

Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design







Guide for Registered Apprentices



Effective from 1st October 2013



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Version control

This is the definitive guide to Diploma (System 5.2). Any changes or updates will be communicated to all apprentices and tutors.

The online version will always be the latest version.



change your world

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“Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.”

William James

Welcome to the Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design



Andy Goldring, Chief Executive of the Permaculture Association

As an apprentice, you've joined an inspirational network of people working across Britain, learning how to put their permaculture theory into practice. It's a friendly network, where people share their information and ideas, and work to help each other in their projects and designs. The interaction with other apprentices can be as rewarding as your own project and design work, and we encourage collaboration between apprentices.

Our key approach – action learning – or 'learning by doing' ensures that as well as learning a great deal about permaculture, you'll also contribute in a very real way to the development of practical solutions to many of the challenges facing us. This might be a design for a new garden or farm to increase self-reliance and biodiversity; an improvement in home energy efficiency to combat climate change; designs for community spaces that help bring people together; or a new strategy for your neighbourhood group.

Whatever the focus of your projects and design work, Britain will be a more sustainable place than it was, as a result of your learning. You can help investigate vital areas of research, provide case studies of how and where permaculture is being applied, and create resources that will help other people in their work.

So we're delighted that you've chosen to get involved. Good luck with all your learning, designing and practical project work. Keep us up to date on how it's going and give us your feedback on how to keep improving the diploma.

I look forward to seeing your final presentation!

Andy Goldring
Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Andy Goldring', with a long, sweeping tail extending to the right.



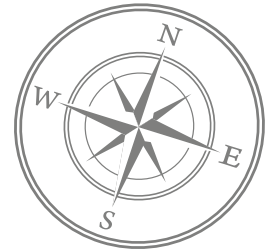
Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to developing Diploma System 5.2.

We'd like to thank Andrew Langford for his original work on the diploma, and everyone who has helped with the development of this more polished and updated version.

In particular, Andy Goldring, Aranya, Hannah Thorogood, Jan Mulreany, Joanna Dornan, Wilf Richards, Nigel McKean, Patricia Taylor and Hedvig Murray, together with the apprentices who supplied artwork, images and quotes.

How to use this guide



This guide is for you, as a registered apprentice on the Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design. It sets out all you need to know about the diploma and how it works, as you follow your chosen diploma route, carry out your designs, develop your portfolio, have your portfolio assessed and, finally, gain accreditation as a diploma holder.

The guide explains what you can expect from staff, tutors and peers on the diploma system, as well as what's expected of you as an apprentice. It also gives pointers to further resources and where to look for additional help.

This version of the guide has been significantly rewritten for Diploma (System 5.2), so we'll be particularly interested in your feedback on the experience of using it. Thank you, in advance!

Navigating the guide

The various elements of the diploma system may well seem complex at first sight, so we've tried to make the information you'll need as clear and accessible as possible.

Different routes

You'll be following one of three routes through the diploma:



supported route



supported route plus



independent route

Not all the information in the guide is relevant for all routes, so the above symbols are used to help you identify the most information most relevant to you.

Sections

The main part of the guide is divided into numbered sections, with section-specific headers throughout. Each section is also represented by an icon, to make the sections easily visually identifiable as you're scanning through the guide.

Signposts

There are small signposts throughout the guide to show where further information can be found if you need it. The signposts are indicated by a sign like this >> , and point you to the relevant page or section.

Terminology

Key diploma terms are defined in the **Glossary** at the end of the guide, and each of these terms is underlined on first mention in the main text of the guide.

More generally, within each section of the guide, key terms for that section are **shown in bold** to make it easier to scan for the most important information.

Highlights

Throughout the guide you'll find the following types of boxes, designed to highlight and summarise the information you'll need most:

IN THIS SECTION

- ▶ **Main headings** With a brief explanation of what they cover

p.1

IN A NUTSHELL

A brief summary of the information you'll find under that heading.



NOTE TO SELF

Something important that you should do or keep in mind.



HOT TIP

An optional but useful piece of advice.



FIND OUT MORE

► Further information, elsewhere in the guide (where it's particularly relevant to read further), on the website or in other publications



SECTION RECAP

A brief round-up of the main points covered in the section.



There are a few other types of boxes (e.g. those highlighting definitions or examples of work by past apprentices), but these aren't as frequent and should be self-explanatory.

Reference

You may also find the following sections useful, placed at the end of the guide after the main numbered sections:







- **Resources** – A list of guides, web pages, forms and other documents we may refer you to
- **Glossary** – A list of key definitions relevant to the diploma
- **Contact us** – Our details (on the last page of the guide for easy access)



1 Different routes

Understanding your diploma

IN THIS SECTION

- ▶ **Supported route**  The standard tutorial support package p. 3
- ▶ **Supported route plus**  An extension of the standard tutorial package p. 11
- ▶ **Independent route**  The assessment-only package p. 13
- ▶ **All diploma routes**    Useful information for all apprentices p. 15
- ▶ **Technical skills training** Developing the technical skills you need p. 17

“Permaculture is not a destination, it is a direction.”

Graham Bell

The three routes through the diploma offer you a choice and are designed to suit different apprentices. By now, you'll have chosen the route that's right for you – the supported route, the supported route plus or the independent route.

In practice, your diploma journey will be unique, whichever route you've chosen. You'll steer the course of your learning, create your own projects and designs, find the support you need at the time you need it (including any extra tutorials from diploma tutors), and submit your portfolio for assessment when you think it's ready.

Diploma apprentices are a diverse group. You may:

- have finished your Permaculture Design Course (PDC) quite recently, or a number of years ago
- be relatively new to permaculture, or a more experienced designer
- have a more or less limited budget to spend on support for your diploma
- prefer more structured support or the freedom of 'going it alone'

NOTE TO SELF



Working towards the diploma can be a real culture change from the PDC – even on the supported routes. Your diploma journey will be an **extended period of self-directed learning** – not a tutor-led, taught course. So how you manage your learning and organise your design work, training and tutorials (if any) is very much up to you.

It takes a *minimum of two years* from finishing your PDC to beginning the final assessment process for your diploma. We believe this is the shortest time in which you can really integrate permaculture into your life and work, and build up sufficient practical experience of applying permaculture design. In fact, most apprentices take longer than two years to complete their diploma, whichever route they take.

Supported route

IN A NUTSHELL

A structured framework of tutorial support: a personal tutor, a flexible tutorial programme and a comprehensive assessment process.



If you've chosen the supported route for your diploma journey, then whatever your level of experience, you'll benefit from the structured framework as you work on designs and prepare your portfolio for assessment.



The supported route puts you at the heart of a network of apprentices and tutors: a learning community

Personal tutor

IN A NUTSHELL

A registered diploma tutor and experienced permaculture designer to guide and support you through your diploma journey.



The personal tutor you've chosen will be an important part of your diploma experience. They'll be your first point of contact for any questions or difficulties that arise in your diploma learning and design work.

Your tutor will deliver all of these sessions:

- Induction event >> see p. 6
- Personal tutorials >> see p. 9
- Interim portfolio assessment >> see 6: **Assessment**, p. 53
- 1st final portfolio assessment >> see 6: **Assessment**, p. 53

They'll also be the presiding diplomate at your presentation event – the celebration that marks the end of your diploma journey.

>> see 7: **Your presentation event**, p. 66

If you choose to have any design support tutorials (which would be extras, for an additional fee), then you may want your personal tutor to deliver some or all of these too.

>> see also **Supported route plus**, p. 11

You may also already have received a draft learning agreement from your tutor. If not, you should receive this soon.

Learning agreement

IN A NUTSHELL

An informal contract that sets out how you and your tutor will work together.



The written learning agreement between you and your tutor is designed to cover the main practical details of your working relationship. These may well evolve and change over time, but the learning agreement gives both you and your tutor a starting point and an idea of how you each prefer to work.

Content

Your learning agreement is likely to include the following details:

- **Responsibilities**
 - what you can expect from your tutor
 - what your tutor will expect from you
- **Communication**
 - methods – what type of communication you and your tutor prefer
 - boundaries – your tutor's availability and willingness to answer queries outside tutorials
 - response times – how long you and your tutor should expect to wait following emails or phone messages
- **Personal tutorials** >> see below, p. 9
 - organisation – who will set them up (including how much advance notice is needed)
 - timing and frequency – how often or at what stages you'd like them
 - purpose – how you think you'd like to use them, though you may not know yet and it's fine if this changes
 - preparation – what you'll need to do beforehand
 - usual venue, for face-to-face sessions (including any additional travel costs that might arise if your tutor needs to travel to you)
- **Confidentiality** – covering any personal information you disclose during tutorials

- **Overall timescales** – how long you expect to take to complete your diploma (though obviously your plans may change over time)

Process

Your tutor will send you a draft learning agreement before your **induction event**. This gives you a chance to think about any changes or additions you'd like to suggest. You can then discuss these during the induction event.

Once you and your tutor are both happy with the details, you can sign the agreement.

If your learning agreement isn't finalised during the induction event, you can complete the process by phone or email afterwards. You should then sign the agreement and send a copy to your tutor.

Induction event

IN A NUTSHELL

The first session with your tutor: a chance to meet them, ask questions and get started on your diploma journey.



Purpose & content

The induction event is an excellent opportunity for you to get to know your personal tutor and for them to start getting to know you. If it's a group event, you'll also meet other apprentices starting their diploma at the same time.

During the session you should expect to:

- explain why you're doing the diploma and what you hope to get out of it
- **ask questions** about how the diploma works or anything else you're unsure of
- agree and sign your **learning agreement**
- share your understanding of the **permaculture design process**
- get help with designing your learning pathway

>> see 2: **Your learning pathway**, p. 19

- discuss ideas for your first **designs** and get help with how to approach them

>> see 5: **Your Portfolio**, p. 36

- consider how you'll find and create your **peer support** network

>> see 4: **Sources of support**, p. 29

Format

When you've had your registration confirmed, you should contact your personal tutor to arrange your induction event.

Timing When you've completed both parts of the registration process and made your first payment.

Length & type 2 hours one-to-one or the group equivalent (e.g. 6 hours for three apprentices). Face-to-face.

People You and your personal tutor. Perhaps other apprentices if they're starting with the same tutor at the same time. (Let your tutor know in advance if you have a strong preference for either a one-to-one or a group session.)

Preparation

It's important to **be as well prepared as possible** for your induction event, so you can make the best use of your tutorial time and get the most out of this first session. Your tutor will expect you to have read, understood (as far as you can) and made notes, using the list below.

Read

- This guide
- Your draft learning agreement

Understand

- Your diploma route – including the different types of tutorial support
- What action learning is

>> see **3: Action learning** p. 23

- What a learning pathway is

- (Broadly) what your portfolio should look like
 - >> see 5: **Your portfolio**, p. 36
- (Broadly) what the accreditation criteria are

And of course, above all:

- The permaculture design process

Make notes on

- Any questions you have from this guide or your learning agreement
- Ideas for your learning pathway
- Ideas for your first designs and projects

Follow-up

After the induction event your tutor will give or send you a copy of their **session notes**.

You should:

- **sign your learning agreement** (if this wasn't done during the session) and send a copy to your tutor
- **finish designing your learning pathway** and send a copy to your tutor
- **agree a date** with your tutor for your first personal tutorial
- take the first steps along your learning pathway ...

FIND OUT MORE



▶ See the **Guide to accreditation criteria** – downloadable from the website (permaculture.org.uk/diploma) in **Diploma documents**

▶ Go to the **Knowledge base** on the website (permaculture.org.uk/knowledge-base/design) for a list of resources and recommended reading.

Personal tutorials

IN A NUTSHELL

Four short one-to-one tutorials: the support you need at the time you need it.



Purpose & content

Personal tutorials offer a regular check-in with your tutor and a chance to reflect on progress, find ways forward and keep your diploma work on track.

Sessions will vary, but you might expect to:

- reflect on your learning process and the action learning cycle
- explore ideas to help manage your diploma work
- discuss specific design challenges and questions
- get advice on developing your portfolio
- find out about relevant resources (e.g. reading, contacts, skills training)

Different types of support

You can choose which type of support to have in your personal tutorials – either one of these or a combination of both:

- **action learning support** (reflecting on your learning process)
- **design support** (focusing specifically on your design work)

Format

You contact your tutor when you're ready for a personal tutorial.

Number Four sessions in the standard package for the supported route, but you can book extra tutorials at any time, for an additional fee.

Timing & frequency You choose, though we recommend that you have some kind of tutorial at least once every six months. Many apprentices take longer than two years to complete their diploma, so this would mean booking extra tutorials, as above.

>> see also **Design support tutorials**, p. 11

FIND OUT MORE



► Read 3:
Action learning
on p. 23 for
more on this key
permaculture
process

FIND OUT MORE

► See the **Guide to fees** for details of additional tutorial fees – downloadable from the website (permaculture.org.uk/diploma) in **Diploma documents**

Length & type 1 hour. Ideally face-to-face, but by phone or tele / videoconference (e.g. Skype) if need be.

People You and your personal tutor.

Preparation

Good preparation is important, so you can make the best use of your personal tutorial time. Decide which type of support you need and make sure you and your tutor are both clear about what you want to get out of the session. This is especially important if there is something specific that you want to cover that your tutor will need to prepare for.

Action learning support

You can draw up your own template of reflection questions to answer and make notes on before each tutorial. Alternatively, these **four questions** are a good framework for reflection and a useful starting point for any tutorial.

>> see 3: **Action learning**, p. 23

- What is going well?
- What has been challenging?
- What are your long-term visions and goals?
- What is your next achievable step?

Design support

Reflect and make notes on key issues and challenges, and any specific questions you have.

Follow-up

After each personal tutorial your tutor will give or send you a copy of their session notes.

Supported route plus

IN A NUTSHELL

The same structured tutorial framework as on the supported route, plus a flexible programme of design support tutorials.



If you've chosen the supported route plus for your diploma journey, then, whatever your level of experience, you'll benefit from the additional focused design support as you work on designs and prepare your portfolio for assessment.

Design support tutorials

IN A NUTSHELL

Two or more longer and more in-depth tutorials focusing specifically on your design work.



Purpose & content

Design support tutorials focus solely on your **design work**. They offer a chance to have one or more designs looked at by your chosen tutor and to get more or less detailed feedback. (So the more designs you bring, the less detailed and more general your tutor's feedback has to be). The tutor can be your personal tutor or any other diploma tutor you'd like to work with.

Sessions will vary, but you might expect to do one or more of these:

- talk about your designs and how they're going
- explore issues and challenges in your designs
- discuss how you're applying permaculture design theory
- get detailed feedback on one design or more general feedback on two or three designs
- get a formal assessment report on one design

HOT TIP



Boost your confidence and **get individual designs 'signed off' as you go**. This can be a great way to build up your portfolio step by step. Why not have a design support tutorial with a formal assessment when you've written up your first design?

HOT TIP

Don't send original work through the post.

Send a copy or scan it and send by email.

FIND OUT MORE

► See the following documents – downloadable from the website (permaculture.org.uk/diploma) in **Diploma documents**:

• **Diploma tutor register**

• **Guide to fees** for details of additional tutorial fees

Format

You contact your chosen tutor when you're ready for a design support tutorial.

Number Two or four sessions in the two standard packages for the supported route plus, but you can choose to have more tutorials than this and have the additional cost factored into your regular payments. Or you can book extra design support tutorials at any time, for an additional fee.

Timing & frequency You choose – whenever you feel the need for specific design support and feedback. It may be helpful to arrange one after completing your first design or two, depending how confident you feel about them.

Length 2 hours one-to-one or the group equivalent (e.g. 4 hours for two apprentices). 2 hours per apprentice is the standard length, but you can pay for a longer session at the hourly tutorial rate. You can also choose to send your design work to your tutor in advance (electronically or by post) for them to look at before the session, and then have a shorter time in the tutorial itself.

Type Ideally face-to-face, but by phone or tele/videoconference if need be. In this case, you'll need to send your design work to your tutor in advance (electronically or by post).

People You and your chosen tutor. This could be your personal tutor or any other diploma tutor you'd like to work with – for example, one who specialises in your design area (see the [diploma tutor register](#)). Perhaps other apprentices too, to share each other's design work and benefit from peer support as well as design support.

Preparation

Good preparation is once again important, so you can make the best use of your design support tutorial time. For this you'll need to:

- choose how many and which design(s) you want to bring
- define the key issues for discussion and design support
- decide whether you want informal feedback or a formal assessment report

Finally, as for any tutorial, make sure you and your tutor are clear about what you want to get out of the session.

Follow-up

After the design support tutorial your tutor will give or send you a copy of either their session notes or their assessment report, depending which you've chosen.

Independent route

IN A NUTSHELL

The same comprehensive assessment process as on the two supported routes, but without the structured tutorial framework.



If you've chosen the independent route for your diploma journey, you've decided you can work through your projects and designs without regular tutorial support. Apprentices choose the independent route for a variety of reasons, and you may be anywhere in the process – from starting out on your first project to assembling your portfolio of completed designs and beginning the assessment process.

You can register on the independent route any time after finishing your PDC, but it still takes a minimum of two years after finishing your PDC before you can begin the assessment process.



The independent route suits apprentices with a very clear idea of what they want to do, and how they want to do it.

HOT TIP

It's worth registering in good time on the independent route.

If you **register well ahead of booking your interim portfolio assessment**

(the first stage of the assessment process), you can spread the costs of your diploma and pay your fees in instalments.

What's different ...

You won't have any of these on the independent route:

- A personal tutor
- An induction event
- Personal tutorials (unless you arrange and pay for them as extras – in which case the tutorials would be given by your 1st assessor, the tutor who carries out your interim and 1st final portfolio assessments)
- Design support tutorials (unless you arrange and pay for them as extras)

... and what's the same

These elements of your diploma will be the same as for apprentices on one of the supported routes:

- The requirements for your **portfolio**
- Your **choice of tutor** – in this case, to be your 1st assessor (use the diploma tutor register to select from among the registered assessors)
- The **assessment process** – your interim assessment will probably be the first session you have that involves direct contact with a diploma tutor
- Your **presentation event** – where your 1st assessor will probably be the presiding diplomate
- Gaining accreditation as a diploma holder

See the next subsection for where to go in the guide to find information on all of the above.

FIND OUT MORE

▶ See the **Diploma tutor register** – downloadable from the website (permaculture.org.uk/diploma/) in **Diploma documents**

All diploma routes

Whichever route you've chosen, you'll have these elements of your diploma in common with all other apprentices, and you can find out more about them from the signposts below:

- The requirements for your portfolio
>> see 5: **Your portfolio**, p. 36
- Extra personal tutorial support
>> see **Personal tutorials**, p. 9
- Extra design tutorial support
>> see **Design support tutorials**, p. 11
- The assessment process
>> see 6: **Assessment**, p. 53
- Your presentation event
>> see 7: **Your presentation event**, p. 66

And throughout your diploma journey, you'll also need to:

- develop your technical skills
>> see **Technical skills training**, p. 17
- seek out the resources and support that will help you stay on track – there's a lot of excellent support out there, and you should never feel that you're on your own
>> see 4: **Sources of support**, p. 29






HOT TIP

You're welcome to **arrange extra tutorials at any time**, for an additional fee

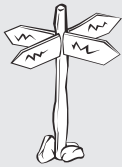
Either contact us at the office or get in touch with a tutor direct via the diploma tutor register.

What if you need more help?



- 1. Self-reflection** Look at your learning pathway. Think about what you're finding difficult and see if you can identify any practical steps that would allow you to move forward again.
- 2. Peer support** Talk to other apprentices. They might offer a different perspective or simply listen while you talk through a dilemma – which can often help you find your own solutions.
- 3. Personal tutor**  **or 1st assessor**  Ask your tutor for informal advice – they may be able to answer simple queries by email or signpost you on. But please respect your tutor's time and the boundaries you've agreed together – they may have to advise you to arrange another tutorial. Remember, you can pay for extras at any time.
- 4. Another tutor** Ask a different tutor for a tutorial (see the diploma tutor register). This could be a tutor with particular experience in the area you're working on, or simply one to give a second opinion on a tricky issue.
- 5. Change routes**  If in the end it becomes too difficult to complete your diploma on the independent route, and you'd like more support in your learning and design work, you can swap to the supported route for an additional fee.

FIND OUT MORE



▶ See the following documents – downloadable from the website (permaculture.org.uk/diploma) in **Diploma documents**:

- **Diploma tutor register**

- **Guide to fees** for details of additional tutorial fees

- **Guide to accreditation criteria**

Technical skills training

Alongside your design skills you'll need to develop appropriate **technical skills**. These will often be dictated by the designs that you're implementing, and may be either specific or wide ranging. Subjects might include building, animal husbandry, business studies, computer technology, cookery, art, eco-design, organic gardening, forest gardening, languages, personal development and many more.

The diploma is based on self-directed learning, so it's up to you to identify and seek out or organise any taught or practical training that you need, in order to develop your technical skills. This training can be formal or informal. You can attend courses or workshops specifically about permaculture or about anything else that's relevant to your design work, as long as it helps you progress along your learning pathway.

Types of training

Technical skills training comes in many forms, including:

- advanced permaculture design courses
- independent courses and/or tutorials on specific subject areas
- adult learning qualifications or courses at local colleges
- workshops and talks at convergences, conferences, festivals, gatherings, camps or other events
 >> see 4: **Sources of support**, p. 29
- skill-sharing days
- time spent with an expert in their field
- formal or informal apprenticeships
- research via books or the internet

NOTE TO SELF



Keep a record of any technical skills training that you do.

Whether it's informal and relatively spontaneous or a planned and formal qualification, it can be included in the review of relevant activities within your portfolio.

SECTION RECAP

DIFFERENT ROUTES

By the end of this section, you should know or understand:

- the need for **self-directed learning**, whichever diploma route you've chosen
- how your choice of route will shape your diploma journey – **what's included in your chosen route**, and what can be added as extra
- the **key elements of your diploma route** (e.g. personal tutor, learning agreement, induction event, personal tutorials, design support tutorials)
- the importance of **good preparation and communication** in getting the most out of your chosen route
- **where to find additional help** when you need it, including how to access extra tutorial support
- the importance of **technical skills training** and your role in seeking it out

2 Your learning pathway

Designing your diploma journey

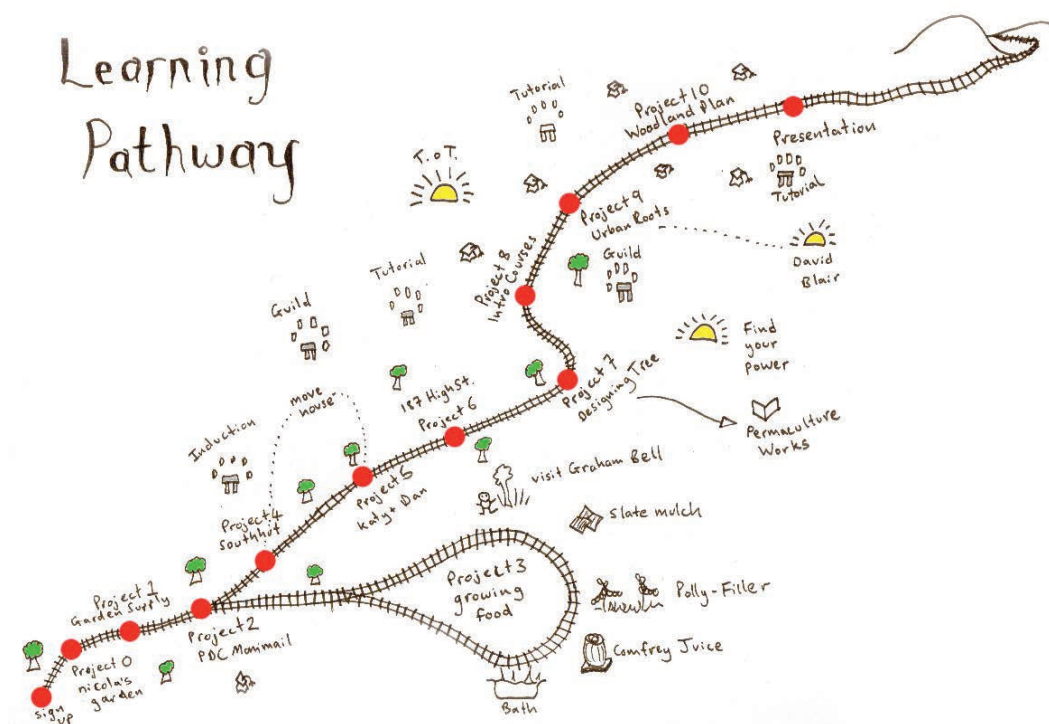
IN THIS SECTION

- ▶ **What is a learning pathway?** A plan for your diploma journey

p. 20

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

Lao Tzu



James has presented his learning pathway as a train journey, with projects as stops along the way.

What is a learning pathway?

IN A NUTSHELL

An action plan that sets out projects, activities and goals along a timeline.



NOTE TO SELF



It's important to **review, adjust and develop your learning pathway** throughout your diploma journey. So keep copies of your pathway from each stage of its development, to help you reflect on the process of change. You may wish to design a maintenance plan which includes how and when you will review and update your learning pathway design as you progress.

Your learning pathway will provide a focus for design work and guide you through your diploma journey. It's not compulsory, but it is highly recommended, and for many apprentices, it's the first design you'll do. Your pathway will inevitably evolve and change along the way, but now is a good time to make an initial plan. This will map out the shape of your intended journey and help prepare you for the first few months of your diploma.

Designing a learning pathway prompts you to:

- be a more conscious designer of your learning
- prepare for the different stages of the action learning cycle
 - >> see 3: **Action learning**, p. 23
- be aware of your available resources and sources of support
 - >> see 4: **Sources of support**, p. 29
- set goals for what you want to learn and do

What to include

Each apprentice's learning pathway will be unique, and how much detail yours should contain will depend on your personal circumstances including your interests, needs and experience. If you're relatively new to permaculture design, then you are likely to have a more general plan than if you're already an experienced designer. And if you're somewhere in the middle, then your pathway too should reflect this.

Less experienced designers

If you're:

- not yet an experienced permaculture designer
- more or less starting out on the design work for your diploma

then your initial learning pathway may be rather sketchy to start with, but you should plan to frequently update it as you progress through the action learning cycle. Your diploma journey will take in a variety of projects, designs and activities – including visits, training (whether structured or self-taught), research, events and peer support.

Content

- Your learning pathway should reflect all of these, and so is likely to include:
- a **timeline** of planned activities. Your initial pathway should cover at least the first six months but will eventually reflect all your diploma journey.
- a **project list**
- **design(s)** for each project
- **technical skills training** – your needs and opportunities
>> see 1: **Different routes**, p. 1
- **research materials** (e.g. books, studies, online resources etc)
- peer support group activities
>> see 4: **Sources of support**, p. 29
- **places or projects** to visit (e.g. LAND centres)
- **events** (e.g. national and regional diploma gatherings)
>> see 4: **Sources of Support** p. 29
- **goals** for key dates (e.g. completing individual designs, having your portfolio ready for interim assessment and finishing your diploma overall)

HOT TIP



Your learning pathway can count as **one of your ten portfolio designs** if you can demonstrate how you've used permaculture thinking in designing it.

So keep a record throughout your diploma of how you've used the design process to create, implement and review your learning pathway.

HOT TIP

How to 'frame' and present your learning pathway is very much up to you. It's a great **opportunity to express your individuality** in the way that you set out your plans and priorities.

Past apprentices have done this in a variety of ways (e.g. as a train journey, a flowing river and many more).

Or you can stick with spreadsheets or project plans!

More experienced designers 

If you're close to having enough designs for your diploma portfolio then your learning pathway may not need the same level of detail and is likely to have fewer revisions.

Content

Your pathway can focus on assembling your portfolio and going through the assessment process, so it's likely to include:

- a **timeline** of planned activities, covering the whole of your diploma
- **time allocated to prepare and adjust** your portfolio before and after assessments
- **goals for key dates** (e.g. interim and final portfolio assessments, presentation event)

>> see 6: **Assessment**, p. 53

- **plans for your presentation event**

>> see 7: **Your presentation event**, p. 66

You may also include the following to demonstrate how you have learned and progressed during the diploma:

- **technical skills training** undertaken
- **research materials** used
- **peer support group** activities
- **places or projects** visited (e.g. LAND centres)
- **events** (e.g. national and regional **diploma gatherings**)

FIND OUT MORE

► Go to the diploma section of the website (permaculture.org.uk/diploma/) for **examples of completed learning pathways**

SECTION RECAP

YOUR LEARNING PATHWAY

By the end of this section, you should know or understand:

- what a learning pathway is and how it can help in mapping out your diploma journey
- what you'll need to include in yours
- the flexibility you have in choosing how to present it

3 Action learning

Learning through doing

IN THIS SECTION

- ▶ **What is action learning?** A reflective learning process and a key design tool p. 24
- ▶ **Action learning and your diploma** How to use action learning as you design p. 25

“Planning and design processes (like life in general) often involve incremental adjustment in response to experience.”

David Holmgren



Sometimes action learning will push you out of your comfort zone – this design web session was certainly active!

What is action learning?

IN A NUTSHELL

A four-stage, cyclical learning process that should be a key tool in your diploma work.



Action learning is a **cycle of action and reflection** pioneered by Donald A. Schön in *The Reflective Practitioner*. It is a key tool in permaculture design. You can picture action learning as a circle with you, the doer, at the centre. Each stage in the process leads into the next, creating a continuous loop that feeds back into itself.

Action learning is what happens when we **learn actively through doing**, rather than passively through traditional instruction. David Holmgren's first principle of permaculture then reminds us to '**observe and interact**', so that as well as doing we should reflect on what's being done, in order for the cycle of learning to continue.

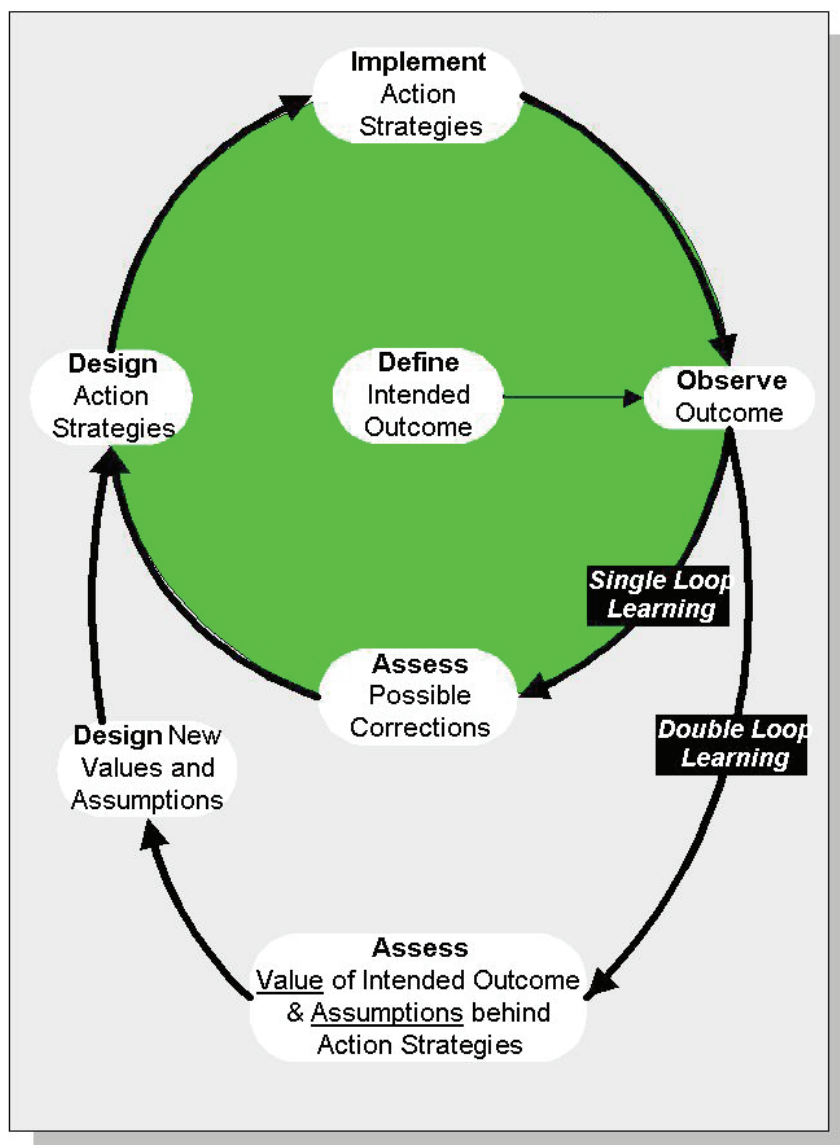
The four stages

1. **Planning** E.g. thinking about your needs and challenges, and the design and practical opportunities these could give you to learn more about permaculture.
2. **Doing** E.g. making changes to your lifestyle and carrying out practical project work.
3. **Observing** E.g. noting systematically the effects of your own actions and those taken by others as a result of your designs.
4. **Reflecting** E.g. thinking about how your observations add to your understanding of permaculture theory.

... and then, most importantly, *back* to planning, doing, observing and reflecting once again.

The essence of action learning is that it's a continuous cycle. If any stage is missing, the process – and the learning – is incomplete. For example, if all we do is doing and we never stop to reflect on what hasn't worked well, we keep repeating the same mistakes. Similarly, if we only ever observe and reflect, we waste opportunities through inaction.

Single and Double Loop Learning



The action learning cycle is a continuous, iterative process. Double-loop thinking is a key skill for reflective practitioners.

Action learning and your diploma

We encourage and expect you to **use the action learning cycle** throughout your diploma journey. Below is how the four key stages might work in practice.

Planning

- Choose your projects, starting with your **learning pathway**
 >> see 2: **Your Learning pathway**, p. 19
- Try to identify **projects that will help you learn** and reinforce your motivation
- **'Start at the back door'** (Bill Mollison's challenge) as you consider changes for a more sustainable lifestyle
- Talk to other people to identify **design ideas that will benefit your community**

Doing

- **Carry out the design process** (survey, analyse, design, implement and maintain), as described in your PDC
- **Record the design process** for your portfolio – this is vitally important
- Think how you'll **monitor the progress** of each project – build this into the survey and design stages
- **Implement each design** as fully as possible, though some will naturally outlive your diploma journey

Observing

- Observe, monitor and evaluate: ask yourself **'did it work?'** / 'is it working?', as measured against your original aims
- Consider keeping **systematic records** for long-term projects (e.g. weather records, yields, fixed-point photographic records, energy use, worm count)

NOTE TO SELF



Recorded observations add great value to both your design work and permaculture research generally.

They provide an evidence base that can be used to assess how well the methods used are working, which in turn helps us to improve our practice.

Reflecting

- **Ask critical questions**, based on your observations, about any aspect of your design or practical work or about the whole learning process. For example:
 - What is going well?
 - What has been challenging?
 - What are your long-term visions and goals?
 - What is your next achievable step?
- Think about **how the design process went**, and how to apply what you've learned to your next project or design
- Ask yourself **what else you may need to learn**:
 - More theory (or revised from your PDC)?
 - New skills?
 - Further aspects of design?
- **Revisit and update** your learning pathway
- **Use your peer support group** to help you reflect

>> see 4: **Sources of support**, p. 29

One diploma journey: an example

As an apprentice you'll take this material and make it your own, perhaps by creating a template that helps make action learning work for you. Diploma apprentice Michaela did just this, and came up with these useful self-evaluation questions for reflection:

1. What is the project and what steps have you taken/how has it gone?
2. What particular skills have you found useful, and are there others you'd like to include in your next project?
3. What challenges have you had and how did you overcome them (if you did)?
4. Looking back over your project, what would you like to have done differently?
5. What areas could have done with improvement?
6. What aspect(s) of the project are you particularly pleased with?
7. What did you learn?
8. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being best), how do you feel you fared?

HOT TIP

Consider keeping a **reflective journal** over the course of your diploma journey.

Not only will this help you keep better track of your learning and progress, but it will be a valuable tool as you prepare for tutorials.

Your journal doesn't have to be in writing – you could keep an audio/video diary – include diagrams, mind-maps, or artwork – publish it as a blog. Be as creative as you like!

SECTION RECAP

YOUR LEARNING PATHWAY

By the end of this section, you should know or understand:

- what **action learning** is, including the four stages and their iterative cycle
- the value of action learning in permaculture design and why it's an **important learning tool for your diploma**
- how you might **adapt action learning principles** to your own way of working

4 Sources of support

Finding and creating your own support

IN THIS SECTION

- ▶ **Our office** Getting support from the Permaculture Association p. 30
- ▶ **The website** Making use of online resources and facilities p. 31
- ▶ **Peer support** Finding and collaborating with your peers p. 32
- ▶ **The wider network** Connecting with the permaculture community p. 34

“Just join with one or two friends to make your way in the confusion. Others will follow and learn.”

Bill Mollison



Developing your local networks and finding other apprentices who share your interests will enhance your diploma journey.

It's important that you put together the support you need on your diploma journey to help you stay on track. This is true whichever route you're on – the emphasis is on **self-directed learning**, even on the supported routes. On the other hand, even on the independent route, you're not on your own. There are **many sources of support** available, so we encourage you to actively seek them out.

Our office

IN A NUTSHELL

Our committed team of staff and volunteers, based at the Permaculture Association office in Leeds, West Yorkshire.



As a diploma apprentice and Association member, you're welcome to contact our friendly and knowledgeable office staff and volunteers with any queries that your tutor can't answer.

>> see **Contact us**, p. 89

NOTE TO SELF



You need to be a **Permaculture Association member** throughout your diploma, so please don't forget to pay your annual membership fee.

We'll remind you when it's time to renew.

Our support might include:

- advice and assistance with financial and practical arrangements
- signposting to other useful organisations and networks
- help with finding technical skills training and resources

>> see 1: **Different routes**, p. 1

- information on attending regional and national events
- help with applications to the LAND network

The website

IN A NUTSHELL

www.permaculture.org.uk - a key online resource, for permaculture in general and the diploma in particular.



The Permaculture Association website is a **key source of information and support** and well worth exploring. It can help expand your knowledge of permaculture and keep you in touch and up to date with the network.

Useful features include:

- the knowledge base
- news and events
- courses and other training opportunities
- projects and working groups
- jobs and volunteering
- blogs and forums
- a link to the Association Facebook page

and many more.

Diploma section

There's also a dedicated **diploma section** on the website. This is *your* area of the website, and the best place to go for up-to-date information, inspiration and support on your diploma journey.

Useful features include:

- the **diploma tutor register** – for finding different tutors and assessors to work with
- details of **diploma gatherings, training and other events**
- links to **online examples** of portfolios and designs
- downloadable forms, templates and other **key documents**
- a link to the **diploma Facebook page** – set up by apprentices, for apprentices

>> see **Peer support**, p. 32

HOT TIP



Keep an eye on the diploma section of the website: it's a work in progress and evolving all the time, with a number of useful features in the pipeline. So it's a good idea to get familiar with what's there already, look out for further developments and, if in doubt, try there first.

We'll keep you posted as new features come online.

NOTE TO SELF

Make use of your personal profile and diploma page – to upload details of events, courses and other opportunities, as well as information about yourself and your design work.

Personal profile

All members of the Association are entitled to have an online personal profile on the website. If you're already a member you should have a login for this, and may have entered some information about yourself.

When you register on the diploma, you're also then entitled to a diploma page: an additional page on your personal profile, specifically to give more information about your diploma activities.

Peer support**IN A NUTSHELL**

How to find and develop peer support to help you on your diploma journey.

**HOT TIP**

Your diploma page is a **great way to network with other diploma apprentices** through the website, and to tell the rest of the membership or the general public about your diploma journey.

It can be a real challenge to stay focused on your diploma, since with self-directed learning you have to rely on your own resources to keep yourself on track. Working with committed peers is a very good way of getting support with your diploma. You don't have to be part of a **peer support group**, but most apprentices find it helpful, and we'd certainly recommend that you try it.

First find your peers

Your peers might include:

- other diploma apprentices – especially those who share your personal tutor and/or are local to you
- other graduates from your Permaculture Design Course (PDC)
- graduates of other PDCs in your local area
- other members of the Permaculture Association
- like-minded others who might work with you jointly on a project

In practice, peer support group members are almost always fellow diploma apprentices, but it's valuable to make connections with other peers too.

Some good ways of finding and making contact with peers:

- Talk to your tutor about other local apprentices they could put you in touch with
- Ask the office to provide a list of members in your local area
- Make the most of any group sessions you attend (e.g. particularly your induction event), by exchanging contact details with other apprentices
- Look at other apprentices' online diploma pages within their personal profiles

Peer support groups

One way of working with other diploma apprentices is to form a peer support group. These groups organise themselves in many different ways, including those below.

Regular groups

It's up to you and your peers to decide on the nature and purpose of your group, depending on what you all want from it and what you find what works best for you. Arrangements can be as formal or as flexible as you like, but past apprentices have found it useful to:

- meet on a regular basis to keep up the momentum – maybe once a month or every six weeks
- have three or four members
- plan the group's activities around the needs of individual members
- share time to review each other's work – with either one person presenting their work for feedback or the time divided equally between everyone
- review how the group is going after an agreed period (e.g. six months)

Action learning & design support

Peer support groups are all different, but the learning focus will generally be on one or other of these, or a combination of the two:

- **Action learning** – reflecting on the learning process, making use of the action learning cycle and perhaps the four questions

>> see 3: **Action learning**, p. 23

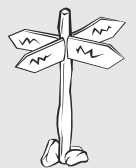
HOT TIP



An active and enthusiastic **Facebook group** has been set up by diploma apprentices

Joining this can be another good way to meet like-minded people, ask questions and form peer support groups around particular areas of need or interest.

FIND OUT MORE



► Go to the **diploma Facebook page** (facebook.com/groups/305674732796762) or search for 'Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design', and ask to join the group

HOT TIP

It's a good idea to **plot the activities of your peer support group** on your learning pathway.

- **Design support** – concentrating on design work and suggestions for development

Informal groups

Your group may prefer to keep the arrangements informal (e.g. 'meet and share'). This might involve meeting regularly or less so, sharing some food and having time to discuss your diploma with others, often with an opportunity for one of you to present your work for comment.

Remote or dispersed groups

These groups allow members who live far away from each other to share support and ideas, often around a specific area of interest. Members may then take the opportunity to meet in person at national and regional diploma gatherings.

HOT TIP

There are **many ways to communicate** within these sorts of groups – e.g. online chat rooms and forums, social networking sites, email groups, phone and tele/ videoconference (e.g. Skype, Flashmeeting).

The wider network

IN A NUTSHELL

Opportunities to interact with the wider permaculture community.



Members, networks & projects

There's an **active network of Association members** throughout the country, including many who are willing, able and qualified to help you on your diploma journey. In some areas, active permaculture groups form a local group or network. Some of these projects are part of the LAND network of learning and demonstration centres.

Events

National diploma gatherings

The annual gathering for apprentices and diploma holders is a multi-faceted event that can support you in your diploma work. It's an optional extra for all apprentices and diploma holders. Diploma gatherings provide rich and varied opportunities to:

- attend advanced level master classes, workshops and talks given by tutors with a specific expertise
- book individual or group tutorials with a wide range of tutors (which may be extra or included within your diploma fee)
- take refresher sessions on PDC subjects
- share skills with other apprentices and diploma holders
- meet up with peer support group members
- practise or hold your presentation event
- network and socialise

The cost of gatherings is not included in your diploma fee, but we work hard to keep these events as affordable as possible. You may well save on travel costs by meeting with a tutor or peer group members who live a long way away. And we send out dates, information and booking forms well before the event, so that you can book in advance and pay by instalments to spread the cost.

HOT TIP



Look on the website to find members, local groups and LAND projects, or contact the office for a list of members in your area.

FIND OUT MORE



► Go to the website (permaculture.org.uk/people-projects-places) for more details of **LAND projects and demonstration centres**

HOT TIP

There may be **useful conferences or other events** in your local area, or on a subject of particular interest to you, so it's worth keeping up to date with news and events from relevant organisations and communities.

Regional diploma gatherings

We're keen to support tutors and apprentices to host their own regional diploma gatherings, so get in touch if you're interested in doing this. You might decide to get together with the other apprentices working under your personal tutor, or to look at the wider network in your local area. This happens more easily in regions with high levels of engagement and capacity – which we hope will soon be every region!

We'll email apprentices and tutors with details of any regional gatherings coming up – as long as we know about them. So if you're organising an event independently, please tell us. We can also offer support to regions to run events, and will post details on the website.

Permaculture convergences

The Association runs a national permaculture convergence every two years. This is another opportunity to network more widely, meet up with peers and attend workshops. We'll let you know about the next convergence and any other one-off national events.

SECTION RECAP

SOURCES OF SUPPORT

By the end of this section, you should know or understand:

- the **importance of a good support system** on your self-directed diploma journey –both people and resources
- the support available from **the Association, its staff and volunteers**
- some of the **online resources** available to you, including the **diploma section of the website**
- how to build up a **peer support group** and find the best way of working together
- how to **connect with the wider network**, including through **national and regional events**

5 Your portfolio

Preparing and presenting your design work

IN THIS SECTION

- ▶ **Why a portfolio?** The purpose and benefits of your portfolio p. 38
- ▶ **In your portfolio** The ten designs and accompanying sections p. 38
- ▶ **Practical advice** Additional guidance on 'what' and 'how much' p. 47
- ▶ **Progression in learning** Academic levels and your learning progress p. 51

“When our design is a transparent process we are able to engage others. It saves us time, energy and mistakes.”

Looby Macnamara



A portfolio needs to be clearly laid out, making it easy for people to understand your work.

Why a portfolio?

IN A NUTSHELL

The purpose of your portfolio within the diploma and the further opportunities it can bring.



Your diploma portfolio represents an opportunity to build up a **substantial and wide-ranging body of design work**. It will contain detailed material on ten designs, as well as **reflections** on your learning and progression, **self-assessment** against the accreditation criteria and a **profile** of yourself as a permaculture designer.

The immediate purpose of your portfolio is to be a way of presenting your diploma work for assessment. But there will also be benefits that go beyond the diploma itself – both for the wider permaculture community and for your future as a designer. The design examples in your portfolio will be a resource:

- to use in courses, presentations and talks
- to show others – including potential clients or employers
- to refer to in future projects – a reminder of how you tackled previous challenges

In your portfolio

IN A NUTSHELL

The five components of your portfolio, and advice on how to assemble them.



Throughout your portfolio it's important to demonstrate how you've used the permaculture design process, referring to the **ethics and principles** of permaculture.

Your portfolio should include **ten designs** – the heart of your portfolio - clearly labelled and easily navigable, and a piece of reflective writing, video journal, or other media that describes what you have learnt through the development of your ten designs.

We recommend that the following items are also included in your portfolio:

- A **review of relevant activities** – a short reflective summary of your diploma journey
- A **Self-assessment summary** – your view of how your designs fulfil the accreditation criteria
- A **permaculture designer's profile** – a short profile of yourself and your design work
- **Supporting evidence** – an appendix of additional material relevant to your work

But don't include every piece of paper you've ever drawn on, nor every photo you've taken! Assembling your portfolio is about being selective, bringing together the best and most relevant evidence to 'make your case': how does your design work meet the accreditation criteria? Don't leave your assessors stranded in a sea of paper, or they won't have time to assess your work properly.

Ten designs

Your designs form the vast bulk of your portfolio – the other components are all intended to be fairly brief. Doing and writing up this number of designs should allow you to develop the mastery that comes from repeated practice, as well as to continually reflect on your learning.

Purpose

- To show the **range and quality of your design work** in a variety of contexts
- To demonstrate your experience of **using and learning from the design cycle**

What to include

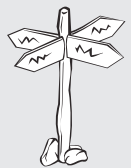
For each design, you'll need to pull together the documentation of your design process in a coherent and accessible way. This is what we often call a design write-up – effectively a design report. You'll also need to identify any related material that needs to go in your supporting evidence.

HOT TIP



Permaculture design is not impersonal work. Let your **individual curiosity and passion** shine through – we want to know why you've chosen a particular project and why it excites you. And we're just as interested in the disappointments as the highlights, so don't be afraid to reflect on both.

FIND OUT MORE



► See the **Guide to accreditation criteria** – downloadable from the website (permaculture.org.uk/diploma/) in **Diploma documents**

HOT TIP

An easy way to go about this is to **use an individual design assessment form** – the same form your assessors use to write their reports.

Introduction

- Sum up your design with text and an illustration or photo

The design

- Use your chosen design framework (e.g. S-A-D-I-M) for this design to present your design in a clearly labelled structure
- Compile whatever is relevant – your surveys, base maps, drawings, costings etc –including full technical details (e.g. on a base map: titles, labels, scales, north)
- Include your design evaluation (e.g. client feedback, monitoring data)

Reflective summary

- Explain what you learned about the design process itself
- Reflect on your overall learning process

Self-assessment

- Show how your design work meets some or all of the accreditation criteria – *your* version of the individual design assessment report to be written by your assessor(s)

FIND OUT MORE

► See **Diploma forms & templates** for the assessment forms – downloadable from the website (permaculture.org.uk/diploma/) in **Diploma documents**

Key distinctions: Projects & designs

Projects and designs are the core of your diploma work, so it's important to understand the distinction we make.

Projects

A **project**:

- sets out to achieve a particular goal
- has a start and a finish
- may be large or small
- may be carried out by an individual or by one or more teams

It may consist of one or more designs.

Designs

A **design** is essentially a plan that sets out:

- what you want to happen
- how and where different elements will go
- when things will happen
- how the different elements relate to each other

Designs can be extremely varied – they may be:

- land-based or non-land-based
- conceptual (e.g. your life journey, your learning pathway, how you spend your time)
- organisational (e.g. the structure of an organisation that you work with or for)

Designs within projects

Within any one project, there can be many individual design opportunities. This is especially clear if we look at major projects but it can also apply to smaller ones. An example of a large project, extending throughout your diploma and almost certainly beyond it, would be a smallholding or your whole house and garden. Examples of designs within it might be a waste water system, forest garden or financial strategy.

HOT TIPS



- It is a useful process to **recognise more of what you do as designing**, and to broaden your notion of what *can* be designed. This can help deepen your understanding of the design process, as well as expanding your design repertoire.
- If you're working on one major project, it's especially important to understand how you can **use the project to generate a whole series of designs**. Otherwise you might struggle to put together a portfolio with ten designs.

HOT TIP

If you designed a learning pathway for your diploma journey, and have regularly reviewed, adjusted and developed it along the way, you'll have effectively fulfilled this portfolio requirement. So you can **refer to your learning pathway design instead**.

>> see 2: **Your learning pathway**, p. 19

FIND OUT MORE

► See the **Guide to accreditation criteria** – downloadable from the website (permaculture.org.uk/diploma/) in **Diploma documents**

Review of relevant activities

IN A NUTSHELL

A short review or reflective summary of your diploma work, written at the end of your journey, looking back.

**Purpose**

- To **review and reflect** on your learning and progress while on the diploma
- To provide your assessors with the '**edited highlights**' of your diploma journey

What to include

This review is to encourage you to look back over your whole diploma journey, pick out significant moments and experiences, and write your own narrative around them.

Introduction

- Outline your starting points, key activities and learning points
- State which area(s) of activity (as set out in accreditation Criterion 5 – see below) you've focused on in your design work
- Describe where you are now, referring to your learning pathway, if available

Main content

- Summarise your main learning activities, highlighting key milestones from your more detailed log of technical skills training and other activities included in your supporting evidence
- Reflect on what you've learned over the course of your apprenticeship, referencing the design work in your portfolio and any other significant activities that are relevant to your progress (e.g. work experience, training, attending events)

Conclusion

- Summarise the main points of your review
- Outline briefly your next steps

Key distinctions: Evaluation & reflection

Again, it's important to understand the distinction between these two key aspects of the design process.

Evaluation

Evaluation is an important part of any design process and should ideally be planned right from the beginning. Your evaluation for each design should answer the questions:

- How successful has the project been?
- How far has the design worked and achieved its aims?

Reflection

Reflection is another layer of evaluation. It involves your personal reflections on your learning process, including reflection on the design process and techniques that you've used. It should answer the questions:

- What have I learned?
- How can I apply this learning?

NOTE TO SELF



Make sure you **distinguish clearly between evaluation and reflection** in your portfolio, to demonstrate your understanding of both.

Self-assessment summary

IN A NUTSHELL

Your own assessment of how your portfolio meets the accreditation criteria.



Purpose

- To **see for yourself** how well you meet the accreditation criteria, and to identify any gaps
- To **show your assessors** how well you think you meet the criteria

What to include

Show how your portfolio as a whole meets the accreditation criteria. Like the self-assessment you do as part of each design write-up, this self-assessment summary parallels the summary assessment report of your assessors. You'll need to pull together your individual design self-assessments in summary form.

FIND OUT MORE



► See the following documents – downloadable from the website (permaculture.org.uk/diploma) in **Diploma documents:**

- **Guide to accreditation criteria**
- **Diploma forms & templates** for the assessment forms.

HOT TIP



An easy way to present this is to **use a summary assessment form** – the form your assessors use to write their report.

Permaculture designer's profile

IN A NUTSHELL

A short profile (or CV) presenting yourself and your experience as a permaculture designer.



Purpose

- To **promote yourself** and what you do as a permaculture designer to whomever you choose – including potential clients and employers
- To **help us build up a comprehensive list** (the diploma holder register) of practising permaculture designers to be able to recommend to enquirers

What to include

Your one-page profile should include:

- your contact details (including business name, if you have one)
- relevant courses and qualifications
- relevant work experience (paid or voluntary)
- mention of any testimonials relating to your design work, if they're available
- anything else you'd like to include, to promote your permaculture design work

NOTE TO SELF

Feel free to be creative, but make sure that it can be **easily read and understood**.



HOT TIP



Alternatively, you can **complete the diploma holder page of your online personal profile** on the Association website to meet this portfolio requirement.

This doesn't become live until you've accredited, but you can contact the office and ask them to set one up in advance for you to complete offline. Then you can print this off for your portfolio.

Supporting evidence

NOTE TO SELF



Make sure you **reference all your supporting evidence** clearly from within your design write-ups, so that your assessors can find it easily and understand how it relates to your portfolio.

IN A NUTSHELL

Relevant additional material that supports your learning and design work.



Purpose

- To allow you to include a range of **material that's relevant to your portfolio** but is either too long or not obviously covered by another section

What to include

It's up to you to select the supporting evidence you think is relevant, but in general it should include:

- your learning journal
- a log of technical skills training (e.g. workshops, courses, technical tutorials), events, work experience etc
- any relevant more detailed notes from such training
- a log of reading and information sources that you've found useful (e.g. books, journals, websites)
- any 'workings out' behind each design that you want to reference but not include in the actual design write-up

NOTE TO SELF

If any of your designs are a much larger piece of work than the recommended word count allows for, you can include these **longer documents in your supporting evidence**.



>> see **Word count**, p. 49

But you'll need to write a shorter summary for the main design section of your portfolio, with clear referencing as above for your assessors.

Practical advice

IN A NUTSHELL

Additional advice and some answers to common questions about what and how much to put in your portfolio, and how best to present it.



How much is enough?

There's no easy answer to this. Your portfolio will be unique and a reflection of your life and chosen diploma journey. We're looking for **balance and variety** – a range of designs that are diverse in content and scale, and that show your ability to work in different ways appropriate to the context. But it's a question of **quality as well as quantity**, and equally important is your **clarity of process** in design work.

There's some general guidance below on a range of questions about what should go into your portfolio and how much work might be involved. Your personal tutor (supported routes 🗨️ 🗨️+) will also be able to advise you.

Scale

Your portfolio should include a **range of different-scale designs** (e.g. from a small area of your house or garden to an overall design for a smallholding or farm). There's no fixed number of designs at each scale that you need to include. But as a rough guide, your portfolio could include two small, two large and six medium-sized designs (in terms of work and input).

So your projects should be a mixture of small and short-term (more than a 'back-of-envelope' design but something that can be achieved in a day or two) or large and long-term (involving a considerable amount of design work and a lot of supporting evidence). But either way, it's important to show how you've used a conscious design process and incorporated the ethics and principles of permaculture.

Implementation

Designs do not all have to have been implemented, but it is recommended that the majority of them are, so that observations, evaluations and reflections on the designs have been made and learnt from. In most cases you will set out with the intention of implementing the design, but we recognise that circumstances change and this is not always possible.

It is important to demonstrate your ability to **complete the design cycle**. Across your portfolio, it's important to show that you've been significantly involved in implementing at least some of your designs.

Some designs may only be implemented to an early stage, where you can carry out a useful initial review and evaluation. Others may be very long-term and may ultimately involve several iterations of the design cycle, extending beyond the course of your diploma. For these designs you should show **at least one full cycle of the design process**.

In general you should choose projects that will definitely be implemented, but there may be some instances where implementation is impossible. Or you may not yet have had the opportunity to implement a certain design. If so, you should include plans for implementation and evaluation, to show that you've considered how you'd do this.

If you're designing for someone else, you may not be the person who actually carries out the planned work. In this case, you should keep closely in touch with the implementation process and make sure that you get detailed feedback on it.

Duration & work hours

In practice many people take longer than the minimum two years to accredit. How long you take will obviously depend on your intentions for your diploma journey, and how much time you want to put into it on a regular basis. But it may be useful to have some rough guidelines on how this might work.

From our experience of working with apprentices, we estimate that you should be able to complete your diploma in two years if you spend roughly 6 hours a week consciously doing design work. (Or, on a sliding scale, three years if you spend roughly 4 hours a week, or six years if you spend roughly 2 hours a week, and so on.)

These estimates don't include time for implementation – you may well spend much longer than this on actually carrying out your projects. Implementation is obviously an integral part of design work, but the point of the diploma is to invest *additional* time in the more reflective aspects of the design process. This is why our estimate focuses on time spent consciously and solely working on these parts of the process.

Word count

We have often been asked to give a recommended word count for designs and the portfolio overall. The following is given as guidance and is not intended to be prescriptive.

Documentation for a design. There is no maximum word count for the design itself, or the documentation accompanying a design. The appropriate word count will vary enormously depending on the project.

- If you have a lot of material for each design it can be time consuming to assess it, so please try to structure the way you present it so that it is straightforward to navigate and understand.
- We encourage a diversity of approaches. Mindmaps, graphics, maps and plans, spreadsheets, videos and so on, are all valid and the word count will need to be judged as appropriate to the way in which the portfolio is presented.

There are a number of recommended but optional portfolio elements and we suggest as a guide:

- For a design summary: around 2000 words per major design including 400-500 words of reflection.
- For a review of relevant activities: around 2000 words.
- For an overall summary sheet showing how you meet the accreditation criteria: 2000 words.

In addition, your portfolio will of course include drawings, diagrams and illustrations. Any supporting evidence is also excluded from the above word count.

NOTE TO SELF



It's worth investing serious **time and thought in how to present your portfolio**, since it can be a real challenge to organise such diverse material.

Think about what you can do to ensure that your assessors can find specific content quickly and easily. This is especially important for discussing it over the phone or by tele/ videoconference when you're not present.

How to present your portfolio

The most important thing about how you present the work in your portfolio is that your assessors must be able to **find their way round it easily**. They have a standard and limited amount of time to assess your work, so it's **vital** that your finished portfolio is well organised, clearly navigable and rigorously referenced.

Presentation & layout

Here are some basic guidelines for presenting your portfolio well:

- **clear sections**, each labelled and numbered
- **clear headings** and subheadings within each section and each design
- **page numbers** throughout
- **captions** to describe all illustrations, photos and multi-media clips
- **clear references** to any additional documents or multi-media content (whether as part of your supporting evidence, or included elsewhere)

NOTE TO SELF



Try to convert as much of your portfolio as possible into **electronic format** (including by scanning paper-based content). This makes it easier to send your work for assessment (and saves you postage). It also means that your work can be shared more widely, increasing the range of resources, examples and evidence available to the network.

Format

You can submit your portfolio in a number of formats, including:

- as an electronic file
- on paper
- as a website (incorporating all documents, plans and images)
- as a multi-media combination of any or all of the above

HOT TIP



The emphasis of your portfolio needn't be on written material – it can include a higher proportion of visuals and a balance of other multi-media (e.g. audio/video evidence). We welcome **creative and non-traditional formats**, as long as you follow the guidelines above.

Progression in learning

IN A NUTSHELL

Your learning process and the expected academic level of your diploma work.



Your portfolio should show the progression of your learning, and your assessors will expect to see this. For example, your earlier designs should include **analysis and reflection on mistakes** you've made or things you'd do differently another time. Similarly, your later designs should demonstrate **how you've applied this learning** – as well as further analysis and reflection on these designs themselves.

Academic level

The diploma isn't yet externally accredited but, to give you an idea of the academic level of work required, we're looking for the equivalent of:

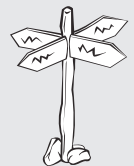
- post A-Level/early undergraduate years
- Levels 4 and 5 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

These are the standards used by your assessors, but if you follow your tutor's advice and the recommendations in this guide, you can be confident that you're working at the right level.

In practice, we often see diploma work of a very high standard, and at a higher academic level than Levels 4 and 5. For example, if each design in your portfolio demonstrates new knowledge for the permaculture network, then this may indicate work at Level 7 (i.e. postgraduate level). The diploma offers a structure for you to work at your chosen level, so don't let the above standards hold you back!

Equally, we've set out these guidelines to help you feel confident that you can complete your diploma in a 2–4 year time-frame. We want you to be able to finish and gain accreditation so we can continue to build up our register of diploma holders. These are the people we can most easily recommend to anyone who approaches us looking for an experienced designer to work with.

FIND OUT MORE



► See the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) on the Ofqual website (<http://www2.ofqual.gov.uk/downloads/category/157-national-qualifications-framework-nqf>) for details of the Level 4/5 NQF descriptors.

Investing in the network ...

You might be able to do a project for the Association as one of your diploma designs. We usually have a range of projects, events and activities that need ongoing support. Past diploma apprentice volunteers have helped with:

- a continuing professional development (CPD) proposal for professional designers
- an open-source database specification
- aspects of the website
- a new reference library system
- new written materials
- working groups (e.g. on farming, education, Wales, Scotland)
- and many more.

Contact the office if you're interested, to see what projects are currently in the pipeline. We can't guarantee to find one that fits your needs and skills, but we'll do our best to help. Some of the projects may require working in the Leeds office, while others may be done remotely.

Alternatively, think about projects that might benefit your local or regional permaculture network. Opportunities to do this will be as varied as the regions. The office staff can help you identify what is happening in your area.

SECTION RECAP

YOUR PORTFOLIO

By the end of this section, you should know or understand:

- the **purpose and benefits of a portfolio**
- the **five components of a portfolio**, their purpose and what to include in each one
- some **practicalities** (e.g. how much, how long) of how to compile your portfolio
- **how to present your portfolio**, and the importance of making it clearly navigable for assessors and others interested in your work
- the **academic level** expected in your diploma work
- some **key definitions**: project vs design, evaluation vs reflection

6 Assessment

Moving towards accreditation

IN THIS SECTION

- ▶ **Interim portfolio assessment** Early assessment of the first half of your portfolio p. 55
- ▶ **1st final portfolio assessment** Overall assessment of your completed portfolio p. 59
- ▶ **2nd final portfolio assessment** A cross-check on your 1st final assessment p. 63
- ▶ **Ready to proceed** On to your presentation event p. 65

“Have no fear of perfection – you’ll never reach it.”

Salvador Dalí



Portfolio assessment gives you valuable feedback that can inform your future design work, as well as the development of your portfolio.

NOTE TO SELF

Your portfolio has to be able to stand alone at assessment – at the first two stages you'll have only a short time to talk about it, and at the third stage you won't be present.

So make sure that your designs are written up to be **complete and self-explanatory**, and to show clearly how they meet the accreditation criteria.

The diploma assessment process has three stages:

- **Interim portfolio assessment** – by your personal tutor (supported routes 🗨️ 🗨️+) or 1st assessor (independent route 🗨️)
- **1st final portfolio assessment** – also by your personal tutor or 1st assessor
- 2nd final portfolio assessment – by your chosen senior tutor (your 2nd assessor)
- At each stage of assessment, there are three possible outcomes:
 - **Ready** to proceed
 - **Nearly ready** (minor changes required)
 - **Not yet ready** (major changes required)

At the end of the assessment process you'll be ready to proceed to your presentation event. This is the culmination of your diploma journey and an opportunity to share and celebrate your work in front of a chosen peer review group and an invited audience.

>> see 7: **Your presentation event**, p. 66

HOT TIP

It's a very good idea to **duplicate your portfolio** in any case, but especially so if you're sending it by post to either of your assessors.

Interim portfolio assessment

NOTE TO SELF



Some tutors need more notice than others for arranging an assessment, and they may need more than the minimum we recommend. So find out early on how much notice your assessor will need, and make sure you **contact them in plenty of time.**

IN A NUTSHELL

The first stage of assessment: an interim assessment of your portfolio, carried out by your personal tutor (or 1st assessor) when you have five designs written up.

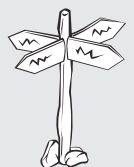


The interim assessment is an opportunity to get formal feedback on your design work when your portfolio is roughly halfway to being complete. It allows you to get some designs 'signed off' as ready to go in your final portfolio.

Arrangements

1. **Ready?** You're expecting to have five designs written up by a certain date, and you feel ready for your interim assessment.
2. **Agree date** You contact your personal tutor (or 1st assessor) at least a month before you'd like your interim assessment and agree a date.
3. **Book with office** You book your interim assessment by downloading the assessment booking form and emailing the completed form to the office, with a copy to your assessor.
4. **Check fee payments** The office checks that your payments are up to date with the tutorials you've had, and confirms to you and your assessor that the interim assessment can go ahead. If not, the office will liaise with you until your account is up to date.

FIND OUT MORE



► See **Diploma forms & templates** for the assessment booking form – downloadable from the website (permaculture.org.uk/diploma) in **Diploma documents**

FIND OUT MORE

► Read 5: **Your portfolio** on p. 36 for details of how to prepare your designs for assessment.

Preparation

Your assessor will contact you in advance with a checklist of what to prepare and an idea of what to expect during the session. They may ask you to send your portfolio to them in advance.

The session

Length 3½ hours

Assessor Your personal tutor (or 1st assessor).

Format One-to-one. Ideally present during the session and face-to-face for the final feedback, but it can all be done by phone or tele/videoconference if need be.

Plan You'll have a short time at the start to orientate your assessor to your work. Then for most of the session the assessor will be reading through your designs and completing the assessment forms. You may need to be on hand to answer questions, so it can be useful to bring something with you to do.

Feedback Your assessor will give you verbal feedback at the end of the session on their decision and recommendations. They'll talk through their individual design and summary assessment reports, including:

- details of any changes/additions required to individual designs
- clear recommendations for anything else they'd like to see included in your final portfolio (e.g. to ensure that your projects cover a good range of size, type and approach)

Outcomes

There are three possible outcomes from your interim assessment, indicating whether or not you can proceed to your 1st final assessment.

Ready to proceed

- At least three designs completely ready, with no changes required
- The other one or two designs well on the way to being ready, with minor changes/additions required

- **Recommendations:** Precise details of any minor changes/additions you should make before proceeding to your 1st final assessment

Nearly ready (minor changes required)

- More than two designs with minor changes/additions required
- **Recommendations:** Precise details of the minor changes/additions you should make, and a 1-hour further assessment session (for an additional fee) before proceeding to your 1st final assessment

Not yet ready (major changes required)

- More than two designs with major changes/additions required
- **Recommendations:** General details of the major changes/additions you should make, and a 2-hour further assessment session (for an additional fee) before proceeding to your 1st final assessment

Further assessment

If your portfolio needs more work, it's not a requirement at the interim assessment stage to resubmit (i.e. to have a formal reassessment). But it's advisable to have a further assessment session if your assessor recommends it.

HOT TIP



Similarly, it's up to you how closely you follow the interim assessment recommendations for changes/additions to your designs – they're also not strictly required at this stage. But obviously your portfolio is more likely to get through the 1st final assessment stage the first time round if you **do as your assessor recommends.**

FIND OUT MORE

- ▶ See the ***Guide to fees*** for details of additional session fees – downloadable from the website (permaculture.org.uk/diploma/) in ***Diploma documents***



Reports

Your assessor will write the following reports from your interim assessment, including their overall decision, and will email them to you soon afterwards:

- An **individual design assessment report** on each of your five designs
- A **summary assessment report** (with a copy sent also to the office)

NOTE TO SELF

You can make provisional arrangements for your presentation event before your final assessments (e.g. deciding on a date, venue and presiding diplomate.



But make sure you **allow plenty of time** between the two final assessments and then before your presentation event, in case you need to resubmit at any stage.

1st final portfolio assessment

NOTE TO SELF



As for the interim assessment, it's important to start making your **final assessment arrangements well in advance**. So check how much notice both assessors will need, and make sure you contact them in plenty of time.

IN A NUTSHELL

The middle stage of assessment: an overall assessment of your portfolio, carried out by your personal tutor (or 1st assessor) when you've got all ten designs written up and the other components of your portfolio assembled.



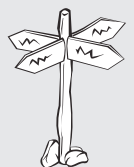
The 1st final portfolio assessment builds on the interim assessment of your work. Your assessor will look at the five designs they haven't yet assessed, and review your first five designs as necessary (depending on whether any changes have been made). If your portfolio meets the accreditation criteria, you'll be ready to proceed to your 2nd final assessment.

>> see **2nd final portfolio assessment**, p. 63

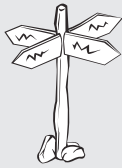
Arrangements

- 1. Ready?** You're expecting to have your whole portfolio prepared by a certain date, and you've had the recommendation to proceed to your 1st final assessment.
- 2. Agree date** You contact your personal tutor (or 1st assessor) at least a month (and ideally two or three months) before you'd like your 1st final assessment and agree a provisional date.
- 3. Confirm 2nd assessor** You choose which senior tutor you'd like to carry out your 2nd final assessment (see the diploma tutor register) and ask them by email to confirm whether they're willing to do it.
- 4. Book with office** You book your 1st final assessment by downloading the assessment booking form and emailing the completed form to the office, with a copy to both your tutor (or 1st assessor) and your agreed 2nd assessor.
- 5. Check fee payments** As at interim assessment, the office checks that your payments are up to date with the tutorials you've had, and confirms to you and your assessor that the 1st final assessment can go ahead. If not, the office will liaise with you until your account is up to date.

FIND OUT MORE



► See the **Diploma tutor register** – downloadable from the website (permaculture.org.uk/diploma/) in **Diploma documents**

FIND OUT MORE

► Read 5: **Your portfolio** on p. 36 for details of how to prepare your designs for assessment.

Preparation

As at interim assessment, your assessor will contact you in advance with a checklist of what to prepare and an idea of what to expect during the session. They may ask you to send your portfolio to them in advance.

The session

Length 4½ hours.

Assessor Your personal tutor (or 1st assessor).

Format One-to-one. Face-to-face for the final feedback and ideally present during the session leading up to it – but the first part of the session can be done by phone or tele/videoconference if need be.

Plan As at interim assessment, you'll have a short time at the start to orientate your assessor to your work. Then for most of the session the assessor will be reading through your designs and completing the assessment forms. You may need to be on hand to answer questions, so it can be useful to bring something with you to do.

Feedback As at interim assessment, your assessor will give you verbal feedback at the end of the session on their decision and recommendations. They'll talk through their individual design and summary assessment reports, including:

- details of any changes/additions required to individual designs
- feedback on your portfolio as a whole and the quality of your work
- recommendations for new areas of learning, skills and development

Outcomes

There are the same three possible outcomes from your 1st final assessment, indicating whether or not you can proceed to your 2nd final assessment.

Ready to proceed

- Your portfolio meets the accreditation criteria, with no changes required

Nearly ready (minor changes required)

- At least one design with minor changes/additions required
- **Requirements:** Precise details of the minor changes/additions you must make before resubmitting your portfolio, and a 1-hour reassessment session (for a resubmission fee) before proceeding to your 2nd final assessment

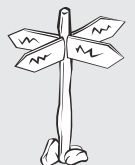
Not yet ready (major changes required)

- At least one design with major changes/additions required
- **Requirements:** General details of the major changes/additions you must make before resubmitting your portfolio, and a 2-hour reassessment session (for a resubmission fee) before proceeding to your 2nd final assessment

Resubmission

You should resubmit as soon as you reasonably can, since it's easier for your assessor while your work is still fresh in their mind. If you take more than 12 months to resubmit, you'll need to repeat the whole 1st final assessment stage.

FIND OUT MORE



► See the ***Guide to fees*** for details of resubmission fees – downloadable from the website (permaculture.org.uk/diploma) in ***Diploma documents***

Reports

Your assessor will write the following reports from your 1st final assessment, including their overall decision, and will email them to you soon afterwards:

- An **individual design assessment report** on each of the five designs not previously assessed
- An **update to the individual design assessment report** from your interim assessment on any of the first five designs adjusted since then
- A **summary assessment report** (with a copy sent also to the office)
- Your tutor (or 1st assessor) will also email your 2nd assessor, with:
- the **full set of reports**, if you're ready to proceed to your 2nd final assessment
- a **progress update**, and then continue to keep them informed, if you're nearly ready or not yet ready to proceed

NOTE TO SELF



You need a recommendation from both final assessors **before you can proceed to your presentation event.**

If you don't get this the first time round, you'll need to resubmit your portfolio until you do.

But because the two final assessments are staggered, it should then be far less likely that you'd have to resubmit at the 2nd final assessment stage.

2nd final portfolio assessment

NOTE TO SELF



This assessment is **based solely on your portfolio** – you won't be there to explain any aspect of your work. So make doubly sure that your designs are written up to be complete and self-explanatory (e.g. following any recommendations from your 1st final assessment), and to show clearly how they meet the accreditation criteria.

IN A NUTSHELL

The last stage of assessment: carried out by your chosen senior tutor (your 2nd assessor) as a cross-check on your 1st final assessment.



The 2nd final assessment is a cross-checking or '**internal moderation' exercise**, where a senior tutor evaluates your personal tutor's (or 1st assessor's) 1st final assessment. You won't be present, and the assessment will follow on automatically once you have a recommendation to proceed.

Arrangements

1. **Ready?** You've had the recommendation to proceed to your 2nd final assessment.
2. **Send reports** Your personal tutor (or 1st assessor) will already have sent your 2nd assessor the full set of reports from your 1st final assessment.
3. **Send portfolio** You send your completed portfolio to the 2nd assessor.

The session

Length 2½ hours.

Assessor Your chosen 2nd assessor – a senior tutor.

Format Without you present.

Plan The assessor will sample your work and evaluate the 1st final assessment carried out by your personal tutor (or 1st assessor).

Feedback The assessor will give verbal feedback on their decision and recommendations to your tutor (or 1st assessor) at the end of the session.

Outcomes

There are, in theory, the same three possible outcomes from your 2nd final assessment, indicating whether or not you can proceed to your presentation event.

Ready to proceed

- Confirmation that your portfolio meets the accreditation criteria

Nearly ready (minor changes required)

- At least one design still with minor changes/additions required
- **Requirements:** Precise details of the minor changes/additions you must make before resubmitting your portfolio, and a 1-hour reassessment session (for a resubmission fee) before proceeding to your presentation event

Not yet ready (major changes required)

This outcome is unlikely at 2nd final assessment. If it did happen, we'd want to investigate how it came about (and if there was no error on your part, you wouldn't be charged for resubmission).

Resubmission

As at 1st final assessment, you should resubmit as soon as you reasonably can, since it's easier for your assessor while your work is still fresh in their mind. If you take more than 12 months to resubmit, you'll need to repeat the whole 1st final assessment stage.

Reports

The 2nd assessor will write the following reports from your 2nd final assessment, including their overall decision, and will email them to you and your personal tutor (or 1st assessor) soon afterwards:

- An **individual design assessment report** on three or more designs
- An **update to the summary assessment report** from your 1st final assessment (with a copy sent also to the office)

FIND OUT MORE

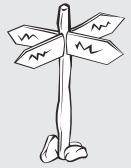


► See the **Guide to fees** for details of resubmission fees – downloadable from the website (permaculture.org.uk/diploma) in **Diploma documents**

Ready to proceed

When you've successfully completed all three stages of the assessment process, the next step is to arrange your **presentation event**.

FIND OUT MORE



► See 7: *Your presentation event* on p. 66 for details

SECTION RECAP

ASSESSMENT

By the end of this section, you should know or understand:

- the **three-stage assessment process** for your portfolio
- the **format of each assessment** and who carries it out
- **how to arrange and prepare** for each assessment
- the **three possible outcomes** of each assessment

7 Your presentation event

Sharing and celebrating your work

IN THIS SECTION

- ▶ **What is a presentation event?** A celebration of your diploma work p. 66
- ▶ **Organising your event** When, where, how and who p. 68
- ▶ **Preparing your presentation** Its content, format and timings p. 71
- ▶ **Accreditation** It's official! p. 74

*“The stream sings it to the river, the river sings it to the sea.
The sea sings it to the boat that carries you and me.”*

Lorre Wyatt

Three proud diploma holders, after holding their presentation events at the national convergence – a great way to share your achievements with the network.



What is a presentation event?

IN A NUTSHELL

A public presentation and celebration of your work as a permaculture designer, marking the end of your diploma journey.



Overview

Your presentation event is an opportunity to present a summary of your diploma work in public. It represents a **celebration of your work and public recognition of your competence** as a permaculture designer. It's also a required part of the accreditation process.

You give a **45-minute presentation** to a selected **peer review group**, led by a **presiding diplomate**, and in front of an invited audience. This is followed by time for questions and answers, and then **feedback** from the peer review group on both your presentation and your design work. At the end of the presentation event, you'll be presented with your **diploma certificate**.

You make all the arrangements for your presentation event. You can choose to hold it as part of a wider permaculture event, or to organise it locally as a stand-alone event.

Aims

The three main aims of the presentation event are to:

- share your work more widely and present highlights from your portfolio
- facilitate a peer review process where your assessors and peers can meet you in person and ask questions
- celebrate your diploma journey and your work as a permaculture designer

NOTE TO SELF



You can **set a provisional date and start making plans** for your presentation event before your final portfolio assessments. But you'll only be able to confirm the date and send out invitations once you've had a recommendation to proceed.

Organising your event

HOT TIP



If you **let us know when you're planning to hold your presentation event**, we'll

publicise it on the website and include it in the newsletter, e-bulletin and diploma e-bulletins.

IN A NUTSHELL

How to plan your presentation event, including when and where to hold it, and who to invite.



When you've successfully completed your 1st and 2nd final portfolio assessments, your assessors will give you a recommendation to proceed to accreditation. You can then set a date and start preparing for your presentation event.

Overview

- 1. Ready?** You decide when and where you'd like to hold your event.
- 2. Agree date & venue** You contact your presiding diplomate in good time and agree with them your provisional date and venue.
- 3. Book with office** You download a presentation event booking form and email your completed form to the office.
- 4. Check fee payments** We check that your fee payments are up to date and confirm to you and your presiding diplomate that you can proceed. If not, we'll liaise with you until your account is up to date.
- 5. Get support** When you can proceed, we'll send you some guidance and offer to help you promote your event.

FIND OUT MORE



► See **Diploma forms & templates** for the presentation event booking form – downloadable from the website (permaculture.org.uk/diploma) in **Diploma documents**

Venue

It's your choice whether to hold your presentation event as part of a wider permaculture event (e.g. a national or regional diploma gathering or a national permaculture convergence), or independently in your local area. There are pros and cons to both.

Being part of a permaculture event

It's often easier to run your presentation event at one of these larger events, where the venue, catering and other event logistics are all taken care of.

Suitable peer review group members will also be available all in one place. Best of all, you can present your design work to a well-informed audience and disseminate your work more widely within the network.

On the other hand, the event may be held some way away from where you live, giving less opportunity for friends, family, clients and colleagues to attend.

You're also free to hold your presentation event as part of another, non-permaculture event if that's what you'd prefer. Many of the same advantages may apply, but again, you'll need to liaise with the event organisers.

Organising your own event

If you prefer to hold your presentation event more locally, this may well have logistical advantages for those you'd like to attend. You'll just need to ensure that you have enough suitable peers locally or who are prepared to travel

You'll need to send out invitations in good time and to consider the following, including any cost implications:

- Venue, date and time
- Logistics (e.g. furniture, parking)
- Equipment (e.g. laptop, projector)
- Refreshments

NOTE TO SELF



If you plan to hold your presentation event at an event run by the Association, make sure you liaise with the office and **let us know well in advance**, so we can include your event in the timetable.

HOT TIP



Check whether there are any **other local apprentices ready to hold their event** at the same time – that way you may be able to share the organising and the costs.

NOTE TO SELF




Talk to your presiding diplomate in good time, and keep them informed of your plans as you go along.

Audience***Presiding diplomate***

The role of your presiding diplomate (usually your **personal tutor** or 1st assessor) is to:

- brief the peer review group on the presentation event process and the accreditation criteria used in assessing your portfolio
- ask questions to help clarify your work and draw out useful evidence
- lead the peer review group in discussing your work and giving feedback
- present you with your signed diploma certificate

Which tutor you should ask to be your presiding diplomate will depend on which route you've followed:

- **Your personal tutor** (supported routes  ) will have supported you throughout your diploma journey, and would usually be your presiding diplomate
- **Your 1st assessor** (independent route ) will have carried out your first two assessments and been your main point of contact

If for any reason they're unable to fulfil the role, you can ask your 2nd assessor. If they too are unavailable, then you can ask any other diploma tutor (see the diploma tutor register).

FIND OUT MORE

► See the **Diploma tutor register** downloadable from the website (permaculture.org.uk/diploma) in **Diploma documents**

Peer review group

You'll need to invite your chosen peer review group members and get confirmation of their attendance. Your tutor will be able to help you identify suitable peers to invite, and the office can give you a list of diploma holders and apprentices in your region. If you're holding your presentation event at a permaculture event, it will be easier to ensure enough group members, and we can help more directly.

The peer review group are there to witness your presentation and give constructive feedback on your work. Their feedback will have a positive and celebratory emphasis, as well as including recommendations for your development as a permaculture designer.

Members

In addition to the presiding diplomate, your peer review group should have **at least three members**, and preferably between four and six. Ideally the group should be made up of diploma holders and apprentices, so that the peer review is carried out by those who are actively involved in permaculture design. Members should include:

- at least one diploma holder (or diploma apprentice, if this isn't possible)
- at least one diploma apprentice (ideally who's familiar with your diploma work – perhaps someone from your peer support group)
- other diploma apprentices (or PDC graduates, if this isn't possible)

Attendance

You should get advance confirmation of attendance from five members of your peer review group. This allows you contingency for two of them to cancel at short notice. If fewer than three members can attend, you should try to find replacements.

On the day of the event, if you have less than the minimum number required, your presiding diplomate can help you decide what to do. If your presiding diplomate has to cancel (e.g. if they're ill) they'll help you find a replacement. If you contact the office, we'll also try to help you in these situations.

>> see **Contact us**, p. 89

Invited audience

You can also invite friends, family, colleagues and clients, as well as other apprentices and PDC graduates.

Preparing your presentation

HOT TIP



Prepare and practise your presentation well in advance,

making sure it runs to time. Try out different presentation formats on your peer support group before the event, and ask for feedback.

HOT TIP



It's a good idea to **make your portfolio available** before the start of your presentation event, so that your audience and peer review group members can look through it.

IN A NUTSHELL

The content, format and timings relating to your presentation.



Content & format

You can start preparing your presentation when you're ready to proceed (or are confident that you're nearly ready to proceed) from your 2nd final portfolio assessment.

>> see 6: **Assessment**, p. 53

The time allowed for your presentation is 1 hour in total:

- 45 minutes for you to present your diploma work
- 15 minutes for questions and answers from the audience

You should mention all ten of your designs in brief, but choose only a few of them to talk about in detail.

The exact format of your presentation is up to you. You could:

- give a talk
- give a slide show, PowerPoint presentation or similar
- give an illustrated tour of a site
- play a pre-recorded video

The main thing is to ensure that your presentation gives a good sense of the design work in your portfolio, and of how it meets the accreditation criteria.

Timings

Introduction

Introductions (led by presiding diplomate)	5 minutes
Clarification of accreditation criteria (if necessary)	5 minutes

Presentation

Your presentation	45 minutes
Q&A session	15 minutes
Break for refreshments and peer review group discussion	45 minutes (between these two)
Feedback from peer review group	
Presentation of your diploma certificate	5 minutes

Total duration

2 hours

Accreditation

At the end of your presentation event your presiding diplomate will present you with your **diploma certificate**, and your diploma journey will be complete.

Afterwards the presiding diplomate will let the office know that you're now a diploma holder, and they'll add you to the online **diploma holder register**.

SECTION RECAP

YOUR PRESENTATION EVENT

By the end of this section, you should know or understand:

- the **purpose of your presentation event**
- **what happens** at the presentation event and what's expected of you
- **who attends** the event and the respective roles of the presiding diplomate and peer review group
- **how to plan and prepare** for your presentation event, including the venue, format, timings and practical arrangements

8 After your diploma

Continuing on your journey

IN THIS SECTION

- ▶ **One journey ends ...** Looking back over your portfolio and learning pathway p. 76
- ▶ **... and another begins** New opportunities as a permaculture designer p. 77

“There is no point at which you can say, ‘Well, I’m successful now. I might as well take a nap.’”

Carrie Fisher



Rob Hopkins (3rd from left) went on to set up the Transition Network, now a worldwide phenomenon

One journey ends ...

You've completed your diploma: warm congratulations from all of us at the Permaculture Association! But after the euphoria and celebration at the end of your diploma journey comes the question: where next?

Your portfolio

It's important to keep learning and developing your skills, and we'd encourage you to keep on developing your design work and to document this through your portfolio. If you go on to work as a diploma, PDC or LAND tutor, your portfolio will be a powerful tool to show students, apprentices and prospective clients.

Your learning pathway

You've been using and developing your action learning skills for at least two years, including the ongoing design and review of your learning pathway. Finishing the diploma is a good time to review what you've achieved so far and what you want to do next. Your diploma projects and design work will have given you a good sense of the work you most enjoy, and where and how you want to develop in the future

... and another begins

From our point of view, diploma holders are a special resource. We know you can produce good design work, persevere, reflect and learn – and we encourage you to stay involved. When we're looking for people to work with or to recommend, diploma holders are our first choice.

New opportunities

Having completed your diploma, you'll be able to:

- lead PDCs (subject to other requirements)
- apply to become a diploma tutor – ask the office if you're interested
- become a LAND Learner design support tutor, once you're registered as a diploma tutor
- work with the Association on a range of other projects

Choosing to transfer your learning, skills and experience to others can be very rewarding, and will help ensure the continuing practice and development of permaculture.

Old friends

Convergences and diploma gatherings are a way of continuing your learning as well as to network with friends and colleagues in permaculture. We encourage you to make the most of these opportunities, and to keep in touch!

SECTION RECAP

AFTER YOUR DIPLOMA

By the end of this section, you should know or understand:

- the range of **options open to you after accreditation**
- how to **continue developing** as a permaculture designer
- how to **stay involved** with the Permaculture Association

9 Diploma development

Helping us ensure high quality learning

IN THIS SECTION

- ▶ **Our standards** How we support and improve the diploma experience p. 79
- ▶ **Your contribution** How your input and feedback can help p. 81

“In nature we never see anything isolated, but everything in connection with something else which is before it, beside it, under it and over it.”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe



The diploma working group represents all aspects of the diploma system: tutors, apprentices and staff.

Our standards

IN A NUTSHELL

What you can expect from us: excellent standards and quality assurance.



The diploma system has **quality assurance and network development** built into its structure. This means that, as an apprentice, you should have a consistent and high quality experience with well-trained tutors working within a well-run system. If you don't get the quality you expect, or you can see a way to improve things, we'd like to know about it.

Administration

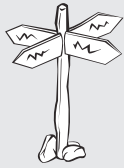
We aim to provide **excellent administration and support** for the diploma system. We review our work frequently and invest time and resources in developing improved systems and processes to ensure that we support the network effectively.

We encourage you to give feedback and we also invite diploma apprentices who want to get involved in administration, organisational design or governance to contact us, spend time working at the office and help with new projects.

Teaching

Continuing professional development (CPD) for our tutors is key to ensuring high quality teaching on the diploma. Meetings and training events for tutors are built into the national diploma gatherings attended by apprentices. This means that we can minimise costs as well as environmental impact.

Tutors are required to attend at least one such event every two years, bringing examples of portfolios they've assessed and discussing their assessment decisions. This allows us to **standardise assessments** across the tutor network, as well as give tutors training and support, facilitate their peer supervision and promote the **sharing of best practice**.

FIND OUT MORE

► Go to the diploma section of the website (permaculture.org.uk/diploma/) for a **list of current diploma working group members**

► Please contact the office for more information or if you'd like to join the working group. >> see **Contact us**, p. 89

Diploma working group

The diploma working group has six to ten members, including tutors, senior tutors, staff and apprentices, so as to be **representative of the diploma system as a whole**. Working group members meet in person at least twice a year and by teleconference at other times.

The group has secretarial support from the Association and a small budget allocated from diploma fees in order to carry out its responsibilities.

Annual learning challenge

Just as the diploma itself is based on a process of action learning, so we use action learning to underpin the way we learn as a network. Each year we choose several topics or challenges to focus on, using action learning and the combined power of the network to design improved solutions and new approaches where needed.

We decide on these challenges and design our responses to them by means of workshops at national events, annual surveys, working group initiatives and input from members of the network.

Your contribution

IN A NUTSHELL

How you can help: your feedback, design work, participation and advocacy.



Feedback

We welcome your views on the diploma experience and how it's working out for you (or *not*), along with your suggestions for how it could be improved. So if anything *is* going wrong, please don't suffer in silence – difficulties can usually be quickly resolved, and we'd always much rather know about them.

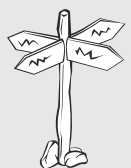
You can **tell us how things are going at any time**, through any of these channels:

- contact the office (and we can also put you in touch with the diploma working group) >> see **Contact us**, p. 89
- contact your personal tutor
- fill in the feedback form on the website
- take part in one of our regular online surveys

Projects

You can help develop the diploma through your own design work, and we'd encourage you to think of ways to do this. You could create a new resource (e.g. a guide explaining how to use a particular design process or document your work using video) – shaping the diploma for future apprentices through your learning and experience now.

FIND OUT MORE



► See **Diploma forms & templates** for the apprentice feedback form – downloadable from the website (permaculture.org.uk/diploma/) in **Diploma documents**

Advocacy

If you'd like to promote the diploma in your area, we can provide materials and resources for you to do so – whether you're giving a presentation, talking to a local group, or running a stall at a local event. Or if you're part of a teaching team, you can use courses to let people know about the diploma.

Please contact the office in advance of any events or courses you're running and we'll send you leaflets, copies of this guide copies or sample lesson plans as required.

SECTION RECAP

DIPLOMA DEVELOPMENT

By the end of this section, you should know or understand:

- how **we try to ensure a quality learning experience** for apprentices
- the role of the **diploma working group**
- how to **give us feedback** on the diploma
- **what you can do** to improve and develop the diploma
- how you can **help promote the diploma** more widely



Resources

Website

- www.permaculture.org.uk – as a whole
- www.permaculture.org.uk/diploma/ – diploma section
- www.permaculture.org.uk/knowledge-base/ – knowledge base
- www.permaculture.org.uk/diploma/diploma-documents – downloadable documents
- www.permaculture.org.uk/diploma/diploma-tutor-register – diploma tutor register

Guides

These additional guides are available to download from the diploma section of the website, and further such guides are planned.

- **Guide to accreditation criteria**
- **Guide to fees**

Forms




These forms are also available to download from the diploma section of the website, in ***Diploma forms and templates***.




- **Apprentice feedback form**
- **Booking forms** – tutorials, assessments, presentation event
- **Assessment forms** – individual design, summary

News

- **Newsletter: *Permaculture Works*** – a quarterly permaculture magazine
- **e-bulletin** – a monthly emailed permaculture news round-up
- **Diploma e-bulletin**

Glossary

1st assessor The tutor who carries out your interim and 1st final portfolio assessments – your personal tutor (supported routes  ) or chosen diploma tutor (independent route ).

1st final portfolio assessment The second of three assessment stages, carried out by your personal tutor (supported routes  ) or 1st assessor (independent route ) on your whole portfolio when it is complete.

2nd assessor The tutor who carries out your 2nd final portfolio assessment – your chosen senior tutor.

2nd final portfolio assessment The last of three assessment stages, carried out by your chosen 2nd assessor as a cross-check on the findings from your 1st final portfolio assessment.

Accreditation The process of being awarded a diploma through assessment and presentation of your portfolio, providing official recognition of your permaculture design skills and experience.


Accreditation criteria The standards that your diploma work will be measured against, to be found in the *Guide to accreditation criteria*.

Action learning A reflective learning process – a cycle of action and reflection, involving planning, doing, observing and reflecting. A key tool in permaculture design work.

Apprentice You! – and anyone registered on the diploma and working towards accreditation.

Assessor (or assessment tutor) A registered diploma tutor who has undertaken further training in order to carry out portfolio assessments.

Design A plan that sets out what you want to happen, when and where. It may stand alone or be part of a larger project. You need ten of them for your portfolio. (See also **project**.)

Design support tutorial An in-depth tutorial, usually 2 hours long, focusing solely on your design work, with a diploma tutor of your choice and possibly shared with other apprentices (supported route plus , or paid for as extra).

Diploma gathering An opportunity for all apprentices and diploma holders to attend workshops, talks and tutorials, to network and to socialise with their peers. National diploma gatherings are run annually by the Association, and we also encourage local groups to run their own regional gatherings.

Diploma holder Anyone who has successfully completed the diploma and gained accreditation.

Diploma holder register A database of all diploma holders, available on the website.

Diploma journey The whole process of working towards accreditation, including all aspects of your experience along the way.

Diploma page A page you're entitled to add to your online personal profile when you register as an apprentice – specifically to give more information about your diploma activities.


Diploma route The level of tutorial support you choose to have through the diploma. There are three main routes available as well as possible variations depending on your requirements. (See also **independent route, supported route, supported route plus.**)

Diploma tutor A diploma holder and experienced permaculture designer who has undertaken training and fulfilled the other requirements to be registered as a tutor.

Diploma tutor register A database of all registered diploma tutors, assessors and senior tutors, available on the website.

Diplomate (See **presiding diplomate.**)

Evaluation Your thoughts on how successful your projects and designs have been, and how far they've achieved their aims. (See also **reflection.**)

Independent route  A route through the diploma that has the same assessment and accreditation process as the supported routes, but without a personal tutor or structured tutorial support.

Induction event The first session with your personal tutor – a chance to get to know them, ask questions and receive help with the first steps on your diploma journey.

Interim portfolio assessment The first stage of portfolio assessment, carried out at the halfway point of your portfolio development, on five of your designs.

Learning agreement An informal contract that sets out the principles and practicalities of how you and your personal tutor will work together.

Learning pathway An action plan that sets out projects, activities and goals along a timeline, allowing you to map out your diploma journey.



Peer review group A small group of selected diploma holders and apprentices whom you invite to your presentation event to ask questions and give constructive feedback about your completed portfolio.

Peer support group A group of committed peers, usually other diploma apprentices, who meet regularly on an agreed basis and offer mutual support in keeping their diploma journey on track.

Permaculture designer's profile A component of your portfolio: a short profile of yourself and your design work.




Personal profile The facility to have an online public profile on the website, of yourself as a permaculture designer – open to all members of the Association. (See also **diploma page**.)

Personal tutor The diploma tutor you choose to guide you through the diploma (supported routes  +).

Personal tutorial A one-to-one, 1-hour tutorial with your personal tutor, usually focusing on action learning (supported routes  +, or paid for as extra).

Portfolio The collection of ten designs and accompanying material that is the means of presenting your diploma work for assessment.

Presentation event The public presentation and celebration of your diploma work – the final stage in the accreditation process.

Presiding diplomate The diploma tutor and diploma holder who presides over your presentation event – usually your personal tutor (supported routes  +) or 1st assessor (independent route ).

Project An undertaking with a start, a finish and a particular goal. It may include more than one design. (See also **design**.)

Reflection Your thoughts on your learning process, including on the design process and techniques that you've used. (See also **evaluation**.)


Reflective journal A record of your reflections on your diploma journey, documenting your learning progress in any format you choose.


Review of relevant activities A component of your portfolio: a short reflective summary of your diploma journey.

Self-assessment summary A component of your portfolio: your view of how your designs fulfil the accreditation criteria.

Self-directed learning The process of managing your own learning and design work, identifying and arranging the training, tutorials (if any) and peer support you need.

Senior tutor (or senior diploma tutor) An experienced assessor (or assessment tutor) who has undertaken further training in order to become a 2nd assessor.

Supported route  The standard tutorial support package, with ongoing support from a personal tutor.

Supported route plus  An extension of the standard tutorial support package, with two or more 2-hour long design support tutorials focusing in more depth on your design work.

Supporting evidence A component of your portfolio: an appendix of additional material relevant to your work.

Technical skills Any skills that you need to learn or use in order to carry out your design work – they may be wide-ranging and not necessarily permaculture-based.



Contact us



Our team of dedicated staff members and volunteers: we're here to help you learn.



Monday – Friday: 10am – 4pm



office@permaculture.org.uk

This is the best way to contact us, and we'll get back to you as soon as we can. But please note that all our staff work part-time, so if you contact them after they've finished for the week, it may be a few days before they can respond.



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London
WC1N 3XX

This is a commercial mail forwarding company, and post takes an extra day to get to us, but it means that we'll never have to change our address again.



For **parcels only**, please send them direct to:

Permaculture Association
Hollybush Conservation Centre
Broad Lane
Leeds
LS5 3BP