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**Qualifications
and Curriculum
Development
Agency**



2010
A guide for
consortia

Embedding equality in the Diploma

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Introduction

The Diploma is an exciting new qualification for 14- to 19-year-olds in England, offering an innovative approach to learning. Putting equality at the heart of the Diploma enables it to be flexible, responsive and inclusive of all students. Other benefits will include wider participation, achievement and opportunities for in-programme learning, by using different perspectives and learning materials.

This guidance looks at how equality can be embedded across all the Diploma components, at the curriculum planning stages and in its delivery. Its suggestions can also be applied to the other three overarching learning and progression pathways (apprenticeships, Foundation Learning and general qualifications), so are relevant to everyone involved in education and training for 14- to 19-year-olds.

This guidance is for everyone involved in curriculum planning and delivery of the Diploma. This includes consortia managers, curriculum planners, practitioners, information, advice and guidance (IAG) advisers and employers. It draws on the experiences of existing consortia and includes case study examples of good practice. It complements existing guidance on addressing gender inequality in the Diploma, *Gender equality Nuts and Bolts* series by the Department for Schools, Children and Families (DCSF-01024-2009), and the *Good practice guide: the application of reasonable adjustments and special consideration in vocational qualifications* (Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB) 2005). It also complements *Access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and*

special consideration: general and vocational qualifications (Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) 2009).

This guidance is divided into four sections:

‘Equality and the Diploma – the context’ explores why equality matters, what the law says and how the Diploma aims to be inclusive of all students.

‘Planning to embed equality in the Diploma’ looks at how to take a strategic approach to ensuring equality is at the heart of Diploma delivery. This includes planning reasonable adjustments for disabled students and the importance of challenging stereotypes. It also examines how equality can be embedded through information, advice and guidance provision across the different components of the Diploma.

‘Embedding equality in practice’ sets out some practical considerations for equality and inclusion when delivering the Diploma. It includes a suggested checklist for practitioners.

‘Useful resources’ provides helpful links, tools and further reading on equalities and the Diploma.

Equality and the Diploma – the context

This section looks at equality as an integral part of what the Diploma is designed to achieve. It also considers equality in terms of the wider legal context in education.

Overview of the Diploma

The Diploma enables students of all abilities to gain knowledge, understanding and practical experience of employment sectors that they are interested in. Completing a Diploma will allow a student to progress to further or higher education, apprenticeships or employment with training.

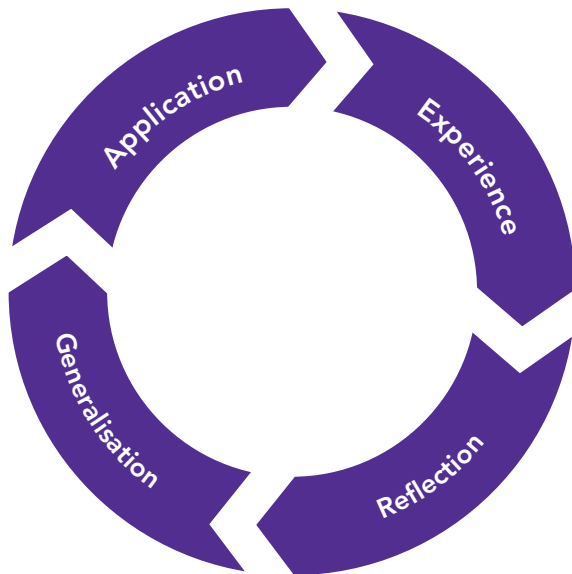
Diplomas are being introduced in phases. By 2013, 17 lines of learning will be available at levels 1 (Foundation), 2 (Higher) and 3 (Advanced) and the Diploma will become an entitlement for all students. All Diplomas share a common structure made up of three components: principal learning, generic learning and additional and specialist learning (ASL).

More information on the Diploma components can be found at www.qcda.gov.uk/diploma.

The Diploma, equality and inclusion

The Diploma has been developed for 14- to 19-year-olds to promote diversity, opportunity and inclusion by offering applied (work-related) learning and an exciting, stretching and relevant programme of study. All lines of learning can be planned to be accessible for all students. Diplomas encourage students to take increasing responsibility for their own learning.

Learning activities included in the Diploma are coherent and engaging, based on the experiential Kolb Learning Cycle¹, a theory that there are four stages that follow from each other to result in effective learning from personal experience. *Experience* is followed by *reflection*. This leads to *generalisation* from the individual experience or to the application of known theories or principles. The final stage is the *application of learning* to new experiences, situations and activities. The new experiences then lead back to further reflection, and so on.



¹ Kolb, 1984; Dewey, 1938; Lewin, 1951; Boud et al. 1993; Boud and Miller, 1996; Piaget, 1950; Bruner, 1960 and 1996.

Information on the research that has informed the Diploma can be found in *The Diploma and its pedagogy* (QCA/08/3908) at www.qcda.gov.uk.

The Diploma is an opportunity for students to determine or personalise their learning programme to suit their individual needs. As a result, the Diploma provides opportunities for a wide range of students, including the gifted and talented. It also caters for students who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), and disaffected students that have re-engaged with an entry level or level 1 Foundation Learning programme to stay in learning and progress to a Diploma programme of study.

It has been well documented that some students are likely to face barriers to academic achievement. Barriers can include discrimination, stereotyping and low aspirations. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) sponsored research to inform the publication *Staying on* (EHRC 2009). The study found that while the majority of students are hopeful and optimistic, just over one in 10 students say they will drop out of or have considered dropping out of school or training. It suggests that those experiencing the greatest inequality in learning are more likely to be students who are disabled, from lower socio-economic backgrounds, refugees, from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, transpeople, asylum seekers, Gypsies and Travellers, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and young mothers.

Providers are ensuring that the Diploma offers equality by identifying and addressing the barriers that students might face when choosing it, and by working with them to ensure they can pursue their chosen line of learning. Addressing equality and ensuring that Diploma delivery is inclusive of all students is straightforward and achievable. It requires an awareness of the diversity of students, an understanding of their varied needs and a willingness to respond to those needs.

Equality in education: the legal context

Equality legislation is relevant to all members of a Diploma consortium. Schools, colleges, other providers and workplaces must prevent unlawful discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender (including transpeople), ethnicity, religion and belief, and sexual orientation.

In practice, this includes:

- actively promoting equality
- preventing and tackling prejudice-driven bullying
- ensuring opportunities and choices are available consistently to all students
- ensuring the curriculum is inclusive of all students
- ensuring students are not treated differently or unfairly because of assumptions or stereotypes.

As well as preventing discrimination, schools and colleges also have a legal duty to actively promote equal opportunities and good relations in the areas of ethnicity, disability and gender.

Every child matters (DCSF-1106-2004) states that all children, whatever their background or circumstances, should have the support they need to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing. This vision must be at the heart of everything a school does and should be reinforced through every aspect of its curriculum, including lessons, events, routines, the learning environment and what students do out of school. Ofsted inspectors now regard performance on equality and diversity as essential, to the extent that under-performance can limit the grades that establishments receive.

In developing Diploma provision it is important to comply with all legal equalities requirements and be guided by the vision of Every Child Matters. This is the cornerstone for ensuring that all students are able to access the opportunities offered by the Diploma. There are additional legal requirements relating to disabled students and to those with special educational needs. Further details are at www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/disability/summary.

The EHRC gives advice to education and training providers at www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/education-and-training-providers.

Planning to embed equality in the Diploma

This section discusses the steps that providers can take to ensure that equality is embedded in the planning of the Diploma, is part of their strategy for delivery and enhances students' choices.

Our aim is for all students to feel that they can do a Diploma if they want to, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion or disability. We have linked the Diploma with a wider drive to raise standards and achievement in the borough. Our strategy has been formulated in response to *Quality, choice and aspiration* (DCSF-00977-2009) and the statutory guidance on impartial careers education. We feel strongly that the broad range of experiences the Diploma offers, including an insight into industry, can truly widen students' horizons and really increase their aspirations.

The Sandwell 14–19 Learning Team

Taking a strategic approach to embedding equality

Consortia should consider equality at the earliest planning stages so that Diploma delivery is inclusive of all students in practice. Equality should be part of the strategic vision for Diploma delivery, providing a clear direction in terms of an inclusive and beneficial outcome for the consortium and for students. A collaborative culture within a consortium is a key success factor for a shared vision for equality in the Diploma.



Key factors for success:

- making a strategic commitment to embedding equality
- ensuring that this commitment is endorsed and upheld across the consortium
- understanding what diversity and inclusion mean in practice and within a local context
- communicating the strategy and the importance of equality across the consortium.

The Sandwell 14–19 Learning Team operates in an area rich in cultural diversity. It has put equality at the heart of its Diploma strategy and implementation plan. The aim is to ensure all students have equal access to the Diploma.

Consortia should consider three key aspects when planning for inclusion in the Diploma:

- the development of an equality and diversity strategy
- understanding the local setting – the communities, the partners and the opportunities available
- monitoring and evaluating steps taken to embed equality.

These are discussed in more detail below.

Developing an equality and diversity strategy

An equality and diversity strategy will help consortia plan, implement and measure the approach to embedding equality and diversity in the Diploma. It is important that the strategy is realistic and achievable, and that all partners involved make a commitment to and are accountable for its implementation in practice. It should be endorsed at governor/board level to make it clear that it is integral to providers' values.

An equality and diversity strategy might include:

- a vision for equality in Diploma delivery
- an overview of legal requirements and duties
- details on the demographic profile of the local area
- activities to better understand the local setting and to establish needs

- arrangements for engaging with students and other stakeholders
- inclusion from the outset of a wide range of partners and centres, including pupil referral units and special schools, single-sex schools and faith schools
- agreements with employers and other partners relating to equality
- shared and agreed equality targets that are tangible, measurable and achievable
- joint protocols, so institutions can share best practice.

A good way to develop and evaluate an equality and diversity strategy is to carry out an equality impact assessment. A helpful toolkit can be found at www.dcsf.gov.uk/des/downloads/EQUIAWorkbook.doc.

Understanding the local setting

To plan for equality and inclusion, it is important to understand the profile of the local community in terms of students, delivery partners and local opportunities. This is about understanding where students may be at risk of exclusion from the Diploma, but also about identifying existing opportunities and expertise to enhance inclusive Diploma delivery. This includes building on local progression agreements between 14–19 networks and consortia groups to provide clear pathways and options to Diplomas from Foundation Learning provision at Entry level and level 1.



Key factors for success:

- recognising the diverse make-up of the local community and the varied experiences students can have as a result of their differences
- understanding who the students are and the potential barriers to the Diploma they may face
- considering how best to effectively communicate with different groups of students, and how to develop targeted messages and support for different groups.

Basingstoke College of Technology used the findings of the research into year 11 students' academic choices, commissioned by Basingstoke 14–19 Partnership, when planning for equality in the Diploma. The findings showed the strong influence of parents/carers and subject teachers, which sometimes reinforced stereotyped choices based on gender and perceptions of the value of work-related qualifications. This meant girls were less likely to feel able to study Diploma lines of learning such as engineering, construction and the built environment, or manufacturing and product design.

The college strongly believes that the Diploma has a better chance of success if this type of prejudice is addressed early on. To this end, the college developed the 'Primary Initiative', in which tutors and students, including female students, go into local schools to do engineering projects with pupils in years 5 and 6. Primary school pupils were also invited into the college to work on special projects, such as designing a Ferris wheel, to show them that engineering is not just about heavy-duty manual labour – or something that can only offer career opportunities to men. The action was broadcast via webcam back to the primary schools for other pupils to observe. The college was careful to ensure female students were featured prominently in this broadcast.

Further examples of good practice in addressing gender inequality in Diploma take up and provision can be found in *Gender equality Nuts and Bolts series* (DCSF-01024-2009).

Many disabled students and those with special educational needs are in mainstream schools, supported by local authority support services, which have solid experience and expertise in planning an inclusive learning programme. In addition, special schools have valuable experience in developing a collaborative culture and this vital expertise should be shared across a consortium during the planning stage. This ensures the Diploma is accessible and inclusive of students with different abilities.

Provision within the special school sector ranges from behavioural difficulties to learning disabilities. Special schools have extensive and transferable experience in setting up work experience placements and providing inclusive practical learning. They can also provide work-based learning opportunities themselves.

Many special schools have facilities that can be used by consortia to give disabled and non-disabled students opportunities to fully apply their learning.



Key factors for success:

- identifying local agencies and partners to collaborate with and support the planning of effective provision
- harnessing the expertise of diverse delivery partners – these may include special schools, faith schools, single-sex schools and pupil referral units.

Beaumont Specialist College, a post-16 college for disabled students, is optimistic about the opportunities presented by the Diploma. A small number of students will be able to complete a level 1 or 2 qualification and the college is confident that there will be some students who will be able to complete the Diploma. The college also offers mainstream students work experience placements as part of their Diploma in society, health and development, where they work alongside staff.



Key factors for success:

- identifying how students can get involved with diverse local opportunities
- ensuring local opportunities are going to be accessible to all students
- raising aspirations by giving local progression examples that different groups of students can relate to.

The 14–19 Team at the **London Borough of Newham** has identified a range of local opportunities provided by the Olympic Games to promote the Diploma. These include opportunities relating to leisure, health, the environment, tourism and hospitality, cultural and creative sectors, and retail. Building on this, staff from large construction firms building the Olympic athletes' village in Newham have given talks in local schools to students studying the Diploma in construction and the built environment. They have ensured that the list of invited speakers included women, to encourage female students to consider the construction and built environment industry and show that there are many career paths beyond the stereotyped image of the male bricklayer.

Monitoring and evaluation

The effectiveness of steps taken to embed equality in the Diploma can only be understood if systems for monitoring and evaluating have been built into the strategy at the planning stages. Monitoring the success of initiatives to embed equality in the Diploma will help consortia identify effective strategies, as well as persistent barriers to equality that need to be addressed. It is important to make use of student data to identify trends across different groups. Consortia are encouraged to ask themselves a range of broad and specific questions to establish what they want to aim for, and to identify how they will measure that.

Some sample questions are listed below.

- What will equal and inclusive Diploma delivery look like?
- What are the trends for different groups of students in terms of their choices and achievements, particularly with regards to their gender, disability or ethnicity?
- Are there any significant disparities between groups, and if so, why?
- Would it be helpful to set targets where groups of students are under-represented in certain lines of learning?
- Should you consider taking positive action for under-represented groups, for example running single-sex taster sessions?
- What are the benefits of promoting equality and how can these be measured?

Where an evaluation suggests unequal opportunities in the Diploma, this needs to be investigated and addressed.



Reasonable adjustments

Planning for teaching and learning needs to suit all students' needs, including disabled students and those with special educational needs. 'Reasonable adjustments' are steps that schools and colleges must take to ensure disabled people have equal access to opportunities, and an equally good experience of educational activities.

A reasonable adjustment will generally lead to an access arrangement being made for the student. However, it can also mean working with disabled students to equip them socially with the skills they need to participate in the Diploma, and to support them before they embark on the programme of study.

Schools and colleges have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students. This applies to all lines of learning and all aspects of Diploma delivery, including:

- classroom access
- functional skills
- additional and specialist learning
- the project
- work placements
- travel and transport
- time allocated for activities and assessments.

Consortia can benefit from the advice and experience of schools with specialist knowledge of working with disabled students. In addition, many employers will have made reasonable adjustments for their disabled employees and may be readily equipped to welcome disabled students on a work experience placement. It is good practice to liaise directly with the individual themselves. All disabled students should be involved in planning their learning as they best understand their own particular needs in terms of access and support.

While not all disabled students will necessarily have special educational needs, there is some overlap between the two groups. If a student has a statement of special educational needs, adjustments may need to be made for them. If they also have a disability, then a reasonable adjustment will need to be made. Further information can be found in the awarding body guidelines on the FAB website at www.awarding.org.uk and in *Access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration: general and vocational qualifications* (JCQ 2009).

Further guidance on disability and special educational needs is also available at www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/disability/dissen.



Key factors for success:

- anticipating reasonable adjustments to enable disabled students to participate – these adjustments can be physical, social or attitudinal
- not assuming that reasonable adjustments can only be made within certain limited settings (such as the office environment) or discount opportunities for disabled students to participate in a manufacturing, outdoor, retail or technical setting
- drawing on the expertise of disabled people, specialist providers and employers.

Lancashire Education Business Partnership (LEBP) has been working with the Hollins Technology College and Broadfield Special School to deliver a Foundation Learning project, which aims to increase the confidence and employability of their students. The pilot involves 10 students of mixed ability, including some with learning difficulties, and runs over a two-year period while the cohort progresses from year 10 to year 11. Sessions explore topics such as an introduction to a company, acceptable behaviour/social skills, managing yourself at work and preparation for work experience. Ambassadors from industry are acting as role models during some of the sessions.



Challenging stereotypes

Stereotypes can limit a student's perception of the choices they have academically, professionally, personally and socially. They are based on mistaken assumptions about what people from certain groups can or cannot do. For example, stereotypes about masculine and feminine jobs may lead a male student to decide not to pursue a Diploma in hair and beauty studies, or society, health and development. Further to this, stereotyped assumptions about the value of qualifications with a work-related element may also influence choices about the Diploma.

The EHRC suggests careers advice, the choice of subjects to study, and work experience placements are all prone to stereotyping. This stereotyping has a more significant impact on some groups, including girls and young women, disabled students, the working class and some ethnic minorities (*Staying on* EHRC, 2009).

There is also a common stereotypical assumption that a student with special educational needs has limited scope for achievement. Having a statement of special educational needs does not equate to a lack of potential, rather a requirement for alternative approaches to delivery. A student with special educational needs could easily be capable of achieving the Advanced Diploma, though additional support may be required. This equally applies to disabled students.

The Diploma offers an opportunity to challenge stereotypes and therefore promote equality and inclusion. It presents sectors of industry, and potential progression opportunities, in their widest sense. This broadens the appeal of individual lines of learning and makes them accessible to a wider range of individuals. For example:

- the Diploma in construction and the built environment covers a range of disciplines, including construction, town planning, architecture and the environment and sustainable communities – part of the curriculum considers issues of accessibility in the built environment
- the Diploma in hair and beauty studies includes business and event management, cosmetic science, anatomy and physiology, salon and spa design, and health and wellbeing
- the Diploma in sport and active leisure covers issues as wide ranging as fitness, playwork, leisure facilities operation, event management, stadium management and safety, youth work, the outdoors, sports surfaces, grounds maintenance and sport.

It is important that students, and those advising them, do not discount particular lines of learning due to stereotyped misconceptions about what they will cover.



Key factors for success:

- identifying where stereotypes may be limiting students' choices
- encouraging students to explore and challenge others' assumptions and to interrogate their own
- taking steps to counter stereotypes, including introducing students to role models working in an atypical field
- targeting information to under-represented groups and creating an environment in which they feel comfortable exploring the potential subject and sector
- challenging stereotyped expectations of what individual students can achieve
- engaging employers in supporting all students' future career choices.

The **Education Business Partnership in Kent** holds an annual event that targets Kent-based employers and raises awareness of students with special needs as potential future employees. While many national organisations are providing work-based placements for students with special needs, small to medium size enterprises may need more encouragement and support. A prominent Diploma display is brought to the event and work is taking place with special schools and employers around locally-based opportunities such as horticulture and land-based work, hospitality, sports and leisure.

Further examples of good practice around challenging gender stereotypes can be found in *Gender equality Nuts and Bolts* series (DCSF-01024-2009).

We are totally committed to the Diploma. It is about accepting that youngsters will choose from a palette of options and that, with real collaboration around the Diploma, we can match the learning to what employers actually want.

The Education Business Partnership in Kent

Information, advice and guidance

Information, advice and guidance (IAG) is an umbrella term covering a range of activities and interventions that help students to become more self-reliant and better able to manage their personal and career development, including their learning.

The DCSF IAG strategy, *Quality, choice and aspiration* (DCSF-00977-2009), states that ‘information, advice and guidance services promote equality of opportunity, celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes’. IAG has an important role to play in embedding equality in the Diploma and helping to create a qualification that is truly inclusive and accessible to all. This includes:

- ensuring all students gain full and equal access to information about the whole range of Diploma options
- challenging stereotypes that limit students’ perceptions and choices
- raising students’ aspirations in terms of their potential
- helping students reach a decision about the qualification that they want to do
- recognising the role of faith, culture, gender and class in students’ decisions, and ensuring IAG is sensitive to this
- raising parents/carers’ awareness of the Diploma options, and the academic and career-oriented paths that it can lead to.

Effective and encouraging IAG has been identified by the EHRC as one of the most important factors in helping engage students who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) and other groups (*Staying on* EHRC 2009). About two in 10 students say they have not had enough information and advice to make the right choices about their future. More specifically, research found that disabled students need more information about opportunities in work-based learning, including apprenticeships.

It is equally important for parents/carers to understand and support the Diploma offer, should their son or daughter want to pursue it. This is particularly important for groups of students whose parents/carers may have specific reservations, including:

- disabled students, whose parents may be concerned about the feasibility and risk of attending work-based or mainstream school placements
- students from some faith groups, whose parents may have reservations about young men and women studying together
- students from some backgrounds where there is less value placed on practical and applied learning than on more traditional academic learning.



Key factors for success:

- being proactive with IAG about the Diploma – this could include offering IAG to students rather than waiting for them to request it
- targeting IAG on specific lines of learning to groups that are traditionally under-represented in that subject area and sector
- using IAG to counter stereotypes about particular career paths
- involving students when developing initiatives that raise Diploma awareness and engagement.

In the **London Borough of Newham**, a ‘construction awareness mobile bus’ has been built to promote construction qualifications, including the Diploma in construction and the built environment. The bus is a mobile source of information about the construction industry, and provides access to computers, construction software and other interactive features for students to explore. This has been taken into schools in the borough, including girls’ schools, with a view to increasing the number of female students on construction courses.

The Sandwell 14–19 Learning Team has developed the *Sandwell 14-19 learning online prospectus* (www.4teen9teen.co.uk) to be much more than a database of courses. It includes comprehensive and accessible information about the Diploma. Designed in collaboration with students who tested and trialled it before it was launched, the website features case studies on a diverse range of students and provides information aimed at young parents and young homeless people.

Connexions Buckinghamshire has worked with a group of students from the Diploma in engineering to create a short film that promotes the course to other students. The film shows boys and girls from different ethnic backgrounds interviewing each other about the course in a documentary. They also interview the Connexions 14–19 entitlement coordinator and provide contact details for IAG. The video is posted on YouTube and linked to the Connexions Buckinghamshire website at www.connexionsbucks.org.uk.



Key factors for success:

- involving parents/carers in IAG
- informing parents/carers of their child's options and the progression opportunities provided by the Diploma
- acknowledging and responding to parents/carers' concerns about the nature of the Diploma, including cultural sensitivities and concerns about travel.

The Sandwell 14–19 Learning Team has used a range of innovative marketing to raise awareness of Diplomas among parents and carers. This includes the annual *DCSF Diploma roadshow* at West Bromwich Albion FC and various evening events. The parents of all Sandwell students about to choose key stage 4 options receive a mail-shot with a Diploma information leaflet and an invitation to attend the annual roadshow.

The 14–19 Team has also targeted specific groups and supports Connexions in delivering an annual event for African-Caribbean parents. The team also arranges for potential Diploma students to participate in 'taster days', which this year will be delivered in single gender groups.

The team has also used the local press to raise the profile of Diplomas among parents/carers, with an emphasis on challenging gender stereotyping. This has included coverage of a high-achieving female student studying the Diploma in engineering. It presents her as a role model to other potential female engineering students, and also reinforces the message that the Diploma is a challenging qualification that provides excellent preparation for higher education and/or a range of exciting careers. Information on the Diploma regularly features in Sandwell Council's e-communications.

Embedding equality across the Diploma

The structure of each Diploma includes the three components of:

- principal learning
- generic learning (including functional skills, personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) work experience and the project)
- ASL.

The composite nature of the Diploma lends itself to being flexible and responsive to a wide range of students. Consortia need to think creatively about how to respond to the needs and aspirations of all students who want

to pursue a Diploma. This includes planning for equality across all the components. It is important to plan for inclusion and to consider making reasonable adjustments where disabled students need them to fully participate.

Developing and practising PLTS should be built into the teaching and learning processes for all parts of the Diploma. Consortia should think about how students with particular needs can demonstrate their abilities in PLTS. This is an opportunity to challenge stereotypes and assumptions about how different students' skills and aspirations can develop. Students with different needs can participate in the Diploma by experimenting with a range of tools and learning styles to suit these needs. For example, a visually impaired student may benefit from verbal or audio presentation opportunities, while a hearing impaired student may excel using visual presentational means.



Key factors for success:

- ensuring that no one makes unfounded assumptions about what individual students can achieve
- supporting students' decisions to pursue atypical choices.

As part of **Beaumont Specialist College's** creative arts programme, students from mainstream schools collaborate on a performance project with Beaumont's students, who have a broad range of physical and learning impairments. The impact on both groups of students has been extremely positive. Mainstream students learn about the challenges and barriers disabled students face, while the disabled students work and socialise with children from a mainstream setting and learn about age-appropriate behaviour and language. It is also an opportunity for both groups to discover different approaches to creativity. Staff believe this collaborative approach to project work is well suited to the Diploma.

All Diploma students complete a project on a topic of their choice, which may be set in an industry context. Assumptions should not be made about the suitability of different types of projects for different students. Consortia are working creatively with students and providers, including employers, to develop projects that are genuinely inclusive, appropriate and accessible, and best suit students' abilities and preferred learning styles.

Work experience takes place on an employer's premises where a student carries out a particular task or duty, or a range of tasks and duties. These should be carried out more or less as they would be by an employee, but with the emphasis on the learning aspects of the experience. Consortia should take care not to apply stereotypes when negotiating work experience placements, nor should they make assumptions about the suitability of different students for particular placements. Finally, it is important that as well as being subject to the appropriate checks to ensure the student's safety, the employers subscribe to the underpinning principle of equality, and are committed to tackling discrimination and promoting inclusion.



Key factors for success:

- ensuring the employer partners are briefed on the student's home centre and consortium's equality policies and strategies for inclusion
- encouraging dialogue between the school or college, the employer, the student and the parents/carers, to enable participation and to resolve any concerns (including the need for reasonable adjustments)
- assuming that all students, including disabled students, will be able to complete a meaningful work placement
- building relationships over time with employers to identify what they can offer and how they can benefit from the work placement
- working closely with employers to ensure they are equipped to offer equal access to workplace experiences to all students through making reasonable adjustments
- seeking advice from specialist agencies, such as the local authority support service, on issues such as accessible ICT
- identifying tasks that are meaningful to, and develop independence for, the individual concerned.

Newham Sixth Form College writes a letter to employers offering work experience that refers to and includes a copy of their equal opportunities policy. Work experience advisers visit the employers to discuss all aspects of the placements, including disability, cultural/religious observations and dress code. There is a guide for students on work experience placements, which advises them to dress appropriately. If they wear religious/cultural garments they should check beforehand with their supervisor about what is acceptable for the position they are working in. This gives the supervisor the opportunity to talk about fitting prayer in with work (which may not always be possible), and wearing a hijab (which may not always be suitable). Advisers stress that the important issue is to have the discussion with the employer beforehand.

Beaumont Specialist College has developed excellent relationships with local employers, from large corporations to sole traders. These offer ongoing work experience placements for the students, including those with very complex needs. The school offers employers disability awareness training to ensure they can meet the students' needs. A support worker also accompanies the student and advises the employer on good practice. This support is gradually phased out as the students, and employers, become more confident and independent. Several students have continued to be involved with their work experience employer even after the official placement has ended.

Monkshill Farm is a working farm in Kent that provides land-based education and training to students from both special and mainstream schools and colleges. Owned by the Royal School for the Deaf and Kent and Westgate College for Deaf People, the farm provides work-based learning for deaf and hearing students in mixed groups and often engages students at risk of being excluded. It also provides work-based learning for students with a range of other disabilities, including wheelchair users, students with autism and those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Embedding equality in practice

This section examines some of the practical considerations for embedding equality in the Diploma, including multi-centre delivery, safeguarding and travel. It also features a summary and checklist to help consortia make sure equality is embedded across the planning and delivery of the Diploma.

Managing equality across different centres

As the Diploma is delivered by a range of different partners, students will experience a variety of learning environments. Practical issues to consider in embedding equality across these different centres include:

- a consistent approach to equality
- managing learning in different settings
- safety and safeguarding
- travel and transport
- supporting staff to embed equality.

A consistent approach to equality

Taking a strategic approach to equality should ensure there is a consistently inclusive delivery across the consortium and in each learning centre responsible for Diploma delivery.





Key factors for success:

- making sure the Diploma message is consistent across settings, including the way in which stereotyping is addressed
- developing shared protocols for encouraging and supporting students with different needs, including addressing discrimination and tackling behavioural problems related to an equality issue
- creating opportunities for practitioners from different centres to share information and best practice on successful initiatives for inclusion
- establishing an equality group to coordinate and monitor activities across the consortium.

The **Birmingham East Network** has established an 'equality group' to oversee the development of equality principles and their practical delivery across the Diploma. The group:

- deals with inclusive curriculum development
- takes responsibility for timetabling, transport and consistent behaviour management – particularly where this is related to an equality, exclusion or discrimination issue
- discusses health and safety, particularly around students who refuse to attend different schools, which may be as a result of difficult relationships with teachers or other students.

If a behavioural issue arises with a student it is reported back to the equality group to consider whether or not it is an equality and inclusion issue.

To encourage consistent approaches from the different staff and institutions delivering the Diploma, the group coordinates a series of lesson observations to standardise the format for lessons and address equality issues across the network.

Managing learning in different settings

The Diploma offers students an exciting opportunity to meet and study with a diverse range of people that is reflective of the wider world. This may mean studying in centres that are very different from the student's home centre in terms of gender, ethnic diversity and

age ranges. It is important to acknowledge that while this may be an exciting opportunity for some, it may be daunting for other students, who might need support to ease the transition and enable them to participate.



Key factors for success:

- considering whether or not there will be gender equality issues when delivering Diploma subjects that have traditionally been gender stereotyped
- managing, if necessary, the issue of girls going to boys' schools, or studying or doing work experience in traditionally male environments, and vice versa
- ensuring all students feel safe and able to study.

Basingstoke College of Technology's engineering department has taken steps to create a female-inclusive environment to address the under-representation of female students studying the subject. This includes:

- the allocation of female-only changing rooms
- a women's forum
- a women-only notice board
- a women's area on the intranet.



Key factors for success:

- being aware of the preconceptions some students will have about studying in different schools or colleges or about the different neighbourhoods across the consortium
- creating opportunities for students from different settings to meet before they start studying together, focusing on a common goal or an activity that they can all enjoy.

The **Birmingham East Network** covers diverse areas in terms of culture, religion and socio-economic status. Within the different areas, students sometimes do not want to travel outside the neighbourhood that they are familiar with, or to mix with students from other backgrounds. This is a potential barrier for students who would otherwise benefit from choosing to study a Diploma that is delivered at multiple sites.

To address this, the consortium has designed a series of activities to bring the students from different schools and areas together, for a common purpose and joint activity. This enables them to get to know each other and to dispel any misconceptions they may have.

Activities have included:

- a talk by former *EastEnders* actor, Nicholas Bailey, to raise expectations and challenge stereotypes
- bringing students together and raising their aspirations by showing them university life
- a talent showcase as part of the Diploma in creative and media, to bring all students together for a joint activity.

Safety and safeguarding

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a statutory duty on key people and bodies to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Schools and further education providers have an equivalent duty through the Education Act 2002, and must also refer to the *Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004* (0036-2007 DOM-EN).

In terms of embedding equality in the Diploma and ensuring all students are safe regardless of who they are, this means ensuring students are not placed at a disadvantage because of their difference and are able to study free from the fear of discrimination, harassment or bullying. It is particularly important to:

- be proactive in addressing all forms of discrimination
- ensure students can identify discrimination and know not to perpetuate it
- ensure students know how and who to report any discrimination to
- take steps to check that any initiative to tackle discrimination is working, for example by talking to students and evaluating their engagement.





Key factors for success:

- taking steps to anticipate and understand the safety concerns that may dissuade some groups of students from pursuing the Diploma
- ensuring any existing anti-bullying initiatives are accessible to Diploma students, including when studying away from their home centre
- considering whether students need specific support during their work experience placement, such as a work-based mentor
- encouraging students to report any instances of bullying or discrimination that occur at any point during their Diploma studies.

Through national consultation and local feedback from students and staff, **East Sussex 14–19 Team** identified that Diploma students sometimes felt hesitant about going into other schools. Some Diploma students studying in other institutions had found it difficult to integrate.

The **East Sussex Anti-Bullying Team** has a peer support model, which is a ‘befriending’ model. The team wanted to expand it to take account of the particular needs of Diploma students moving between institutions. It has developed a training programme for students volunteering to befriend others coming into their schools and colleges. This covers some of the specific issues that might be faced by some students due to ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation. The role of the befriender includes a basic welcome service on the first day of a course, showing the Diploma student where the canteen, toilet and recreational facilities are and introducing them to tutors and other students. Participating schools will also develop welcome packs for new Diploma students.

A key feature of the model is that it is designed to run as part of the institution’s anti-bullying policy. This ensures that there is a clear process to follow if any incidents – including those linked to ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation or religion – should occur. Befrienders are not expected to tackle situations that need a firm organisational response from the school or college. The county-wide programme ensures a consistent approach so that students changing courses or institutions can expect a similar befriending service from the new institution or department.

Further good practice examples for preventing and tackling gender-based bullying can be found in *Gender equality Nuts and Bolts* series (DCSF-01024-2009).

Travel and transport

Travel arrangements need careful consideration so that Diploma programmes are accessible to all students. Some groups of

students and their parents/carers may initially see transport as a potential barrier, but experience has shown that effective planning can overcome these barriers. Consortia should consider transport arrangements when planning for the Diploma, and measure their impact to ensure that all groups of students find the Diploma accessible. The two documents referred to below give a range of good practice examples.



Key factors for success:

- anticipating the travel and transport issues for students who may be moving away from their home centre for the first time
- making links with existing provision in the local area, for example many areas already have schemes for disabled students, which could possibly be expanded or adapted to suit the Diploma.

ReadiBus is a dial-a-ride scheme run by an independent charity in Reading that transports physically disabled people of all ages. It can be used by 14- to 19-year-olds with physical difficulties who are studying for Diplomas to travel between sites of learning (*14–19 transport – related issues and solutions: examples of developing practice*, DCSF/ York Consulting 2008).

For pupils not able to travel independently, **London Borough of Ealing** runs a travel buddy scheme that pays students engaged in social care courses (or similar) to travel with students who have learning and/or physical disabilities so that both parties can benefit from the experience (*Transport provision and partnership review – good practice guide*, Learning and Skills Council 2009).

Supporting staff to embed equality

Awareness of equality and being able to manage diversity can contribute to practitioners' professional development. Many practitioners will already be familiar with working in a diverse environment. Others will have expertise working with specific groups of students, including disabled students, particular faith communities and students from single-sex schools. It is important that expertise is shared and that students receive a consistent approach wherever they are learning. Consortia should consider a range of initiatives to support staff to embed equality, including:

- equality and diversity training
- opportunities to discuss equality and inclusion issues during staff meetings
- online discussion groups focusing on equalities issues
- advice and guidance on tackling specific types of discrimination
- training and information on making reasonable adjustments, including those required for assessment
- information about local voluntary and community groups and their resources, including faith groups, disability forums, groups for ethnic minorities and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transpeople youth groups.



Summary and checklist

Embedding equality in the Diploma is an integral part of a consortium's approach to delivering the Diploma. The Diploma and all lines of learning are inclusive of and accessible to all students, regardless of ethnicity, disability, gender, religion/belief, sexual orientation or socio-economic status.

The following is a suggested checklist for ensuring equality is embedded in the planning and delivery of the Diploma, both strategically and in practice. When agreeing a checklist, its objectives should be realistic and achievable. They should be set within a timeframe with agreement on who is responsible for them, and how they will be measured. There is a more detailed checklist in *Equality and diversity in self-assessment: guidance for colleges and providers* (Learning and Skills Council/Learning and Skills Improvement Service 2009).



Checklist for embedding equality in the Diploma

- Plan for equality at a strategic level.
- Understand the local setting, including diverse expertise and opportunities.
- Involve special schools, support services and those with specialist knowledge from the outset.
- Plan to monitor and evaluate the embedding of equalities.
- Identify how to make reasonable adjustments for students, where appropriate.
- Challenge stereotypes when promoting Diploma choices.
- Embed equality through IAG.
- Identify how equality will be embedded across all components of the Diploma.
- Take a consistent approach to equality throughout the different centres within a consortium.
- Prepare students to participate in different settings.
- Support staff in embedding equality.
- Ensure students with different needs receive appropriate support.
- Embed equality in terms of safety and safeguarding.
- Monitor and evaluate your progress against your equality plan.
- Share good practice between deliverers.

Useful resources

This section provides useful links, publications, tools and resources that practitioners can use in addition to this guidance.

Diploma resources

There is a wide range of material explaining the Diploma from QCDA, including guidance on each line of learning and curriculum programmes at www.qcda.gov.uk/diploma.

The Diploma support programme provides an extensive range of training and support including face-to-face workshops, support materials, remote advice and support, professional networking and online support. It can be found at www.diploma-support.org.

DCSF has a range of materials and publications to support the Diploma, which can be found by starting at www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19 and following the link to 'Qualifications and curriculum' then to 'Diplomas'.



Line of learning resources

The following links provide access to useful line of learning material from each Diploma development partnership.

- Construction and the built environment www.cskills.org
- Creative and media www.skillset.org
- Engineering www.semta.org.uk
- Information technology www.e-skills.com
- Society, health and development www.skillsforhealth.org.uk
- Business, administration and finance www.fssc.org.uk
- Environmental and land-based studies www.lantra.co.uk
- Hair and beauty studies www.habia.org
- Hospitality www.people1st.co.uk
- Manufacturing and product design www.improveltd.co.uk

Developing Diplomas for first teaching in 2010

- Public services www.government-skills.gov.uk
- Retail business www.skillsmartretail.com
- Sport and active leisure www.skillsactive.com
- Travel and tourism www.people1st.co.uk

Developing Diplomas for first teaching in 2011

- Humanities and social sciences
- Languages and international communication
- Science levels 1 and 2

Developing Diplomas for first teaching in 2012

- Science level 3

For information on developing Diplomas for first teaching in 2011 and 2012, please go to our phase 4 Diploma web pages at www.qcda.gov.uk/phase4.

There is material aimed at students and their parents/carers at <http://yp.direct.gov.uk/diplomas>.

Connexions Direct (www.connexions-direct.com) offers information on a range of issues, from careers and learning to money, health and relationships.

Equality resources

The 'Equal opportunities in the Diploma' section of the QCDA website at www.qcda.gov.uk.

The 'Inclusion' page of the QCDA website at www.qcda.gov.uk.

Ensuring equitable access to the Diploma is one of a range of self-evaluation activities provided by the Diploma support programme: www.diploma-support.org/mydevelopment/browse/22642.

Access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration: general and vocational qualifications (JCQ 2009): www.jcq.org.uk.

DCSF has a range of materials and publications to encourage equality, diversity and inclusion. They can be found by starting at www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19 and following the links to 'Equality and diversity'.

The DCSF's *Gender equality Nuts and Bolts* series (DCSF-01024-2009) provides guidance on how to embed gender equality into Diploma work, with many illustrative case study examples, www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/gender_equality_nuts_bolts.pdf.

The Learning and Skills Council also has a range of resources, including: *Equality and diversity in self-assessment* (LSC-P-NAT-090159), which provides comprehensive guidance for colleges and providers in a self-assessment format.

The Learning and Skills Information Service (LSIS) Excellence Gateway at www.excellencegateway.org.uk is an online service for everyone who works in the post-16 learning and skills sector. It provides resources, support, advice and opportunities to participate and share good practice.

The legal context

For information on the legal context of equality in the Diploma, the following resources may be helpful.

Every child matters: change for children (DCSF-0012-2006): <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/>.

Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (0036-2007 DOM-EN): <http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk>.

The national curriculum statutory statement on inclusion can be found at: www.qcda.gov.uk/22594.aspx.

Summary of schools' statutory responsibilities under disability discrimination and special educational needs (SEN) legislation (teachernet 2009): www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/disability/summary/.

Good practice guide: the application of reasonable adjustments and special consideration in vocational qualifications (Federation of Awarding Bodies 2005) go to: www.awarding.org.uk and click on the 'Documents' section.

The *Equality Bill* that is currently going through Parliament: www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_bill.aspx.

DCSF has produced a helpful toolkit on Equality Impact Assessment called *Equality impact assessments – a workbook*: www.dcsf.gov.uk/des/downloads/EQUIAWorkbook.doc.

Resources on equality strands

The Skill website (www.skill.org.uk) has general guidance about students with disabilities and links to further information and resources.

UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (www.ukrc4setwomen.org) offers a range of information, statistics, good practice guidelines and training for women in science, engineering and technology. A range of posters and packs are available related to engaging girls and women in areas where they have traditionally been under-represented. It also suggests strategies for teachers to help their female students overcome the barriers they face and offers practical advice for encouraging and supporting girls.

Gender Equality Race Inclusion (GERI) Project (www.geriproject.org) produces careers resources to challenge gender and ethnic stereotyping, covering those areas where there is a gender or ethnic bias, for example in hair and beauty, health and social care, construction and engineering. Resources include CDs, printed guides and web-based learning.

GTC Achieve (www.gtce.org.uk/networks/achieve) has a variety of materials relating to race and ethnicity, including materials specifically relating to Gypsies and Travellers, refugees and people seeking asylum.

Making space for faith: values, beliefs and faiths in the learning and skills sector (The National Ecumenical Agency in Further Education (NEAFE) and the Faiths in Further Education Forum (FiFEF) 2007): www.fbfe.org.uk.

Multi-faith chaplaincy: a guide for colleges on developing multi-faith student support (LSC 2007) provides comprehensive guidance for colleges in this area: <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-multi-faith-chaplaincy.pdf> (LSC-P-NAT-070201).

New career choices for Muslim women, (The National Muslim Women's Advisory Group 2009). Twelve life stories of women who have successfully broken through barriers to work in jobs that reflect many Diploma lines of learning: www.ourchoices.org.uk.

The London Engineering Project produces a range of materials relating to the Diploma, including *Gender inclusion and cultural diversity guidelines*, which could easily be adapted for other lines of learning (London Engineering Project): www.thelep.org.uk/home.

Safe to learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools 2007 (DCSF-00656-2007) (www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying/safetolearn).

There is also the guidance for schools on the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation), which includes useful information on the implications for schools and guidance on how to ensure compatibility with religious freedoms.

Notes



About this publication

Who is it for?

This guidance is for Diploma practitioners and senior staff in centres and consortia who are teaching the Foundation, Higher or Advanced Diploma courses or who are planning to offer them in the future. It will also be relevant for information, advice and guidance advisers and everyone involved in education and training for 14- to 19-year-olds.

What is it about?

This guidance looks at how equality can be embedded across all the Diploma components at the curriculum planning stages and in its delivery.

Related publications from QCDA

Design for success

Progression and the Diploma

Work experience supporting Diploma programmes

Details of training and support for the introduction of Diplomas can be found at www.diplomasupport.org.

For more copies

Email orderline@qcda.gov.uk
or download from www.qcda.gov.uk/orderline
Reference QCDA/10/4763

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