

# Middle Leader Certificate: Curriculum Design

Handbook



# Contents



|                  |    |
|------------------|----|
| Introduction     | 2  |
| Course overview  | 3  |
| Course breakdown | 4  |
| Assessment       | 6  |
| Success criteria | 10 |

# Introduction



The PTI **Middle Leader Certificate** (MLC) champions subject-centred leadership. It is designed for current and aspiring subject leaders who want to strengthen their influence, deepen their subject knowledge, and lead meaningful improvements in curriculum and pedagogy.

The **MLC** is a personal accreditation that recognises individual professional growth and the impact of that development on practice. The course focuses on curriculum design and planning. Delegates identify a significant thread within their subject and map its development across key stages, exploring how knowledge is sequenced to build coherence, progression, and depth of understanding.





# Course overview

The course develops delegates' understanding of curriculum design and subject leadership. Delegates explore how subject knowledge builds over time, how meaningful connections can be made across the curriculum, and how opportunities beyond the classroom can enrich pupils' learning.

Through the creation of a detailed curriculum plan, delegates reflect on curriculum coherence, progression, and sequencing, considering how curriculum design can support pupils' long-term learning and inform school improvement.

The course consists of five online sessions, independent research, the creation of a curriculum plan, evidence of delivery and impact, and peer review.

# Course breakdown

| Event                                     | Preparation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Purpose                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Launch</p> <p>January (online)</p>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the online application form which is used by the subject tutors as the basis of the first eTutorial</li> <li>• Reading provided by The PTI</li> <li>• Curriculum self-reflection and audit</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of curriculum in a broad sense – what is it and what is its purpose?</li> <li>• Consider the rationale for this work within own context of department/school/trust to create a needs analysis to inform planning</li> </ul>                                             |
| <p>eTutorial 1</p> <p>Spring (online)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to PTI lecture podcast and complete reflection questions</li> <li>• Consider how and when the chosen topic could be taught in different key stages</li> </ul>                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deepen subject knowledge to enrich curriculum understanding</li> <li>• Consider features of the ultimate curriculum plan framed around the chosen topic</li> <li>• Identify barriers to learning and how these could be overcome</li> <li>• Share ideas with subject group</li> </ul> |
| <p>eTutorial 2</p> <p>Spring (online)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent research on aspects of the curriculum, making use of PTI resources and subject group</li> </ul>                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate the chosen topic and rationale for curriculum choices beyond exam specifications</li> <li>• Strategy around how to approach the work</li> </ul>                                                                                                                            |

| Event                                                          | Preparation                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Purpose                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Independent research<br><br>Summer                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Itemise details and include comments about value/impact (these could include reading, podcasts, courses, collaborations, visits/trips, resources)</li> </ul>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively seek to develop understanding of curriculum principles within a subject and how these might be implemented within your own context</li> </ul>                                 |
| Design curriculum plan<br><br>Summer                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with your subject network</li> <li>Collaborate with others (departments/schools/phases)</li> <li>Decide which aspects will be delivered for testing and reviewing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share best practice</li> <li>Road test aspects of curriculum design</li> <li>Facilitate colleagues in improving practice</li> <li>Improve quality of education for students</li> </ul> |
| eTutorial 3<br><br>Autumn (online)                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflect on progress so far – what has gone well and why? What still needs to be done?</li> <li>Reflect on course criteria and begin to identify areas to evidence</li> </ul>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consolidate work so far and review progress</li> <li>Share practice and swap ideas</li> <li>Consolidate ideas for curriculum plan</li> <li>Celebrate and recognise progress</li> </ul> |
| Final summary reflection and assessment<br><br>Autumn (online) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflect on impact of the work</li> <li>Create Evidence Portfolio</li> <li>Familiarise yourself with the assessment roles and questions</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consolidation of the process and consideration of next steps</li> <li>Final assessment</li> <li>Peer review of another participant</li> <li>Quality assurance by The PTI</li> </ul>    |

# Assessment: Evidence Portfolio



The Evidence Portfolio must contain:

1. Your Curriculum Plan (with reflections and notes)
2. Three further pieces of evidence selected from the 'Sources of evidence' list

## Sources of evidence

1. Evaluation of strengths and areas to develop around coherence and challenge of school's curriculum
2. Strategic plan for school improvement including improvement for pupils in learning, attitudes, enthusiasm, and outcomes, and improvement for teachers in teaching, enthusiasm, and retention
3. Pupil voice: involve pupils in the design of their learning
4. Raw data analysis (school/national data)
5. Evidence of research (action-based research in school/academic research)
6. Evidence of subject-based activities beyond the classroom: how are pupils enriched by these experiences? How are these activities sustainable?

## Sources of evidence

7. Plans (e.g. staff meeting/subject-focused CPD/coaching schedules)
8. Pupil performance: evidence to illustrate high level of pupil engagement/outcomes (e.g. pupil work, pupil voice, outcomes)
9. Evidence of subject-based work with other schools/organisations
10. Sponsor comments (if applicable)
  - a. How have you raised the profile of the subject within your school?
  - b. What is the response of staff (and beyond)?
11. Budget: how can you make more of what you have? Share resources? Access extra resources/funding?
12. Project plan: how is this different to what you might have done anyway? How has your thinking changed as a result of attending the course?

# Assessment: Peer to Peer Interviews



Delegates work in triads and rotate through the roles of Interviewee, Interviewer, and Moderator, ensuring all participants experience presenting, questioning, and evaluating professional practice.

| Role        | Responsibility                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Interviewee | Present your Evidence Portfolio, demonstrating how your work meets the programme success criteria. Share reflections on the impact of your work and respond to questions from the Interviewer and Moderator.                                                               |
| Interviewer | Reflect on the assessment questions and support a constructive professional dialogue. Evaluate, challenge, and celebrate the Interviewee’s work, ensuring the discussion explores both the quality and impact of the curriculum design project.                            |
| Moderator   | Review the Interviewee’s Evidence Portfolio in advance and six assessment questions. Prepare two to three questions of your own to explore the rationale, impact, and outcomes of their work. Facilitate the discussion and record key points using the provided template. |

## Assessment questions

1. What aspect of curriculum leadership did you focus on and why? What does it look like? How does it fit your school plan?
2. How did you prepare for implementing your curriculum plan?
3. What has been the impact so far? What are the successes? Which areas have been less successful and why?
4. How has the project developed your subject expertise and that of your team?
5. How has the project enriched your leadership skills?
6. What are your next steps?

# Success criteria



Each aim should be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Thorough evidence supported by educational research
2. Clear evidence
3. Insufficient evidence

## Aim

Design a challenging subject-focused curriculum through curriculum planning across key stages

Consider coherence and challenge within the subject's curriculum

Identify and respond to the conditions that impact upon the learning process within a subject over time (including extending and enthusing pupils through subject-based activities beyond the curriculum)

Evidence and evaluate the outcomes to drive school improvement



[www.ptieducation.org](http://www.ptieducation.org)



The PTI™ is a trading name of The Professional Teaching Institute, a registered charity (1116224) and a company limited by guarantee (05910443) registered in England & Wales at 14-15 Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EX.

For enquiries, please contact [events@ptieducation.org](mailto:events@ptieducation.org) or call us on 020 3174 3106  
Twitter/ Instagram: @ptieducation  
Facebook/ LinkedIn: The PTI