



Phase 4 Diploma Criteria Consultation

A report on the findings from the Consultation Events and Online Survey

Interim Report

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1. Introduction

Pye Tait Limited 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**
- **Science¹**

The aim of the consultation is to ensure that the Line of Learning Criteria are fit for purpose, robust and fair, and to ensure that the regulatory body OfQual, therefore, has confidence in the Criteria. In-depth and constructive feedback is being sought from a broad range of stakeholders in order to identify common themes across Lines of Learning, identify where any changes are required, and ensure the criteria are fully inclusive and do 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 as well as employment.

The Line of Learning Criteria set out:

- the aims and purpose of the Diploma
- any issues relating to diversity and inclusion² that may be encountered by learners undertaking the Diploma
- the topics covered by the Principal Learning element of the qualification

¹ This specification has been impacted by the announcement of 16th 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.

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

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 this current consultation is concerned.

It should be taken into account that this consultation is 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) based on the three events that have taken place so far.

The purpose of this interim report is to set out the responses received so far in relation to the Line of Learning Criteria for the three Phase 4 Diplomas.

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).

2. Methodology

The consultation process comprises two components:

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

2.1 Regional Consultation Events

As of 29th April 2009, three consultation events have taken place; in Durham, Manchester and London. Events commence with an overview of the Diploma before attendees are divided into focus groups to discuss an individual line of learning during morning and afternoon sessions. The output of each focus group is recorded and the results transcribed in full.

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

The **focus** of all discussions is 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 is 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. Discussion will also cover 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 are debated in the relevant focus groups, in addition to some discussion around the vision and ASL. Attendees were reminded that Diploma policy is **out of scope** for these discussions.

2.2 Online Survey

An online survey has been developed and hosted by QCA, with input into the questions from Pye Tait. Three separate surveys cover each Line of Learning for Phase 4. The surveymonkey tool has been selected by QCA to host the survey and responses are being analysed by Pye Tait.

The three surveys for each Line of Learning went live on 20th April 2009. As of 29th April, a total of 16 responses had been submitted. A breakdown of these responses by Line of Learning and by Stakeholder Type are provided below:

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

Responses to the online survey: by Line of Learning	
Humanities and Social Sciences	3
Languages and International Communication	5
Science	8
TOTAL	16

Table 2: responses to the online survey by stakeholder type

Responses to the online survey: by Stakeholder Type	
Awarding Body	3
Employer	2
Further Education College/6th Form College	1
Local Authority	1
Member of (Phase 4) Diploma Development Partnership	1
Member of other Diploma Development Partnership	1
School	1
Sector Skills Council	3
Training Provider	1
Representing Own Views	1
Other	1
TOTAL	16

3. Key Messages Emerging from the Online Survey

As there have been very few responses to the online survey in Humanities & Social Sciences (3) and Languages & International Communication (5) at the time of writing, feedback on results of the online survey have only encompassed the Science Line of Learning in this Interim report. It should be noted that the information that follows is based on a very small number of responses (8) to date.

3.1 Content

Topic summaries have been well received to date; 50% of respondents (4) at level 1 and 62.5% of respondents (5) at level 2 believe them to be very or quite good. At both levels 37.5% of respondents (3) strongly agreed or agreed that topics were engaging for learners; however more concern was expressed at level 2, with 25% of respondents (2) disagreeing with this statement.

The clarity of what learners need to know and do has also been largely positively received. Five (62.5%) respondents at both levels strongly agreed or agreed that this is expressed clearly within the topics. However again, at level 2 there is less confidence, with 25% of respondents (2) strongly disagreeing or disagreeing that it is clear what a learner needs to know and understand.

There is more support at level 2 for delivery of the topics; 62.5% of respondents (5) strongly agreed or agreed that the breadth was deliverable compared with 25% of respondents (2) that strongly disagreed or disagreed at level 1.

Two-thirds of all respondents felt that the content was very or quite successful in presenting the application of mathematical skills and knowledge in a scientific context at both levels.

The strongest opinion has been expressed towards the level and depth of content, with 37.5% of respondents (3) strongly disagreeing or disagreeing that this is appropriate at level 2. A comment made by one respondent stated that:

- ❖ “Level 2 requires a lot of the learners”.

3.2 Scope for Other Factors

Respondents so far cannot see a great deal of scope for the development of understanding of spiritual, moral, ethical and cultural issues. 50% of respondents (4) felt this was covered not very or not at all well, with specific comments including:

- ❖ “Doesn’t jump out at me”
- ❖ “Please, more ethical contexts..”

However the scope for developing learners’ understanding of European and International developments has been viewed far more positively, with 62.5% of respondents (5) saying this has been addressed quite well.

3.3 Personal Learning and Thinking Skills

The key message emerging from the feedback received to date is that respondents find it difficult to assess the scope to develop Personal Learning and Thinking Skills, with half of all 8 respondents unable to respond.

3.4 Diversity and Inclusion

25% of respondents (2) said they understood diversity and inclusion issues quite well, but again it can be seen that difficulty is experienced in answering this, with 50% of respondents (4) unable to respond. Half of the respondents felt that the criteria support diversity and inclusion needs and requirements quite well.

3.5 Assessment

“Ambiguous” was one comment made when asked about opportunities for creative assessment; at both levels 50% of respondents (4) felt unable to respond. Feedback indicates a more positive response to level 1, with 37.5% of respondents (3) stating that they strongly agreed or agreed that the breadth of subject content will allow for topics to be creatively assessed; although 12.5% of respondents (1) strongly disagreed. However at level 2, 25% of respondents (2) strongly disagreed.

4. Criteria for Humanities and Social Sciences

4.1 Aims

Within this framework, the overarching aims of this Diploma are 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.

4.2 Vision

The vision for the Diploma in Humanities and the Social Sciences is set out and discussed on pages 7-8 of the Criteria³ document. The overall vision is:

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

It is intended that this vision 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 by and enriched by other humanities and social science subject areas. The vision set out for the Diploma is that it should provide opportunities to deepen and apply concepts from the statutory Key Stage 4

³ Reference 'Consultation Version' QCA/09/4182 – April 2009

programme of study, but not replicate or replace it.

The vision was not specifically designated for discussion at the consultation events, and received no substantive adverse comment during the first three consultation events. Instead, there was broad support for a qualification of the type outlined in the vision statement. Delegates at the Manchester event in particular felt that this Diploma offered a way to re-engage learners in subjects from which they had become alienated by rigid and inappropriate assessment regimes, especially at Level 3.

It was noted by one participant in the London even that the study of humanities is itself an entitlement within the statutory curriculum. He argued that this merited mention where the vision for the Diploma in Humanities and Social Sciences is discussed in relation to statutory curriculum entitlements. Even though 'humanities' is not part of the Diploma footprint, presumably because of the self-evident tautology that would result, there may be some benefit in considering the relationship in more depth in the Criteria document.

4.3 Structure of Principal Learning

The Criteria for the Diploma in Humanities and Social Sciences is 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, this Diploma seeks to fulfil its aims and vision by building 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.

4.4 Coherence and Clarity of Topic Summaries

The topic summaries were generally well-received across the first three consultation events. They were in most cases felt to provide convincing and coherent introductions to the subject matter to be covered. One participant in the Durham (North East) event commented that they were ‘very good, clear summaries... within the context of each we’ve got a very clear idea of what the focus [is] going to be.’

However, there was some specific concern that the applied purposes of the skills covered in the topics were not sufficiently clearly described in the topic summaries. In Durham and Manchester there was a specific desire to see a clearer indication of the kinds of employment contexts where the skills developed in the topics could be applied (see below '*Clarity and Appropriateness of Contexts*' for further details).

There was also concern that in some specific cases topic summaries did not accurately represent the K&U and skills set out for the topic. This was either because the topic summary suggested certain kinds of content that did not reappear in K&U statements, or conversely that topic summaries did not fully articulate the content detailed in the K&U statements. This was particularly the case in topics dealing with literature, such as Topic 3.5 *Expressing culture*, where literature is referred to in the purpose statement but not in the K&U statements (see below *Line Specific Issues*).

There were also some specific concerns about some of the phrasing used in the last sentence of the first paragraph of the purpose statement in Topic 1.2 *Where do we live?* This sentence suggests that this topic will ‘result in [learners’] being better informed about where to live or work to enable them best to pursue their own ambitions.’

Delegates at both the Durham and Manchester events were uneasy with this wording. It was perceived to reduce the purpose of study to self-interested economic goals. It was questioned whether this represented an appropriate outcome for a qualification. This section would seem to need reworking if it is to effectively communicate the DDP’s intended meaning.

There was also some concern in Durham and Manchester that the Level 1 topic summaries gave the impression of being narrowly focused on personal and local concerns, and that this may need reconsideration in order to support a) satisfactory progression to the Higher Level Diploma; and b) delivery in areas lacking in strong local resources.

4.5 Appropriateness of Topic Content (level and depth)

The topic content, in terms of level and depth, was broadly felt to be appropriate at levels 2 and 3 in all three events to date. However, there was specific concern in relation to Level 1. These concerns were most emphatically expressed in London and Manchester, but were also evident at Durham.

The precise nature of these concerns varied from one event to another, with the most serious concerns being expressed in Manchester and London. In both these events, most participants shared the view that much of the content in Level 1 was too broad and abstract for the target audience. It was felt that this could lead to learners being overloaded by a breadth and/or depth of content that was beyond their capabilities.

'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, Manchester

A wide range of examples of Level 1 topics along with their K&U and skill statements were cited by participants in this respect. Examples include:

- Topic 1.1 K&U statement 6, which requires learners to understand how to communicate with people taking account of their identities or culture. This was considered to be an 'extraordinarily difficult high level skill.'
- Topic 1.1 skill statement 1, where the requirement to 'interpret identities' was considered too ambitious, and perhaps better replaced by 'describe identities'
- Topic 1.5 *How can we make a difference*, where learners are expected to know and understand 'The purpose of policy...' This was considered to be an extremely complex, contentious and ill-defined area.

In addition, participants in the Durham event had some concern that the Level 3 content, while satisfactory in itself, did not make sufficient use of the specific terminology associated with the skills that could reasonably be expected of Level 3 learners.

4.6 Balance of Content

There was overall satisfaction with the subject matter covered in the Criteria at all the events to date. However, there was a broad range of views, sometimes contradictory, about the detailed balance and sufficiency of the content prescribed in the Criteria.

In Durham, 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. It was pointed out that there is no specific theme connected with change at Level 1, although it was acknowledged that it could be introduced in relation to any and all of the five Level 1 topics. It was noted that it was prominent in two topics at Level 2, but in even then only in relation to other themes (social and economic change).

A social science teacher with a geography specialism questioned whether there needed to be more

attention to the relation of physical and social geography. This participant felt that the content in the topics directly relating to the overarching theme 'people and the environment' theme were in their current form oriented towards social geography, and questioned whether this reflected a deliberate decision to separate the two out. Within this limitation, however, the content was felt to be appropriate to the learners at the different levels of the Diploma.

There was also concern from an Awarding Body representative that in Topic 1.3, there was an insufficiently balanced approach to communication. It was felt that there needed to be more emphasis in the purpose and K&U statements on the reciprocal nature of the communication, and in particular on how messages are received and interpreted by others.

Other specific points raised included:

- Some concerns that Topic 2.4 may not take into account sustainability issues, and may be too narrowly focussed on economic development in ways which may betray an implicit, pro-Western, assumption that economic development is an uncomplicated good (Durham).
- Some concerns that Topic 3.5 *Expressing culture* may have an implicit bias towards high or elite culture. In London, one participant argued that this represented an important but currently unexploited opportunity to introduce learners to the way in which culture can be used establish and sustain hierarchies.

4.7 Engaging for Learners

There was broad consensus throughout the three groups that the content identified in the Criteria would indeed be engaging for learners, and indeed for many teachers. The broad structure of Level 1, with its use of questions as topic titles that organise and give purpose to the material within the topics, was particularly welcomed in Durham and London.

'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

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.

'For each level there's something there which can really capture a young person and make them want to learn...' Practitioner

There were particularly strong feelings in London that 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.

There were however concerns in both London and Manchester that the two methodology Topics -- 2.1 *Choosing a research method* and 3.1 *Challenging knowledge, argument and evidence* -- would prove highly disengaging for learners.

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. This participant also felt that, particularly at Level 2, the number of GLH assigned to the methodology topics was excessive.

Similar views were expressed clearly in London, where it was again reported that the methodology units, at Level 2 in particular, were likely to prove extremely challenging, dry and disengaging for learners. Practitioners and former practitioners reported direct experience in the past of such content having de-motivated students. They also called for the integration of the main subject matter covered within the methodology topics to be fully integrated with appropriate content in the other units.

It was emphasised at the events that Awarding Bodies would have the freedom to ‘re-chunk’ methodological elements, but most participants, including an Awarding Body representative, advocated integration at the level of the Criteria document.

It should be noted that at the Manchester event, an admissions tutor from a major research university strongly emphasised the importance that learners should receive some basic education in research methods and protocols.

He complained that many undergraduates arrived at university unable to write an academic essay, and said he would be very impressed to find a sixteen year old able to properly reference and footnote an essay. His main concern seemed to be that students should be able construct a well-researched, appropriately referenced essay that followed standard scholarly formats.

He emphasised that some element of research methods should be retained in the Criteria, although not necessarily as a standalone topic: *‘If it was 2.1 or it was incorporated in some other subject, to me, that [topic area would be] a massive bonus.’*

4.8 Clarity and Appropriateness of Contexts

There was broad consensus at the first three 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.

However, participants in the three events differed considerably in their views as to whether this was a problem.

There was considerable concern at both Durham and Manchester that the ‘applied purpose’ and relevant applied contexts did not come out sufficiently clearly. In Durham the concern was broadly that the Criteria should guide Awarding Bodies, Local Authorities and prospective delivery consortia towards the kind of employment contexts that might be appropriate for delivering the content.

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.

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.

Related views were forcibly expressed in Manchester, and appeared to be shared by most participants in this event. In this instance, it was felt that the lack of clear employability contexts risked eroding the distinctiveness and ‘saleability’ of the diploma, as well as its coherence with other Diploma lines.

These views were echoed by a single participant in the London event, who argued that the lack of clear employment contexts failed to meet one of the basic purposes of the Diplomas and in doing so would disadvantage learners. In this case the argument did not resonate with other participants, the clear majority of whom felt that it was better to leave employment contexts open to enable Awarding Bodies and providers to focus in on the contexts most relevant to their particular situation and capabilities.

4.9 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 actually demanded, 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. This included presenting findings in innovative ways, such as the use of ICT for producing work in the form of blogs and journals.

4.10 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.

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, the majority of participants appeared to be 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 the heavier, 180 GLH, regime of assessment was a practical necessity, even if in principle the greater flexibility of provided by more extensive internal assessment might be desirable.

4.11 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.

The relevance of topics at all levels that encouraged understanding of different cultural and personal identities, effective communication, team-working, were felt to be particularly valuable potential skills that would be developed within the context of this Diploma.

4.12 Progression through Diploma levels

Progression issues provoked sustained discussion at all the events. Apart from general concerns that Level 1 was potentially too demanding (discussed in the section on *Appropriateness of Content* above), there was also debate about the flow of topics across the levels.

At Durham there was a suggestion that that did not 'seem to be a natural flow between level one to level two, level three', because related topics did not map clearly on to each other at the different levels. There was particular concern that there was also some kind of disjunction between the approaches at Level 1 and Level 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.

In London, however, the focus on the individual learner was broadly felt to be a positive aspect of the Level that was likely to be particularly engaging for the target audience at this Level.

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 be perhaps unduly emphasise activism, and the more analytical emphasis of the corresponding Topic at Level 2 (2.5 *The role of governance*).

4.13 Distinctiveness of the Diploma

The Diploma in Humanities and Social Science was welcomed as an important and valuable addition to the existing qualification offer.

In terms of content, some specialist practitioners did feel that there was a close resemblance to existing integrated humanities specifications. However, most delegates seemed to see potential for applied learning as a genuine source of distinctiveness for the Diploma. This seems to have been one of the primary reasons why delegates in Durham and Manchester sought clearer contexts of application in the purpose statements.

In Manchester, an HE representative was particularly impressed by the Level 2, which he saw as bringing valuable breadth to the curriculum and offering new opportunities to make connections between disciplinary areas. He was also impressed by the deliberate inclusion of methodological and

interdisciplinary emphases at both Levels 2 and 3:

'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 research-intensive University.

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.

4.14 Line Specific Issues

Within the wider context of the broadly positive and enthusiastic reception for the Diploma in Humanities and Social Sciences, there were a number of specific issues that may need further exploration, many of which had already been identified for further exploration by the Humanities and Social Sciences DDP.

4.14.1 English Literature

In both Durham and Manchester 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, with this view particularly cogently articulated by an English subject practitioner.

It was felt that there should be a high degree of flexibility to include different types of text, and not just works traditionally considered to be part of the literary canon. It was suggested that short excerpts of varied types of text would be particularly appropriate at Level 1, where these could be provided directly to learners. Progression to Level 2 could be secured by requiring learners at the Higher level to identify excerpts from texts that would support particular content or research areas.

There would therefore seem to be a need to incorporate more explicit opportunities for consideration and critical analysis of textual evidence at all three Levels of this Diploma.

4.14.2 English Language

There were significant concerns raised in both Manchester and London about the English language requirements of the Level 1 Diploma in relation to the requirements for Level 1 functional skills and for English language GCSE, although discussion focussed on different aspects of this in the two events.

In Manchester, the concern was that English skill requirements in Topic 1.3 may be pitched at too high a level. There was concern from a practitioner in Manchester that the requirement that learners should be able to use language to persuade went beyond functional English skills at Level 1.

In the London event, there was broad agreement among participants that there needed to be close attention to the English functional skills content already being covered by learners in other parts of the curriculum, such as Level 1 functional skills and English GCSEs, in order to avoid undue, and potentially off-putting, repetition of content. It was also pointed out that learners at this level should be required to inform their audience of basic factual information, as well as engaging in persuasion.

It was also noted that the English language element, where this was present in mark schemes in subjects other than English, was so small as to be virtually negligible. On the basis of the evidence gathered so far, there would therefore seem to be little support for including any additional specific English language requirements to the Criteria.

Additional Points:

- **Topic 3.6 – Living with Rules and Governance** The DDP were particularly concerned to find out whether there is sufficient integration between the teamwork skills emphasised in the skills outcomes for this topic, and the purpose and K&U statements. At all three events, participants did seem to have difficulty grasping this connection, bearing out the DDP's concerns. There was particular concern in Manchester, where it was felt that it may be challenging to go from the K&U statements' emphasis on understanding laws and governmental systems to skills statements that emphasise team-working: 'I'm not sure how laws and rules are enforced would necessarily produce a skill set of 'learners must be able to work towards common goals'.' Related though less emphatic concerns were raised about the equivalent topic at Level 2, *What do we care about?*
- **The Concept of Knowledge in Topic 3.1 'Challenging Knowledge, Argument and Evidence** There was some specific concern expressed in Manchester that there may be too much content packed into Topic 3.1, and some confusion as to whether the focus of this topic was on exploring the history of ideas, epistemological issues, or the development of argumentation skills. It was felt that there should be clearer signposting to Awarding Bodies of the intended emphasis. A more historical, content based approach was felt to be more potentially engaging, but it should be noted that the HE representative made it clear that the development of argumentation skills was more valuable for progression to HE courses.

There was also specific concern about K&U 1, which discusses different types of knowledge. In Manchester, the inclusion of revelation as a type of knowledge was felt to be problematic and potentially discriminatory, by implicitly endorsing religious claims to be in possession of special 'revealed' knowledge. This delegate also felt that the first sentence in the second paragraph of the purpose statement in was unclear due to a floating pronoun.

4.14.3 Interdisciplinarity

Most participants felt that the opportunities for interdisciplinary working were clearly presented in the document. However, there were contradictory views held on the degree to which particular disciplines should be specifically cited in connection with particular content areas.

In Durham there was some discussion over whether the full range of subjects covered in the Diploma footprint came out with sufficient clarity or in appropriate contexts. One participant suggested that all the disciplines within the Diploma footprint should come out clearly at some point within each level, and that this was currently not the case.

In London and Manchester, by contrast, delegates generally advocated the greatest possible flexibility for Awarding Bodies and providers to address each disciplinary area in the way that was most relevant to their particular contexts.

4.14.4 Additional Detailed Points

- In Topic 1.1, one participant pointed out that K&U 3 should include the *similarities* as well as the *differences* between different groups and communities;
- Topic 2.3 K&U 4 considers the varied organisations concerned with environmental management and exploitation. This needs clarification to ensure that the exemplifications are clearly separated from the range of organisations to be considered – at the moment it incorrectly implies that Natural England is a charity;
- A concern was raised that the explicit economic themes of Topics 2.4 *Examining Economic Change* and 3.7 *Linking local and global economies* may 'close doors'. There needs to be clear identification of synergies with other topic areas and additional emphasis on the interrelationship between economics and wider culture. The suggestion was made that at Level 3, the title of the topic could be changed to *Linking local and global perspectives*, in order to broaden the emphasis of the topic.

4.15 Additional and Specialist Learning

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

4.16 Key Findings in Humanities and Social Sciences

Overall, it is clear that the qualification has been broadly welcomed by delegates, who feel that it will prove highly engaging for learners at all levels. The potential for interdisciplinary working was particularly welcomed across stakeholder groups, and providers were happy to see greater flexibility in content and assessment than they were accustomed to in previous qualifications. There was also confidence in the qualification's capacity to develop desirable 'soft skills' called for by employers.

Nevertheless, there are number of specific points raised by participants in the consultation events that may merit further exploration:

- There are real concerns about the level at which the Level 1 topics are pitched. There was a sense that they are too abstract, too difficult, and potentially too wide-ranging. It was felt that translating them into specifications at an appropriate level for learners would be extremely challenging for Awarding Bodies.
- Topic 1.1 has been welcomed as an outstandingly engaging introductory topic for learners at this level, but is seen by some participants as being too demanding in breadth and depth for the 30 GLH assigned to it. The DDP should consider the potential benefits of turning this back into a 60 GLH topic by reducing the weight of Topic 1.2 *Where do we live?*
- There were also real concerns about the methodology topics at Levels 2 and 3, which many practitioners felt would be extremely off-putting to learners if they were delivered as standalone topics or in the number of GLH prescribed. Concerns were particularly acute at Level 2. The DDP should consider whether it would be possible to address participants' desire to see the content of these topics integrated into appropriate topics while ensuring sufficient coverage of methodological issues to satisfy the desires of the HE sector.
- Differing views on the need for additional contextualisation of skills in the purpose statements suggest that there may need to be some additional emphasis in the purpose statements of broad potential workplace applications of skills. However, more detailed suggestions should be reserved for the Curriculum Guidance materials in order to maximise flexibility for Awarding Bodies and Providers.
- There needs to be careful reconsideration of the PLTS statements for each topic in order to ensure that the most appropriate choices have been made in each case.
- Topic 1.3 *How do we communicate with others* may need revisiting to ensure that the topic as a whole adequately reflects the two way nature of communications and the demands that can reasonably be made on Level 1 learners.

5. Criteria for Science

5.1 Aims

Within this framework, the overarching aims of the Science Diploma are to enable learners to:

- enable individuals to acquire relevant personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) in a science context
- give opportunities to practise and acquire essential functional skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), which are relevant to the level and delivered in the context of science
- offer progression to other Diplomas, to transfer laterally and progress to further education, apprenticeships and training
- aid effective transition to further education, work-based learning or higher education and to working life by providing a wide range of transferable skills and knowledge
- provide a motivating learning experience through a blend of general education and applied learning within a coherent and stimulating programme

5.2 Vision

The vision for the Diploma in Science (pages 3 to 4 of the Criteria) points out that we live in three interlocking worlds - the natural world, the human world, and the technological world - at the centre of which are major challenges for science and big science questions. The Diploma for Science aims to confront learners with those changing challenges and questions and embed the idea that 'there will always be major challenges and big questions thus demonstrating the scope of scientific activity from innovation to development, with respect to improving quality and in the investigation of natural behaviour, processes and phenomena'.

A major feature of the Science Line of Learning Criteria (LoLC) is that the three main science disciplines - Biology, Physics and Chemistry contribute to the topics in different but overlapping ways.

Again, as for the other Lines of Learning, the vision itself was not designated for specific discussion at the events. Participants however chose to point out that their positive reaction to the vision; the

first few pages of the Criteria engendered that spirit and excitement. However, a number of participants were disappointed by the fact this seems to have been lost in translation somewhat in the subsequent pages.

So there was concern for instance in Manchester that the vision as portrayed in the presentation was inspiring but that the vision does not seem to link through to the content – they suggested that in the vision big questions were coming through and some very exciting things were mentioned such as the origin of life, being able to use scientific methodology, in communicating and sharing ideas with other scientists, providing broad experience of scientific endeavour; but it appears to lack clarity on what science is as a subject and what makes it distinct, what is meant by the scientific questions? And, what can science do for us?

'There's a lot of talk about data, and interpreting data through here but not enough opportunity for children to really get a grip of what good data is, and for applied scientists that's got to be crucial. Replicable, repeatable, valid, I'm sure employers would want to see these sorts of things. There is a lot of dynamism, creativity and excitement, and about what science really is which was what you talked about in the Vision, but then it doesn't match up fully here'. (Centre for science)

In London this point was echoed to some extent. It was pointed out that although there are the big questions there is no real attempt at addressing epistemology within the Principal Learning ie there's nothing about where scientific knowledge comes from.

5.3 Structure

The Criteria for the Diploma qualifications in Science⁴ is structured in the following way:

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

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

There is no Advanced level currently contained within the Criteria for the Diploma qualifications in science following the announcement made by the Minister Jim Knight (April 16th 2009) that the delivery of the Advanced Level would be delayed a year until 2012.

The topics are not governed by themes, instead the approach is a model that splits 7 topics into a structure of 5 and 2 at both levels 1 and 2. The first 5 are centred around domains or areas of science - substances, animals and plants, the human body, energy and the environment, the other 2 provide an opportunity to draw on the content of the first 5 and allow learners to operate more

⁴ Reference 'Consultation Version' QCA/09/4184 – April 2009

independently.

The intention is that these first 5 topics are designed to encourage the development of knowledge and understanding of core underlying principles and scientific concepts using standard procedures and protocols. Practical skills will be a key outcome of the application of the knowledge and understanding to different contexts and situations outlined through purposeful activities. Level 1 contexts are designed to align to familiar territory for level 1 learners whereas Level 2 have no pre-determined contexts to enable greater flexibility.

The debate on the structure of this split of topics into 5 and 2 suggested there is some question over the understanding participants have of the approach and that maybe further clarity should be provided. Some at all 3 events were convinced 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? However, others 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 interest them.

'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)

5.4 Coherence and Clarity of Topic Summaries

All the topic summaries in the Science Criteria are 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'; the second paragraph conveys the topic's purpose and in Topics 1.1 and 1.4 a specific context has been provided of consumer products and home technologies respectively. Durham participants offered their satisfaction with this two paragraph presentation.

At all three events it was pointed out that the approach of providing examples of 'organisations and people' has not however been used consistently or perhaps appropriately. London participants suggested that a solution to this would be to footnote 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. Topic 1.4 is a case in point and there was some discussion in London about the seemingly tenuous links that the topic summary appears to make between nuclear physicists providing home technology solutions.

In some cases participants pointed out where they felt a sentence is missing that would make a link more explicit and easier for the reader to understand. Again in Topic 1.4 this was requested between

the sentence - '*Solutions are urgently being sought to the problem of our overdependence on fossil fuels*' and the next sentence that states '*Biochemists, chemists, engineers and nuclear physicists are all contributing to the development and application of home technologies*'. In addition there was concern expressed in London and in Durham that for a number of topics the organisations and people depicted do not appear to be linked to the KUS that follow.

In terms of clarity of purpose one participant in London suggested that the topic summary in 2.4 reads more directly with a clearer purpose and intent than its level 1 equivalent of Topic 1.4.

'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)

5.5 Appropriateness of Topic Content (level and depth)

Much focus has been given to Topic 1.1 - and this appears not just because it is the first topic to be seen in the Criteria. To a number of participants in Durham and London this topic comes across as simplified and in many cases the content looks very similar to Key Stage 3 and, it is believed, very traditional.

The issue over the apparent duplication with Key Stage 3 worried participants at all 3 events. Knowledge and understanding statements 4 and 6 in Topic 1.1 were two such examples that came up the most often in this context. Participants felt that there is an inherent danger that it will enable some teachers to just deliver it as Key Stage 3 all over again, to teach 'reversible and non-reversible changes' in isolation ie without any context as they have done in the past.

However, some participants in Manchester could see how this could be an opportunity to take what the students have learnt in Key Stage 3 and build on that knowledge to apply it. They, and some participants in London, pointed out that it is about pitching it at the right level for the range of learners and revisiting concepts to provide them with the understanding in context and its uses.

There are several occasions of participants suggesting that some words concern them in consideration of the level of learner; Topic 1.2 and the use of 'advise' in the topic summary (final sentence) was one such example. Body Mass Index (BMI) along with issues of confidentiality and legislation (Topic 1.2) was suggested by another participant in Manchester to be controversial with the understanding of the concept being too high-level for Foundation learners. Some participants in Manchester also wondered if some aspects of 1.6 and 1.7 (for example statements 1 to 4) were also pitched at too high a level for Foundation learners, but this was not a strong feeling and overall was seen as acceptable.

A participant in Durham questioned the 'writing styles' of the topics and how different the other 5 topics in the Science Criteria at Level 1 look in comparison with Topics 1.1 and 1.5 which appear to

have less complex statements.

Coverage of the programme of study for Key Stage 4 was also a subject for discussion that has come up (but as a lesser concern than the subject of overlap and duplication with Key Stage 2 and 3). In addition, in reference to the statement that explains the coverage of the Key Stage 4 programme of study (PoS) in the Criteria, several have questioned if this refers to just core science or core and additional science. They have suggested that in relation to the core science PoS missing areas seem to be ionising radiation (London), electricity (all 3 events) and electro magnetism (Durham and Manchester).

The topics relating to 'energy' is referenced under the line specific points in the section that follows.

There is also a related point in terms of breadth and depth which was brought up by those participants expressing uncertainty over the decision-making process on the breadth/depth covered in teaching. Such examples that raised concern were areas of knowledge in Topic 2.3 (4) 'the principles of genetics', or Topic 1.1 (5) how many and which 'word equations and simple balanced symbol equations' should be taught. The question of genetics and if this would cover cloning/stem cells was also raised by one participant because it is seen of its topical nature which may help with progression onto the Level 3 when that becomes available.

5.6 Balance of Content

This has not been an issue so far. One or two participants have suggested that there seems to be some inconsistency of the amount of skills listed, but there has been no specific request to cut down or add to the KU statements in preference to the Skills statements.

There was one plea by a participant in Manchester, supported by several others, to ensure that the specification writers do not fill the GLH out to their maximum, but to 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)

5.7 Engaging for Learners

This question prompted an intense debate. The issue regarding overlap and duplication particularly at level 1 with Key Stage 3 also clouded this question on enthusing learners. Also caution was expressed as participants were at pains to point out this is not a simple matter; in their view it comes down to those delivering the topics to bring out the contexts and make it applied and exciting, ie it is about the approach and the pedagogy with which it will be delivered.

*'What we would do is look **around** that subject and see how can we make that industrially relevant or world relevant and that would be down to the staff to do' (FE college)*

One participant in Durham commented that, with engagement of learners being a pivotal criterion, Science qualifications in general nowadays appear to use simpler and simpler language. They said that if the proper terminology is not used teachers themselves do not understand what is intended because it is too simple. *'One particular one that I picked out was in Topic 1.2 (1) how we study state in the functioning of the human body. Can we not call it homeostasis?'*

A number of participants across all 3 events could see the potential of enthusing the learners but wondered if the vision could be brought out more into the topics to strengthen the interest and excitement. People agreed that teaching to the big questions and major challenges will interest learners as they like to know the relevance of what they are learning.

'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 big global questions that you could be asking in each of these topics' (Learned Society)

In London and Durham, where some of the participants had a more critical stance to certain aspects of the Criteria document, there was an underpinning feeling that the content will not excite learners. 'Dull as ditchwater' was an expression independently used at both events.

5.8 Clarity and Appropriateness of Contexts

As was explained earlier Science has a particular approach to the matter of provision of contexts for the topics at level 1 and 2. The domains of science give some parameters in topics 1 to 5 with the provision of several explicit contexts (in Topics 1.1 and 1.4). The final two topics at each level are intended as the opportunity for learners to explore other contexts. The frequent debate over the inclusion of 'hair straighteners' in Topic 1.4 will no doubt continue over the subsequent events but is mainly brought up as an issue over its juxtaposition with the focus of fossil fuels which, as participants said, leads one to thinking about alternative energy sources rather than home technologies.

In the main participants preferred to see the contexts left open to Awarding Bodies and not to have them rigidly tied down in the Criteria. A college offering applied qualifications stated they could already see the potential and specifically requested that contexts are not made too prescriptive.

Examples of application to the real world and work of work were often described. In Manchester the subject of forensic science was brought up, and how this is a good hook for learners; Topic 2.1 is one such Topic where this application could easily sit. It was agreed however that learning the appropriate skills and knowledge requirements to be able to apply them to forensic science was more appropriate than overtly referencing to this discipline within the topic(s). Cosmetology was another example suggested by a participant again because of its potential hook for (female) learners but at the same time it was agreed veterinary sciences and environmental testing are other good examples of contexts that the KUS could be applied to without necessarily making explicit reference to them in the topics.

A few participants were unsure if the concept of 'how science works' should be brought out more explicitly, but this was often because of the rationale that the new GCSE qualifications currently do this. It was agreed that the final topics 1.6 and 1.7 and similarly 2.6 and 2.7 are the opportunities to give that focus.

The general message was that a balance was required between over-specifying some of the context to ensure sufficient freedom is provided for individuals to respond to local circumstances, but avoiding leaving it so generic that it becomes impossible to work out what is intended.

5.9 Creativity of Assessment Methods

As for the other Lines of Learning it was again 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.

It may be worthy of mention here that for this line of learning in particular it was notable that at all 3 events there was some considerable scepticism and concern about Awarding Bodies. This referred to their perceived tendency to remove any excitement, scope and opportunities for creative assessment within their specifications. Assurance about the future existence of a toolkit as guidance from the DDP for the Awarding Bodies was required on a number of different occasions.

Requests to see or know more about the planned assessment criteria were also made at all 3 events.

5.10 Employability Skills

In response to this question the participants responded generally fairly negatively, they could not see that 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 work experience. 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 looked at in this context and it prompted a big debate in London. Some felt that it was too dry and too reflective of economics and business studies. But others thought that was fantastic as business and enterprise skills are necessary components:

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 to run this like Dragons' Den and expect that sort of creativity that teachers could bring to it.... (FE College)

There was no real question over sufficiency of inclusion of literacy, numeracy or ICT skills and therefore this aspect of employability skills has not so far been regarded as an issue.

5.11 Progression through Diploma levels

The debate about the links (and possible overlaps) between KS 3 and Level 1 have been aired earlier but has proved a subject of some considerable debate in all 3 events.

This line of learning has been partially hampered in this discussion without the presence of the advanced level topics. However participants agreed that there seemed to be good links between 1.1 and 2.1, between 1.2 to 2.2, and so on. Several participants questioned if the links are as good between Topics 1.6 and 1.7 to their equivalents in the level 2, but they felt unable to suggest a solution to this and indeed if it even warranted one.

In 2 of the 3 events the question of whether a learner could progress into specifically A level Physics arose, signalling some concern over the sufficiency and specificity of particular KUS. . At Durham it was noted that that you would have to have the same discussion around 'chemistry 'aspects, and to a lesser extent biology.

This proved quite a divergent discussion also occurring within the afternoon session on ASL, particularly in London. Some queried if the Diploma would be the right route in the first place for those learners if that is their preferred pathway. In contrast a University noted that the Diploma should cater for them and that it would be doing them a disservice if it didn't contain the appropriate content, and a third view related it back to what they saw as the pivotal problem for this Line of Learning - which is if the vision/aims can genuinely cater for the different worlds of professional scientists, science for the workplace and general scientific literacy. There was no definite conclusion on progression from the Higher Level and onto A levels but the view that ASL should contain requirements for physics as a specialist learning option prevailed.

Some participants were at pains to point out that A levels are not necessarily the answer or even an appropriate benchmark.

5.12 Distinctiveness of the Diploma

The participants were asked to consider this, alongside the caveat and recognition that they were only looking at Principal Learning and an abbreviated one at that. It has to be said that in contrast to the reaction to the Humanities and Social Sciences and the Languages and Internal Communication participants have been more cautious about this line of learning.

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 to the Key stage 4 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)

5.13 Line Specific Issues

Energy has a whole topic to itself in 1.4 and 2.4 and participants were asked if they felt this was appropriate or too much /too little. In the main the reaction was could it be changed to something else as it is overdone and can often be dull; a suggestion of changing it to one that focuses on communications (perhaps involving satellites) was very much welcomed . Participants explained that energy transfer could appear in all other topics so participants felt communications could be more invigorating as a topic than 30 GLH and 60 GLH worth on energy.

It was noted too that there is confusion in Topic 1.4 on the use of energy transfer and energy transformation and that it needs to be one or other and not both. In Manchester all participants agreed that the electromagnetic spectrum was a much more exciting and current topic than as it stands now.

The **multidisciplinary** approach was welcomed but it was not felt to be universally applied across the topics. London summed this up by explaining that you can see which are in reality the chemistry topics and which the biology topics etc, and that very few topics encompassed this approach. Topic 2.5 was cited as one such better example that has a more multidisciplinary nature to it.

Additional Detailed Points

1. Topic 1.5 - it only mentions 'scientists' and no others;
2. Topic 1.5 - in the final sentence uses the word 'determine' the group felt this was not quite the right word because clearly scientists don't know all the causes and reasons for phenomena, they suggested it might be better to have 'evaluate'.
3. Topic 1.6 - two people at separate events queried the final sentence in the final paragraph of the topic summary 'as a result they will be able to set their own criteria for what would make a good career goal' as sounding more than is intended and was it meant to tie in with the first skill in that topic; should this be 'set themselves challenging 'career' goals with success criteria?
4. Topic 1.6 - the title appears to not match the intent of the summary and the KUS - one participant suggested that a title that is more reflective of the fact the topic is aimed directly at the learner and their personal skills development would be better.
5. Topic 2.7 promoted the debate as mentioned earlier, there were also mixed reactions about the funding references and whether these are entirely necessary, too high and too dull. This could be reviewed at remaining consultation events.
6. It has been consistently queried why risk assessment and hazards appear to come out only explicitly at level 2 (Topic 2.6) when it is such an inherent part of scientific work and desire this to be included in an appropriate topic in Level 1, too (taking on board the comment that subject areas need only be mentioned once in a level).

5.14 Additional and Specialist Learning

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

5.15 Key Findings in Science

'We do think though that the actual philosophy of the Diploma is brilliant, we can bridge the gap between the academic route which is perceived to have a better status than a vocational route and give those learners a different feel, but at the moment there's still a lot of work to do'

The issues seem to be centred around:

- Possible overlaps with the KS3 programme of study which if delivered in the same way may

not enthuse and motivate the students as it looks like they are doing the same things again;

- Following on from the point above, participants felt strongly at all 3 events that some teachers at schools, in particular, will need CPD, guidance and links with employers to become enthused and motivated themselves so they can do the same for their learners;
- At all 3 events it was noted that there are some points from KS4 POS that are missing such as elements of physics (electricity/electromagnetism) - it was unclear to them if this is an urgent issue;
- The main concern is that given that the events are focussing purely on the principal learning the perception remains that it is not yet different enough given the wealth of other Science qualifications and recent reforms in the curriculum and PoS.

- The 5 and 2 model of the topics has been broadly welcomed once people understand the approach and the concept behind the model. First reactions are to request that the final 2 topics are threaded throughout, but then they recognise the advantage of a) being able to revisit aspects that motivate and excite the learners perhaps through b) a different context or via a more detailed perspective and c) to provide ample opportunity for creative assessment.

6. Criteria for the Diploma in Languages and International Communication

6.1 Aims

Within this framework, the overarching aims of this Diploma are 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

6.2 Vision

The vision for the Diploma in Languages and International Communication is set out and discussed on pages 6-7 of the Criteria document⁵. The overall vision 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.

The key driver for change in the teaching of Languages is a decline in the uptake of learning

⁵ Reference 'Consultation Version' QCA/09/4183 – April 2009

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.

The underlying theme must be to develop and maintain an interest in language learning, to raise awareness of cultural and intercultural issues, and appreciate the links between language and intercultural understanding.

To facilitate this, the content of the Diploma will allow for the teaching of languages through the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) approach. The CLIL approach is in full accord with the aim of the Diploma, to encourage and motivate learners 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 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 a number of discussions. Participants at the three events undertaken to date (April 2009) were, on the whole, positive that the Diploma would invigorate, and provide a new dimension to, language learning.

6.3 Structure

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 five 'contexts' to support the acquisition of language learning are:-

- Art and culture
- Business and enterprise
- Humanities and social sciences
- Science and technology
- Socio-political issues

Their application is focused on the following five topics:-

- 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

6.4 Principal Learning Content

"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, North West]

The following sections present the main views of participants from the first three consultation events (Durham; Manchester and London).

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

6.5 Coherence and Clarity of Topic Summaries

Participants at Durham commented that they were generally pleased with the layout of the topic

summaries, being in bullet-point form as opposed to narrative prose. This approach was considered to be effective in clearly conveying the purpose of each topic, making it easier to identify the 'subject matter, and enabling the identification of key differences between related topics (i.e. within a given theme) at different levels.

There were no general concerns around the written style of the summaries, and it was felt that they were, on the whole, clear and coherent. Some exceptions relating to individual topic summaries are presented below.

- It was also suggested at Durham that the first two summary statements within topic 1.3 – *Using Languages at work*, conveyed an overlapping message, and could be amalgamated. Both statements refer to the development of an awareness of language and intercultural skills at work. The second statement explicitly refers to the 'value' of languages and intercultural skills, as well as 'organisations and employability'. It was felt that the two statements could be combined to convey the same meaning.
- 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 being provided, suggesting that the former statement should not be included, and that the emphasis should be on application. However, others favoured the discreet split, in that the concept of 'opportunities' connoted that learners have a degree of selective agency, and that 'enabling' represented more of a supportive function.
- At level 1, topics 1.1 and 1.2 contain between five and six statements within their respective summaries, compared with the average of four statements throughout the document. The question was raised about whether these could all be fulfilled, given that topic 1.2 in particular covers 30 GLH rather than 60 GLH. Participants generally felt that achievement would be possible given that less depth would be required at level 1, but the specification would be required to ultimately determine this.
- One participant commented that the first two summary statements in topic 1.1 provided a good foundation for building on coverage of languages at primary level; in summary – an overview of the diversity of languages and the strategies and techniques required to learn a language.
- The title of topic 1.2 – *Living in a global village*, was questioned by participants at Manchester and London. The use of the term 'village', whilst intended to convey the values of 'community', was deemed to be something of a cliché, failing to capture the topic's inherent aspects of scale, cohesion and diversity.
- Concern was also raised about summary statement 3 in topic 3.8; 'illuminate issues through creative works and media'. One member commented that it was unclear how 'issues' were linked to creative language and the aesthetics of creative works. Instead, it was felt the

activity was actually focused on the review and development of creative works, with the illumination of an issue being a secondary concept.

6.6 Appropriateness of Topic Content

Participants generally felt that a more detailed specification and supporting materials would be required to determine the appropriateness of topic content to their respective levels. However the following issues were raised:-

- Comparisons were made between level 1 content and the respective level within a core language GCSE qualification. It was felt by some that achievement of some of the units, and indeed the grammar requirements specified for level 1, would lead to the attainment of grade C or even B if undertaken at GCSE. However it was noted that the grammar requirements were aligned to the respective levels within the GCSE framework, and that direct comparisons with GCSE should not be over-exemplified, given the unique offering of the Diploma.
- Some aspects of the Criteria at level 1 were considered to be too challenging. Within topic 1.1 – *Linguistics and language learning*, it was felt at Manchester that K&U statements 3 and 4 looked too advanced for the abilities of level 1 learners. Within topic 1.3 – *Using languages at work*, the question was raised at all 3 events about the abilities of level 1 learners to produce ‘gist’ summaries, given that producing summary statements is a skill in its own right, with the selection of words being particularly important to the conveying of concise meaning. For clarity, examples were provided relating to the envisaged nature of texts for summarisation, such as emails, facsimiles and machine operating instructions. It was felt that such examples would benefit from being included in the criteria, to ensure awarding bodies and practitioners could clearly see the intention of these activities.
- Within topic 1.4 – *Using language for investigation and exchange of ideas*, the topic content was examined in light of the use of the term ‘ideas’ in the title. At Durham it was felt that the topic was actually focused on the more straightforward activities of generating information and opinions rather than the formulation of ideas. The content (excepting K&U 2) was therefore considered appropriate to level 1.
- Of the topics relating to the structure of language (1.1; 2.1; 3.1), it was felt that topic 1.1 provided a good introduction to learning a language ab initio, and that topic 3.1 was suitably demanding for those with a particular interest in language and linguistics. However it was commented that topic 2.1 seemed ‘dry’ and abstract, perhaps with the exception of ‘language borrowing’ as cited in K&U 5.
- At Manchester participants also highlighted that consortium support may be required for the teaching of linguistics at level 3, particularly in relation to K&U 6 in topic 3.1. One participant, representing higher education, welcomed the inclusion of linguistics at all levels, given that much work is centred on this at level 4 and above. Others felt that topic 3.1 in

particular – *Using linguistics' for discourse analysis*, would be more appropriate to the Additional and Specialist Learning, given the theoretical depth of this topic.

- Within topic 2.3, it was considered that the content might be too high-level for learners at level 2, in that it was not aligned 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’.
- In topic 3.5, some participants at Manchester commented that K&U 5 – ‘how two-way consecutive interpreting is carried out’, and K&U 6 – ‘where and how simultaneous interpreting is used’, could potentially be too high-level even for learners at level 3.

6.7 Balance of Content

Participants were generally pleased with the breadth of content, and the eight containing ‘themes’, as presented on a chart. 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 topic areas more so than others, as appropriate, would be welcomed, although it was acknowledged that assessment requirements might impact on this.

It was highlighted that some of the topics would lend themselves well to simultaneous teaching, i.e., to lay the foundations of particular language skills (topics 1.1; 2.1; 3.1) and then to increase the degree of application using other topics.

- At Durham topic 3.7 – *Using language to interact, network and discuss*, was highlighted as a possible partner (in a practical and applied sense) to the more theoretical topic 3.1 – *Using linguistics for discourse analysis*. It was noted however that topic 3.1 did have applied potential, through the examination of real-world modes of communication such as text-speak and fan-fiction – popular among young people.
- A similar example of the mutual benefit of two related topics was identified across topics 2.5 and 2.4. Topic 2.5 – *The world of professional communication*, was considered by some participants to place too great an emphasis on interpreting and translating functions, potentially leading learners at level 2 to believe that professional communications existed only within abstract interpreting and translating occupations. However it was acknowledged by other participants that these skills were used in a variety of occupations, and in different ways, and that topic 2.4 – *Using languages at work*, acted a complementary unit.
- Topic 1.2 was referenced for its potential to explore ‘culture’ across a broad framework, and against the backdrop of the diverse international environment. In this sense, the allocation of 30 GLH (as opposed to 60 GLH) was questioned at Durham. 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 within other topics.

- Reference to registers, as well as formal/informal language is used throughout the Criteria, and this was well received by participants at all 3 events, on the basis of their considered importance to practitioners.
- Within topic 2.5, participants discussed K&U 9 – ‘some of the basic strategies needed to teach language to others’. It was generally felt that whilst this could be taught in an applied way, it would also be of benefit to include this statement within topic 2.2 – *Learning to learn a language*.
- As discussed above, topic 3.8 raised questions around the importance of illuminating issues through creative works. It was felt at Manchester that whilst 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 learner and practitioner, such as creating a message or an idea.

6.8 Engaging for Learners

“I was hoping that the able linguists would buy into this now because the A-level French is miserable”. [Languages Teacher, North West]

Participants generally welcomed the Diploma as a qualification that looked refreshingly different to GCSE and A-Level provision. A-Level French was described by one participant as “miserable”.

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.

- In fact, one participant at Durham felt that topic 1.2 should be increased from 30 GLH to 60 GLH, although it was acknowledged that another unit at level 1 would need to be pared down to 30 GLH to compensate for this. Consideration was given to paring down topic 1.1 – ‘Linguistics and language learning’ – due to its apparent ‘dryness’, although this was rejected on the basis that sufficient time would be needed for the development of a language ab initio. It was then suggested that topic 1.2 could provide a contextual backdrop for some of the language learning within topic 1.1.
- 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.

- Concern was expressed about the ability of topic 2.3 – *International perspectives of society and culture*, to engage learners. Participants felt that the more humanitarian aspects would generate greater interest, in particular K&U 7 – 'the role of some development agencies...'

6.9 Clarity and Appropriateness of Contexts

A list of five specific contexts allied to the Diploma, along their intended application to the topics assessed wholly in the target language, is given in the 'Structure' section above. Two main questions were asked in relation to the contexts of the Diploma. Firstly, the appropriateness of the choice of contexts, and secondly, the perceived effectiveness of their application.

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 other contexts if this increased the choices available for practitioners. Additional contexts were suggested by participants at Manchester and London, on the basis of their relevance to the interests of young people. Notably – tourism and hospitality; cuisine, as well as sport and leisure (particularly given the impending 2012 London Olympic Games and the convergence of various nationalities into one 'community').

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.

- Topics 1.5, 2.8 and 3.8 (under the theme 'Using language creatively') are also assessed in the target language but do not have specific contexts attached. It was generally felt by participants that these topics, being linked to existing textual sources, would develop their own contexts through the use of these sources.
- One participant at Manchester suggested that it would be of interest and value to learners if the target language culture, as well as UK culture, was considered as part of the context-based learning. It was noted that the current A-Level specification does not require this to be the case, thus drawing out a unique angle to the Diploma at level 3.
- Linking very closely to the use of given contexts, is the use of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) within the Diploma in Languages and International Communication. Discussions relating to CLIL are presented further below.

6.10 Creativity of Assessment Methods

Participants were generally in favour of the concept of creative assessment, and saw the Diploma 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.

Suggested methods of creative assessment from all 3 events included:-

- Writing and performing a song/piece of drama
- 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 campaign
- Designing a poster
- Creating a blog

- One participant at Durham did suggest that assessment methods should be standardised across centres. Further consultations will explore this, in relation to whether a prescriptive range of assessment options should be offered for centres to choose from.

- The idea 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 them to life in an engaging way for young people.

- Two topics in particular were cited for their possible lack of suitability for creative assessment, unless due care was exercised. Topic 2.3 – *International perspectives of society and culture*, places some emphasis on the viewpoints of particular groups towards other groups, and some 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.

- Within topic 1.2 – *Living in a global village* – learners must be able to 'demonstrate cultural sensitivity', and concern was expressed by participants in Durham as to how assessment criteria could be drawn up to measure this. Suggestions did include: providing a scenario and asking for comment – and/or commenting on how the school welcomes international visitors.

6.11 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, North East]

Participants were asked whether 120 or 180 GLH should be applied to the Diploma at advanced level. This was considered by participants at all 3 events 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 impact of creative assessment methods might also impact on the amount of GLH, such as recording time, if (for example) individual performances are being undertaken. One participant, representing HE at the Manchester event, was strongly in favour of 180 GLH at advanced level.

The question was also put to participants, about what proportion of target language learning elements should be externally assessed. It is possible for example, that at levels 1 and 2, all target language assessment could be controlled internally, with external assessment focusing on learning elements that are assessed in English.

Participants generally saw a benefit in the internal control of target language learning, as a break away from the structures used within GCSE and A-Level qualifications. In addition, given that the Diploma is not simply oriented towards the acquisition of language per se, and could develop the skills suitable to a range of training and career paths, some participants felt it would be appropriate to weight some external assessment to the demonstration of non-language-specific skills.

However this approach was considered to be a double-edged sword by participants at Durham, as it was felt by others that employers and higher education institutions in particular, would favour the external assessment of language acquisition. As such, this was considered to be an important consideration.

6.12 Employability Skills

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 *transferrable skills* were being developed, with the opportunities to demonstrate and be assessed in relation to those skills. Of particular note, were topics 2.4 and 3.4 (within the theme of 'Languages for work'), as well as 2.5 and 3.5 and 3.5 (within the theme of 'Languages for professional communication').

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. As such it was considered that they should be inherent throughout all the topics, and that their 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.

6.13 Progression through Diploma levels

Progression was considered *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 felt that opportunities existed for upward progression through the Diploma, owing to distinctions in the complexity of topics, and the continuation of the same eight themes across each of the levels.

At the Manchester event one participant raised the issue that if a learner undertook the level 1 Diploma in years 10 and 11, where level 2 was not offered at sixth form, level 3 might constitute too great a jump.

Concern was also expressed that the linguistic elements of the level 3 Diploma would present a challenge to learners migrating from a language GCSE at any grade. This argument was countered on the basis that a short period of 'bridging' is common across many courses, for learners with the aptitude and to develop background knowledge and understanding at a reasonable pace.

It was pointed out just at the Manchester event that practitioners would need to exercise judgment in respect of learners undertaking an ab initio language as part of the level 2 ASL, who also may wish to take this ab initio language forward as the target language within the principal learning at level 3. In other words, consideration would need to be given as to the ability of the learner to succeed at this advanced level.

Some participants in Durham and Manchester commented that progression opportunities were difficult to see without a more detailed specification showing the grammar build-up.

One participant from Higher Education at eh Manchester event stated that learners completing the level 3 Diploma would be welcomed into language courses at HE, but would be expected to demonstrate the linguistic ability and language knowledge equivalent to the rigour of current A-Level specifications, as at level 4, additional 'bridging' streams would not be favoured.

6.14 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, North East]

Participants were generally positive that the Diploma represented a new and exciting learning pathway, both for learners as well as practitioners.

Some participants valued the content-based learning elements, 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 partly, as part of a marketing strategy, to attract learners who might otherwise be put off by the study of languages. Others felt that this would be too crude a ‘disguise’ and would not serve to retain learners not wishing to acquire a new language.

While some participants at all 3 events expressed concern around the ability of the Diploma to deliver language proficiency at an equivalent level to GCSE and A-Level offerings, others 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 that the Diploma would be engaging for learners and appealing to a broad range of potential employers.

6.15 Line Specific Issues

6.15.1 Content and language integrated learning (CLIL)

“we do like A levels, admissions tutors do like A levels, it’s simple, it’s what we know. That said, the one thing that I thought going through it, is we’d like more of it to actually focus on the culture” [HE Admissions Officer, North West]

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) was the focus of much discussion at all 3 events, in terms of the *balance* between the language and content based elements, as well as the *appropriateness* of assessing both these elements within the same topic, and possibly within the same assessment.

Participants generally felt that the balance of the two elements was right, if the Diploma was trying to attract learners *into* the study of languages, particularly in respect of those ‘not currently interested’ in languages. To attract learners ‘not able enough’ to study languages, it was considered that a greater emphasis on content would be required. In respect of another group of learners – those interested in pursuing linguistics at HE level – it was felt that GCSE and A-Level qualifications might prove more appealing.

Taking the above considerations into account, it was noted that the depth of language learning was unclear without a full specification, and that the current balance served to develop more transferrable, employability skills.

It was also felt appropriate that the level 3 Diploma should carry a greater proportion of target language assessment, as laid out in the current Criteria.

In terms of assessment, it was felt by some participants in Durham and Manchester that certain content areas may present too great a challenge to be assessed in the target language at levels 1 and 2. Due care would be required in respect of topics assessed partly in English and partly in the target language, as well as topics (with attached contexts) assessed wholly in the target language. 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, it would be important to ensure a realistic approach to the context selected, taking into account the age and experience of the learner. The example was given in Durham of e-commerce impacting on the retail sector, and whilst deliverable at the appropriate level in English, it was considered difficult to expect learners to be able to discuss in the target language at level 1.

The approach of the Diploma to facilitating the communication of accurate and real-life scenarios (as opposed to ‘easier’ fictional ones), emphasises the importance of the balance of content and language learning. This is particularly important to topics assessed wholly in the target language, through real-world contexts.

6.15.2 ‘Productive skills’ – speaking and writing

Participants were also asked to comment on the intention of the Diploma to focus assessment on speaking and writing skills, as ‘productive’ outputs of learning, with the more receptive skills of reading and listening assessed *through* these two productive channels.

A number of participants at all 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 is often undertaken without the need to deliver a productive response.

It was felt by some that to remove assessment within these areas, would also ignore the strengths of some learners within these areas, and present a challenge to learners at level 1, where ‘writing’ is

considered to be particularly difficult. Some participants noted that younger learners, whilst not always able to communicate in a particular language, take pride in being able to understand it.

6.15.3 Grammar Annex

Finally, 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 commented that as an applied course, perhaps the grammar could be 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.

6.16 Additional and Specialist Learning

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

6.17 Key Findings for the Criteria for Languages and International Communication

Overall, the Diploma in Languages and International Communication has been welcomed by participants at the consultation events, as a unique qualification with the propensity to attract and motivate learners to study languages in a new and engaging way. The choice of contexts, along with the balance of content and language integrated learning (CLIL), were considered to be an attractive offer for young people that might otherwise not wish to pursue language study.

A number of specific issues and suggestions were raised in respect of particular topics and statements, and consideration will need to be given to each of these, as detailed above. However the following over-arching issues were also raised that may merit further exploration. These are summarised below:-

- There are concerns that the level 3 Diploma will not deliver target language ability to the same rigour as A-Level qualifications. While the vision of the Diploma is not to emulate current provision, and to offer learners a wide range of possible progression routes – higher education practitioners of language courses would still expect learners to be proficient in the target language, and it is important that employers (not represented thus far at the consultation events), are consulted on the benefits the Diploma has to offer in terms of transferrable skills

- There is concern that the intention to assess receptive listening and reading skills through ‘productive’ speaking and writing outputs, ignores that in life and work, listening and reading are required without always requiring a deliverable. In addition, young people, particularly at level 1, find writing particularly challenge, and enjoy being recognised for their ability to ‘understand’ in a foreign language. Consideration should therefore be given to applied methods of assessing listening and reading skills
- There remain some unanswered questions on the amount of external assessment that should take place at level 3 (in terms of GLH), and how much of the target language should be externally assessed at all levels. Participants felt unable to express notional amounts, without seeing the specification and exact assessment requirements. Representation from higher education favoured external assessment in respect of target language learning (and up to 180 GLH external assessment at level 3), whereas others commented that external assessment should reflect the Diploma’s CLIL approach, and cover content as well as language
- Progression was a notable concern, particularly regarding learners opting into the Diploma at advanced level from a GCSE qualification, given the complexity of some linguistic elements, such as topic 3.1 – *Using linguistics for discourse analysis*. In addition, care would be needed to ensure that learners undertaking an ab initio language as part of the ASL at level 1 or 2, were considered competent if they wished to take it forward as a target language at the next level
- Consideration would need to be given to ensuring that a number of topics perceived by some participants as potentially ‘dry’, (e.g. 1.1; 2.1 and 2.3), are brought to life through their content, and via creative assessment.

Appendix I – Attendees for the 3 Events for Phase 4

Humanities and Social Sciences

Breakdown of all Humanities and Social Sciences attendees across the first 3 events. (Durham, Manchester and London)

Attendee Type	Total
Awarding body	3
Further Education College/Sixth Form	7
Higher Education	1
Local Authority	10
School	5
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	13
TOTAL	39

Durham 21st 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
TOTAL	7

Manchester 23rd 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
TOTAL	10

London 28th April 2009 – Jumeirah Carlton Tower Hotel

Attendee Type	Total
Awarding Body	2
Further Education College/Sixth Form	3
Local Authority	7
School	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	8
TOTAL	22

Languages and International Communication

Breakdown of all Languages and International Communication attendees across the first 3 events. (Durham, Manchester and London)

Attendee Type	Total
Awarding body	1
Further Education College/Sixth Form	7
Higher Education	5
Local Authority	7
Other Education	1
School	11
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	14
TOTAL	46

Durham 21st 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
TOTAL	11

Manchester 23rd 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
TOTAL	17

London 28th April 2009 – Jumeirah Carlton Tower Hotel

Attendee Type	Total
Awarding Body	1
Further Education College/Sixth Form	3
Higher Education	2
Local Authority	1
Other Education (Publisher)	1
School	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	8
TOTAL	18

Science

Breakdown of all Science attendees for Durham, Manchester and London

Attendee Type	Total
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Awarding body	2
Employer	1
Further Education College/Sixth Form	10
Higher Education	3
Local Authority	13
Other Education	2
School	11
Science Organisation	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	11
TOTAL	55

Durham 21st April 2009 – Radisson SAS Hotel

Attendee Type	Total
Employer	1
Further Education College/Sixth Form	4
Local Authority	5
Higher Education	1
School	1
Other Education (Science Learning Centre)	1
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	3
TOTAL	16

Manchester 23rd April 2009 – Radisson SAS Manchester Airport Hotel

Attendee Type	Total
Further Education College/Sixth Form	3
Local Authority	5
School	6
Other Education (National STEM Centre)	1
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	3
TOTAL	18

London 28th April 2009 – Jumeirah Carlton Tower Hotel

Attendee Type	Total
Awarding Body	2
Further Education College/Sixth Form	3
Higher Education	2
Local Authority	3
School	4
Science Organisation	2
Observers (DDP, Criteria Writer, QCA etc)	5
TOTAL	21

