

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.

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.

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 to join the CTR and this will cover all the PDCs you teach. However, we will ask that this form is completed after significant changes to the curriculum or your teaching. Forward updated forms to education@permaculture.org.uk.

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:

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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, inc Indigenous influences on the roots of permaculture			
<i>Permaculture is about taking responsibility</i>			

2. Ethics

Topic	Covered?	Teaching plan reference	Changes, tweaks, resources?
Earth Care			
People Care, inc Human needs in addition to basic needs, for example; <i>health including psychological, social, resilience, safety, confidence</i>			
Fair Shares or Future Care, inc Equity vs Equality; <i>access, opportunities and power balance</i>			
<i>Exploring different interpretations of the ethics and how they are applied in practice.</i>			
<i>Explore why students are on the course.</i>			

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?
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<p>Attitudinal Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with nature, not against • The problem is the solution (Liabilities into assets) • Make the least change for the greatest possible effect • <i>The yield of a system is theoretically unlimited</i> • <i>Start from your back door and work outwards</i> • <i>Everything Gardens (or has an effect on its environment)</i> 			
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Ecological Principles:

- Cycling of energy, nutrients & resources
- Succession
- Edge effects
- Microclimate
- Every element performs multiple functions
- Every function is supported by multiple elements
- Relative Location
- *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 in both ways, and permaculture is information and imagination intensive*

<p>Principles sessions should mention that there are contributions from many other sources. <i>You may choose to explore them in depth as well.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Holmgren Principles</i> <p><i>Permaculture design can be seen from many different perspectives e.g.:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Energy Management</i> • <i>People Care</i> • <i>Landscape Design</i> • <i>Pattern understanding</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Physical</i> • <i>Mental</i> • <i>Behavioural</i> • <i>Natural</i> • <i>Designing from pattern to detail</i> 			
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4. Design

Topic	Covered?	Teaching plan reference	Changes, tweaks, resources?
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<p>Process Frameworks: e.g. SADIM / OBREDIMET / other.</p> <p>4.1 Permaculture design can be applied in many different ways and contexts e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy Management • People Care and people systems e.g. community design, holistic care, wellbeing, governance • Landscape Design: urban, rural, farm scale, garden scale • Pattern understanding, for example: Physical patterns; Mental patterns; Behavioural patterns; Natural patterns, Designing from pattern to detail 			
<p>Skills, Tools & methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation • Patterns • Research • Client Interview • Surveying • Maps & Mapping • Key Planning Tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>diaries</i> <i>Wild design</i> <i>sit spot</i> <i>Shade mapping</i> <i>Spirals of erosion & entropy</i> <i>Cascade of intervention</i> <i>6 coloured thinking hats</i> 			
<p>Design Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A series of opportunities to develop and practice design skills throughout the course, leading to... Final design exercise (<i>This may be individual and/or group exercise</i>) that is both sustainable and productive <i>Group working/process skills, for example:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Planning and allocating tasks and time</i> <i>Decision making in groups (Sociocracy for example)</i> <i>Communication & conflict resolution</i> <i>Using permaculture principles & ethics in groups</i> <i>Presentation & recording skills</i> 			

Design Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <i>How to present - presentation skills, hints & tips</i> <i>How to give & receive feedback (if students are giving each other feedback).</i> 			
Celebration			

5. Themes

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

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<p>Plants/trees</p> <p>A minimum of 5 of the following topics should be covered in detail and all of them mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 			
<p>Growing and sourcing your food.</p> <p>Growing Your Own</p> <p>A minimum of 4 of the following topics should be covered in detail and all of them mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • polycultures – why & how • permaculture and organic gardening • bed creation • seasonal planning • food preservation • field scale strategies 			

- field scale strategies
- designing broadscale agriculture
- hugelkultur and Sepp Holzer's work
- livestock / animals in the system e.g. holistic management, mob grazing

Purchasing and sourcing your food

A minimum of 4 of the following topics should be covered:

- Food security and nutrition
- Studying and designing input-output cycles
- Localisation of purchasing & supply
- Ethical and organic choices
- Carbon and ecological footprints of food choices
- Transport, packaging, chemical additions, affordability, nutritional quality
- Alternatives to shops: farm stalls, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA's), pick your own, veg boxes

<p>Built environment</p> <p>A minimum of 3 of the following topics should be covered in detail and all of them mentioned: Recommended topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 			
<p>Resource use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ecological footprints,</i> • <i>Resource choices</i> • <i>Personal asset assessment – knowing your own value</i> • <i>Setting future learning – recognise where you can strengthen your design capability</i> 			
<p>Social systems/contexts</p> <p>For many of the topics covered</p>			

from social systems; power, privilege and equity should be considered as central to the teaching. A minimum of 5 of the following topics should be covered in detail and all of them mentioned:

- Zone 00: health & wellbeing, personal resilience e.g. (e.g. Non-violent communication, healthy diet, Herbal Medicine, Conflict Resolution)
- The importance of vibrant, well-connected community (4 generations model, transition towns etc.)
- Finance & Economics (e.g. real wealth, money and alternatives,)
- Land Tenure & Community Governance*
- Culture & Education* (including learning from nature)
- Communication skills
- Urban, suburban and rural social, economic and equity contexts
- Decision making (e.g. consensus) & Sociocracy
- Work that Reconnects (less relevant to power, privilege and equity)

<p>Site visit(s) which exemplify permaculture principles</p> <p>★ Ideally a LAND centre</p> <p>If a site visit is not possible then audiovisual material should be used to enable students to see examples of established permaculture projects.</p>			
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6. Next Steps & Further Information

Topic	Covered?	Teaching plan reference	Changes, tweaks, resources?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the Permaculture Association (Britain) and why/how to become a member. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Establishing/linking with local groups</i> 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Further learning goals-</i> e.g. Training of Teachers courses; Advanced design courses; reading and viewing lists; etc. • Developing your own project(s): e.g. Projects and LAND Centres. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identifying allies</i> 			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting up action learning guilds/peer support groups- next steps in the permaculture pathway 			
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7. Feedback

Topic	Covered?	Teaching plan reference	Changes, tweaks, resources?
Course participants should be given regular opportunities 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

Please return this form along with your teaching timetable and application form to education@permaculture.org.uk