



## Graduate Diploma in Tertiary Education

### Learning Agreement

**Credits: 15**

**Level: 7**

**Time: 150 hours**

A Learning Agreement is a detailed description of the work that you will carry out to complete your GDTE major project. It generates 15 credits for your diploma and could take up to 150 hours to prepare. In preparing your Learning Agreement, you will work closely with your Team, Facilitator and Mentor. Your Learning Agreement is both the framework for your project and a detailed plan for the journey that you are about to begin. Make sure that you consult the Graduate Profile, to identify any attributes that are not already covered.

Your Project *includes* a Presentation to your School, or colleagues working on the Programme, which outlines the Project and the results. In addition, your Project *includes* a written article or a report, which will be available for your wider community of practice. When you design your Project, allow time for both of these activities.

The process of writing a Learning Agreement is *circular*; every time you move to the next section, there will be an effect on the parts that you have previously written so the team will edit the Agreement many times before you're satisfied with it. This important part of the learning process helps to clarify your thoughts about the Project. Consult team members and your facilitator regularly.

The Notes below are given as a guide only, and are not intended to be prescriptive, since every Learning Agreement will be structured differently.

#### ***Part One: Project Overview***

In this section, you introduce the reader to the *key features* of your project.

No.	Section	Notes
1	Title of the Project	This may change as the Learning Agreement is fine tuned.
2	Aim of the Project	This is a general statement which explains the purpose of the project - what the project is about. The description is general, not detailed; no background information is required at this stage. Clearly identify the problem or the issues that you will explore and why you are interested in this particular problem/issue.
3	The Specific Goals of your project	This takes the form of a list, using action verbs to describe what you will <i>do</i> (actions), in order to meet the Aims of your Project. Initially, you might make a long list, but as you work through the Learning Agreement, you might discard/refine some.



4	The Learning Strategies	<p>This is the substantial part of the Learning Agreement. When you examine your Goals, you identify specific areas of knowledge that team members need to learn in order to carry out the Goals of your Project. As well as <i>knowledge</i>, you should identify the <i>skills</i> that you want to work on, e.g. academic writing, research methods, educational pedagogies and technologies.</p> <p>Go through each Goal and decide what you have to <i>do</i>, to meet the Goal. Will you read (and if so, what?), interview, discuss, attend courses? Will you consult individuals? What other resources (including funding) will you need to meet your Goals? What other actions will you have to take? Consult the Graduate Profile to make sure that your Project will provide evidence for the Assessment Portfolio.</p>
6	Project Outputs	<p>This is an important section. You identify</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What counts as <i>evidence</i> (for your Assessment Portfolio).</li> <li>• What you will produce, as a result of your Project?</li> <li>• What form will it take?</li> <li>• When will you present your Project Outputs to colleagues?</li> <li>• How and when you will write your article?</li> </ul>
7	Assessment	<p>What is the best way to assess your Project Outputs? Who will assess it?</p>

### ***Part Two: Project Details***

In Part Two, you add depth to some of the ideas that you introduced in Part One.

8	<p>(a) Project Background and Context</p> <p>(b) Literature Review</p>	<p>Discuss the purpose of the project and the context for the project. You should explore some of the research that has already been done and state how your project relates to what others have done or are currently doing. <i>See Appendix 1</i></p>
9	Project Plan: Timetable & Milestones	<p>This is a detailed timetable of how the project will progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who will do what?</li> <li>• What are the key milestones that need to be met and what dates are set for these?</li> <li>• What is the starting date and the projected finishing date for the Project?</li> <li>• Date for the Presentation</li> <li>• Date for completion of the article.</li> </ul>



10	Project Methodology	What methods will you use to gather information? How will you analyze and interpret this data? The methodology depends upon the type of project. There are a number of acceptable ways to gather data but if you have not gathered data formally before, you may need to learn about methodologies. If you need to learn about methodologies, this learning is part of your Learning Strategies.
11	Ethical Considerations	How will you deal with the data? You must ensure that the data you gather remains confidential and state how you will do this. There are ethical problems associated with 'insider research' (gathering data from students/colleagues). Think about the ethics of using the information you expect to gather. Who do you need to consult? If your project involves Māori learners and staff, you need to consult with the Kaitohutohu team.

Begin by discussing possible Projects with your team, mentor and Head of School. Identify any major problem areas (for example methodologies) and discuss these with your facilitator. Send drafts regularly to your subject mentor or Head of School for comments and feedback. Your facilitator will give feedback on drafts.

When you are ready to submit, write your LA in essay form, with side headings that follow the template (or design your own template). The word count is approximately 1,000 – 1,500 words. Include a bibliography and appendices (if appropriate) which should not be included in the word count.

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## Appendix 1

### Literature Review

In the Learning Agreement, Section 8 requires you to provide the *Project Background and Context* and *Rationale* for the project. Discuss the major focus of the project – a new programme, a course, a different way of delivering an existing programme and what others have written about this. This is, in effect, a literature review. What is a literature review?



**Definition** The process of reading, analyzing evaluating and summarizing written texts – books, journal articles, on-line material, trade papers, newspapers, reports – about a specific topic. The results are summarized and form the context (wide background, framework) in which your project sits. For the GDTE project, you need to know at least 3 or 4 pieces of research or theories and be able to link your ideas to them

**Purpose**

- (a) To define and refine the problem that you’re going to address.
- (b) To establish a clear link between the aims of your project and the ideas, research, projects of others.

**Some ideas** As you read the research, you build up a picture of the current knowledge about your topic and find out what others have done, or are doing, which will not be exactly the same as your project, but useful to know. You show that you can put your project and ideas into the bigger picture so that your project in turn will become *part of* the big picture. *Think about:*

- the history/background of the topic
- the key ideas of the topic
- the main theories that underpin the topic
- the politics/power issues
- the contradictions and paradoxes.

By situating your project alongside the work of others, you provide a *context* for the audience for your work and this helps them (and you) to understand where your ideas fit into the overall picture.

As you read about the ideas or projects of others, you think about how your project differs, or is similar or takes the ideas further. A literature review requires your comments and opinions. You don’t have to agree with what others have said or done but you should be able to say why (and substantiate your opinion). You can agree with some part of a project/theory and disagree with another part.

Finally, you can think of this as a ‘state of the art’ assessment of the current knowledge about your topic.

### **When to do the Literature Review?**

There is no perfect time to review the research except that it should be done sometime around the start of your draft Learning Agreement. It should help you to refine your ideas. You could do your review *after* you have drafted the Aims of your project. Or, you could do a review *before* drafting the Aims and then extract the Aims from this.

For most people, the Aims and Project Background/Review are developed together and redefined and polished many times. Your review can be viewed as a ‘work in progress’ as it will grow as your project progresses. Ideally, you will be reading the literature, writing and commentating on the research and projects of others throughout your project. Remember to consult regularly with your facilitator and Mentor who can give advice and guidance on your ideas. Keep your review as a draft until you are ready to be write it for your article, or make it part of the presentation (or both). And, remember to keep a bibliography of your sources. You can compile theses in End Note if you have access or Zotero – a free web-based platform for collating reference material.



The article that you present as part of your project can be thought of as the *starting point* for an academic article. If you want to publish the results of your project, in an academic journal, newspaper, on a web-page or in an industry publication, you will need to learn how to write for the audiences of these publications and this can be done, after the project has been completed.

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## Resources

**University of Otago. (n.d.) Conducting a Literature Review.**

[http://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/distance\\_study/otago029525.html](http://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/distance_study/otago029525.html)

**Writing a Literature Review**

[http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/slss/studyhub/handouts/Writing%20A%20Literature%20Review.pdf](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/slss/studyhub/handouts/Writing%20A%20Literature%20Review.pdf)

**Write a Literature Review: Lit Review 101**<http://guides.library.vcu.edu/lit-review>

**Referencing**

[http://wikieducator.org/Flexible\\_Learning/References#APA\\_Referencing](http://wikieducator.org/Flexible_Learning/References#APA_Referencing)

**Annotated Bibliography**

<http://oil.otago.ac.nz/oil/module2.html>

