

Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design



Guide to Accreditation Criteria





Thanks

Thanks to everyone that has contributed to developing Diploma System 5.2.

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Version control

This is the definitive guide to the Diploma Accreditation Criteria. Any changes or updates will be communicated to all apprentices and tutors. The online version will always be the latest version.

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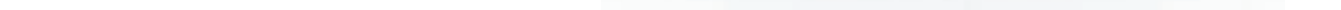
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Section A. Why have accreditation criteria?

There are a number of reasons why we have set these criteria:

- So everyone knows what they need to do, and what they need to be able to demonstrate, to be awarded a Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design;
- So everyone can be assessed against the same criteria;
- So we can make sure everyone is treated equally and fairly;
- As a basis for feedback and learning during the Diploma process; and
- So that Diploma tutors assessing portfolios can work together, share observations and ensure a consistent quality of assessment.

Section B. Summary of Accreditation Criteria

To successfully complete your Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design you must be able to demonstrate that:

1. You have completed a permaculture design course, and are a current member of the Permaculture Association;
2. You have actively applied permaculture over a period of at least two years since your permaculture design course (PDC).
3. You have produced ten permaculture designs to the required standard;
4. You can put permaculture theory into action and make appropriate changes to your lifestyle and working practice; and
5. You are able to reflect on your permaculture practice and learn from it.

You will show that you meet the criteria through the submission of a portfolio of work for assessment, including a piece of reflective writing, video journal, or other media that describes what you have learnt through the development of your ten designs. Include supporting evidence as appendices.

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

- a review of relevant activities;
- a summary sheet on how you meet the accreditation criteria;
- and your permaculture designer's CV or updated online profile on the Permaculture Association website.

Notes are provided in Section D, and in the Guide for Registered Apprentices to assist you in developing a portfolio that clearly meets the criteria.

Section C: Accreditation Criteria in detail

1. Completion of a PDC and member of the Permaculture Association

You will be able to demonstrate this by:

- Naming the permaculture design Course (PDC) that you completed, including date, venue and tutor(s). Provide this information on your registration form.
- Having a current membership with the Permaculture Association.

Evidence will include:

- A record in the Permaculture Association's graduate register and members database; or
- If the course is not listed on the graduate register, we will contact you, and you will need to send a copy of your certificate. We may also contact the tutor to confirm details.

The PDC does not have to have taken place within Britain. The assessment of these criteria is completed through the registration process. Once you have been registered on to the Diploma this is complete.

2. Applying permaculture for at least two years

“The process of actively applying permaculture to your life and projects, over a period of at least two years.”

By the end of your Diploma apprenticeship, you will be able to:

- Show that you have been actively applying permaculture for at least two years since your PDC; and
- Refer to the work you have undertaken, and the broad categories it fits within. You can use the following list that was first developed by the Permaculture Research Institute to categorise your work.

- Administration and organisational design
- Architecture, building and retrofitting
- Art, Media, Culture and Communications
- Business
- Community Development
- Design Consultancy
- Education
- Finance
- Manufacturing
- Personal development, and the ‘inner transition’
- Research
- Site Development
- System Establishment and Implementation
- Trusteeship
- Z / General / Other

Evidence will include:

- Designs within your portfolio; and
- May also include a review of relevant activities.

You do not need to show that you have been working in every area. For more details about the categories refer to Section E.

3. Demonstrating Design Skills

“The process of using design processes and tools to create working permaculture systems.”

By the end of your Diploma apprenticeship, you will be able to:

- Use permaculture ethics, principles and theory as appropriate to the situation;
- Make accurate and appropriate use of intentional design processes;
- Use processes and tools that suit the clients and situation;
- Show that you can produce designs that include land and social elements;
- Use a variety of design tools;
- Create designs that are intelligible, coherent and effective;
- Choose and produce appropriate presentation and documentation for clients and third parties;
- Present ten designs; and
- Show you have achieved fluency with design processes and tools.

Evidence will include:

- Documentation for ten designs, within an overall portfolio (paper or electronic).
- Documentation for each design that includes references to which of the accreditation criteria it meets. This can be by the use of a summary sheet, or by reference to the criteria within the design write up.

Please note that it is the overall portfolio that needs to demonstrate that you meet all of these criteria, rather than each design.

4. Applying permaculture in your own life

“The process of using permaculture ethics, principles and design strategies to enhance the sustainability of your own life and household.”

By the end of your Diploma apprenticeship, you will be able to:

- Show how changes you have made bring you closer to a sustainable lifestyle, in line with permaculture’s ethical framework.

Evidence will include:

- Design work within your portfolio. This may be shown in one or more of your designs.
- May also include evidence within a review of relevant activities.

5. Developing your permaculture practice

“The process of evaluating your work, and reflecting on your permaculture practice, to increase your skills and understanding.”

By the end of your Diploma apprenticeship, you will be able to:

- Show how you have evaluated the effectiveness of your design work;
- Reflect on your use of permaculture theory and practice, including design processes, tools and practical skills; and
- Show how your skills and understanding have developed since completing the PDC.

Evidence will include:

- Documentation that shows how you have measured and evaluated the performance and effectiveness of a design or particular aspects of the design;
- Documentation that shows how you have reflected on the effectiveness of the process or particular tools that you used within a design;
- A piece of reflective writing, video journal, or other media that describes what you have learnt through the development of your ten designs.

It is recommended that one of the designs in the portfolio is your Learning Pathway, and its evaluation.

Section D: Glossary and further guidance

Glossary

Client: The individual or group for whom you are designing. It could be yourself, or your family or household. It could be a group or organisation you are a member of, or one you are being paid by.

Design process: This refers to the sequencing of design work. Within each stage of the process a range of different design tools may be used. The design process is also referred to as a 'design sequence', or 'design framework'. Examples include: 'SADI / SADI(MET)' – Survey, Analyse, Design, Implement, (Maintain, Evaluate, Tweak); OBREDIM(ET) – Observation, Boundaries, Resources, Evaluation, Design, Implement, Maintain (Evaluate, Tweak); and the Design Web developed by Looby Macnamara.

Apprentices can and have used processes of their own making, the key point is that an intentional design process is used.

Design tools: An overall term we are using to describe the many different techniques and methods available to help develop a permaculture design.

Examples are numerous and include 'zoning', 'sector analysis', 'pattern language', 'flow diagrams', and so on. Design tools are usually used in combination, within an overall design process (see above.)

Evaluation: The process of measuring the effectiveness of your design and project work. Identifying whether the design enabled you to meet your stated aims and goals.

Non-land based: This refers to designs or elements in a design that are primarily social. These are sometimes referred to as 'invisible structures'.

Portfolio: Your assembled design work and supporting evidence, placed within a clear framework for signposting people to the different designs and any other significant areas of work you want to highlight. It can be a physical folder with real paper inside, or a hyper-linked online resource with electronic documents and images, or a video on DVD with a menu to navigate to each design.

Reflection: The process whereby the apprentice takes time to consider their design experience and reflect on how it was done.

Reflective writing: This is where the writer describes a particular scene, event, design, interaction, thought, or memory, and adds a personal reflection on the meaning of this in relation to their life or learning. Questions, such as “What did I notice?” or “How has this changed me?” are used.

The four action learning questions of “What went well”, “What was difficult”, “What are my long term visions and goals” and “What are my next achievable steps”, are also a good reflective framework. The key point is that the writing is not merely descriptive, but instead, reveals what has been learnt or understood, or observed to be significant.

Sustainable lifestyle: Tricky! This is a lifestyle which can be sustained by the earth indefinitely. One of the most coherent approaches to measuring this was developed by Matthis Wackernagel and William Rees in their Ecological Footprint work. A range of online calculators are available to help monitor your progress.

Symmetry: is one of the previous complementary criteria and means giving and receiving developmental support in equal measure. It is about showing a progression from needing one-way support from the permaculture network for your development as a practitioner, towards being active in offering your support to others within the network.

Further guidance about the Accreditation Criteria

Size and diversity of designs in your portfolio

- A diversity of design work is encouraged, and a portfolio should include both land-based and non-land based designs, and show that the apprentice can design for both land and people.
- 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 the apprentice will set out with the intention of implementing the design, but we recognise that circumstances change and this is not always possible.

- Some of your designs can be concept or sketch designs, but some must be detailed. We suggest that of the ten designs, two can be small, six medium sized, and two large.

This is not intended to be prescriptive, but rather a guide to what is expected as a minimum. Ten large detailed designs is obviously also acceptable.

- 'Small' would be reasonably quick, perhaps a couple of days intensive work, more than "back of an envelope", but less detailed than an involved design. These have been called "walk through designs" where you are able to work with someone over a day and come to a design solution that enables the client to move forward with their project.

The design may meet one or two accreditation criteria, but not necessarily more. Small designs still need accompanying documentation that shows how you have used permaculture and your reflections on the process.

- Medium and large designs will be more involved and are likely to meet more of the accreditation requirements.

Supporting evidence and referencing

- Supporting evidence needs to show your design process, including aspects such as surveys, client interviews, base maps, implementation and maintenance plans, costings, and your final evaluation and reflection.
- Where other people's ideas and inspirations have been used, they should be acknowledged. Cooperation, group work and sharing are encouraged.
- Design processes and tools can be drawn from a wide range of sources. Where these are not drawn from permaculture literature, references should be given.
- The portfolio should make it easy to see where and how permaculture has been used. A commentary or summary can be given for each design to assist assessors and the presentation event peer group.

This can include information about the design process used, where stages of your chosen process appear, and how ethics and principles have been applied.

- Everything, in all media used (e.g. drawings, photographs), should be captioned. What seems obvious to you, won't necessarily be to others.
- Any appendices should be referenced.

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.
- Please note that 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.

See the Guide for Registered Apprentices for more detail on how much is enough, what to include in your portfolio, and more. Supported Route apprentices can ask for further guidance from their personal tutor.

The Interim Portfolio Assessment is an excellent point for both Independent and Supported Route apprentices to seek guidance about the development of their portfolio and the documentation of the design work.

Section E: Permaculture Research Institute categories

The following list was first developed by Bill Mollison and colleagues at the Permaculture Research Institute. We have since updated it to reflect new areas of work, and the British context. We have also incorporated the Complementary Criteria from the previous version of the Accreditation Criteria to show where these activities fit within the categories.

You can use this list to show which areas of work you have been involved in. Your work may fit into one area or many.

- **Administration and organisational design:** Directing, conducting or assisting groups, associations and institutes and developing organisational strategies for permaculture work.
- **Architecture, building and retrofitting:** Designing or building low cost and low energy use dwellings and structures. Can also include the redesign and retrofitting of existing buildings.
- **Art, Media, Culture and Communications:** Creating or operating publications, websites, other online resources or audio-visual and mixed media aids to communication and education in the permaculture community. Written, creative, artistic or cultural work that develops the public's understanding of permaculture. Included in previous accreditation criteria as 'dissemination'.
- **Business:** Initiating, designing, adapting or supporting the development of sustainable businesses and livelihoods. Can include wider work on the green / blue / circular / permaculture economy.
- **Community Development:** Planning, assisting with, or implementing community development projects, urban systems, villages, or work with disadvantaged groups. Community Development can include the development and support of the permaculture network itself and was included in previous accreditation criteria as 'community building' and 'symmetry' (reciprocal support for other people in the network).
- **Design Consultancy:** Completing permaculture designs for others.

- **Education:** Working on curricula, teaching materials or course work in permaculture education and training.
- **Finance:** Setting up or operating financial systems such as ethical investment, community revolving loan funds, Local Exchange Trading Systems, time-banks, credit unions, or other financial systems.
- **Manufacturing:** Establishing or operating strategies or workshops producing hardware or goods for permaculture design use or other essential technologies. Includes the researching and marketing of such technologies.
- **Personal development, and the 'inner transition':** Designing yourself, and making changes to your personal behaviours, attitudes and outlook to enhance your personal well-being. Can include skills development and support for other people's inner transition.
- **Research:** Contributing to research into permaculture systems and needs. This may be as an 'academic' producing papers, or as a practitioner producing scientific data and reports. Included in previous accreditation criteria as 'evaluation and costings'.
- **Site Development:** Designing and working on your own or another site and creating a working demonstration of permaculture in action.
- **System Establishment and Implementation:** Setting up or operating nurseries, earth moving systems, soil conservation strategies or the supply of goods or services to the permaculture community. Working on the implementation of designed systems.
- **Trusteeship:** Setting up or operating land or property trusts, a land office for allied organisations, Cooperatives, Community Interest Companies, Community Development Trusts, Charities, or other organisations run for ethical purposes.
- **Z / General / Other:** If your work does not fit neatly into the other categories, this category can be used, please state what the area of work is!

Section F: History of the assessment criteria

In the beginning

The first Diploma system was developed by Bill Mollison and the Permaculture Research Institute (PRI). Essentially you needed to show you had done two years practical work and submit a portfolio of designs, and it cost \$75 (Australian).

You were asked to say which area of work you focussed on. There were no specific criteria other than two years work minimum and that Bill thought the portfolio was 'of good quality'. You also needed to identify which category you were working in (our criteria 5).

It was a very simple system and reflected the need for a system that could support isolated pioneers working across the world in the new discipline called 'permaculture'.

The Diploma arrives in Britain

In 1992 Bill Mollison awarded Diplomas to Graham Bell, Andy Langford and Stephen Nutt, and basically said, "you lot can issue your own diplomas now, get on with it", so the diploma process in Britain was born! The new Diploma group worked for a number of years to develop the process and in 1994 launched a number of criteria that could be assessed by a small but growing group of Diploma holders, mainly under the leadership of Andy Langford and the Permaculture Academy.

"Design Skills" and "Theory in Action" were essential criteria focussing on the skills and personal application of permaculture. "Dissemination", "Community Building", "Symmetry" and "Evaluation and Costings" were complementary criteria, and focussed more on the development of the wider permaculture network, enhancing relationships between practitioners and building an evidence base. This was a peer reviewed process and was all about nurturing a growing network.

Getting more professional: System 5

When we launched system 5, we re-jigged the criteria, giving more detail for each and in places re-wording to make them clearer. We also re-instated the original 12 areas of work introduced by Bill Mollison and the PRI, and added 'Other', because permaculture

apprentices are a very creative lot! The previous system had been criticised for lack of detail and complicated jargon, so we tried to address this.

Connecting to the wider world

This next set of criteria aims to keep the spirit of the criteria that have developed since the early 1980s, and also to create a clear link into mainstream accreditation systems, so that future versions of the Diploma can have the same 'academic value' as other qualifications.

A new criteria of 'Developing your permaculture practice' has been added to make explicit expectations by assessors that were not previously stated as such. The complementary criteria have been removed, but linked to the now 15 areas of work, which includes two new categories 'Business', 'Personal development' and 'Other'. A glossary has been added and the language has been further refined to minimise confusion over terminology.

A note on the Complementary Criteria

The complementary criteria were all about adding value to the network and the apprentices' learning. Because they were not compulsory, and to aid simplification of the system, they have been removed from the Accreditation Criteria.

However, many apprentices may still be including the work itself as part of their projects, design work and overall portfolio, and this is encouraged. The intention remains that the Diploma process can help to support the development of the wider permaculture network. For the record, the complementary criteria were:

Dissemination

"The process of sharing your work and insights with others."

You exhibit a clear sense that you are willing and active in letting other people know about your work through outlets such as:

- writing magazine articles;
- adding case studies and articles to the Association website;
- showing visitors around projects;
- writing up research for peer review;
- leading workshops, giving talks and presentations;
- seeking teaching spots on courses.

Community Building

“The active process of developing supportive social networks.”

Your work shows an appreciation of how developing design skills can help build capacity for self-reliance and self-determination into any community that you are a part of or allied to. This may be evidenced by:

- setting up and contributing to Peer Support Guilds
- convening courses or events
- being active in developing a local permaculture group
- supporting or developing a local bio-regional network or transition town initiative
- local community projects, e.g. LETS, eco-schools, community composting, car sharing, etc.

Symmetry

“The process of reciprocating support received from other permaculture individuals and networks.”

Symmetry means giving and receiving developmental support in equal measure. You can show a progression from needing one-way support from the permaculture network for your development as a practitioner, towards being active in offering your support to others within the network. This may be evidenced by:

- supporting local permaculture courses;
- working as an apprentice to an established designer;
- making a short film about your local group for publicity use;
- helping to redevelop a local permaculture group’s finance systems from own skills;
- supporting another practitioner to document and record their work;
- volunteering to support or develop a project within the Association.

Evaluation and Costings

“The process of increasing the knowledge and understanding of permaculture systems, such as their effectiveness and overall cost.”

Your work shows that you have measured the effectiveness of your work when input costs, resources and efforts are compared to output yields, resources and efficiencies. Some completed evaluations will be included. Typically permaculture costs can

include unnecessary work, pollution, and human impact, alongside the more usual aspects of time, materials, and finances. This may be evidenced with completed observations and system evaluations such as:

- extended input-output analysis of the design / system;
- ecological footprint analysis of a permaculture system;
- a cost benefit analysis of a design;
- comparative research between different approaches;
- other research activities that contribute to permaculture understanding and knowledge of the effectiveness of permaculture systems.

About the Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design

The Diploma formally recognises and accredits a persons permaculture practice.

The Diploma is not a taught course like a permaculture design course, it is a scheme for supporting an extended period of self-directed learning based around the projects and activities that you are involved in and that you set yourself.

You plan and carry out your own course of self-managed study, taking on projects of your own choosing and carrying out the permaculture design process with these projects.

You document your work and put it together in a portfolio. This work is assessed by diploma holders and accredited by the Permaculture Association.

**For more information please go online:
permaculture.org.uk/diploma**

**or call:
0845 458 1805**

