



# Progression through the Diploma (14–19)

## Examples

### Example 1:

## Personalising the Diploma

### Why this approach?

The Diploma is designed to promote progression and retention by operating across the 14–19 continuum. It aims to motivate learners and enable them to develop their learning in the various aspects of principal learning and additional and specialist learning (ASL) as well as developing functional skills and personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS).

The key to the Diploma approach is the recognition that progress may not be equal in all aspects of learning. For example, at any point, attainment in ASL could be at a different level to that in principal learning or functional skills. The aim is to ensure that learners achieve the highest attainment levels possible across Diploma components and that programmes are delivered to reflect individual abilities and aspirations.

### How is learning organised?

In year 10, Diploma principal learning at level 1 is allocated the same amount of time as at level 2, that is, three option blocks or 7.5 guided learning hours (GLH) per week. This means that the principal learning component of 240GLH can be completed by the end of year 10.

In year 11, a further 240GLH are available. During this time learners can complete their level 1 Diploma, with 60GLH of principal learning / a project, and undertake 180GLH of their level 2 programme.

Functional skills are taught within the Diploma and through the compulsory curriculum and events, so the outcome for any individual learner can be at level 1 or level 2 and can differ between mathematics, English and information and communication technology. Learners can also take functional skills assessments at intervals during the key stage. Personal, learning and thinking skills are developed across the whole curriculum including Diploma learning and are assessed as part of principal learning.

At 120GLH, ASL fits comfortably within a fourth option block (160GLH over the key stage). Additional and specialist learning may be a GCSE, with outcomes at either level as above, or be relevant to the Line of Learning. Where learners are aiming for early completion of level 1, some of these units may be chosen to enable achievement at either level.

By the end of key stage 4, learners could have achieved:

- a level 1 Diploma
- one or more of the functional skills at level 2
- ASL at level 1 or level 2
- some Diploma units at level 2.

This places them in a good position for post-16 progression. In year 12, learners could have a further 240GLH of principal learning / a project at level 2 to complete, in addition to any aspects of functional skills and ASL not achieved at level 2. Individual programmes are likely to vary a good deal depending on prior attainment. The size of individual level 2 programmes will also vary according to the length of the teaching week in schools and colleges, but most learners should be able to complete level 2 within year 12. Many will also be able to begin work on level 3 units, as shown in the following diagram.

In year 13, achievement within the level 3 Diploma will be dependent on how many units have been achieved in year 12, and the length of the teaching week. Some learners would be able to complete the progression qualification (720GLH). In year 14 all learners would be able to complete the level 3 Diploma.

The following diagram sets out a hypothetical progression pattern for a Diploma learner who started a level 1 Diploma in year 10, but who gained a level 2 pass in ASL and was able to start level 3 units of principal learning in year 12.

Year 10	PL level 1		ASL level 1/2	FS level 1/2		
Year 11	Project level 1	PL level 2	ASL level 1/2	FS level 1/2		
Year 12	PL level 2		ASL level 2	Project level 2	FS level 2	PL level 3
Year 13	PL level 3		ASL level 3	Project level 3		
Year 14	PL level 3		ASL level 3	Project level 3		

### Features of this approach

- There is recognition that learners develop at different rates.
- There is recognition that achievement can vary across a programme.
- Progression at an individual pace, through a personalised model, is enabled.
- Learners are encouraged to progress by such a motivational model.
- Post-16 retention is promoted.

### Variations

There are many variations to this arrangement, which can allow for individual rates of progress. The key to successful personalisation will be the flexibility of partnerships' responses to different rates of progress.

## Issues to consider

- How can this approach be best provided within a consortium?
- How can this approach operate alongside more conventional patterns of level 1 and level 2 provision?
- At what point would learners opt for this approach rather than another?
- How best can learners who are likely to succeed within this structure be identified?
- What are the advantages of this approach over a more conventional progression route to year 14?
- In what order should the components of the Diploma be taught at each level?
- What is the potential impact of different lengths of teaching/learning week?

## Example 2:

# Progression and the use of higher-level units

## Why this approach?

The Diploma is intended to provide a flexible pathway that can be suited to all learners' needs. A wide range of materials, experiences, courses and qualifications can be harnessed to provide the learning needed at each level. This example explores some of the possibilities.

## How is learning organised?

The Diploma structure enables learning and attainment at different levels. This approach shows how a Diploma programme can be structured to include qualifications or units at a higher level than the principal learning and the Diploma award itself. It relates to stage, not age, so there is no implication that the starting point is year 10, although it could be. Work towards any of the qualifications may span more than one year.

This approach:

- recognises attainment at different levels within functional skills
- uses wider key skills qualifications to assess personal, learning and thinking skills
- exercises the flexibility available in additional and specialist learning (ASL)
- introduces a higher education module within level 3.

Diploma level	Principal learning (PL)	Generic learning (GL)	Additional and specialist learning (ASL)
<b>Level 1</b>	Units at level of Diploma	<b>FS</b> English level 1 Mathematics level 1 ICT level 2  <b>PLTS</b> Working with others level 2 Project level 1	Additional qualification at level 2
<b>Level 2</b>	Units at level of Diploma	<b>FS</b> English level 2 Mathematics level 2  <b>PLTS</b> Improving own learning and performance level 2 Project level 2	Additional qualification at level 2/3
<b>Level 3</b>	Units at level of Diploma	<b>PLTS</b> Improving own learning level 3	Specialised units at level of Diploma or OU module at level 4

### Features of this approach

- It provides opportunities for personalised learning.
- It may prevent some learners from feeling they are insufficiently challenged.
- Working at a higher level in areas of strength could have a motivational effect.
- Learners may attain better qualifications, some at a higher level.
- Provision of higher education experience might help promote progression to that sector.

### Variations

- Other qualifications could be used for generic learning. These include Certificates of Personal Effectiveness, qualifications in career planning or evidence of preparation for employment.
- Qualifications may be used for ASL that link with those required within apprenticeships.

### Issues to consider

- What is the availability and selection method of appropriate qualifications?
- To what extent should qualifications at a higher level complement the Diploma line or go beyond it?
- What are the implications of any mismatch in levels between principal learning and the other components?
- Could individual or small groups of learners have access to these opportunities, or would a larger group be needed?
- Would it be possible to offer a range of choices?

