



Step 2: Planning

This step involves interpreting your aims and intended outcomes to create a curriculum plan that has a clear focus on what is to be learned, how learning will take place and how it will be assessed.

What do you want to achieve?

It is essential to be very clear about the aims and intended learning outcomes of experiences outside the classroom experiences. Here are some common features of learning outside the classroom that you may want to build into your plans:

- knowledge, skills and understanding – related to subjects or learning outside the classroom activity
- Every Child Matters – achieving the five outcomes underpins the planning and delivery of extended services in and around schools
- social, citizenship or sustainability education, for example values, attitudes, aesthetic awareness
- personal skills, for example problem solving, self-reliance, independence, teamwork
- personal enjoyment and motivation
- adding value through building in, for example, ICT, literacy and numeracy.

How do you provide continuity and progression?

These issues are key to the success of curriculum design. Perhaps the most obvious place to begin is from the perspective of the individual learner.

Do all learners have sufficient opportunities for learning outside the classroom?

Are opportunities varied to suit learning needs? (age, key stage, SEN)

Does your planning build on prior learning outside the classroom to provide challenge – within and across phases and key stages?

Find out whether your school is using the TDA School Improvement Planning Framework.

How do you plan time?

Issues arising from inflexibility in curriculum design are often cited as barriers to learning outside the classroom taking place. A range of strategies have been used in many schools to provide solutions, instead of the 45-minute to one-hour lesson as the basic building block of the timetable. Simple changes in the way in which time is chunked can strongly affect learners' experiences of schooling and facilitate learning outside the classroom. Different approaches are being designed that give the learner a varied experience of the school day, week, term and year.



Step 2: Planning

Examples include:

- Lessons lasting for a half-day or a whole day
- Short learning outside the classroom activities built into 'normal' lessons
- Concentrated blocks of time at the start and end of a curriculum theme so that subjects pull together related learning
- 'Study weeks' within a school calendar where the normal cycle is put aside for more intensive or varied activities
- In-built longer sessions for certain subjects or areas to overcome the single lesson barrier
- Pairing subjects together to create longer blocks of time where two teams of teachers can programme learning outside the classroom jointly
- Creating a new 'Learning Outside the Classroom (subject)' slot in the timetable with at least one longer session per cycle for either a project-based or personal learning and thinking skills led approach
- Moving from two- to one-year courses at Key Stage 4 creates longer blocks of time as fewer subjects are programmed for any given week. This facilitates collaborative arrangements with other schools, institutions at 14–19 and providers of learning outside the classroom.

All of these make it easier, especially for secondary schools, to arrange learning outside the classroom without requiring complex trade-offs with other subject areas or producing fragmented teaching groups where some learners are absent due to work at another location.

How do you plan for teaching and learning?

Important for all experiences but essential when working in partnership with the wider workforce and with learning outside the classroom providers. More detailed guidance is provided in the next unit on 'The Learning Experience' but below are some handy hints for designing the whole learning outside the classroom curriculum:

- Plan to capture opportunities for follow-up (data, photos, samples etc)
- Design your curriculum to make effective use of adults others than teachers/leaders
- Create effective partnerships between teachers, schools and learning outside the classroom providers
- Ensure when planning with any partners providing external support, that there are clear roles for those leading activities
- Include assessment opportunities in designing your curriculum
- Link to the new secondary curriculum at QCA and guidance for developing the curriculum – curriculum.qca.org.uk/key-stages-3-and-4/developing-your-curriculum/index.aspx
- See the SSAT link for publications on curriculum design from NCSL: www.schoolsnetwork.org.uk/Article.aspx?PageId=239194&NodId=0
- See the direct link to NCSL curriculum leadership resources: www.ncsl.org.uk/region/leadership_network/leadershipnetwork-curriculuminnovation.cfm?token

NOTE: More detailed information on planning teaching and learning activities for learning outside the classroom can be found in the section 'Organising learning outside the classroom'.