

**PINA**  
**PROFESSIONAL**  
**DIPLOMA**  
**PROGRAM**



**PERMACULTURE INSTITUTE OF NORTH AMERICA**

**JANUARY 2015**



# PINA

PERMACULTURE INSTITUTE OF NORTH AMERICA

## PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

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### ABOUT PINA

The Permaculture Institute of North America (PINA) is a professional organization designed to support students and experienced practitioners of permaculture in North America and Hawaii. Grounded in permaculture ethics and principles, PINA is structured as an association of both individuals and regional permaculture hub organizations working together to grant diplomas, maintain the integrity and quality of the Permaculture Design Course (PDC), promote PDCs, and facilitate networking among permaculturists.

PINA's Professional Diploma Program works to raise and maintain professional standards in permaculture design, teaching and additional permaculture disciplines, through personalized programs and a certifying process that encourages and recognizes achievement and excellence.

Additional information about PINA is available at: [permaculturenorthamerica.org](http://permaculturenorthamerica.org).

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## PART I

### PINA'S PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

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PINA grants a *Professional Diploma* to its members in several permaculture disciplines, acknowledging excellence, achievement, and unique contributions to emerging fields.

Diplomas currently offered by PINA are:

*Professional Diploma of Permaculture Design*

*Professional Diploma of Permaculture Education*

Other permaculture disciplines will be added as this program develops.

This document describes the diploma program process, along with diploma requirements for each permaculture discipline.

#### **A. SPECTRUM OF EXPERIENCE AMONG DIPLOMA PROGRAM APPLICANTS**

PINA's Professional Diploma Program is designed to accommodate the specific education, work experience and preferences of each applicant to the program, while maintaining rigorous professional standards in permaculture.

Permaculture Design Course graduates with limited or no direct experience in their discipline are welcome to apply to PINA for diploma candidacy, and are expected to take about 3 years to complete the program.

Applicants with greater permaculture education and experience will receive credit for work already completed that meets program requirements, and are expected to take up to 2 years to complete the program.

To honor extensive and long-standing professional work, PINA also offers an abbreviated diploma process for North American permaculturists who have been working in their disciplines for decades, requiring only basic documentation of past work. A complete description and application form are contained in PINA's *Fast-Track Diploma for Senior Permaculturists* document.

Once an applicant is accepted for diploma candidacy, the path to the diploma is defined by each candidate's unique *Action Learning Plan*, and documented electronically by the *Portfolio*, as described below. The candidate's field advisor may request additional work or documentation as needed, and may alter the time frame for completion as appropriate.

## B. CHECKLIST OF STEPS IN THE DIPLOMA PROCESS

- 1. PDC**  
Certification from a PINA-recognized 72-hour Permaculture Design Course (PDC) is a prerequisite for PINA's professional diploma program.
- 2. ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP IN PINA**  
For membership information and registration: [permaculturenorthamerica.org](http://permaculturenorthamerica.org).
- 3. APPLICATION TO THE DIPLOMA PROGRAM**  
The applicant completes the *Diploma Program Application*, submits it electronically to PINA with all required materials, and submits the application fee.
- 4. DIPLOMA CANDIDACY**  
Upon acceptance by PINA into the program, the applicant becomes a diploma candidate, is assigned a field advisor, and begins working with the advisor.
- 5. HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE AND STUDY**  
The diploma candidate creates and implements a self-directed *Action Learning Plan* to fulfill educational objectives and requirements not already met. The field advisor guides this process by assessing the candidate's experience, determining how the candidate may best qualify for a diploma, and offering recommendations for further study.
- 6. DOCUMENTATION**  
While implementing the *Action Learning Plan*, the diploma candidate posts well-organized electronic documentation of the work to a PINA-designated *Portfolio*. The *Portfolio* illustrates mastery of the key practices and skills on which permaculture rests, including embodying permaculture ethics in the permaculture and larger communities. Specific requirements for each diploma discipline are listed in Part II below.
- 7. GUIDANCE**  
Throughout this process, the field advisor assists the candidate, offering resources for research and recommendations for mentorship, tracking the candidate's work, and providing feedback and written evaluations.  
  
PINA recommends a monthly meeting between the candidate and the field advisor to review the candidate's progress. If meeting in person is not practical, the candidate may submit relevant documentation to the field advisor in advance of a monthly phone or skype conversation.
- 8. FIELD ADVISOR EVALUATION**  
Once complete, the field advisor reviews and approves the *Portfolio*, and issues a written evaluation for the candidate.

**9. REGIONAL REVIEW**

The field advisor then requests the regional hub to convene a diploma review panel of peers to hear the candidate present the *Portfolio*. The panel may request additional work in specific areas. Upon final review, the regional panel issues a brief written report of its findings.

**10. PINA REVIEW**

Once the *Portfolio* is approved at the regional level, the field advisor forwards the candidate's completed documentation, along with the evaluation and the regional review panel's report to PINA. PINA's Diploma Review Panel then assesses the *Portfolio*, and either accepts it or requests additional documentation or work experience.

**11. SUBMISSION OF ALL APPLICABLE FEES** as they are incurred.

**12. AWARD OF PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMA**

Upon final approval by PINA, the candidate is awarded PINA's *Professional Diploma* and any associated materials.

**C. THE ACTION LEARNING PLAN**

The design and development of a diploma candidate's unique educational process is expressed in the *Action Learning Plan*, an individualized approach of taking action and evaluating the results by asking good questions.

Action Learning is structured around self-identified learning objectives, which are supported by a series of working encounters and directed investigations, and whereby individuals learn by tackling real issues and reflecting on their actions. This may involve volunteer or paid work. Learners acquire knowledge through action and practice rather than through traditional instruction alone. An *Action Learning Plan* may include formal coursework.

Action learning is accomplished in conjunction with other people, in small groups called action learning sets. It is particularly suitable for adults, enabling each person to review actions taken and learning points arising, which then guides future action and improves performance. Action Learning rests on four key skills:

**1. PLANNING**

Determining candidate's needs, yields, challenges and practical opportunities.

**2. DOING**

Carrying out practical project work.

**3. OBSERVING**

Noting systematically the results of actions by the candidate and by others.

**4. REFLECTING**

Considering how one's observations add to the understanding of permaculture theory.

**SAMPLE EXCERPT FROM AN ACTION LEARNING PLAN**

Plan Date	Teaching Assignment	Action Date	Observations	Reflections
3/1/15	Assist at Garden Workshop	4/5/14	140 seedlings and fun	Hands-on worked well; ready for PDC
		4/5/14	Confusion on Site Analysis	Need examples; develop visual aids
3/1/15	Start seedlings at PDC	4/14/14	Messy indoors	Plan for bad weather next time; bring tarp
3/1/15	Cover Site Analysis at PDC	4/14/14	Class got it!	Charts helpful; ready for next subject
5/1/14	Cover Client Interview at PDC	5/12/14	_____	_____

For more information and a full-blown example for the *Action Learning Plan*, please refer to PINA's Action Learning Plan documentation and links.

**D. THE PORTFOLIO**

The *Portfolio* is the body of work posted electronically and presented by a diploma candidate to the field advisor, regional hub diploma review panel, and PINA diploma review panel. The *Portfolio* demonstrates fulfillment of the *Action Learning Plan*, achievement in a permaculture discipline, and completion of all diploma requirements.

**E. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

The candidate's work will be assessed through consideration of two primary and three secondary criteria, comprising 100 points. A score of at least 70 points is required for issuance of a diploma. The criteria are:

1. Fully completed *Action Learning Plan* and *Portfolio*. [50 points]
2. Knowledge of permaculture design methods and process, as evidenced by the applicant's portfolio. This should include evidence of ability to complete or secure appropriate costings and evaluations of own work. [30 points]
3. Theory in action — demonstration of permaculture ethics and understanding in daily life as well as in professional work. The candidate shall submit evidence of implementing permaculture in personal life as well as in public affairs, which may be attested by the written statements of colleagues [10 points]
4. Dissemination of candidate's learning through publishing or media outreach.



[5 points]

5. Community development: Aiding and empowering communities to take charge of their own resources. [5 points]

## F. FEE STRUCTURE

- 1. Application Fee** — \$200  
For reviewing the application and maintaining the status of the diploma candidate for up to three years, and for general support of PINA’s work. Submitted to PINA with the initial application documents. If additional years are required to submit the *Portfolio*, the candidate will pay \$50 per year for each of those years by the anniversary of the application approval.
- 2. Field Advisor Support** — variable  
A review or tutorial session shall take place monthly between the candidate and the field advisor for the length of the candidacy. Fees, paid directly by the candidate to the field advisor, are determined by agreement of the parties. PINA suggests a rate of \$60 per hour, which may include barter.
- 3. Other Mentors and Instructors** — as negotiated by the candidate
- 4. Diploma Review Panel** from the regional hub — to be determined  
Fee is submitted directly to the hub.
- 5. PINA Review Fee** — to be determined  
Submitted to PINA for its diploma review panel and administrative costs.

Please note that once the application is accepted by PINA, all fees are non-refundable.

## G. AWARD OF DIPLOMA

Upon final approval by PINA, the diploma candidate is awarded PINA’s *Professional Diploma*, recognizing broad competence in a specific permaculture discipline.

Diplomates of Education also receive a Master copy of the PINA *PDC Certificate*. The instructor issues this certificate to students upon completion of the PDC.

## H. CONTINUING ASSOCIATION BETWEEN PINA AND DIPLOMATES

- 1.** PINA publishes the name and status of the Diplomate in its roster of members, available to the public at the PINA website.
- 2.** The Diplomate maintains an active membership in PINA.
- 3.** The Diplomate participates in a PINA-recognized continuing education

program or permaculture convergence at least once every 3 years.

- 4. PINA reviews the Diplomate’s credential every 5 years.
- 5. Diplomate of Permaculture Education only:  
For each course taught, submits participant rosters to the PINA registry.

## PART II

### DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH PERMACULTURE DISCIPLINE

#### II.A. CHECKLIST FOR DIPLOMA OF PERMACULTURE DESIGN

This Diploma is granted to honor achievement and excellence in Design. After acceptance into the program, the candidate works through the following requirements with the guidance and support of the field advisor and additional mentors.

Upon final approval by PINA, the design candidate is awarded PINA’s *Professional Diploma of Permaculture Design*, recognizing broad competence in permaculture design at all scales.

- 1. ACTION LEARNING PLAN**  
Developed with the guidance of the field advisor, the plan may entail mentoring, internships, paid work, self-directed projects or direct instruction, and may include work with a variety of mentors and designers. Please see Section C above for more about this educational planning strategy.
- 2. PERMACULTURE DESIGN WORK**  
Completion of 10 comprehensive permaculture client-based designs and/or community project designs, as detailed below. Team-based design work is encouraged. Demonstration of skills that connect design to the real world, including problem solving ability, budgeting, generating estimates and scheduling.
- 3. ADVANCED COURSEWORK**  
Participation in a PINA-recognized *Advanced Permaculture Design Course* or other advanced permaculture course is highly recommended, and may be



required at the discretion of the field advisor. Online advanced coursework may be recognized by PINA on a case-by-case basis.

**4. DESIGN EXPERIENCE**

Under the guidance of the field advisor or PINA-recognized mentor, candidates for the Diploma of Permaculture Design will demonstrate a broad diversity of design experience through meeting several overlapping criteria for design projects. Of the 10 required designs:

**1. Tangibility**

- a. At least 5 designs for physical sites
- b. At least 2 designs for invisible structures

**2. Staff**

- a. At least 2 designs completed in a partnership or team
- b. At least 2 designs completed solo

**3. Scale**

- a. At least 1 design for less than 1/4 acre
- b. At least 1 design for 1/4 - 3 acres
- c. At least 1 design for greater than 3 acres

**4. Density**

- a. At least 1 urban design
- b. At least 1 suburban design
- c. At least 1 rural design

**5. Bioregion**

- a. At least 1 design outside the candidate's home bioregion

**6. Clients**

- a. At least 2 designs for a private residence
- b. At least 1 design for a business enterprise
- c. At least 1 design for an institution
- d. At least 1 design for a community project

**7. Compensation**

- a. At least 1 design completed as a paid professional
- b. At least 1 design completed as a volunteer

**8. Implementation**

- a. At least 5 designs substantially implemented

Should the candidate not meet all criteria with ten designs, additional design projects may be submitted.. One or more of these requirements may also be waived at the discretion of the field advisor, in consideration of the diploma candidate's unique circumstances and challenges.

**5. DESIGN PORTFOLIO**

- a. Documentation of how the candidate is implementing permaculture in personal life, including the design and status of the candidate’s home site and livelihood, to illustrate permaculture ethics in action.
- b. Graphic and text documentation for the 10 permaculture designs described above. Please see the **DESIGN PROJECT FORMAT** below.
- c. Evidence of the ability to present design work in an organized, timely, articulate manner.
- d. Two written references from PINA-recognized design diplomates with whom the candidate has worked.
- e. Two written references from employers.

**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION IF APPLICABLE:**

- f. Bibliography of publications.
- g. Roster of public outreach activities.
- h. Professional awards.
- i. Additional supporting evidence, such as field reports or photos.

**6. DESIGN PROJECT FORMAT**

For each design submitted, provide electronic documentation for:

**1. Project Overview**

- Vision Statements/Ethics for the Project
- Notes on Client Interview
- Goal Statement/Design Aims
- Icon or Symbol for the project (optional)

**2. Documentation of Existing Site**

- Base map for the entire site, including neighbors at the edges
- Blow-up maps for area(s) of intensive design (as needed)
- Elevations, sandbox or models (as needed)
- Photos
- Species Lists
- Diagram of Current Invisible Structures
- Misc features (soils, water rights, liens, easements, building codes, etc)
- Additional notes on observation and research

**3. Site Analysis**

- Overlay Chart of Sectors
- Overlay Chart of Current Zones of Use
- Overlay Charts of Microclimates, etc. (as needed)

**4. Design Methods**

- Charts of Needs/Yields, Pattern Language, other methods (as needed)

**5. Final Design**

- Overlay Chart of Design Features
- Blow-ups, elevations, models, charts, etc. (as needed)
- Overlay Chart of Proposed Zones of Use (as needed)
- Diagram of Proposed Invisible Structures (as needed)
- Bubble Chart showing connections among the design features

**6. Implementation Plan**

- Priorities
- Phases/Time line
- Budget and Materials
- Maintenance

**II.B. CHECKLIST FOR DIPLOMA OF PERMACULTURE EDUCATION**

This Diploma is granted to honor achievement and excellence in Teaching. After acceptance into the program, the candidate works through the following requirements with the guidance and support of the field advisor and additional mentors.

Upon final approval by PINA, the teaching candidate is awarded PINA's *Professional Diploma of Permaculture Education* recognizing broad competence in teaching permaculture design, along with a Master copy of the PINA *PDC Certificate* for issuing to students upon completion of the PDC.

- 1. ACTION LEARNING PLAN**  
Developed with the guidance of the field advisor, the plan may entail mentoring, internships, paid work, self-directed projects or direct instruction, and may include work with a variety of mentors and instructors. A sample plan is included above.
- 2. PERMACULTURE DESIGN WORK**  
Completion of five comprehensive permaculture client-based designs and/or community project designs, including one design for an Invisible Structure that has been presented to a group, such as designing a permaculture guild for the community. Team-based design work is encouraged. Demonstration of skills that connect design to the real world, including problem solving ability, budgeting, generating estimates and scheduling.

**3. ADVANCED COURSEWORK**

Participation in a PINA-recognized *Advanced Permaculture Design Course* and/or *Permaculture Teacher Training Course* is highly recommended, and may be required at the discretion of the field advisor. Online advanced coursework may be recognized by PINA on a case-by-case basis. Advanced courses may be applied towards the requirement for teaching experience (see #4b below).

**4. TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

Accrued under the guidance of the field advisor or PINA-recognized mentor:

**a.** Co-teach at least four PDCs with a PINA-recognized senior teacher, being present throughout the entire course, and sharing in organizing, instruction and classroom management responsibilities. For Tier 1 candidates with extensive previous experience, one or two of these courses may be waived at the discretion of the field advisor.

**b.** After completing #4a, co-teach and co-organize an additional six PDCs. Teaching an online course can count towards this requirement, as determined by PINA on a case-by-case basis.

Certification from an advanced course (see #3 above) will be considered equivalent to co-teaching one PDC. With both advanced courses, the candidate will be required to co-teach only four additional PDCs.

PINA will supply PDC certificates for graduates of these courses. The field advisor, in consultation with senior teachers who co-taught with the candidate, will ascertain if the candidate is ready to sign certificates on behalf of PINA, or if a senior teacher needs to be included in the course.

**5. TEACHING PORTFOLIO**

**a.** Documentation of how the candidate is implementing permaculture in personal life, including the design and status of the candidate’s home site and livelihood, to illustrate permaculture ethics in action.

**b.** Graphic and text documentation for the five permaculture designs described in #2 above.

**c.** Evidence of the ability to present information in an organized, timely, articulate manner.

**d.** Documentation of PDC teaching experience (#4 above), including course evaluations from ten participants.

**e.** Documentation of the ability to teach all modules of the PINA-recognized PDC curriculum. This may include a written description of the curriculum as taught, documented lesson plans for units within the curriculum, and/or documentation through oral presentation and inquiry.

- f.** Two written references from PINA-recognized lead instructors with whom the candidate has co-taught.
- g.** Two written references from co-workers and/or employers.

**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION IF APPLICABLE:**

- h.** Bibliography of publications.
- i.** Roster of public outreach activities.
- j.** Professional awards.
- k.** Additional supporting evidence, such as field reports or photos.