

# Business Case Framework

A board-ready structure for making the case to invest in a digital learning programme. Use it to turn a learning need into a decision your executive team can approve with confidence.

## HOW TO USE THIS

Work through the seven sections in order. Each sets out what a board needs to see and the questions to answer before the conversation. Fill it in for your own programme; the result is a short, defensible case rather than a wish-list. It is supplier-agnostic — it works whoever ends up building the programme.

## 1. The problem, in the board's language

Open with the cost of inaction, not the solution. Boards fund problems, not features.

- What is happening now that should not be — falling completion, an ageing credential, a compliance exposure, members leaving for a competitor's offering?
- What does it cost to leave it as it is, in money, risk, or reputation? Quantify where you can.
- Why now? What has changed — a regulatory deadline, a competitor move, a member expectation — that makes this the moment?

## 2. The outcome you are buying

State the result in terms the board already cares about, then the learning outcome underneath it.

- The business outcome: retention, compliance, revenue, member growth, defensibility of the credential.
- The learning outcome: what a member will be able to demonstrate after the programme that they cannot now.
- How you will know it worked — the two or three measures you will report against.

## 3. Options considered

Boards trust a recommendation more when they can see the alternatives were weighed.

Option	Strength	Risk
Do nothing	No spend	Problem compounds; cost rises
Off-the-shelf	Fast, cheap	Generic; weak credential fit
Build in-house	Full control	Capacity, craft, timeline risk
Partner design & production	Quality at pace; you keep authority	Choosing the right partner

## 4. Scope and approach

- What is in scope for this phase, and explicitly what is not.
- Whether you begin with a small trial phase before committing to the full build — a lower-risk way to set the standard once and apply it across the rest.
- Who holds subject-matter authority (always in-house) and who does the design and production.

## 5. Investment and the shape of the cost

Boards do not need a single number on a slide; they need to understand how the cost behaves and what they are committing to at each stage.

- The phased structure: a scoping phase that produces a fixed-scope plan before any build is committed.
- What the first phase buys, and what the decision is at the end of it — proceed, change course, or stop.
- The lifecycle view: not just what it costs to build, but what it costs to keep current as rules and references change.

## 6. Risks and how they are managed

- Delivery risk — managed by a trial-first structure and a single accountable lead.
- Currency risk — managed by naming an owner and a review cadence tied to the regulatory calendar.
- Dependency risk — managed by structuring the work so the institute owns the outcome, the source files, and the documentation.

## 7. The recommendation and the ask

- The single recommended option, in one sentence.
- The specific decision you are asking the board to make today — typically to approve the scoping phase, not the whole build.
- The next step and the date you will return with the scoped plan.

This framework is published by LearnFrame and is free to use with any supplier. If it would help to work through it for a specific programme, the Programme Design Diagnostic does exactly that — [learnframe.com/programme-design-diagnostic](https://learnframe.com/programme-design-diagnostic).