



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority

The Diploma within the key stage 4 curriculum

Examples

Example 1:

An overview

This example expands on the general approach described in Section 4 of the *Design for success* guidance booklet.

How can the Diploma integrate with other learning at key stage 4?

This basic model will provide fully for the Diploma at levels 1 and 2 and enable learners following a Diploma to be taught with their peers for the core subjects and for at least one optional subject.

This approach shows how elements of the key stage 4 curriculum might fit together, including:

- statutory and optional elements
- GCSE and other pathways
- the Diploma
- functional skills
- personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS)
- learning acquired in a variety of settings, such as lessons and events.

This example suggests a way in which the Diploma can fit within the overall curriculum. Other examples explore various aspects of this approach.

Day	Statutory curriculum (60%)							Events	Optional curriculum (40%)				Lessons
	Cit and PSHE	PE	RE	Science	Maths	English	ICT		Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	
1													6
2													6
3													6
4													6
5													6
Personal, learning and thinking skills													

Functional skills
 (English, maths, ICT)

Diploma level 1
ASL 1

Diploma level 2
ASL 1

How is learning organised?

- The level 1 Diploma occupies two option blocks for principal learning with additional and specialist learning (ASL) in a third option block.
- The level 2 Diploma occupies three option blocks for principal learning with ASL in a fourth option block.
- Within this timetable, Diploma learners may be learning in school or in other settings within the partnership.
- The school or partnership uses 70 weeks of teaching time across two years and organises events such as activity weeks and focus days for a total of six weeks across key stage 4. These contribute to the generic learning for the Diploma, to functional skills and to PLTS for all learners. These events also enable learners to make links between different subjects and to apply learning in practical contexts. They may take place in school or in other settings within the partnership. It should be noted that 50% of the principal learning in the Diploma must be delivered within an applied setting.
- Functional skills are also covered within elements of the statutory curriculum.
- Personal, learning and thinking skills are built into learning across the curriculum.

Features of this approach

- Diploma learners can be taught with their peers for at least 60% of their programme.
- The time allocation allows for full and coherent Diploma delivery.
- Level 2 Diploma learners can choose ASL from within an option block.
- Level 1 Diploma learners can choose ASL from two option blocks.
- Personal, learning and thinking skills are developed across the curriculum.
- Lessons and events are integrated within learning for all learners.

Time and place

Assuming that 70 weeks will be available over the key stage and that six of these will be used for events such as enterprise weeks, challenge days, visits and work experience, then each option block would be allocated approximately 160 hours over the key stage. This means that:

- the two option blocks for level 1 allow 320 hours for principal learning – 20 more than suggested for the guided learning hours (GLH)
- the three option blocks for level 2 allow 480 hours (exactly the GLH requirement for principal learning)
- within the option block for ASL, there would be a total of:
 - 480 hours for level 1 – leaving 120GLH to be located elsewhere in the curriculum
 - 640 hours for level 2 – leaving 160GLH to be located elsewhere.

Much of this content will be located within the statutory curriculum (and the other option at level 1) where functional skills and PLTS will be covered, and where elements of principal learning might also be included. Some will also fall within the six weeks of events, where a total of 150 hours are available.

This example therefore allows ample scope for flexibility, and does not in any way preclude other arrangements. For example, some partnerships are considering Diploma learners spending a full week in college at a time.

This example does not make any assumptions about the settings in which the learning might take place. Within each partnership there will be a range of school, college and workplace settings, any one of which might be used for any aspect of learning. It will be for partnerships to decide what is most appropriate.

Issues to consider

- How can partnerships ensure that learning in one area of the curriculum, or in one setting, builds upon and complements learning in other areas and settings?
- How can functional skills be integrated across a number of subjects and settings?
- How can PLTS be embedded across all subjects and pathways without duplication?
- What sort of events, activities or focus days/weeks can best contribute to learning for all students?

Example 2:

Pathways within the key stage 4 curriculum

Why this approach?

The key stage 4 curriculum should offer a range of pathways that will meet the needs of all learners. Diplomas will provide one of these. The learning in some of the pathways may require students to learn in settings other than school for up to two days per week. Whatever the arrangement or pathway, learners should be able to make a genuine choice and should not miss out on other aspects of learning, particularly the statutory subjects.

This example addresses the issue of enabling Diploma learners to study in a range of settings other than the school while ensuring that they still have access to the statutory element of the curriculum, which will usually be provided in school.

In this example it is important that learning in one setting builds on and complements learning in another. There are also the practical issues of movement and transport and the need to minimise frequent moves between centres during a day. This example clusters the option blocks so that some learners will be able to study a Diploma course over two days to overcome this problem.

How is learning organised?

- The option blocks are clustered into two days each week so that Diploma learners can be in one setting all day.
- Both level 1 and level 2 Diploma learners may still need to be in school for part of one or both of these days if their additional specialist learning option and second option are being offered there.
- The pathways may include:
 - a Diploma
 - units from the foundation learning tier
 - a Young Apprenticeship
 - GCSE only
 - activities to engage potentially disaffected learners
 - individual arrangements, for example with a work or college placement.

The following example uses the same three days per week for the statutory element of the curriculum and two days for the optional curriculum pathways. More detailed curricula based on this pattern are given in other examples.

Day 1	Statutory subjects
Day 2	Statutory subjects
Day 3	Diploma, GCSE options, FLT, YA, KS4 Engagement, other
Day 4	Diploma, GCSE options, FLT, YA, KS4 Engagement, other
Day 5	Statutory subjects

Features of this approach

- Sixty per cent of curriculum time (three days out of five) enables all statutory aspects to be covered.
- All learners have access to the range of choices.
- Learners can be assigned to appropriate sets for statutory subjects, whatever pathway they are following.
- Two days of learning may be undertaken out of school if necessary.
- There may be little flexibility between the two parts of the curriculum.
- Limitations on the time of teaching staff may make flexibility necessary if statutory subjects and options are to be timetabled. The whole-school examples in this pack indicate how teachers could be deployed.

Variations

- Where enough learners are following pathways other than GCSE only, there would no longer be a need to cluster the GCSE-only learners' statutory subjects and options into separate days. Learners following pathways in settings other than school would still need to study statutory subjects in their three days in school.

	GCSE only		Other pathways
Day 1	Statutory subjects	+ Options	Statutory subjects
Day 2	Statutory subjects	+ Options	Statutory subjects
Day 3	Statutory subjects	+ Options	Other pathways
Day 4	Statutory subjects	+ Options	Other pathways
Day 5	Statutory subjects	+ Options	Statutory subjects

- Further sub-divisions are possible if numbers allow. For example, there could be a designated pathway for those taking a Diploma. If learners on a Diploma programme are taught separately from those on GCSE-only programmes, their curriculum could more easily reflect the structure and content of their Diploma. However, it would mean that none of their learning was shared with non-Diploma learners.

Issues to consider

- Would a critical mass of learners be needed to make separate curricula viable?
- Are there advantages and disadvantages in creating separate pathways for different groups of learners?
- How can you ensure that a GCSE pathway is not regarded as the norm, with others viewed as 'alternative'?

Example 3:

Fitting the programmes within the week

Why this approach?

To enable access to partnership provision within the Diploma, learners may need to be based in a non-school setting for one or two days per week. By providing the same time allocation for the Diploma at levels 1 and 2, a single arrangement can be made for all Diploma learners. This may include both groups being in the same non-school setting at the same time if necessary. This arrangement would make transport and timetabling easier.

The approach would give level 1 learners more than the minimum hours required for Diploma learning. However, this time could be used positively for generic learning, skills development, working on the project and/or to gain enhanced support with their work. Alternatively, learners could use the time to complete level 1 before the end of the key stage and then start building towards post-16 progression. (See the *Progression through the Diploma (14–19)* examples in this pack.)

How is learning organised?

In this arrangement, the Diploma at both levels is set against three option blocks – B, C and D, leaving option A for additional and specialist learning (ASL). Clustering the option blocks on two days would enable learners to be taught in a non-school setting for two days per week.

Learning relating to functional skills would be addressed within the Diploma and also within the compulsory part of the curriculum. It would also be included within the events referred to in Section 4 of the *Design for success* guidance, together with other aspects of the curriculum such as personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and citizenship. The more that can be covered in events, the less time is likely to be needed elsewhere in the timetable.

The example that follows is based on a 30-period week, and a one-week timetable, with each lesson 50 minutes long. It also assumes that a total of six weeks over the two years will be allocated to activities weeks, focus days and similar events, where functional skills, personal, learning and thinking skills and PSHE will be addressed for all learners along with a focus on particular subjects. The time allocations, in terms of 50-minute lessons, could be as follows.

Statutory curriculum	English (4)	Maths (3)	Science (5)	ICT (1)	PSHE (1)	Cit (1)	PE (2)	RE (1)
Options	4 options with 3 lessons for each							
Diploma	For both levels 1 and 2: 9 lessons for principal learning and 3 lessons for ASL (which could be one of the options)							

Day	Statutory curriculum							Events	Optional curriculum				Lessons
	Cit and PSHE	PE	RE	Science	Maths	English	ICT		Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	
1				Science 2	Maths 1	English 2			Option A 1 or ASL 1				6
2		PE 1	RE 1	Science 2	Maths 1	English 1							6
3									Option A 1 or ASL 1	Option B 2 or Diploma	Option C 1 or Diploma	Option D 2 or Diploma	6
4	PSHE/Cit 1								Option A 1 or ASL 1	Option B 1 or Diploma	Option C 2 or Diploma	Option D 1 or Diploma	6
5		PE 2		Science 1	Maths 1	English 1	ICT 1						6
Personal, learning and thinking skills													

Features of this approach

- Issues of timetabling and transport may be simplified by a common time allocation to both levels of the Diploma.
- The two whole days in a non-school setting will only be effective if the ASL is provided in this setting as well. Alternatively, ASL may be provided in a school setting on days one, two and five. Diploma learners may then cover PSHE, citizenship and information and communication technology (ICT) as part of the Diploma on days three and four.
- This approach includes three physical education lessons, which more than satisfies the requirement for 2 hours per week. Citizenship, PSHE and possibly religious education are delivered through a carousel arrangement during the year.

Variations

- Level 1 Diploma learners could be allocated two option blocks for principal learning, and two for ASL. This would enable them to take an extra GCSE or other qualification in option block A. The disadvantage would be that they may then not be able to spend two whole days in settings other than school.
- Science could be increased to 20% through the teaching of ICT across the curriculum, although partnerships will then need to ensure that Diploma learners can acquire this learning if they are in a non-school setting for two full days.
- Option A could be moved from a 'statutory day' to an 'option day', avoiding the need for any aspects of the statutory curriculum to appear within the times that some learners may be in settings other than school.

Issues to consider

- How can appropriate ASL options be made available for Diploma learners?
- Will Diploma learners be in a non-school setting for two days a week for the whole school year? If not, what other provision will be made?
- What are the implications if parts of statutory curriculum or generic learning are taught in settings other than school?
- How can planners be sure that additional time available for level 1 learning is used most effectively?

Example 4:

Longer blocks of time and 1.5 days for Diploma options

Why this approach?

Many schools are moving toward longer blocks of time within the curriculum. In many cases, this has been driven by the need to create a partnership offer that provides for learning experiences in a range of settings. Many schools have found that these longer blocks lend themselves to more investigative approaches and to deeper engagement in the learning process.

Examples one to three are based on a more traditional 50-minute lesson timetable. This approach is based on a two-week programme with three blocks of time each day. The two-week approach is used to avoid splitting option blocks and so reverting to a six-lesson day.

The key advantage is the ability to allocate Diploma provision to three days in each two-week period, rather than the four days in previous examples. This allows the additional and specialist learning option to be offered in a school setting without learners having to change settings during the day. It also gives a better spread of the subjects in the statutory section of the curriculum.

How is learning organised?

This timetable is essentially the same as previous examples, only with longer blocks of time. The time allocations are in terms of longer lessons of a notional 1 hour 40 minutes.

Statutory curriculum	English (4)	Maths (4)	Science (5)	ICT (1)	PSHE (0.5)	Cit (0.5)	PE (2)	RE (1)
Options	4 options with 3 longer lessons over the two weeks							
Diploma	For both levels 1 and 2: 3 longer lessons for principal learning and 1 lesson for ASL (which could be one of the options)							

The numbers in brackets refer to the number of 'longer lessons' allocated over the two-week period.

Day	Statutory curriculum								Events	Optional curriculum				Lessons
	Cit and PSHE	PE	RE	Science	Maths	English	ICT	Option A		Option B	Option C	Option D		
1				Science 1	Maths 1	English 1							3	
2				Science 1	Maths 1	English 1							3	
3										Option B 1 or Diploma	Option C 1 or Diploma	Option D 1 or Diploma	3	
4										Option B 1 or Diploma	Option C 1 or Diploma	Option D 1 or Diploma	3	
5		PE 1		Science 1		English 1							3	
6				Science 1		English 1			Option A 1 or ASL 1				3	
7				Science 1	Maths 1				Option A 1 or ASL 1				3	
8										Option B 1 or Diploma	Option C 1 or Diploma	Option D 1 or Diploma	3	
9	PSHE 0.5 Cit 0.5				Maths 1		ICT 1						3	
10		PE 1.5	RE 0.5						Option A 1 or ASL 1				3	
Personal, learning and thinking skills														

Features of this approach

- The quality of learning may be improved through the use of longer blocks of time.
- There are reasonable time allocations for all subjects.
- Three or four full days per fortnight can be set aside for Diploma work.
- The Diploma at level 1 is timetabled across the same time as level 2, making it larger than it needs to be. However, such additional time can be used positively.
- It should be possible to split time blocks where appropriate (some learning may be more appropriate in shorter blocks of time).
- Option A may be used as part of the extended statutory curriculum, which could include modern foreign languages.

Variations

- Allocating subjects two blocks in a row or moving options together creates opportunities for even longer blocks of time for intensive learning.
- Options can be spread so that Diploma provision can be made possible on four days in each two-week programme (rather than across three days). This would require one option block to be taken in a non-school setting.

Issues to consider

- What is the impact and potential of a two-week timetable in increasing flexibility?
- What are the possible difficulties in fitting this approach within the programmes of different institutions within a partnership?

