

Questions before joining the Diploma

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How much does it cost and how do people pay?

You will pay a monthly subscription to the Permaculture Association for the duration of your diploma. This covers all the costs, such as membership of the association, administration and ongoing development of the diploma system. As well as this, you'll pay a fee directly to your tutor for each tutorial and assessment of your designs. The current fees are listed on the Permaculture Association website.

How do I sign up?

You can sign up on the Permaculture Association website. You'll need to confirm that you've completed a Permaculture Design Course by giving the date, location and name of the teacher. You'll also need to say who you want your diploma tutor to be, so before you do that, you'll need to contact them and ask if they have space. You'll also need to start your monthly subscription at this point.

Can I get help filling out the application form if that's helpful?

If you are unable to complete the online form, please contact the Permaculture Association office and they will be able to help you. The contact details are on the website www.permaculture.org.uk or you can email diploma@permaculture.org.uk

How do I find a tutor?

There is a tutor register and map on the Permaculture Association website where you can see tutor names, approximate locations and areas of expertise. You might find it helpful to choose a personal tutor who lives relatively close to you, as you may want to travel to them for tutorials. Or, you might want to choose your tutor based on their area of expertise or their approach. Their contact details are on the website, get in touch to see if they have space to support you through your diploma.

Attending regional and national permaculture events and diploma gatherings is a great way to meet apprentices as well as tutors.

What will my personal tutor do?

They will support you through your diploma through assessing your designs and portfolio and providing tutorials. There are three types of tutorials. An induction tutorial, personal tutorials, and design support tutorials.

What are the different tutorials?

Personal tutorials are more general, about your progress on the diploma and your overall pathway. You would usually have all of your personal tutorials with the same

tutor, although you can switch if either of your circumstances change. Your personal tutor is who you select at the start of your diploma.

Design support tutorials are about specific designs. Your personal tutor can provide these, or you can choose any tutor who has expertise in the area you are interested in. The tutor register is a great place to learn more about tutors' area of expertise.

How is my work assessed?

By the time you complete your diploma, your portfolio will consist of ten designs, and some supporting documents. There are three stages to the assessment of your portfolio

1. Interim portfolio assessment
2. First final portfolio assessment
3. Second final portfolio assessment

The interim portfolio assessment takes place after you have completed your first five designs. Your personal tutor will assess these according to the diploma criteria, which you can read about in the guidebook, available on the Permaculture Association website. These might be signed off, or you might be asked to make some tweaks.

Once you've completed the remaining five designs, your tutor will assess those too - this is the first final portfolio assessment, and again they might be signed off, or you might be asked to make a few tweaks.

The final stage is that your whole portfolio is sent to a senior tutor. This is a moderation process, and again, they'll give you feedback and might ask you to change a few things.

At the end, once your work is signed off, you'll have an accreditation event, which is a celebration of your diploma work. There are no exams!

How is the diploma accessible to a diversity of people and needs?

The aim of the diploma is to support you to become a confident and competent permaculture designer, and the system is keen to support a diversity of people with a range of needs and talents. There's no upper time limit, so you can take the time you need, and there are no taught classes, so you'll be able to talk to your individual tutors about what good support looks like for you.

Designs can also be presented in a variety of ways, for example they can be hand-written, typed up, done as a presentation, video, through art - anything you can think of as long as you can demonstrate how you meet the criteria.

How can apprentices connect with each other?

You're actively encouraged to form a group with a small number of other apprentices to support each other and give informal feedback on your design work. These are sometimes called guilds. You can do this as a pair or in a group of several people. Your personal tutor may be able to introduce you to some of their apprentices.

The diploma facebook group is a great starting point - there's a regular check in where people post what they're doing and thinking about. You could put a post on there looking for others at a similar stage, or who live near to you, or who are doing similar projects. Don't worry if facebook isn't your thing, not everyone uses it.

Events are a great way to meet people too. There's the annual Permaculture convergence, and the annual diploma gathering, and you might find other regional events in your area too.

You don't need to live near the others in your group - catch-ups over the internet are becoming more and more common. You could use regular video calls to support and encourage each other.

And here are our 5 Next Steps you might consider:

1. Make sure you've watched the rest of the diploma videos online and looked through the information on the website.
2. If you'd like to do a bit more research you could have a look at some other people's designs or portfolios if you haven't done already - there are links on the Permaculture Association website
3. Once you're ready to sign up, head over to the tutor register and find a personal tutor.
4. Sign up using the application form on the website.
5. And then start to connect with other apprentices. Maybe book onto an event.

If you have any further questions about this or other subjects, you may find the answer on our website, or you can contact the office on diploma@permaculture.org.uk