

DIPLOMA COURSE CONTENT

COURSE NOTES & TECHNICAL DOCUMENTATION

We provide very full and detailed course notes for all our lectures. These include what we believe to be the most comprehensive technical documents offered by any garden design school. These include plant schedules, job costing, risk management, the tendering process and a complete precedent bank for use when preparing specification documents running to several hundred clauses, as well as a full draft letter set covering the design process from start to finish. These are copyright free to our students, who go on to use them as the basis for document production in their own design practices.

PROFESSIONAL ASSIGNMENTS – BUILDING YOUR PORTFOLIO

In addition to the subject modules there are four long term professional assignments within the course, each built around real clients and real gardens. Because of our reputation in the garden design field, many garden owners contact us to volunteer their gardens for use by our students. Many students have seen their work come to fruition in this way as clients have gone on to have their designs constructed.

We ensure that the projects chosen give students the design experience of a wide range of gardens, from small urban plots to large country house gardens. Students work on these projects in exactly the same manner as professional garden designers.

The four assignments ensure that upon completion of the course, students have built a most impressive portfolio to show to prospective clients.

PEER GROUP REVIEWS

Detailed assessment of projects within the classroom setting builds students' confidence in presenting their work, and enables each student to learn from the group as a whole. We believe that these peer group reviews are fundamental to the teaching process, enabling our students to develop their presentation skills, a critical eye and to learn from each other as well as from the lecturers.

GARDEN VISITS

We arrange garden visits for our students during the year to illustrate particular aspects of lectures such as the development of planting schemes. These visits are arranged after discussion with the group, and we often arrange private visits to less well known gardens. Entrance fees are additional to the cost of the course.

RHS CHELSEA ONE DAY TUTORED REVIEW & CRITIQUE

We offer a tutored review of RHS Chelsea Show Gardens for any students who wish to attend. Past students say they have found this experience invaluable and we believe that we are the only design school to offer this, reflecting our emphasis on design training. The cost of entry is an additional cost to the course.

WORK PLACEMENTS

We can arrange voluntary short term placements during the year for students wishing to have first hand experience of landscaping, construction, planting and business management.

QUALIFICATION

The end of year assessment takes the form of the fourth and final professional assignment. This is a substantial project giving students the opportunity to demonstrate all the skills they have learnt during the year. It encompasses both paperwork and drawing skills; the drawings and documents required are those which a practising garden designer would be expected to produce.

The assessment is undertaken jointly by the School's Principal and lecturers. In addition to this the work is moderated by qualified external academic assessors. Students obtaining a pass grade or higher are awarded the right to use the designation Dip. PSGD. The qualification has been recognised throughout the garden design profession for over 30 years.

SOCIETY OF GARDEN DESIGNERS (SGD)

The SGD is the controlling body of garden designers in the UK and gives credibility to the industry as a whole, encouraging professionalism amongst practitioners. The School's founder, Christopher Pickard, is a past vice-chair. There are a range of benefits to membership, including access to twice-yearly conferences, an excellent monthly magazine, and local support groups. We encourage student attendance at the SGD Autumn and spring conferences as these provide excellent topics for discussion in class.

MATERIALS

We have negotiated an arrangement on behalf of our Diploma students with leading design and graphic supply companies whereby students may purchase all the course materials required at a discounted rate and have them delivered direct to home or to our classrooms on the first day of term if preferred. Details are provided to all students as soon as their application forms are received.