

PINA

FIELD ADVISOR

PROGRAM



PERMACULTURE INSTITUTE OF NORTH AMERICA

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A. THE ROLE OF THE FIELD ADVISOR

A field advisor is an experienced PINA diplomate who guides candidates for PINA's Professional Diploma through the design and fulfillment of their educational programs. Serving as both a mentor and an administrator, a field advisor assesses a candidate's work and readiness for review.

Field advisors are the cornerstone of PINA's decentralized structure, linking diploma candidates, regional hub organizations, and PINA's administrative services.

PINA seeks to foster excellence and a high degree of professionalism through its diploma programs, and has therefore set rigorous standards for candidates. Working on a continental scale demands broad consistency and parity among diploma candidates. However, PINA also recognizes that permaculture education is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor, and that geographical considerations and personal circumstances may at times require flexibility. The field advisor is therefore empowered to adapt certain requirements to a candidate's specific situation, as defined in the job description below. Please refer to PINA's *Professional Diploma Program* documents for specific diploma requirements and details.

B. SELECTION OF FIELD ADVISORS FOR REGIONAL HUBS

Field advisors are PINA diplomates with at least ten years of professional experience in permaculture. PINA recommends that they also have lived in the region where they practice for at least 5 years, including at least 2 years working directly in permaculture.

Field advisors are nominated by their associated regional hub organizations, invited to apply to PINA, and then reviewed and appointed by PINA. PINA recommends that each hub establish three or four advisors, with one serving as a coordinator. Where a regional hub is not yet established, colleagues from that geographical area may nominate prospective advisors, and PINA itself may nominate local advisors and request them to help establish the hub.

Nominees are asked to submit an application to PINA electronically **within 30 days of nomination**. PINA reviews the application within 30 days of receipt, and advises the applicant and the regional hub of the field advisor appointment.

Field advisors generally work within their own region, but may sometimes be requested to work with candidates in under-served regions. Field advisors with specific expertise may also mentor candidates who are assigned to other field advisors, both within and outside of their region.

C. ASSIGNMENT OF FIELD ADVISORS TO DIPLOMA CANDIDATES

PDC graduates interested in earning a professional diploma may apply at PINA's website. Regional hubs may also refer requests for diploma candidacy to PINA.

Once PINA's Diploma Program Committee reviews and accepts an applicant for diploma candidacy, it assigns a field advisor from the appropriate region to work with that candidate, taking into consideration recommendations from the regional hub, any requests by the candidate, and the proposed advisor's preferences.

D. FIELD ADVISOR JOB DESCRIPTION AND REQUIREMENTS

PINA estimates an average of 9-12 hours of work per year per candidate, including both mentoring and administrative responsibilities. PINA intends that its field advisors demonstrate a high degree of emotional intelligence, treating diploma candidates with respect and kindness.

The field advisor:

- Reviews the application and contacts the new candidate.
- Establishes a financial agreement with the candidate and begins receiving compensation, as described below.

- Guides the candidate in developing an Action Learning Plan, which may entail mentoring, internships, paid work, self-directed projects or direct instruction, and may include work with a variety of mentors and instructors.
- Follows through with correspondence and communications, while the candidate maintains regular communication and submits documentation of work for review.
- Meets with the candidate regularly, providing support as needed and keeping track of progress. Depending on the candidate and the circumstances, meetings must take place **at least quarterly**, and generally not more than once a month. Candidates will usually need more time at the beginning to become oriented and establish the Action Learning Plan, then less attention in the middle phases, and more time towards the end to complete the diploma review process.

Meetings are recommended to have as much personal interaction as possible, taking place primarily by telephone, skype or in person. Half an hour is generally a good time frame for the typical meeting, and PINA's field advisor materials include a suggested template for meetings.

- Submits a brief (1-2 paragraph) annual report to PINA's Diploma Program Committee describing the candidate's progress and current status.
- Mentors the candidate as applicable. Candidates may also be mentored by other field advisors and professionals with specific experience — perhaps out of region — in the candidate's fields of interest.
- May require the candidate to participate in one or more PINA-recognized Permaculture Design Courses if needed.
- May require the candidate to participate in a PINA-recognized Advanced Permaculture Design Course, Permaculture Teacher Training Course and/or other advanced permaculture coursework as needed.
- May grant additional time for the candidate to complete the Action Learning Plan and submit the portfolio.
- Presents the candidate's portfolio to the regional hub's Diploma Review Panel once the work is complete.
- Upon approval by the regional hub, forwards the candidate's portfolio to PINA's Diploma Review Panel.

1. FOR THE PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMA OF EDUCATION

- In conjunction with the candidate's senior co-teachers, the field advisor ascertains:
 - When the candidate is ready to sign PDC certificates on behalf of PINA.
 - When the candidate is ready to teach PDCs without a senior co-teacher.
- For candidates with extensive previous experience, the field advisor:

- May waive one or two of the four PDCs that candidates are required to co-teach with a PINA-recognized senior teacher.

2. FOR THE PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMA OF SITE DESIGN

- Candidates must demonstrate a broad diversity of design experience, meeting several overlapping criteria for projects. The field advisor:
 - May require additional design projects should all criteria not be met with 10 designs.
 - May waive one or more of the design requirements, in consideration of the candidate's unique circumstances and challenges, as long as the candidate demonstrates a mastery of the design process and an ability to produce solid permaculture design work.

E. COMPENSATION FOR FIELD ADVISORS

The diploma candidate compensates the field advisor directly for administrative work and mentoring. PINA's suggested payment rate is \$60 per hour, via dollars or barter. It is up to the field advisor and the diploma candidate to negotiate their specific financial agreement. Payment is expected to be current when the field advisor submits the portfolio for review.

To minimize frequent transactions and indebtedness of candidates to field advisors, one possibility is for the field advisor to request a retainer payment up front for three or four hours of work, and additional advance payments from the candidate as the credits are used. When services are completed, the field advisor must be prepared to issue a refund to the candidate for any balance.

F. FIELD ADVISOR TRAINING AND SUPPORT

PINA's Field Advisor Training Program includes live conference calls to develop mentoring skills, relevant readings and links, hands-on exercises, and regular discussion of this work. Optional templates, forms and checklists are available to help field advisors track candidates and structure their practice.

PINA **requires** new field advisors to participate in **one 90-minute live telephone orientation** that includes clarification of exactly what the job entails. Ongoing 90-minute group conference calls are offered regularly, at no cost, to provide general support, advanced training skills, networking, sharing of challenges and triumphs, opportunities for discussion, and feedback to improve the program. Field advisors are welcome to participate in as many calls as they want, and are **required to attend at least one conference call per year**.

Please note that PINA protects the privacy of all candidate information, so that any candidates or applicants referred to in these calls are treated as anonymous case studies.

G. REVIEW OF FIELD ADVISORS

1. PROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENT

PINA reviews the work of each field advisor every 3 years, and more often if needed. PINA recommends that each regional hub also establish a protocol for regular assessment of field advisors' work.

2. ETHICAL STANDARDS

PINA requires field advisors to uphold the permaculture ethics, to maintain professional ethical standards, and to abide by PINA's ethical code.

To avoid improprieties, field advisors may not work with their romantic partners or family members. If a romantic relationship begins to develop between a field advisor and a diploma candidate, the advisor must inform the regional hub and PINA of the changed circumstances so that PINA can reassign the candidate to a different advisor. The field advisor must also inform the hub and PINA about other possible conflicts of interest with a diploma candidate.

3. REMOVAL OR REASSIGNMENT OF A FIELD ADVISOR

Following due process, field advisors may be removed from the position by PINA or by the regional hub they serve. Should PINA receive a written complaint regarding a field advisor, it will request the advisor to respond to the allegations, review the situation, and take appropriate action.

Field advisors may also be terminated from working with a specific candidate upon request of the advisor, the candidate, PINA's Diploma Program Committee, or the regional hub. PINA will then assign new field advisor to the candidate.

H. PINA ACCEPTANCE OF UK DIPLOMATES AS FIELD ADVISORS

If your diploma was issued by the Permaculture Association of the UK, PINA will honor your credential in place of the PINA professional diploma. In addition to the information requested in the **APPLICATION FOR FIELD ADVISOR**:

- 1. If not yet a member of PINA, join now at the diplomate membership level,
- 2. Include a copy of your UK Diploma Certificate with your application.