

Frequently Asked Questions - for Apprentices

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Can I arrange my own tutorials during the Diploma?

Absolutely. You can contact your personal tutor or you can also look for another tutor in the [Tutor Register](#) to have your tutorials with. You don't have to stay with the same tutor throughout your Diploma pathway. There are two types of tutorials: personal tutorials and design support tutorials. The Guidebook gives full explanations as to the differences between these.

Can I have remote tutorials or do they have to be face to face?

Whichever way works best for you and your tutor - both approaches have positives and compromises. Have a chat with your chosen tutor.

Do I have to stick with one tutor for my entire Diploma?

No, definitely not. You can keep the same personal tutor if it works well for you but you are free at any time to have a tutorial with any other tutor and also to change your personal tutor if you feel another would suit you better.

How do I meet other Diploma Apprentices from my area?

If you're on Facebook, join the Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design private group and post on there. There are also localised permaculture groups on Facebook too. Ask your tutor or email the Permaculture Association's Diploma Coordinator on diploma@permaculture.org.uk if you're having difficulty finding local contacts. There is also a map of Diploma apprentices on the website (please note that Apprentices need to opt in to feature on this map so it doesn't necessarily show everyone on the Diploma pathway). There are also local convergences and gatherings that happen - usually in the summer but occasionally at other times - and they're a great way to meet others on the Diploma.

What about connecting with other Apprentices if I'm not in Great Britain?

Again, Facebook and other social networking sites are a great resource. The apprentice map on the website doesn't just cover the UK. Apprentices from overseas are encouraged to join together to form online guilds because there are fewer of them than UK based apprentices.

What is the best way to present my design work?

You can use a wide variety of methods, whatever you prefer. It's great to use your portfolio as a chance to experiment with lots of different things and build up your skills - both professional and creative - and perhaps build your own website. There are some really easy to follow free website builders which you can find by reaching out to the permaculture network through the Facebook group or through the Association. A website is a great way to be able to share your work with lots of other apprentices and also to really easily share it with tutors when it's being assessed. You can add videos, powerpoint, graphic novels to your website. Lots of people like to work with handwritten journals, sketchbooks, drawings and artworks, but if you take photos of that or scan it in it's an easy way to share that work with others. Show your thought process and be as creative as you like - include sculpture, crochet, anything! Nothing is off limits. It's your portfolio and it's unique to you so really use it

as a chance to express yourself and showcase/explore your personal skills and creativity - skills you have or that you'd like to develop. Always try and combine graphics with your text. These can be photos, drawings, tables, mind maps, all kinds of things. They make it a much more interesting read and it's a great way to share that information.

Put some time into thinking about the flow and structure of your portfolio as well, using fonts, colours and styles to clearly identify all the different chapters and subheadings. Showing how you make your design decisions - so clearly setting out all the tools and methods you used - is almost more important than the final outcome. You're being assessed on your design skills so all of that process is really important to see. Before you're actually presenting it for assessment, share your design with your support network, your peers, and ask for feedback because it's a great way for all of you to learn from each other (and that's what the permaculture network is best at!). So really think about what is the best way to present your work while highlighting your strengths.

So does this mean I'm going to have a lot of material on paper, on videos and so on that isn't actually presented in the final portfolio?

Yes. It is really important to document all of the key steps and processes and note them in your design. However, if you include absolutely everything it's going to become a body of work that nobody can get through and it's too much. Therefore try and keep it as concise as possible. Designs can be different lengths - some might be quite compact, others will be bigger, but try and aim for a maximum of 2,000 words. Try not to go over this. You can always add an appendix with supplementary information that people can explore if they want to. It is very important to always think back to the assessment criteria and whether you're really showing how you meet those criteria throughout your design.

How do I prepare for a design assessment? What are the steps?

You have two different types of tutorials - personal tutorials and design support tutorials - and you can ask for some feedback through a design support tutorial that will really help with the evolution of that design. When you feel like it's about ready for assessment, you can use some of your tutorial time to have that design assessed. Your tutor will go through the individual design assessment form and give you really detailed feedback on how that design meets the criteria and what steps you need to take for this to be ready to be signed off. Getting a design assessed, especially early on, is a good way to get an idea of where you're at, what patterns you might be developing that are positive or perhaps a bit more challenging that you need to work on, and it gives you a great footing for your designs. When preparing for assessment, do share your designs with your peers and ask for feedback.

Before you hand a design in for assessment, and to make the best use of precious tutorial time, it is important that you are really clear on what those assessment criteria are and that you are sure you clearly demonstrate how you have met all of those in your write up. Also consider what you really want your portfolio to be used for, what skills you want to develop and what skills you want to show and that will really help you. This is a good opportunity to reflect back on your Action Learning Pathway which is something you might do early on in your Diploma, so just make sure it's fulfilling everything you wanted it to.

If you have a question that isn't covered in this document or on the pages of the website, do ask your tutor or get in touch with our diploma administrator diploma@permaculture.org.uk