QCA Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

Opportunities for co-learning: Foundation and Higher Diploma

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Contents

Background information

Learners taking different qualifications that have compatible objectives can sometimes learn together in the same group. This is called co-learning. Co-learning implies a learner-centred style of delivering a learning programme where both learner and facilitator participate in the learning process. In the Diploma there are opportunities for co-learning in the principal learning as well as in functional skills or the project. However, the Foundation and Higher Diplomas are two different qualification outcomes, which must be kept distinct to maintain the integrity of the two levels.

This guidance is for curriculum managers and practitioners who are responsible for planning and delivering Diploma programmes. The guidance will help consortia make decisions about the opportunities for co-learning in the Foundation and Higher Diploma.

Diplomas and the key stage 4 curriculum

Diplomas integrate closely with and apply learning from the general curriculum and encourage young people to develop personal strengths and capabilities. Each Diploma is related to a particular sector of the economy, giving learners opportunities to develop skills of enterprise and work-related learning (WRL). The Diploma builds learners' essential skills, challenges and enriches their study and makes all areas of their learning coherent.

The Diploma is a component-based qualification of a substantial size at both Foundation and Higher level. At key stage 4, the Diploma will usually be offered as a two year programme; this is because Diplomas sit alongside the statutory curriculum and other subjects. Centres now have the flexibility to provide focused support and greater challenge, so that all learners can make progress and achieve in a wide range of pathways. One of the key characteristics of a co-learning relationship is that it allows students to learn from one another, which also enables social and personalised learning.

Co-learning at Foundation and Higher level

Consortia should consider the following factors when deciding how to deliver the Foundation and Higher Diploma.

- Diploma programmes should be personalised to meet the needs of individual learners.

- Centres and consortia can personalise learning to design and build a locally-determined curriculum to meet the needs of all learners. The value of the Foundation level must be communicated and clearly shown.

- Partnerships should expect the coherence of Diplomas to improve learner retention and progression.

- Diplomas at Foundation and Higher level are discrete qualifications and should be treated as such.

- The Foundation level requires fewer guided learning hours than the Higher level, so learners at the two levels may need different numbers of timetable hours, for example a third session day or additional day-long sessions for Higher level learners.

In this context, consortia should consider whether co-learning is an appropriate option for their learners.

Foundation and Higher level groups

Planning for distinct Foundation and Higher level groups in a particular line offers several advantages.

- Prior attainment can be analysed, and the level of demand adjusted to suit the learners.

- Motivation is likely to be boosted and maintained where learners see the work as demanding, yet rewarding when successes are achieved.

- Learners are less likely to drop out because the work is too difficult or too easy.

- Functional skills can be matched neatly to principal learning. For some learners, they may link to their learning in English, mathematics and ICT in the statutory curriculum, thereby strengthening the general coherence in learning as a whole and increasing coherence for the learner.

- Foundation level is seen as distinctive and not as a failed Higher.

Curriculum planning and structure

Teachers are concerned that if a learner starts at the wrong level, he or she will have to remain there for the full two-year course. Co-learning is only one way of preventing this. Some consortia are already planning creative solutions. Examples include:

- parallel timetabling of Foundation and Higher so that a student can be transferred easily from one to the other if appropriate

- all students starting on Foundation level, with those for whom progression is appropriate moving on to Higher level at an agreed point

- parallel timetabling of years 10 and 11 (possibly also 12) in each line of learning so that some students who started on Foundation level in years 10 could begin Higher level after one year

- better assessment of students' needs and potential not only at the start of key stage 4 but throughout the first teaching period, thus making sure that as far as possible they are placed correctly or are moved at an appropriate early point to Higher level. Awarding bodies' specifications vary. Schools and consortia considering this approach should analyse their chosen specification and consult the awarding body on suitable transfer points.

Approaches to co-learning

Having considered the above, some consortia may decide that co-learning for Foundation and Higher level learners is an appropriate option for them, for some of the following reasons:

- to make efficient use of specialist resources and experts, for example a radiologist, youth worker or paediatric nurse visiting a society, health and development programme

- to offer opportunities to interact usefully with employers on the site of their key plant, factory, assembly section, prototype development or research centre, in a hi-tech engineering facility

- to allow learners to work collaboratively with professional guests in residence, for example performance artists, textile designers or musicians

- to bring together enough learners to make a difference in an enterprise project for their local community, for example applying their engineering skills to help refurbish a heritage vehicle, or developing a website for the local community centre

- to provide imaginative stimulation to learners through all three functional skills through day-long mini-conferences where workshops in 'mathematics in IT' or 'English in engineering' or 'ICT in 'society, health and development' can be explored when specialist subject teachers and sector specialists are both present.

Examples

Some examples of co-learning are explored in 'Planning a personalised programme', below.

The examples are based on the QCA Diploma curriculum guidance (see www.qca.org.uk/diploma), which describes the range and processes of principal learning and how to deliver it in an applied context. The guidance is designed to underpin all awarding body specifications and to fully articulate Diploma development partnership line of learning statements in a way that supports teaching and learning in centres.

The examples take potential opportunities for co-learning from the range and content section of the guidance. They show how consortia could use resources and expertise across levels. Co-learning can provide opportunities for learners at different levels to interact socially and create interesting possibilities for challenging learners and encouraging stretch and progression.

There is one example from each line of learning. Consortia who decide to use this approach will need to analyse the Diploma curriculum guidance to identify additional opportunities.

Next steps

Building on the approach in *Design for success* (also available at www.qca.org.uk/diploma), which shows how some consortia have already responded to the new challenges and opportunities of the Diploma, QCA has developed more examples. These focus on four key areas: functional skills, post-16 modelling, delivery approaches and consortia planning.

Planning a personalised programme

Construction and the built environment

Task

To construct an integrated programme of learning to be used for Foundation and Higher level construction and the built environment students working together. The programme can be personalised to meet individual learning needs.

The aim is to combine some of the intended learning outcomes from both Foundation and Higher level. The learning activities are differentiated, with the learner being guided to tackle the appropriate elements. The content will be greater for Higher level students, in line with the expected guided learning hours. There is scope to personalise the learning to a particular learner, for example:

- a strong Foundation learner may attempt Higher-level activities that will offer stretch

- the addition of English functional skills activities in respect to sustainability.

In this case the examples are taken from the Foundation and Higher range and content section of the construction and built environment Diploma curriculum guidance.

The team incorporates all the outcomes, which are matched in colour. The brown underlined content is unmatched, but could be packaged within the learning programme or delivered separately.

Foundation	Higher
Theme: Design the built environment	**Theme: Design the built environment**
Design influences	**Design influences**
The learner will:	The learner will:
- investigate the main factors that need to be considered in the design process	- explore the factors that need to be considered in the design process
- explore the role of planning in the design process	- apply the processes involved in responding to planning requirements in the design process
- investigate the impact on design of sustainability and environmental issues	- examine how utilities are accommodated in the design process
- explore how the properties of a range of different materials make them	- identify and apply technical information

suitable for use in design.	available to design the built environment.
	Theme: Design the built environment
	Develop knowledge and understanding of materials and structures
	Learners develop a good knowledge and understanding of the use and properties of construction materials and common structural forms and building elements used in design.
	The learner will:
	• examine the properties of different materials and their influence on the design process
	• explore the use of different materials
	• investigate the manufacture, preparation, location and securing of materials
	• investigate the use of sustainable materials and their influence on the design process
	• review a range of different structures and components and explain their influence on the design process
	• investigate the use of prefabricated frames and components.

Theme: Design the built environment	Theme: Design the built environment
Apply design principles	**Applying design principles**
Learners will be introduced to how design principles are applied in practice and why a range of structures are designed as they are.	Learners will apply design principles in a design project and explore careers and career pathways related to design.
The learner will:	The learner will :
• investigate the factors that influence the design solution	• establish the functions of the structure to be designed
• produce a design solution	• explore alternative design solutions for a complex structure
• explore a range of different types of job opportunities in design of the built environment, how they relate, and progression opportunities.	• investigate alternative materials suitable for the design
	• consider the build-ability of the design
	• explore job roles and career opportunities related to the design of the built environment.

The planning group involves one or more employers to provide a setting and context for the learning. Activities that offer experiential learning can then be developed in a real context.

The group designs a range of activities to support the learning outcomes they have selected. Any or all of the activities may integrate aspects of generic learning. All or most of the activities are jointly undertaken by learners at both levels; a few aspects are specifically assigned for either Foundation or Higher level learners.

Expected outcomes could be different for Foundation and Higher level learners, for example in relation to:

• depth of knowledge and understanding of the topics covered

• capacity to operate the 'plan, do, reflect, review' cycle

• a wider of breadth of knowledge of the topic.

Expected outcomes could be the same for learners in respect of:

- skills in practical activities

- ability to devise creative solutions.

Creative and media

Task

To construct an integrated programme of learning that will be used by Foundation and Higher creative and media students working together. The programme can be further personalised to meet individual learning needs.

The aim is to combine some of the intended learning outcomes from both Foundation and Higher level. The learning activities are differentiated, and the learners guided to tackle the appropriate elements. The content will be greater for Higher level students, in line with the expected guided learning hours. There is scope to personalise the assignment to a particular learner, for example:

- adding elements to practise explicitly the learning cycle (plan, do, reflect, review) as part of generic learning

- incorporating learning from a work experience placement where appropriate

- including IT activities to support functional skills.

In this case the examples are taken from the Foundation and Higher range and content section of the creative and media Diploma curriculum guidance.

The team incorporates all the outcomes, which are matched in colour. The brown underlined content is part of the additional Higher learning, which could also be packaged within the learning programme, or delivered separately.

Foundation	Higher
Creativity in context	**Creativity in context**
Learners will be introduced to the concept of audience and encouraged to consider creative and media products and practices in the context of the audience they are intended for.	Learners will explore contexts including a diverse range of cultures and the historical development of products and practices.
Learners should consider:	Learners should consider:
• a range of different examples of creative and media production and practice	• creative and media production and practice in a range of social, cultural and global contexts
• audience response to creative and	• a critical perspective in response to

media practice	creative and media production and practice
• the work of a range of practitioners	• the work of a broad range of recognised practitioners
• the development of creative and media practice over time	• the historical development of principles and practices and the influence on contemporary practice
• technology in creative and media practice	• the impact of new technologies on production, distribution and reception of creative and media products
• diversity, equality and representation in creative and media products and practice.	• issues relating to diversity and representation in the context of creative and media production and practice.
Creative businesses and enterprise	**Creative businesses and enterprise**
Learners should be introduced to the creative and media sectors, the realities of working in the industry and the importance of self-development in supporting progression.	Exploration of the industry and of progression routes should be reinforced by a realistic view of the industry and employment opportunities.
Learners should consider:	Learners should consider:
• working creatively with available resources	• working creatively within available resources and developing skills in managing resources
• learning about industry structures, job roles available and progression routes into employment	• the structure of the industry, job roles, progression opportunities
• transferable skills that support employability	• the practices, protocols and realities of working in the industry
• opportunities for self-development	• the importance of a range of transferable skills in supporting employability
• skills and activities required in enterprise and entrepreneurial	

activities.	• promoting own work and engaging in self-promotion
	• enterprising behaviour and the personal qualities that support it
	• intellectual property rights and how to protect them.

The planning group involves employers to provide a setting and context for the learning.

The group designs a range of activities to support the learning outcomes. The activities are likely to integrate aspects of generic learning as well as opportunities for applied learning. All or most of the activities are jointly undertaken by learners at both levels; a few aspects are specifically assigned for either Foundation or Higher learners.

Expected outcomes could be different for Foundation and Higher level learners, for example in relation to :

- breadth of knowledge expected

- quality of interpretation of knowledge.

Expected outcomes could be the same for learners in respect of:

- level of self-awareness demonstrated

- comprehending the range of work opportunities open to the individual learner.

Engineering
Task
To construct an integrated programme of learning that will be used by Foundation and Higher level engineering students working together. The programme can be further personalised to meet individual learning needs.
The aim is to combine learning outcomes from both Foundation and Higher level. The assigned activities will need to be differentiated, and the learner guided to tackle the appropriate elements. It is likely that the content will be greater for Higher level students, in line with the expected guided learning hours. There is scope to personalise the assignment to a particular learner, for example a strong Foundation learner may attempt Higher level activities that will offer stretch.
In this case the examples are taken from the Foundation and Higher range and content section of the engineering Diploma curriculum guidance.
The team is planning to incorporate the matched outcomes. The brown underlined content is part of the additional Higher learning, which could be packaged within the learning programme or separately.

Foundation	Higher
Theme B: Discovering engineering technology	**Theme B: Discovering engineering technology**
Electronics	**Construct electronic and electrical systems**
The study of electronics should include:	The study of electronics and electrical systems should include:
• standard symbols used to represent electronic components and applying this knowledge in working with circuit diagrams	• basic principles and techniques used in the construction of electronic and electrical systems
• working with circuit diagrams	• recognising and selecting components
• testing electronic circuits using a range of test equipment	• testing electronic circuits using a range of test equipment
• assembling circuits using correct tools and test equipment.	• assembling circuits using correct tools and test equipment

	• how applied mathematical skills are required to perform calculations.
Theme C : Engineering the future **Engineering in the future** The study of engineering in the future should include: • developments in engineering technology that impact on everyday life • the impact of recycling and safe disposal of engineered products.	**Theme C : Engineering the future** **Engineering in the future** The study of engineering in the future should look at: • the importance of innovation and creativity in engineering design and development of new products and services • the role of research and development when designing and developing products • environmental and social impact of engineering and sustainability of resources.

The planning group involves one or more employers to provide a setting and context for the learning. In the case of a local employer, subject to suitability, the setting might also be the organisation providing a student's work experience, thereby enhancing personalisation.

The group designs a range of activities to support these learning outcomes. The activities are likely to integrate aspects of generic learning.

Expected outcomes could be different for Foundation and Higher level learners, for example in relation to:

- depth of knowledge and understanding of the topics covered

- breadth of knowledge expected

- quality of interpretation of knowledge.

Expected outcomes could be the same for learners in respect of:

- understanding of safe and unsafe practices

- adherence to safe practices.

Information technology

Task

To construct an integrated programme of learning that will be used by Foundation and Higher level information technology students working together. The programme can be further personalised to meet individual learning needs.

The aim is to combine learning outcomes from both Foundation and Higher into the assignment. The learning activities will need to be differentiated, and the learner guided to tackle the appropriate elements. The content will be greater for Higher level students, in line with the expected guided learning hours. There is scope to personalise the learning to a particular learner, for example:

- adding elements to practise the learning cycle (plan, do, reflect, review) as part of generic learning

- incorporating learning from a work experience placement where appropriate

- to support a strong Foundation level learner to attempt Higher outcomes in order to offer stretch

- adding elements at Higher to reinforce mathematics functional skills.

In this case examples are taken from the Foundation and Higher range and content section of the information technology Diploma curriculum guidance.

The team is planning to incorporate all the outcomes, which are matched across the levels by common content. The brown underlined content is unmatched, but could be packaged within the learning programme or delivered separately.

Foundation	Higher
The digital world	**The potential of technology**
The study of the digital world should include:	The study of the potential of technology should include:
- the use of digital technology to produce outcomes	- use of increasingly complex information in a variety of contexts
- current multimedia and presentation media	- use of a range of information sources
- identifying key components of	- the implications for businesses, nations and individuals of technological

technology systems as used in business	innovation
• main organisational functions, including human resources, purchasing, production, marketing and finance	• the impact of actions and behaviour on business effectiveness
• fundamentals of business, including customers, products and profits and their interrelationship	• investigating the evolution of technology developments related to current and future business effectiveness and competitiveness.
• business objectives and how technology contributes to meeting these objectives.	
Multimedia	**Multimedia**
The study of multimedia should include:	The study of multimedia should include:
• using a range of digital media	• using a range of ICT tools including a range of software applications to meet the needs of the user and solve problems
• the use of digital technology to produce multimedia outcomes	
• simple project planning	• designing, developing and testing a multimedia product to meet a specific need.
• seeking and acting upon feedback from the target audience.	

The planning group involves employers to provide settings and contexts for the learning. The settings may come from one or more employers who operate IT systems on varying scales and for varying purposes.

The group designs a range of activities to support these learning outcomes. The activities integrate aspects of generic learning, as well as opportunities for applied learning. All or most of the activities are jointly undertaken by learners at the two levels; a few aspects are specifically assigned for either Foundation or Higher learners.

Expected outcomes could be different for Foundation or Higher level learners, for example in relation to :

• breadth of knowledge expected

- quality of interpretation of knowledge

- problem solving.

Expected outcomes could be the same for learners in respect of:

- level of self-awareness

- abilities to contribute to a team

- level of technical skills demonstrated.

Society, health and development

Task

To construct an integrated programme that could be used by Foundation and Higher level society, health and development Diploma students working together. The programme can be further personalised to meet individual learning needs. Planners need to examine the Diploma curriculum guidance as well as the criteria and specifications for the Diploma qualifications in society, health and development.

The aim is to combine learning outcomes from both Foundation and Higher level. The learning activities will need to be differentiated, and the learner guided to tackle the appropriate elements. The content will be greater for Higher level students, in line with the expected guided learning hours. There is scope to further differentiate in order to personalise the learning to a particular learner, for example:

- adding elements to practise explicitly the learning cycle (plan, do, reflect, review) as part of generic learning

- incorporating learning from a work experience placement where appropriate

- to further develop this area of learning to form the basis of a project, negotiated with the student

- to support a strong Foundation learner to attempt Higher learning outcomes in order to offer stretch.

In this case examples are taken from the Foundation and Higher range and content section of the society, health and development Diploma curriculum guidance.

The team is planning to incorporate all the outcomes, which are matched (using colour) across the levels by common content.

Foundation	Higher
Learners will develop knowledge of:	Learners will develop knowledge of:
• the legal and ethical framework, incorporating the many policies and codes of practice that people working in this sector must adhere to • how Every Child Matters impacts on the services provided in the sector, and	• the legal and ethical framework, incorporating many policies and codes of practice that those working in the sector must adhere to, including health and safety, parliamentary and EU legislation, codes of practice, World Health Organisation (WHO)

safeguards against harm and abuse • key features of the organisation of health, social care, community justice and services for children and young people • the impact of multidisciplinary and multi-agency working • the processes followed when decisions are made locally, nationally and in the wider world.	recommendations • how Every Child Matters impacts on the services provided in the sector • key features of the organisation of health, social care, community justice and services for children and young • the impact of multidisciplinary and multi-agency working • the processes followed when decisions are made locally, nationally and in the wider world.

The planning group involves employers to provide a setting and context for the assignment. The settings may come from one or more of the four society, health and development sectors.

The group designs a range of activities to support these learning outcomes. The activities integrate aspects of generic learning, as well as opportunities for applied learning. All or most of the activities are jointly undertaken by learners at the Foundation and Higher levels; with a few aspects specifically assigned for either Foundation or Higher level learners. The assignment includes a range of teaching and learning approaches, and Diploma-appropriate assessment strategies.

Expected outcomes could be different for Foundation and Higher level learners, for example in relation to:

• breadth of knowledge expected

• quality of interpretation of knowledge.

Expected outcomes could be the same for learners in respect of:

• appreciation of equalities principles

• demonstration of caring skills.