

The Diploma Criteria Guidebook for the Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design. This Guidebook is effective from July 1st 2021 and will be reviewed in late 2022.

This version is for all Apprentices undertaking the Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design with the Permaculture Association.

This document covers all requirements and assessment criteria to enable an Apprentice doing the Diploma to start, progress and complete their pathway.

For an official interpretation of specific terms throughout the Permaculture Diploma programme then please see the separate Glossary document on the Diploma website at <a href="https://diploma.permaculture.org.uk/sites/default/files/elements\_of\_the\_diploma\_-\_gloss-ary\_1.pdf">https://diploma.permaculture.org.uk/sites/default/files/elements\_of\_the\_diploma\_-\_gloss-ary\_1.pdf</a>.

This is a living document. If you have suggestions for edits and tweaks then please send them to the Diploma Working Group via the Office.



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### 1. Why have Requirements and Criteria?

#### The functions of the requirements and criteria are:

- To enable Apprentices to know what they need to do and what they need to be able to demonstrate in order to be awarded a Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design with the Permaculture Association (Britain)
- To ensure all Apprentices are assessed using the same criteria
- To provide the ability for feedback and learning during the Diploma process
- To ensure Tutors can work together and provide a consistent quality of assessment

We also want you to know that the criteria is really about you becoming a better permaculture designer. It is about sharing your journey of exploration and your pathway to becoming a confident, competent and empowered designer. It is about you creating a relationship with permaculture as a process and bringing your way of doing it to life. We want to hear about what you are learning. We avoid terms such as pass or fail, right or wrong, instead we choose to let you know if we think it is ready or if there is something in your journey that we think could be explored further.

### 1.1 A Summary of the Essential Requirements

### To start your pathway on the Diploma programme you must:

- Complete a Permaculture Design Certificate Course (PDC)
- Register for the Diploma programme through the Permaculture Association and set up your payment, which includes membership of the Association

### To complete your Diploma you must:

- Actively apply and be able to demonstrate permaculture over a period of at least two years since the completion of your PDC;
- Produce a portfolio of 10 designs that fulfill the assessment criteria;
- Put permaculture theory into practice and make relevant changes to your life, as evidenced through your design work;
- Reflect upon your permaculture practice and learn from it, as evidenced through reflections and evaluations for every design and across the whole portfolio;
- Create your designer's CV, which could also be uploaded to the Permaculture Association website;
- Upload at least three of your assessed designs to the Permaculture Association website, or provide a link to your own portfolio website.

### 2. The Learning Outcomes of the Diploma Pathway

### By the end of your Diploma you should be able to:

- Demonstrate your confidence and competence as a permaculture designer;
- Demonstrate your fluency as a designer;
- Demonstrate how you have progressed as a designer from the start of the programme;
- Apply your design skills to a variety of situations including land based and non-land based situations;
- Use a variety of intentional design processes accurately and appropriately;
- Use permaculture ethics, principles and theory as appropriate to the situation;
- Use a variety of processes and tools that suit the client and situation;
- Create designs that are intelligible, coherent and effective;
- Present and document your designs appropriately for clients and third parties;
- Show how changes you have made have brought you closer to a lifestyle in line with permaculture's ethical framework;
- Show how you have evaluated the effectiveness of your design work;
- Reflect on your use of permaculture, including design processes, tools and practical skills.



#### 3. The Criteria

#### 3.1 A Summary of the Assessment Criteria for each Design

Tutors assessing your designs are looking for some key ingredients in every design report, no matter what format you choose to present your work in. These include:

- Use of an intentional design process.
- Consideration of all three ethics in every design and across the whole portfolio.
- Use of at least three of the permaculture principles in depth (and a variety across the whole portfolio).
- Use of at least three design tools (and a variety across the whole portfolio).
- Identification of the client and aiming to meet the needs of the client.
- Use of appropriate presentation methods to communicate your design work to the client.
- Identification of a clear design brief which may include setting goals.
- Clear record of relevant observations or survey work.
- Analysis of observational information and design options.
- Inclusion of your design decisions relevant to the situation including an implementation plan and maintenance plan.
- Evaluation of the design subject and content.
- Reflection of the design processes used.
- Summary of your lessons learnt and indicators of progression.

#### 3.1 Further Minor Criteria

For every design that you submit, you also need to include the following where relevant:

- Provision of supporting evidence
- Provision of acknowledgements
- Self assessment
- Providing a summary of each design
- Addition of captions
- Highlighting key words

#### 3.2 Key Criteria for the Whole Portfolio

Over all of your ten designs Tutors also have some further expectations:

- Diversity amongst your Designs
- A Majority of your Designs Implemented
- Demonstrate Progression
- A Review of Relevant Activities
- Your Designer's CV

#### 4. The Assessment Process

For those in System 5.2 the default is to submit your designs for assessment in two chunks. The stage to assess the first five is known as the Interim Portfolio Assessment (IPA). The second set of five are known as the Final Portfolio Assessment (FPA1). It is possible for Apprentices in System 5.2 to submit their designs one at a time but this is something you will need to discuss with your Tutor.

If you have joined the Diploma after September 2020 then you will be encouraged to submit your designs one at a time. This has many advantages including:

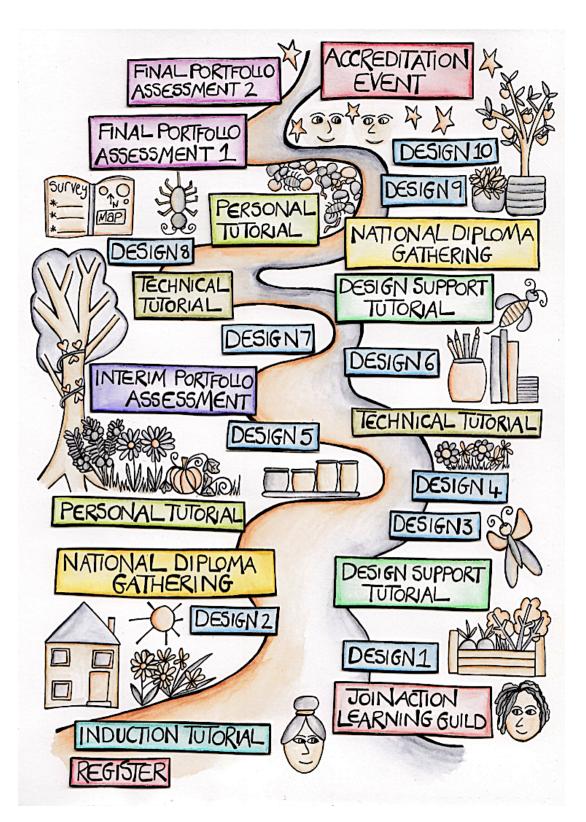
- Providing you with a more gentle introduction to the Assessment Criteria.
- Allowing for additional time to be spent on assessing your design as the time allocated for assessment is increased.
- The provision of more regular step by step feedback to enable clearer progression of your learning.
- Spreading out the cost of the assessment process.

Before you get to the assessment stage you may request feedback on a draft design through a Tutorial. These are known as Design Support Tutorials. This is particularly useful on an early stage design to help you understand more about what is expected to fulfill the criteria.

Tutors will use the Individual Design Assessment Form for all designs submitted for assessment. This form goes through the assessment criteria that Tutors are looking for in every design. The next section of this document looks at that form and the key assessment criteria in detail.

You will also receive a further piece of feedback at the end of the Interim Portfolio Assessment stage. This will provide you with a summary of your progression and what further work is expected in the second half. There is also a summary provided at the Final Portfolio Assessment stage. At these stages Tutors are looking at patterns in your portfolio and they have further criteria that they are considering. These additional criteria for your whole portfolio are explored in depth later in this document.

After all ten of your designs have been assessed and are deemed as ready then your portfolio is passed onto a Senior Tutor for the Final Portfolio Assessment Part 2 (FPA2). This process provides a second opinion on your work and a check on the consistency of the assessment procedure carried out between the Tutors. Once this is complete then it is time to celebrate and carry out your Final Presentation for us all to celebrate with you.



a diploma pathway map, drawing by Katie Shepherd

### **5. The Individual Design Assessment Form**

In this section we look at the Individual Design Assessment Form and provide details about how you may fulfill each of the criteria through reflective questions. Tutors use this form to record their thoughts on how you have fulfilled these criteria and what could be done or needs to be done differently. The most up to date version of this form is available from your Tutor or from the Permaculture Association Diploma website.

The form is split into three sections. Part 1 covers an overview of the design process, ethics, principles, tools, fulfilling the client's needs and appropriate documentation. Part 2 covers the details of the design from observations through analysis to your decision, and Part 3 focuses on evaluation, reflection and progression.

#### Part 1

# The design uses an appropriate design framework or intentional process accurately

Which design process are you going to use and why? Here we are looking for a clear intention from the start that you are deliberately using a design process such as OBREDIM / GOBRADIMET, SADIM, CEAP, Design Web or many others that you could choose from. Will your chosen design process enable you to form clear goals? Will your design process enable you to carry out observations and analysis leading to design decisions?

#### It utilises the permaculture ethics appropriately

How are you going to use the ethics in your design? Are you exploring all three ethics in your design? There may be exceptions where you only explore two but in greater depth. Have you demonstrated that you understand them? In what way are they influencing your decision making?

# The design uses permaculture principles & theory that are appropriate to the situation

Which of the principles are you drawn to for this design? Have you applied and referenced at least three permaculture principles in depth? In what ways have the principles influenced your design decisions? What permaculture theory have you used or developed while working on this design and how has it influenced the design? There is a further explanation about permaculture theory in the FAQ section of this document.

### It uses a variety of tools to suit the needs of the situation / design brief

Which design tools do you think will be useful for this design and why? Have you used at least three design tools to explore your observations, analysis and possibilities for your designs?

The design is intelligible, coherent and effective, meeting the client's needs Who is the client? Have you identified the needs of the client? Have you tried to fulfill the needs of the client? Do you think your design is understandable? Your report needs to be intelligible to the assessing tutor as well as the client.

The documentation is appropriate to present to the clients and others

How will you communicate your design to the client and to others? Is the design
presented in a way that is clear for the audience that it will be presented to?

#### Part 2

# There is a clear explanation of how the design brief was investigated through surveying the situation and gathering the information.

In what way will you include surveys and observations? How will you investigate the design brief? Are you developing aims and goals for your design? How will you interview the client?

# There is a clear explanation of how the design decisions and solutions were developed.

Which analysis tools will help you? In what way have you analysed your observations to bring forth possible solutions to the challenge?

The solutions are relevant and appropriate to the area and design brief.

Have you identified the best solutions that you can? Do they still fit the original design brief?

#### Part 3

## The design report includes an evaluation of the design's effectiveness.

What worked? What did not work? Did you fulfill the original design brief or goals? Evaluation focuses on what you have learnt in relation to the content and subject of your design. If you set aims or goals early on during your design then these will be really useful in your evaluation process by exploring the extent to which you fulfilled these goals.

# There is a critical reflection on what you have learnt about the design processes, tools, ethics, principles and theory that you have used.

What did you learn? What aspects of the design process, tools, ethics or principles worked for you on this occasion? What aspects did not work for you? What would you do differently next time you use these processes, tools, ethics or principles? Reflection

focuses on what you have learnt in relation to the processes you have used in the design.

The design shows how design skills and competence have progressed and some next steps for design practice.

What did you do differently because of something you learnt previously? What will you do differently next time?

### 6. Summary of the Minor Criteria

For every design that you submit, the Tutor is also looking out for the following:

- Provision of supporting evidence
- Provision of acknowledgements
- Self assessment
- Providing a summary of each design
- Addition of captions
- Highlighting key words

These criteria are minor because they are only required where appropriate, useful and relevant.

#### **6.1 Provision of Supporting Evidence**

The main body of your design report, no matter what the format, does not need to include everything. You can add appendices that direct the Tutor to additional supporting evidence. This might include details from a client interview such as the questionnaire used and details of the responses. Other examples of Supporting Evidence may include photos, financial analysis, spreadsheets and maps. You will need to decide what are the key parts of Supporting Evidence that need to be in the main body of the design report and what parts can be added to an appendix. You don't need to include everything you have ever done for the design journey as some parts might be confidential or only done roughly or not relevant. You will need to include references to the appendices in your report.

### **6.2 Provision of Acknowledgements**

Where other people's ideas and inspirations have been used, they should be acknowledged. Other people's photos and images need to be acknowledged and permission may be required. Give thanks to those that have supported you. 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 with gratitude.

#### **6.3 Self Assessment**

It is highly recommended for you to self assess your work in advance of sending it to the Tutor. You can use elements of this guidebook to check your work or follow through the Individual Design Assessment Form. This will save the Tutor time and yourself as you will be less likely to receive requirements to tweak or change your work. You can even fill in an Individual Design Assessment Form yourself and share that with your Tutor outlining where and how you think you have fulfilled the criteria.

#### **6.4 Providing a Summary**

Each design should make it easy to see where and how permaculture has been used. A summarising cover page is what we suggest and it can be given for each design to assist Tutors and the Final Presentation Event peer group. Please include in these summaries a start date and end date for the design, the key Design Process used, what Tools have been utilised and which Principles have been applied. You may also highlight your key learnings that you have drawn from your evaluation and reflection.

#### **6.5 Adding Captions**

Drawings and photos should be captioned to show what the image is and thus its relevance to the work. You may also need to include a date and an acknowledgement if required.

### **6.6 Highlighting Key Words**

Tutors, when assessing, are on the lookout for keywords such as anything to do with ethics, principles and design tools. As well as making your report more attractive it may also make the assessment process easier if you highlight key words in whatever way you like be that in bold, italics, a different font or different colour. It also helps to fulfill the criteria relating to the design being appropriate to present to clients and third parties.

#### **6.7 Other Top Tips**

- If you are drawing a Base Map or any layer on top then we recommend labelling it clearly using TOADS (Title, Orientation, Author, Date and Scale)
- Dating stages of your work especially if it covers a long period of time so we can see clearly when each aspect of the work was done, what came first and what came later etc. Always avoiding labelling aspects of your work as "the current situation".

## 7. A Summary of the Criteria for the Whole Portfolio

Over all ten designs Tutors also have some further expectations which include:

- Diversity amongst your Designs
- A Majority of your Designs Implemented
- Demonstrate Progression
- Demonstrate Understanding of Permaculture Theory
- A Review of Relevant Activities
- Your Designer's CV

#### 7.1 Diversity amongst your Designs

We want you to gain a variety of experience through your pathway and to treat it as an opportunity to experiment. You will need to *avoid* every design in your portfolio being based around the same one subject with the same design process for every design, the same couple of principles every time, the same size every time and the same format every time. You need to ensure that your whole portfolio demonstrates diversity. We need to see a range of:

**7.1.1 Presentation Formats:** Most design reports are in a written format but they don't have to be. You may want to consider who your report is for or what functions you hope to fulfil in the creation of the design report as that may influence the format you choose. This is a chance to experiment with the multiple options available to us today. You can try anything from pen and paper, computer aided design tools, videos, spreadsheets, websites, audio, poems, songs, photos, play dough, cardboard cut-outs and so much more. It could be just one format or a mix of formats. Remember that your design needs to be shared with your client, your Tutor and also the FPA2 Tutor. As long as the design is in a shareable format for assessment then you are **only limited by your imagination** in choosing your medium. Please remember also that the Tutors are allocated an hour for assessing each design, so a video presentation will need to be considerably less than an hour, we recommend somewhere between 10 to 30 minutes. You may need to consult with your Tutor about your creative plans to use experimental formats.

**7.1.2 Sizes:** This section assumes you are creating a written report so if you are using a different format for a design then you will need to interpret this section with your wonderful imagination. Tutors will encourage you to start with a small design, the smaller the better. Throughout your whole portfolio we expect to see a mix of small, medium and large designs. The size of your design may refer to the word count or to the scale of the project. This is not always straightforward as you could go into a lot of detail on a small

scale design or only sketch out a broad strategy for a large scale project. As a *rough guide* to what we mean by the size of the design here is a table to explain:

Design Size	Word Count	Examples of Scale
Small	1000-3000 words	Building of compost bays
Medium	3000-5000 words	Whole garden design
Large	5000-7000 words	Strategic land management plan for a farm

Your Tutor is only allocated an hour to assess each design and so the larger the design the longer it takes to assess. The design, the feedback and the requirements to make changes to fulfill the criteria are likely to be more complex and costly in terms of time when the design is bigger. We encourage you to be sharp editors in the presentation of your work, and only to include what is essential, required and relevant. Some Tutors may refuse to assess a design if they believe it can be edited down in size first. A design of more than 10,000 words will be deemed as too big to assess by most Tutors. The word count would not include any Supporting Evidence such as appendices that you may add to any of your designs.

- **7.1.3 Topic Types:** You will need to demonstrate that you can design for both land based situations and non-land based scenarios such as personal or community based situations.
- **7.1.4 Design Processes:** Tutors expect a range of Design Processes. Please ensure you do not use the same Process for every design. Seeing at least three Design Processes over a whole portfolio is ideal. It is also good to use the same Design Process a few times as this will enable the development of confidence and competence with the Process. Developing your own Design Process is allowed, what is key is that you intentionally use a design process from the start.
- **7.1.5 Design Tools:** We expect to see at least three Design Tools used in every design and a range of Tools used over the whole portfolio. Do not use the same three Design Tools with every design. This is a chance to experiment and gain familiarity with a Tool. It is great to use a Tool a few times to gain your confidence and competence with the Tool. Your Tutor should be able to provide you with a list of commonly used Design Tools. There are some Design Tools that we may expect to see in most designs such as Base Maps and Client Interviews.

**7.1.6 Principles:** We expect to see at least three Principles used in depth with every design but not for you to use the same Principles with every design. Your Tutor will be able to provide you with a list of commonly used Principles. It is good to map your use of the Principles as your designs unfold. See which ones you haven't explored as you progress through your designs. Demonstrate over your whole portfolio that you have got to grips with a diversity of Principles from a range of sources. We also like to see that you understand the origin of any Principle that you use.

### 7.2 A Majority of your Designs Implemented

Designs do not all have to have been implemented, but it is recommended that the majority of them are, so at least six have been implemented. All of your designs need to get to the stage where decisions have been made about what you plan to implement. We understand that situations change and implementation is not always possible. By getting to the decision making stage though you can still evaluate aspects of the work and reflect upon the process. You can still learn from the design and document that learning.

#### 7.3 Demonstrate Progression

Every Apprentice starts from the basics learnt on their PDC but you will also bring other experience and skills. We measure progression by seeing where you are when you start and see what developments and lessons learnt you have made as you journey through your pathway. We are looking for positive changes, learning from mistakes and heading towards being a confident and competent permaculture designer.

To make this easier for Tutors we expect Apprentices to make explicit on each design how they think they have progressed. This is often part of the Reflection section at the end of a design report where you share what you are learning from the process of being a designer. The Tutor will also be able to see and reflect back to the Apprentice signs of progression that the Tutor has observed. One of the ways in which Tutors can see progression is through increased fluency and confidence in the use of the ethics, principles, design processes and design tools. Tutors will also encourage progression by providing feedback and recommendations on future design work.

Progression is also shown by the degree to which you fulfill the criteria with each design as you move along your pathway. In your initial designs Tutors are expecting that you fulfill criteria, but maybe only just. As you proceed through your designs the expectations will increase. By your final stage designs Tutors will be hoping to see your confidence in the design process shine through.

#### 7.4 Demonstrate Understanding of Permaculture Theory

If we define permaculture as applied ecology, then ecology is a vital part of permaculture theory. Design and ethics as other areas of permaculture theory are covered in separate criteria. Here, we encourage you to consider how ecological thinking applies to your design.

Here are a few ways to bring ecological thinking into your design practice:

- Pattern observation how does nature express itself on your land, or in the social context you are working in.
- Pattern analysis Reflect how fundamental principles such as succession, flow, food webs or edge effects express themselves in your project and how they could be applied or modified beneficially.
- Remember that we humans are nature, and reflect which fundamental patterns can be applied in the personal and social aspects of your work.
- Additionally you can draw on systems theory or ethical or philosophical writings coming out of or relating to permaculture. It is a valuable contribution to introduce theories from other disciplines that you are active in, and explore what relevance they have in permaculture design and practice.
- This might include discussion about the ethics and principles or new
  developments in design processes and tools. For the assessment we ask you
  to reference the theory and acknowledge when you have referenced other
  people's work. You could draw on books, articles, videos or diploma design
  work by others, as well as your own reflective writings which you can include as
  part of your portfolio.

#### 7.5 A Review of Relevant Activities

This is a final summary and reflection of your whole diploma. It may be the closing chapter of your Learning Pathway design or it may stand alone. It is your opportunity to stand back and reflect upon your whole journey. Where did you start? What did you learn? What books did you read or courses did you do? Where are you now? Where will you go next? What were your key lessons learnt? This should be submitted after your last design has been assessed, and will not be assessed against any criteria. It can also provide a framework for what you share at your Final Presentation Event. It should include some key reflections covering such topics as your use of the ethics, principles, design tools and design processes.

## 7.6 Your Designer's CV

We hope you will become a confident and competent permaculture designer that other people will want to consult. Your skills and experience will matter and so we encourage you to get out there and promote yourself to offer your services to a world in need. Creating your Designer's CV is an obvious first step. Your Tutor should be able to point you towards examples of existing CVs, although they won't be assessing it. Well done and congratulations when you get to this point. It is truly exciting.

## 8. Some Frequently Asked Questions

# Should I document my design as I go or try to write it up once it is all finished as a process?

Tutors recommend that you document as you go. The process of documenting encourages reflective practice and enables new insights into your current work. Trying to write up your designs months or even years later will be deeply frustrating as you try to recall what happened when, and struggle to find that photo you took.

### Can I work in collaboration with someone else on my design?

Yes, collaborating with someone else on your design is encouraged. The other person may or may not be a Diploma Apprentice. You will need to be clear about who carried out which aspects of the design work and provide clear evidence. In your report you will need to be explicit about what you did and what your collaborators did and what you did together. Each collaborator may end up creating their own design report to show the story from their angle and focus on the work they did.

### I experience Dyslexia. Can I still do the Diploma?

Yes you can and many have before you. There are many Apprentices and several Tutors who experience dyslexia and other forms of neurodiversity. One of the Tutors has even written a blog about the subject. It is appropriate to explore with your Tutor your learning style and particular needs so that the Tutor can support you appropriately. Maybe you might choose a particular Tutor that can offer the relevant support to you and maybe forming an Apprentice support group will help too.

#### Do I need to check my spelling and grammar before getting my design assessed?

Yes please. One of the criteria is that the report should be suitable for the client and intelligible. So your work needs to be understood by others including the assessing Tutor. There are some minor variations though on the expectations by Tutors so check with them first. If the client is yourself then Tutors are more likely to be lenient as long as they understand the work then the odd spelling and grammar error is not important. If English is your second language or if you struggle with accurate spelling and grammar we recommend that you ask someone you know (maybe another Apprentice or a friend) to check your work before submitting for assessment. Some Tutors may insist upon this before assessment takes place as it makes the process of assessment far easier.

# Is there an official list of design processes, design tools, ethics and principles recognised by the Permaculture Association?

Currently no, there is not a single list. We like diversity! There are a few commonly referred to "lists" including a spreadsheet created by Hannah Thorogood, a booklet created by Cat Dolleris, a deck of cards created by Delvin Solkinson and the Permaculture Association's Knowledge Base. You will have learnt some on your PDC but there are more! Your Tutor may share with you a list that they have put together or share one of the above already mentioned. We encourage the development of new processes and tools if they fit with the ethics and can forward our ability to make good decisions for people and the planet. There are however some processes and tools that are so commonly used and so relevant to the permaculture design process that we would be surprised if they did not appear somewhere in your portfolio. This might include OBREDIM / GOBRADIM, SADIM / GoSADIM, Design Web, Inputs and Outputs, Functions and Elements, Zoning and Base Maps. We recommend having a good look at recent completed diploma portfolios to look out for other commonly used processes and tools.

## Can I still fulfill the criteria if I don't like using computers and don't create word documents?

Yes, for sure. You can use a variety of formats to report on your design work. We have seen websites, videos, photos and of course hand drawn work. There will always be creative options open to you. Whatever you create though must still fulfill the criteria and be shareable.

#### Do all designs need to define their client and design brief?

Yes. It is essential to define who the client is so that you can define the client's needs, even if the client is yourself. Once the needs are known then the boundaries and intentions of the work can be defined. This may manifest as stating the goals or aims of a design early on. In other cases it may be more appropriate to develop the goals as the analysis of the observations unfolds. By defining the brief and goals of the design, no matter what stage that emerges, they will be really useful at a later stage to enable your evaluation of the design by asking a key question. Did I fulfill the goals that I set?

### Does every design have to include both evaluation and reflection?

Yes they do. They are both important aspects of the learning process, and we ask that you ideally separate them out in your design documentation. We have specific interpretations of these two words. Evaluation is where you focus on what you learned in relation to the content and topic of your design whereas Reflection is where you focus on what you learned in relation to the processes used in your design. The use of both

evaluation and reflection is really important. They are the points where you demonstrate to yourself and to the Tutor what you have learned and your progression towards becoming a confident and competent permaculture designer. They are the points where you celebrate.

#### Would I be assessed differently if I choose a different Tutor?

Possibly as every Tutor comes with their own experience and interest, and will inevitably view your portfolio in a unique way. However Tutors are trained to carry out assessment work so each Apprentice should receive a similar assessment experience. Tutors are also expected to fulfil various CPD requirements, repeat training on a regular basis and keep up to date on changes to the diploma system. The Senior Tutor group is responsible for setting the standards and the interpretation of the criteria. New assessment level Tutors, as well as undergoing training, are also observed and assessed on their initial delivery of assessment work. Furthermore the Final Portfolio Assessment is carried out by two Tutors to ensure an internal verification of the work. The Tutors have regular meetings to discuss and identify issues relating to criteria and other matters. We make many efforts to ensure that there is a high degree of standardisation in the interpretation of criteria amongst all Tutors.