



Consulting



## Phase 4 Diploma Criteria Consultation

Final Report on the findings from the Consultation Events and Online Survey

### Final Report

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## Executive Summary

### Introduction

Pye Tait Consulting was commissioned to facilitate and support a wide-ranging consultation on the Criteria documents for the phase 4 Diplomas. These Diplomas include three lines of learning in:

- **Humanities and Social Sciences**
- **Languages and International Communication**
- **Science**

These Diplomas are each intended to be available at three Levels: Level 1 (Foundation), Level 2 (Higher) and Level 3 (Advanced). The Diplomas are to be available for first teaching in September 2011, with the exception of the Advanced Level of the Diploma in Science, which will be introduced one year later to permit additional development work to be undertaken.

The Criteria documents for these Diplomas have two purposes:-

1. To specify the requirements against which awarding bodies will develop qualifications for the Diploma
2. To enable the admittance of accredited qualifications into the Diploma catalogue (publications that demonstrate the component qualifications of the Diploma and which are available to view on the National Database of Accredited Qualifications)

The purpose of the consultation was to ensure that those Criteria, developed for the mandatory Principal Learning element of the Diplomas, are fit for purpose.

### Methodology

The consultation sought the views of a wide range of stakeholders groups with an interest in these Diploma lines. The consultation process comprised two components:-

1. Nine regional consultation events which took place across England between 21<sup>st</sup> April and 29<sup>th</sup> May 2009. A range of stakeholders (e.g. employers, providers, Higher Education Institutions and Awarding Bodies) were invited by the QCA to contribute to focus group discussions on individual Lines of Learning.
2. An online survey hosted via the QCA website between 20<sup>th</sup> April and 29<sup>th</sup> May 2009. This enabled a range of stakeholders to provide feedback on one or more of the Phase 4 Line of Learning Criteria.

The events were attended by a total of 384 delegates. Of these, 112 attended the focus groups for Diploma in Humanities and Social Sciences; 112 attended those for the Diploma in Languages and International Communication; and 144 attended those for the Diploma in Science. These attendees belonged to the full range of stakeholder groups targeted for the consultation process:

Awarding Body	Employer	FE	HE	Local Authority	Other*	School	Observers	Total
19	10	62	35	74	40	58	86	<b>384</b>

\*'Other' includes consultants, SSC's, Professional Bodies, Learned Societies, Training Providers, etc

Discussions in all the individual focus groups were recorded and transcribed in full, and then analysed by Pye Tait Consulting's research team, as were the survey findings.

The online survey was completed by a total of 96 respondents, with Science securing a significantly larger response at just under 69% than the other phase 4 Lines of Learning:

<b>Responses to the online survey: by Line of Learning</b>	
Humanities and Social Sciences	14
Languages and International Communication	16
Science	66
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>

## High Level Overview of Findings

The vision and aims of all three phase 4 Diplomas have been broadly welcomed by participants in the consultation events and the online survey. All three lines are perceived by all stakeholder groups to have the potential to make a significant contribution to the existing qualification offer, especially if rigorous but flexible assessment standards and processes can be put in place. There is particular enthusiasm for the applied approach envisaged for these qualifications, their potential for applied learning, and their focus on skills relevant to those required by employers and higher education.

A series of findings were broadly common to all three of the phase 4 Diplomas. These often reflect the particular challenges of producing a qualification which is applied, interdisciplinary, and focused on 'academic' subject matter.

- A perception that the **level of demand** posed by the Level 1 across the lines may be pitched too high. There was particularly the case in Humanities and Social Sciences, but was also the case in Languages and International Communication, and, to a much lesser degree, in Science. The report recommended a review of the content at Level 1 for breadth and depth to ensure that it is at an appropriate level and provides appropriate progression from Key Stage 3.

- There was concern that the real-world and **workplace contexts** in which skills and knowledge could be applied were not sufficiently clear or comprehensive in the Criteria documents: concerns such as a heavier focus on interpretation and translation in the Languages and International Communication Criteria than was thought to be necessary; a lack of enough explicit references to employment contexts in the Humanities and Social Sciences Criteria lacked; and concerns that the Science contexts were not sufficiently up-to-date and relevant to learners. The report recommended that the topic summaries make reference to relevant workplace and real world contexts where the skills developed by these Diplomas are applied.
- There was uncertainty about the **target audience** at whom these Diplomas should be aimed, particularly at Level 1; it was felt that ‘academic’ learners would tend to opt for the existing GCSE and A level route, while more ‘hands-on’ learners would tend to opt for the more obviously vocational orientation of the first fourteen Diploma lines. It is important that the advantages of the interdisciplinary and applied approach are communicated effectively to all stakeholders.
- Finally, though technically out of scope of the consultation, many delegates emphasised the need for **appropriate CPD and support** to make the transition to more collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning for those providers and teachers more accustomed to more tightly defined subject boundaries. The report recommended that steps are taken to overcome the barriers to collaborative working by developing appropriate professional support or making use of existing sources of expertise, and ensure that their availability is clearly communicated to providers and teachers.

Within the framework of these broadly shared concerns, there were very varied perceptions of how well the individual lines of learning had succeeded in translating their respective visions into detailed content:

- In **Languages and International Communication** there was a definite perception that the vision has been successfully translated into appropriate content, and that this Diploma has clear potential to be a significant and valuable addition to the existing qualification offer. Concerns tended to focus on the very specific challenges posed by assessment in this line of learning, with particular reference to the Content and Language Integrated learning (CLIL) approach used in the Criteria document (as detailed below).
- In **Humanities and Social Sciences**, there was a perception that the Criteria provided the opportunity for highly engaging teaching and learning, but the content was not yet fully meeting that potential. There was not yet, according to the participants, an appropriate balance of content and skills related to specific disciplines, with concern that history, English literature, Classics, and even the humanities in general were not sufficiently well-represented. The challenges posed by the interdisciplinary nature of the qualification are not therefore fully resolved.

- In **Science**, there were serious concerns that the Criteria document has not succeeded in translating the vision set out for the Diploma into a reality. Delegates felt that the ‘big questions’ and ‘major challenges’, which were major potential hooks for attracting learners, had become lost in that translation. There were strong fears that the majority of the content would not engage learners, and that the content was not at present sufficiently carefully thought through in relation to the Key Stage 3 Programme of Study, and that the coverage of the Key Stage 4 Programme of Study needed to be more clearly indicated.

These issues will need to be addressed if the Diplomas are to reach their full potential. A summary of the more detailed findings presented in the report is provided below.

## Line Specific Findings and Recommendations

### *Languages and International Communication*

The Diploma in Languages and International Communication and in particular the Principal Learning – according to the Criteria – appears a relatively complex qualification offer with a number of distinctive features. In addition to requiring the development of a main ‘target language’, it introduces Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) – where a foreign language is learned in the context of a specific content area – with a minimum of five specific thematic areas available for learners to choose from; it will assess the productive (speaking and writing) as well as the receptive (listening and reading) skills; and has a thematic structure across the levels. It also introduces discourse analysis to the level 3 study of languages, and supports the acquisition of language study skills through learning a second foreign language *ab initio*.

Despite this complexity (of particular concern for level 1 learners), participants in the focus groups on the Criteria for the Diploma in Languages and International Communications were, in the main, very positive about the way the vision had been realised in the topic content set out in the Criteria. It was perceived to be a valuable and innovative addition to the existing qualification offer that would help attract and retain learners into the study of languages. Concerns tended to focus instead on the way that the qualification would be assessed, and how the innovative content could be effectively defined and supported.

- **Assessment** - There was particular concern that the innovative content and approach of this Diploma should not undermine rigour in assessment particularly at Level 3. This applies particularly to the assessment of CLIL, but also more generally to a need to ensure accuracy in the use of language and preserve the productive and receptive skills through assessment. There were also concerns about the balance of internal and external assessment of the target language, with some feeling that while some external assessment was necessary at Level 3, this was less necessary at lower levels.

**Recommendation:** Give careful consideration to the assessment requirements, particularly in relation to CLIL and the assessment of the productive and receptive skills.

- **Contexts** – The five ‘contexts’ listed in the Criteria were welcomed, but there were many suggestions for additional contexts in order to increase the appeal to the full range of learners. Sport was particularly mentioned as a valuable addition.

**Recommendation:** Consider amplifying the number of themes available, particularly sport.

- **Balance of content** – Topics were examined in detail and two in particular (2.5 – The world of professional communication; as well as 3.3 – Global challenges facing contemporary society) emerged as the most in need of change. Topic 2.5 was considered to place too great an emphasis on the work of professional interpreters and translators, and 3.3 was identified as a highly valuable topic that could offer greater breadth of content, with the potential value in introducing some target language assessment.

**Recommendation:** Consider reviewing and reworking topic 2.5, and consider the suggestions from consultation participants that would serve to broaden the content of topic 3.3.

### ***Humanities and Social Sciences***

The Diploma in Humanities and Social Sciences is designed to be a genuinely interdisciplinary qualification that uses a thematic approach to allow learners to coordinate knowledge and skills from the various disciplinary areas in this Diploma’s footprint. In doing so, this Diploma is intended to engage and empower learners.

The overall reception of the Criteria has been notably positive. Participants broadly welcomed the vision and aims of this Diploma, and could see the ways these were developed in the proposed content. Most delegates viewed the content as potentially highly engaging for learners. There was also particular enthusiasm from HE delegates, who saw great potential to develop fundamental methodological skills and interdisciplinary awareness not currently being developed through A levels. Issues arising from the consultation centred on the following areas:

- **Interdisciplinarity and Balance of Content** – The major concern was whether the Criteria had managed to fully achieve the interdisciplinary approach envisaged for the qualification. There was particular debate over the balance of content from the different subjects within the Diploma’s disciplinary footprint, with a perceived insufficiency of content in history, English literature and Classics. There was particular concern that the skills of handling and interpreting texts and sources were insufficiently emphasized, particularly at Levels 2 and 3. In addition, some delegates felt that some topics, particularly at Level 2, were too obviously based on a single main subject area. Finally, there was some concern that certain sections of the document betrayed an implicit commitment to Eurocentric and

progressivist values.

**Recommendations:** Give consideration to increasing the focus on textual skills, particularly those associated with history and English literature. Consider making the opportunities to introduce historical, literary and Classical subject matter clearer. Carefully consider the way that interdisciplinarity has been dealt with in the topics. Review the content to ensure that there is balanced consideration of change, progress and diversity

- **Real World Contexts** - There was also a particular worry that the real-world contexts in which humanities and social sciences skills could be applied were not sufficiently evident in the documents. This was felt to undermine the distinctiveness and marketability of this Diploma.

**Recommendation:** Consider including more explicit mention of relevant employment contexts in the topics summaries

- **ICT and New Media** – As a result of the huge transformation effect of new media and technologies, both historically and, especially, in the present, it was felt these areas should be given more emphasis in the Criteria document. This would also help support innovative assessment.

**Recommendation:** Consider whether there are sufficient opportunities to introduce ICT and new media in the Criteria document

## Science

The Diploma in Science aims to use an interdisciplinary approach to engage learners and show them how science is used to analyse, and attempt to solve, the major questions and big challenges that face those using science or working in this field. This vision was extremely well received by the participants, who were enthused by the way that this vision was presented and its capacity to integrate knowledge, understanding and skills from the traditional scientific disciplines. But they also felt that this was not yet sufficient to make the Diploma in Science truly stand out from the current qualification offer.

In addition, there has been real and recurrent concern from delegates that the content set out in the Criteria document has not succeeded in translating the vision set out for the Diploma into a reality. These concerns have been so persistent that it has led to a major rethink, during the consultation process, of the topic content of this Diploma, limiting the direct relevance of the consultation findings. Despite this there are clear messages that emerged from the consultation:

- **Lack of Clear Distinctiveness in the Vision:** For many delegates the ‘unique selling point’ of this Diploma remains insufficiently clear, especially given the wealth of science

qualifications that are already available.

**Recommendation:** Ensure that the Diploma's unique features are fully reflected in the Vision.

- **Failure to Translate the Vision into the Content:** Participants felt that the 'major challenges' and 'big questions' at the heart of the vision had been lost in the topic content. They also felt that much of the content and many of the contexts was not as relevant and 'cutting-edge' as they should be.

**Recommendation:** Ensure that there is a clear relationship between the Vision and the content and that the resulting content is not only engaging for learners but different to that presented by existing qualification specifications.

- **Multidisciplinary Study** - The multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary aspect of the qualification is still not fully realised and its intent understood by many participants. Many of the topics remained clearly identifiable as primarily relevant to a particular subject area, particularly Biology and Chemistry. Moreover, there is a perceived lack of fundamental physics content, which is held to underpin many other areas of study.

**Recommendations:** Give careful attention to the way that the multidisciplinary nature of the qualification is developed, both in the vision and in the topic content. Ensure that there is adequate coverage of physics and particularly space-age physics content.

- **Relationship with Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 Programme of Study** – There has been a great deal of concern that the Diploma in Science must provide clear progression from the KS3 science Programme of Study, but delegates have identified overlaps that may lead to duplication. In addition, many delegates were concerned that the coverage of the KS4 Programme of Study was not sufficiently clearly undertaken.

**Recommendations:** Ensure that the Diploma in Science provides smooth progression from KS3. When redrafting the Criteria, consideration should also be given to clearly identifying the elements which satisfy the requirements of the KS4 science Programme of Study.

## 1. Introduction

Pye Tait Consulting was commissioned by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) to facilitate and assist at a public consultation on the Phase 4 Diploma Lines of Learning Criteria at Foundation, Higher and Advanced levels in:

- **Humanities and Social Sciences**
- **Languages and International Communication**
- **Science<sup>1</sup>**

The aim of the consultation was to ensure that the Line of Learning Criteria are fit for purpose, robust and fair, and to make certain that the regulatory body, OfQual, has confidence in the Criteria. In-depth and constructive feedback was sought from a broad range of stakeholders in order to identify common themes across Lines of Learning, identify where any changes were required, and ensure the criteria were fully inclusive and did not pose any barriers for access.

The underpinning objectives are to ensure that:-

- ❖ The Diplomas are deliverable and appealing and are taken up by learners across the age range
- ❖ They are seen as having equal parity alongside other more traditional and long-standing qualifications and are therefore an acceptable basis for entry into Higher Education
- ❖ They will provide learners with the skills and knowledge that are needed to equip them for the future

All Diplomas have a requirement to deliver a stimulating and high-quality programme of learning, and provide young people with skills and knowledge relevant to Higher Education, training and employment.

The Line of Learning Criteria set out:-

- The aims and purpose of the Diploma
- Any issues relating to diversity and inclusion<sup>2</sup> that may be encountered by learners undertaking the Diploma
- The topics covered by the Principal Learning element of the qualification

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<sup>1</sup> This specification has been impacted by the announcement of 16<sup>th</sup> April 2009 that the Advanced Diploma in Science will now be introduced in 2012, a year later than the Foundation Level and Higher level in 2011. Questions relating to the Advanced level in Science have therefore been removed from the consultation events and the online survey.

<sup>2</sup> Separate consultation activities are being undertaken by QCA on the subject of Diversity and Inclusion within the Phase 4 Criteria documents.

## 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Criteria document is twofold:-

1. To specify the requirements against which awarding bodies will develop qualifications for the Diploma
2. To enable the admittance of accredited qualifications into the Diploma catalogue (publications that demonstrate the component qualifications of the Diploma and which are available to view on the National Database of Accredited Qualifications)

It is these Criteria documents with which the consultation was concerned.

It should be taken into account that the consultation was only concerned with the proposed Principal Learning element of the composite qualification. Work on assessment criteria and Additional and Specialist Learning (ASL) is yet to be finalised. However the consultation events incorporated an opportunity for attendees to share their thoughts on ASL, and a separate record of this feedback has been passed to the relevant Diploma Development Partnership (DDP).

The overall aims of the Diplomas are set out in Section 2 of the *Criteria for accreditation of foundation, higher and advanced Diploma qualifications* (Ofqual/08/3990).

The purpose of the final report is to set out the responses received from all nine consultation events, along with the results from the online survey hosted by QCA. Cross line issues have also been explored as a result of the consultations and the findings are also contained within this report.

## 1.2 Methodology

The consultation process comprised two components:-

1. Nine regional consultation events which took place across England between 21<sup>st</sup> April and 29<sup>th</sup> May 2009. A range of stakeholders (e.g. employers, providers, Higher Education Institutions and Awarding Bodies) were invited by the QCA to contribute to focus group discussions on individual Lines of Learning and the Phase 4 Diplomas as a whole.
2. An online survey hosted via the QCA website between 20<sup>th</sup> April and 29<sup>th</sup> May 2009. This enabled a range of stakeholders to provide feedback on one or more of the Phase 4 Line of Learning Criteria.

The consultation events took place as follows:-

Region	Location	Date
North East	Durham	21 <sup>st</sup> April 2009
North West	Manchester	23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2009
London	London	28 <sup>th</sup> April 2009
Yorkshire	Leeds	7 <sup>th</sup> May 2009
South East	Basingstoke	12 <sup>th</sup> May 2009
South West	Bristol	14 <sup>th</sup> May 2009
East	Ipswich	19 <sup>th</sup> May 2009
East Midlands	Nottingham	28 <sup>th</sup> May 2009
West Midlands	Birmingham	29 <sup>th</sup> May 2009

The events were attended by over 300 participants, as the table below shows:-

	Awarding Body	Employer	FE	HE	Local Authority	Other*	School	Observers	Total
Durham	1	0	7	2	10	2	1	11	<b>34</b>
Manchester	0	0	8	3	9	2	17	6	<b>45</b>
London	5	1	9	4	13	3	7	19	<b>61</b>
Leeds	1	0	10	1	9	4	7	9	<b>41</b>
Basingstoke	1	1	1	5	6	5	5	11	<b>35</b>
Bristol	1	2	4	1	8	6	9	7	<b>38</b>
Ipswich	4	1	11	3	4	4	5	6	<b>38</b>
Nottingham	2	3	2	9	6	8	4	7	<b>41</b>
Birmingham	4	2	10	7	9	6	3	10	<b>51</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>384</b>

\*Other includes consultants, SSC's, Professional Bodies, Learned Societies, Training Providers, etc

## 1.3 Summary of Approach

### 1.3.1 Consultation Events

Events commenced with a presentation by the QCA, which included an overview of the Diploma qualification and an update on the current stages of all four phases. This was followed by three shorter presentations by DDP members representing each of the phase 4 lines of learning. These presentations set out the vision for each Diploma.

Attendees were then divided into focus groups to discuss an individual line of learning during morning and afternoon sessions. The focus groups were facilitated by Pye Tait Consulting staff, and for consistency, each staff member was allocated to a particular line of learning for the whole of the consultation process. Observers from the QCA attended morning and/or afternoon focus group sessions and made notes accordingly. Criteria Writers were present at some of the events, and at least one member of the relevant DDP was present to respond to any technical queries that arose.

The output of each focus group was recorded and the results transcribed in full, in order to facilitate rigorous analysis. Attendees were assured that they would not be identified based on any views they decided to share.

Focus groups in both the morning and afternoon sessions discussed questions specific to the relevant Line of Learning; however the afternoon sessions also included a focus on the Phase 4 and DDP vision and strategy for Additional and Specialist Learning (ASL) development. Conclusions were shared in a plenary session at the close of the event.

The **focus** of all discussions was the Principal Learning component of the Diploma – the mandatory learning that young people will undertake to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to each Line of Learning.

The **purpose** of the discussions was to examine the clarity of topic summaries, the appropriateness and balance of topic content, whether topics are engaging for learners and whether the Principal Learning supports progression opportunities and develops relevant employability skills. Discussions also covered assessment methods, the appropriateness of work-related contexts, and whether the Diploma is sufficiently different from existing provision.

Further questions specific to each Line of Learning were debated in the relevant focus groups, in addition to some discussion around the vision and ASL. Attendees were reminded that Diploma policy was **out of scope** for these discussions.

The ordering of questions did not follow a rigid process, and flexibility was important to ensuring the natural flow of views. Some questions were changed over the course of the consultation period to reflect the DDPs wish to move on from resolved issues to new ones.

The consultation events ran smoothly. The morning presentations overran by up to 20 minutes on most occasions, but this did not impact significantly on the breadth and depth of the focus group discussions. Attendees broke for lunch from, and returned immediately to, their focus group rooms, minimising any logistical problems. The plenary session (for which attendees from all three lines of learning came back together) was kept reasonably succinct. Attendees appeared to be engaged throughout the day.

### ***1.3.2 Online Survey***

As with Criteria consultations for previous phases of Diploma rollout, an online survey was created to enable a range of stakeholders to provide their feedback on the four line of learning in phase 4. Survey participants were able to submit responses on one or more of the line of learning.

The online survey was promoted by the QCA and the DDPs, and the web address was provided to event attendees following the plenary session at each of the nine consultation events.

Pye Tait Consulting staff monitored the results of the survey on a regular basis.

### ***1.3.3 Reporting***

The next section of the report presents a summary of the cross line issues emerging from all nine events. Following this, the findings in respect of each line of learning are presented separately, consisting of an overview, detailed evidence base, and a set of recommendations.

Opinions expressed within the findings represent the views of individuals and are not necessarily representative of their organisation as a whole.

## 2. Cross-Line Findings and Issues

The vast majority of points raised by delegates during the consultation process were highly specific to individual lines of learning.

However, there were a number of issues that were relevant to all three lines, and these are presented below.

It should be noted that issues concerning the relationship between the vision statement and detailed content were raised in respect of 'Science', as well as 'Humanities and Social Sciences'. Whilst important, given that these issues only affected two of the three lines, they have not been covered within this section.

### 2.1 Demand at Level 1

Many delegates had concerns about levels of demand at Level 1. This was a recurrent theme of discussions in the Humanities and Social Sciences breakout groups. There was concern that the topic content was too 'abstract', whereas most Level 1 learners tend to prefer 'concrete' subject matter. Many participants felt that the balance between depth and breadth was not made clear. More generally, participants in several events suggested that the challenge posed by Level 1 in particular was approximately a year ahead of what could reasonably be expected of Level 1 learners. It was, in a phrase used by several delegates, more like a 'Level 1.5'. There was also specific concern that the Level 1 expected a high level of independence and autonomy from learners, who would in fact need support to develop this.

Similar views were evident in several of the Languages and International Communications sessions, although it should be noted that the DDP served to clarify, or even suggest changes to the Criteria and assessment methods during the Consultation, in order to resolve some of the issues emerging from the consultation version of the document. It was clear that level 1 included some challenging content. Of note, was the potential complexity of producing gist summaries, the expectation of level 1 learners to be autonomous and independent, and the requirement to use the target language creatively without a great deal of experience using it productively prior to level 1. Some participants felt that topic 1.3 – *Using languages for work*, was too heavily weighted (at 60 GLH), given that the limited depth required at level 1 would not engage with the needs of employers. There were also concerns that uses of language in professional contexts were not practical enough to engage the minds of young people. Finally, there was a great deal of resistance to the DDPs original intention to assess only the productive skills of speaking and writing directly, thus failing to recognise the stronger receptive skills of the level 1 cohort.

For Science the content marrying with level 1 demand was not so much of an issue with the earlier Criteria - some concern was expressed about specific items in Topic 1.1 relating to word equations and formulae. However, this Topic has now been dropped. Topic 1.2 and Topic 2.2, which may

remain, will need some content changing over due to suggestions that much of Topic 1.2 lent itself to level 2. With regard to progression to Level 1, there were a number of suggestions that learners progressing from Key Stage 3 may progress readily into Higher Level. Those regarded as being in the target group of D to G may not, after studying Science up to KS3, feel inspired enough to continue on with Science at the Foundation level. This may be exacerbated by its requirement to include what is often perceived as a relatively hard subject - mathematics. Co-teaching was not necessarily seen as a solution for this and many expressed anxiety over this concept.

### **Recommendation**

In order to maximise recruitment, retention and progression of level 1 learners, the breadth and depth of content at this level should be reconsidered in order to ensure it is achievable as well as challenging for learners within this cohort. In particular, this should involve identifying topics (and topic content) that are identified or construed as being beyond the scope of level 1. This may require reconsidering the GLH applicable to certain topics, removing certain requirements, and/or re-specifying statements in order to clearly position them at level 1.

Consideration needs to be given to the progression from key stage 3 to the Foundation and Higher level Diplomas, ensuring that there is a clear demarcation in the breadth and depth of content between both Diploma levels.

## **2.2 Application to the world of work**

Delegates expressed concerns that applied contexts were not yet sufficiently clearly identified. This was particularly the case in Humanities and Social Sciences. There was a broad consensus that the Criteria should make a clearer link between the skills being developed and the kinds of employment that would use them. Participants attending the sessions for Languages and International Communication raised some related concerns. The concern here was that topic 2.5 – *The world of professional communication*, was too heavily weighted, over-emphasising the ‘abstract’ roles of professional interpreters and translators. Science participants also gave much time and debate to contexts and the applied nature of the topics. Given their disappointment with the content after the promise of the Vision they felt obliged to give this much consideration and draw on current experiences of applying science to the world of work.

### **Recommendation**

Application to the world of work is a key driver behind the Diploma philosophy, therefore it is important that an applied purpose is clear across all topics, and ultimately, obvious to the learner.

First and foremost, this should be evident in the topic summaries, and the detailed content should serve to develop knowledge and skills that can be transferred to a range of real employment situations. Creative and practical methods of learning and assessment should be considered in order to differentiate from the focus of traditional academic subjects, particularly where consortia

can support delivery in a more applied way.

### **2.3 Uncertainty about Target Audience**

While participants across the Diploma lines shared a conviction that the content of all the Diploma lines had the potential to be engaging (if developed appropriately), they showed some difficulty in identifying a ‘target audience’ for these Diplomas. This appears to have been a recurrent theme across the three lines, particularly in respect of Level 1, but also at higher levels. This partly reflects the simple fact that the Phase 4 Diplomas are more overtly academically oriented than the first fourteen. This means that they will have to compete to attract learners with both the established GCSE and A level route and the more vocationally oriented Phase 1-3 Diplomas. It is clear that many participants assumed that conventional ‘academic’ learners will continue to opt for the GCSE and A-level route, while other students will be drawn to the more obviously hands-on and relevant sector-oriented Diplomas.

Many participants passionately argued that these Diplomas will need strong and effective marketing as well as good information, advice and guidance not only for learners and their parents, but also for teachers, providers and consortia.

#### ***Recommendation***

In order to be successful, stakeholders must be persuaded that the interdisciplinary make-up of the Diplomas is advantageous, and that the combination of traditional ‘academic’ and ‘applied’ learning methods is relevant to the needs of learners, parents, teaching practitioners, higher education institutions and employers.

Recommended actions include consideration of the aims and target audience in respect of each Diploma level; signposting/mapping to and from other levels/other qualifications; amendments to any requirements within the Criteria (such as research methods/terminology) that cause conflict between two or more disciplines; consideration of how delivery will co-exist (ie curriculum planning) with traditional single-discipline qualifications within a school or college; and careful marketing of the Phase 4 Diplomas.

### **2.4 Need for Effective Professional Support and CPD for Teachers**

Although technically out of scope of the consultation, many participants were very concerned about the demands that the interdisciplinary nature of these Diplomas will make on teachers. The Phase 4 Diplomas mark a real break with the ‘subject silos’ characteristic of A-level teaching, and delegates from all stakeholder groups welcomed this in itself. However, these approaches mean that teachers will often have to work outside their area of subject expertise. Some participants in the Humanities and Social Sciences sessions, for example, pointed out that their own education and professional experience included a wide range of humanities and social sciences subjects, but that they still felt insecure about teaching such a strongly interdisciplinary qualification.

In respect of the Diploma in Languages and International Communication, many language teachers were worried about their ability to teach some of the advanced linguistics and discourse elements at level 3, as well as some of the more specialised content areas. Some practitioners were reluctant to embrace the idea of consortia delivery, whereas others acknowledged the need to adapt to new teaching structures.

Science welcomed the multidisciplinary approach but strongly emphasised too the need for CPD support as mentioned above. This also came out when looking at the content of the consultation version of the Criteria, which many said was too easy for some teachers to pick up and teach using existing styles thus ignoring the multidisciplinary approach.

The success of the Phase 4 Diplomas will therefore depend on teachers being fully prepared for this new kind of teaching and learning. Teachers will need to work together within and across institutions to develop interdisciplinary expertise. Collaborative, team-based lesson planning will be essential. This will require deep change of culture for some providers. According to the discussions, many teachers, particularly in schools, are unaccustomed to this approach and anxious about introducing it.

As a result, many delegates, especially providers, were very keen to emphasise that appropriate CPD and specialist support will be critically important to assure the success of this phase of the Diplomas. Teachers will need effective and tailored support to cope with delivering both existing qualifications and making the transition to the new style of teaching and learning necessary for these Phase 4 Diplomas. It will also be important to ensure that consortia, providers and teachers are fully aware of the availability of this support, in order to ensure that challenges posed by the Phase 4 Diplomas' interdisciplinary emphasis do not discourage providers from supporting these qualifications.

### ***Recommendation***

Insecurities among some practitioners about delivering content outside of their 'comfort zone' need to be overcome. Additionally, some stakeholders still needed to be convinced of the benefits of working as part of a consortium.

This can be achieved by ensuring that all centres potentially interested in delivering the Diplomas are aware of the importance and values of working as part of a consortium, and how this will work in practice.

Consideration should be given to the types of skills required by teachers, and the opportunities to develop CPD, training and other specialist support that will be necessary to the development, enhancement and retention of those skills necessary to deliver the Diplomas effectively. This is likely to involve giving special attention to the demands posed by the interdisciplinary nature of this phase of the Diplomas. Science being part of the critically important STEM agenda, has many resources, tools and national providers to draw upon, examples include the national Science

Learning Centres, the Science and Engineering Ambassadors, the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) to name but a few.

It would be of value to all Phase 4 Diplomas if similar sources of national expertise for the three subject areas are linked in with the future delivery and provision.

## **2.5 Development of Effective Assessments**

Most delegates across the lines and events seemed convinced that the Diplomas offer the potential for imaginative, effective assessment. However, they wished to be assured that the DDPs and Awarding Bodies will work together to make this potential into a reality. Assessments will need to be both flexible, to meet the needs of learners and providers, and demonstrably rigorous, to ensure credibility with HE, employers, and parents. This is particularly important at Advanced Level, where most stakeholder groups were convinced that the higher (180 GLH) amount of external assessment would be necessary. Many delegates, across the lines, also emphasised the potential of ICT to support effective, innovative assessment.

Those attending the sessions for the Diploma in Humanities and Social Sciences largely supported the larger amount external assessment at Advanced level. However, they were very concerned that existing assessment structures, particularly within current A level qualifications, were acting as such a disincentive to learners that they were reducing take up of humanities subjects. They were therefore very emphatic that there needed to be a real break with such approaches, which are perceived to be excessively rigid and prescriptive. They therefore wish to see greatly increased flexibility and a wider range of formats (including new technologies) allowed in assessments.

In respect of the Diploma in Languages and International Communication, concern over the balance between internal and external assessment was the subject of major debate. The underlying issue was the application of 'contexts' as a backdrop to the topics assessed in the target language. While internal assessment would provide greater creative freedom to explore contexts at greater breadth, limiting the external assessment of these topics would not be welcomed by employers and higher education institutions. Similarly, the problem of 'levelling' was discussed in relation to Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). It was felt that learners would not necessarily be able to demonstrate both content knowledge and linguistic complexity at the same level; views were mixed over how each of the two components should be assessed and indeed how this issue should be resolved.

Whilst discussions on assessment for Science were limited to Levels 1 and 2 and therefore no debate could be had specifically on internal/external assessment for the level 3, there was much discussion about assessment and what this may look like. Participants were very keen to point to their own recent developments in schools and colleges to make the learning more applicable and engaging for learners. Many examples were provided that indicated creativity for assessment, including 'debating', video diaries and so on.

They were also keen to explain the usefulness and importance to developments for Key Stage 3 with the concept of Assessing Pupils' Progress which they felt would have many benefits for the Diploma in Science at Foundation level onwards.

***Recommendation***

Consideration will need to be given to the appropriateness of internal versus external assessment for individual topics, taking into account the balance of both methods across each Diploma line and level.

As part of this, it is important that topics and elements of each Diploma which stand out as particularly critical to employers and HE institutions, are considered for external assessment where appropriate. It is also important to strike the right balance between flexibility and control, by evaluating the feasibility and appropriateness of externally assessing topics that carry significant breadth, in terms of content, contexts, and potential for creative assessment.

### 3. Findings from the Online Surveys

The online surveys were developed and hosted by the QCA, with some input into the questions from Pye Tait Consulting. Three separate surveys cover each Line of Learning for Phase 4. The SurveyMonkey tool was selected by the QCA to host the survey and responses were analysed by Pye Tait.

The three surveys for each Line of Learning went live on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2009 and closed at 5pm on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2009, when a total of 96 responses had been submitted.

The low number of responses for Humanities and Social Sciences, and Languages and International Communication has inevitably impacted on the validity of the findings. This needs to be taken into account when reading the reports.

A general finding is that quite high proportions of respondents completed the introductory questions but did not answer any more and this applies to all three subject areas. The length of the survey may have been a contributory factor in this.

It should also be noted that, due to the way in which the software operates, the additional observations made by respondents could only be linked to particular questions. Unless respondents actually stated which level of the Diploma they were referring to, it was not possible to link comments to specific levels.

A breakdown of the responses by Line of Learning and by Stakeholder Type is provided below:

**Table 1: responses to the online survey by Line of Learning**

<b>Responses to the online survey: by Line of Learning</b>	
Humanities and Social Sciences	14
Languages and International Communication	16
Science	66
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>96</b>

**Table 2: responses to the online survey by stakeholder type**

<b>Responses to the online survey: by Stakeholder Type</b>	
School	18
Other	16
HE Institution	12
Awarding Body	10
Local Authority	7
Representing Own Views	7
Professional Body/Learned Society	4
Sector Skills Council	4
Employer	4
Diploma Development Partnership for Science	3
Training Provider	3
FE College/6th Form College	2
'Other' Diploma Development Partnership	2
Teaching Union	2
Diploma Development Partnership for Humanities and Social Sciences	1
Subject Association	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>96</b>

### 3.1 Diploma in Humanities and Social Sciences: overview

In total, 40 respondents logged on to the online survey for Humanities and Social Sciences, but of that number only 14 respondents\* completed the survey, with the remaining 26 dropping off after answering the introductory questions only. The relatively low number of respondents should be taken into consideration when reading the report. For the same reason it has not been possible to identify themes by stakeholder type.

It should also be remembered that those responding to the online survey have only been able to take the documents at face value - i.e. in an unsupported way, whereas delegates attending consultation events have been in a position to discuss the proposals in more detail, which may account for some of the ambiguity noted by online survey respondents.

\*This figure drops to 13 at section 3

**Table 1: Responses to the Humanities and Social Sciences online survey**

<b>Responses to the online survey: by Stakeholder Type</b>	
Awarding Body	3
School	3
HE Institution	2
Subject Association	1
Local Authority	1
Teaching Union	1
Training Provider	1
Representing Own Views	1
Other	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>

### **3.1.1 Coherence and clarity of topics and topic summaries**

Respondents agreed that the topic summaries were successful in encapsulating the content of the topics at all levels. At level 1, 10 of the 14 respondents (71.4%) stated that this was delivered either very or quite well. The extent of support diminishes slightly at levels 2 and 3; the answer to the question was “quite well” from 57.1% (8) of respondents at level 2 and 42.9% (6) at level 3. A word of warning was expressed by one respondent, stating that levels 2 and 3 did not have the clarity that was perceived at level 1:

*“Levels 2 and 3 become increasingly abstract and nebulous in their terminology...the acid test is whether what is stated is immediately recognisable as a coherent programme in the humanities: I think it fails this”*

**Teaching Union**

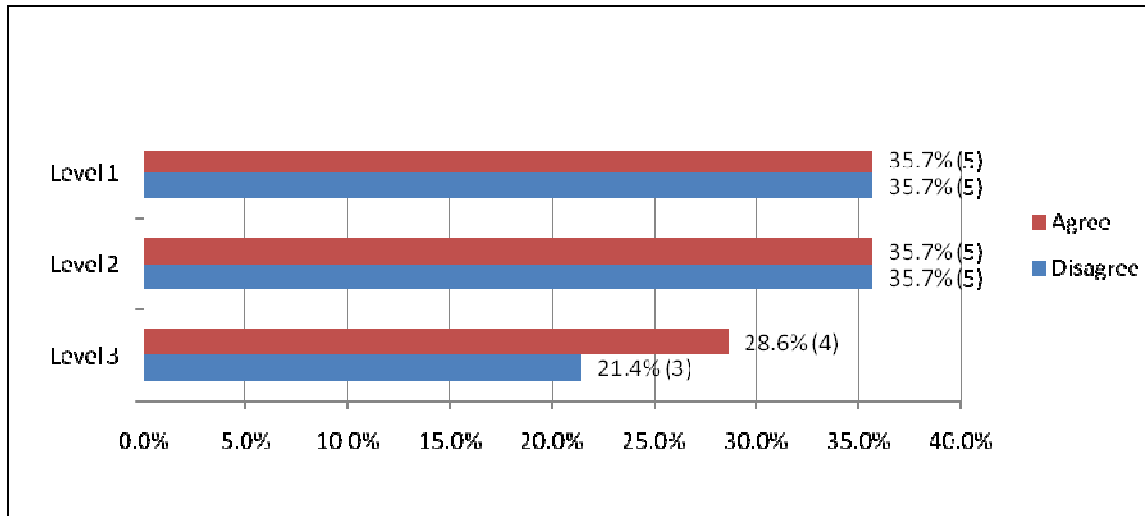
It has not been possible to report definitively on the issue of whether the topics identify what learners need to know and understand, as opinion was divided amongst respondents. 37.5% (5) of respondents agreed that the topics did successfully identify this at level 1, while a further 37.5% (5) disagreed. Similarly at level 2, 42.8% (6) of the 14 respondents strongly agreed or agreed, whilst 42.9% (6) strongly disagreed or disagreed. There was a slight uplift at level 3; 42.8% (6) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed compared with 35.7% (5) that strongly disagreed or disagreed.

*“Too open to interpretation as to what these objectives actually mean...I found at level 3 they were clearer”*

School

Feedback was similarly mixed in terms of identifying what learners must be able to do, with more obvious support for topics seen only at level 3:

**Figure 1: “The topics identify what a learner must be able to do”**



Base – 14 (QCA survey, May 2009)

One respondent from an Awarding Body stressed that statements such as “develop communication strategies” need to be clarified, as it is not clear what this actually means.

### **3.1.2 Appropriateness of topic content**

The majority of respondents felt that the level and depth of the topic contents at levels 1 and 2 was appropriate; half of the respondents at level 1 either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement whilst at level 2, 42.8% (6) of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed. However at level 3, support waned slightly - 35.7% (5) of respondents agreed that content was appropriate but a further 35.7% (5) disagreed. Furthermore, 28.6% (4) of respondents were unable to respond to this question at level 3, suggesting that some ambiguity was detected within the documentation.

### **3.1.3 Balance of content**

When considering the amount of content, respondents expressed the strongest support for level 1; 50% of respondents agreed that the amount was satisfactory, compared with 35.7% (5) of respondents at levels 2 and 3. It was again apparent that some respondents found it difficult to answer the question at level 3, with 35.7% (5) stating that they were unable to respond.

This issue recurred when respondents were asked whether the breadth of content was deliverable. At level 2, 42.9% (6) of respondents could not answer, and at level 3 this number increased to 50% (7). However, half of the respondents were in agreement that the breadth of content was deliverable at level 1.

Several respondents made particular reference to the difficulties that may be experienced in teaching the broad range of subjects being proposed and it was questioned whether teachers will have the relevant expertise to span all areas, “especially considering the different methodologies used by the subject areas covered” (Subject Association).

#### ***3.1.4 Engaging for learners***

Feedback was predominantly positive in this area. 50% (7) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the topics will be engaging for learners at levels 1 and 2; at level 3 this figure dropped slightly to 42.8% (6).

However 28.6% (4) of respondents disagreed that the topics were sufficiently engaging at levels 2 and 3, and several pointed to the fact that the quality of resources and teaching style will play a key role in determining how engaging the topics actually are.

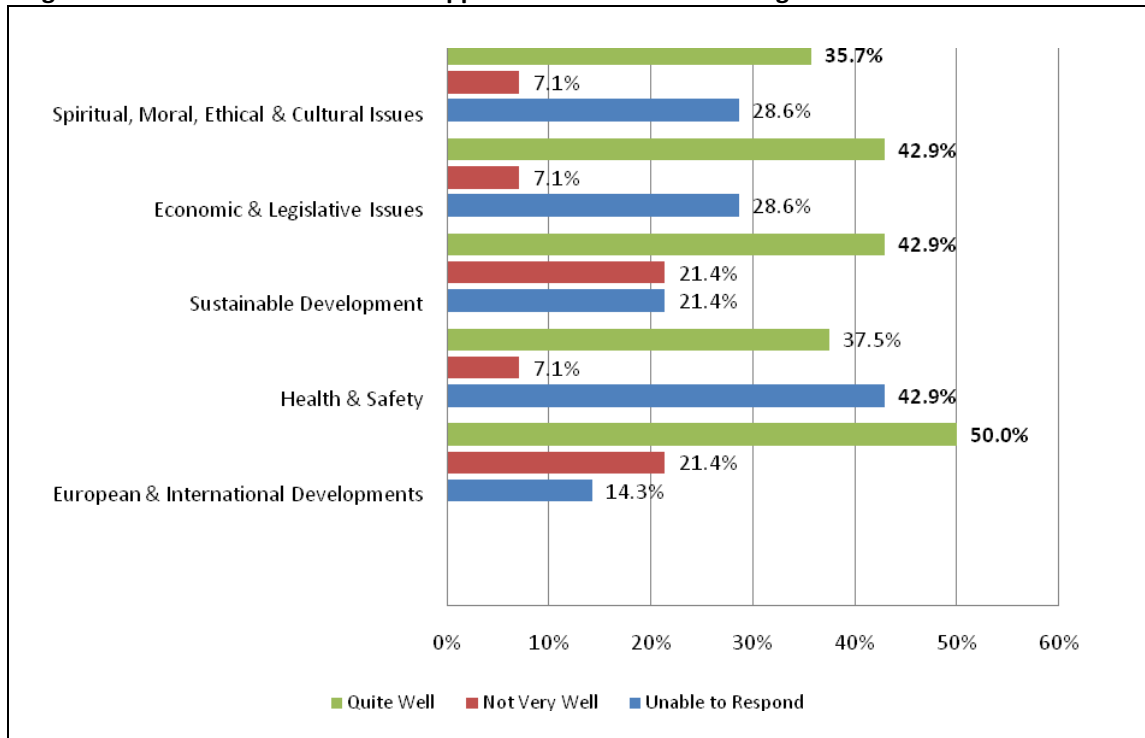
#### ***3.1.5 Clarity and appropriateness of contexts***

Respondents reported a lack of clarity surrounding the ways in which learning can be applied in the workplace. Nearly half of the 14 respondents (42.9%) were unable to respond to this question at levels 2 and 3, and 5 of the 14 respondents (35.7%) could not answer at level 1.

#### ***3.1.6 Scope for developing understanding of broader issues***

Respondents were largely positive about the scope for developing this understanding, albeit one respondent noted a need for “further guidance on the range of contexts considered appropriate”.

**Figure 2: “How well do the criteria support learners’ understanding of..?”**



Base – 14 (QCA survey, May 2009)

### 3.1.7 Specialist Subject Content

42.9% (6) of respondents agree that specialist subject content is adequately specified at level 1. However, it is less clear cut at levels 2 and 3.

Whilst 28.6% (4) of respondents at level 2 agree that the specialist content is sufficiently specified, 35.7% (5) disagree. At level 3, 4 out of the 14 respondents agree with this statement, whilst a further 4 disagree.

*“There is an over emphasis on history, geography and business/economics over the levels whilst other subjects are far more implicit”*

**Subject Association**

### 3.1.8 Line Specific Content

Respondents were asked about the opportunities within the Diploma in Humanities and Social Sciences to include literature and poetry. 38.5% (5) of the 13 respondents felt that this was achieved quite well at levels 1 and 2 and 30.8% (4) said the same at level 3<sup>3</sup>.

None of the 13 respondents disagree with the suggestion that specific provision should be made to improve the quality of written communication. At levels 2 and 3, 61.6% (8) of respondents strongly agree or agree with the proposal; this rose to 69.3% (9) at level 1.

Nearly half of the 13 respondents (42.9%) agree that the proposed level of external assessment at level 3 is appropriate. The majority of respondents (38.5%) were unable to respond at levels 2 and 3 when asked “how well has the level of specificity in the knowledge and understanding captured the richness of the topics' meaning”; one pointed out that they did not understand the question. 38.5% (5) of respondents felt that the level of specificity had been achieved quite well at level 1 but it was also noted that:

*“Although I accept that a Diploma in Humanities and Social Sciences is by its nature going to mean that the subjects within lose some of the specificity...I think it has gone too far here to the point that the appeal of the subjects themselves has been diluted”*

School

Nearly half of the 13 respondents (42.9%) were satisfied that teamwork linked effectively into topic 3.6 (living with rules and governance). Over a third of respondents (38.5%) agreed that expression of the concept of knowledge in topic 3.1 (in the knowledge and understanding section of Challenging Logic, Argument and Evidence) was quite successful.

### 3.1.9 Employability Skills

This area of the Diploma was well received by the online survey participants, with 69.3% (9) of the 13 respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing that topics will develop employability skills sufficiently at levels 1 and 2.

At level 3, 61.6% (8) of respondents strongly agree or agree with this statement. A representative of a school felt that *“the emphasis on skills is refreshing”*, although added that improvements could be made in the way in which this is expressed within the content.

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<sup>3</sup> The question is phrased “How well, **at all levels**, does this Diploma provide opportunities to include literature/poetry?”, but this same question is asked three times, for each different level. As the response is different at level 3, it has been assumed that respondents have answered three separate times, for each specific level.

### **3.1.10 Diversity and Inclusion**

Feedback was generally optimistic about this area of the Diploma, with 71.4% (10) of the respondents stating that they understood these issues very or quite well.

Furthermore, 57.2% (8) of respondents felt that the criteria support diversity and inclusion needs and requirements very or quite well.

However, some concerns were raised that should be taken into account. One HE institution commented that *“it was surprising to see that this document suggests that consideration MAY be given to use of BSL for examinations”*; further comments were also made about students with learning difficulties:

*“Candidates with autism may find collaborative team working and creative thinking an immense hurdle. Candidates with dyslexia or dyspraxia may find self management extremely difficult. This should be identified and justified”*

**Awarding Body**

### **3.1.11 Barriers**

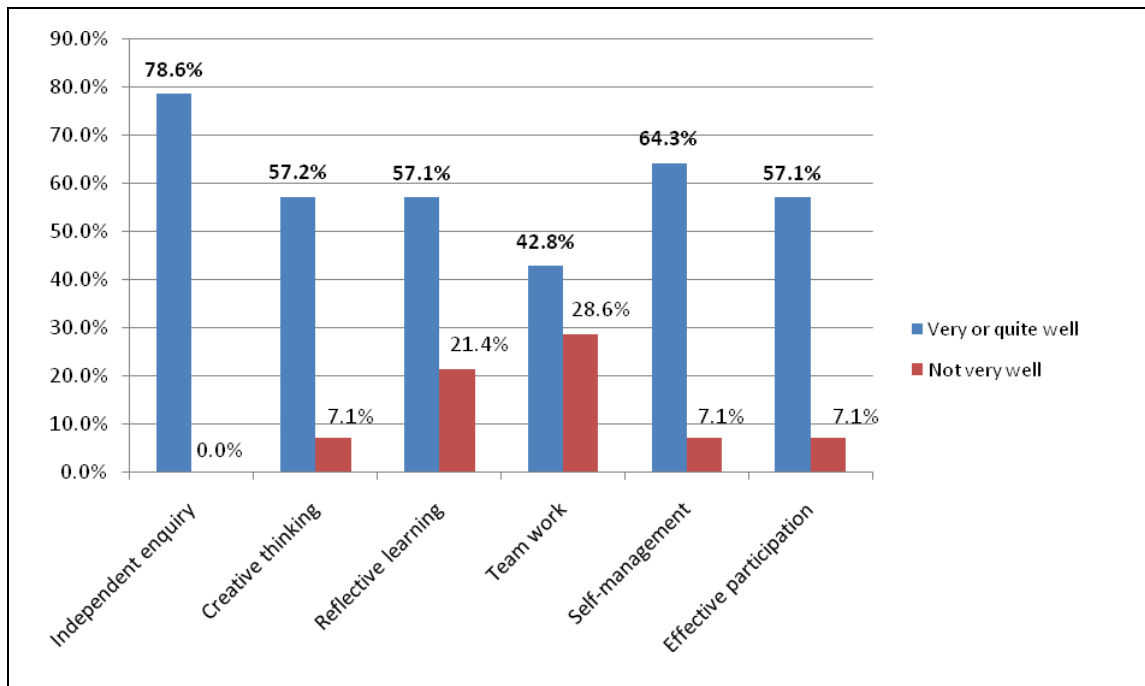
Although 42.9% (6) of respondents state that there are barriers to learner achievement, due to the low number of responses, few suggestions have been made as to ways in which these may be overcome.

One respondent (Teaching Union) emphasised that the Diploma must be aligned with current employment legislation. Another issue highlighted was that the candidates with learning difficulties such as autism or dyslexia may find it challenging to engage in collaborative team working and effective self-management (see also 3.1.11); it was stated that this barrier could not be overcome.

### **3.1.12 Personal Learning and Thinking Skills**

Respondents highlighted the importance of actually implementing the teaching of personal learning and thinking skills rather than merely paying them lip service; it was suggested that the success of this will largely be determined by the practitioners. Aside from this caveat, this area of the Diploma was well received by respondents:

**Figure 3: “How well do the criteria enable learners' to develop the following Personal Learning and Thinking Skills?”**



Base – 14 (QCA survey, May 2009)

### 3.1.13 Guided Learning Hours

Nearly a third (28.6%) of respondents felt that the indicative Guided Learning Hours (GLH) aligned quite well to the content required in the topics; however it is not possible to provide a valid conclusion, as nearly half the respondents (42.9%) felt unable to respond. Some specific changes were suggested, for example:

*“To have 180 GLH on Exploring Diversity within Level 3 may not appeal to many learners...Within Level 2, topic 2.1 seems not to merit a whole 60 GLH...30 GLH would be more than sufficient unless a whole piece of research is to be undertaken”*

**Awarding Body**

### 3.1.14 Creativity of Assessment Methods

Respondents predominantly felt unable to provide a clear response; half could not answer at levels 2 and 3 and 42.9% (6) were also unable to respond at level 1.

### 3.1.15 Opportunities for co-teaching

Respondents felt there was some scope for teaching pre-16 learners together at levels 1 and 2, with just over a third (37.5%) stating that this was possible. This figure dropped to 28.6% (4) when respondents were asked the same question about post-16 learners. A representative from a Subject Association pointed out that *“it would need very careful planning as the topics do not seem to easily correlate”*.

### 3.1.16 Recommendations made by respondents in the online survey

**Table 2: Specific recommendations made by topic for Humanities and Social Sciences**

Level 1	Recommendation
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At point 3 include “and similarities” after “cultural differences”</li> </ul>
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No stated historical content but there needs to be</li> </ul>
1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The only form of political process referred to is voting – consider adding campaigning [e.g. against slavery or for the vote]</li> </ul>
Level 2	Recommendation
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This material could be embedded into other topics to make delivery more interesting</li> <li>Should have “research design” within the key elements</li> <li>Does not seem to merit a full 60 GLH – 30 GLH would be more than sufficient unless a whole piece of research is to be undertaken</li> </ul>
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners need to understand persistence/continuity of ideas as well as change</li> <li>Point 7 could sit in topic 2.1</li> <li>Environmental change and inequality are conspicuously absent</li> </ul>
2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater emphasis on sustainable development could be included here</li> </ul>
2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not sufficiently engaging</li> <li>Learners need to know and understand about power and equality</li> </ul>
2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not sufficiently engaging</li> <li>Learners need to know and understand about power and equality</li> </ul>
2.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No reference to the importance of taking a historical approach to the issues</li> </ul>
2.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not sufficiently engaging</li> <li>No reference to the importance of taking a historical approach to the issues</li> <li>No reference to inequality</li> </ul>

Level 3	Recommendation
3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This material could be embedded into other topics to make delivery more interesting</li></ul>
3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>No real focus for what it is asking students to concentrate on as achievable aims</li></ul>
3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reference to history is needed</li></ul>
3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Replacing the 'consequences of diminishing natural resources for food and energy supplies' with 'consequences of pressure on food and energy sources' would allow a broader treatment</li></ul>
3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reference to history is needed</li></ul>
3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Not sufficiently engaging</li></ul>
3.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reference to the UK is restrictive</li></ul>

### 3.2 Diploma in Science: overview

In total, 120 respondents logged on to the online survey for Science, but of that number, 66 respondents\* completed the survey, with the remaining numbers dropping off after answering the introductory questions only.

The majority of the respondents found that they needed to spend longer than the suggested 20 minutes reading the documentation and completing the survey - which may account for the high numbers that did not finish it all. Of the 66 respondents, 19 completed the survey in less than 20 minutes, whereas 17 took over 45 minutes and 4 people needed over an hour.

The decision to delay the launch of the Advanced Diploma in Science until 2012 led to the removal of all level 3-relevant questions from the online survey, therefore these findings relate to levels 1 and 2 only. The higher number of respondents from educational establishments (schools and HE institutions in particular) has made it possible to identify some themes by this stakeholder type. Where this has been possible it is indicated in the text.

\*This figure drops to 62 at section 2 and to 57 at section 3

**Table 1: Responses to the Science online survey**

<b>Responses to the online survey: by Stakeholder Type</b>	
School	14
Other	12
HE Institution	8
Local Authority	5
Representing Own Views	5
Awarding Body	4
Professional Body/Learned Society	4
Sector Skills Council	4
Diploma Development Partnership for Science	3
Employer	3
FE Institution/6 <sup>th</sup> Form College	1
Diploma Development Partnership for Humanities and Social Sciences	1
'Other' Diploma Development Partnership	1
Training Provider	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>66</b>

### **3.2.1 Coherence and clarity of topics and topic summaries**

The majority of respondents agreed that the topic summaries were successful in encapsulating the content of the topics at both levels.

At level 2, 40.9% of the 66 respondents (27) agreed that the topic summaries outlined the topic content quite well and this figure rose to 43.9% (29) at level 1.

However, some respondents would still like to see further clarity, with a reminder to ensure the language is accessible from one Professional Body, and a concern that *"Summaries still don't reflect the big picture vision and grand challenges etc."* raised by several Diploma Development Partnership representatives.

*"The topic summaries clearly articulate a vision that supports the overall vision for the Diploma in Science and the content shows the "range and content" and the practical enquiry skills to be delivered...However the relationship between range and content and "How science works" isn't adequately articulated"*

**National Strategies**

The level of support was slightly less pronounced when respondents were asked to consider whether the topics identify what learners need to know and understand. 37.9% (25) of respondents agreed that they do at level 1, whereas 28.8% (19) disagreed with this statement.

At level 2, 36.4% (24) of respondents agreed, compared with 25.8% (17) that disagreed. The bulk of the comments indicated that more work could be done to better articulate the topic content, with greater emphasis suggested for mathematical knowledge and skills, ethical issues, sustainable development, the global context and How Science Works (HSW).

One comment made by a National Science Learning Centre suggested that “many of the learning outcomes are open to multiple interpretations and will depend upon skilful interpretation by awarding bodies in order to fulfil the aims of the Diploma qualifications”.

Similarly, there was little difference between the numbers of respondents agreeing and disagreeing on the question of whether topics identify what learners must be able to do. At level 1, 40.9% (27) of respondents agreed that the topics do identify what a learner must be able to do and 31.8% (21) disagreed.

At level 2, the number that agreed with the statement dropped slightly to 39.4% (26), whereas the number that disagreed rose slightly to 33.3% (22). Respondents would like to see more detail, such as the specifics relating to practical experience, and clear interpretation of what the learning outcomes should actually look like.

### ***3.2.2 Appropriateness of topic content***

At both levels the respondents are once again divided in their opinions of the level and depth of the topic content. At level 2, 42.4% (28) of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that the level and depth of the content was appropriate, compared with 34.9% (23) that strongly agreed or agreed. There was slightly more support shown for topics at level 1, with 40.5% (28) of respondents that strongly agreed or agreed, compared with 36.4% (24) that strongly disagreed or disagreed.

Schools and HE/FE institutions would like to see modifications made to the level and depth of topic content at level 2 in particular. 21.7% (5) of the 23 respondents to this question (of this stakeholder type) agreed that it was appropriate, whereas 39.1% (9) disagreed.

### ***3.2.3 Balance of content***

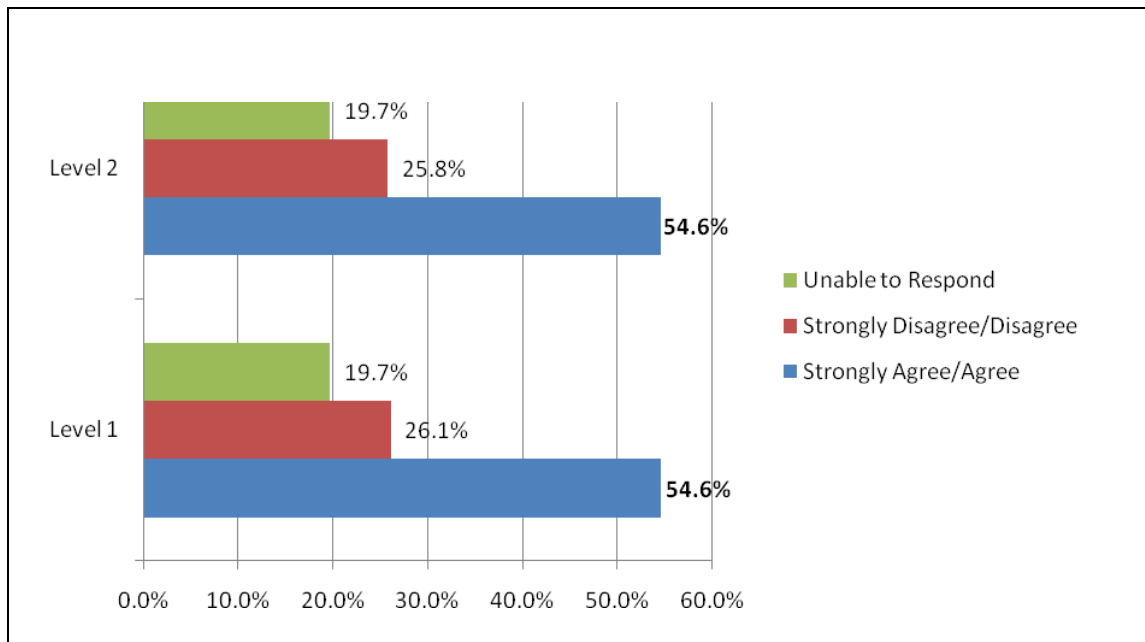
Respondents were predominantly positive about the amount of content contained within the topics, particularly at level 1, where 50% of all 66 respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the amount was sufficient compared with 28.8% (19) that strongly disagreed or disagreed.

At level 2, 43.9% (29) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed, and 34.9% (23) strongly disagreed or disagreed. Some suggestions to improve the content were made, such as the inclusion of green technologies, microbiology and genetics.

One School noted that *“the content will allow students to approach the learning in different ways”*.

Endorsement was also evident specifically in terms of how deliverable the content would be:

**Figure 1: “The breadth of subject content is deliverable”**



Base - 66 (QCA Survey, May 2009)

### **3.2.4 Engaging for learners**

In this area, tentative support was shown by respondents, with some caveats - for example:

*“The topics have the potential to engage learners as long as the assessment methods are not narrow and teachers are able to use a variety of contexts”*

**National Science Learning Centre**

Half of the 66 respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the topics will be engaging for learners at level 1, compared with 34.9% (23) of respondents that strongly disagreed or disagreed.

However at level 2, 48.5% (32) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed, whereas 36.4% (24) strongly disagreed or disagreed. The focus on developing practical skills, together with the multi-disciplinary approach towards the major challenges and big questions was welcomed as a means to engage learners at both levels. However concern was expressed that some conceptual aspects and mathematical content could disengage learners at level 1.

### 3.2.5 Clarity and appropriateness of contexts

Support for the appropriateness of work contexts was noted at level 1; 42.4% (28) of respondents were in agreement compared with 24.2% (16) that disagreed. It was less clear cut at level 2, with 36.4% (24) in agreement but 28.8% (19) of respondents that disagreed.

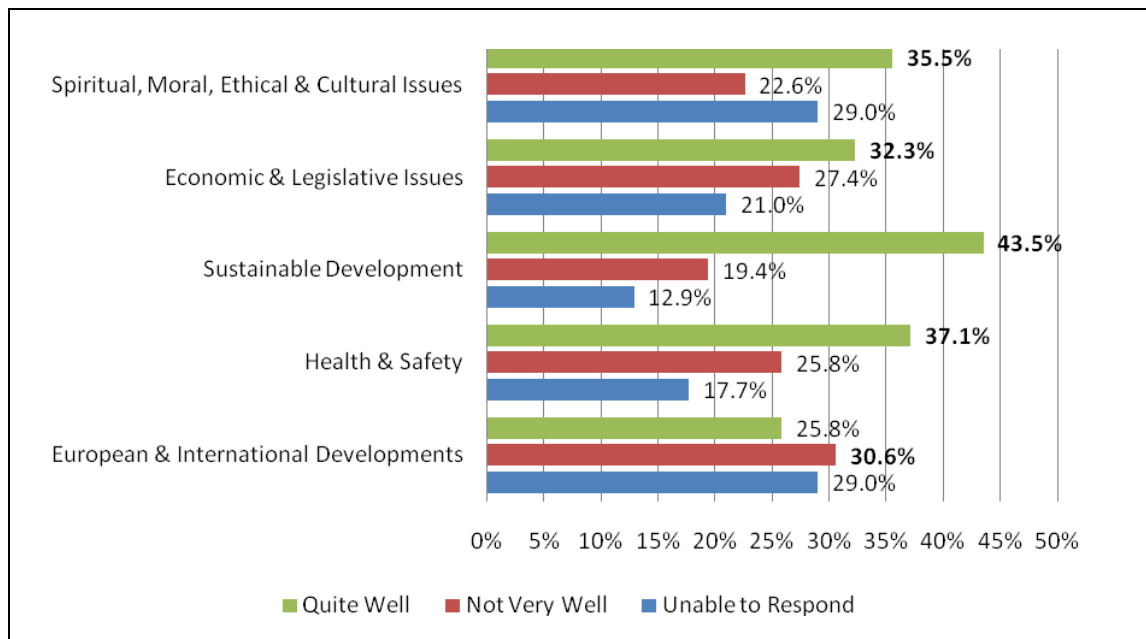
A representative from a school wanted more information, having noted that *“how much will need to be learned in the work place context is not clear”*. A respondent from a Professional Body proposed that the specialist learning sections could include field study centres, nature reserves or outdoor centres.

### 3.2.6 Scope for developing understanding of broader issues

Of the 5 areas to be included in the Diploma, respondents showed the most support for the capacity of the criteria to support learners' understanding of sustainable development.

One HE institution noted that it was *“very pleased to see these (elements) included”*. However it was suggested that the inclusion of European and International developments was not sufficiently explicit, although it was acknowledged that the potential was there to improve this.

**Figure 2: “How well do the criteria support learners’ understanding of..?”**



Base - 62 (QCA Survey, May 2009)

### 3.2.7 Specialist Subject Content

Respondents to the online survey clearly stated that they would like to see changes made to the specification of specialist subject content. At level 1, 40.9% (27) of respondents disagreed that this was sufficiently depicted, whereas 25.8% (17) were in agreement. At level 2, 24.2% (16) agreed, but 37.9% (25) disagreed.

Schools and FE/HE institutions were also keen to see modifications made in this area. One representative from a school stated that “far more explicit examples need to be given”.

**Figure 3: “Any specialist subject content is sufficiently specified” – responses from Schools and FE/HE institutions**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unable to Respond
Level 1	0%	26.1% (6)	<b>34.8% (8)</b>	30.4% (7)	8.7% (2)
Level 2	0%	21.7% (5)	<b>34.8% (8)</b>	30.4% (7)	13.0% (3)

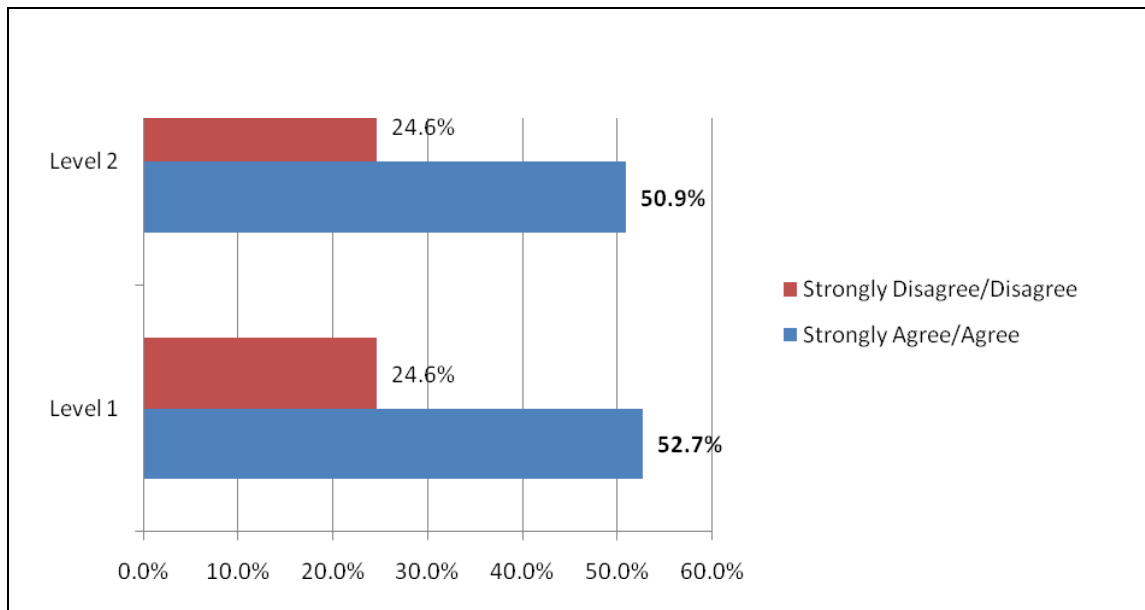
Base - 23 (QCA Survey, May 2009)

### 3.2.8 Line Specific Content

Feedback was chiefly positive in terms of the scope within topics for learners to acquire and apply key practical skills.

Over half of the 57 respondents were in agreement that there was sufficient scope at both levels, with this figure rising to 60% of the 20 respondents within schools and FE/HE institutions that strongly agreed or agreed at level 1, and 55% that strongly agreed or agreed at level 2.

**Figure 4: “The proposed content for each topic allows time for learners to acquire and apply key practical skills”**



Base - 57 (QCA Survey, May 2009)

At both levels, respondents were largely satisfied that the content supports the applied purpose of each topic. 54.4% of the 57 respondents at level 1 and 49.1% at level 2 agreed that this was achieved very or quite well.

Respondents were also supportive of the mathematical content. At both levels 43.9% of the 57 respondents agreed that the content was quite successful at presenting the application of mathematical skills and knowledge in a scientific context, compared with 26.3% (15) that felt it was not very successful. However, once again it was highlighted that it will be important to ensure there is sufficient detail and exact specifications.

*“More mathematical content could be stated in the criteria, making the content and context of that mathematics more explicit”*

**Diploma Development Partnership for Science**

Opinion was divided amongst the 57 respondents that addressed whether the proposed content allows for coverage of the KS4 Programme of Study for Science. A third of the respondents agreed that it does achieve this at both levels, however a further 33.3% were unable to respond.

### **3.2.9 Diversity and Inclusion**

A large majority of respondents stated that they had a clear understanding of diversity and inclusion issues. 61.3% (38) reported that they understood very or quite well, compared with 12.9% (8) that said they understood not very or not at all well.

However, how well they felt the criteria supported diversity, inclusion needs and requirements was less clear cut. 38.7% (24) of the respondents believed this was achieved quite well, but 30.6% (19) of respondents were unable to answer.

Concern was expressed by one HE institution that there was *“nothing that would appeal to BME groups or girls”*.

### **3.2.10 Barriers**

Of the 62 respondents that answered this question, 53.2% did not believe that there were any barriers to learner achievement.

However the majority of schools and FE/HE institutions disagreed with this perspective, with 61.9% of the 21 respondents stating that there were barriers. One representative from a school stated that there would be a *“lack of stretch for gifted and talented students”*.

*“Much thought needs to be put into design (of) ...practical issues and participation in laboratory and field exercises”*

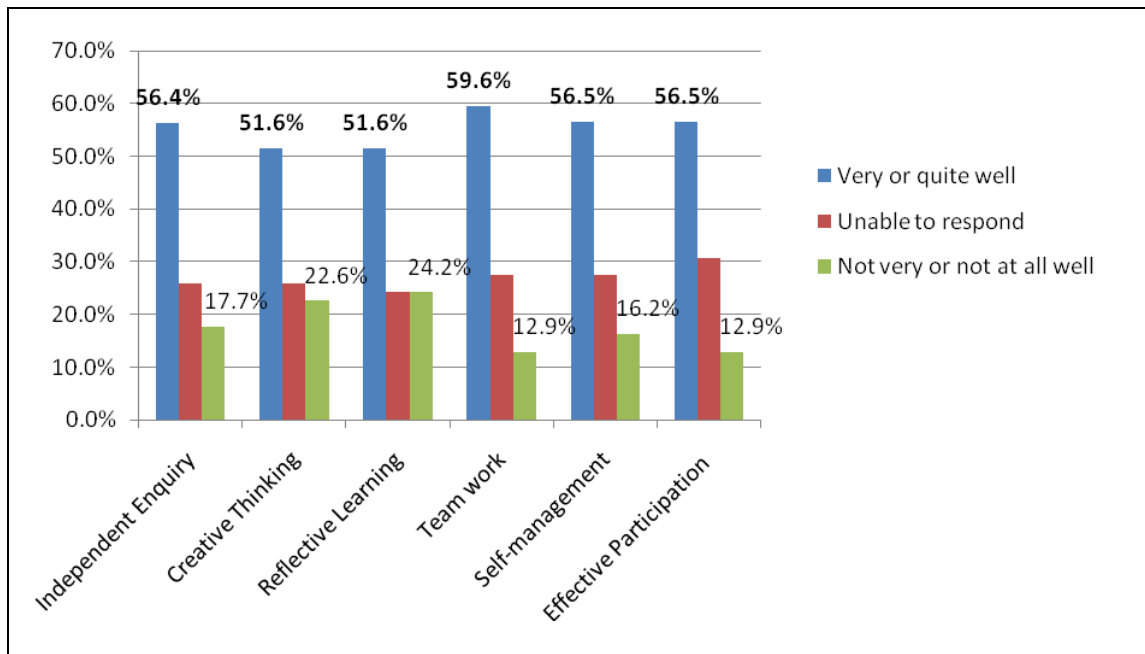
**HE institution**

### **3.2.11 Personal Learning and Thinking Skills**

Respondents were predominantly in agreement that the criteria will enable learners to develop Personal Learning and Thinking Skills.

A representative from a Professional Body stated *“there should be no difficulty with these - the criteria do appear to have these at their heart”*. Several HE institutions added caveats however, stressing that the extent of success would be dependent on the way in which it was taught.

**Figure 5: “How well do the criteria enable learners' to develop the following Personal Learning and Thinking Skills?”**



Base - 62 (QCA Survey, May 2009)

### 3.2.12 Guided Learning Hours

Some ambiguity remains around this question; of the 62 respondents - although 35.5% agreed that the indicative Guided Learning Hours aligned to the content required in the topics - a further 38.7% were unable to respond.

### 3.2.13 Creativity of Assessment Methods

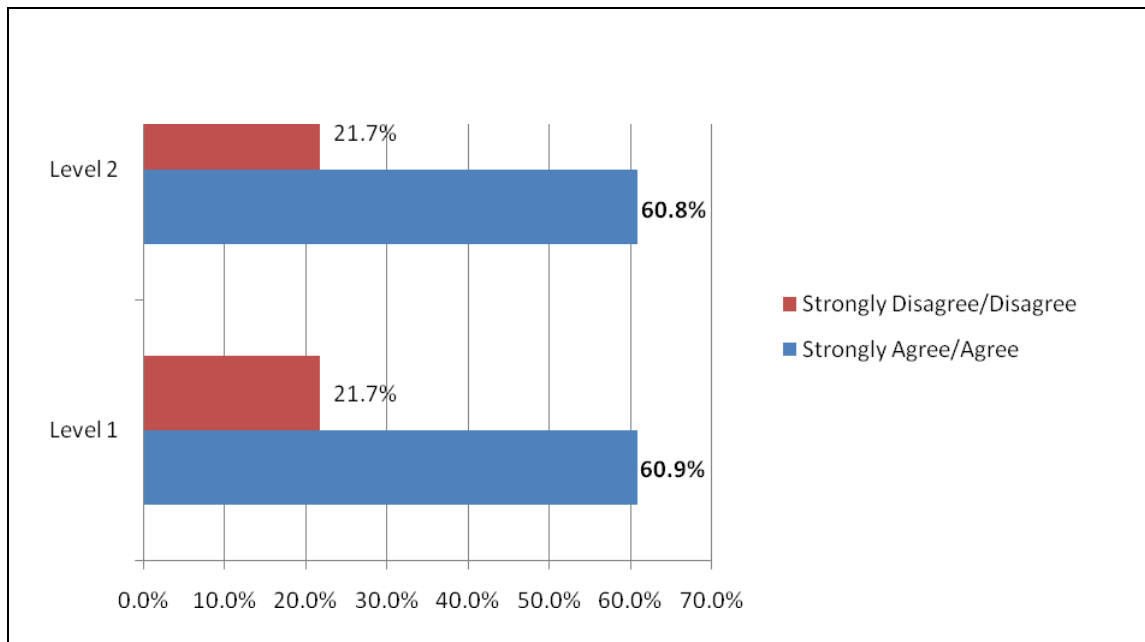
It is apparent that some respondents found this question difficult to answer; several comments stressed that more ideas for creative assessment need to be identified first. 31.8% (21) of respondents were unable to answer at both levels.

A representative from the National Science Learning Centre reminded that:

*"the assessment methods will need to mirror the flexibility (of the learning contexts) and not be restrictive in contexts for assessing the learning outcomes".*

However, schools and FE/HE institutions showed strong support for the capacity for creative assessment within the Diploma in Science:

**Figure 6: “The breadth of subject content will allow for topics to be creatively assessed” – response from schools and FE/HE institutions**



Base - 23 (QCA Survey, May 2009)

### 3.2.14 Opportunities for co-teaching

Respondents can see some opportunity for co-teaching of pre-16 learners, with 25.8% (17) of respondents in agreement and a further 30.3% (20) that believed it was possible.

There was less clarity in terms of the scope for co-teaching post 16 learners, as 34.8% (23) of respondents agreed that it could be achieved, but a further 34.8% (23) were unable to respond; *“this would need to be considered by individual consortia”* (Member of ‘other’ Diploma Development Partnership)

### 3.2.15 Recommendations made by respondents to the online survey

**Table 2: Specific recommendations made by topic for Science**

Level 1	Recommendation
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New developments such as green technologies/green chemistry should be discussed</li> <li>This topic still uses the “transformation model”, unlike the KS4 Programme of Study</li> </ul>

1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity needed e.g. “Learners must be able to use equipment”; “Learners must be able to test soil and water’ - for what and how?</li> <li>• This topic is “huge” - limitations need to be applied to some statements, or statements should be removed</li> </ul>
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not equate to Ecology and Managing environmental change and biodiversity and so need to be changed. The titles are “Planning for the growth of plants and animals” and “Maximising the yield of plants and animals”. This is not ecological subject matter but plant breeding and animal rearing which are dealt with by the Environment and Land-based Diploma</li> <li>• Point 1 - The emphasis on productivity over animal welfare will disengage many young learners</li> </ul>
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too content heavy</li> <li>• Too much content for 30 GLH</li> <li>• Point 5 - the actual mathematical skills required are left very vague with references to 'calculate' ;'interpret data' ;'obtain data' ;'analyse data' ;'record data' but with very few specific examples</li> </ul>
1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “An idea relating to change in an environment is right or wrong” - this is a highly problematic statement as scientific method is about testing hypotheses, not proving things. This lack of understanding of the basics of scientific method is important as it leads to the poor quality of public debate about issues such as MMR and climate change</li> <li>• Any discussion of how physics principles are at the heart of many environmental monitoring instruments (sound, light, radiation, smoke etc), appears to be absent from the focus of the topic laid out in the introduction</li> <li>• Would like to see more on European and International Developments in this topic</li> </ul>
1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools will need support and resources to make this topic relevant and engaging</li> <li>• There appears to be some negativity towards science</li> <li>• Perhaps project work &amp; visits would help link topics 1.6 and 2.6 for co-teaching</li> <li>• A deeper and more critical approach to sustainable development is needed in this topic</li> <li>• There are limitations on learning due to the need for external visits and the number of appropriate organisations available to visit within a reasonable distance</li> </ul>
1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perhaps project work &amp; visits would help link topics 2.6 and 2.7 for co-teaching</li> <li>• GLP should feature in this topic</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amplification is needed of the depth required relating to force, acceleration etc.</li> <li>• Sounds very like a ‘sports science’ unit. This may only be deliverable by a single tutor in a limited number of centres</li> <li>• Point 5 - the actual mathematical skills required are left very vague with references to 'calculate' ;'interpret data' ;'obtain data' ;'analyse data' ;'record data' but with very few specific examples</li> </ul>

2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not equate to Ecology and Managing environmental change and biodiversity and so need to be changed. The titles are “Planning for the growth of plants and animals” and “Maximising the yield of plants and animals”. This is not ecological subject matter but plant breeding and animal rearing which are dealt with by the Environment and Land-based Diploma</li> <li>• The emphasis on productivity over animal welfare will disengage many young learners</li> <li>• Point 6 - the actual mathematical skills required are left very vague with references to 'calculate' ;'interpret data'; 'obtain data' ;'analyse data' ;'record data' but with very few specific examples</li> </ul>
2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Point 6 has missing areas; consider adding wind, tidal, solar to the existing topic of wave energy</li> <li>• New developments such as green technologies/green chemistry should be discussed</li> </ul>
2.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A more general approach to informed citizenry should include more of an understanding of risk in general and its implications for society in general, such as understanding the issues around scares such as MMR</li> <li>• Perhaps project work &amp; visits would help link topics 1.6 and 2.6 for co-teaching</li> <li>• Does not seem to have much content – to teach this is unlikely to take 60GLH</li> </ul>
2.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perhaps project work &amp; visits would help link topics 1.7 and 2.7 for co-teaching</li> <li>• The environmental and social impact of a product should be included</li> <li>• Would like to see more on European and International Developments in this topic</li> <li>• There are limitations on learning due to the need for external visits and the number of appropriate organisations available to visit within a reasonable distance</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Diploma in Languages and International Communication: overview

In total, 32 respondents logged on to the online survey for Languages and International Communication, but of that number, only 16 completed the survey, with the remaining 16 dropping off after answering the introductory questions only.

The relatively low number of respondents should be taken into consideration when reading the report. For the same reason it has not been possible to identify themes by stakeholder type.

**Table 1: Responses to the Languages and International Communication online survey**

<b>Responses to the online survey: by Stakeholder Type</b>	
Awarding Body	3
HE Institution	2
School	1
FE College/6 <sup>th</sup> Form College	1
'Other' Diploma Development Partnership	1
Local Authority	1
Teaching Union	1
Training Provider	1
Employer	1
Representing Own Views	1
Other	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>

#### 3.3.1 Coherence and clarity of topics and topic summaries

There was considerable support for the topic summaries. 75% (12) of respondents stated that the summaries outlined the topic contents very or quite well at all 3 levels.

One employer requested further clarification on the meaning of “creatively” in topic 1.5 and noted that this could mean using and practising a language **or** the study of literature or creative writing.

Feedback was also positive in terms of whether the topics identify what learners need to know and understand.

At level 1, 56.3% (9) of respondents agreed that they did, whereas only 12.5% (2) disagreed. At level 2 the number in agreement rose to 68.8% (11), with only 1 respondent that disagreed. 25% (4) of respondents strongly agreed at level 3; a further 50% were in agreement. However, an education charity commented that the global aspects need strengthening and there was also a reminder that language needs to be accessible (however, this may be due to a misunderstanding as to the target audience for the Criteria document):

Strong support was noted when respondents were asked if the topics identified what learners must be able to do. Only 2 of the 16 respondents disagreed that this was the case at levels 2 and 3; just 1 respondent did not agree at level 3. An education charity would like to see *“a much stronger emphasis on critical media literacy (this is essential to International Communication)”*.

### **3.3.2 Appropriateness of topic content**

The majority of respondents felt that the level and depth of the topic contents at levels 2 and 3 was appropriate; at level 2, 43.8% (7) of respondents agreed compared with 18.8% (3) that disagreed. At level 3 half of the respondents were in agreement whilst 12.5% disagreed.

However at level 1, 43.8% (7) respondents agreed, whereas 31.3% (5) disagreed.

*“Level 1 content will be challenging”*

**Teaching Union**

### **3.3.3 Balance of content**

Respondents agree that there is a wide scope of content at all levels, to the extent that one Awarding Body pointed out that *“in almost all topics, the content seems to exceed what could be required for the purpose”*.

Just over half of respondents (56.3%) agreed that the content was sufficient at all 3 levels. A training provider advised that care should be taken to ensure that topics do not overlap and thus avoid any duplication.

50% (8) of respondents agreed that the breadth of content would be deliverable at levels 1 and 2, and this figure rose to 56.3% (9) at level 3. Representatives from a teaching union and a training provider both pointed out that teaching staff may need additional training and ongoing professional development in order to deliver the content to the standards required.

### **3.3.4 Engaging for learners**

Respondents predominately felt that the topics would be sufficiently engaging for learners at level 1, where 68.8% (11) of respondents were in agreement with this statement.

Half of the respondents were also in agreement at level 2, with a further 12.5% (2) that strongly agreed. However, it was felt that more work could be done at level 3; 37.5% (6) of respondents agreed that the topics would be engaging, but 31.3% (5) disagreed.

A training provider commented that *“some of the level 3 topics are very complex”*, whilst an Awarding Body stated that *“topic 3.5 would not be engaging for all learners as it is too specialised”*.

### **3.3.5 Clarity and appropriateness of contexts**

Respondents reported some uncertainty about the learning contexts; this was most apparent at level 3, where 43.8% (7) of respondents agreed that they were sufficiently clear and appropriate, but 37.5% (6) of respondents disagreed.

Similar division of opinion was seen at level 2, where 43.8% (7) of respondents agreed, but 31.3% (5) disagreed. The most confidence was shown towards level 1 – half of the respondents were in agreement that the learning contexts were satisfactory.

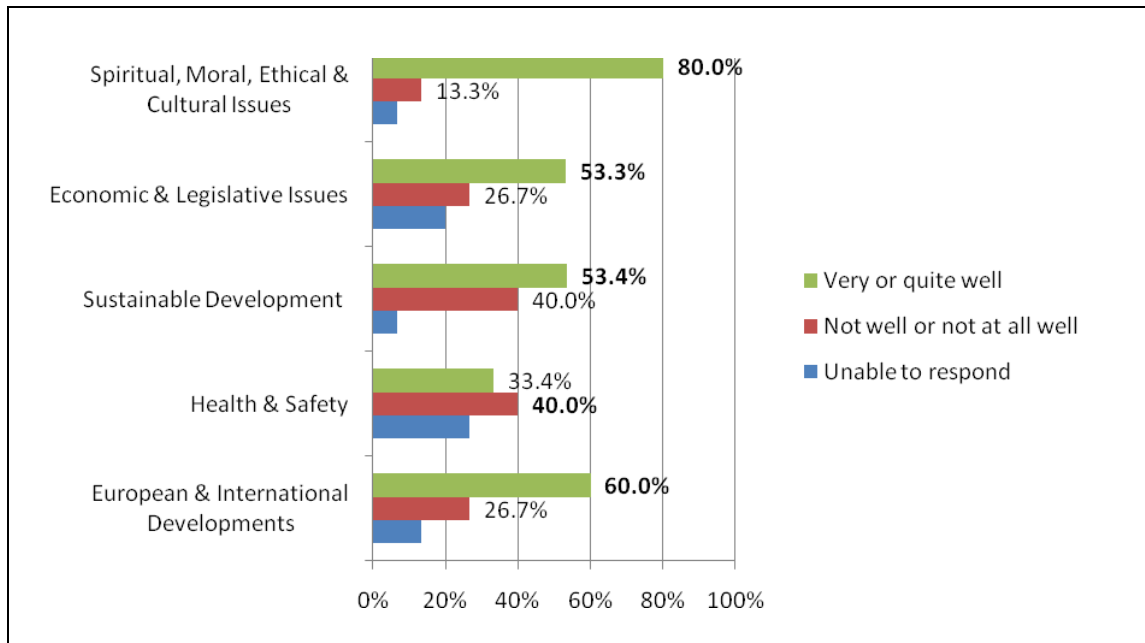
*“It is unclear how much flexibility there is for interpretation of these contexts, and the breadth and depth required in covering the contexts”*

**Awarding Body**

### **3.3.6 Scope for developing understanding of broader issues**

Respondents were extremely positive about the scope for developing understanding of spiritual, moral, ethical and cultural issues. An education charity praised the human rights approaches to global issues, but would also like to see a stronger focus on global interdependence and sustainable development, with consideration given to a range of countries. Feedback on the capacity to develop an understanding of health and safety was less encouraging; one Awarding Body stated that *“there is no specific or related focus on health and safety”*.

**Figure 1: “How well do the criteria support learners’ understanding of..?”**



Base - 15 (QCA survey, May 2009)

### 3.3.7 Specialist Subject Content

Ambiguity remains in this area as there is little difference between the numbers of respondents that agree that the specialist subject content is sufficiently specified and the numbers of those that disagree:

	Agree	Disagree
<b>Level 1</b>	37.5% (6)	31.3% (5)
<b>Level 2</b>	31.3% (5)	31.3% (5)
<b>Level 3</b>	25.0% (4)	31.3% (5)

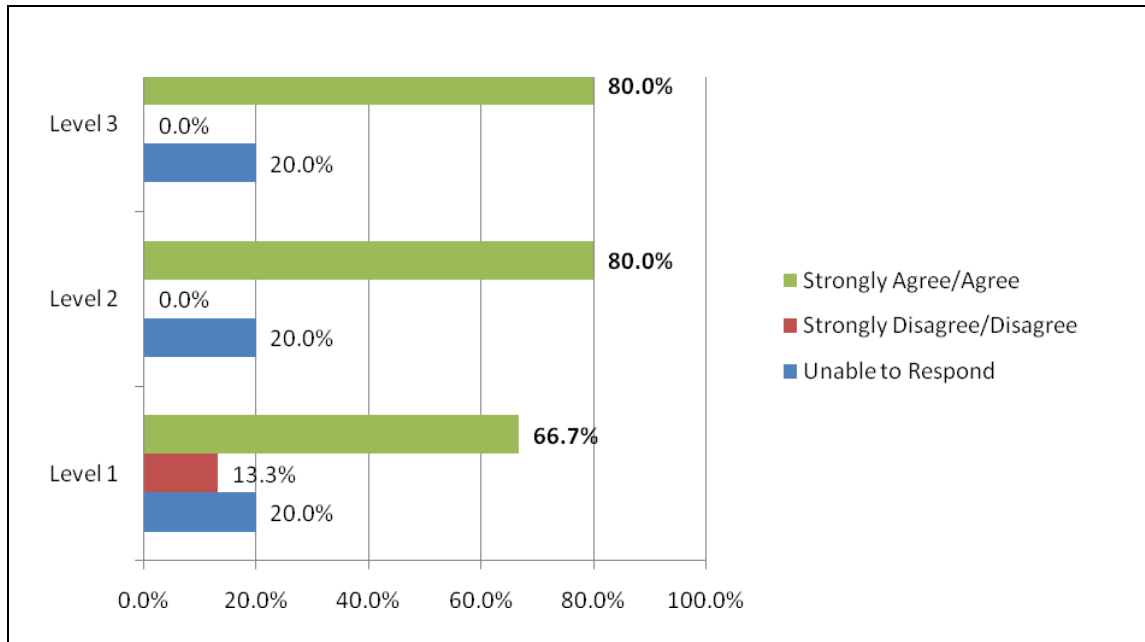
Base - 16 (QCA Survey, May 2009)

### 3.3.8 Line Specific Content

Respondents endorsed the balance of time spent on language acquisition and learning of other content across the Diploma, particularly at levels 2 and 3, where nearly three-quarters (11) of respondents agreed that the balance was correct.

Feedback on assessment of learners on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) was very positive; albeit one school noted that *“this is not a definition of CLIL - CLIL is not about assessment”*.

**Figure 2: “It is beneficial to learners to be assessed on both factual content and language acquisition within the topics and in the same assessment. (CLIL)”**



Base - 15 (QCA Survey, May 2009)

Some issues were raised in terms of assessing both factual content and language acquisition within the topics and in the same assessment. One Local Authority suggested that *“candidates with limited language proficiency at Level 1 may not be able to demonstrate their factual knowledge, understanding and sensitivity in the target language adequately”*.

An Awarding Body added that *“achieving a balance on an assessment between what a learner demonstrates in terms of content and of language acquisition is not as straightforward as it may seem”*. However a representative from an FE College did not believe that there were any issues that were insurmountable.

At levels 1 and 3, respondents were chiefly in agreement with the DDP’s intention that the main focus on assessment should be on speaking and writing and that reading and listening skills will be assessed through these.

53.3% (8) of respondents agreed at level 3, and 40% (6) at level 1. However at level 2; whilst 40% of respondents agreed with this approach, 33.3% (5) disagreed. One student teacher argued that all four skills should have equal importance.

Feedback was more noticeably positive at levels 2 and 3 when respondents were asked to consider whether it was appropriate to provide an annex in the Criteria detailing grammar requirements.

53.3% (8) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed; compared with 20% (3) that strongly disagreed or disagreed. However at level 1 it was less clear cut; 40% (6) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed, whereas 33.4% (5) strongly disagreed or disagreed.

*"It would better to develop grammar requirements specifically for the Diploma"*

**Awarding Body**

The majority of respondents were in favour of the proposed level of external assessment at level 3; 20% (3) of respondents strongly agreed and a further 20% (3) agreed, compared with 26.4% (4) that disagreed.

However a representative from a Training Provider commented that *"it is not clear which units other than 3.3 could readily lend themselves to the external assessment"*.

### **3.3.9 Employability Skills**

53.3% (8) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the Diploma will develop employability skills at levels 1 and 2, compared with 26.6% (4) that strongly disagreed or disagreed.

However, at level 3 the number that strongly agreed or agreed rose to 60% (9), whereas only 20% (3) strongly disagreed or disagreed.

### **3.3.10 Diversity and Inclusion**

Respondents reported a clear understanding of diversity and inclusion issues; 46.7% (7) of respondents stated that they understood this very well and a further 26.7% (4) said they understood the issues quite well.

The majority also believe that the criteria are largely successful in supporting diversity and inclusion needs and requirements.

46.7% (7) of respondents felt this was achieved quite well compared with 20% (3) that felt it was not very well addressed.

Two Awarding Bodies have, however, drawn attention to the way in which BSL regulations are phrased, stating that it is somewhat ambiguous, notably the reference to English literature. One added that:

*“Holistic assessment...is very justifiable in languages but is not necessarily manageable from a disability point of view”*

**Awarding Body**

### 3.3.11 Barriers

Two-thirds of the 15 respondents did not believe that there were any barriers to learner achievement.

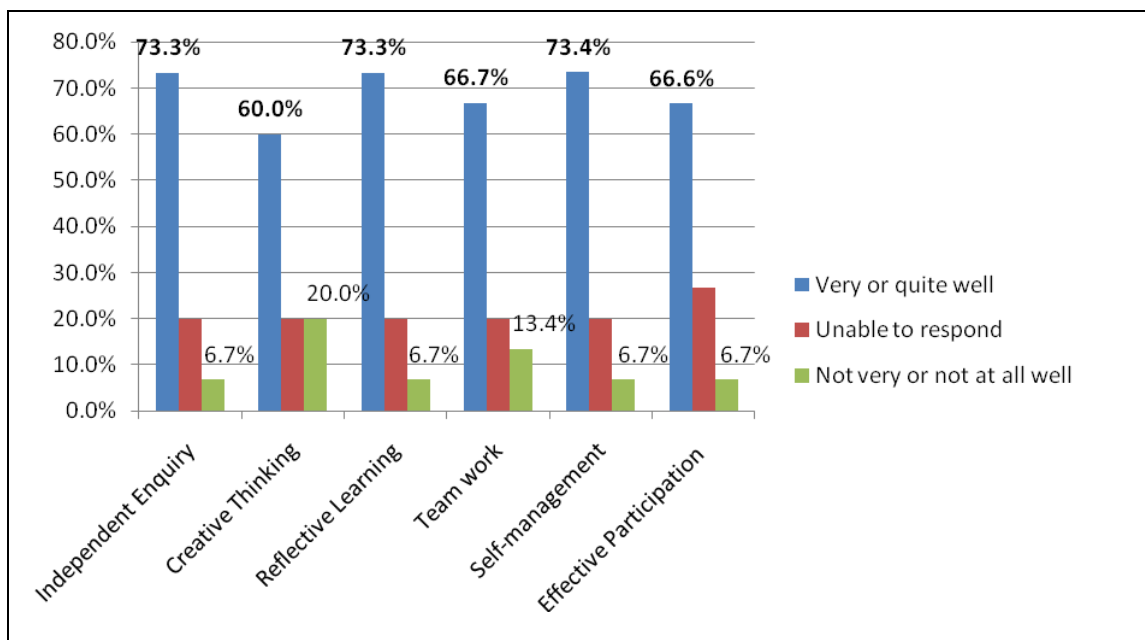
*“On the face of it there seems to be quite a substantial body of what learners must know and understand”*

**FE College**

### 3.3.12 Personal Learning and Thinking Skills

The scope for developing Personal Learning and Thinking Skills was well received by respondents; it was highlighted that there are a *“range of possibilities for useful and mutually beneficial collaborative learning”* (FE College).

**Figure 3: “How well do the criteria enable learners' to develop the following Personal Learning and Thinking Skills?”**



Base - 15 (QCA survey, May 2009)

### 3.3.13 Guided Learning Hours

40% (6) of respondents were satisfied that the proposed Guided Learning Hours aligned to the topic content quite well; however one FE college pointed out that it *“needs to be put into practice before a sound and valid judgement can be made”*.

A representative from a training provider advocated the review of the weighting of level 2 units.

### 3.3.14 Creativity of Assessment Methods

Half of the respondents agreed that the breadth of subject content will allow for topics to be creatively assessed at levels 1 and 2.

At level 3, 37.5% (6) of respondents agreed, whilst 12.5% (2) strongly agreed.

### 3.3.15 Opportunities for co-teaching

Respondents could see more scope for teaching post 16 learners together at levels 1 and 2; 43.8% (7) believed that this was possible and a further 12.5% (2) stated that it could be done.

There was no clear message when respondents were asked about teaching pre 16 learners together at levels 1 and 2, however - whilst 43.8% (7) thought it was possible - a further 37.5% (6) were unable to respond.

### 3.3.16 Recommendations made by respondents to the online survey

**Table 2: Specific recommendations made by topic for Languages and International Communication**

Level 1	Recommendation
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having “Linguistics” in the title is misleading as it does not really cover the academic discipline of linguistics</li> </ul>
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The title “Using languages at work” is misleading, as it does not look deeply enough into the ways in which languages are incorporated into the workplace</li> </ul>
1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Using language creatively” – there is a need to define what creatively actually means in this context</li> </ul>
Level 2	Recommendation
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>60 GLH is likely to be less engaging – 30 GLH might be more appropriate</li> </ul>
2.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The inclusion of imaginative prose may restrict rather than allow for more creative teaching/learning</li> </ul>
Level 3	Recommendation
3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The summary would be better in prose than in bullet form</li> </ul>

3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider how it can be assessed as it involves self-directed language learning which is very difficult to assess externally</li></ul>
3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This topic is very narrow - human rights are very important but global issues must be understood through a range of lenses, including understanding global interdependence and sustainable development</li><li>• The implication that most arguments only have two sides this is confrontational and not helpful - learners need to appreciate multiple perspectives on controversial issues</li></ul>
3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider how it can be assessed as it involves team work which is very difficult to assess externally</li></ul>
3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This topic would not be engaging for all learners as it is too specialised; it might be better to subsume a small element into topic 3.4</li><li>• The objective "learners must be able to carry out two-way consecutive interpreting" is a totally unrealistic aim and expectation and undermines the profession</li></ul>

## 4. Humanities and Social Sciences Line of Learning Criteria

### 4.1 Vision, Aims, and Structure

The overarching vision for the Diploma in Humanities and the Social Sciences is:

To equip learners with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to understand themselves and their world, and to shape its future

By fulfilling this vision, the Diploma in Humanities and Social Sciences aims to enable learners to:

- Develop their personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) and functional skills in the context of the humanities and social sciences
- Provide a sound foundation for progression into other education and training (including higher levels within this Diploma, other Diplomas, apprenticeships and training, further education, work-based learning and higher education)
- Provide a sound foundation for future employment
- Provide a motivating learning experience by combining general education and applied learning in a way that develops learners': transferrable skills; ability to take ownership of their own work; capacity to critically evaluate varied sources of information and opinion; and ability to articulate their own views in the form of substantiated arguments

It is intended that the vision and aims of this Diploma should be realised through content that draws on the sixteen curriculum subjects identified as lying within the scope of the Diploma in Humanities and Social Sciences. This includes five main subject areas within the current statutory curriculum (Citizenship, English Literature and Language, Geography, History, and Religious Education), supplemented and enriched by other humanities and social science subject areas. It is intended that the Diploma should provide opportunities to deepen and apply concepts from the statutory Key Stage 4 programme of study, but not replicate or replace it.

The principal learning content of the Diploma in Humanities and Social Sciences covers the mandatory core of knowledge, understanding and skills that must be covered by learners at each of the three Diploma levels. The Criteria for the principal learning are structured in the following way:

**Foundation** – 5 topics - 2 x 30 GLH and 3 x 60 GLH (240)

**Higher** – 7 topics - all 60 GLH (420)

**Advanced** – 7 topics – 3 x 60 GLH and 4 x 90 GLH (540)

Across the levels and topics the principal learning content is built around four overarching themes. These themes have been chosen to embody some of the most important concepts across all the humanities and social science disciplines:

- The individual in society
- People and change
- People, land and environment
- People and power

In some cases the topics developed within this thematic framework have a clear focus on two or more of the five areas of the statutory curriculum. In other cases topics have been designed to have a stronger interdisciplinary focus, and in doing so provide appropriate contexts for introducing the full range of subjects within the Diploma footprint.

## 4.2 Overview of Events

Throughout the consultation events, the vast majority of delegates warmly welcomed the aims and vision of the Diploma in Humanities and Social Sciences. Providers were particularly enthused by this Diploma's potential to offer an engaging alternative to humanities and social science A-level qualifications, which they felt had become unduly content-driven as a result of sterile and unimaginative assessment. Representatives from HE were impressed by the Diploma's potential to develop important study and research skills that are currently missing in students who progress from A levels. They also felt that the diploma would encourage learners to make connections between subjects and disciplines, something A level students find difficult to do. Limited evidence from employers suggests that they also welcome the wide range of transferrable skills that the Diploma aims to develop.

*'I'm much more impressed with this than I thought I was going to be with [its being] a Diploma ... it was much more along the kind of lines that I would be looking for than I thought.'*

HE Admissions Tutor for Humanities

Nevertheless, there were a number of recurrent concerns about the detailed content set out in the Criteria document. Almost without exception these reflected participants' wish to ensure that the Diploma is as good as possible. They clearly perceived its enormous potential to engage learners, and wanted it to succeed.

Within this positive and supportive context, the most fundamental concerns raised by delegates related to the balance of content. This theme came up in one form or another at almost every event. Delegates clearly felt that an appropriate balance of subject matter and skills from the disciplines included within the Diploma's footprint had not yet been achieved.

One of the main recurrent foci of debate concerned the balance between historical and geographical study within the Diploma, which was widely perceived to favour geography. The primary concern was not that there was insufficient opportunity to include historical subject content, but that there is insufficient coverage of fundamental historical skills. There was a clear conviction that some of the most important historical skills – notably the critical analysis of sources – were missing. Delegates emphasised that these were important transferrable skills with wide applicability to learners' lives, not only in education, but in employment and more generally as active citizens able to understand and shape the world around them.

In addition, there was a general perception that the opportunities to study literature were not sufficiently clear. When the facilitator and DDP representatives cited specific instances where literature was included, this satisfied some people's concerns. The majority, however, continued to feel that these opportunities were not sufficiently clearly signalled. There was also a clear concern that textual study should show clear progression. As learners move through the levels they should be exposed to increasingly substantial texts, and be able to critically engage with them in increasingly sophisticated ways. There was also some concern, again across many of the events, at the relative lack of Classical subject matter.

It is important to note that the DDP had identified the representation of literature as a potential issue from the outset of the events and specified it as a subject for discussion. In most events, however, the issue emerged without any prompting, strongly confirming the DDP's concerns.

These various points seemed to converge on the conclusion that there needed to be, in general, more focus on critical analysis and engagement with sources, particularly different types of text.

More generally, a small number of participants, particularly those familiar with epistemological and methodological issues, stated that the Criteria document gave an overall impression of being biased in favour of the social sciences rather than the humanities. In addition, several delegates, especially those with a humanities background commented that several topics betrayed a progressivist or Eurocentric bias, which they tended to associate more with certain social science, rather than humanities, approaches and methodologies. They felt, for example, that change and development were implicitly treated as 'good' and conflict treated as 'bad'. They argued that these phenomena should be treated as complex, multi-faceted phenomena, and that, for example, 'progress' could legitimately be viewed critically or even opposed.

The question of content balance is clearly related to the handling of interdisciplinary study in the Diploma. There was extensive discussion of the need to balance fundamental skills and core subject knowledge for individual disciplines on the one hand, and the need to make connections between subjects and disciplines demanded by the Diploma's interdisciplinary focus.

Another recurrent theme was the level of demand posed by the Level 1 topics. Many delegates were concerned that the knowledge and understanding statements were too abstract and ambiguous to ensure that the content would be developed in a way appropriate to Level 1 learners.

They also felt that the depth relative to the breadth of study required was not made clear in the knowledge and understanding statements at this level. Finally, many delegates cited examples of ‘Learners must be able to’ statements that they felt were too ambitious or demanding for Level 1 learners.

The final broad theme which occurred prominently and repeatedly across almost all the events was that there were insufficiently clear links between the concepts, knowledge and skills developed in the Principal Learning and the real world contexts where they could be applied. The topic summaries were felt to be the most appropriate place to introduce these contexts

## **2.3 Detailed Evidence**

### ***4.3.1 Coherence and Clarity of Topic Summaries***

There appear to be few problems with the coherence and clarity of the topic summaries. For the most part, those who participated in the events felt that they were clear and succinct summaries of the topic content. One Local Authority representative commented that they are ‘very good, clear summaries... within the context of each we’ve got a very clear idea of what the focus [is] going to be.’ One delegate did comment that they seemed ‘bland’, but otherwise they attracted very little negative comment at any of the events.

The use of questions as topic titles at Level 1 has had a more mixed reception. In some cases the question format was felt to be desirable (some delegates suggested that this format should be extended across the levels). Other delegates felt that the questions at Level 1 were simplistic; that they replicated issues that were covered extensively at KS3; and that they risked patronising learners.

The most prominent recurrent concern, however, related to applied contexts. Many participants felt that the topics summaries currently fail to make a clear connection between the skills developed in the unit and the way they can be applied in the wider world, especially in employment.

This point emerged from a clear majority of delegates at almost every event, and was felt to connect directly to wider issues of making the Diploma in Humanities and Social Sciences distinctive from the existing GCSE and A level offer. Many participants, particularly providers and Local Authority education advisers, felt that they needed explicit guidance towards the kinds of contexts that could be used for teaching topics in an applied way. They also wanted some indication of the kind of employers they could approach to support their own development and delivery of the Diploma.

They nevertheless emphasised strongly that they did not want these contexts to be restrictive. They therefore wanted to see the relevance of skills in broad employment contexts (e.g. market research, journalism, human resources and so on) rather than in specific job roles.

The DDP has already decided to take action in response to this concern. However, some consultation findings suggest that these changes will need to be handled carefully. It should be noted that delegates tended to react negatively to sections of the report that were perceived to subordinate learning to career ambitions (particularly the last sentence of the first topic summary paragraph in Topic 1.2 *Where do we live*). This suggests that relevant employment contexts should be identified because they use the knowledge and skills developed by the humanities and social sciences content of the Diploma; it also implies that particular knowledge and skills should not be emphasized simply because they are relevant to certain specific employment contexts (for more detail see section 4.3.5 *Applied Contexts*).

Another point that emerged at several events, particularly from geography specialists, was that the topic summaries (and indeed the topics a whole) do not always make the geographical emphasis and scope of the content absolutely clear. This is of some significance, as there was considerable discussion about the need to set local issues in wider contexts, with many delegates feeling that there needed to be clearer reference to international and global dimensions across the levels.

#### **4.3.2 Appropriateness of Topic Content (level and depth)**

The level and depth of the topic content provoked sustained discussion at all the events. Many delegates, especially providers, expressed concern that the content and skills required were demanding across the levels. This view is best encapsulated by a teacher who commented that ‘everything to me felt pitched ... probably about a year beyond what I would expect from the students at that level.’

Discussion focussed more closely on Level 3 gave rise to contradictory responses. At Durham, some of the skills statements were felt to lack ‘Level threeness’ and needed to be made more demanding. At other events, several delegates commented that the level as a whole seemed more like a first year degree course than Level 3.

After a detailed discussion of individual topics at Levels 2 and 3, many of these concerns were mitigated. However, there remained some concerns about specific skills statements, which were not seen to be clearly differentiated between levels. For example, ‘Present a persuasive argument’ in topic 3.1 could be seen as being potentially less demanding than ‘Communicate persuasive messages to influence different audiences’ in topic 2.6. Overall, however, delegates usually came to see the content of both Levels 2 and 3 as challenging but broadly appropriate.

This was especially the case in events where HE representatives contributed to the discussion. They invariably reported significant problems with A levels as preparation for university study. They had found that A level students lacked essay-writing and argumentation skills and had difficulty making connections between different subject areas. HE representatives therefore gave a very favourable response to the Levels 2 and 3. They welcomed the emphasis, particularly in topic 3.1, on developing basic methodological, analytical and argumentation skills, which were felt to be particularly lacking in current entrants to undergraduate courses.

*'Looking at level two, the subjects in general, I was really impressed when I'd seen the breadth and the subject content, because you're looking at things like politics, economics, sociology. ... this whole menu is really impressive ... this could offer many advantages over some of the current qualifications that are around at the moment.'*

Social Science Admissions Tutor of a leading research university

This kind of comment had a significant impact on providers, who came to see the challenge evident in Levels 2 and 3 as both necessary and 'aspirational'.

However, detailed scrutiny of Level 1 topics tended to have the opposite effect. In Manchester, London, and Ipswich, delegates (mostly practitioners and local authority representatives) were particularly vocal about the 'abstract' and challenging nature of many of the Knowledge and Understanding Statements and skills statements at this level.

*'I have grave reservations about the ambition of the level one diploma in humanities. I think some of the concepts and knowledge that will be required will be very, very challenging for the target audience.'*

Practitioner.

Participants at these events felt that this could lead to learners being overloaded by a breadth and/or depth of content that was beyond their capabilities. They felt that the knowledge and understanding statements needed to be more closely defined and more concrete and the skills statements needed to be carefully reviewed for demand. For example, the requirement that learners must be able to 'use language to persuade and influence audiences' (Topic 1.3 *How do we communicate with others?*) was often felt to be very challenging. Using language to 'inform' was felt to be more appropriate at this level.

Similar concerns were also evident, though less emphatically, in Durham and Bristol. In Basingstoke, too, delegates argued that the Level 1 would be very demanding. The primary concern here was that there was too great an expectation of independent and autonomous learning. They pointed out that these learners could not be expected to begin the course with much capacity to work independently. These concerns were echoed in Birmingham, where one teacher pointed out that '... there's a strange irony about independent learners that actually [they] have to be taught very specifically how to become independent.' Learners at this level would therefore need structured support to become more autonomous learners, and this need should be more clearly reflected in the topic contents.

*'I think if [this Diploma]'s going to exist at level one and people are going to subscribe to it, there's going to have to be a lot of work done...'*

Local Authority School Improvement Adviser

It should be noted that Topic 1.2 *Where do we live* seemed to be an exception to the general rule. This topic has a clear geographical focus and was reviewed for level by geography specialists at

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several events; they all felt that the topic was at a comparable level to current qualifications. In some events, delegates did feel that other individual topics (for example topic 1.5 *How we can make a difference* at the Leeds event) were at an appropriate level, but this was the more the exception than the rule.

#### **4.3.3 Balance of Content**

As the events proceeded, it became clear that the most recurrent concerns about the Criteria document related to the balance of content. There were several important findings that emerged in relation to this broad theme:

- A perceived lack of history content and skills, especially in comparison with geography
- A perceived lack of English literature content and skills
- Some concern at the lack of Classics content
- More generally, a possible bias in favour of the methods and values of the social sciences as opposed to the humanities
- A need to give more emphasis to the impact of new technologies on media and modes of understanding the world
- A specific concern from geography subject specialists about the balance of physical versus human geography

**Lack of Historical Content** - The single most recurrent concern was the perceived lack of historical content. At the first event, one delegate questioned whether 'change' was addressed sufficiently clearly or coherently in its own right, especially given that People and Change is identified as one of the four overarching themes for this Diploma. Although he saw that history could be introduced in the context of topics which required knowledge and understanding of 'change' or of 'chronological frameworks', he remained uncertain that history had been properly addressed.

Concerns about this aspect of the Criteria became much clearer from the fourth event (Leeds) onwards, after the format of the discussion was slightly changed to allow delegates to give their overall impressions of the Criteria document at the beginning and the end of the discussion. From this point onwards, at every event at least some of the delegates said that they felt there was a relative lack of historical content and skills. In most cases these concerns persisted even after wide-ranging discussions and detailed consideration of specific topics.

It should be noted that participants whose subject background was history were particularly vocal about this issue. This view was shared by history subject specialists across stakeholder groups, including providers, local authority education advisers and HE. Furthermore, perhaps more unexpectedly and significantly, this view was frequently echoed by delegates with geography subject backgrounds.

*'I've looked and been able to clock the Geography there, so to speak. I've not a problem with that, but I do agree ... about the History, because I'm looking at it with a brief for Humanities as well.'*

Local Authority Geography Adviser

Moreover, no one argued at any event that there was too much historical content, whereas some geographers came close to suggesting that there may be too much geographical content.

*'...There doesn't seem to be a balance. It seems to be like Geography is ... the principle subject ...As a Geographer I should say 'wow' but I kind of think if it's Humanities it needs [more balance].'*

Local Authority Humanities Outreach Adviser

The question of historical skills and content was therefore debated in considerable detail during the events from Leeds onwards. It became clear through these discussions that, for most (though not all) history subject specialists, the opportunities for introducing historical content could be seen fairly clearly when the Criteria were scrutinised in detail. The main problem was a lack of explicitly defined historical analytical skills, particularly for handling historical sources.

*'I think the history skills seem really quite weak and hidden. If you look at the power of subject specific history skills... [they] need to be strengthened in this [and] that wouldn't, I would have said, oppose or duplicate history A-Level.'*

Local Authority Education Adviser

This was felt to be particularly important by many delegates because the history skills they have in mind are applicable across a wide range of subjects and sectors. This claim was supported by delegates outside history subject boundaries. For example, a psychology HE admissions tutor commented that 'the skills you get in history A level are invaluable in any subject ...if we see someone with [history A level] we think that's great, they'll be able to do something with evidence.' At another event, a provider mentioned that history had traditionally been a preferred A level subject for entrance to leading Law degrees, presumably for similar reasons.

One event included a wide range of stakeholder types, including an HE head of history, providers, and local authority advisers; this was particularly helpful in defining the kind of skills needed. There were a number of specific skills that emerged. These can be summed up as follows:

- Being able to critically analyse sources, including a sophisticated understanding of bias – this means understanding sources in the context of the motives, purposes and historical situation of their creators – the 'who, what, when and why'
- Having an understanding of the nature of historical debate - in particular, that primary sources do not simply provide illustrations of the historical claims made in secondary texts but are their foundation
- Having an ability to prioritise and assess the relative significance of historical individuals and phenomena

It should also be noted that some participants also pointed out that these skills were prioritised in KS3 and earlier, and that failing to build on this foundation would represent a lost opportunity.

Some providers, particularly in Manchester, reported difficulties identifying or conveying to learners the meaning of some historical terminology, notably 'primary and secondary sources' and 'bias'. For them, the solution was simply to banish these words and concentrate on the underlying concepts. It was clear from the comments of other delegates, however, that this terminology is still habitually employed by professional historians. This suggests that the key issue is to ensure that these terms are understood in a more sophisticated way, rather than simply abandoned. In addition, it should be noted that in this connection that detailed scrutiny of the research focussed topics (1.2, 1.4, 2.2, 2.4, 3.3. and 3.4) consistently provoked delegates to argue that primary and secondary research invariably needed to be carried out in a coordinated way.

A broader point that emerged both in the context of both history and politics was the need for more extensive consideration of ideology. Some delegates argued that some basic ideological positions (at the very least left versus right wing), and probably including such basic political ideologies as Conservatism, Liberalism, Socialism and Marxism, should be explicitly included within the Criteria. This was particularly the case at Level 3.

Finally, some delegates were concerned that there should be some in-depth study of history to ensure that the relevant historical skills were properly developed. There was little concern that any specific content should be included, simply that whatever content was chosen was studied to an appropriate degree of depth for the level.

**Lack of English Literature** – This point is dealt with separately below in section 4.3.11

**Lack of Classics** – A considerable number of delegates found it difficult to identify specific Classics content or to identify where this content could be introduced. At Ipswich, delegates went so far as to suggest that topic 3.1 *Challenging Understanding, Argument and Evidence* could be integrated with the remaining topics, and the time allocated to a Classics oriented unit. This was an extreme suggestion that had no parallel in other events, but it does reflect a more general concern.

**Bias in favour of the Social Sciences** – At some events, delegates perceived a wider bias in the Criteria in favour of the social sciences at the expense of the humanities. This was especially the case when viewed from the HE perspective, where geography is regarded as having more in common with the social sciences rather than traditional humanities subjects.

*'One worry that I have is that humanities as understood, certainly in higher education, seems to have disappeared almost entirely from the diploma in favour of social science.'*

HE Subject Representative

This view also emerged implicitly in comments that the Criteria had an implicit progressivist or Eurocentric bias. This was to some degree associated with the idea that some of the social sciences,

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especially Economics and Geography, have historically tended to view economic development as a ‘good thing’, whereas the humanities in general tend to be critical of such progressivist, ‘Whiggish’ viewpoints (see below, section 4.3.16 *Additional Points* for more detail on this point).

**New Technologies** – At some events, delegates emphasized the need to include new media and communication technologies more prominently. One employer strongly emphasized how these were going to have a huge transformative impact on the world, and that including them in the Diploma was a fundamental aspect of preparing learners for life. In addition, delegates at several events cited the important role of ICT can play in creating more innovative models of assessment. Stressing ICT more in the Criteria document would help support this process.

*‘...[W]e’ve just been talking about internet technologies and current technologies that are changing things, but I still don’t see a sense of the enormous changes that are about to impact upon our world, and a sense of creating adaptable, resilient individuals.’*

Employer

**Physical versus Human Geography** – Geography specialists at several events questioned whether there needed to be more attention to the relation of physical and social geography. They felt that the content in the topics directly relating to the overarching theme, ‘people and the environment’, were in their current form oriented towards social geography, particularly at Levels 1 and 2, and questioned whether this reflected a deliberate decision to separate the two out. The opportunity to include physical factors was much clearer at Level 3 in Topic 3.4 *Sustaining Environments*, and some geography specialists suggested that the comparable topics at Levels 1 and 2 should include similar content. Within this limitation, however, the content was felt to be appropriate to the learners at the different levels of the Diploma.

#### **4.3.4 Engaging for Learners**

There was broad consensus among the vast majority of delegates throughout all the events that most of the content identified in the Criteria would indeed be engaging for learners, and indeed for many teachers.

*‘I think this has the potential to be incredibly engaging ... as a former teacher in humanities and social science subjects, I’d be very excited to be teaching it.’*

Awarding Body Representative

Even in Manchester, where at least some of the participants took a more aggressively critical approach to certain aspects of the Criteria document, there was still an overall conviction that the content offered strong potential for engaging learners, with one participant commenting that ‘For each level there’s something there which can really capture a young person and make them want to learn...’

There were however specific concerns about the methodology topics at Levels 2 and 3 (Topics 2.1 *Choosing a research methodology* and 3.1 *Challenging Knowledge, Argument and Evidence*). There was almost complete agreement among providers that these would be extremely off-putting for learners if they were taught as standalone units. In Manchester, one particularly vocal participant suggested that if these topics were ultimately to be delivered as units in qualification specifications, it would be the ‘kiss of death’ to this Diploma. Similar views emerged in London and subsequent events. Practitioners and former practitioners reported direct experience in the past of such content having de-motivated students. They also called for the main subject matter covered within the methodology topics to be fully integrated with appropriate content in the other units.

The recurrence of this view has led the DDP to decide to include an explicit requirement in the Criteria document. This will prescribe that these units should be delivered in the context of the other topics rather than as standalone units. When this was made clear to delegates at later events, this seemed to resolve their main concerns over these units.

At the London event, delegates argued strongly that at Level 1, topic 1 *Who do we think we are?*, would be extremely engaging for learners. There was a strongly expressed view – which appeared to be broadly shared – that this implied that the time assigned to this topic should be raised from 30 to 60 GLH. It was suggested that the additional hours should be taken from topic 1.2 *Where do we live?*, which could be reduced in part by the elimination of K&U statement 6, which is strongly fact-oriented and content heavy.

The DDP also decided to act on this suggestion. However, when feedback on this decision was sought at the Bristol event, delegates argued that the 1.2 would be more engaging for their learners, and that the GLH assigned to the two topics should be left the same. They suggested that the difference of view reflected the differences between London and the less urbanised or ethnically diverse South West. In ethnically diverse communities, identity offers extensive scope for exploration of different identities; in other areas, however, it is often the physical features of learners’ environment that offers the greatest potential for engaging learners them with history, identity and values. Participants in the South West cited examples such as monuments, the remains of industrial sites, as well as changing attitudes to their preservation or reuse.

A minority of delegates expressed concern suggested that the topics with a strong economics focus may prove disengaging. The DDP itself was particularly concerned about Topic 2.4 *Examining Economic Change*. In addition, one Awarding Body delegate suggested that this topic was insufficiently sophisticated.

The topic was therefore discussed in detail at the Birmingham event. However, delegates raised few objections to the content. The main suggestion was that there needed to be more consideration of the distribution of wealth and the disparities between rich and poor both within the UK and globally. This would provide ample opportunity to engage learners and show how decisions in one place can impact directly on the economic state of other parts of the world.

However, one delegate raised specific concerns about Knowledge and Understanding Statement 5, 6, and 8, and argued that they could easily become a tick list of institutions or regulations that would end up being taught mechanically and unimaginatively.

Concerns focussed on the skills statements, which were criticised for being ambiguous and failing to connect clearly with the content covered in the knowledge and understanding statements. One delegate felt that the requirement to ‘analyse and interpret straightforward economic statistics’ was particularly problematic because it is so difficult to define a ‘straightforward’ statistic. An employer suggested that the topic lent itself to introducing some basic statistics used in business, such as income-expenditure balance sheets. A provider suggested that this kind of application could be developed through learners’ becoming involved in developing or supporting some form of social enterprise. This would link effectively with considerations of inequality and its effects.

#### **4.3.5 Clarity and Appropriateness of Contexts**

There was broad consensus throughout all the events that relevant employment and work-related contexts were not clearly evident in the criteria in general, and in the topic summaries in particular. Participants observed that the topic summaries do not make explicit the way that the skills and knowledge developed in that unit can be applied in real workplace or work-related contexts.

At all events except London, delegates felt this was problematic.

*‘Every topic I went through I wrote applied learning question mark, applied learning question mark, you know, where’s the emphasis on that really?’*

Specialist Schools and Academies Representative

There were two primary concerns. The first was that a lack of applied and employment contexts would make the Diploma in Humanities and Social Sciences less distinctive from existing qualifications in these areas, and less similar to the first fourteen more explicitly vocationally relevant Diploma lines. This would reduce this Diploma’s attraction to learners and make it more difficult to market.

The second was a more pragmatic concern that Awarding Bodies, Consortia, providers and teachers should be able to identify appropriate employers and employment contexts that could support applied learning.

Participants therefore felt that more explicit guidance on work-related contexts would be particularly welcome to Awarding Bodies, Local Authorities and potential delivery consortia. However, they were keen to maintain as much flexibility as possible. They wanted to be able to identify applied contexts which were accessible and relevant in their own locality. It was therefore emphasised that these contexts should not define specific job roles, but broad employment contexts, such as journalism.

It was broadly felt that emphasizing these applied contexts would make it much easier to market the qualification and engage learners. At Bristol in particular, it was suggested that the Diploma could then be marketed effectively as a qualification that provided a wide range of transferrable skills without requiring learners to commit themselves to a specific vocational pathway.

In addition, there were some suggestions that careful thought about applied contexts could lead to the inclusion of specific, widely applicable humanities skills. In Bristol, for example, a delegate suggested that writing concise briefing papers was a valuable skill both for employment and as a learning tool: it forces learners to express themselves concisely, prioritise information, and consider how information can be presented most effectively, and this skill is critical for providing accessible information to colleagues in the workplace, especially at meetings.

#### **4.3.6 Creativity of Assessment Methods**

It was generally agreed that the topics set out in the Criteria document provided ample opportunity for creative assessment. Indeed, in London it was felt by most participants that the nature of the skills required, the applied context of the learning, and opportunity for extensive internal assessment, not only provided the opportunity for, but demanded, the use of innovative and creative approaches to assessment.

*'I've got no details on what the assessment will look like, but does this give us the potential for it? Yes, certainly, no doubt about it.'*

Local Authority Representative.

There was particular enthusiasm for methods of assessment that could draw on learners' own research and data collection, especially at advanced level. Several delegates, both from HE and providers, emphasized the importance of developing effective formal presentation skills, from at least Level 2 onwards. They spoke of having experience with learners or students whose presentation skills lagged far behind their abilities to put together coherent arguments and high quality written work. In order to support these presentation skills, some delegates suggested that there should be the opportunity within the Diploma to present findings in innovative ways. These might involve the use of ICT and video for producing work in the form of blogs and journals or to record debates. There was also, as a result of this, a call for more emphasis on ICT in the specifications, so as to ensure an appropriate basis for these kinds of assessments. The DDP representatives also mentioned the possibility of using exhibitions created by learners as part of the assessment process. This was broadly welcomed by delegates.

The real concern evident from most providers was that this Diploma's potential for creative assessment should actually be realised in the assessment regimes developed by Awarding Bodies. Some providers were sceptical that this would happen as a result of their experience with A level assessment processes. However, all agreed that the success of the Diploma would be strongly dependent on the development of rigorous but flexible assessment methods which allowed full potential to learners to play to their strengths.

It should be noted at this point that some delegates, for example a provider with experience of teaching special needs students, observed that the assessment of actual personal interactions, which the skills statements in some topics implied would be part of the assessment, may discriminate against learners with certain learning disabilities such as Asperger's syndrome. Such learners are likely to find these types of assessment extremely intimidating, if not impossible. This will need to be borne in mind during the development of assessment schemes by the Awarding Bodies.

#### **4.3.7 External Assessment Methods**

Debate focussed on advanced level, and whether the DDP should opt for 120 or 180 GLH of units subject to wholly external assessment (set, marked and moderated entirely by the Awarding Body). In both Durham and Manchester, there was clear agreement with the DDP's decision to opt for the greater, 180 GLH, amount of external assessment. The grounds for this were the need to ensure that the Advanced Diploma had the greatest possible credibility with higher education institutions. One HE delegate argued in favour of retaining at least some traditional, sit-down examinations, both to ensure credibility and to provide a foundation for progression to HE, where such examinations remain common.

Viewpoints were considerably more varied in the London event, where a minority of participants advocated reducing the amount of external assessment. Their argument was that this would enable the Diploma to take full advantage of the additional flexibility for personalised and relevant learning and assessment.

However, almost all participants who expressed a view were swayed by opposing claims that at Level 3 the credibility of the qualification in the eyes of universities had to be the overarching concern. As in Manchester, this was taken to imply that even if the greater flexibility provided by more extensive internal assessment might be desirable in principle, the heavier, 180 GLH, regime of assessment was a practical necessity. This view was so clear that in later events this question was not prioritised for discussion.

At the Ipswich event, it was decided to switch the focus of discussion from the amount of external assessment, as there was such uniformity of opinion in this respect. Instead, there was considerable debate over how the flexibility of the Diploma could be combined with rigorous external assessment. Valuable suggestions were made about using in-depth study of a particular field or subject area, using a particular analytical approach, as the basis for teaching and learning. This would then be assessed by providing learners with a resources booklet and asking them to carry out the same kind of analysis on these resources. This kind of assessment would emphasize the acquisition of transferrable skills, while providing learners, teachers and providers with the freedom to work to their strengths and individual preferences in terms of content.

#### **4.3.8 Employability Skills**

Participants in all the events seemed to be absolutely clear that the Diploma in Humanities and Social Sciences had the potential to develop a wide range of valuable employability skills. In the London event, one delegate placed particular emphasis on recent research, which revealed an increasingly emphatic demand from employers for ‘soft skills’, communication skills and interpersonal skills. At other events, almost all delegates believed that this Diploma offered exceptional potential to develop general employment skills that would be valuable in almost any employment sector. Topics at all levels that encouraged understanding of different cultural and personal identities, effective communication, and team-working, were felt to be particularly valuable for developing skills that would have wide relevance to employment.

At almost all the events, however, delegates felt that the applied employment contexts that would bring these skills alive were not sufficiently obvious in the Criteria document.

‘[I]t would be good if we all felt confident that as a result of going through this diploma, the young person actually felt equipped to take action in the real world.’

Provider

It was acknowledged in Durham that such contexts are implicit within the principal learning at levels 1 and 2. However, it was felt that it was particularly difficult to identify such contexts at Level 3, where the academic orientation of the content became more emphatic.

Related views were expressed emphatically at Leeds, Manchester, Bristol and Basingstoke. For example, at Basingstoke a consultant stated that ‘What it doesn’t seem to do in the same way as other diplomas do, is set that [learning] in a vocational context...’ In Manchester, most delegates felt that stressing these applied contexts was a major selling point for the Diploma, and if they were not made more explicit it would fail to attract learners. This view was repeated at other events, particularly in Basingstoke and Bristol.

Participants therefore felt that more explicit guidance on work-related contexts at Level 3 would be particularly welcome to Awarding Bodies, Local Authorities and potential delivery consortia. It was emphasised that these contexts should not define specific job roles, but rather the broad utility of particular skills in widely applicable employment contexts.

The DDP made a decision to include more applied contexts early on, and reported this decision to delegates at Nottingham and Birmingham. The need for more application emerged specifically at Birmingham as well; the DDPs proposed change was received favourably at this event.

#### **4.3.9 Progression through Diploma levels**

With the exception of concerns about the challenging nature of Level 1, delegates were broadly happy that there was satisfactory progression through the Diploma levels. When individual topics were scrutinised in detail, most delegates felt that they were at about the right level, although

there were some concerns that at Levels 2 and 3 there needed to be close attention to skills statements to ensure that there was some clear differentiation between what learners were expected to do at the two Levels. However, some delegates felt that there should be clearer signposting of the connections between topics at the different levels. A delegate at Durham suggested that they did not 'map' onto each other in the way they did in some other Diplomas. This made it more difficult to navigate the document and identify progression between levels.

At some events, delegates were encouraged to consider linked topics across levels, and when this was done the response was almost always that progression was clear and appropriate (with some specific exceptions related to Level 1, as detailed above in Section 4.3.2).

There were some broader concerns about progression, however, and these tended to focus on the move from the focus on the individual at Level 1 to broader contexts at Levels 1 and 2. Specifically, a concern raised by one participant, and echoed by awarding body representative, was that the Criteria at Level 1 gave the impression of being too narrowly focused on the individual learner and did not sufficiently bring out the learner's relationships with a larger context, particularly beyond the local level. It was suggested that there may be insufficient material to lead securely into Level 2, where there was felt to be a much stronger focus on the outside world beyond immediate personal and local contexts.

Other concerns about progression usually related to progression into HE. A number of participants in the Humanities and Social Science and Science groups were concerned that at Level 3 these Diplomas may not provide a sufficiently robust foundation of content knowledge for progression into HE. The fundamental issue is the difficulty of balancing development of skills against the need for fundamental content knowledge. This challenge is particularly difficult to resolve in this kind of interdisciplinary qualification.

There were particular concerns about entry to degrees in history and English literature, where it is usual at some universities to recruit students with A-levels in those subjects. Some delegates were much less worried about this when it became clear that it will be possible to take an A-level as part of ASL. Others pointed out that this required learners to decide their degree subject before beginning their Level 3 studies, and therefore advocated a stronger basis of disciplinary knowledge and skills in these areas.

Entry to other degree level humanities and social science subjects caused less concern – in fact most delegates, including HE admissions tutors, felt that the more interdisciplinary approach and focus on skills of the Diploma would be preferable to traditional A-levels.

*'I think that subjects like mine would actually much prefer people to come in with this diploma than with traditional A-Levels precisely because it develops people's ability to think independently and so on.'*

HE Representative

There was some concern at Manchester that there was not clear progression between the Level 1 topic on law on governance (1.5 *How can we make a difference*), which was felt to perhaps unduly emphasise activism, and the more analytical emphasis of the corresponding topic at Level 2 (2.5 *The role of governance*).

#### **4.3.10 Distinctiveness of the Diploma**

There were varied views on the distinctiveness of the Diploma from the existing qualification offer. Some commented that it 'felt' very much like citizenship or general studies, and this occurred at several events without direct prompting. Others, mostly those who had grasped the highly interdisciplinary approach envisioned by the DDP, were very convinced that it was a distinctive offer because of the way that it breaks down 'subject silos'. This was especially the case among HE representatives.

HE representatives uniformly welcomed the aims of the Diploma, and were particularly impressed with the argumentation skills developed at Advanced Level, particularly in Topic 3.1 *Challenging Knowledge, argument and evidence*. They also welcomed the opportunity for learners to think beyond subject boundaries and make connections between the various aspects of their study. For HE, the interdisciplinary nature of the qualification was of huge benefit in familiarising learners with the breadth of the humanities and social sciences beyond the traditional school subjects of history and geography.

*'I've been kind of amazed by the content. Again, the content is exactly the kind of thing that we're looking for. Funnily enough in our own department we're trying to offer students these kinds of skills, these particular skills that you're drawing out here.'*

HE Humanities Admissions Selector

It was also felt that the Level 3 Diploma could prove particularly valuable in providing a sound foundation for progression while enabling students to avoid over-specialisation. Some delegates particularly welcomed the range of exposure to different subjects, and hoped that this would help learners understand the breadth of choices available beyond the traditionally most prominent school humanities subjects.

Nevertheless, at many events delegates reported that they had difficulty identifying a target market for the Diploma. They argued that the Diploma would have to compete for more traditional 'academic' learners with GCSE and A levels, and with the other Diploma lines for vocationally oriented learners.

This view emerged repeatedly, and again led to the suggestion that the applied contexts needed to be brought out more clearly. However, when this was discussed in detail in Bristol, some valuable suggestions were made that could help identify this Diploma's 'unique selling point'.

*'I think the danger the Humanities diploma possibly has is that teachers will say it's a dog's dinner, it's jack of all trades master of none, unless this kind of USP is very clear... I mean, you could turn its challenges into its success in that ultimately you could perhaps say that ... no diploma can offer you more in terms of being prepared for the world of work.'*

Practitioner representing a Local Authority

The suggestion that this Diploma incorporates an exceptionally broad range of valuable transferrable skills, while enabling learners to keep progression options open, generated genuine excitement. It was felt to be particularly applicable to Level 1 learners. These learners were widely perceived to be most likely to prefer more vocational options, but were also often said to lack a clear sense of direction when they are making subject choices at the age of 13 to 14. The Diploma could therefore be particularly valuable for such learners.

Most delegates therefore agreed that if applied contexts and workplace applications – and indeed application to further study and learners' civil lives – were made clearer, this would help ensure that this Diploma would stand out more clearly as an innovative qualification. This in turn would help stakeholders to market it more effectively, especially at Level 1.

#### **4.3.11 Scope for Literature/Poetry**

At almost all the events there were strong and widely shared concerns voiced that the potential to explore literature was not sufficiently clearly signalled in the Criteria document. In Durham, one participant noted that the literature element 'did not spring out'. In Manchester, there were similar concerns that the potential to use literature was not fully exploited in the topics. This view was particularly cogently articulated by an English subject practitioner. At almost every subsequent event, similar views were expressed, with one comment that the periodic inclusion of 'literature' in the document currently risked seeming tokenistic. In three events, HE representatives from philosophy, English and history backgrounds all strongly emphasised the need to ensure that skills of close textual analysis – which are common across the humanities disciplines – need to be developed far more extensively in the Diploma. They also stressed the need, particularly at Level 3, to undertake at least some in-depth study of substantial texts. They complained that undergraduates often arrive from A levels without having read a single book from cover to cover.

*'One of the skills ... that is relevant to people who want to study what we call arts or humanities at universities, is the skill of reading texts ... there seems to be no emphasis here on guiding students through the skill of extracting interpretations from textual material. I think this is a serious absence...'*

HE Representative

Delegates stressed that the kinds of text studied should be broad, and should include new media, and popular as well as traditional 'High Literature'. The key concern was that these texts should be subject to close, critical reading and analysis. Attention needed to be paid to discerning authorial intention and the reaction the text was intended to elicit. When the facilitator suggested that

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including this kind of rigorous study of texts would help meet the demand for more history skills, this was broadly accepted. The implication is that to a considerable extent the perceived absence of history and literature in the Criteria document can be resolved in a coordinated way.

#### **4.3.12 Standards for Written Communication**

Delegates were divided over the need for specific inclusion of specific content connected with written expression. Most stakeholder groups, including the vast majority of providers and several Awarding Body representatives, felt that there was no need to include specific prescription for consideration of issues such as grammar and spelling. It was also noted that the English language element of mark schemes for current qualifications, in subjects other than English, was so small as to be virtually negligible.

The view of HE representatives was, however, somewhat different. They argued that the written communication skills of new undergraduates were often poor, and that there needed to be some focus on developing traditional essay writing skills. These concerns appeared to be inseparable from the development of general argumentation skills in topic 3.1. However, several participants reported experience of learners who had excellent oral discussion and argumentation abilities, but who struggled to express their ideas in writing. There is at the least considerable potential for enhancing the credibility of the qualification with HE if it includes a more explicit requirement for requiring learners to develop written arguments, particularly at Level 3. However, views on this matter were not sufficiently strong to warrant drawing firm conclusions.

There most significant concerns about English language requirements in the Diploma arose in connection with a perceived potential overlap with Level 1 functional skills. Participants at several events suggested that there should be careful mapping – in terms of what was likely to actually happen in delivery, rather than in terms of technical overlaps between Criteria documents – between Level 1 functional skills, English GCSEs and the KS4 programme of study, and the English language components of the Diploma. This is necessary to avoid undue, and potentially off-putting, repetition of content (see also section 4.3.2 *Level and Depth of Content* for further information relevant to this point).

On the basis of the evidence of this consultation process, there would therefore seem to be little strong support for including any additional specific English language requirements to the Criteria. However, consideration should be given to the concern of HE representatives that essay writing skills are a weakness in current university entrants, and that these may require more explicit mention in the Criteria document.

#### **4.3.13 Teamwork in Topic 3.6**

There was a broad consensus that teamwork is not effectively integrated into topic 3.6 *Living with rules and governance*. Most delegates saw a sharp disjunction between the first ten Knowledge and Understanding Statements, which deal with policy and governance, and the next five, which deal with the theory and practice of team-working. As one delegate put it, 'I've got to the bottom on the first page, turned over the page and [then I] get to the handbrake turn.'

It took delegates some time to grasp the DDP's intention – that learners would learn about the need for policies and governance structures through the processes required to undertake effective team work. There was particular concern that the skills statements related almost entirely to team work skills, while neglecting the extensive content related to politics and law specified in the knowledge and understanding statements.

One delegate suggested that the topic could be made clearer by placing the teamwork related knowledge and understanding statements (11-15) before the law and politics related statements (1-10). This would create a natural logical flow. The topic would start with the actual team-based learning that learners would be undertaking, and then broaden out to consider the wider knowledge and understanding of governance issues that are relevant to creating and running teams. There were also comments that the issue of leadership needed to be addressed in this context.

#### **4.3.14 Expression of Concept of Knowledge in Topic 3.1**

Topic 3.1 provoked considerable debate at many of the events. In particular, there were strong and polarised feelings about the inclusion of 'revelatory' knowledge as one of the types of knowledge to be covered in the Diploma. Several delegates were uneasy about this, and a few felt it was offensive, self-contradictory or even potentially discriminatory. On the whole, however, delegates came to see that this intended to ensure that religious thought was included in consideration, and therefore broadly accepted the term. It was felt to offer high potential for engagement with learners of widely varying backgrounds and beliefs.

One HE delegate objected to the idea of 'challenging' knowledge, arguing that the very fact that it is called 'knowledge' implies that it is held to be true. Other delegates argued from a more historical perspective that knowledge must be socially constructed; that is to say knowledge is developed by real people on the basis of socially and culturally defined standards of 'truth' and 'falsity'. They therefore saw the existing terminology as appropriate.

*'Challenging belief is completely different from challenging knowledge, and the whole point is that knowledges are... socially constructed and change over time and differ across class, and across geography and everything. So I think challenging knowledge is precisely the point.'*

Head of HE history department

In addition, it should be noted that this topic was consistently welcomed by both providers and HE representatives as an extremely valuable summation of the skills and knowledge that were missing in current A level learners. It was generally felt to provide most of the fundamental cross-disciplinary argumentation and analytical skills that were currently missing in many A level learners.

*I mean this looks great... I'm seriously tempted to nick bits of this and put them into my tutorial programme. It's crystallised all sorts of things I knew students should be able to do.*

Head of V1th Form Studies, Major FE College

The primary concern with this topic, as with 2.1, was that delivery should be integrated as far as possible with other topics. This was partly to ensure that learners were not disengaged by the demanding content, and partly to ensure that the skills were learned in a fully applied manner.

#### **4.3.15 Interdisciplinary Nature of the Qualification**

This is in some ways the crucial point of many of the discussions throughout the nine consultation events. Although the challenges of building an interdisciplinary qualification were not always addressed explicitly at every event, their implications can be seen in many of the responses to the Criteria for the Diploma in Humanities and Social Sciences. The key challenge clearly lies in the attempt to maintain the rigour and conceptual sophistication developed by the in-depth study of individual subjects and disciplines, while breaking down the disciplinary boundaries within which they have historically been contained.

Those delegates who were most enthused by, and supportive of, the qualification, tended to be delegates who understood the DDP's aim to produce a genuinely interdisciplinary qualification. However, many delegates made comments that show that the DDP has not yet succeeded in providing this kind of qualification. Across the events, it was common to find providers commenting that they could easily identify a single subject focus for most of the topics.

*'It does seem very compartmentalised even though it's supposed to be broad ...I was thinking [one person] will do that one and classics will fit in there, history's here...'*

Practitioner

This was especially the case at Level 2, where there seems to be a particularly strong sense that each topic relates to a primary discipline:

*'It would seem that the way it's been put together, topic 2.1 is quite generic, 2.2 it seems to be particularly applicable to history, 2.3 to geography, 2.4 economics, 2.5 politics, 2.6 English, and 2.7 media studies. It would seem to me that if I was putting this to classroom teachers it would fall into those categories for them.'*

Practitioner

Some practitioners seemed to find this reassuring; others were anxious that this could ultimately lead to a lack of innovation in delivery and assessment and that it could erode the very interdisciplinary emphasis that helps make the Diploma distinctive from existing qualifications.

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*'...What I don't think should happen is that individual unit becomes identified as the geography of the area. When that happens everything starts to fragment, and the power of what you started with about having a broad Humanities approach gets lost.'*

Leadership Team Member, Humanities Specialist School

One HE representative argued strongly that, although he was personally impressed with the potential of the Diploma, the interdisciplinary focus of the Criteria document remained unclear. This delegate's comments imply that if the Diploma is to be a truly interdisciplinary qualification, then the skills and knowledge covered, and the relative weight assigned to them in the Topics, will genuinely have to be led by their relative importance for further study, employment and everyday life. For this reason, he actually supported the inclusion of additional historical content, because the skills developed through historical study 'are widely applicable in any subject.'

Another challenge is the fact that different humanities and social science subjects use the same terminology in different ways. A specific instance of this is the different way that the terms primary and secondary research are employed in the humanities and social sciences. In the former, primary research involves working with documents and sources that are as close as possible to the events or phenomena being researched; in the social sciences, the term tends to refer to fieldwork such as conducting surveys and polls. One delegate asked for the inclusion of a glossary defining the way in which these terms were being used in the document.

Finally, although technically out of scope of discussion, those providers who appreciated and welcomed the emphasis on interdisciplinary study also tended to be very concerned about the practicalities of delivery. This was particularly the case for many schools, where there would have to be a complete 'change of culture' for teachers accustomed to teaching within tightly prescribed subject boundaries. There was a broadly shared concern that extensive resources – of both time and money – would be needed to support the transition to this new style of interdisciplinary learning.

#### **4.3.16 Additional Points**

The most important additional point that emerged frequently and spontaneously at many of the events was a perception that some of the topics exhibited an implicit progressivist or Eurocentric bias. There were particularly concerns with topics such as 2.4 *Examining Economic Change*, which was felt to place insufficient stress on the potential negative aspects of economic development. In topic 3.3 *Exploring Diversity*, it was felt that there should be more exploration of the need to 'Balance diversity and cohesion', and that learners should come to understand that this is a complex relationship. In topic 1.5, *How can we make a difference?*, there was felt to be an implicit assumption that change should always be pursued from within existing institutional frameworks, rules and policies. There should be more consideration of non-conventional forms of protest.

*'I think it's important that at this aspect there's an element of regression built in to it as well, because there's a notion that change is always good!'*

Local Authority Representative

In general, delegates, particularly those with humanities backgrounds, tended to see the Criteria as insufficiently critical in its approach to complex issues. There was insufficient emphasis on uncertainty or the difficulty of reaching valid conclusions

*'You must have knowledge of ... critical thinking, that progression and social change [are] not this nice progressive movement forward ... that the pattern of change is either not constant, it could be retrogressive, that sort of thing. But you need to be more critical about it.'*

Local Authority Representative

In some instances, these observations were linked to the feeling that there was a social sciences, rather than humanities bias to the Criteria document (see above, section 4.3.3 *Balance of content*).

#### **4.4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

The Criteria for the Diploma in Humanities and Social Sciences has broadly been welcomed by participants in the consultation events. Providers who are unhappy with existing qualifications and assessment systems have been particularly enthusiastic, and HE representatives have been impressed by the qualification's interdisciplinary emphasis and focus on study and argumentation skills. However, the consultation process also uncovered a wide range of specific concerns. While debate across the events was complex and often nuanced, with views on many points eliciting contradictory responses, a number of clear issues did emerge. These recurred with such consistency that they demand careful consideration, and in some cases action to be taken.

##### **Conclusion 1**

It is clear that one of the fundamental challenges posed by this Diploma is achieving an appropriate balance of fundamental disciplinary skills and knowledge. At present, it seems that while the Criteria are getting close to achieving an appropriate balance of this kind, they have not yet attained it. This is reflected in the perception of an imbalance between humanities and social sciences and in perceptions that some of the content and phrasing in the Criteria betray an implicit progressivist stance that is more reminiscent of certain social sciences (such as economics) than the humanities. It was also reflected; in a pervasive concern that additional textual and source analysis skills needed to be included, and in the perception among some delegates that the explicit inclusion of certain subject areas seemed inadequate or even tokenistic. However, the most emphatic discussions centred on the relative balance of history, classics and literature content. There was particular concern that historical skills and content were insufficiently addressed, and that the opportunities to use literary sources were not clear enough.

Because the concern over history and literature was largely focused on the need for increased close textual and source analysis skills, both of these points can largely be addressed together. Classics content will need to be addressed separately, as the absence of Classics was clearly felt to reflect a need for more Classics subject matter rather than a perceived absence of 'Classics skills'.

**Recommendation 1A**                      **Essential**                      **Sections 4.3.3, 4.3.11, 4.3.15**

Review the opportunities provided within this Diploma for detailed textual/source analysis (paying special attention to opportunities to explore the agenda, motives, intended audience and chronological situation of the text/source and its author(s)) to ensure they are sufficiently clearly indicated and appropriate throughout the levels. Consider whether the opportunity for the in-depth and comparative analysis of sources is sufficiently clearly signalled, particularly at level 3.

**Recommendation 1B**                      **Desirable**                      **Sections 4.3.3**

Review the amount of explicit historical content, and consider whether the opportunity to study this content in depth is clearly indicated. In particular, consider whether the Criteria make it sufficiently clear that content across the topics should be informed by a historical perspective, developed through awareness of chronological frameworks and patterns of change.

**Recommendation 1C**                      **Desirable**                      **Sections 4.3.16, 4.3.3**

It is recommended that a careful review is carried out of topic content to identify areas where there may be an implicit progressivist, Eurocentric or other bias. This applies especially to topics such as 1.5 *How can we make a difference?*, 2.2 *Exploring Social Change*, 2.4 *Examining economic change*, 3.3 *Exploring Diversity* and topic 3.4 *Sustaining environments*.

**Recommendation 1D**                      **Desirable**                      **Sections 4.3.3**

Review the amount of Classical subject matter explicitly included in the Criteria. Consider whether some of the opportunities for this kind of study could be signalled more explicitly.

## **Conclusion 2**

Delegates are clearly concerned that some of the issues related to balance of content are fundamentally rooted in the challenges posed by the creation of an interdisciplinary qualification. It was felt by some delegates that there needed to be clearer thought about how to resolve the tension between the need for rigour brought by subject specificity and the need for integration brought by the qualification's interdisciplinary emphasis. This suggested that the four overarching themes identified as the cohering structure for the diploma may not be sufficiently robust.

Some delegates pointed out that the same terminology has significantly different meanings in different subject disciplines, and there is therefore a need for clarification as to how words are being used. It will be important to resolve this to ensure the clarity and comprehensibility of the document.

These difficulties are particularly acute with reference to ‘primary and secondary research’, which are used in different ways in humanities, archaeology and social research contexts. In addition, delegates pointed out that both types of research are necessary to answer any significant research question, and this is especially the case within an interdisciplinary context. Given the discussions, attempts to break down primary and secondary research between topics would probably be misguided.

**Recommendation 2A**                      **Essential**                      **Section 4.3.3, 4.3.15**

Review the vision intended for the interdisciplinary qualification and its translation into content to ensure that the aims of the DDP are clearly reflected in the Criteria document.

**Recommendation 2B**                      **Essential**                      **Section 4.3.3, 4.3.15**

The DDP should review the use of key humanities and social sciences terms to ensure that Awarding Bodies and other stakeholders are clear about the sense in which they are being used. An integrated approach to primary and secondary research may be desirable particularly at Levels 2 and 3.

**Recommendation 2C**                      **Desirable**                      **Section 4.3.15**

It is also recommended that at some point the DDP give thought to the way in which skills and content are prioritised for inclusion in the qualification particularly when the Criteria are being turned into specifications. Added to that a review of whether the four overarching themes are sufficiently robust to organise the content of the qualification is recommended.

**Conclusion 3**

There were extensive concerns about the challenge at Level 1. Although the overall themes and content covered within Level 1 were felt to be potentially manageable, the vast majority of delegates felt that the knowledge and understanding statements should be more concrete and closely defined and that the skills statements should be less demanding. In addition, some delegates signalled the need for clearer recognition within the Criteria document that Level 1 learners would need support to move from directed to independent learning.

**Recommendation 2A**

**Essential**

**Section 4.3.2**

Undertake a comprehensive review of the Level 1 Criteria to ensure that levels of demand and terminology align with what can reasonably be expected of Level 1 learners.

**Recommendation 2 B**

**Desirable**

**Section 4.3.2**

Consider whether it is possible to clarify within Level 1 the implications of supported progression from directed to more independent learning styles.

**Conclusion 4**

A clear majority of delegates at almost all the events felt the need for clearer signalling of applied contexts – the work-related and employment areas where the skills and knowledge acquired in a topic could be applied. However, care should be taken that the skills and knowledge are not subordinated to employment contexts, or that employment contexts are too narrow. Awarding Bodies, Consortia, Providers and Teachers want guidance that will point them towards relevant applied contexts but which will allow maximum flexibility to engage with employment and applied contexts that are accessible and relevant within their own circumstances.

**Recommendation 4**

**Essential**

**Section 4.3.2**

Identify broad employment contexts and sectors relevant to the skills being developed by the Diploma, and incorporate in the topic summaries to indicate where the humanities and social science skills developed in that topic are likely to be most relevant.

**Conclusion 5**

Almost all delegates agreed that the Diploma content was potentially engaging. However, a significant number felt that it was insufficiently distinguished from the traditional academic route, and too different from the more vocationally-oriented Diplomas, to command an obvious market. This was especially the case at Level 1. The suggestion was made that this could partly be resolved through emphasising applied contexts and by emphasising the truly interdisciplinary nature of the qualification, as in recommendations 1a-c, 2b and 4. These could then be used to generate a unique selling point for the qualification: that it is a qualification which develops a wide range of transferrable skills but does not require learners to commit themselves prematurely to a particular vocational pathway. This was felt to be especially applicable to Level 1 learners.

**Recommendation 5A**

**(Highly) Desirable**

**Sections 4.3.10, 4.3.5**

Review and more clearly state the case for the Diploma's USP.

**Recommendation 5B**

**Desirable**

**Sections 4.3.10, 4.3.5**

Although this is strictly out of scope of the consultation process, it is also recommended that the DDP develop marketing and communications strategies that take full advantage of this USP.

**Conclusion 6**

Some delegates felt that links between topics within and across the levels of the Diploma needed to be more clearly signalled, to improve the clarity of the document and aid navigation within and across the levels.

**Recommendation 6**

**Desirable**

**Section 4.3.9**

Consider clarifying links between related topics, both within and across the levels.

**Conclusion 7**

It was clear from the discussions that there needs to be more consideration of ICT and new media as fundamentally important drivers of change, both historically (for example the invention of printing), and in the future. ICT also needs emphasis as it was widely felt to offer enormous potential for innovative assessment.

**Recommendation 7**

**Essential**

**Sections 4.3.3**

Review the coverage of ICT and new media to ensure it is sufficient, especially in topics connected with communications and social change.

**Conclusion 8**

Delegates were clear that the integration of teamwork skills in topic 3.6 is inadequate in the current document. The relationships between working in a team and the need for rules and governance structures were not sufficiently clear. It is required that teamwork and the wider content are integrated adequately both within the knowledge and understanding statements and in the skills statements. One delegate suggested that this could be done if the knowledge and understanding statements start with the teamwork-related content and then broaden out to include relevant elements of governance, policy and rule-making.

**Recommendation 8**

**Essential**

**Sections 4.3.13**

Topic 3.6 should be reviewed for its treatment of teamwork skills.

Additional more detailed recommendations made in connection with individual topics can be found in Appendix 2.

## 5. Languages and International Communication Line of Learning Criteria

### 5.1 Vision, Aims and Structure

The overarching vision for the Diploma in Languages and International Communication is:-

*The Diploma in Languages and International Communication will encourage young people to develop linguistic, cultural and intercultural knowledge and skills that they can use and enjoy at home and abroad in social, professional and academic life, and in lifelong language learning. It will offer a wide choice of languages as well as an understanding of global issues and international communication. Learners will be able to exploit their knowledge in innovative ways, enabling them to live and work in harmony with people of other cultures.*

By fulfilling this vision, the Diploma aims to enable learners to:-

- Introduce learners to the world of languages and international communication
- Attract learners who seek to acquire knowledge and develop skills in languages and intercultural understanding
- Enable individuals to acquire relevant personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS)
- Give opportunities to practise and acquire essential functional skills in English, Mathematics and Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- Offer progression to other Diplomas, to transfer laterally and progress to further education, apprenticeships and training – by providing a wide range of transferrable skills and knowledge
- Provide a motivated learning experience through a blend of general education and applied learning within a coherent and stimulating programme

The key driver for change in the teaching of Languages is a decline in the uptake of learning provision. The Dearing Review's recommendations, intended to revitalise language learning, include the need to develop a more engaging secondary languages curriculum, involving, amongst others, employers and higher education. This Diploma represents a response to the Dearing Review, and intends to develop and maintain learners' interest in language learning, raise awareness of cultural and intercultural issues, and enable learners to appreciate the links between language and intercultural understanding.

To facilitate this, the Diploma will involve the acquisition of content-based knowledge, as well as language acquisition. Topics will be assessed using English, a target language, or a mixture of both. In the case of some topics, the Diploma will assess both content and language through an approach titled 'Content and Language Integrated Learning' (CLIL). The CLIL approach is in full accord with

the aim of the Diploma, to encourage and motivate language learning by focusing on the content. Supporting this, language acquisition will be taught within a range of contexts that are of real interest to learners.

All levels will support learners who aspire to careers as specialist linguists, as well as those who might see languages as an important, but probably supporting/secondary part of their future lives.

While the vision was not specifically designated for discussion at the nine consultation events, the discussions around the CLIL approach, the use of contexts, and the broadening of traditional language learning to include international communication, were all explored in the discussions.

The Criteria for the Principal learning in the Diploma in Languages and International Communication is structured in the following way:-

- ⇒ **Foundation** – 5 topics - 2 x 30 GLH and 3 x 60 GLH (640)
- ⇒ **Higher** – 8 topics - 2 x 30 GLH and 6 x 60 GLH (420)
- ⇒ **Advanced** – 8 topics – 1 x 30 GLH; 4 x 60 GLH and 3 x 90 GLH (540)

It is intended that external assessment will be required at all three levels (30 GLH at L1; 60 GLH at L2 and 120 or 180 GLH at L3).

At each of the three levels, eight broad 'themes' are explored. These are:-

- The structure of language
- Learning to learn a language
- The world we live in
- Languages for work
- Languages for professional communication
- Using languages for investigation (written focus)
- Using languages for interacting (speaking focus)
- Using language creatively

At levels 2 and 3, each topic is allied to one theme, whereas at level 1, some of the topics span two themes.

The use of one or more contexts at each level, provide the backdrop for content and language integrated learning (CLIL). The following five 'contexts' were presented in the consultation version of the Criteria:-

- Art and culture
- Business and enterprise

- Humanities and social sciences
- Science and technology
- Socio-political issues

Contexts are applied to the following five topics, all of which are assessed wholly in the target language:-

- 1.4 Using language for investigation and exchange of ideas
- 2.6 Using language for investigation and information
- 2.7 Using language for networking and interaction
- 3.6 Using language for research
- 3.7 Using language to interact, network and discuss

## 5.2 Overview of findings

Across all nine consultation events in respect of the Diploma in Languages and International Communication, it was clear that participants wanted to make sure that the Diploma, ultimately, would be fit for purpose. In other words – fit for learners, parents, teaching practitioners, universities and employers.

As expected, the majority of attendees were made up of language teachers (including some head teachers) from schools and colleges. Higher education representatives attended the majority of sessions, awarding bodies to a lesser extent, and finally a very small number of employers attended, including publishers and those involved in professional translation work.

Teaching practitioners were, on the whole, positive that the Diploma would bring something fresh, exciting and creative to the traditional study of languages, and there were a number of negative comments about the appeal of some *existing* specifications for language subjects.

Teaching practitioners praised the opportunity to explore a varied terrain of content across the levels, particularly in view of the applied approach to work, and the encouragement of the personal and social development of learners. Linguistic rigour remained of paramount importance to the majority of participants at the events, including, not surprisingly, those from a higher education background. Any concerns in relation to this were overcome once a perspective was gained on the size of the Diploma, and its equivalence in terms of the number of GCSEs and A levels.

A common concern raised by teachers related to delivery, given that the specialist nature of some of the content, particularly at level 3, looked beyond the comfort zone of traditional language teaching. That said, most participants were positive about the opportunity to work as part of consortium once this had been fully explained.

The target market for the Diploma remained at the heart of most discussions, which took into account learners not capable of studying languages through existing general routes, learners not

interested in the study of languages, as well as the more 'able' linguists. Discussions acknowledged that all target markets could be catered for, although there were some opposing views on the extent to which the Diploma would be suitable for each of those target markets.

The complexity of the Diploma became clear as the consultations progressed, which often led to the DDP having to explain the rudiments of a number of concepts to participants, notably: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), the use of contexts as applicable to certain topics, the introduction of an 'ab initio' language (in addition to the target language), the use of English and/or the target language as required by individual topics, and the different approaches to assessing language (via one or more of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing).

There was much discussion around level 1 as a whole being too demanding, not only in terms of the amount of content, but also the degree of difficulty. A number of issues around specific statements and outcomes were raised, although participants generally acknowledged that delivery and assessment presented the main challenges. The DDP provided reassurance that the degree of difficulty in an activity such as producing 'gist summaries', would be within the scope of the level.

The intricacies of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) provided significant debate, focusing on how the two components should be weighted and assessed. Indeed, issues around internal versus external assessment were discussed at length, on the basis that external assessment could hinder the creative elements of the Diploma, and restrict the flexibility for teaching practitioners to explore the breadth of 'contexts'. It is noteworthy that some awarding body participants were receptive to the idea of giving greater weight to internal (rather than external) assessment of the target language, particularly at levels 1 and 2.

Approaches to assessing the traditional four skills of listening speaking, reading and writing were also discussed in relation to the opportunities and constraints presented by the Criteria. The majority of participants were clear that at level 1 in particular, greater emphasis should be placed on the receptive skills of listening and reading, with writing being of considerably less importance at this level due to the limited 'productive' abilities of learners within this cohort.

With some exceptions, the majority of topics within the Criteria were considered to be engaging and hold opportunities for creative assessment. Progression opportunities were evident between the Diploma levels, although there were some suggested changes to certain topics as part of a comparison between levels 2 and 3. Higher education representatives were particularly pleased with the introduction of linguistics for discourse analysis at level 3. Most groups felt that the Criteria would develop skills and knowledge that would be transferrable and beneficial directly to employers. These included listening and communication, as well as an awareness of Europe, the world, and the issues affecting societies and enterprise on a global as well as a local scale. In terms of the more technical employment skills, it was generally agreed that at level 2, less focus should be placed on the professional roles of interpreters and translators.

The detailed evidence from the consultation is presented below.

### 5.3 Detailed evidence base

*"I was literally stunned for words when I was asked by a girl in year nine, 'if I take up French GCSE, are you going to teach me to be bilingual Miss? Would I speak French?' I'd never been asked that. What's our aim, what's our goal, what do we do?" [Languages Teacher]*

The following sections present the detailed evidence from the nine consultation events, using headings which relate to the main discussion areas covered. The level of detail within this section reflects the intricate and 'high level' nature of discussions, as the Diploma emerged to be an exciting but complex proposition.

It should be noted that while the views from the consultation events have been presented within the key sections below – there are a number of natural overlaps. For example, opinions around the balance of topic content may be influenced by a desire to develop the Criteria to further engage learners.

#### 5.3.1 Coherence and Clarity of Topic Summaries

*"The awarding bodies like to be absolutely clear about what you require them to do before they present a spec. For me [the summaries] very clear - what you require, how [they] can be used, which of course is vital to schools" [Awarding Body representative]*

The consultation version of the Criteria presented the topic summaries (or 'purpose statements') in bullet point form, representing a different approach to the narrative style adopted by the other phase 4 lines. Participants praised the written style of the summaries, and found them to be, on the whole, clear and coherent. Importantly, this view was shared by awarding body representatives – the primary audience for the Criteria.

During the consultation process, the Diploma Development Partnership (DDP) confirmed their intention to re-work the purpose statements as narrative prose, with the two aims of drawing out the applied nature of the topics, and providing more detailed descriptions on how they could be turned into realistic activities. This intention was discussed at later events, and participants remained in favour of the existing bullet-point style.<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that one respondent to the online survey advocated the use of prose to outline the purpose of topic 3.1 in particular.

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<sup>4</sup> At the final event in Birmingham, a sample topic summary in narrative prose was made available for topic 3.1. Due to time constraints this could not be discussed, although a brief comparison between the new version and the consultation version was undertaken separately, by an awarding body representative. The narrative version was considered to articulate the topic well, although the bullet point version was preferred for ease of application.

The first two summary statements of topic 1.1 – *Linguistics and language learning*, were singled out for particular praise at Manchester. Their focus on the diversity of languages and the strategies and techniques required to learn languages, were considered to provide a good foundation for building on the coverage of language learning at primary level.

A number of issues emerged in relation to individual topic summaries, and these are presented in appendix 2.

### **5.3.2 Appropriateness of Topic Content**

Participants acknowledged that a more detailed teaching specification, as well as supporting materials, would be required to truly determine the appropriateness of topic content to their respective levels. Mixed views emerged over the suitability of the Criteria at levels 1 and 3 in particular, leading to issues being raised about the target audience for the Diploma as a whole.

Language practitioners described the content of the level 3 Criteria as both ‘inspiring’ and ‘frightening’. The complexity of some of the target language elements was identified to be beyond the current expectation of learners at level 3, extending up to undergraduate level.

At several events, learners reviewed the level 1 content and drew comparisons with the equivalent material within a core language GCSE qualification. There was concern that the achievement of some of the topics within the level 1 Diploma, would lead to the attainment of grade C or even B if undertaken at GCSE. There were similar concerns in relation to the grammar examples provided in the Criteria document, although the DDP explained that the grammar requirements provided in the Criteria were aligned to the respective levels within the GCSE framework.

Focusing on level 1, the online survey generated greater uncertainty about the appropriateness of content at this level than at levels 2 and 3. Similar views permeated the consultation events. At Bristol, the content of level 1 was described as ‘overstuffed’, with concerns arising about the ability of learners to achieve all the required outputs in order to pass. Participants here were unable to decide which topics or aspects of level 1 warranted removal or reduction, with one participant stating that the interlinked nature of language and content made it difficult to identify anything that could be taken out. Another participant favoured ‘doing more with less’ (i.e. covering a broad range of content but with a limited amount of target language vocabulary and grammar). A brief discussion followed on the flexibility available for the topics to be taught ‘in parallel’. The DDP provided the example of gist summaries (within topic 1.3) being produced in relation to the investigation and exchange of ideas (topic 1.4). It was ultimately determined that teaching methods, along with assessment requirements, were the key drivers of successful delivery, rather than level 1 being ‘overstuffed’ per se.

Topic 1.1 – *Linguistics and language learning*, received substantial praise for providing a smooth transition from the key stage 2 and key stage 3 frameworks. Several groups welcomed the ‘knowledge about language’ (KAL) approach, including an awareness and appreciation of language diversity.

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One participant at Basingstoke highlighted the absence of KAL within current key stage 4 and 5 curricula, paving the way for the approach of the new Diploma.

Also welcomed within topic 1.1, was the use of English language to assess the processes of language learning, thereby allowing learners to focus on exploring and understanding language structure, how links can be found between English and other languages, and indeed the importance of languages in the world. One participant at Bristol discussed the importance of encouraging learners to develop cognitively in their native language at an early level in order to find 'links' with learning an additional language. An example was given of this model currently working well in practice, with EAL (English as an Additional Language) learners, being encouraged to develop cognitively in their native language whilst also learning English in the UK.

Some debate emerged around the appropriateness of 'autonomous and independent learning' within topic 1.1. At Leeds, it was felt that autonomy per se might lead to activities such as simply setting learners up with a CD-ROM, which at level 1 would prove disengaging and ineffective. Participants at Bristol discussed the same issue and had a different view altogether. It was felt that while learners are currently 'not able to' demonstrate these skills, they should certainly 'be encouraged to'. Reference was made to the importance of ICT in supporting these types of activities, and that more explicit reference should be made to how it would be of benefit. Participants at Ipswich agreed, and commented that university undergraduates need to demonstrate autonomy and that more should be done to embed those skills at earlier levels.

At the Leeds event, the level of linguistic depth in topic 1.1 was discussed, with particular regard to part of K&U 2 – '...the common features and key differences of major language families, including pronunciation and writing systems'. This particular element was welcomed as a progression route from key stage 2 activities on the diversity of languages; however there was uncertainty over how many writing systems it would be useful to know about at that level. The example was given of Chinese (described as the 'language of inflections') where the pronunciation of a single word could express many different meanings. It was questioned whether this alone would constitute a sufficient source for fulfilling the requirement of the K&U. Similarly, it was questioned whether there would be enough material within one family of languages, such as Japanese, or the Indian languages, without the need to draw comparisons *between* families. An additional challenge highlighted here, was whether there would be sufficient teaching knowledge within the consortia, of the types of languages that would really demonstrate 'differences' in pronunciation and writing systems.

Some additional comments made about topic 1.1 included the need for learning 'reflection' to be more clearly aimed at oral rather than written learning, owing to oral skills being better developed within the level 1 cohort. Participants at Manchester felt that K&U statements 3 and 4 looked too advanced for the abilities of level 1 learners.

The requirement for learners to carry out 'gist summaries' (topic 1.3 – *Using languages at work*) was the subject of much debate, on the basis that producing summary statements is a skill in its

own right, given added complexity by the involvement of the target language. The DDP provided examples of the intended texts for summarisation, such as emails, facsimiles and machine operating instructions, and participants responded to state that the Criteria would benefit from examples being provided, or clearer wording to ensure awarding bodies could clearly see the degree of complexity required, and that it would be appropriate for level 1.

Basingstoke participants were positive about the use of gist summaries, stating that they are already being undertaken at key stage 3, with learners being asked to listen for the most appropriate information contained within a message. Comparisons were also drawn with the Applied French GCSE, where a long message is expected to be summarised in a given number of words, and in fact, in the target language.

At the London event, participants felt it was unclear how the gist summaries would be produced, e.g. French to French; English-French; French to English. It was explained by the DDP that ‘from target language to English’ would be used in the written form, and ‘between target language and English’ in the oral form. Although deemed appropriate to the level, it was felt that this should also be made clearer. Participants at Leeds were concerned that poor memory might inhibit learners undertaking gist summaries, and that the method of assessment should seek to avoid this at all costs.

In respect of topic 1.5 – *Using language creatively*, the majority of participants welcomed the fresh and potentially engaging nature of this topic at level 1. At the Leeds event, participants commented that with creative use of language being part of the key stage 2 curriculum as well as the new key stage 3 curriculum, it should be embraced as a development opportunity within the Diploma. Some caution was expressed at Nottingham around the abilities of level 1 learners to have the necessary ‘building blocks’ and productive skills in place to be able to manipulate the target language and be creative in a meaningful way. Several participants therefore suggested that topic 1.5 could be removed, providing more of a progression platform for levels 2 and 3, and acknowledging the already-present thread of creativity that is inherent throughout the remaining topics at level 1. Participants at Birmingham echoed the concern over topic 1.5, stating that creative ability at level 1 would be impeded by the limited grasp of the target language.

One topic at each level of the Criteria covers the learning of a language ‘ab initio’ (1.1; 2.2; 3.2). The topics are to be assessed in English, and the DDP explained at each event that the process of learning the language would be assessed, rather than the acquisition of the language itself (which would not be achievable at the target level from scratch). Once this was understood, participants at each event valued the concept of ab initio language learning within the Diploma, and were pleased that learners would understand the language learning process.

Participants in London raised concern about the disparities in ‘prior language knowledge’ among learners entering the Diploma at any level, notably bilingual/multilingual/EAL learners. The question raised was whether the principal learning was too focused towards ‘language learners’ rather than multilingual ‘language users’. It was highlighted that a learner’s level of fluency in the

target language might be greater than their level of fluency in English, potentially affecting units which use English to assess language learning.

In contrast to this viewpoint, participants in Bristol praised the broad potential appeal of the Diploma, arguing that multilingual learners would be able to follow the course of learning with ‘some confidence’.

Some participants considered that topic 2.3 – *International perspectives of society and culture* might be too high-level for learners at level 2, on the basis that it did not align to the interests and concerns of most young people. Of particular note was K&U 5 – ‘the key articles of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights’. One participant in London commented that there were a number of interesting facets to the corresponding topic at level 1 (*Living in a global village*), and that topic 2.3 should be broadened out.

There was much discussion around the appropriateness of topic 3.1 – *Using linguistics for discourse analysis*. The topic was praised for being suitably demanding for able and interested linguists, and in particular, the inclusion of discourse analysis was well received for bringing something new to language learning at level 3. However at most events, practitioners expressed insecurities about their own ability to deliver the content effectively, which often led to the DDP being required to explain the consortia approach to delivery. Once practitioners understood this supported delivery model, the issue of ‘ability to teach’ was generally considered resolved. One participant in Basingstoke described the topic as ‘terrifying’, ‘very attractive’ and ‘very stretching’, which echoed the feeling of participants across the events.

Higher education participants at various events praised the inclusion of linguistics at all levels, given that much work is centred on linguistics and discourse analysis at level 4 and above. One HE participant at Nottingham stated that the content of topic 3.1 could ‘knock out’ an entire module in the first year at undergraduate level. A minority of participants felt that topic 3.1 would be more appropriate to the Additional and Specialist Learning, due to concerns over its theoretical depth, and potential lack of appeal to some learners at level 3.

### **5.3.3 Balance of Content**

*“For me, the raison d’être of teaching language is quite simply to break down prejudice and to actually facilitate communication between peoples. So for me, this is putting back in this raison d’être, so I’m really pleased with it”. [Languages Teacher]*

Participants were generally pleased with the breadth of content throughout the Criteria, as well as the eight broad ‘themes’, (which the groups felt were effectively conveyed using a visual chart provided by the DDP). It was felt that such breadth would provide a great deal of opportunities for practitioners to choose and adapt content that was appropriate to their own strengths and interests, as well as the needs of learners. The freedom to go into increased depth within some

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topic areas more so than others, as appropriate, was be welcomed, although it was acknowledged that assessment requirements might impact on this flexibility.

Some concerns were raised at Basingstoke, that there appeared to be a lot of overlap with other core subjects such as English Language, History and Business Studies. This led to a debate on the perceived merits and drawbacks of overlapping content. One teaching practitioner felt that those learners interested in Humanities might be more inclined to opt for a qualification in that alone, thereby negating the need for 'less-appealing' language components. However a retaliatory comment touched on the progression value of a learner undertaking the Diploma in Languages and International Communication at level 2, then potentially moving on to an A level or advanced Diploma in Humanities. It was argued that the languages skills, along with an understanding of the international business environment would prove invaluable to future study and employment opportunities.

Participants at several events were concerned that parents of learners gifted in languages might be more 'comfortable' with traditional GCSE and A level language qualifications. However it was acknowledged that work could (and should) be done from a marketing perspective, to highlight the opportunities the Diploma would offer to more gifted learners at level 3.

In respect of the topics requiring a language to be learned 'ab initio' (1.1; 2.2; 3.2), participants at several events commented that the acquisition of 'masses' of vocabulary was secondary in a lot of employment situations to understanding key phrases, and grasping the basics of a language in order to communicate. In addition, participants felt it would be a useful and interesting opportunity for learners to be able to select the study of a community language.

At Basingstoke and Ipswich, participants commented on how valuable it would be if the ab initio language could be 'used' or 'demonstrated' in some way. Whilst it was acknowledged that target language assessment would not be realistic, it was felt that learners should have the opportunity to show their ability to communicate and see the fruits of their learning for themselves. The following three options emerged as possible solutions:-

- 1) target language assessment of the ab initio language could be undertaken outside of the Diploma. Some concerns were raised, such as the appropriateness of learners using extra-curricular time to demonstrate their ability to use a language being studied on the Diploma.
- 2) the ab initio language could be taken as part of the additional and specialist learning if the teacher felt the learner had reached a good enough standard.
- 3) At level 3 – demonstrating ab initio language acquisition by providing teaching support to more junior learners (as required within topic 3.2 – *Self-directed language learning*).

Topic 1.2 – *Living in a global village*, was praised at a number of events for its potential to explore ‘culture’ across a broad framework, and against the backdrop of the diverse international environment. Participants at Durham and Birmingham felt the allocation of 30 GLH was therefore too low. This view was echoed at Nottingham, with cultural awareness considered to be more important to learners at level 1 than the emphasis on work (as per topic 1.3).

However it was acknowledged that assessment requirements would determine how much breadth and depth would be entered into within this topic, and it was commented upon that some of the knowledge & understanding statements were sufficiently generic at level 1 to be built upon and explored within other topics across the level.

Topic 2.4 – *Using languages at work*, coupled with topic 2.5 – *The world of professional communication*, were the focus of much discussion, given their existence as separate and equal entities at level 2 as opposed to a combined entity at level 1 (topic 1.3). Most participants were positive about topic 2.4, as the applicator of language learning and illustrator of communications within the real and varied world of work. In London in particular, the partial use of target language assessment was recognised as duly appropriate in support of these activities. Some participants praised topic 2.5 (with its emphasis on the professional activities of interpreters and translators), welcoming the inclusion of the ‘underpinning mechanics’ of interpreting. One participant at Basingstoke praised the separate existence of topics 2.4 and 2.5 – stating that combining them would water down the message about *why* languages were important in the workplace, and possibly inhibit learners from fully understanding *how* the use of languages can boost employment potential.

However, opposition emerged in respect of topic 2.5 at several events. Many felt that level 2 learners would not pick up on the message that interpreting and translating could take place in a wide variety of work contexts, and instead perpetuated the ‘abstract’ roles of the ‘interpreter’ and the ‘translator’. While participants recognised the importance of these roles, it appeared that the main issue within topic 2.5 was one of over-emphasis, and there were concerns over the ability of level 2 learners to undertake the types of ‘high level’ skills involved in the professional disciplines of interpreting and translating. At Basingstoke a number of participants felt that while interpreting and translation were important activities that could be required to some extent in a variety of work places, the percentage of learners ultimately going on to work as professional interpreters and translators would be very small by comparison. Topic 2.5 was considered by many participants to be ‘dull’, and it was argued that it should be reduced in terms of GLH. One participant at Birmingham suggested that the final 3 K&U items of topic 2.5 were relevant, but the rest of the topic could be removed.

The extent to which the principal learning was considered to effectively apply itself to ‘the world of work’ was raised at one event by two local authority members. It was felt that employment contexts were not explicit enough throughout the Criteria, and this view was echoed by an awarding body participant. Despite the awarding body toolkit (currently in development) being designed to illustrate the types of purposeful activities that could be undertaken that are relevant

to the world of work, it was still felt by this participant that different awarding bodies could interpret the Criteria in different ways, leading to a lack of consistency, and that more prescription around the applied nature of the topics should be evident in the Criteria.

Reference to 'registers', as well as formal/informal language are prevalent throughout the Criteria, and the frequency and positioning of these references were discussed at Durham and Bristol.

Participants were happy on the basis of the importance of these elements, and were comfortable with English being used to communicate an understanding of registers and styles of spoken and written language, with the target language being used where appropriate for exemplification.

Participants at Ipswich suggested that teaching the international phonetic alphabet would be a popular addition to topic 3.1, and could be made more explicit in relation to K&U 6 – 'how and why orthographically transcribed conversation, using standard transcription conventions, is different from formal written prose'. One participant raised the point that phonetics had been removed from some dictionaries, and that understanding its principles would help in the learning of other languages.

There was much debate across each of the consultation events in relation to topics 1.2, 2.3 and 3.3 (theme: 'the world we live in'). Participants were asked to comment on how the topics could be broadened out, and particularly in respect of 3.3, the appropriateness of target language assessment and the existing allocation of 60 GLH.

Participants generally agreed that these topics should be broadened out. At level 1, fair trade, sustainable development and ethical issues facing industry and commerce were important extra considerations. At levels 2 and 3, a broader spectrum of content was suggested, including trade, law, history, politics, environmental issues and the military industrial complex, all in an international context. At Basingstoke it was suggested that aspects of national identity and migration (currently within topic 1.2) should be embedded at deeper levels in topics 2.3 and 3.3, and that reference to 'rights' should be supplemented with coverage of 'responsibilities', as an important part of citizenship development. Participants at this event also agreed that whilst topic 1.2 explored the relationship of the learner to society around them, topics 2.3 and 3.3 were too heavily centred on distant issues and forces, without enough 'personal involvement'. At Birmingham, it was suggested that topic 3.3 should be made more positive, to attract learners who might otherwise be tempted to undertake a sociology qualification.

At Basingstoke, discussions around topics 2.3 and 3.3 primarily centred on the possible overlaps with other humanities qualifications, and participants were undecided on the value of 'integration' versus the issue of 'overlapping' with these other subject areas. Opportunities for co-teaching and class sharing were nevertheless considered useful approaches, and this led the group to discourage the idea of introducing target language assessment into topic 3.3. This view was shared in Basingstoke, where the topic was perceived to be wide-ranging and not country specific, thus sidelining the relevance of target language assessment.

Conversely, participants in London felt that there *was* scope to introduce some target language assessment to topic 3.3, in order to explore global issues ‘through the eyes’ of those involved, and in order to provide a greater focus on how language impacts international communications. The example given of French aid agencies working in the north of Sri Lanka.

At Ipswich, comparisons were drawn between the content of topic 3.3 and current A levels, with one participant commenting that challenges such as the environment and other global issues were already being assessed in the target language, providing no reason why that shouldn’t be the same within the Diploma. The use of English to assess this topic was considered by Ipswich participants to create a ‘disadvantage’. An employer participant working within the field of human rights highlighted that ‘tons of jargon’ are inherent in that arena, which would have to be understood and taught effectively.

Participants at Leeds generally agreed that there was also scope to extend topic 3.3 to 90 GLH, with one participant describing topic 3.3 as ‘the lynchpin’ of the Diploma.

Topic 3.6 – *Using language for research*, was the focus of much discussion at Bristol. Whilst the topic requires the assessment of both content and target language ability (in line with CLIL), it adds an overt third dimension, by focusing on research methodologies and presentation skills (i.e. the ‘processes behind’ the content and language outputs). Participants were asked whether the use of target language terminology was necessary in relation to research practices, and whether research abilities could be more effectively assessed in English. One participant commented that other topics as written already serve to develop research skills, project planning and self-reflection in English, and that it was difficult to visualise how much more complex these activities would be in the target language. Another participant agreed, stating that without knowing the depth of learning required, it would be difficult to establish the complexity. A third participant felt that this topic should provide recognition to learners for self-reflection on research methodologies used, including the identification of what could have been done differently in order to deliver improved findings in the future. The discussion then steered on to the importance of striking the right balance in assessment between the target language and the ‘quality’ of what was being produced, with the suggestion of a 60/40 ratio.

At Ipswich, Nottingham and Birmingham, the balance of content was discussed with particular reference to topics 2.6 and 3.6 (theme: using languages for investigating – written focus) as well as between topic 2.7 and 3.7 (theme: using languages for investigating – speaking focus). The focus of the discussions was to determine whether the topics at their respective levels (i.e. 2 and 3) were clearly demarcated in order to aid progression. There were no significant issues raised at any event, and participants at Nottingham commented positively on the emphasis on either speaking or writing (rather than both of an equal weight) across these topics, in order to focus on developing each productive skill in specific depth.

In relation to topics 2.6 and 3.6, participants at Ipswich and Nottingham felt that the project at level 3 would mark the most significant and appropriate difference between the levels, although

one participant did express concern that the lack of a project at level 2 would mean that learners at level 3 would not have a building block on which to hone their project skills. It was suggested that a presentation of finding at this level would be appropriate.

In respect of topics 2.7 and 3.7, it was commented at Ipswich that ‘non-verbal techniques’ were present at level 3, were missing at level 2, and were present at level 1 albeit in topic 1.3 (under a different theme). It was felt that the study of body language and gestures would be of interest to learners in a younger age group, and that this should be considered for inclusion in topic 2.7. Participants at Ipswich and Birmingham were also concerned with the abilities of learners at level 2 to be able to ‘build positive relationships’, without harbouring suitably high cognitive skills in social interaction and empathy. This outcome was considered more appropriate to level 3.

Topic 3.8 – *Using language creatively*, raised questions around the importance of illuminating issues through creative works. In Manchester it was agreed that while there had to be a purpose to reviewing and developing creative works, a more flexible approach to the purpose (other than ‘issues’) would be beneficial to both learners and practitioners, such as creating a message or an idea. In Leeds, the opposite view was presented, with participants satisfied that ‘issues’ (rather than ‘artistry’) were in fact the best way to ensure a connection with the real world. Participants at Basingstoke argued that reference to ‘creative works’ connoted too much of a literary bias, and that the use of language creatively in a range of multimedia contexts such as music, film and ICT should be made clearer within the Criteria. Such mediums were considered to provide greater opportunities to demonstrate metaphor, rhyme, style and structure.

#### **5.3.4 Engaging for Learners**

*“I am really thrilled at what I’m reading here in terms of the breadth and range, and the fact we’re getting away from so much of the stultifying material, even at A level” [Local Authority Skills Effectiveness Advisor]*

Participants recognised and welcomed the Diploma in Languages and International Communication as being a qualification refreshingly different to GCSE and A level provision. Taking into account the balance of principal learning content, the target audience for the Diploma provided a key area of discussion. On the whole, participants felt that the inclusion of applied content and the use of contexts, would enthuse learners who might otherwise fail to see the point of studying languages. Ingredients seen as vital to the engagement of level 1 learners included practical based content, largely in English. The general consensus was that the proof of the pudding would be in the teaching, and participants were confident with the Criteria’s potential.

The issue was raised concerning learner engagement with the study of languages, and one participant at Basingstoke commented that there was a perception in UK society that languages were not needed, particularly in the UK, leading to a lack of engagement among learners on the *need* to study languages. However the same participant went on to state that the opposite was in

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fact the case, particularly in a multicultural society, and in an age where international boundaries were broken down by advanced forms of communication and enterprise. Several others agreed that the marketing of the Diploma would need to address the perception among learners and parents that languages were ‘difficult’, and advocated a culture where the study of languages should be accepted, just like ‘learning to ride a bike’.

Participants were enthusiastic about the Diploma’s potential to engage learners through the application of knowledge to life and work. Some participants stated that they looked forward, in particular, to the topics relating to using language creatively (1.5; 2.8; 3.8), and that topic 1.2 – *Living in a global village*, had the potential (through its content) to really capture the interests and curiosities of young people and excite teachers. One participant at Birmingham praised the final purpose statement in topic 1.2 – ‘enable learners to work with others to recommend actions to enhance international/community understanding’. It was felt that this would truly engage young people to work with adults and community groups.

Participants at Bristol commented that topics 1.2, 2.3 and 3.3 (theme: the world we live in) had the potential to attract and engage traditional linguists who might otherwise drop languages as ‘not relevant’, though at level 1, the emphasis should be on a practical and stimulating approach to language learning.

Topic 3.6 – *Using language for research* was considered by some participants to be engaging as a precursor to, or a complementary arm for, the extended project. The application of ICT was considered by participants at Manchester to be a potentially useful and interesting conduit for young people to undertake research and investigation, and therefore particularly relevant to learners’ engagement with topics 3.6 and 2.6.

There was a mixed response around the ability of topic 2.3 – *International perspectives of society and culture*, to engage learners. Participants in London suggested that the inclusion of international business and law could make the topic more dynamic, and participants at Durham suggested that more humanitarian aspects would generate greater interest, noting K&U 7 – ‘the role of some development agencies...’. Participants in Bristol were wholly positive about the topic’s ability to engage learners.

### **5.3.5 Creativity of Assessment Methods**

*“the only time in life that someone will stick a microphone up your nose and say ‘we’re going to record everything you say’, you’d probably have your solicitor sitting next to you. So that’s a very stressful situation that should be avoided” [Languages Advisor]*

Participants were, on the whole, in favour of creative assessment within the Diploma in Languages and International Communication, and saw it as an important mechanism for breaking away from the more traditional approaches to assessment undertaken within GCSE and A level frameworks. It

was clear that participants felt that creative assessment could go hand-in-hand with the engagement of learners, by making use of materials and media (such as YouTube) that were already being used by young people in their everyday lives.

The DDP explained to participants that creative assessment would need to contain an applied work-related purpose, and this idea was generally met with praise. One participant in Leeds was keen to stress the importance of social interaction both in and out of the workplace, illustrating that an overt work based application would not always be needed to develop employability skills. The examples were given of topics 2.7 and 3.7, with their emphasis on networking and interacting.

Suggested methods of creative assessment emerging from the consultation events, included:-

- writing and performing a song/sketch
- devising questions for use as part of an interview with an employer
- assisting with the delivery of teaching to a junior class
- setting up and delivering a pitch or campaign
- delivering a business presentation
- designing a poster
- creating a blog
- preparing a diary/video diary
- designing and developing a website

The concept of creative assessment led one participant at Durham to re-evaluate their view on topics they had previously considered to be 'dry' (notably 1.1 and 2.3). It was felt by a number of participants that creative assessment could bring topics to life in an engaging way for young people.

Several topics were singled out for their propensity to lend themselves well to creative assessment. Participants at Bristol suggested that topics 1.5, 2.8 and 3.8 (theme: using language creatively), should allow learners to choose to produce works in either written or oral form, taking into account their individual creative strengths and abilities. Similarly, topics 2.7 and 3.7 (theme: using languages for interacting – speaking focus) could be assessed creatively by inviting learners to converse on something of genuine interest to them. Such an approach would encourage active preparation and formulation of opinions.

Questions were raised in relation to how to assess 'cultural sensitivity' (as per topic 2.1). Suggestions included: testing learners' maturity by illustrating a scenario and asking them to comment on it, and/or asking learners to comment on how their school welcomes international visitors.

Topic 2.3 – *International perspectives of society and culture*, places some emphasis on the viewpoints of particular groups towards other groups, and participants at Manchester commented that care would be needed to avoid stereotyping. One suggested method of creative assessment

for this topic was the implementation of a mock debate or mock election.

### ***5.3.6 Clarity and Appropriateness of Contexts***

Within the Diploma in Languages and International Communication, contexts aim to provide an applied purpose to five topics assessed wholly in the target language, where they would otherwise lack a clear contextual backdrop. A list of five ‘contexts’ were suggested in the consultation version of the Criteria document, on the proviso that Component Awarding Bodies (CABs) may suggest others. Two main questions were asked of the consultation groups in relation to the contexts of the Diploma. Firstly, the appropriateness of the choice of contexts, and secondly, to what extent they would enhance learning.

Participants were generally pleased with the breadth and clarity of the contexts, and were not perturbed by the possibility that Component Awarding Bodies (CABs) may choose to define and develop others if this increased the choices available for practitioners. The following additional contexts were suggested at several events on the basis of their relevance to the interests of young people, notably:-

- leisure and tourism
- hospitality
- sport (particularly given the impending 2012 London Olympic Games and the convergence of various nationalities into one ‘global community’)

In London, ‘ethical issues’ were considered important at all levels, and participants suggested that this be included as either an additional context, or embedded within the existing contexts. It was concluded that the latter approach would be most appropriate, particularly in relation to the discussion of ideas and how viewpoints are formulated. In Basingstoke, one participant felt that ‘economic awareness’ was important, but could not determine whether this should fit within ‘business and enterprise’ or ‘socio-political issues’. This led to a more detailed discussion on ‘socio-political issues’ being a vague context in its own right, and that it would be better embedded elsewhere. As the consultation period progressed, the DDP took the decision that ‘socio-political issues’ would be removed as a separate context, and captured within ‘humanities and social sciences’. Participants in Nottingham were all in agreement that ‘the environment’ should be made more overt, either in a context by itself, or linked with ‘science and technology’.

Participants in London debated the importance of contexts having an international dimension. The example was given of ‘business and enterprise’, and whether this should be explored through local avenues or from an international perspective. It was determined that the latter approach might inhibit interactions between the school, the local community and local businesses, and it was felt that international issues would be a useful progression step for level 3, representing (in the words of one participant), a “wonderful building block” for the level.

In terms of the application of specific contexts, participants generally agreed that it was appropriate to apply these to the topics allocated for assessment in the target language, and that

real-world scenarios should be encouraged, rather than the production of factually incorrect written or spoken works that served simply to exercise the accurate use of language.

Participants were advised that topics 1.5, 2.8 and 3.8 (theme: using language creatively) were to be assessed in the target language but without specific contexts attached. There was general agreement that their linkage to existing textual sources would allow these topics to develop their own contexts.

Participants at several events debated whether it would be more important for learners to demonstrate cultural and contextual awareness in respect of the target language culture rather than the UK. The basis for this debate was the lack of scope to do this within current A level specifications. The DDP clarified that one approach should not be favoured over the other, in keeping with the international flavour of the Diploma, and participants were satisfied with this.

Participants at several events highlighted that the potential breadth of 'contexts' would present a challenge for externally assessing the five topics assessed wholly in the target language. One participant from an awarding body raised the issue that the potential breadth of contexts available for practitioners to choose from, would lead to difficulties defining external assessment to truly assess what had been taught in schools and colleges. This led to a discussion on who should define and develop contexts, be it the awarding bodies or the consortia. The preferred option was to give flexibility to the consortia to develop contexts, and this view was also shared by several awarding body representatives. Given this, most groups concluded that internal, rather than external assessment of the topics assessed wholly in the target language had clear advantages, although less so at levels 2 and 3 respectively in the interests of 'rigour'. Bristol and Nottingham participants commented that learners would no doubt appreciate the broadest scope possible in terms of subject matter, which would also boost their own engagement with the Diploma.

The DDP explained to participants that learning could span one or more topics, but that assessment would just focus on one. There was some concern in Ipswich that if a context such as 'science and technology' was singled out by a learner at level 3 – he or she might not be suitably prepared for progressing to a literary-focused languages degree at university, which might in turn lead to higher education institutions questioning the 'rigour' of the target language elements of the Diploma. Similarly, if a learner focused only on one context and then transferred to an alternative institution, the transition might become difficult if that same context was not shared by their peers or not offered by that particular consortium. The DDP explained that they had originally intended for assessment of the content of the target language topics to be highly focused (such as on an artist or political figure). This approach was then changed to cover, more broadly, the use of language to express attitudes and emotions, as well as demonstrating originality and understanding in relation to the content. The rationale was that the assessment would be suitable for any context learned. Participants generally favoured the new approach, although the overall view was that a broader range of contexts should be experienced by learners across any one level of the Diploma.

Within the Diploma in Languages and International Communication, the use of content and

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language integrated learning (CLIL) links very closely with contexts. Discussions relating to CLIL were lengthy at most events, and are presented below.

### **5.3.7 Content and language integrated learning (CLIL)**

*“we currently do CLIL at my school at the moment and the students really like the ‘buy one get one free’ element if you like. So they’re sort of revising what they’ve been doing in one particular subject, but they’re doing it through a language. We’ve seen huge progress and linguistic motivation as a result of that”. [Languages Teacher]*

*“people come into translating and interpreting having just studied languages. But actually, you need some subject skills as well to really balance that out...international communication is so important in what we do” [Employer]*

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a concept which describes the acquisition of the target language, as well as the learning of content knowledge, both of which are assessed within the same topic and potentially within the same assessment. Participants were invited to discuss what would constitute an appropriate *balance* between these two elements, including feasible approaches to assessment.

The use of CLIL was, overall, well received, particularly on the basis that real and useful knowledge would be acquired and assessed, rather than abstract or fictional material simply presented to test linguistic ability. Participants in Manchester and London commented that right across key stages 1 to 4, the topics and content being discussed varied very little, leading to a decrease in motivation for language study. The Diploma was seen as a way of changing that. A higher education representative commented that whilst A levels were well understood and accepted, a move to integrate real and applicable cultural understanding would be welcomed.

Participants at Manchester considered CLIL in respect of three ‘target markets’ of learners.

Firstly, for the Diploma to attract learners *into* the study of languages, it was felt that the balance of the two elements was about right. Secondly, to attract learners ‘not able enough’ to study languages, it was considered that greater emphasis on content would be required. This was echoed at Ipswich, with one participant concerned that learners at level 1 in particular would have difficulty coping with the academic rigour of the language element of the Diploma. Thirdly, to attract those interested in pursuing linguistics at HE level, it was felt that GCSE and A level qualifications might be more appealing unless the Diploma was marketed to emphasise all the unique and applied elements of the Criteria at level 3.

Some participants feared that the logistical complexities of teaching using CLIL might impede teaching quality, based on knowledge and expertise. One participant in London felt that language practitioners might struggle with some of the depth of the content at level 3, whilst humanities subject practitioners might not be attracted to the language element. However it was noted that teaching specifications and resources, along with further detail on the intended consortia approach, would pave the way to overcoming this issue.

Participants in Basingstoke emphasised the importance of minimum standards being maintained for both language and content elements. Demonstrating some diversity in opinion, one participant described language acquisition as merely a 'vehicle' for transmitting learning within another subject area, while another was keen to stress that language competence at the target level would be important for the receiving institutions and employers. The majority at this event ultimately agreed that equal weighting should be given to these two elements.

At London, one participant described how target language assessment of CLIL already worked successfully at year 8. In the example given, learners produced a project in Spanish about which Japanese island they would like to live on and why. The purpose was to focus on the geography, with greater marks awarded for more detail and descriptions about the features of the island – an approach which rewarded geographical knowledge communicated successfully through the medium of an additional language.

In terms of assessment, it was felt by some participants in Durham and Manchester that certain contexts and concepts could present too great a challenge for learners in the target language at levels 1 and 2. Due care would therefore be required by practitioners and awarding bodies to take into account the age and experience of learners. For example topic 1.4 – *Using language for investigation and exchange of ideas*, exists within level 1, is assessed wholly in the target language, and may have a 'business and enterprise' context attached. At this level, such a context could prove too difficult, both in terms of the cognitive ability of learners to grasp certain concepts, and in terms of bespoke target language terminology that might be needed to aid discussions.

Participants in Leeds raised concerns about the 'target level' of assessment for both language as well as content, and in particular, the ability of learners to achieve the target level in both elements. The DDP explained that the content would be intended at the target level but would focus on 'aspects' and 'concepts' from a given syllabus, rather than the whole of the syllabus. One participant commented that this would need to be made more explicit beyond the current consultation process. Another participant commented that it was difficult for some learners to express level 3 concepts even in the English language, therefore assessment in the target language would need to be at a level below. This raised further questions in terms of assessment. Firstly, how could one judge a concept to be expressed at level 3, if the language used to express it was at level 2? Secondly, would learners with a conceptual understanding at level 3 be 'inhibited' from expressing these concepts by their language ability at level 2? (This issue was also raised in the online survey). The DDP acknowledged that the actual requirements of the content assessment would need to be considered in greater detail. At subsequent events, it was generally felt (with a

few exceptions) that assessment of the target language would need to be undertaken at a lower level than the assessment of content.

Participants at Bristol suggested solutions to ensure that content and language could both be demonstrated and assessed at the target level – with a focus on listening and reading skills.

Firstly, several participants agreed that the ability of learners to access ‘high levels’ of target language information through listening and reading was worthy of its own merit, and that production of written or spoken outputs in English ought to be satisfactory ways of assessing content knowledge, as well as target language understanding. Secondly, the example of a video conference was given between two learners; a French child and an English child. Under this scenario, rather than each child communicating in their second language (resulting in a ‘low-level’ conversation), it was suggested that they both communicate in their first language – i.e. the French child speaking French and the English child speaking English. The purpose would be to assess ‘high level’ target language listening skills, by allowing them to express what they had learned, clearly, and at a cognitive level, in their first language.

From Basingstoke onwards, the assessment possibilities within the language component of CLIL were discussed in relation to the three elements of ‘communication’, ‘accuracy’ and ‘quality’. One participant highlighted that if the quality of language (i.e. the complexity) was demonstrated at an appropriate minimum benchmark level akin to the subject matter, inaccuracies could be overseen. Similarly, it was argued that the ability to communicate content was the primary aim of any language, and that this could be undertaken without the need to be 100 per cent accurate. This view was echoed at Bristol, with the example given of a French student having produced a geography essay where their own first language French was not totally accurate. It was felt in Bristol that as long as *additional* marks were awarded for accuracy – then quality, communication and content were more important at the target level.

Some opposing views to the idea of reducing the weighting of accuracy also permeated the groups. At Basingstoke, it was commented that the Diploma as a whole could be devalued through the eyes of higher education, employers and parents, if accuracy was not upheld. One participant discussed an old-specification A Level assessment, where content was given a greater weighting than language, leading to acceptable marks being gained in spite of language ability. This approach was described by the participant as being a conduit for learners to ‘manipulate’ marks for the better, and cited this issue as the reason for its lack of inclusion within the new specification. Participants at Nottingham were strongly in favour of accuracy as important, with one HE participant highlighting that the single biggest demand from learners across all languages departments within HE was ‘more grammar’. An interesting permutation did emerge at Nottingham however, where it was suggested that the weightings need not be the same at all levels. At levels 1 and 2, the importance was considered to be ‘getting the message *across*’, whereas at level 3, learners would be trying to ‘get the message *right*’.

At Bristol, participants raised the point that whatever the balance between content and language in

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terms of assessment, there should be consistency. This would need to be considered in terms of consistency across the individual topics, and consistency between different awarding bodies. It was brought up that teaching practitioners as well as learners would need this to bring clarity to the delivery and assessment requirements, and would avoid a situation where centres ended up opting for one particular awarding body because of a simpler administration process.

#### **5.3.8 External Assessment Methods**

*“...as a language teacher, it just doesn't seem right, does it, to not have that sort of real, if you like, verification from someone externally that, actually, you can speak that language... Wouldn't the employers want that as well?” [Languages Teacher]*

*“the moment we've got even a small fraction of language externally assessed, everybody zooms in on that and makes sure they do that and tick every 'T' and every 'I'. All the creativity is out of the window” [Languages Teacher]*

#### **Internal versus external assessment**

Views were mixed on the value of internal assessment versus external assessment. Those in favour of more external assessment drew attention to the need for the Diploma to be held in high regard by parents, employers and universities, with external assessment demonstrating the 'rigour' demanded by these groups. At the same time however, there was recognition across the board that the Diploma would need to be appealing and engaging for learners, without assessment 'surprises' leading to stumbling blocks and a loss of confidence among learners. At Basingstoke and Bristol, some participants argued that the greater the freedom for the teacher to be creative in the classroom, the better, strongly advocating internal assessment.

One participant in Leeds stated that the professionalism of teachers was rarely questioned, but would need to be considered as a possible issue when deciding how internal assessment should be carried out. Other participants then suggested that internal assessment could involve employers to ensure standards of internal assessment were upheld.

#### **120 or 180 GLH external assessment at level 3**

Participants were asked whether 120 or 180 GLH of external assessment should be applied to the Diploma at level 3 (equating to 22 per cent or 33 per cent of total principal learning GLH respectively). This was considered by many participants to be difficult to answer in a notional way, without seeing the detail within the assessment requirements, and without being able to determine the amount of 'man hours' needed to bring learners up to the required level and to the required quality standard. In addition, the use of creative assessment methods were also

considered to be factors that would impact on the amount of GLH required, such as recording time if (for example) individual performances were being undertaken.

Thinking about the perceptions of higher education institutions, participants in London discussed the need for the Diploma to be attractive to all universities (the Russell group was cited in particular), and that it should ensure that learners progressing to level 4 would have the same opportunities irrespective of their choice of higher education institution.

On this basis participants leaned towards 180 GLH being more appropriate, and participants were keen to ensure that the Diploma would demonstrate the rigour and standards associated with external assessment. At Leeds, one teaching practitioner commented that the value of the advanced Diploma would diminish in the eyes of learners if it was felt that higher education institutions did not also value it. One HE participant responded to state that they (as a small university) were positive about accepting Diplomas 'in the widest context'. HE participants at several other events were strongly in favour of 180 GLH at level 3. Only at Birmingham was some concern expressed about the potential leap that 180 GLH would represent in terms external assessment at level 3 compared with level 2. I.e. 33 per cent of total principal learning GLH at level 3, compared with 14 per cent at level 2.

#### **External assessment of target language topics**

*"as an employer, it's not really going to make a difference at level one whether they get assessed externally in the target language or not, because it's very generic" [Employer]*

Participants were asked to comment on the proportion of target language assessment that should be undertaken externally. Within the Diploma at levels 1 and 2, all topics assessed in the target language could, theoretically, be controlled internally, with external assessment focusing on topics assessed wholly and/or partly in English.

Participants at Durham and Manchester identified a benefit to the internal control of target language learning, as being a 'break away' from the structures used within GCSE and A level qualifications. On that basis the Diploma should seek to be different. Participants in London and Leeds came to the agreement that external assessment of the target language was not so important at levels 1 and 2, with one participant in London commenting that at level 1, language learning was about 'whetting the appetite' of young people for further study. However at both of these events, external assessment of the target language was considered particularly important at level 3.

External assessment of the target language at level 1 presented a challenge to the majority of participants. With 30 GLH external assessment allocated to this level, this would mean that only topic 1.5 would be available in the target language. Yet with this topic being centred on *using language creatively*, it was considered unsuitable due to its potentially broad-ranging nature, and

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the restrictions external assessment would place on its very creativity. At Bristol, one participant disagreed with this argument, on the basis that the types of tasks that could be set in respect of all the topics titled 'Using language creatively' (1.5, 2.8, 3.8), could be generic enough to bring within scope a broad range of activities and texts.

In respect of level 3, participants at Leeds stated that the flexibility of consortia to use a broad range of contexts for target language topics, would hinder awarding bodies in the scoping of external assessment, meaning that target language would need to be restricted to topics assessed

'partly in English and partly in the target language'. At level 3, that would mean topics 3.1, 3.4 and 3.5, each at 60 GLH.

Issues were raised in London around what measures should be used as part of the assessment of English language topics. I.e. Whether quality, accuracy and communication would be measured in the use of English to the same degree that they would be measured as part of the target language assessment. If it was determined that a consistent approach should be used whatever the carrier language for the assessment, then consideration would need to be given as to how this impacted upon learners whose fluency in English was more limited than their fluency in the target language.

#### ***5.3.9 Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing***

Participants were asked to comment on how the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing should be assessed within the Diploma. The DDP had considered that in order to ensure an applied focus, assessment should be weighted on the 'productive' skills of speaking and writing, with the more 'receptive skills' of reading and listening assessed indirectly.

The online survey generated more enthusiasm for the weighting of assessment on the productive skills than came across at the consultation events. Most participants across the early events expressed their concern that listening and reading, whilst receptive, were valid and applicable skills needed in everyday life, and in a wide range of employment contexts. In the case of reading in particular, it was noted that this was often undertaken without the need to deliver a productive response. At one event in particular, a skills advisor commented that there was concern about the levels of engagement among young people in the UK to read books even in English, making it all the more important to focus on and develop reading skills.

It was felt by participants in London that to remove the assessment of listening and reading would be to ignore the younger and less experienced cohort at level 1, with greater mastery over their receptive strengths than their productive ones.

The general consensus among participants was that learners should be assessed and rewarded in respect of all four skills, even if some of these were combined in assessments (i.e. listening and speaking; reading and writing). There was general agreement that the choice of skills to assess within each topic, along with the weightings given to each, would vary depending on the topic.

At Bristol however the view was quite different. Participants commented that in real life, conversations are two-way, and that it would not be appropriate to assess listening and reading without asking for some evidence in oral or written form, to test how that information had been used. Tying in with an applied business context, it was considered perfectly acceptable for the learner to be able to ask questions or seek clarification in the target language if necessary.

Participants were asked how 'listening' could be creatively assessed. Examples included use of the following source material, with questions being asked of the learner, possibly in English, in order to gauge understanding:-

- performance arts
- music
- announcements (such as television or railway platform)
- telephone calls
- television advertisements
- sports commentary
- reporting back on a business presentation or video conference
- selection of one or two current television news items for summarisation (providing a degree of selective agency to support areas of interest to the learner)
- reaching the correct target destination from directional instructions (a physical or diagrammatical response)

In terms of the creative assessment of reading, participants in Bristol highlighted the artificiality of reading material within current languages qualifications, opening up the creative potential for assessment of this skill. Examples given included using more authentic texts such as brochures, magazines, websites and blogs, as well as print media in order to identify and discuss spin and different ideologies inherent within texts.

Participants at Basingstoke were less in favour of the creative assessment of listening or reading, as long as there was general validity to the types of situations that might be encountered in real life. I.e. Learners would be willing to suspend their disbelief at listening to a radio news bulletin on an 'artificial' cassette tape, as the general activity of listening to a radio news bulletin is one which might be undertaken. However one participant was keen that assessment should include face to face communications, which take place in the work place a great deal more than non-face-to-face communications. At Bristol, participants echoed this view, stating that the emphasis on assessment of listening should exploit the visual aspect of teaching and learning.

#### **5.3.10 Employability Skills**

The majority of consultation events did not have any employer representation, but most participants commented positively on the applicability of the topics to real world issues and work. Notably, development of fundamental listening and communication skills, as well as an awareness of Europe, the world, and the issues affecting societies and enterprise on a global as well as a local scale.

Participants in London acknowledged the potential difficulty in developing employability skills in a classroom environment, but across the topics it was felt that the necessary *transferable skills* were being developed. Of particular note were topics 2.4 and 3.4 (theme: 'Languages for work'), as well as 2.5 and 3.5 (theme: 'Languages for professional communication'). One employer at Basingstoke identified the Diploma's encouragement of 'autonomous and independent learning' as a valuable employability skill, despite this statement being particularly contentious among other groups.

At Bristol, one participant discussed how learners at level 1 typically enjoy hands on and practical work, and described how other Diplomas (such as Engineering) could involve employer visits to enrich learners' knowledge and understanding of real world work contexts. However there was concern in respect of the Diploma in Languages and International Communication, on the basis that language diversity within organisations had a more theoretical and complex base, perhaps inhibiting the value of the employment link at level 1. In response to this point, the discussion covered the existing 'business language champions project', whereby schools link up with businesses to explore and appreciate how languages are used in different employment contexts, how different groups interact (such as doctors and patients), and why languages are important. The emerging message was that such proven approaches would be important to the Diploma at all levels, particularly in support of topics 1.3, 2.4 and 3.4 (theme: 'Using languages for work'), in order to help learners develop the types of thinking, practical and attitudinal skills relevant to the workplace.

Participants were asked to comment on the inclusion of 'SMART targets' (solely in topic 1.1) – a series of skills notable for their application in work-based environments. Participants in Manchester and London felt that these skills fell under 'self management', and as such, within the Personal Learning and Thinking Skills of the Diploma. It was therefore considered that they should be inherent throughout all the topics, and that their overt inclusion in topic 1.1 was appropriate to provide a stepping-stone for learners, to enable them to think about the suitability of their own approach to language learning.

Participants at Bristol identified the inherent employability skills in the assessment of listening and speaking activities in the target language, such as learning to take turns, how to position oneself in relation to someone else (including eye contact), and how to actively listen in order to identify information required for a given purpose.

Topic 3.2 – *Self-directed language learning* was discussed in relation to the linkage between secondary schools and primary schools to support primary language learning. Through this approach, participants identified that secondary learners would pick up on what a 'good' learner should be doing in the classroom, as well as how to deal with any behavioural issues – valuable employability skills. One participant described how similar practices were already being undertaken at their school, to positive effect.

Participants at Birmingham commented on the potential appeal of topics 3.5 and 3.6 to employers, particularly for learners ultimately seeking to undertake a professional discipline (such as medicine) in an overseas country. Participants were conscious however that the primary subject (such as medicine) would be the driving force at level 3, leading to the study of science-based subjects. It was suggested that the level 3 principal learning of the Languages and International Communication Diploma would benefit a wider audience of learners and ultimately employers, if it was also built in to the additional and specialist learning component of other Diplomas, such as Science. Indeed, a number of participants were disappointed by the lack of language coverage in the Travel and Tourism Diploma.

#### **5.3.11 Progression through Diploma levels**

*“If this Diploma really delivered, at the advanced level, students with all of those skills then I can’t think of a decent university in this country that would say no” [HE Director of Undergraduate Admissions]*

Progression was considered in three respects: *between* the three levels of the Diploma; *into* the Diploma from the GCSE and A level pathway, as well as *from* the Diploma into Higher Education.

Participants generally agreed that opportunities existed for upward progression through the Diploma, owing to clear distinctions in the complexity of topics, and the continuation of the same eight themes across each of the levels.

Many participants commented positively that the diversity in the level 1 content, coupled with the creative assessment opportunities, had the potential to capture the interests of learners in ways that other language-based qualifications had been unable to do, thereby supporting progression onto another Diploma line of learning, an apprenticeship, or an alternative work-based training programme.

Some concerns did emerge in relation to progression from level 1 to either another level within the Diploma, or into direct employment. At Manchester, participants stated that the likelihood of learners wishing to progress from level 1 to level 2 would also be slim, unless they were migrated during their course based upon individual performance. At Basingstoke, a number of participants were of the view that the Diploma at level 1 would neither aid progression within the qualification nor develop adequate skills for life and work. Several felt that the vocational ‘work-related’ link at this level was not strong enough within the Criteria.

At Manchester, it was pointed out that practitioners would need to exercise due care in respect of learners undertaking an ab initio language as part of the level 2 Additional and Specialist Learning, who might then wish to take this ab initio language forward as the target language within the principal learning at level 3. In other words, careful consideration would need to be given to the ability of the learner to progress using this language.

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Some concerns were expressed in relation to progression from a GCSE course to the level 3 Diploma. Participants at Basingstoke questioned why a learner completing a GCSE languages course at grades A\*-C would want to progress to the level 3 Diploma as opposed to following a more languages-specific A level route. A hypothetical scenario was then put to the group, of a student asking their teacher for a recommendation on 'what they should do next'. Teaching practitioners at the event stated that their answer would depend on what the student ultimately wanted to do with their qualifications. When the example was put forward that the student 'wanted to go to university', there was some uncertainty among the group over what route they would recommend.

One participant spoke to say that it would all depend on whether the Diploma could be 'sold' successfully to universities, and whether universities would value the qualification. That seemed to be the crux of the issue in terms of recommending the Diploma to learners looking to enter level 3.

Participants at Durham and Manchester commented that the linguistic elements of the level 3 Diploma would present a challenge to learners migrating from a language GCSE at any grade. In London, it was suggested that topic 3.3 – *Global challenges in contemporary society* would be particularly difficult without the background knowledge and understanding offered within topics 1.2 and 2.3. Some positive countering arguments did emerge however. One participant in Manchester commented that a short period of 'bridging' in schools and colleges was common across many courses for learners with the aptitude to quickly develop the pre-requisite background knowledge and understanding. This view was also echoed at Basingstoke in the context of learners transferring from the level 2 to the level 3 Diploma.

Higher education practitioners were positive at each event about welcoming undergraduates from the level 3 Diploma, on the proviso that the language ability of learners would be at least equal to that currently developed within A level qualifications. One HE participant stated that additional 'bridging' streams to bring undergraduates up to the required minimum level for level 4 would not be favoured. From the consultations on the Principal Learning, and taking into account the total GLH, higher education practitioners were, on the whole, satisfied with the level of rigour built in to the level 3 Diploma. Additionally, the broadening out of language learning to include cultural understanding and application was warmly welcomed.

### **5.3.12 Grammar Annex**

Participants were asked to comment on whether grammar requirements should be expressed in an annex, similar to within GCSE and A level qualifications.

Participants in Durham suggested that as an applied course, the grammar could be better presented in an applied way, such as linking the requirements to particular topics or contexts within the specification, and therefore not simply serving as a single tick list. It was considered that such an approach would provide a useful aid for practitioners, and one participant commented that the production of a colourful document listing a series of 'can do' statements for learners to tick off, would also prove engaging.

Participants at Bristol and Ipswich echoed the view that grammar requirements should be listed by topic, particularly given that certain topics would require certain ‘types’ of language. E.g. The formal polite use of language in business, versus more informal structures through social interaction and networking. It was not considered necessary for grammatical prescription to extend to detailed vocabulary. However it was acknowledged that vocabulary specific to certain contexts (such as business terms) would need to be understood, and that a range of suitable examples could be provided.

### **5.3.13 Distinctiveness of the Diploma**

*“It includes a lot of areas, which are not currently included anywhere within language related qualifications which I’m really happy about... I was really pleased to see a creative language section there as well” [Languages Teacher]*

Participants praised the Diploma as a new and exciting learning pathway, both for learners as well as practitioners.

Many participants were excited about the varied content, leading to a suggestion by one participant at Durham to rename the Diploma ‘International Media and Communications’ (thus dropping ‘Languages’ from the title). The reason given for this was to make the Diploma more marketable to learners who would otherwise be put off by the idea of studying languages. Others felt that this would be too crude a ‘disguise’ and that the Diploma would not serve to retain learners who simply did not want to acquire a new language.

Participants at Nottingham compared the Diploma to the International Baccalaureate, finding positivity in how the Diploma was different. The use of CLIL in particular, would mean that teaching of varied content and contexts would be less daunting for learners than (for example) teaching French and Science as separate components.

Participants were largely united in their view that the Diploma would develop language ability at least to the equivalent level of either GCSE or A level qualifications respectively. Where concern was expressed, this was largely overcome when the DDP explained the structure of the Diploma as a whole, and the total GLH. Many participants were keen to stress that the purpose of the Diploma was not to emulate GCSE and A level provision, but to broaden out the abstract study of languages into an understanding of how they are applied in societal and work-based environments. In this sense, it was felt by the majority that the Diploma would be engaging for learners and appealing to a broad range of potential employers.

### **5.3.14 Additional and Specialist Learning**

The main points on additional and specialist learning will be provided to the Diploma Development Partnership.

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## **5.4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

Overall, it is clear that the Diploma in Languages and International Communication is welcomed by participants at the consultation events because it is seen as a unique qualification with the strong possibility to attract and motivate learners to study languages in a new and engaging way. In particular, the use of content and language integrated learning (CLIL), as well as the various themes of the Diploma, are considered to make an attractive offer for young people who might otherwise not pursue language study, and open their eyes to a world of career opportunities that may or may not involve the direct use of other languages.

The Criteria demonstrates a highly considered, thorough and ambitious document to engage and attract learners to language acquisition.

It should be noted prior to reading these conclusions and recommendations that some of the questions put to the participants changed over the course of the consultation events. This included the prioritisation of additional detail and specific prompts within certain discussion areas.

### **General Conclusion**

It could be seen from the discussions held around the country at the nine events that the Principal Learning for Languages and International Communication is a complex conceptual offer – necessitating a diagram at the events to explain the approach to those new to it. To put this in context: those unfamiliar to CLIL had to not only understand that concept in itself, but take on board the ‘themes’ approach across the levels, as well as the planned treatment of the productive and receptive skills – i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing, - including understanding that some topics are to be assessed in English and others in the target language. Complementing all of this there is an approach of developing language learning skills (for a third language) built in as well. There were some concerns noted across the majority of the events that for level 1 learners the whole concept in of itself could be a challenging and maybe daunting package.

### **General Recommendation**

The DDP could consider, given the complexities of the requirements for level 1 learners, simplifying the offer in some way. This may be useful along with making it very clear in the Awarding body guidance for instance how valuable tools, such as gist summaries, could be used for learners at this level.

The remaining conclusions below refer to and largely demonstrate the high level of debate and keenness by participants at the events to assist the DDP’s thinking on the complex matter of assessment and delivery of the Principal Learning offer.

Drawing on the evidence within section 5.3, the following conclusions have been identified, accompanied by recommendations for the QCA and DDP to consider.

**Conclusion 1**

In consideration of the CLIL approach, being able to express concepts of content in another language at the intended (or target) level was discussed at length, and the consultation revealed mixed views regarding this point of factual content and language acquisition - with some preferring the language to be assessed at a level below and some preferring it at the same level as the content. Those that feel that the language is too important to deliver at a level below the content included HE participants.

They largely believe that at level 3 the target language and content should be at the same level in order to demonstrate academic rigour.

**Recommendation 1**                      **Essential**                      **Section 5.3.7**

The DDP should therefore consider, particularly at level 3, stipulating that assessment of the target language is to be equal to, i.e. the same level, as content. With levels 1 and 2, conclusions were less evident, but there was clear concern that level 1 learners would struggle if this same principle was adopted and therefore the likely more appropriate requirement is that assessment of the language is at a level lower than the content.

**Conclusion 2**

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is considered to be a valuable approach across all levels of the Diploma, as it is currently lacking at key stage 4. Assuming that content aspects (eg content knowledge) should be assessed, the debate centred around whether assessment should focus on 'how' the content is used i.e. does it contribute to effective communication in the target language? Participants are in agreement that content should be assessed but that the appropriateness and even accuracy of content is of more importance than using fictional or inaccurate scenarios to simply demonstrate target language proficiency.

**Recommendation 2**                      **Essential**                      **Section 5.3.7**

The DDP should indeed consider how 'content' is assessed in terms of how it is being used and contributing to effective communication in the target language.

**Conclusion 3**

This conclusion relates to the assessment of language. From the Basingstoke event onwards, participants were asked to comment on the relative importance of three core strands of language skills assessment. These explained via these terms: 'accuracy' (correctness of language used); 'quality' (complexity of the language used in relation to the content matter) and 'effectiveness of

communication’.

At levels 1 and 2 it remains unclear whether any one of these aspects are of greater importance, due to there being mixed views among participants. However, at level 3, accuracy in language is felt to be of particular importance.

**Recommendation 3**                      **Essential**                      **Section 5.3.7**

As no clear cut view for level 1 and 2 could be determined here the DDP should continue to discuss the finer detail with language experts and Awarding Bodies regarding the assessment of language. It could be, for instance as suggested in some events, that providing indications of proportionate weightings on ‘accuracy’, ‘complexity of language used’ and ‘effectiveness of communication’ in respect of language assessment at each level would be of value to those delivering the Principal Learning.

Based on the views of participants, at level 3 however, it is recommended that ‘accuracy’ is given a transparent and equal weighting along with all other aspects of language skill assessment.

**Conclusion 4**

This conclusion relates to a question raised at only one event; however those delegates considered it of sufficient importance to request its deliberation by the DDP. Some participants at this event were also concerned, in this debate, about those learners for whom English is not their first language.

The issue relates to those topics that it is stipulated are to be assessed in English, and whether assessment of the English language should be undertaken in the same or different way to assessment of the target language for the other topics.

**Recommendation 4**                      **Desirable**                      **Section 5.3.8**

The DDP to continue to consider this issue and its importance alongside other questions on assessment with experts and Awarding Body colleagues.

**Conclusion 5**

This conclusion relates to the combination of internal and external assessment of the target language at all levels, and in relation to topics assessed partly, and topics assessed wholly, in the target language.

There was almost equal concern that including some external assessment of the target language (particularly at levels 1 and 2) may risk inhibiting the flexibility and creativity offered to teachers as part of the approach to using ‘contexts’ in designated topics, to the concern that using purely internal assessment could lead to credibility questions of rigour.

**Recommendation 5**

**Essential**

**Section 5.3.6**

As the DDP will need to determine whether the 'target language' is fully internally assessed at levels 1 and 2 as well as Level 3 or if some external assessment is used.

Indications from the consultation show that external assessment of the target language is considered critical at level 3, somewhat less important at level 2, and far less important at level 1. At level 1, the opinion of participants leads to a recommendation that 100 per cent of the target language is internally assessed.

**Conclusion 6**

On the question of the amount of GLH for external assessment should take place at level 3 a number of participants felt unable to express notional amounts without seeing the specification and exact assessment requirements, yet decisions need to be made prior to this stage being reached.

**Recommendation 6**

**Essential**

**Section 5.3.8**

As views from the consultation largely leaned towards allocating 180 GLH to external assessment at level 3 rather than 120 it is recommended that is adopted. The main argument strengthening this recommendation is the perceived necessity of this to maintain academic rigour concerning the language component of the Diploma. It is also recommended that the DDP should work with awarding bodies to identify how much of the external assessment should be applied to the target language.

**Conclusion 7**

Following the DDP's initial intention to assess only the productive skills of speaking and writing in a direct capacity, the DDP took the decision during the consultation period to consider directly assessing the receptive skills ie listening and reading. This decision reflected the fact that participants at the events pointed out that learners at levels 1 and 2, in particular, have better developed receptive skills than productive skills, whereas learners at level 3 need to demonstrate more varied approaches to language production. Awarding bodies require guidance on how each of these skills should apply to each level of the Diploma.

**Recommendation 7**

**Essential**

**Section 5.3.9**

It is recommended that the DDP should work with awarding bodies to agree a methodology for the assessment of all four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing and not as previously thought assessing the receptive skills through the productive skills.

It is also recommended that the DDP may wish to consider creative methods of assessment based

on the considerations and suggestions of participants (as indicated within the final report). Building on these suggestions and drawing on a point raised by one participant it may be worth considering allowing learners to use their best skill (either speaking or writing) in order to 'use language creatively' as part of topics 2.8 and 3.8.

**Conclusion 8**

It is intended that the learning of a language ab initio with assessment of the learning process in English. Whilst valued as an approach there was concern at the events that without some form of outcome or recognition for the language acquisition aspect, it may not be as engaging for learners as it could be.

**Recommendation 8**

**Desirable**

**Section 5.3.3**

Identify ways in which learners can demonstrate use of the ab initio language, including some kind of assessment of their ability. Some suggestions are given in the final report.

It should also be decided upon whether or not this assessment is 'formal' (contributing to their results/grade in respect of the topic), or informal (not contributing to their results/grade).

The DDP could consider signposting how the ab initio language can be used to support other parts of the Criteria. At level 3 this could include the use of the ab initio language to deliver language learning to others (as per topic 3.2).

**Conclusion 9**

The five 'contexts' as explicitly laid out in the Criteria are considered, on the whole, to be satisfactory, yet there is scope to introduce specific new contexts which will appeal to learners and add value to the content. It is also acknowledged that the DDP are considering removing 'socio-political issues' as a standalone context, and integrating it within the context 'humanities and social sciences'. Participants were still keen that 'socio-political issues' are explored, be it as a standalone context or as part of 'humanities and social sciences'.

The eight broad 'themes', into which topics are grouped, were not debated and therefore still remain appropriate.

**Recommendation 9**

**Desirable**

**Section 5.3.6**

The DDP should consider adding 'sport' as an additional standalone context, reflecting the strong views of participants.

Other contexts as suggested by participants, as outlined in the report, should also be considered.

**Conclusion 10**

While the level 1 Criteria was criticised at a number of events for providing too much detail, and being too challenging in places for the abilities of level 1 learners (see General conclusion 1 above), issues generally related to delivery and assessment rather than the complexity of the content itself. Some specific changes have been provided in appendix 2, where clarification will make the intentions clearer.

**Recommendation 10**

**Desirable**

**Section 5.3.2**

It is recommended that no changes to the structure of topics at level 1 are made but please see appendix 2 for specific recommended changes.

**Conclusion 11**

Topic 2.5 – *The world of professional communication* examines the valuable mechanics that underpin interpreting, but seems to present too great a weighting towards the professional roles of the interpreter and the translator and is then possibly out of kilter with the prevalence of these roles in society.

**Recommendation 11**

**Essential**

**Section 5.3.3**

It is recommended that a review of content within topics 2.4 and 2.5 is carried out in order to determine whether there is a need to pare down the amount of detail in respect of interpreters and translators in topic 2.5.

In the event that the current combined GLH of both of these topics is reduced, consider other topics at level 2 that will need to be expanded in order to meet the total principal learning GLH requirement at level 2.

**Conclusion 12**

Topic 3.3 – *Global challenges facing contemporary society* is welcomed at level 3 as an important topic. However, it is heavily focused on human rights whereas other issues and concerns would benefit from inclusion, in order to add greater breadth and depth. Other areas suggested in the consultation that could link with human rights and global challenges included the environment, pollution, the military industrial complex, international trade, law, and business ethics (including fair trade). It was suggested that if target language assessment was considered for this topic it would allow learners to fully appreciate the communications challenges facing international organisations.

**Recommendation 12**

**Desirable**

**Section 5.3.3**

It is recommended that topic 3.3 is broadened out.

**Conclusion 13**

Stakeholders (including awarding body representatives) are satisfied with the layout and clarity of topic summaries in bullet point form, yet the DDP intends to change the format to narrative prose. Insufficient consultation activity has been possible on narrative-style summaries to determine whether the new approach would be an improvement.

**Recommendation 13**

**Desirable**

**Section 5.3.1**

Consider undertaking further consultation activity using all intended narrative-style purpose statements, as the evidence from the consultation reveals unanimous support of bullet point summaries.

**Conclusion 14**

Given the contexts applicable to target language topics, there will be a need for learners to use bespoke grammar and vocabulary. Practitioners may have limited background experience in a number of these content areas, and will therefore need guidance on the requirements at each level and for each topic, such as a sample list of bespoke vocabulary pertinent to the contexts of each topic where the target language is required to be assessed, as well as grammar and vocabulary to cover a range of possible ab initio languages with which lead practitioners may not have had any previous contact.

**Recommendation 14**

**Desirable**

**Section 5.3.12**

Consider the development of a separate grammar annex for use by practitioners that is tailored, where appropriate, to the requirements of each topic.

**Conclusion 15 – a general and wider issue**

Marketing of the Diploma is acknowledged to be out of scope of the Criteria Consultation. However discussions around the Criteria led to some concerns about the capacity of the Diploma to attract learners from the following cohorts:-

learners lacking the capability to study languages;  
learners not interested in studying languages;  
learners both able and engaged with the study of languages

***Recommendation 15***

***Desirable – to note***

***Section 5.3.7***

It is recommended that the aims of the Diploma are adjusted so that they are specific to each level, and that marketing activities to learners, parents, teachers and employers clearly explain how learners will be able to use their knowledge.

At level 1, the practical nature of the content should be emphasised, but the value of learning a target language should be reinforced so that learners understand why it is important.

## 6. Science Line of Learning Criteria

### 6.1 Overview of Findings

The Criteria document for science (April 2009) was considered by all delegates attending the nine consultation events, as well as by the survey participants during the six weeks the survey was live. Owing in part to the constructive, but relatively negative feedback received from the events by the midway point, completely new topic summaries were written and shown to delegates at the penultimate and final event.

There have been several fundamental questions raised by delegates at all of the events at the start of discussions before the more detailed questions on employability, clarity of topic summaries, etc could be put to them.

These relate in the main to two linked points: the target audience and the USP or purpose of the Diploma in Science.

Messages about the purpose and target audience do not seem to be yet fully conveyed nor are the ones that have been conveyed fully convincing. Understanding this and the treatment or coverage of the Programme of Study within the Criteria document, along with the lack of an Advanced level, restricted fuller and deeper discussions on content.

The consultation version of the Criteria for the Diploma in Science is structured in the following way:

⇒ **Foundation** – 7 topics - 6 of 30 glh and 1 of 60 glh (240)

⇒ **Higher** – 7 topics - all 60 glh (420)

There is no Advanced level within the Criteria for the Diploma in Science following the announcement made by the Minister, Jim Knight (April 16<sup>th</sup> 2009) that the delivery of the Advanced Level would be delayed by a year until 2012.

The topics at each of the two levels are not governed by themes. Instead the approach given to the attendees is a model that splits content into 7 topics. The first 5 are centred around domains or areas of science - substances, animals and plants, the human body, energy and the environment, while the other 2 provide an opportunity to draw on the content of the first 5 with the intention that learners can operate more independently and explore those aspects that particularly enthuse them.

#### Criteria content

Feedback from the consultation version of the Criteria was varied. Pleasure was expressed by some participants at seeing key items within topics or whole topics such as 1.3 and 2.3 (particularly where it related to the specific scientific specialism or background of the commentator). Other participants were more cautious, with the majority regarding the Criteria

as a 'work in progress'.

The latter group were in the majority and examples of their points that stand out are:

- a) Some of the Knowledge and Understanding statements have been presented very simply and others give much fuller detail - there appears to be no clear rationale on what KUS should be included.
- b) Some aspects of energy such as wave energy have been included, but other key areas such as nuclear energy have not.
- c) On occasions, such as in 1.4, the KUS do not fully align to the topic summary and applied purpose.
- d) For many the big issue was that the 'process skills' - those embedded in 'how science works' within Key Stage 4, appear to not have the pivotal focus or emphasis that would be expected by the scientific community.
- e) Occasionally the content was misleading and implying, for instance, that all questions are capable of being answered or addressed by science.

The topic that received in general the most positive feedback was Topic 2.7 – 'developing a product specification'. This was seen as having wide applicability and relevance to science and the application of science, as well as linking to business, enterprise and having good potential links to the Project.

*"Some engineers I know really ought to know how to write a product specification! I'm also impressed that you've used sources of funding because half of being a research scientist is getting the money, and that is a big issue that you really ought to find out quite early on". (Employer)*

Many participants came across as having a strong interest, enthusiasm and the will to make the Diploma in Science succeed, but they were clearly only partially reassured about the Diploma in Science's distinctiveness, purpose, and target audience from the content of the Principal Learning. This, supplemented by the fact that the content appeared largely dull, uninspiring and missing a number of opportunities to be engaging for young people, meant many left the events hopeful but somewhat disappointed.

## 6.2 Aims and Purpose

The vision for the Diploma in Science, since the early development of the Line of Learning Statement, has always been presented diagrammatically. Three overlapping circles present the 'big questions' and 'major challenges' at the centre, followed by summary text which points out that these challenges and questions change over time. Not only that but they "*provide a powerful tool to demonstrate the scope of scientific activity - from innovation to development with respect to improving quality and in the investigation of behaviour, processes and phenomena*".

Unlike the other two Lines of Learning, the Diploma in science does not have a single statement capturing the vision for the Diploma in Science.<sup>5</sup> Neither does the Science Diploma appear to yet possess a clear statement of who it is aimed at.

The circle diagram has evolved over time and in the consultation version of the Criteria document<sup>6</sup> it provides suggestions for both major challenges and big questions including 'How did the Universe come about' and 'What is the origin of life' and so on. In the centre of the diagram (seen in the extant – April 2009 – Line of Learning Statement), although there is a list in the criteria, (pointing towards the Big Questions), containing skills integral to that concept; it was noted by a number of participants that the diagram in the Criteria no longer includes the explicit reference to 'Using Science'.

Supplementing this diagram, there are thirteen specific aims for the Diploma in Science which include reference to providing practical skills, having a hands-on approach, a basis of solid scientific knowledge and methodology, engaging learners and an awareness raising opportunity of the impact of science on society.

Whilst the vision was not designated for specific discussion, it quickly became clear at the outset of the consultation process that it lies at the heart of the very intense discussions on the acceptability of the Criteria (consultation version) in all nine consultation events.

### **6.2.1 Target Audience**

In all of the events participants sought greater clarification on who would do the Diploma in Science, i.e. what sort of learner, and why they would do it. This was more than the usual query seeking firmer understanding about the Diploma concept. The question arises from genuine confusion surrounding the crowded arena of Science qualifications. A great many participants were anxious about the similarity in the nature of the Criteria content to, for example, Twenty First Century Science and to other applied qualifications including GNVQ and BTEC qualifications.

Teachers and 14-19 advisers gave caution about the general weariness and scepticism within the educational arena when considering yet another Science qualification. Some institutions explained that they are already offering multiple pathways in Science for this same age group.

Others pointed to the academic nature and rigour inferred, for instance, by Triple Science and were concerned about this Diploma being a viable alternative. Yet others were very unsure about the rationale for and decisions underpinning how much of the three traditional disciplines have been included, therefore, querying how visible and feasible specialist pathways would be through the Higher level Diploma, for instance, to Science A levels and beyond to HE. They were not certain how the Principal Learning could embrace both the necessary content to cater for those 'very able' looking to study science A levels and enter key Universities, as well as those more oriented towards different styles of teaching, learning and the practical, hands-on work.

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<sup>5</sup> The Humanities and Social Sciences vision is 'To equip learners with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to understand themselves and their world and to shape its future' - a number of participants suggested this is an equally valid vision for the Diploma in Science.

<sup>6</sup> Reference 'Consultation Version' QCA/09/4184 – April 2009

Coupled with that it was generally agreed that there seems to be "a missing link" (as it was termed by many) between the skills the learner would have and where they could work as a result of the Diploma in Science. In other words participants thought the links could be made more explicit about the world of work including where users and producers of science are employed. In looking back to the big questions and major challenges some participants pointed out that there are no industrial-related big questions in the framework. Hence, while the current set could be regarded as "engaging" for learners, it might be doubtful as to whether the resulting topics would actually equip learners, at the technician and apprentice level, with truly work-related knowledge and skills.

*"(the questions are) how is this going to galvanise people, and whether we are teaching a bed of tools rather than giving a core sense of identity which enables people to see their futures or their work". (Institute)*

Participants at the events explained that when they heard about the type of learner who could do the Languages and International Communication or the Humanities and Social Sciences, and what they would acquire as a result they wished they could see this for the Diploma in Science.

### **6.2.2 USP for the Diploma in Science**

The purpose set out in the Criteria document is not yet clear and is not helped by explaining it will 'introduce learners to the world of science' (page 3 of the consultation version of the Criteria). As participants pointed out, learners have already been immersed in science for some years at school through their Key Stage Programmes of study.

The USP of the Diploma in Science was not yet standing out for all participants irrespective of the type of organisation where they worked - Schools, Learned Societies or HEIs. Interestingly, the four employers or employer representative bodies that attended the Science events were more confident about the purpose and the USP, but one stated that this could be because they *thought* they understood it or that they had a clearer vision of what they actually need from the Diploma.

A few participants felt that they could see the USP for the Diploma and for them it was the pedagogy.

*"But the subject content will be covered, it's the approach to learning, the pedagogy that they're choosing and the options of the generic and the project, and the ASL options that come with it". (LA Adviser )*

This debate has been further complicated by the commonly made point that the 'exciting and inspiring' vision has not percolated down into the content.

The content did not appear to reflect the intention that the Diploma in Science would be multidisciplinary<sup>7</sup>, it was too readily identifiable as having biology topics, chemistry topics, etc with very few presenting a genuine multidisciplinary feel. Physics came up most often as being an area that was relatively absent in the Criteria content and this was regarded as a missed opportunity.

It was pointed out that projects and fantastic developments are often portrayed in the media relating to topics such as the universe, space /planetary exploration, new forms of energy, and so on which could easily provide exciting contexts or hooks for topics for the Principal Learning content as well as for ASL.

### **6.3 Detailed Findings**

As explained earlier the findings relate to a Criteria document that has been now largely discarded. New topic summaries are being drawn up to replace those discussed in detail at the seven events. So, what follows are largely overarching comments from such discussions and which, it is anticipated, provide guidance for the new Topics when they fully emerge.

#### **6.3.1 Distinctiveness of the Diploma**

Although this was asked generally at the end of the main questions in the events, it should be considered first here as it could be argued, that throughout the events, it became one of the bigger issues. Alongside the caveat and recognition that the Criteria is just Principal Learning (and an abbreviated one at that), participants endeavoured to look for or sought clarification on the uniqueness of this for themselves. This has been explained in the previous section on aims and purpose, but this issue is very important and to many it was simply not distinctive.

The issue remains that due to the wealth of other science qualifications, some of which have been recently reformed along very similar lines, there needs to be a strong case to consider providing this in preference to other qualifications. Schools and 14-19 local advisers felt extremely strongly about this point, underpinning it with reference to the curriculum changes emanating from 2006/2008 to the Key Stage 4 Programme of Study (PoS). They were very anxious to point out that the Principal Learning was therefore going to need to look different and they were not fully convinced of this as yet.

"The diploma itself is the unique selling point, but the content of the diploma isn't so unique because there are already applied routes in science" ( Learned Society)

#### **6.3.2 Vision**

In all events the vision was talked about very positively and it seemed to contribute partially towards that elusive USP for the Diploma in Science.

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<sup>7</sup> Throughout the Criteria and consultation events the term multidisciplinary has been used, but it is likely that this may be replaced to the term interdisciplinary.

The major challenges and big questions have been seen at every event as being an excellent lead in to the Principal Learning for the Diploma. However, the fact that it was not carried through in to the consultation version of the Criteria was very disappointing for many participants and reinforced the confusion over the target audience when it looked so similar to existing qualifications.

The translation of that vision into content was not fulfilling of the promise. It appeared to be traditional biology, physics and chemistry and did not convey that sense of problem or enquiry based learning that so much of science is about.

*"It feels like you've recreated different silos but you're really scared to use the original titles" - School*

The multidisciplinary approach that is referenced (mainly on page 7 of the Criteria and in one Topic) has not come across strongly.

The approach came up in discussions a number of times, and whilst the idea or approach was generally liked it was felt not to be universally applied<sup>8</sup>. It was not really clear to the participants if the intention was to a) have each topic integrating the different disciplines, or if b) individual topics should align to specific disciplines thus collectively making the Principal Learning multidisciplinary. This issue may need sorting out in a review, (one participant suggested for instance that you could build a topic around 'Risk' and the application could be made across all the different science disciplines - for example volts, chemical reactions to growing cultures, transport, etc).

One participant was inspired by the concept and felt it should be visible to her in this way:

*"I liked the idea that it was multi-disciplinary. This pie chart (in the vision) of the blending together actually really does show, because I think previously children have been taught in very chemistry, physics, biology ways, and yet there's biophysics, biochemistry, and physical chemistry".  
(Employer)*

### **6.3.3 Progression**

The discussion here centred around 3 areas – a) progression into the Diploma from Key stage 3; b) across the two levels of level 1 and level 2; and finally c) progression from the Higher level.

- a) Some concerns were raised about the links from Key Stage 3 to the Foundation and Higher levels. Duplication of content was mentioned frequently and what this might mean to the learners who progress on from KS 3 - energy being one such example. Participants also pointed to issues such as language/terminology used in the Criteria that they felt may be

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<sup>8</sup> Sometimes there was inherent confusion over whether the expectation was for an interdisciplinary approach (usually described more as purposeful integration of different disciplines) as opposed to a multidisciplinary approach described as academics/specialists working alongside each other/other professionals but perhaps with different goals - *Education in a Changing Environment, Salford University, 2004*

different to the terms used in KS3 thus creating confusion. Sometimes this was down to content that will be improved, such as in Topic 1.4 where there is a mix up over terms such as transportation and transfer (of energy).

Participants felt that there is an inherent danger that this issue will enable some teachers to deliver the Principal Learning as Key Stage 3 all over again; for example, to teach 'reversible and non-reversible changes' in isolation, i.e. without any context, as they have done in the past.

Most participants involved with schools were anxious to point out the advantages of the relatively new process of Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP). Although this is currently centred about KS3 and lower, it was seen as an excellent means by which a learner's progress with enquiry based skills and other skills relevant to this Diploma could be measured. They were very keen that for progression purposes this is a factor to be borne in mind for future developments on the whole package of the Diploma in Science.

- b) In terms of links between the two levels, it was agreed that current links were mainly logical and that the topics showed progression, such as from Topics 1.1 to 2.1. Across various events, 1.2 and 2.2 were the exception; the content of Topic 1.2 contained much of what might be expected at level 2. Several participants questioned whether links were as good between Topics 1.6 and 1.7 to their equivalents in level 2, but were unable to suggest a solution to this and indeed if it even warranted one.
- c) The biggest area of discussion came back to progression from the Higher Level. This line of learning has been partially hampered in this discussion without the presence of the advanced level topics. Questions have been asked in most of the events about the ability of a learner to progress into Science A levels, particularly Physics.

This latter point has proved quite a significant debate within the discussions overall and again within the afternoon sessions on ASL in London, Bristol, Basingstoke and others as well as at Nottingham and Birmingham, where the new topic summaries (without any explicit content) were presented.

Many participants questioned if the Diploma would be an appropriate route for those learners intending to pursue a University education - and again without the Advanced level it was hard to take that too much further. However, participants spoke of students who do not do well with the A level style of pedagogy and could see that the Diploma would suit them well.

*"There's a whole range of students, I see them every day, they are not the A level students - the exam pathway is not the route for them. They have different skills, different abilities, and I think this (Diploma in Science) will open it up to that type of student". (College)*

Others sought reassurance that the Principal Learning would not shut off routes or pathways too early for a student at 14. This was a particular concern of a participant from a professional body at Birmingham on seeing the proposed new topic summaries. They were concerned that the science content in the Principal Learning might not be as equal to that which a learner would receive whilst undertaking Double or Triple Science awards. They were worried that even after choosing

from the ASL, they may then yet discover that they still do not have enough science to pursue three sciences at A Level, particularly if one of those A levels is Physics. The debate on A Levels and progression to them from a Higher level Diploma in Science was clearly not resolved by the Consultation version of the Criteria for Science. The dilemma participants in the final two events particularly faced without explicit content or ASL was still there:

*"So maybe if it was stated that this (Higher Level) will actually be suitable for a level 3 diploma or an applied A level route but not for a pure A level route - that would solve that problem. But (the) counter argument is that it should be transferable and able to let learners progress onto any route". (School)*

This debate also links back to the question over the target audience for this Diploma as mentioned earlier.

### **6.3.4 Clarity and Appropriateness of Contexts**

As was explained earlier the Criteria for Science had adopted a particular approach to the matter of contexts for the topics at level 1 and 2. The domains of science gave some parameters in topics 1 to 5 with the provision of several explicit contexts (in Topics 1.1 and 1.4). As explained in the Criteria:

'The final two topics at each level were intended for learners to apply their knowledge and understanding to different contexts and situations through purposeful activities. So two Topics at each level would draw on the contexts of the first five topics but allow learners the opportunity to operate more independently and develop their own approaches to dealing with problems'.

The debate on the structure of this split of topics into 5 and 2 continued throughout the seven events and indicated some question over the understanding participants had of the structure or indeed of its clarity of purpose.

Many of those from the teaching arena were convinced, despite explanations, that the latter two topics should be threaded throughout - their argument being that if the opportunity, for example, to test something comes up why wait until Topic 1.7 to do that. To reinforce that they said that the links to the 'How Science Works' skills being integral or embedded throughout specifications were an important development of the KS4 PoS. Some explained that the HSW aspect was originally treated as 'bolt on' but this is now being addressed; they were very anxious to avoid the same 'mistake' happening here.

It is worthy of mention that one or two participants appreciated the purpose of the first five topics and liked the idea that the final two topics present the learner with an opportunity to explore aspects that interested them. It could be argued that they were also seeking something that looked different to fill the void provided by the poor translation of the vision into content as discussed earlier.

*"I like the five and the two topics. That's a change from the original bit and I like the idea of building up the skills, getting that and then doing something with it. I think that's quite nice and it does make it different." (School)*

The debate flowed freely at most of the events about contexts and their appropriateness, and what would be potential 'hooks' for the learners. There was no shortage of suggestions - sometimes these were more about work related learning, and examples were visits, links with local employers or industry; however, mostly participants presented ideas to try and lift the content and make it more engaging and applied to the workplace. Linking it back to the major challenges and big questions was certainly a suggestion that emerged a number of times.

'Contexts' came up both as a prompted and unprompted subject in all events. Some participants interchangeably used the term themes/thematic approach instead of contexts, with a few explicitly asking why there were no themes used in this Criteria document. Many participants found they were struggling without a structure or framework.

It was suggested that the use of 'Themes' can often bring clarity to the purpose for topics and this may well be useful here.

*"I would want to take a thematic approach because I think a thematic approach is much more interesting, both for students and for those delivering it and (it) emphasises the inter-disciplines of the science which we are trying to achieve. If we look at this, if you're not careful, it is Biology, Chemistry and, if you can find the Physics, well okay." (14-19 Adviser)*

Participants believed that if a range of contexts were made available then that would help alleviate what appears to be sometimes a very detailed list of content in the topics. It could also alleviate the big concern over the level of detail that is required, particularly when presented with statements like 'the principles of genetics'. As one Awarding Body explained - 'there is no stop-point here'.

Whilst participants generally preferred to see the contexts left open to Awarding Bodies and not to have them tied down in the Criteria, there was clearly some requirement for a clearer structure or framework for the topics to be linked to.

Participants were also missing the 'interconnectivity' between the topics and the ability to see it holistically - they wanted to avoid a linear nature that maybe the structure of the 5 and 2 topics structure appeared to convey. At many of the events, but in particular Bristol and Ipswich, they talked about 'process' skills and that these need to be the main thread throughout the topics (again this is linked to the APP discussions mentioned earlier).

Fundamentally it could be argued that this all stemmed from differing interpretations of what contexts mean and are used for. So when participants spoke of hospitals, nightclubs and industry as examples of context, they were thinking about physical environments rather than their purpose i.e. of medical care, audio and visual entertainment and production - in all of which scientific skills, knowledge and method play a major contribution.

### **6.3.5 Engaging for Learners**

For the first seven events, on seeing the consultation version of the Criteria participants did not feel confident enough to say it would be engaging for learners. This was down to a number of issues, including overlap and duplication particularly at level 1 with Key Stage 3, but mainly that

the content looked traditional, dull and without any real innovation. Participants were at pains to be fair and point out this is not a simple matter, however; in their view it is down to those delivering the topics to bring out the contexts and make the content( which in a number of events they were broadly happy with) applied and exciting. In other words they pointed out it is about the approach and the pedagogy with which it will be delivered that will make it engaging for learners.

A number of participants across most of the early events could see the potential of enthusing the learners but suggested that the vision should be brought out more into the topics to strengthen the interest and excitement. Teaching to the big questions and major challenges will engage learners, as they like to know the relevance of what they are learning and also that they are at the cutting edge.

*'I think the topic areas were really exciting and really interesting, but I think we might be missing a trick at the moment by not making more use of this diagram'. (School)*

*"Maybe in introducing each of the different topic areas, there could be key global questions that you could be asking in each of these topics" (Learned Society)*

The links back to the big questions and major challenges was seen as a very helpful and attractive hook - good packaging to attract and enthuse learners.

*"I do like the whole big questions, although I think it (topic content) could have been more around the environment and climate change because that's something that's a) very very relevant to young people who are really worried about the state of the planet, and b) they're the ones who are actually going to deal with some of the mess that previous generations have left them with. ...I think that's a way of encouraging young people to come in because it's not just how you do energy sources which has been talked about, but it's also things like how you reduce emissions for transport vehicles whether it's planes or cars or trains". (Science Consultant)*

Similarly, physics was often referred to as an excellent means to attract and enthuse learners. This quote below reinforced a frequent view, albeit a very different explanation of why, that physics has the potential to engage learners:

*"Because having been in a couple of car crashes myself, one of the most interesting things that happens when you're hit by a very large truck is that your body automatically sends all of its blood to your core organs and it also tenses all of your muscles to protect your core, which is an instantaneous thing that you have absolutely no control over. Then the next day you are in absolute agony as your muscles relax. It's (questions) like that that I think would be really quite fascinating, again it also relates the physics to the biology and how forces, how gravity and things can affect us as well". (Employer)*

### **6.3.6 Coherence and Clarity of Topic Summaries**

The topic summaries used in the Science Criteria were split into two paragraphs - the first presents a rationale for the topic and why such scientific knowledge and expertise is necessary along with, in most cases, examples of 'organisations and people.' Some participants offered their satisfaction with this two paragraph presentation. There was certainly no challenge to the approach.

At a number of events it was pointed out that the approach of providing examples of 'organisations and people' has not been used consistently or perhaps appropriately. If these are used again, some participants suggested a solution of including a footnote to note the fact that these are just examples and that there are a whole range of scientists from a whole range of backgrounds, as well as a whole range of disciplines that could impact on these topics.

It was requested that when used the writers consciously check they have considered minority groups and where they work, and ensure that the roles presented are not just established graduate type roles, but also involve those roles such as technicians, or roles that require scientific literacy .

*"The Asian population is disproportionately highly represented in such (sectors) as pharmacy and optical and yet in terms of the things (here) like improving the performance of the human body it's all about sport It's not about being an optician". (HEI)*

Without question, Topic 1.4 fared very badly in this discussion on topic summaries and links to the purpose and KUS. For future reference a much better example was cited as being Topic 2.4.

*'Topic 2.4 is a much better exposition in terms of leading somebody that will teach it as to what they might be considering, enabling them to actually make choices that are interesting and exciting without tying them down to specific examples' (HEI)*

### **6.3.7 Appropriateness of Topic Content (level and depth)**

Much focus was given to Topic 1.1 - not just because it is the first topic to be seen in the Criteria, but because it was a classic example of a dull, traditional topic covered largely in Key Stage 3.

The 'writing styles' of the topics came up a number of times across the events; it appeared that the 5 topics in the Science Criteria at Level 1 look different, with some having more complex statements, with others being less specified, and consistency was requested by all, including Awarding Bodies.

A number of criticisms were levied at the content including the fact that there were subject areas that seemed to have been included on a randomly chosen basis without cognisance of critical – modern issues, examples of which were nuclear physics - the nuclear submarine program or civil nuclear power. Others suggested that it would be good to show how science is used in other sectors – again linking back to the multidisciplinary nature and issue of contexts.

*"We would have liked to have seen more stem-type domains within the science. Rather than biology, chemistry, physics, a bit of geology thrown in....a bigger scope.... It was interesting on the feedback from the (QCA) video clip, where one young man was saying, 'engineering, and the science and the maths involved in the engineering,' ...that would be nice to have that in the science, talking about engineering and maths in science" (Science Consultant)*

Technologies referred to in new topics will need to ensure that they take into account new developments that are as cutting edge as possible given the fact that the future is where the focus of the big questions and major challenges lie.

### **6.3.8 Programme of Study**

Coverage of the programme of study for Key Stage 4 was also a subject for discussion that has come up at all events and a number of times. Overall it is clear to see that despite the paragraph inserted upfront in the Criteria, participants were confused about this and the PoS coverage in the topics. They could see a number of areas that were missing which nearly always brought back the question 'Who is this Diploma for?' and led into discussions on issues of Progression.

There were two topics (1.4 and 2.4) in the Criteria relating to 'energy' – which fundamentally is a critical area, but many suggested that for them it could form the hook or thread that runs throughout. They were anxious to see how the Awarding Bodies deal with that once it was explained that a subject such as energy can only appear once at each level, i.e. not duplicated across the Criteria.

### **6.3.9 Balance of Content**

A number of participants suggested that there were some definite inconsistencies relating to the amount of Knowledge and Understanding in relation to the associated Skills. Whilst there was no specific request to cut down on the Science content per se (although some did express surprise at how much content was there, this message ties in strongly with the request to emphasise the process skills fundamental to science and ensure the Knowledge and Understanding and Skills are balanced.

Also, there were several requests that specification writers should not fill the GLH out to their maximum, but to leave time for the teaching and learning. This message confirms the findings of the research conducted earlier on in the development of the Diploma in Science that teachers want more time within the curriculum<sup>9</sup>.

*"(leave time) for tinkering around the edges, the time for the skills to be taught, the PLTS activities to come in, science in the news, etc". (14-19 local adviser)*

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<sup>9</sup> Secondary Research for the Diploma in Science, Pye Tait pg 120, January 2009

### **6.3.10 Creativity of Assessment Methods**

As for the other Lines of Learning it was generally agreed that the topics set out in the Criteria document provided sufficient opportunity for creative assessment. Indeed, it was felt by most participants that the nature of the skills required and the applied context of the learning, not only provided the opportunity for, but actually demanded innovative and creative approaches to assessment. This is coming into schools more and more given the use of the previously mentioned Assessing Pupils' Progress.

*"One of the things with APP is using that to release creativity in science and that interested engagement, so like you say, the use of pupils interviewing each other, making their own videos, discussions" (School)*

Requests to see, know more about or be involved in the plans for the assessment criteria were made at all events and many participants found it hard to discuss this in any depth without any indications about assessment at all.

### **6.3.11 Employability Skills**

This was not discussed that much, and even where one employer was present – the employer was tentative, unsure and wanted to put the question back onto other participants.

Indications showed participants could not see much evidence that learners will understand what it is to work in an industrial or work environment - although it was acknowledged that this may come out via the work experience. Field work was a skill that some suggested seemed to be missing as one example.

Additionally, they could not always see evidence of opportunities to learn the different technical skills that may be required for different industries, but again it was decided this could be the purpose of ASL.

Topic 2.7 was the nearest of the original content that indicated some direct links to business and enterprise skills.

*"What [this] is doing is stopping scientists being little people in white coats huddled over test tube racks because, actually, there is another side to science and research, including product specifications. What a great idea (it would be) to run this like Dragons' Den and expect that sort of creativity that teachers could bring to it..." (FE College)*

There was no real query over sufficiency of inclusion of literacy, numeracy or ICT skills and therefore this aspect of employability skills has not been regarded as an issue.

## 6.4 New topic summaries

The new topic summaries, as presented briefly in the final two events, link directly back to the 'major challenges' posed in the vision diagram. This was perceived as progressive and exciting and the new topic summaries were more readily welcomed than that which had been previously presented.

Reactions ranged from the hugely enthusiastic, to the more cautious.

*"I think that's just brilliant actually, that would really just build on Key Stage Three beautifully and I can kind of see in terms of engagement with STEM, it will just literally blow it out of the water".*  
(Regional Science Lead )

The concern of this latter group was that, although they liked the intentions posed by the topic summaries they pointed to the potential breath of coverage indicated by the topic summaries. This could be huge and the challenge, they pointed out, would be to choose a context or theme to narrow down the content. These topic summaries would need to be distilled and gain more of a scientific focus in the summaries than they appeared to have. Also the topic on global stability, for instance, seemed to prompt a lot of consternation and discussion on how much young people needed to be exposed to the concepts of war, nuclear fallout and terrorism. The request from Birmingham was to try to soften this and make it potentially less frightening for the young learners.

It remains clear that the DDP still needs to decide critically what the fundamentals are for Principal Learning (in conjunction with the KS4 programme of study) and what should go into ASL.

Comments that came to the fore with the new topic summaries covered the need for:

- Consistency of whether questions being posed are those that can be answered or if they are aspirational.
- Pathways for progression purposes – there must still be sufficient coverage and links for A Levels and those learners wishing to go, for example, to medical school.
- Noting that use of these challenges may well attract learners that are only interested in core science.

## 6.5 Mathematics

The subject of mathematics occasionally came up unprompted across the Criteria events despite it not being a specific question for participants. Generally its coverage was in the context of other discussions, including around the STEM agenda and the application of science through engineering.

Participants acknowledged its importance to Science and were anxious to note that it was present in the Criteria. The consensus was that the only way to teach maths to the learners is to integrate it and bring it alive with real examples as emphasised by this College

*"I think the more real examples you can show them all the way through of using maths to understand something or understand how it works, it starts to make sense ". (College).*

No one indicated a major concern about its sufficiency or otherwise in the Criteria document in the events. Responses to the Criteria externally have prompted limited feedback from specific institutions whose focus is mathematics and its applications. Whilst they had no specific comment on the Criteria they stressed that the Diploma in Science must not adversely affect recruitment routes for those students studying science at school/college and progressing to degree courses in mathematics and engineering - key STEM programme areas.

Much has been written about mathematics elsewhere, so most of the discussions on the Criteria centred around making it come alive and contextualising it, bearing in mind its coverage elsewhere in functional maths. These two quotes emphasise this point and the importance of maths and science to employers and the country.

*"But I think it's the understanding of graphs and tables and charts, it's not necessarily numeracy, it's appreciating how maths can then be put into a visual context for application, and that I think is what would be really useful with science and maths combined. I'd like to think that that will come out in visiting external sites, I'd like to think that will come out with some case studies, but particularly working with employers". (Employer)*

*"We had a NASA scientist come to the area not that long ago, and he was the most inspiring science thing that happened to the kids in this (area) in a long time, and he talked about science as they learn it in school, and how that applies to what NASA does, and it was absolutely fantastic. He also said, and you might want to write this in the (Criteria) introduction, that the second biggest threat to-, well, he said the US because he was from the US, other than terrorism, is the lack of maths and scientists". (14 to 19 Science Adviser)*

## 6.6 Conclusions and Recommendations

The general points that follow have emerged as a result of the Criteria looked at in detail in the first seven events. Although the Criteria document has now changed substantially many of these are still relevant lessons for consideration by the SDDP.

### Conclusion 1

The distinctiveness and USP of the Diploma in Science is not coming across sufficiently strongly in **the vision**. The number of participants who queried its purpose and questioned the type of learner who would study the Diploma suggests that action is required from the SDDP to achieve not only greater clarification, but a much stronger sense of the purpose and target of the Diploma.

Even though the PL is just one component and ASL has not yet been considered, this issue remains critical. The Diploma in Science has a great many challenges facing it, not least those of covering the programme of study, possible duplication with KS3, being the only Line of Learning whose subject is also part of the core curriculum, the very large number of other science qualifications and

pathways on offer, and the well-established and widely-recognised route from level 2 on to A levels and university. Those working in or providing support to teaching and learning are anxious to understand how these challenges are being met.

The feelings were that the Diploma needs to recognise and react to its unique position, including the fact that Learners have already had a wealth of introductions to Science from their start on the Key Stage 1 and 2 programmes of study.

**Recommendation 1**

**Essential**

**Sections 6.2 and 6.3.3**

The SDDP should look to ensure the distinctiveness and USP of the Diploma in Science is made more explicit in the Vision. This should include a review of current statements, such as (see page 3 under Aims) *'the purpose of the Diploma in science at foundation and higher levels is to **introduce learners to the world of science**'*.

**Conclusion 2**

The vision, as presented, is a major aspect of that USP and contributes a great deal to distinctiveness, but the events provided clear evidence that there need to be more explicit links and greater use made of that vision. Participants were not convinced that an effective translation of the **vision into content** has occurred. Using the major challenges is an excellent conduit for Science Principal Learning and has been generally very well received.

However, the major challenges are at a macro level and it is evident from the discussions around 'contexts' that there could be large variations in the way these major challenges and big questions are interpreted and used. It was suggested that themes could be a way to help this distillation from the major challenges and big questions to the topics and their content. Themes suggested by participants include using Time as a concept - past /present/ future, Space - as in dimensions as well as the wider universe, or Risks, or Fuel and Hunger, Energy or economic stability, population growth, climate change and sustainability/ biodiversity.

**Recommendation 2**

**Essential**

**Section 6.3.5, 6.3.2 and 6.3.11**

It is recommended firstly that the SDDP considers how to more effectively translate that vision into content.

And, secondly, that the distillation of the vision into the content be explicitly linked to the content via the big questions and major challenges.

It is also recommended that the SDDP considers 'themes' as an approach to aid the distillation of the vision into content and make explicit links with that content directly to science core principles.

**Conclusion 3**

'Contexts' are, of course, vital for teaching and for bringing the learning to life, it is clear that these are excellent hooks in which to better **engage with learners**. The participants generally agreed that

these should be left to the Awarding Bodies to define those contexts rather than specify them in the individual topics. But it was also clear from such discussions there are a number of interpretations of what contexts are, and what might be appropriate and useful for the Diploma in Science.

**Recommendation 3**

**Desirable**

**Sections 6.3.4 and 6.3.5**

It is recommended that the SDDP consider either providing a series of contexts for consideration as per the approach used by the Languages and International Communication (for the target language) or they make use of the Awarding Body toolkit to set out a variety of suggestions of contexts for each topic.

**Conclusion 4**

The participants were anxious to point out that much of what had been covered in the Criteria **content** was not new or cutting edge and in fact seemed to miss out new technologies or issues critical to the modern world relating to energy for example eg nuclear and nuclear physics.

Similarly, the participants pointed out that the use of organisations and people who use or work in science within the **topic summaries** were, on occasion, inconsistent and very oriented toward certain top level job roles. They felt these were not always as diverse or inclusive as they could be.

**Recommendation 4**

**Essential**

**Sections 6.3.7 and 6.3.6**

It is recommended firstly, that the SDDP ensures that the final content is modern and that applications, technologies and resources referred to are as future looking as possible and that secondly, if the use of organisations and people are referenced within the topic summaries that these are diverse, wide ranging and inclusive.

**Conclusion 5**

Regarding the **multidisciplinary** aspect it was clear this was not fully understood or sufficiently displayed across the Criteria content according to the participants. Some topics in the Criteria were seen as too readily identifiable as biology or chemistry which was regarded as a wasted opportunity. It was suggested that making this clearer and supporting what is laid out in the vision will help aid the distinctiveness and USP of the Diploma as well as give guidance to the Awarding Bodies.

**Recommendation 5**

**Desirable**

**Sections 6.2.2, 6.3.2 and 6.3.7**

It is recommended that the SDDP consider the issue of the multidisciplinary approach (it is noted that this will be interdisciplinary in future) to ensure greater clarity on how this is treated across

the Principal Learning.

#### Conclusion 6

Allied to all previous conclusions and recommendations on **engaging learners**, the relevance of the **content** and the **multidisciplinary** approach, Physics was the area of the traditional disciplines that was most frequently mentioned as being poorly dealt with. This was perceived as an example of not translating the vision into content especially when considering the importance of physics to the modern world, the big questions and major challenges.

#### Recommendation 6

**Essential**

**Sections 6.3.2 and 6.3.5**

It is recommended that physics is brought more strongly in to the new Criteria, topics and their content thus linking back to the vision.

#### Conclusion 7

The KS4 Programme of Study is a major driver of content for the Criteria. Despite the KS4 statement in the Criteria document participants were unclear on its treatment and coverage in the Criteria. They requested reassurance that it had been covered across the topics sufficiently as certain subject areas were spotted as missing which unsettled them and encouraged a re-questioning of the purpose of the Diploma in Science

#### Recommendation 7

**Desirable**

**Sections 6.3.8**

It is recommended that the SDDP ensures it is clear on its treatment of the PoS when rewriting the Criteria and it considers whether to indicate or signpost how the PoS has been treated within the final Criteria document.

#### Conclusion 8

**Progression** was a key issue for discussion. Evidence was found in the Criteria of overlap with KS3 and inconsistencies between terms used in the Diploma and in KS3. Participants did prefer to being able to see consistency between levels 1 to level 2.

#### Recommendation 8

**Essential**

**Sections 6.3.3**

It is recommended that all new topics are checked against the KS3 PoS for consistency and to enable smooth progression. It is also recommended that all new topics should have logical and explicit links across levels 1 to 2 (and to 3 when that becomes available).

**Conclusion 9**

Discussions about **progression** from level 2 to level 3 were restricted by the lack of level 3 content in the Criteria. Nonetheless, there were serious concerns expressed at the events about a) whether the content in level 2 would be sufficient to enable progression from the Higher level Diploma particularly to A levels but also to other pathways through and from the Diploma, and b) the lack of an apparent rationale for the split of content within the level 2 PL and what is intended to be in the ASL.

**Recommendation 9**

**Essential**

**Section 6.3.3**

It is recommended that the SDDP considers this urgently for Principal Learning to aid discussions for the Level 3 and help inform ASL.

**Conclusion 10**

**Scientific skills** people acquire as a result of studying science are transferable and highly employable. This is a key message that parents and learners buy into and has been brought into the new KS4 PoS and recent qualification specifications. They are key to the Vision, the USP of the Diploma and its overall successful reception within the Science community.

Participants were convinced that such skills, i.e. the process skills and the using science or "how science works" skills, are a major hook and should be brought out much more strongly than is currently the case. Currently owing to the presentation of the Criteria document these appear in the topics last of all and reinforce the view that they appear to be of a lesser weight than the Knowledge and Understanding.

**Recommendation 10**

**Essential**

**Sections 6.2, 6.2.1, 6.3.4 and 6.3.11**

It is recommended that consideration is given to raising the profile and emphasis of these critical skills within the Criteria.

## Appendix 1 – Attendees for the 9 Events for Phase 4

### Total Attendee Numbers

#### Breakdown of all attendees across all 9 events by Line of Learning.

	Humanities and Social Sciences	Languages and International Communication	Science	TOTAL
Durham	7	11	16	34
Manchester	10	17	18	45
London	22	18	21	61
Leeds	11	14	16	41
Basingstoke	8	14	13	35
Bristol	14	10	14	38
Ipswich	11	12	15	38
Nottingham	14	15	12	41
Birmingham	15	17	19	51
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>384</b>

## Humanities and Social Sciences

### Breakdown of all Humanities and Social Sciences attendees across all 9 events.

Attendee Type	Total
Awarding body	8
Employer	3
Further Education College/Sixth Form	19
Higher Education	8
Local Authority	21
Other Education*	7
School	14
Sector Skills Council	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>112</b>

\*Other Education includes Professional Bodies, Learned Societies, Consultants and other educational organisations

### Breakdown of Humanities and Social Sciences attendees by event.

#### Durham 21<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – Radisson SAS Hotel

Attendee Type	Total
Awarding body	1
Further Education College/Sixth Form	1
Local Authority	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>

#### Manchester 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2009 – Radisson SAS Manchester Airport Hotel

Attendee Type	Total
Further Education College/Sixth Form	3
Local Authority	1
School	3
Higher Education	1
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>

**London 28th April 2009 – Jumeirah Carlton Tower Hotel**

<b>Attendee Type</b>	<b>Total</b>
Awarding Body	2
Further Education College/Sixth Form	3
Local Authority	7
School	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>

**Leeds 7<sup>th</sup> May 2009 – The Queens Hotel**

<b>Attendee Type</b>	<b>Total</b>
Further Education College/Sixth Form	4
Local Authority	1
Other Education	2
School	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>

**Basingstoke 12<sup>th</sup> May 2009 – Basingstoke Country Hotel**

<b>Attendee Type</b>	<b>Total</b>
Employer	1
Further Education College/Sixth Form	1
Local Authority	1
Other Education (Consultant)	1
School	1
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>

**Bristol 14<sup>th</sup> May 2009 – Mercure Holland House Hotel**

<b>Attendee Type</b>	<b>Total</b>
Employer	1
Further Education College/Sixth Form	1
Higher Education	1
Local Authority	3
School	4
Sector Skills Council	1
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>

**Ipswich 19<sup>th</sup> May 2009 – Trinity Park Conference Centre**

<b>Attendee Type</b>	<b>Total</b>
Awarding body	2
Further Education College/Sixth Form	4
Higher Education	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>

**Nottingham 28<sup>th</sup> May 2009 – East Midlands Conference Centre**

<b>Attendee Type</b>	<b>Total</b>
Awarding body	1
Higher Education	2
Local Authority	3
Other Education	2
School	2
Sector Skills Council	1
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>

**Birmingham 29<sup>th</sup> May 2009 – Crowne Plaza NEC**

<b>Attendee Type</b>	<b>Total</b>
Awarding body	2
Employer	1
Further Education College/Sixth Form	2
Higher Education	2
Local Authority/Government	3
Other Education	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>

## Languages and International Communication

### Breakdown of all Languages and International Communication attendees across all 9 events.

Attendee Type	Total
Awarding body	4
Employer	3
Further Education College/Sixth Form	18
Higher Education	16
Local Authority	21
Other Education*	9
School	28
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	29
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>128</b>

\*Other Education includes Professional Bodies, Learned Societies, Consultants and other educational organisations

### Breakdown of Languages and International Communication attendees by event.

#### Durham 21<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – Radisson SAS Hotel

Attendee Type	Total
Further Education College/Sixth Form	2
Local Authority	3
Higher Education	1
School	1
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>

#### Manchester 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2009 – Radisson SAS Manchester Airport Hotel

Attendee Type	Total
Further Education College/Sixth Form	2
Local Authority	3
School	8
Higher Education	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>

**London 28th April 2009 – Jumeirah Carlton Tower Hotel**

Attendee Type	Total
Awarding Body	1
Employer	1
Further Education College/Sixth Form	3
Higher Education	2
Local Authority/Government	2
Other Education	1
School	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>

**Leeds 7<sup>th</sup> May 2009 – The Queens Hotel**

Attendee Type	Total
Awarding Body	1
Further Education College/Sixth Form	1
Higher Education	1
Local Authority	4
Other Education	1
School	3
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>

**Basingstoke 12<sup>th</sup> May 2009 - Basingstoke Country Hotel**

Attendee Type	Total
Higher Education	2
Local Authority	2
Other Education	2
School	4
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>

**Bristol 14<sup>th</sup> May 2009 - Mercure Holland House Hotel**

Attendee Type	Total
Further Education College/Sixth Form	1
Local Authority	4
School	3
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>

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**Ipswich 19<sup>th</sup> May 2009 – Trinity Park Conference Centre**

<b>Attendee Type</b>	<b>Total</b>
Employer	1
Further Education College/Sixth Form	3
Other Education	2
School	4
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>

**Nottingham 28<sup>th</sup> May 2009 – East Midlands Conference Centre**

<b>Attendee Type</b>	<b>Total</b>
Awarding Body	1
Employer	1
Further Education College/Sixth Form	1
Higher Education	5
Other Education	3
School	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>

**Birmingham 29<sup>th</sup> May 2009 – Crowne Plaza NEC**

<b>Attendee Type</b>	<b>Total</b>
Awarding Body	1
Further Education College/Sixth Form	5
Higher Education	3
Local Authority	3
School	1
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17</b>

## Science

### Breakdown of all Science attendees across all 9 events.

Attendee Type	Total
Awarding body	7
Employer	4
Further Education College/Sixth Form	25
Higher Education	11
Local Authority	32
Other Education*	22
School	16
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	27
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>144</b>

\*Other Education includes Professional Bodies, Learned Societies, Consultants and other educational organisations

### Breakdown of Science attendees by event.

#### Durham 21<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – Radisson SAS Hotel

Attendee Type	Total
Further Education College/Sixth Form	4
Local Authority	5
Higher Education	1
Other Education	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>

#### Manchester 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2009 – Radisson SAS Manchester Airport Hotel

Attendee Type	Total
Further Education College/Sixth Form	3
Local Authority	5
School	6
Other Education	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>

**London 28th April 2009 – Jumeirah Carlton Tower Hotel**

<b>Attendee Type</b>	<b>Total</b>
Awarding Body	2
Further Education College/Sixth Form	3
Higher Education	2
Local Authority	4
School	3
Other Education	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>

**Leeds 7<sup>th</sup> May 2009 – The Queens Hotel**

<b>Attendee Type</b>	<b>Total</b>
Further Education College/Sixth Form	5
Local Authority	4
Other Education	1
School	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>

**Basingstoke 12<sup>th</sup> May 2009 – Basingstoke Country Hotel**

<b>Attendee Type</b>	<b>Total</b>
Awarding Body	1
Higher Education	3
Local Authority	3
Other Education	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13</b>

**Bristol 14<sup>th</sup> May 2009 – Mercure Holland House Hotel**

<b>Attendee Type</b>	<b>Total</b>
Awarding Body	1
Employer	1
Further Education College/Sixth Form	2
Local Authority	1
Other Education	5
School	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>

**Ipswich 19<sup>th</sup> May 2009 – Trinity Park Conference Centre**

<b>Attendee Type</b>	<b>Total</b>
Awarding Body	2
Further Education College/Sixth Form	4
Higher Education	1
Local Authority	4
Other Education	2
School	1
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>

**Nottingham 28<sup>th</sup> May 2009 – East Midlands Conference Centre**

<b>Attendee Type</b>	<b>Total</b>
Employer	2
Further Education College/Sixth Form	1
Higher Education	2
Local Authority	3
Other Education	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>

**Birmingham 29<sup>th</sup> May 2009 – Crowne Plaza NEC**

<b>Attendee Type</b>	<b>Total</b>
Awarding Body	1
Employer	1
Further Education College/Sixth Form	3
Higher Education	2
Local Authority	3
Other Education	4
School	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>

## Appendix 2 – Actions for Criteria Writers

### Languages and International Communication

The following statements list specific changes that the Criteria Writer for the Diploma in Languages and International Communication should consider making, following feedback from the consultation process.

Note that these are small items IN ADDITION to the main issues and debates referred to in the main section of the report.

#### **Summary Statements**

A number of topic summaries contain a statement beginning ‘provide learners with opportunities to...’, followed by a statement beginning ‘enable learners to...’. One participant at Durham commented that the enabling of various activities could not take place without the opportunity first being provided, thereby negating the need for the former statement, and instead placing the emphasis more on application. Others however, favoured the discreet split, interpreting ‘opportunities’ as the degree of selective agency afforded to learners, and ‘enabling’ as the support role of teachers.

Topic 1.2 – *Living in a global village*: Participants at a number of events were unhappy with the use of the term ‘village’. The DDP explained that this was intended to convey the values of ‘community’, but was deemed to be something of a cliché, failing to capture the topic’s inherent aspects of scale, cohesion and diversity.

Topic 1.3 – *Using Languages at work*: Participants at Durham felt that the first two summary statements conveyed an overlapping message, and should be amalgamated. Both statements referenced the development of an awareness of language and intercultural skills at work

Topics 2.3 and 3.3: Participants in London discussed the relevance of to the purpose statements to either ‘languages’ or ‘international communication’. Whilst it was agreed that communication was inherent in relation to global perspectives and challenges, it was felt that this could be made clearer in the topic summaries, to avoid crossing over into the field of humanities.

Topic 2.8 – *Using language creatively*: At the Leeds event, participants commented on the first purpose statement – ‘to illuminate countries and cultures...’. It was felt that the term ‘illuminate’ was vague, and that this was also not made clear through the rest of the topic content.

Topic 3.1 – *Using linguistics for discourse analysis*. One participant in Leeds identified a lack of clarity in the third purpose statement – ‘morphological, semantic and phonetic analysis in English

and the target language'. It was explained by the DDP that the analysis itself would not be undertaken *in* the target language, but would *use* the target language as its source.

Topic 3.8 – *Illuminate issues through creative works and media*. Participants in Durham were unclear how 'issues' were linked to creative language and the aesthetics of creative works. The review and development of creative works was considered to be the main purpose, with the illumination of issues a secondary concept.

### ***Other suggested amendments***

Topics 1.1, 1.4 and 1.5: Make it clearer in the Criteria that greater emphasis will be placed on the receptive skills, with some emphasis on speaking, and limited emphasis on writing in the target language

Topic 1.1: Make K&U 2 clearer in order to specify whether comparisons may be drawn within one language, within a language family, or between language families

Topic 1.2: Replace the word 'village' with a word which conveys scale, cohesion and diversity

Topic 1.2: Amend K&U 1 to make it clearer that indirect connections with diverse cultural groups (such as television documentaries) can be used to address this point – in order to relieve pressure on schools in rural areas, or without an ethnic minority population

Topic 1.3: Add clarity to the requirement to produce gist summaries, to explain the expectations in relation to the target language and English

Topic 1.3: Purpose statements 1 & 2 should be considered for amalgamation

Topic 1.4: Consider changing the title and K&U 7 to reflect that the remainder of the content is more weighted towards 'information' and 'opinions' rather than the more complex formulation of ideas at this level

Topic 1.1: Add 'language borrowing' (as per from K&U 5 - topic 2.1). Identified as a fascinating area for learners at level 1 to study

Topic 2.2: Add K&U 9 from topic 2.5 – 'some of the basic strategies needed to teach language to others'

Topic 2.7: Consider the inclusion of 'non verbal techniques at level 2 (currently present at level 1s and 3)

Topic 3.5: Amend K&U 6 to reflect that the process of actually undertaking simultaneous interpreting is not required

Topic 3.6: Consider the inclusion of 'self-reflection' in respect of the challenges learners might face when approaching research

The 'structure diagram' was well received at all consultation events. Amend this to correct the placing of topic 3.1, add the GLH amounts per topic, and consider incorporating the diagram into future publications and communications

## Humanities and Social Science: Topic Specific Findings

**NB** The following should not be read as series of specific recommendations, but as a summary of detailed responses to individual topics that emerged in the events and their implications.

### Topic 1.1

- Contradictory views have been received from different events on whether to change the GLH assigned to this topic from 30 to 60 GLH. This point needs careful thought, but, at the very least, the positive response in Bristol to topic 1.2 suggests that it should not be reduced to provide additional hours for 1.1.
- There may be some need to increase the sophistication of the title question to make reference to the origins of identity – something like ‘How do we become who we are?’ – in order to make a clearer differentiation from primary and KS3 study
- K&U 1 should include culture as well as family, location, etc.
- K&U 2 may need to be defined more closely to specify the breadth/depth of study: one HE delegate observed this could be an undergraduate course in its own right.
- K&U 3 should include cultural differences as well as similarities
- K&U 4 should be reworded to broaden the range of evidence that can be accessed by learners: the word ‘artefacts’ should be inserted between ‘cultural forms’ and ‘or media’.
- The requirement to ‘interpret’ identities in skill statement 1 was felt by some delegates to be too sophisticated for Level 1; ‘identify’ different identities was thought to be more appropriate
- There may be a need to introduce the global dimension, even if only at a basic level, especially given the increased social and economic interaction across cultures and borders made possible by ICT.

### Topic 1.2

- The last sentence of the first paragraph of the topic summary is perceived to be to reduce the purpose of the topic to self-interested economic goals, and should be removed or rewritten.
- K&U 2 has been criticised for being too ambiguous and imprecise – what kind of ‘key natural and human characteristics’ are being referred to?
- K&U 3 was felt to be ambiguous in scope
- The inclusion of GIS was broadly welcomed, although some geography specialists suggested that in the level 3 topic there needed to be more precision in defining the kind of GIS systems that should be covered; the same would presumably apply at this level
- K&U 6 was felt to be very content heavy, and the DDP should consider eliminating or truncating it
- In Skill Statement 1, the requirement to ‘plan’ a research investigation may represent too high a level of challenge for a Level 1 learner
- Geography specialists have suggested that there may need to be more opportunity to discuss physical geographical characteristics of an area, such as weather and geology.

### Topic 1.3

- This topic may require more emphasis on the reciprocal nature of communication – on the need to receive as well as produce communications – particularly in the topic summary.
- This topic may also present Diversity and Inclusion issues for learners who have difficulty

with social and personal interactions, for example learners with Asperger's Syndrome.

- Some providers felt that this topic as a whole would be too demanding for learners, while others felt that they could see how it could realistically be delivered. There may need to be some tighter specification of scope and level to ensure that the level of demand is clear
- K&U 4 may be too demanding – at this level it may be more appropriate for learners to be aware 'that' rather than 'why' different forms of communication are used for different purposes.
- The skill statements may be too sophisticated, particularly K&U 1; it should be more of a priority at level 1 that learners should be able to inform rather than persuade and influence
- The PLTS may be improved by including either 'team workers' or 'effective 151articipants'.0

#### Topic 1.4

- There may need to be more emphasis on actually carrying out a research investigation, rather than just planning it
- K&U 6 may be rather ambitious in requiring learners to understand 'how to organise fieldwork'

#### Topic 1.5

- Careful consideration needs to be given to the intended outcomes of this topic; some delegates at Manchester suggested that the topic implies that learners should be radicals, a possibility that provoked strongly positive and negative reactions.

#### Topic 2.1

- The first sentence of the topic summary is rather tortuous
- K&U 5 may need amplification and emphasis to show how research may reflect emotional, ethical or contentious *agendas*
- An HE representative felt that it would be helpful to introduce learners to present research findings in appropriate scholarly format i.e. with footnotes and bibliographies

#### Topic 2.2

- There may need to be more focus on the negative effects of social change. There is perceived to be an implicit assumption that change is 'good'.

#### Topic 2.3

- In K&U 2 there should be some reference to global contexts
- K&U 4 contains errors of fact in describing certain agencies as charities when they are not. The list should include NGOs and social enterprises.
- K&U 9 contains an ambiguity – some delegates assumed it referred to research evidence produced by others, when the intention is that it should refer to the learner's own research findings

#### Topic 2.4

- An Awarding Body representative suggested that this topic may be unsophisticated for Level 2.
- There was some suggestion that the topic may prove disengaging
- There was some concern about K&U 5, which could easily be reduced to a 'tick-list'; this could be mitigated if it was changed to read 'the ways in which organisations, including banks, etc. ... are involved with and affect economies.'

- The topic may benefit from some consideration of inequalities of wealth, both within and beyond the borders of the UK.
- The skills statements were felt to be ambiguous, especially numbers 3 (what is a 'straightforward' economic statistic?) and 5.

#### Topic 2.5

- The inclusion of classics in K&U one is inadequate. There needs to be more exact specific of what is intended here.
- K&U 6 would be improved and made more active if 'the process of engaging with and influencing' is replace with 'how to engage with and influence'
- K&U 8 is ambiguous; delegates were unsure what it meant, and few understood that it meant presenting a viewpoint which is not the learner's own
- Skills statement 3 may be better and more differentiated from Level 1 if it is changed to 'Take on a team role'.

#### Topic 2.6

- Some delegates felt that this may need a stronger emphasis on developing 'media literacy', a critical awareness of differing agendas and motivations that shape the presentation of information within and between media forms
- This may be an opportunity to include consideration of the basic features of messages – 'who is communicating what to whom, how, and why?'
- This topic represents an opportunity to introduce text analysis and historical analysis skills more explicitly
- Some consideration of rhetorical strategies may be appropriate at this level, and could introduce some important Classics content.

#### Topic 2.7

- This topic was felt by some delegates to have simplistic approach to knowledge and values
- The statement could be more concise and more sophisticated if K&U 3 was eliminated, and the first word of K&U 5 changed to 'why' instead of 'that'
- K&U 4 should include consideration of the way that values, beliefs and assumptions divide as well as unit humanities and social sciences disciplines
- K&U 7 caused recurrent difficulties for delegates, because they struggled to understand what it means to 'assess' personal attitudes and beliefs
- There is an opportunity in this topic to introduce applied contexts related to the management of diversity in the workplace

#### Topic 3.1

- This topic was generally well received by all stakeholder groups
- In K&U 1, the case for retaining revelatory knowledge was made more coherently than the case for excluding it; however the sentence would benefit from rewriting to make it less contentious: 'that people make claims to possess knowledge on the basis of scientific, historical and philosophical study, ethical claims, and religious revelation.'

#### Topic 3.2

- K&U 2 should include socio-cultural and historical factors
- K&U 8 has been criticised as seeming 'politically correct'. Perhaps change it to 'how to take into account other people's viewpoints.'
- A delegate with experience teaching this kind of subject matter commented that this topic was 'spot on for Level 3'.

### Topic 3.3

- Some delegates felt that this topic should require a more sophisticated consideration of the subject matter
- The last sentence of the topic summary implies that ‘promoting social cohesion’ is always a good thing. Historical examples show that some regimes are highly socially cohesive but this should not necessarily be construed as a good thing.
- Conflict is implicitly viewed as a ‘bad thing’ which must be managed or eliminated. There needs to be some consideration of the productive nature of some kinds of conflict. This is of special significance for students of the humanities and social sciences, where the development of knowledge is closely tied to encountering conflicting points of view.
- The word ‘survey’ in skills statement 2 can be understood in different ways – for example by geographers (physical surveys) and social researchers (questionnaires etc).
- The last skills statement also implicitly promotes the idea of ‘social cohesion’ as an uncomplicated intrinsic good.

### Topic 3.4

- Learners at Level 3 may need a better grasp of the dynamic and reciprocal nature of environmental change
- K&U 3 has an implicit ‘Green’ agenda; it should read something like ‘the impact of human existence and activity on the environment, including factors such as population density, the exploitation of natural resources (including forestry, agriculture and fisheries), and industrial activity.’
- K&U 6 needs to take into account political and social factors
- Underlying agendas and ideologies need to be made explicit, such as ecologism and industrialism.

### Topic 3.5

- The topic may display an implicit bias towards high culture
- In K&U 3 there is a need to consider how culture is transmitted and sustained
- The topic may benefit from consideration of the way that culture is used to establish and maintain hierarchies

### Topic 3.6

- This topic needs to incorporate consideration of the origins and nature of political ideologies, including at a minimum Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism and Marxism.
- There was some controversy at one event of K&U 5, which it was felt could be used to introduce extremely sensitive and emotive subject matter connected with competing cultural values. Some felt that this was inappropriate, others welcomed it as a necessary process.
- The disjunction between governance issues and team working knowledge and skills needs to be worked out properly

### Topic 3.7

- Several delegates suggested that this topic needed to be very clearly interdisciplinary; it should coordinate economic and social data and introduce questions of sustainability and development
- K&U 3 in this topic may be a less appropriate place to consider ideology than in topic 3.6
- Commercial organisations need to be considered in K&U 8
- K&U 9 is extremely general and imprecise – what is the real focus of this statement?

- K&U 11 needs to specify the kind of economic data to be interpreted more precisely
- The skills statements in this unit have been criticised for being too general, and in the case of statement 3, too ambitious. Suggestions have been made that statements 1 and 2 should refer to development data/trends, or relevant social and economic data and trends
- Skills statement 3 should require learners to propose 'some solutions' to 'a trade or world development issue.'