

# Assessment to demonstrate PDC equivalence (ScotLAND Learner)

If you have done a PDC, you don't need to fill in this application. Instead, fill in this [short form \(5 mins\)](#).

## Background

When the Learning and Network Demonstration (LAND) project was initially set up, the coordinator found that applicants who had not done a Permaculture Design Course (PDC) were not ready to represent a Demonstration Centre because they consistently did not have the knowledge and skills normally learnt during a PDC. Thus, when ScotLAND began following the success of the LAND project, it was recommended that the applicant had already completed a PDC as this was the best way to ensure they were well-prepared before a tutor took the considerable time to visit the site.

However, there are many different ways that people can learn about permaculture and the ScotLAND coordinators have, over the years, found that the PDC criterion has limited knowledgeable people and worthy applications from becoming a ScotLAND Learner Centre. As a result, we have created this 'alternative' application form, informed by the Assessment of Prior Learning framework, which is intended as a way for independent learners to demonstrate their knowledge of permaculture up to 'PDC equivalence' (i.e. the standard expected of someone who has attended a PDC). In doing so we have created a way for people who feel that they have a good understanding of permaculture to have that recognised formally, and we hope this is a step towards a more autonomous and independently-minded network of permaculture demonstration sites.

## Feedback welcome

*This is a new system in its pilot phase; it may yet evolve in response to feedback we receive. If you are reading this then you are one of the first people to apply to ScotLAND in this way, and we would love to hear about your experience doing so.*

The application form has been adapted from the Permaculture Association's PDC Core Curriculum, which is available to read on our website here: <https://www.permaculture.org.uk/education/pdc-core-curriculum>.

This pilot has been co-authored by Finn Weddle, Lusi Alderslowe and Steve Charter. Our gratitude to you for taking part.

## Completing the assessment

The assessment is split into *six sections*, some of which are broken down further into different *topics (grey box)* and *subtopics (white box)*, with the exception of Section 5 which are called *themes and subthemes*. The maximum word count is in the region of 4,500 words if you choose to respond to every question in the written word, although this is a maximum and you may write a lot less than this. You may also choose to respond to any or all questions using pictures, diagrams or mindmaps, or submit your whole entry as a video. It is expected that this assessment should take you no more than a day's work (i.e. 7 hours), and hopefully a lot less. It is not meant to be a way for you to find out about permaculture, but for you to demonstrate what you already know. We have tried our best to make the assessment process as short and straightforward as possible, but the simple truth is that it is hard to condense a 72-hour/12-day course into just a few pages.

### Technical help

This file has been created as a PDF which is a stable file format. The best way to complete it is to download the PDF, open it with your preferred word processor (Microsoft Word, LibreOffice Writer etc) to fill it in, and when you are done save it as a PDF (File->Export as PDF) before returning it to us. This ensures that the file we receive from you is also in a stable format, and we won't have to chase you for the half of your application which fell off the page! It also means any images you include in your application won't get lost. Don't hesitate to contact the ScotLAND coordinator on [scotlandworker@permaculture.org.uk](mailto:scotlandworker@permaculture.org.uk) if you need any help.

### Attaching images and design work

Many people don't sit comfortably writing an assessment form of many thousands of words, nor do we believe it is the very best way to assess an understanding of all the complex concepts and facets of permaculture. This is why we have included the possibility of attaching images and diagrams (etc), or submitting as a video (referred to throughout the assessment as 'represent visually'). Your image can be digitally-drawn or a clear, high-resolution photograph of something you have hand-drawn. There is no limit to how many images you can submit, and you can use one image to answer multiple *subtopics/subthemes* within a single *topic/theme* (you may not use one image to cover multiple *topics/themes* as this would get too confusing to mark).

We will not go into detail here about how to best include images in your application. All we ask is that your submission is very clear and easy to interpret; if it is not we will have to return it to you and ask for it to be made clearer.

### Plagiarism

There are many permaculture resources out there on the web these days, which can only be a good thing. However, we strongly advise you write your responses in your own words as we believe it will be a more worthwhile task for both you and the assessor (and probably less time consuming!). We will use excerpts from your assessment to test for plagiarism, so please refrain from doing so.

# 1. Context

<i>Topic: What is permaculture and where/what did it come from?</i>	<i>Please answer in a maximum of 100 words or represent visually:</i>	<i>Please cite any references and sources:</i>
<p>What is permaculture?</p> <p>Please describe it, its history and it's approach. You could include what differentiates permaculture from other design or sustainability movements.</p>		

## 2. Ethics

<i>Topic: The Permaculture Ethics</i>	<i>Please describe in a maximum of 100 words (each) , or represent visually, the ethics below:</i>	<i>Briefly, give examples from your own experience:</i>
❖ Earth Care		
❖ People Care		
❖ Fair Shares		
❖ The relationship between the three ethics		

### 3. Principles

<i>Topic: Mollison's attitudinal principles:</i>	<i>Please describe in a maximum of 50 words (each), or represent visually, the attitudinal principles below:</i>	<i>Give examples from your own experience or from your own site/project (max. 50 words each):</i>
❖ Work with nature, not against		
❖ The problem is the solution (Liabilities into assets)		
❖ Make the least change for the greatest possible effect		
<i>Topic: Mollison's Ecological Principles:</i>	<i>Please describe in a maximum of 50 words (each), or represent visually, the ecological principles below:</i>	<i>Give examples from your own experience or from your own site/project (max. 50 words each):</i>
❖ Cycling of energy, nutrients & resources		
❖ Succession		
❖ Edge effects		
❖ Microclimate		
❖ Every element performs multiple functions		
❖ Every function is		

supported by multiple elements		
<i>Topic: Other Principles</i>	<i>Principle, brief descriptor:</i>	<i>Source:</i>
❖ Please list any other principles that you've come across		

## 4. Design

<p><i>Topic: Design process</i></p>	<p><i>Please name and describe in a maximum of 200 words, or represent visually, at least one of the design frameworks listed:</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ A Design Process Framework, for example:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ SADIM;</li> <li>➤ OBREDIMET;</li> <li>➤ or others</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
<p><i>Topic: Design Skills, Tools and Methods</i></p>	<p><i>Please describe in a maximum of 50 words (each), or represent visually, as many of the following skills/tools/methods as you can:</i></p>	<p><i>Please describe how you would use (or have used) this design tool (max. 50 words each):</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Observation</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Patterns</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Research</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Client Interview</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Maps and mapping</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Zones, sectors, energies in the landscape</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Reading the landscape</li> </ul>		

❖ Relative location		
❖ Input/output analysis		
❖ Climate & microclimate		
❖ Any further analysis tools (e.g. identifying functions and elements, SMART goals, SWOC, placement, design by limiting factors, process flows etc).		

Please attach a copy of the design which you have made of your site, with a description of the following:

- ❖ Your observations of the land/building/other and the people involved
- ❖ Which design process and tools you used to create it
- ❖ How it demonstrates all three permaculture ethics
- ❖ Which permaculture principles it demonstrates and how
- ❖ Reflections on the design process

Have you ever been mentored in your design work, or had the opportunity to learn about design from someone more experienced than you? If so, please describe:

Have you visited or volunteered at any established permaculture projects, including ScotLAND Centres/Learners? Please list, describe, and state when you visited:

## 5. Themes

*For each of the following themes in blue, please describe or represent visually and explain why it is important (max. 100 words). Subsequently, please describe or represent visually a number of subthemes listed on the left (max. 50 words each). The number of subthemes to be covered differs in each theme:*

<i>Theme: Soil</i>	
Subthemes <b>(cover all)</b> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Soil food web: macro- and micro-organisms and their relationships</li> <li>● Tilling: pros &amp; cons</li> <li>● Composting</li> <li>● Mulching – why and how</li> <li>● Soil sampling &amp; analysis: types, textures, pH. Simple solutions.</li> <li>● Mycorrhizal and bacterial associations</li> <li>● Fertility factors</li> <li>● Erosion – a natural process: plus and minus</li> <li>● Indicator species and dynamic accumulators</li> </ul>	
<i>Theme: Water</i>	
Subthemes <b>(cover 4)</b> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Water availability</li> <li>● The hydrological cycle</li> <li>● Rainwater harvesting</li> <li>● Retention in the landscape (e.g. soils, swales, key line planning etc.; dryland vs</li> </ul>	

temperate) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Drainage</li> <li>● Water use in the home and at work and domestic water saving</li> <li>● Aquaculture</li> <li>● Water as an energy store</li> </ul>	
<i>Theme: Plants &amp; trees</i>	
Subthemes ( <b>cover 5</b> ): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tree species, native &amp; exotic, and uses</li> <li>● Energy transactions of trees</li> <li>● Forest gardening</li> <li>● Agroforestry</li> <li>● Windbreaks &amp; shelterbelts</li> <li>● Riparian buffers</li> <li>● Grassland management; holistic management</li> <li>● Plant communities / Indicator plants</li> <li>● Orchards</li> <li>● Sustainable woodland management</li> <li>● Guilds and other ways of looking at plant co-operation</li> </ul>	
<i>Theme: Growing your own food</i>	
Subthemes ( <b>cover 4</b> ): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Polycultures – why &amp; how</li> <li>● Permaculture and organic gardening</li> <li>● Bed creation</li> <li>● Seasonal planning</li> <li>● Food preservation</li> <li>● Field scale strategies</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Designing broadscale agriculture</li> <li>● Hugelkultur and Sepp Holzer's work</li> <li>● Livestock/animals in the system</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Theme: Built environment</i></p>	
<p>Subtopics <b>(cover 3)</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ecological buildings and structure (e.g. local materials, U value, thermal mass)</li> <li>● Retrofitting</li> <li>● Buildings &amp; the home</li> <li>● A Pattern Language &amp; the Timeless Way of Building</li> <li>● Energy Management &amp; the Spiral of Intervention</li> <li>● Urban permaculture</li> <li>● Transport priorities</li> <li>● Renewable energy sources and management</li> <li>● Energy efficient planning in the urban context (zones, sectors, elevation etc).</li> <li>● The planning process</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Theme: Resource use</i></p>	
<p>Subtopics <b>(none required)</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ecological footprints</li> <li>● Resource choices</li> <li>● Personal asset assessment – knowing your own value</li> <li>● Setting future learning – recognise where you can strengthen your design capability</li> </ul>	<p><i>You need not cover any subthemes in this theme, but may choose to if struggling to respond to other topics.</i></p>

<i>Theme: Social systems and context</i>	
<p>Subtopics (<b>cover 5</b>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Zone 00: personal resilience</li> <li>● The importance of vibrant, well-connected community</li> <li>● Health &amp; wellbeing</li> <li>● Finance &amp; Economics (e.g. real wealth, money and alternatives)</li> <li>● Land Tenure &amp; Community Governance</li> <li>● Culture &amp; Education (including learning from nature)</li> <li>● Communication skills</li> <li>● Decision making</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Are there themes or subthemes, either listed above or not, which are particular strengths in your knowledge or your project?</i>  NB This is not necessary for your assessment, but is information we would like to have on hand for the wider network.</p>	

## 6. Next Steps & Further Information

<p><i>As someone applying to be a ScotLAND Centre, it is important you are able to tell people about both the formal and non-formal learning pathways for those who want to learn more about permaculture.</i></p>	<p><i>Please name and describe in a maximum of 50 words (each) or represent visually:</i></p>
<p>The benefits of being a member of the Permaculture Association, and how to join.</p>	
<p><i>Essential skills:</i> Describe the main ways of learning the basics of permaculture which are available to prospective students (in Scotland and beyond).</p>	
<p><i>The Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design:</i> How long does it take to do the Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design, what could be the benefits of doing it (for someone who is interested), and what do you have to do to complete it?</p>	
<p>Any other membership organisations/networks for people in permaculture, and further learning and career pathways.</p>	

Total max word count in the region of 4,500.