Permaculture Design Course - Core Curriculum Check List

A certificate from the Permaculture Association (Britain) can only be awarded if the Permaculture Design Course (PDC) content covers the topics set out in the Core Curriculum. This is available from here: https://www.permaculture.org.uk/education/pdc-core-curriculum

PDCs are designed and taught in many different ways with a range of approaches and formats. This check list aims to support teachers and the Association in making sure courses cover the Core Curriculum, if the intention is to award students with a PDC certificate.

Online Courses

For online PDC's - Please pay particular attention to the delivery of the course.

You will need to record on your core curriculum document how and when the following points are addressed in your course:

4.2 Skills, Tools & methods (How are you assessing each students understanding and ability prior to moving on to the next topic?)
4.3 Design Practice (How are you assessing each students understanding?)
4.4 Design Presentation (Do they have the opportunity to develop their design skills with a group? / How is their final design presentation peer reviewed?).
5.8 Visit site(s) which exemplify permaculture principles. (Do you identify local sites and promote or arrange visits for students?)

For the PcA Britain to certify that your online course includes sufficient design practice and skill development for the student, we will need brief access to your online course, to ensure that it does fulfil 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 5.8 before certifying your online course.

All courses

This check list will enable you to compare your course and teaching plan with the core curriculum and make brief notes about any tweaks and changes you feel are needed for your course to satisfy the curriculum. Once completed please return this form together with an outline teaching plan and timetable to the Education Working Group and the Permaculture Association office – education@permaculture.org.uk. You only need to submit one form, this will cover all the PDCs you teach. We will ask that the form is completed once a year (or longer, but after any updating of the core curriculum) to take into account any changes in the curriculum or your teaching.

Using the check list
You will need a copy of the Core Curriculum and the teaching plan for your course. Work through the check list, referring to the Core Curriculum for more detail. Next to each essential topic indicate whether this is covered in your course (yes/no), where in your teaching plan this topic is covered (time / session reference) and finally whether you feel there is a need for any changes, tweaks or additional resources to ensure that your course covers the Core Curriculum adequately. This is to help you reflect on your course and is optional. Curriculum topics in italics are recommended but optional. The Education Working Group of the Permaculture Association are also very interested to hear your thoughts on the curriculum, please feed these back in section 8.

Name of lead teacher:

1. Context

Topic	Covered?	Teaching plan reference	Changes, tweaks, resources? (optional)
What is permaculture?			
Permaculture as an approach to designing systems which meet human needs.			
A Brief History of permaculture			

2. Ethics

Topic	Covered?	Teaching plan reference	Changes, tweaks, resources?
Earth Care			
People Care			
Fair Shares			
Exploring different interpretations of the ethics and how they are applied in practice.			
Explore why students are on the course .			

3. Principles
The principles below are as they appear in the Mollison's Designers' Manual. Other wordings are acceptable.

Topic	Covered?	Teaching plan reference	Changes, tweaks, resources?
Attitudinal Principles: • Work with nature, not against • The problem is the solution (Liabilities into assets) • Make the least change for the greatest possible effect • *The yield of a system is theoretically unlimited* • *Start from your back door and work outwards* • *Everything Gardens (or has an effect on its environment)*			

Ecological Principles:
- Cycling of energy, nutrients & resources
- Succession
- Edge effects
- Microclimate
- Every element performs multiple functions
- Every function is supported by multiple elements

- *Co-operation rather than competition. How does this square with the fact that nature is competitive as well as collaborative?*
- *Niches – how to profit from them*
- *Use stacking in space and time to increase yields.*
- *Value Diversity: including guilds.*
- *Efficient energy planning (e.g. zone, sector, slope).*
- *Place elements to maximise the beneficial relationships between them (relative location).*
- *Value biological resources*
- *everything works both ways, and permaculture is information and imagination-intensive.*

Principles sessions should mention that there are contributions from many other sources. *You may choose to explore them in depth as well.*
 	
• *Holmgren Principles*
 	
Permaculture design can be seen from many different perspectives e.g.:
 	
• *Energy Management*
• *People Care*
• *Landscape Design*
• *Pattern understanding*
    ○ *Physical*
    ○ *Mental*
    ○ *Behavioural*
    ○ *Natural*
    ○ *Designing from pattern to detail*			

4. Design

Topic	Covered?	Teaching plan reference	Changes, tweaks, resources?
Process Frameworks: e.g. SADIM / OBREDIMET / other.			

Skills, Tools & methods:
- Observation
- Patterns
- Research
- Client Interview
- Surveying
- Maps & Mapping
- Key Planning Tools:
    - Zones, sectors, energies in the landscape
    - Reading the landscape
    - Relative location
    - Input/output analysis
    - Climate & microclimate
    - Further analysis tools (e.g. identifying functions and elements, *SMART goals, SWOC, placement, design by limiting factors, process flows)*

Many teachers also include:
- *Levelling tools: A-frame, Bunyip*
- *Plants, animals, structures, tools/ technologies, events (PASTE).*
- *Mapping tools:*
    - *Elevation*
    - *Pacing*
    - *Slope/aspect*
- *Plus, Minus, Interesting (PMI) evaluation tool*
- *Conservation & hierarchy of intervention*
- *Yeoman's scale of permanence*
- *McHarg's exclusion method*
- *Limiting factors and hierarchy of resource use*
- *Random assembly*
- *Data overlay*
- *Collaborative decision making*
- *Phenological/biotime diaries*
- *Wild design*
- *sit spot*
- *Shade mapping*
- *Spirals of erosion & entropy*

Design Practice
• A series of opportunities to develop and practice design skills throughout the course, leading to...
• Final design exercise *(This may be individual and/or group exercise)* that is both sustainable and productive
 	
• *Group working/process skills, for example:*
   ○ *Planning and allocating tasks and time*
   ○ *Decision making in groups (Sociocracy for example)*
   ○ *Communication & conflict resolution*
   ○ *Using permaculture principles & ethics in groups*			

Design Presentation • Students should have seen at least one implemented design of diploma standard • Sharing & evaluating design work. The design may be an individual and/or group presentation; creative presentations are encouraged. For distance learning, a design portfolio should be submitted. • *How to present - presentation skills, hints & tips* • *How to give & receive feedback (if students are giving each other feedback).*			
Celebration			

5. Themes

Topic	Covered?	Teaching plan reference	Changes, tweaks, resources?

Soil The following topics should be covered: • Soil food web: macro- and micro-organisms and their relationships • Tilling: pros & cons • Composting • Mulching – why and how • Soil sampling & analysis: types, textures, pH. Simple solutions. • Mycorrhizal and bacterial associations • Fertility factors • Erosion – a natural process: plus and minus • Indicator species and dynamic accumulators			
Water A minimum of 4 of the following topics should be covered in detail and all of them mentioned: • Water availability • The hydrological cycle • Rainwater harvesting • Retention in the landscape (e.g. soils, swales, key line planning etc). Dryland vs temperate. • Drainage • Water use in the home and at work and domestic water saving • Aquaculture • Water as an energy store			

Plants/trees A minimum of 5 of the following topics should be covered in detail and all of them mentioned: • Tree species, native & exotic, and uses • Energy transactions of trees • Forest gardening • Agroforestry • Windbreaks & shelterbelts • Riparian buffers • Grassland management; holistic management • Plant communities / Indicator plants • Orchards • Sustainable woodland management • Guilds and other ways of looking at plant co-operation			
Growing your own food A minimum of 4 of the following topics should be covered in detail and all of them mentioned: • polycultures – why & how • permaculture and organic gardening • bed creation • seasonal planning • food preservation • field scale strategies • designing broadscale agriculture • hugelkultur and Sepp Holzer's work • livestock / animals in the system			

Built environment			
A minimum of 3 of the following topics should be covered in detail and all of them mentioned: Recommended topics: • Ecological buildings and structure (e.g. local materials, U value, thermal mass) • Retrofitting • Buildings & the home • A Pattern Language & the Timeless Way of Building • Energy Management & the Spiral of intervention • Urban permaculture • Transport priorities • Renewable energy sources and management • Energy efficient planning in the urban context (zones, sectors, elevation etc). • The planning process			
Resource use • *Ecological footprints,* • *Resource choices* • *Personal asset assessment – knowing your own value* • *Setting future learning – recognise where you can strengthen your design capability*			

Social systems/contexts A minimum of 5 of the following topics should be covered in detail and all of them mentioned: • Zone 00: personal resilience e.g. *(e.g. Non-violent communication, Work that Reconnects, healthy diet, Herbal Medicine, Conflict Resolution)* • The importance of vibrant, well-connected community *(4 generations model, transition towns etc.)* • Health & wellbeing • Finance & Economics (e.g. real wealth, money and alternatives,) • Land Tenure & Community Governance • Culture & Education (including learning from nature) • Communication skills • Decision making *(e.g. consensus & Sociocracy)*			
Site visit(s) which exemplify permaculture principles			

6. Next Steps & Further Information

Topic	Covered?	Teaching plan reference	Changes, tweaks, resources?
• Introduction to the Permaculture Association (Britain) and why/how to become a member.			
• Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design			
• *Establishing/linking with local groups*			

• *Further learning goals*			
• *Identifying allies*			
• *Setting up action learning guilds/peer support groups- next steps in the permaculture pathway*			

7. Feedback

Topic	Covered?	Teaching plan reference	Changes, tweaks, resources?
Course participants should be given opportunity to give feedback about the course to the tutors.			

8. Additional information

Are there any other topics to be included that are currently not on the curriculum? Please explain why.

Any topics you feel should be taken out. Please explain why.

```

```

Any other comments about your course and its relationship with the curriculum

```

```