



LEARNING PLANS GUIDE

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About This Guide

Learning plans provide a way for you to bundle actions and courses learners need to complete. They're especially useful when you need to track whether learners meet compliance standards or meet several competencies required by their role or job. Besides giving you the ability to track learner progress, learning plans also let you specify options such as whether alternate actions and courses are available, or how often they need to be completed.

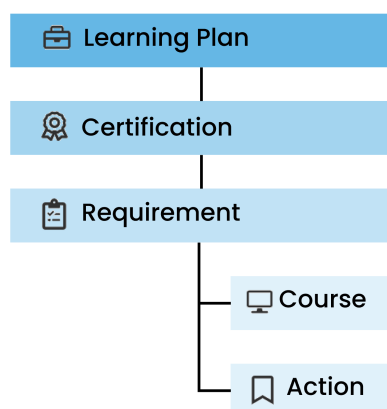
NOTE: Learning plans are a special component of SmarterU that are not included with the basic system. Please contact our [Success Desk team](#) to learn how you can upgrade your account.

This guide explains:

- The parts of a learning plan and how its status is determined
- The statuses associated with a learning plan and its objects
- The types of learning plans that you can create so that you can decide which is best for your needs
- An overview of the process for adding a learning plan
- The importance of testing your learning plan
- The options you have for assigning a learning plan to learners
- How you can track learners' progress

Parts of a Learning Plan

You can think of a [learning plan](#) and its objects as being hierarchical in nature.



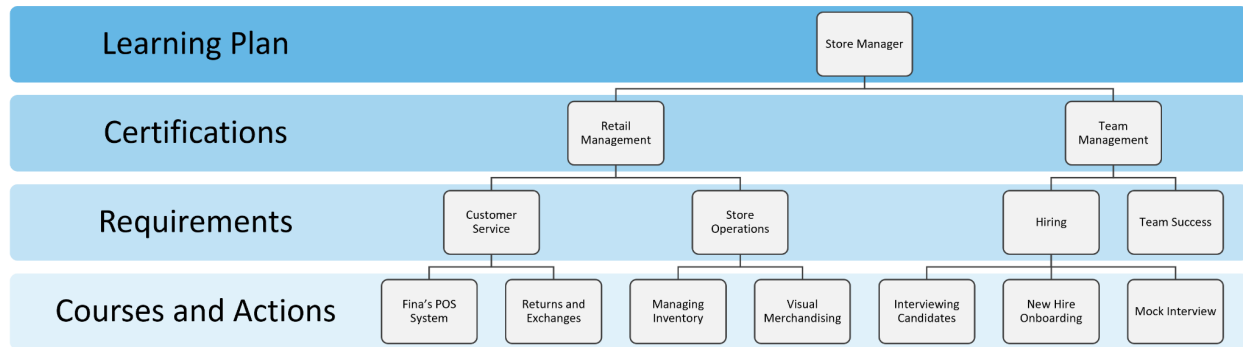
Each learning plan contains one or more [certifications](#). Certifications are the competencies that a learner must demonstrate. For example, store managers might need to demonstrate competence in retail management and team management.



NOTE: If your organization tracks licensing information, you can associate the licensing agency's details with each certification. As learners fulfill the certification, you can [track each individual learner's license with their profile](#).

Within each certification are one or more [requirements](#). These are the criteria that each learner must complete to earn their certification. These criteria can include [courses](#) that the learner must complete, or [actions](#) that they need to take.

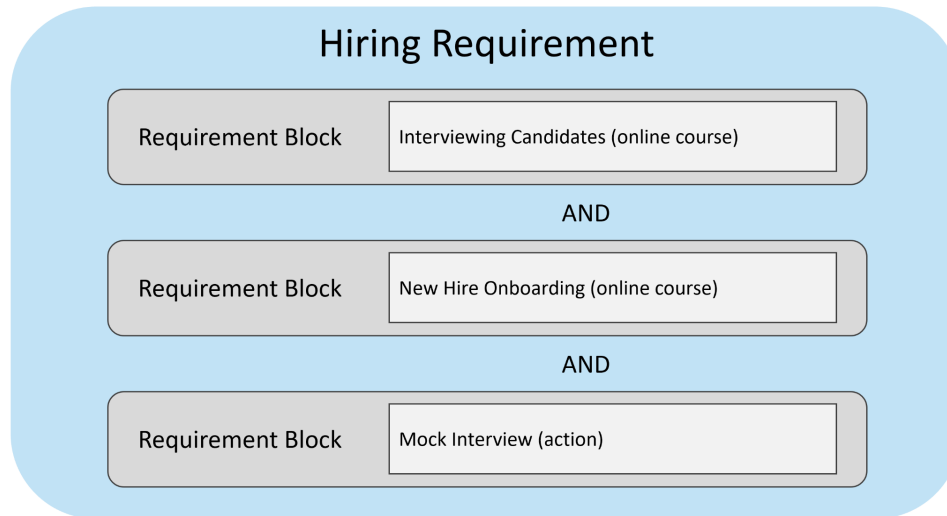
In our example, the Team Management certification includes the Hiring requirement. To satisfy this requirement, store managers must complete the Interviewing Candidates and New Hire Onboarding courses. They must also complete a mock interview (an action).



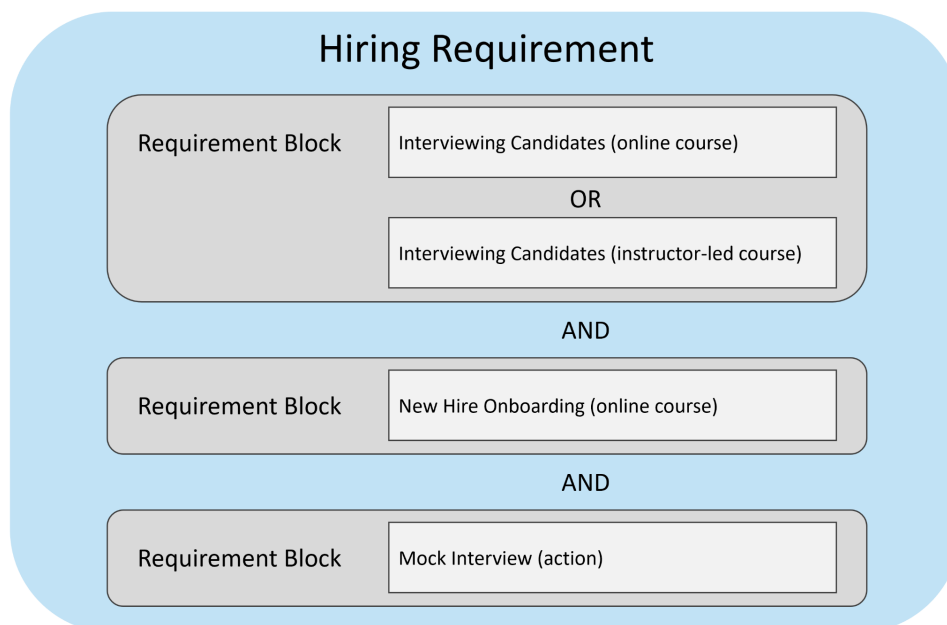
When you set up a requirement, you can define if, and when learners who are assigned the requirement will need to re-complete its courses and actions. For example, you might only need learners to complete the courses and actions in the Hiring requirement once. In this case, when a learner completes the courses and actions that are part of the requirement, they won't need to complete them again.

However, you may want learners to complete the courses and actions in the Customer Service requirement annually. In this case, you can set the requirement to expire after a period of time, such as 365 days.

Within each requirement are one or more [requirement blocks](#) that contain the set of courses and actions that a learner must complete. For example, the Hiring requirement requires learners to complete the Interviewing Candidates online course, the New Hire Onboarding online course, and complete the Mock Interview action. In this example, the Hiring requirement contains three requirement blocks.



Requirement blocks can also be used when you want to give your learners options. In our example, we might want to give learners the option to complete either the online or instructor-led Interviewing Candidates course. In this case, we would include an [alternate option](#) in the block containing this course.



Each object in a learning plan's structure can have multiple objects within it. In other words:

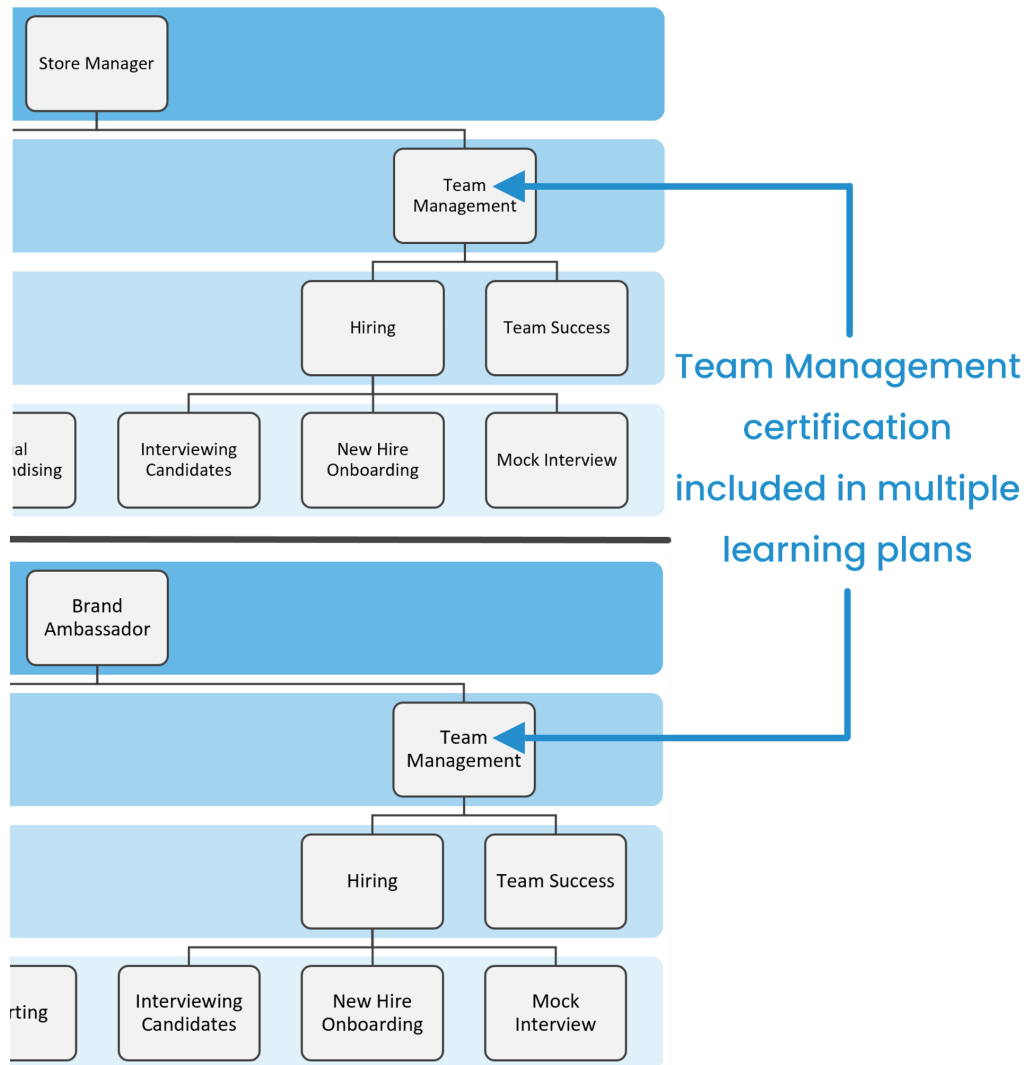
- A learning plan can include one or more certifications.
- A certification can include one or more requirements.
- A requirement can include one or more requirement blocks.

- A requirement block can include one or more actions or courses.

Certain objects in a learning plan can be shared with other learning plans. Specifically:

- Certifications can be included in more than one learning plan.
- Requirements can be included in more than one certification.

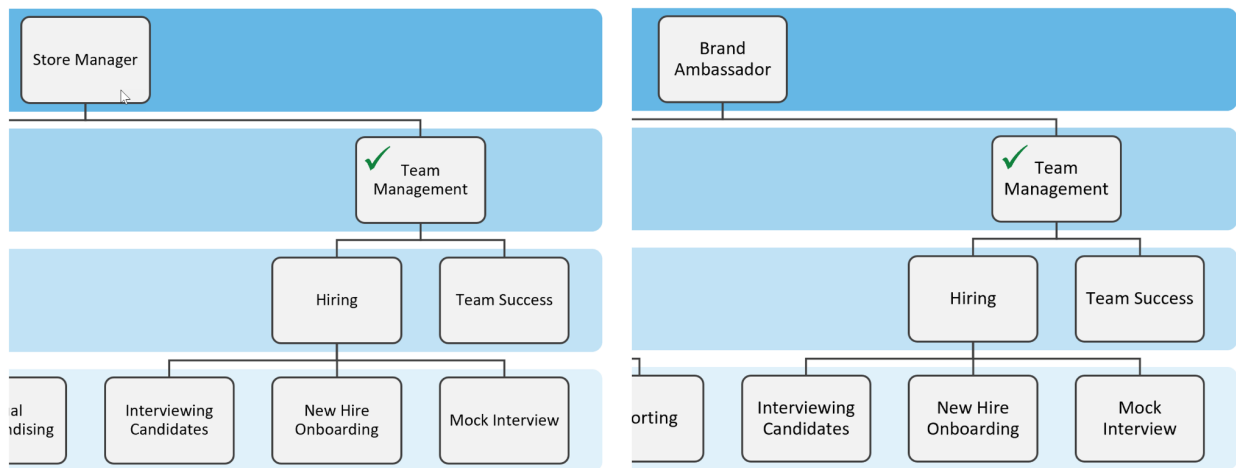
For example, the Team Management certification that's part of the Store Manager learning plan may also be associated with the Brand Ambassador learning plan.



Learning Plan, Certification, and Requirement Statuses

When a learning plan is assigned to a learner, the learning plan, its certifications and requirements will each have a status associated with it. Because certifications and requirements can be assigned to multiple parent objects (e.g., a certification can be assigned to more than one learning plan), the learner's status for a learning plan's object will be recognized across SmarterU.

For example, suppose that a learner is assigned the Store Manager learning plan and the Brand Ambassador learning plan. Both of these learning plans include the Team Management certification. When the learner completes the Team Management certification, that certification will show as *Met* for all learning plans that include it. In our example, the Team Management certification in the Store Manager learning plan and in the Brand Ambassador learning plan will have a *Met* status.

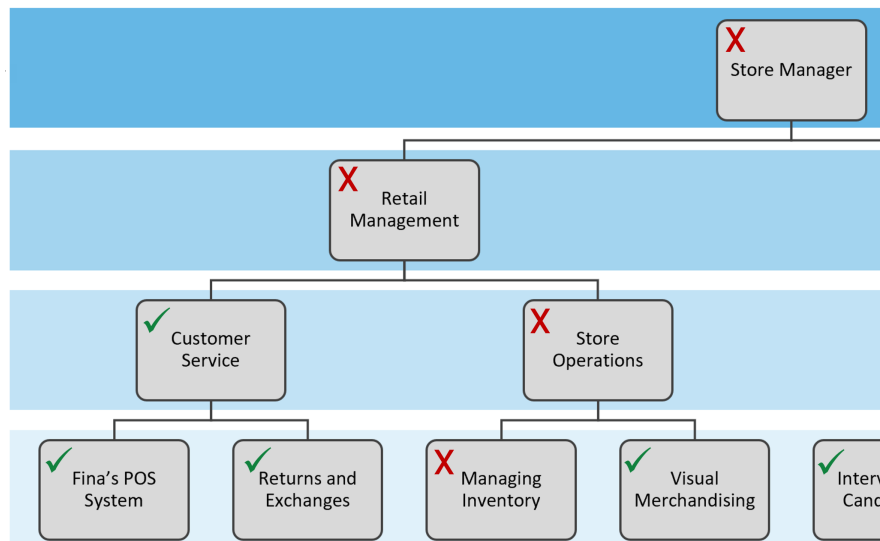


It's important to understand that a learning plan inherits the status of its certifications and requirements. The following sections explain the different statuses and include examples to illustrate how statuses are inherited.

Not Met

The *Not Met* status applies to learning plans, certifications, and requirements. This status indicates that a learner has not completed everything in a learning plan, certification, or requirement. Remember that the status of an object will be inherited by its parent objects. This means that if any part of a learning plan (i.e., its certifications or requirements) is not completed, the learning plan's status will be *Not Met*.

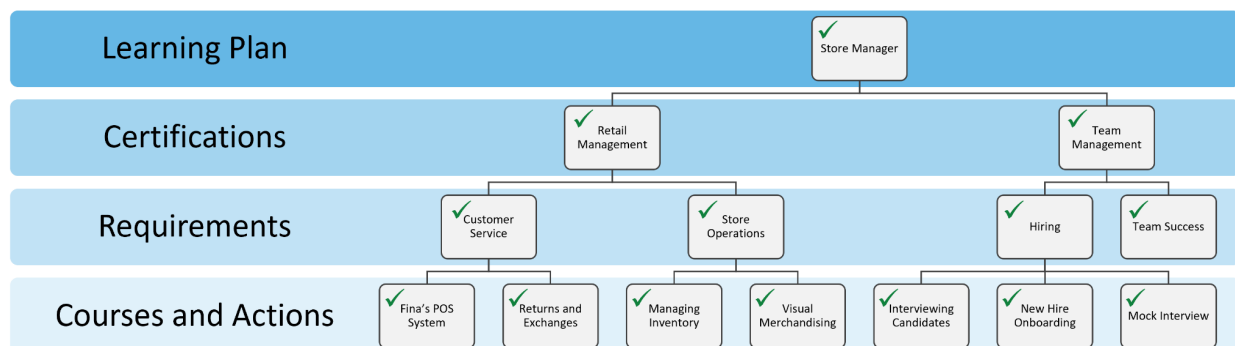
For example, suppose a learner who is assigned the Store Manager learning plan, hasn't completed the Managing Inventory course that's part of the Store Operations requirement. In this example, the learner's Store Operations requirement, Retail Management certification, and Store Manager learning plan will all have a status of *Not Met*.



Met

In order for a learning plan, certification, or requirement to have a *Met* status, the learner must complete everything within it. For learning plans, this means that the learner has met all certifications and requirements in the learning plan. For certifications, this means that the learner has met all requirements in the certification. For requirements, this means that the learner has completed all courses and actions in the requirement's blocks.

In the example below, a learner's Store Manager learning plan will only have a *Met* status, when the learner has met its Retail Management AND Team Management certifications which includes all requirements (courses and actions) within those certifications.



Met By Default

Met by Default is a special status that only applies to requirements. The *Met by Default* status indicates that the courses and actions in a requirement are considered complete when the requirement is initially assigned to a learner. The [Met by Default setting for a requirement](#) lets you give learners a grace period to complete its courses and actions.

For example, suppose you want to give learners who are assigned the Customer Service requirement 30 days to complete its courses (i.e., Fina's POS System, and Returns and Exchanges). The first time a learner is assigned a learning plan that contains the Customer Service requirement, their status for the requirement will be *Met by Default*. If after 30 days — or whatever period you specify — the learner still hasn't completed both courses, their status for the requirement will change to *Not Met*.

Warning

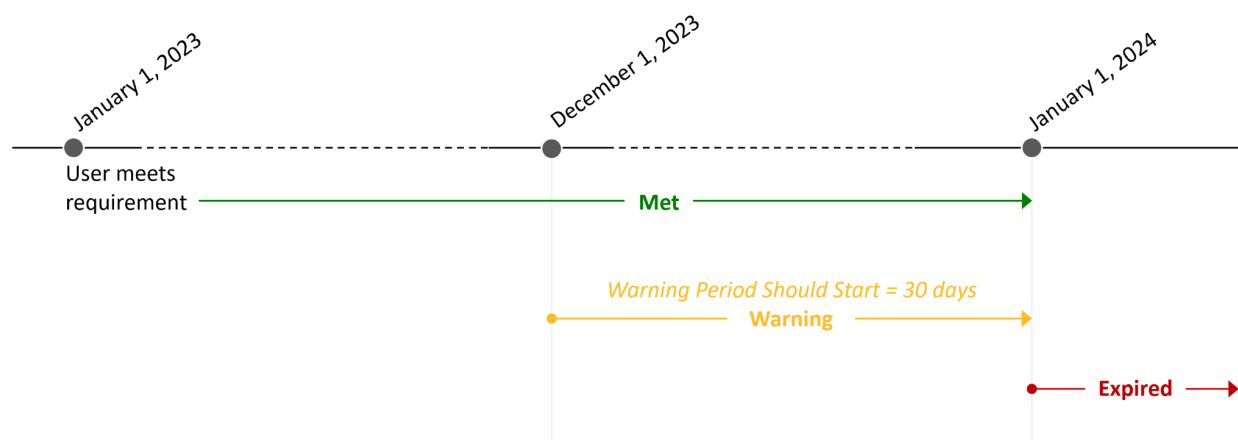
Each requirement can be configured to expire. When you set up a requirement that expires, you can specify a warning period. The warning period gives a learner time to re-complete courses or re-submit actions that are part of a learning plan before they actually expire.

The *Warning* status indicates that a learner previously completed a learning plan, certification, or requirement, but is within the warning period prior to its expiration. At this time, the learner

would need to re-complete recurring courses and re-submit recurring actions that are set to expire, if they haven't already done so.

NOTE: A requirement's recurrence calculation is based on the date that it was met. It's possible that requirements in a certification will expire on different dates if their met dates differ. Although actions can have their own expiration dates, their parent requirement's expiration date takes precedence.

For example, suppose the Customer Service requirement expires after 365 days. Its [warning period](#) starts 30 days prior to its expiration. If a learner completes the requirement on January 1, 2023, the requirement will expire on January 1, 2024. On December 1, 2023, the requirement's status will change to *Warning*.



The status change will be visible to the learner in the learner interface and indicates to them that they will need to re-complete the Fina's POS System and the Returns and Exchanges courses that are in that requirement.

NOTE: Although learners are not emailed when they enter a requirement's warning period, you could [set up an additional email for learners](#) to remind them that they need to complete the courses before their learning plan expires.

Expired

The Expired status indicates that a learner previously completed a learning plan, certification, or requirement, but has not re-completed it after the period of time or date that it was valid for.

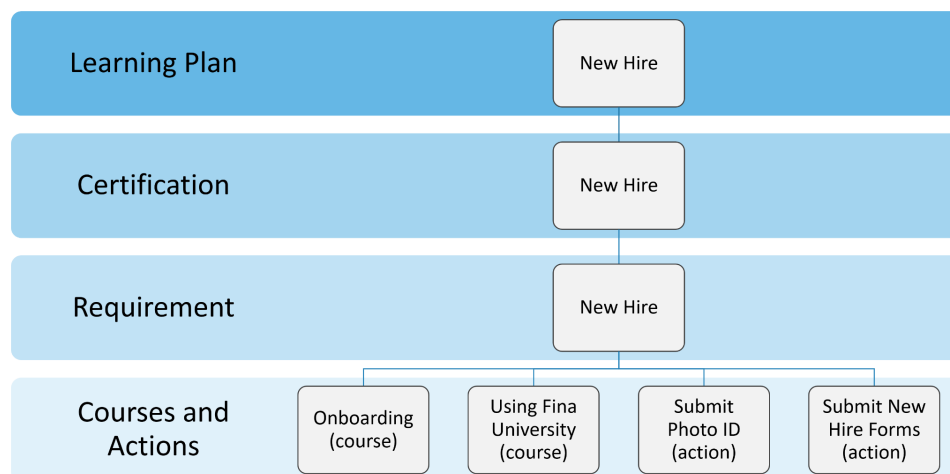
Basic vs. Advanced Learning Plans

SmarterU gives you two options for creating learning plans: basic and advanced.

Basic Learning Plans

Basic learning plans are useful when you want to quickly assign courses and actions to learners. When you add a basic learning plan, SmarterU automatically creates one certification and one requirement of the same name with the same expiration settings. You may want to set up a basic learning plan for one-and-done training, or training that's always done at the same cadence (i.e., expiration settings and warning period).

For example, you may want new employees to complete certain courses and actions as part of your company's onboarding process. If you create a New Hire basic learning plan, SmarterU automatically creates a New Hire certification and a New Hire requirement.



Advanced Learning Plans

Advanced learning plans are useful when you want to further customize the settings in your learning plan, certifications, and requirements. They allow you to assign multiple certifications and requirements to a learning plan. These certifications and requirements can have different mandate levels, expiration dates, and other settings that allow you to refine how your learning plans work.

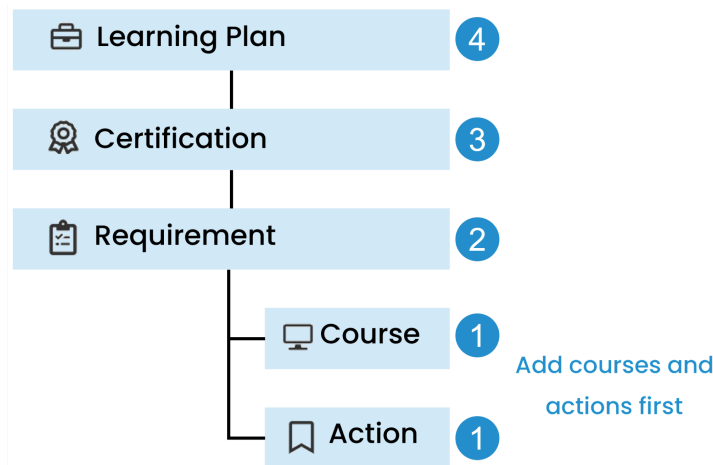
The chart below summarizes the differences between basic and advanced learning plans.

	Advanced Learning Plans	Basic Learning Plans
Learning plan can have multiple certifications and requirements	✓	✗
Certification and requirement can have different names from the learning plan	✓	✗
Certifications and requirements can have different mandate levels	✓	✗
Requirement can have multiple blocks	✓	✓
Requirements can have different expiration dates	✓	✗
Requirements can have different met by default settings	✓	✗
Courses can have different automation enrollment and self enrollment settings	✓	✓

You can [convert basic learning plans to advanced learning plans](#) as your needs change. After converting it to an advanced learning plan, you'll be able to change the settings for the learning plan, its certifications, and requirements.

Setting Up Learning Plans

When you set up learning plans in SmarterU, you'll want to take a bottom-up approach. In other words, you'll want to make sure that the courses and actions are added first.



This approach ensures that when you set up a learning plan, certification, or requirement, the objects it includes are already defined. For example, when you set up a requirement, the courses and actions that are included in it are already created and can be associated with the requirement.

If you're giving your learners the option to choose between different course types (i.e., online, SCORM, or instructor-led), you'll want to make sure you've added a course for each type.

Setting Up Basic Learning Plans

[Adding a basic learning plan](#) is a straightforward process since SmarterU does the work of adding its certification and requirement for you. The key decisions you'll need to make when you add a basic learning plan are [whether its courses and actions expire](#), and [whether you want to give learners a grace period](#). After you've specified your basic learning plan's settings, you can associate courses and actions to it.

Setting Up Advanced Learning Plans

Advanced learning plans offer a number of settings that let you customize them to your organization's needs. For example, you can:

- Specify different expiration settings for a learning plan's requirements
- Specify different mandate levels for its certifications and requirements
- Control whether learners are able to self-enroll in the learning plan
- Control whether learners are automatically enrolled into the learning plan

As mentioned earlier, you'll want to take a bottom-up approach when you add your learning plan objects. After [adding your courses](#) and [actions, add your requirements](#). As part of adding your requirements, you'll specify [expiration settings](#) and whether the requirement is [met by default](#). You'll also [define the requirement's blocks](#) and the courses and actions that they include.

As you select a block's courses, keep in mind that the course settings that you specify in the block are independent of the settings that may have been specified for the course in groups, subscription variants, or other learning plans. For example, automation enrollment for the Interviewing Candidates course in the Store Manager learning plan functions independently from the automation enrollment specified for the same course in the Warehouse Manager learning plan, Retail group, and Annual variant in the Consultant subscription.

Interviewing Candidates Course

	Store Manager Learning Plan	Warehouse Manager Learning Plan	Retail Group	Annual Variant (in Consultant Subscription)
Automation Enrollment	Until Pass	Once	Once	Do Not Auto Enroll
Self Enroll	Yes	Yes	No	No
Send Enrollment Notification	Yes	No	Yes	No

The same is true for the enrollment notification setting specified for the course in the requirement block. The enrollment notification setting functions independently from the enrollment notification setting specified for the same course in groups, variants, or other learning plans

NOTE: As you set up your learning plans, you'll want to consider whether you want SmarterU to [email learners when a learning plan is assigned to them](#) and whether you want to [summarize the course enrollment reminders into a single email](#).

Next, you'll want to [add your certifications](#). As part of this step, you'll [assign requirements to the certification](#).

After you've set up your certifications, you can [add the learning plan](#) and [assign certifications to it](#).

Testing Your Learning Plan

Before you assign your learning plan to learners, we recommend that you test it on yourself or a pilot group. We recommend assigning the learning plan to your pilot group using the same method that you plan to use for your learners. In other words, if you plan to assign the learning plan to individual learners, then assign the learning plan to individual members of your pilot group. If you plan to automatically assign the learning plan to learners in a group, then create a test group that includes members of your pilot group, then [enable automation enrollment for the test group's learning plan](#).

WARNING: Although SmarterU has enrollment automation options for [groups](#) and [learning plans](#), you'll want to consider the impact of enabling these settings for the account at this time. Enabling these account settings could result in a number of other group and learning plan enrollments that still require your testing.

Some of the things you'll want to check while logged in as a non-admin user include:

- Can you see and access the learning plan, its certifications, requirements, courses and actions?
- If you've enabled enrollment automation for the learning plan's courses, are those enrollments occurring?
- Are notification emails for the learning plan and courses working as expected? In other words, are you receiving the emails that you expected? Are you receiving emails you thought you had disabled?
- If you've provided options within a requirement block, is the requirement's status changing as expected when you complete the minimum required courses or actions?
- Do all the courses have Start or Enroll buttons?
- Do actions that require a file upload show an Upload button?
- Is the learning plan accessible from the learner interface, or do you need to add a new page in the dashboard set?
- If you want to provide learners the ability to track their progress, have you added a learning plan page to the learner's dashboard set?

Assigning Learning Plans to Learners

After you've defined your learning plans, you can assign them to your learners using several different options. You can [assign learning plans to individual learners](#), or you can [automatically assign learning plans to learners in a group](#). More advanced techniques for assigning learning plans include the [user import](#) and [SmarterU's API](#).

When a learning plan is assigned to a learner, SmarterU assigns the certifications, requirements, and actions associated with the learning plan to the user. If [learning plan automation](#) is enabled, SmarterU also attempts to enroll the user in the courses associated with the learning plan's requirements. If learning plan automation is not enabled, you can use SmarterU's [recommended enrollments feature](#) to identify the courses that learners who are assigned the learning plan should take, then enroll the users in those courses. You can also [manually enroll learners](#) in courses.

Tracking Learning Plan Progress

SmarterU provides you several different options for tracking learners' progress as they work through a learning plan. Several dashboards such as the [Users Dashboard](#), [Learning Plans Dashboard](#), and [Certifications Dashboard](#) display status blocks at the top of the page. Some of these dashboards summarize the number of learners by status in the grid.

Certifications

Certification:

All

Status blocks

2Certifications Met

0Certifications Warning

142Certifications Not Met

13Certifications Total

7Actions Accepted

1Actions Review

140Actions Pending

148Actions Total

Summary in grid

Name	Actions			Certifications			
	Accepted	Review	Pending	Learners	Met	Warn	Not
Call Center Customer Service	4	0	32	18	0	0	18
Conveyor Belt Operation	0	0	0	5	1	0	4
Fina Customer Service	0	0	0	15	0	0	15

NOTE: Learn more about [action statuses](#) in our [Success Center](#).

To view a specific learner's progress, you can [view the user's profile](#). A summary of the learner's certification status summary displays at the top of their profile. You can also look at the [Learning Plans & Certifications accordion](#) to see the status of learning plans and their certifications.

Michael Lewis

Last Login: 07-Mar-2023 12:55 PM CST (7 minutes ago)

Manufacturing Associate at Manufacturing in Winnipeg
Employee ID: s1271b

Learner Activity

Summary of learner's certifications:

- 1 Certifications Met
- 0 Certifications Warning
- 2 Certifications Not Met

7 Enrollments Completed, 0 Enrollments Warning, 2 Enrollments Overdue, 0 Enrollments Active

Learning Plans & Certifications

Required By	Name	Status	First Met	Expires	Area/Region
★ Mandatory	Forklift Operator	★ Certified Forklift Operator	Not Met	N/A	N/A
★ Mandatory	Forklift Operator	★ Health & Safety - Manufa...	Not Met	N/A	N/A
★ Employee	New Employee Orientation	Met	30-Mar-2021	N/A	N/A

From the user's profile, there's a button that lets you [view a learner's certification details](#) on the Certifications Dashboard. You can [download a PDF](#) that details the courses and actions included in a certification's requirements so that you can see which ones the learner has completed.

Additionally, SmarterU includes a [Learning Plan Report](#) for more advanced reporting on your learning plans, certifications, requirements, and their associated courses and actions. The [default Learning Plan Report](#) gives you a high-level overview as to whether learners have met their assigned learning plan. You can [customize this report](#) to show either summarized or detailed output for the learning plan level that you're interested in.

Closing

We hope that this guide has provided insight on how learning plans can help you deliver and track the courses and actions that your learners need to complete. If you haven't done so already, we recommend that you enroll in the [SmarterU Academy](#) to learn more about learning plans and other important aspects of SmarterU. If you need additional information, check out our [Success Center](#) or contact our [Success Desk](#).