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Qualification Specification

CFI Level 3 Certificate in Agroecological System Design: Farming and Business Practices

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Contents

Key Facts **4**

Section 1: About this Qualification **5**

1.1 Why take this qualification? 5

1.2 What are the entry requirements? 5

1.3 What does the qualification cover? 5

1.4 What are the assessment methods? 7

Section 2: Units **8**

2.1 Unit List 8

Unit 1: Permaculture in Practice as a Design Methodology 9

Unit 2: Permaculture in Practice – the Built Environment 11

Unit 3: Permaculture in Practice – People and Permaculture 12

Unit 4: Business Planning, Local Sales and Marketing 14

Section 3: Delivering this qualification **16**

3.1 Requirements for Centres 16

3.2 Quality Assurance 16

3.3 Assessment Planning Guidance 18

3.4 Training and Support 18

3.5 Policies and Procedures 18

Key Facts

Qualification Title	CFI Level 3 Certificate in Agroecological System Design: Farming and Business Practices
Qualification Number (QAN)	610/4499/4
Qualification Type	VRQ
Sector	3.1 Agriculture
Level	3
Rules of Combination	All units are compulsory
Total Qualification Time	128 hours
Guided Learning Hours	86 hours
Minimum age of learners	18
Assessment Methods	Portfolio of evidence
Grading system	Pass/Fail
How long will it take to complete?	3 months (up to 6 months)
Developed by	The qualification has been developed by CFI with subject-specific expertise provided by Apricot Centre.

Section 1: About this Qualification

1.1 Why take this qualification?

The Level 3 Certificate in Agroecological System Design offers you vital skills and knowledge essential for navigating the dynamic world of sustainable agriculture. This qualification aims to:

- **Deepen your knowledge**: build a solid foundation in agroecological principles, setting you up for further studies, such as a Level 4 Certificate or degree in sustainable agriculture, agroecology, or related subjects.
- **Boost your career prospects**: improve your employability in regenerative farming and agroecological system design, equipping you to make a meaningful impact on sustainable food production practices.
- **Prepare for career opportunities**: get ready for roles in farm management, agroecological consulting, and sustainable business practice, whether in smallholdings or larger agricultural enterprises.
- **Open pathways to innovation**: position yourself for creative roles in regenerative food systems, including community-supported agriculture and sustainable supply chain management.
- **Enable practical implementation**: develop the skills needed to apply practical solutions in regenerative agriculture, promoting sustainable land management and enhancing biodiversity.
- **Encourage ongoing development**: inspire personal growth and a commitment to lifelong learning, motivating you to advocate for regenerative practices and environmental stewardship.

By completing this qualification, you will be well-equipped to contribute significantly to the shift towards sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices, benefiting both the environment and the community.

1.2 What are the entry requirements?

To study on this qualification, you need to demonstrate to the centre that you have:

- A commitment to work-based learning
- In the case that English is not your first language, proof of spoken and written English at a level equivalent to IELTS 6.0.

1.3 What does the qualification cover?

This qualification comprises four mandatory modules:

Permaculture in Practice as a Design Methodology

Learners will understand the key features and uses of Permaculture as the design process(es) used for creating agroecological and regenerative land-based systems.

Permaculture in Practice – the Built Environment

Learners will understand the ethics, principles and process of Permaculture as the design process(es) used for creating the built environment in agroecological and regenerative land-based systems.

Permaculture in Practice – People and Permaculture

Learners will understand how they can apply Permaculture design practice, ethics and principles in their work, their community and in communication with others, to create resilient and healthy designs and work environments within agroecological and regenerative land-based systems.

Business Planning, Local Sales and Marketing

Learners will explore how agroecological and regenerative land-based systems aim to re-localise sales and shorten the supply chain, and the methods of achieving this. Learners will understand that businesses need to be economically regenerative, pay fair wages, and to become financially sustainable in the long term. Learners will be able to explore how to model business for purpose rather than profit.

This qualification is at Level 3 as defined by Ofqual:

Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition - Section E - Design and development of qualifications - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Knowledge descriptor (the holder ...)	Skills descriptor (the holder can ...)
Has factual, procedural and theoretical knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to complete tasks and address problems that while well-defined, may be complex and non-routine. Can interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas. Is aware of the nature of the area of study or work. Is aware of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.	Identify, select and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills, methods and procedures to address problems that while well-defined, may be complex and non-routine. Use appropriate investigation to inform actions. Review how effective methods and actions have been.

1.4 What are the assessment methods?

You will create a portfolio of evidence throughout your time working towards this qualification. This may include:

- Observation of practice by experienced tutors
- Written assignments
- Reflective practice, e.g. a learning journal or self-reflective journals
- Peer observation or feedback as witness testimony
- Artefacts

The portfolio must be your own work and centres will be responsible for verifying that work has been authenticated. CFI awarding takes any reports of suspected plagiarism or other forms of malpractice seriously and will investigate any such reports via the Malpractice Policy which is available on our website.

Note: Plagiarism This means claiming work to be your own which has been copied from someone or somewhere else. All the work you submit must be your own and not copied from anyone else unless you clearly reference the source of your information. This includes the use of AI (please see our AI policy for further information). If there is evidence that your work is copied from elsewhere, it will not be accepted, and you may be subject to a disciplinary procedure.

Section 2: Units

2.1 Unit List

This qualification has 4 units in total, each of which contributes to the learner's development of knowledge, understanding and skill.

All units are mandatory.

Unit title	Ofqual ref	Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	Total qualification time (TQT)	Credits
Unit 1 – Permaculture in Practice as a Design Methodology	H/650/1061	24	40	4
Unit 2 – Permaculture in Practice – the Built Environment	J/650/1062	22	30	3
Unit 3 – Permaculture in Practice – People and Permaculture	K/650/1063	22	30	3
Unit 4 – Business Planning, Local Sales and Marketing	Y/650/1068	20	30	3
Qualification total		**88**	**130**	**13**

Unit 1: Permaculture in Practice as a Design Methodology

Unit reference	H/650/1061	**Guided Learning Hours (GLH)**	26
Unit level	3	**Total Qualification Time (TQT)**	40

Unit aim In this unit, learners will develop an understanding of the Permaculture design practice.

Unit rationale Learners will understand the key features and uses of Permaculture as the design process(es) used for creating regenerative land-based systems.

Learning outcomes The learner will:	Assessment criteria The learner can:
1. Understand a range of design methodologies	1.1 Explain two different design tools used for analysis
	1.2 Use a given design method appropriately
	1.3 Present a Permaculture design
2. Be able to use a range of communication and facilitation skills when carrying out Permaculture design	2.1 Carry out a client interview effectively
	2.2 Create a site survey base plan using information from the client interview
	2.3 Explain two different methods for reaching a decision in a group
	2.4 Explain the importance of effective communication and facilitation skills

3. Be able to present a design	3.1 Use one presentation method to present the final design
	3.2 Use a base map to scale

Unit 2: Permaculture in Practice – The Built Environment

Unit reference	J/650/1062	**Guided Learning Hours (GLH)**	22
Unit level	3	**Total Qualification Time (TQT)**	30

Unit aim In this unit, learners will develop an understanding of how Permaculture design practice, ethics and principles are applied to the built environment.

Unit rationale Learners will understand the ethics, principles and process of Permaculture as the design process(es) used for creating the built environment in regenerative land-based systems.

Learning outcomes The learner will:	Assessment criteria The learner can:
1. Understand the built environment in the context of a agroecological and regenerative land-based system	1.1 Explain the principles of low-energy buildings
	1.2 Explain how energy management and renewable energy is managed in your workplace
	1.3 Explain how transport of the workforce or the produce affects the carbon impact of the land-based system
2. Understand how to reduce the carbon footprint of your personal life	2.1 Present a plan to re-localise a personal food supply
	2.2 Present a plan to reduce the carbon footprint of your home
	2.3 Present a plan to reduce the carbon footprint of your transport use

Unit 3: Permaculture in Practice – People and Permaculture

Unit reference	K/650/1063	**Guided Learning Hours (GLH)**	22
Unit level	3	**Total Qualification Time (TQT)**	30

Unit aim

In this unit, learners will develop a range of personal and interpersonal skills that inform how they can use these skills in ethical agroecological and regenerative systems. They will be able to develop networks and peer-to-peer learning which is vital for continuing professional practice.

Unit rationale

Learners will understand how they can apply Permaculture design practice, ethics and principles are applied to themselves, and in community and communication with others, to create resilient and healthy designs and work environments within regenerative land-based systems.

Learning outcomes The learner will:	Assessment criteria The learner can:
1. Understand the concepts of nature connection	1.1 Explain the principles of nature-based principles
	1.2 Explain the importance of indigenous knowledge nature reciprocity
	1.3 Explain the use of indigenous knowledge in agroecological and regenerative land systems
	1.4 Explain the concept of power, privilege and rank and equity in the context of nature connection and indigenous practices

2. Be able to explore next steps for professional development	2.1 Evaluate next steps in learning and training opportunities in agroecological and regenerative land systems
	2.2 Identify effective networks and support groups

Unit 4: Business Skills, Local Sales and Marketing

Unit reference	Y/650/1068	**Guided Learning Hours (GLH)**	20
Unit level	3	**Total Qualification Time (TQT)**	30

Unit aim

In this unit, learners will be introduced to provide an introduction to simple business planning methods, business structures and community-supported agriculture systems.

Unit rationale

Learners will explore how agroecological and regenerative land-based systems aim to re-localise sales and shorten the supply chain, and the methods of achieving this. Learners will understand the businesses need to be economically regenerative, pay fair wages, and to become financially sustainable in the long term. Learners will be able to explore how to model business "for purpose" rather than profit.

Learning outcomes The learner will:	Assessment criteria The learner can:
1. Understand the principles of business planning and marketing	1.1 Describe a range of business planning techniques and methods
	1.2 Demonstrate how the concept of diversity and resilience is used in business planning
2. Understand the practices used by agroecological and regenerative businesses	2.1 Evaluate the effectiveness of local trading systems and the circular food economy
	2.2 Explain how local marketing methods used by regenerative land-based businesses can be economically viable

3. Understand the legal requirements for land-based business to operate	3.1 Describe a suitable business structure for a regenerative business
	3.2 Describe the legal requirements for regenerative businesses including: • Insurance • Health and Safety • Trading standards • Food hygiene registrations • Trading licences
	3.3 Describe suitable land tenures for regenerative land businesses

Section 3: Delivering this qualification

3.1 Requirements for Centres

Centres must be approved by CFI awarding. In order to be approved to offer this qualification, centres must have:

- Staff who are appropriately qualified and experienced in regenerative farming and land-based systems
- A learning environment that combines both theoretical and practical experiences, including work experience and placement

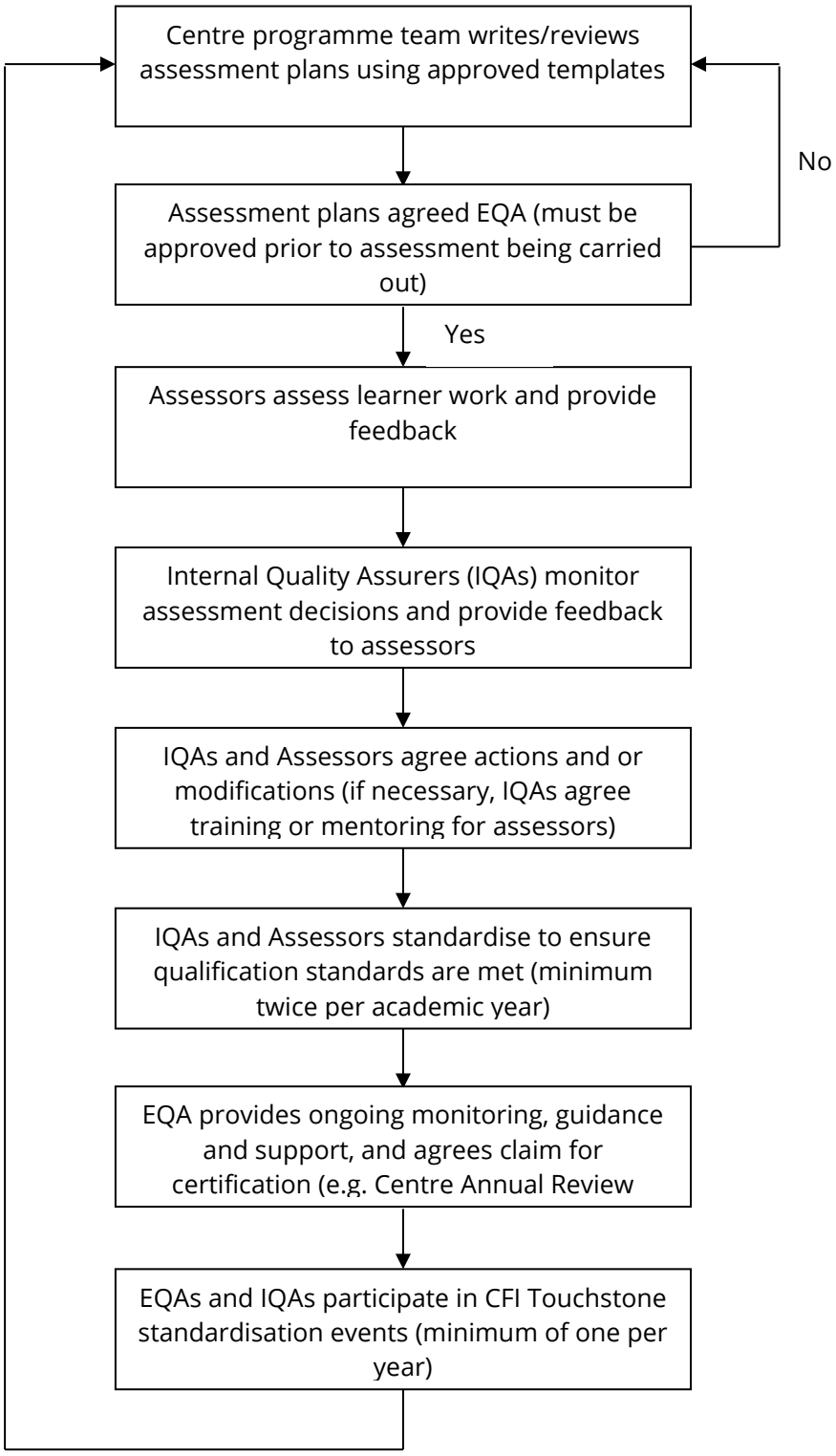
For more information about the process of becoming a centre, please contact us at info@cfiwarding.com or refer to our Centre Handbook (www.cfiawarding.com).

3.2 Quality Assurance

The CFI awarding approach to quality assurance is underpinned by educational values which address the holistic development and transformation of the learner. In this qualification teaching, learning and assessment should be interconnected in order to support each individual to reach their full potential.

The primary aim of the CFI Quality Team is to support centres in delivering the best possible learning experience and high levels of achievement for learners. Centres will be allocated an External Quality Assurer (EQA) by the CFI QA Team.

Centres delivering this qualification are required to follow this CFI Quality Assurance process:


Centre programme team writes/reviews assessment plans using approved templates
Assessment plans agreed EQA (must be approved prior to assessment being carried out)
No
Yes
Assessors assess learner work and provide feedback
Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs) monitor assessment decisions and provide feedback to assessors
IQAs and Assessors agree actions and or modifications (if necessary, IQAs agree training or mentoring for assessors)
IQAs and Assessors standardise to ensure qualification standards are met (minimum twice per academic year)
EQA provides ongoing monitoring, guidance and support, and agrees claim for certification (e.g. Centre Annual Review
EQAs and IQAs participate in CFI Touchstone standardisation events (minimum of one per year)

3.3 Assessment Planning Guidance

This qualification uses a centre-devised approach to assessment. In planning their assessments, centres should ensure that assessment activities:

- are fit for purpose
- can be delivered efficiently
- meet the assessment criteria
- permit Reasonable Adjustments to be made, while minimising the need for them
- allow each learner to generate evidence which can be authenticated
- allow the specified level of attainment detailed in this specification to be reached by a learner who has attained the required level of knowledge, skills and understanding
- allow assessors to be able to differentiate accurately and consistently between a range of attainments by learners

They should also ensure that:

- sufficient time is allowed for assessment planning
- assessment tasks do not produce unreasonably adverse outcomes for learners who share a common attribute
- methods of assessment are in line with the assessment requirements in this specification
- reasonable timescales for assessment and feedback are given to learners
- a timely quality assurance process is conducted

3.4 Training and Support

To support centres in carrying out high-quality assessment and quality assurance practice, the following training and support measures have been put in place for this qualification:

- All centre assessors and quality assurance staff for this qualification are required to meet National Occupational Standards for assessors and IQAs. National qualifications (NVQs) are available for these roles. CFI awarding can also provide customised assessor and IQA education as well as review of assessor and IQA practice
- Assessors and IQAs must keep an up to date CPD log and be able to demonstrate the relevance of their CPD to this qualification and their role
- Handbooks, exemplars and templates are available from the CFI QA Team
- Where required, a customised Quality Assurance Action and Development Plan will be provided by CFI for centres

Please note: there may be a charge for training and resources provided by CFI.

3.5 Policies and Procedures

Each centre is required to work in partnership with CFI awarding to ensure that all learners have the best possible experience whilst taking this qualification and are treated fairly. Our commitment to this is supported by our Centre Handbook, which all centres should become familiar with.

CFI awarding has policies and procedures in place to support centres and learners. All centres must also implement their own policies, which comply with CFI's requirements – these will be checked during centre approval and in subsequent centre monitoring activities. It is the centre's responsibility to make relevant policies available to learners.

Relevant policies include:

- Learner Complaints Policy: which allows learners to take action if they feel they have been treated unfairly
- Learner Appeals Policy: which allows learners to appeal decisions made by centres
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy: which allows centres to make any necessary adjustments to assessments in the light of learners' individual circumstances at the start of the programme
- Special Considerations Policy: which allows centres to request extensions for learners in light of learners' individual circumstances which have delayed their completion of the programme
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy: which gives a framework through which concerns about the delivery and assessment of the qualification can be addressed
- Equality and Diversity Policies: which ensures centres treat learners fairly and without any bias

CFI policies and other key documents are available on our website at www.cfiawarding.com or upon request via info@cfiawarding.com