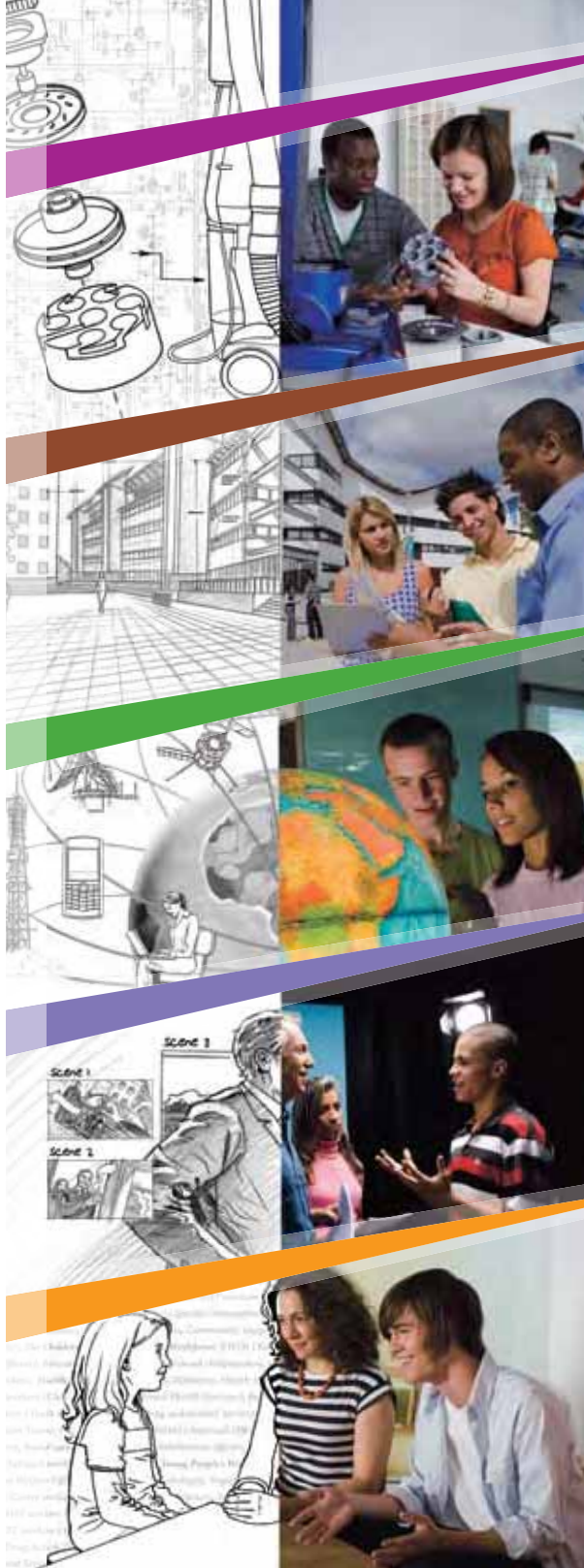


The Diploma

Bringing
your
learning
to life

What all teachers need to know



The Diploma **What all teachers need to know**



► What will Diplomas cover?

The curricula for the teaching and learning in the Diplomas are based around the major employment sectors of the UK. They'll give students an insight into the ways a sector works along with valuable skills like teamwork. They will have the chance to apply their learning to realistic scenarios. Students will learn in different settings, including the workplace, the classroom and local colleges. This will help them to make more informed career decisions, and give them valuable work experience.

► What are the components of the Diplomas?

Principal learning – students will acquire an awareness of a broad employment sector in addition to work-relevant knowledge, skills and understanding. At least half the principal learning is applied – i.e. practical learning, set in a work-related context.

Functional skills – Students will develop their ability to apply their English, maths and ICT skills in situations relevant to work and life.

► What is a Diploma?

The Diploma is one of a number of reforms to widen the range of options available to students. They have been developed in partnership with employers, schools, colleges and universities to motivate and engage more young people.

Diplomas are a new suite of qualifications offered at three levels in 14 broad employment sectors. The first five lines: Construction and the Built Environment, Creative and Media, Engineering, Information Technology, and Society, Health and Development are being taught in selected consortia of schools, colleges and work based learning providers, from September 2008. By 2013 all 14 Diploma subject areas will be available to all young people.

Diploma students will develop their skills in English, maths and ICT and acquire knowledge and skills about an employment sector, including structured work experience. The Diploma will give young people the skills they need for success in the modern workplace and in life. Diplomas will not narrow options. Year 9 students who choose a Diploma could take an Advanced Diploma at 16, or take A levels or an Apprenticeship.

Similarly, a Year 12 student could take an Advanced Diploma without having studied a Diploma at a lower level, and then progress to university, or to employment – the qualifications will be understood and respected by employers and universities.

Personal, learning and thinking

skills – such as teamwork, creative thinking, reflective learning and self-management.

Additional or Specialist learning

(ASL) – options that let students go into more depth in a specialist area, or broaden the study programme, through, for example, a language or science qualification. Students will select from qualifications at the same level as the Diploma that they

are taking, or one higher, e.g. the Foundation Diploma can have ASL at level 1 or 2.

A project – A project related to the employment sector that enables the learner to explore a topic of interest in greater depth or breadth.

Work experience – a minimum of 10 days' structured work experience, where possible in the sector studied.

What other changes are part of the 14-19 education and skills reforms?

- » Changes in GCSEs to make sure they meet students' needs better. These include the recently introduced new science GCSEs, a move to two-tier maths, and the reduction, or removal, of coursework in many subjects.
- » Functional skills: In future, all students at Key Stage 4 will develop functional skills in English, maths and ICT through GCSEs or new stand-alone qualifications.
- » A level changes: There will be a move to four from six units in most subjects. There will be more challenging, open ended questions and an A* grade to recognise the achievement of the most able students.
- » Extended Project: This is a new Level 3 qualification designed to develop and test learning and thinking skills. It is a compulsory part of the Diploma or can be taken as an option alongside A level courses.

► How do Diplomas differ from other qualifications?

The Diplomas blend theoretical study with practical and applied learning related to an employment sector to give young people preparation for work, or further study. Each one involves a breadth of learning which enables young people to keep their options open.

For example, Construction and the Built Environment is concerned not just with the traditional building industries but also with planning, environmental impact and facilities management.

Diplomas do not make young people ready for a specific job – that is the function of Apprenticeships and NVQs, but they will give young people valuable transferable skills sought after by employers and universities.

► What does a Diploma lead to?

A young person with a Diploma may go on to further education, higher education or employment. This may be in a directly relevant area or in a different subject or sector.

► Who should take a Diploma?

Diplomas will suit any young person of any level of ability, who is attracted by a course that combines theory with



practical application of learning. This means schools and colleges can offer choices which meet different interests and ambitions. It would be the right option for those who like to apply their learning in a practical way and are less attracted by traditional GCSE and A level options.

There are three levels of Diploma:

The Foundation Diploma is a level 1 qualification. It takes broadly the same amount of time to do as four or five GCSEs.

The Higher Diploma is a level 2 qualification. It takes broadly the same amount of time to do as five or six GCSEs.

The Advanced Diploma, for those over 16, is a level 3 qualification. It takes broadly the same amount of time to do as three A levels.

A Progression Diploma (also level 3) will be available, which takes broadly the same amount of time to do as two A levels. This will suit students who do not wish to complete a whole Advanced Diploma.

► **How do Diplomas fit within the wider curriculum at Key Stage 4?**

At Key Stage 4, Foundation and Higher Diplomas will run alongside the statutory National Curriculum, and the entitlement subjects and areas of learning. On the assumption that the functional and other skills are also taught within other subjects and across the curriculum – the Foundation Diploma Principal Learning, project and ASL total 30% of curriculum time. At level 2 (Higher Diploma) the Principal Learning, project and ASL total 40% of curriculum time.

Some GCSEs can be counted towards the Diploma (as additional or specialist learning). This means there is flexibility to build in Diploma learning across the curriculum.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has published curriculum guidance on the Diploma for schools and colleges.



▶ How long will it take to complete a Diploma?

When taken at Key stage 4 a Diploma will generally be taken as a two-year full-time course. Post-16, an Advanced Diploma course will normally also take two years but some students will be able to complete a Higher or Foundation Diploma course in less. Diplomas are made up of different parts so it is possible for students to build up towards a complete Diploma at their own pace, allowing for different educational requirements and other commitments, such as part-time work.

▶ Who has developed the Diplomas?

They have been developed by Diploma Development Partnerships (DDPs), which are led by Sector Skills Councils (SSCs). These brought together employers, universities, awarding bodies, schools and colleges. Awarding bodies have developed the

specifications and the qualifications are accredited and regulated by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA).

▶ Where will they be taught?

Initially, they are being taught in selected consortia (partnerships of schools and colleges). No single school or college is expected to deliver all 14 Diplomas on its own. Instead, schools, colleges, training providers, universities and employers will collaborate at a local level.

▶ How will the new Diplomas be funded?

Funding will come through normal channels for schools and colleges. The government will provide £70 million in 2007/08 through the Dedicated Schools Grant to support practical learning opportunities for 14 to 16-year-olds. This covers costs that include teaching, curriculum planning, resource, equipment and relevant fees.

It is also providing £15 million to cover administrative and logistical costs.

► Will Diploma teachers receive training?

Yes. The support is divided into four key areas:

Leaders and managers –

- » A flexible programme of support that can be tailored to the needs of consortia and individual leaders.
- » Focused on change management and collaborative working across institutions.

Delivery of the new Diplomas –

- » Three days of training to teachers and tutors grouped by lines of learning so they can focus on subject matter. This will also cover generic skills required to teach Diplomas. There will be a range of supporting materials online, as well as Diploma networks to share effective practice.

Consortia delivering Diplomas from September 2008 will be contacted by their regional Diploma co-ordinator to arrange local training.

Delivery of functional skills –

- » Four days of training, with supporting materials delivered through the Quality Improvement Agency and the Secondary National Strategies. More information is available through your local authority's national strategies consultant.

Exams officers and support staff –

- » Training needs analysis tool for support staff.
- » Conferences and guidance on 14-19 reforms for exams officers with targeted support through a regional field force.

► What about practicalities, like transporting students to other training facilities?

Local areas will be responsible for making transport arrangements for young people. But the local authority must provide:

- » For pre-16 – free transport for children travelling more than three miles.
- » For post-16 – financial support or transport for students aged 16-19 continuing in education.

The Diploma **What all teachers need to know**

“Diplomas offer students theoretical and practical learning with clear progression to Higher Education and employment. The strength of this qualification lies in the partnerships between schools, colleges, employers and Higher Education. By working together we can engage and motivate more young people, and make their learning more relevant to their lives.”

Sir Mike Tomlinson

You can download this leaflet or order copies online at **www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications**
Search using reference DCSF-00728-2007.

You can also order more copies by calling 0845 60 222 60; textphone 0845 60 555 60. Please quote reference 00728-2007LEF-EN.

For further information, see **www.teachernet.gov.uk/diplomas**

For more information about the new 14–19 curriculum, visit **www.dfes.gov.uk/14-19**

Information about the structure of Diplomas and resources to support their delivery by schools and colleges are available from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority at **www.qca.org.uk/diploma**

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