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April 2023 (v2)

SEG level 4 award, certificate and diploma in arboriculture

Thank you for your interest in our professional, government recognised qualifications.

Enrolment deadlines:

Please note that stage 1 enrolments must be complete by April 17th 2023 to qualify for a place on the course this year.

Stage 1 - Award portion of diploma - May 20th – July 1st 2023 ([fees payable](#) by April 15th 2023)

Stage 2 – Certificate portion of diploma – July 2nd – August 18th 2023 + October 7th 2023 - Feb 10th 2024 ([fees payable](#) by June 1st 2023)

Stage 3 – Diploma top up portion of diploma – Feb 11th – June 15th 2024 ([fees payable](#) by December 1st 2023).

Full fees can be found further in this guide.

This qualification was previously called the TechCert or the ABC level 4 award, certificate and diploma in arboriculture. The qualification is now issued by the Skills & Education Group Awards (previously ABC Awards).

If you want to discuss your career and qualification options, please do not hesitate to contact me. Normal office hours are Wednesdays to Saturdays from 3:00pm to 8pm (UK time). Please see our [website for scheduled and up to date office closures](#). For now, please note that the **office is closed** April 23rd to May 17th 2023 and closed again August 19th to October 9th 2023.

Warm regards,

Lisa Sanderson

Training developer, tree hugger, fungus lover

Human Potential Coach (Bulletproof)

Nutritional Therapist

Arboricultural lecturer / SEG arboriculture course manager

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Company principles

The Training Tree has a clear company vision that embraces the following principles:

Running our courses with the students in mind

We are student focused. How do we show this?

- ♥ **Feedback** - we take feedback seriously and are constantly reviewing and changing the way we deliver our courses based on your views.
- ♥ **Flexibility** - we run our business and courses so that we can be as flexible as possible to meet changing needs. We can provide evening and weekend remote support if booked in advance (office hours are Wednesdays to Saturdays 230pm to 8pm UK time) to increase your contact time.
- ♥ **Educational support** - we will do what we can to support you to achieve and can modify learning plans to suit your needs. This includes, where serious personal issues arise, at our discretion, a pause to your course enrolment period so that you don't miss out qualifying (on approval, by application only).
- ♥ **Eco-anxiety and ecological grief support** – we are aware of these **real phenomena** (the company director had them big time in the past) and we teach with the aim of providing you with the tools you need to improve our natural environment. If you feel you are suffering from eco-anxiety, ecological grief, or any other form of anxiety or depression, please seek professional support. Further information on these newly defined conditions can be found [here](#).

There is a qualified human potential transformational coach and naturopathic nutritionalist on staff that can provide basic further advice to support a holistic mental and physical health plan, should you find yourself needing a boost. Healing ourselves and nature is not only possible but a pleasure.

Running our business with the environment and ethics in mind

"We are facing an unprecedented global emergency. Life on earth is in crisis. Scientists agree we have entered a period of abrupt climate breakdown."
(Extinction Rebellion 2019).

There's no time to wait to make changes – so we're making them now. It's a drop in the ocean but we're trying to do our bit. So far, we have:

- ♥ **Reduced student travel** - reduced the number of classroom days, focusing on specific topics that are enhanced by standing under real, live trees. We are working on live online and recorded lecturers and will build on this as we go. We encourage you to stay at home to study during your working week for an additional 16 days in your first academic year. This will allow you to focus on your studies and to reduce your carbon footprint. You can book telephone / zoom online video tutorials if it supports additional time off from work. It is important that you have everything you need to achieve your qualification and career goals.
- ♥ **Reduced staff travel** - more local lecturers sourced to facilitate classroom days and online live and recorded lectures have been introduced (still in early days but we're working on it). And for now, we are running purely online courses.
- ♥ **Created online tutorials** - online using modern technology, rather than in the classroom, further reducing the number of travel days. These will be scheduled throughout the year to support students in groups and in solo sessions.
- ♥ **Reduced use of valuable resources** – no more paper-based assignments. All new submissions are via our virtual learning environment (Moodle). I print double-sided to help too!

-
- ♥ **Strike for climate change** – the company director has attended the [global climate strike](#) and will continue to close the office to [march for climate days](#). The trees you manage need a stable environment to survive – you know this better than most – support your trees please.

♥ **Supporting other organisations** – The Training Tree supports or has supported the following organisations, either via membership or donations:

- ✓ [Amnesty International](#)
- ✓ [Arboricultural Association](#)
- ✓ [Crisis](#)
- ✓ [The Global Tree Initiative](#)
- ✓ [Greenpeace](#)
- ✓ [Pesticide Action Network UK \(PAN UK\)](#)
- ✓ [Plantlife](#)
- ✓ [Royal Forestry Society](#)
- ✓ [Woodland Trust](#)
- ✓ [Yorkshire Wildlife Trust](#)
- ✓ [International Coaching Federation](#)
- ✓ [Sussex and Surrey Coppice Group](#)

Running courses with ethics in mind

The company was created to provide flexible courses for people with busy lives, who may not otherwise have chance to qualify. We're a modern company that wants to move with the times to meet the needs of our client base.

- ♥ **Fees.** Since 2017, we have reduced our fees annually, with a view to making them more accessible. We even reduced our fees during the pandemic, when the rest of the world seemed to be raising their prices. Although we are committed to providing accessible courses, this year we have taken the decision to increase our course fees for the first time since we started. This is necessary to keep the training offer sustainable.
- ♥ **Ethical banking.** We do the majority of our banking with [Triodos](#), whose mission is to help create a society that protects and promotes quality of life and human dignity for all. Since 1980, their sustainable financial products have enabled individuals and organisations to use their money in ways that benefit people and the environment.

Start dates

Online only

Stage 1 - Award (1 unit)

May 20th – July 1st 2023 ([fees payable](#) by April 17th 2023)

Stage 2 - Certificate (additional 4 units)

July 2nd – Aug 18th 2023 + Oct 7th 2023 - Feb 10th 2024 ([fees payable](#) by June 1st 2023)

Stage 3 - Diploma stage (additional 3 units)

Feb 11th – June 15th 2024 ([fees payable](#) by December 1st 2023).

Other key dates

Tutorials

Zoom group tutorials will be offered throughout the course near your unit start dates. The first will be on May 20th 2023, 1:30-3pm (BT). The remainder will be confirmed during enrolment. Personal tutorials are also available for assignment support.

How to choose the right course for you?

We are currently offering the following online options;

- SEG Level 4 Award in arboriculture only
- SEG Level 4 Certificate in arboriculture only (staged from award to certificate)
- SEG Level 4 Diploma in arboriculture (staged award to certificate to diploma)

Want to do just the award (1 of the 8 diploma units)? You can still use the award to count towards a future certificate or diploma. More info can be found in the section “**Qualification guide – how the qualifications work**”. Please note we are currently prioritising learners wanting the full diploma (spaces are limited).

Want to do just the certificate (5 of the 8 diploma units)? We ask that first you sign up for the award, then top up to the certificate. If you do, you can still use that certificate to count towards the full diploma in the future by topping up those extra 3 units. They're all the same units. More info can be found in the section “**Qualification guide – how the qualifications work**”. Please note we are currently prioritising learners that want to commit to the full diploma and spaces are limited.

Fees

There is no VAT charged on these courses.

Online only fees

This is purely based on distance learning (no classroom attendance included in the price). If ad-hoc classroom sessions are run, you may have the opportunity to attend these, although a day rate fee may apply.

Course fees

Option 1 – online only

SEG level 4 award (*principles of tree management* unit) * £910.00

+

Top up to the SEG level 4 certificate from the award

An additional 4 units on top of the award (based on the optional unit being *tree related damage to built structures*) * £1440.00

+

Top up to the SEG level 4 diploma from the certificate

An additional 3 units on top of the certificate * £1300.00

Total

*** £3,650.00 NO VAT PAYABLE**

* Fees include SEG Awards registration fees. The staged route commits you to the full diploma and will be invoiced accordingly. You can also do the SEG level 4 award or certificate as standalone qualifications, however, spaces are limited and priority is given to those committing to the full diploma. Course fees include the marking of 2 submissions per assignment (further submission incur additional marking fees of £50 / assignment (includes 2 submissions), late assignment submissions incur the same fees. Staged fees are conditional on the previous award / certificate being undertaken with The Training Tree. Please note that we reserve the right to cancel stages of the qualification at any time.

Course fees

Option 2 – online only

One-off, full fees payment for SEG level 4 award or certificate in arboriculture (not the full diploma):

Award

Principles of tree management unit

* £910.00

+ SEG Awards fees (SEE PREVIOUS PAGE)

OR

Certificate

Tree related damage to built structures as elected unit, 5 units in total * £2,500.00

* Fees include SEG Awards registration fees. You can do the SEG level 4 award or certificate as standalone qualifications, however, spaces are limited and priority is given to those committing to the full diploma. Course fees include the marking of 2 submissions per assignment. Further submissions incur additional marking fees of £50 / assignment (includes 2 submissions), late assignment submissions incur the same fees. Award, certificate and diploma qualification certificates are likely not released by SEG Awards until the autumn / winter of 2024 / 2025. Please note that we reserve the right to cancel stages of the qualification at any time.

Why choose one of our courses?

The SEG award, certificate and diploma qualifications are:

- issued and moderated by a government approved awarding body SEG Awards,
- recognised and regulated by Ofqual and Qualifications Wales (government bodies that regulate qualifications, examinations and assessments),
- recognised nationally and internationally,
- respected, written by and supported by the arboricultural industry, industry bodies and employers.

Our students receive:

- professional materials produced and sourced by qualified and experienced arboricultural practitioners and teachers,
- a learning plan (assessment planner) to help you achieve your qualification,
- support from qualified and experienced industry professionals, and qualified teaching and coaching staff with arboricultural / horticultural experience and qualifications,
- access to telephone, email and video support during office hours,
- discounted career and transformational life coaching. Please see [this link](#) for more information.

Course prerequisites and level 2 vs. level 4

Ideally, you will have already obtained at minimum a level 2 arboricultural or related qualification covering appropriate theory material **or** have equivalent knowledge from experience, self-study and workshops / seminars as well as another qualification of the same level.

The level 2 is a good foundation for level 4, particularly the science units. You are expected to have prior knowledge of tree physiology and function, and soils, amongst other topics.

Some students, through reading, experience, other courses, land-based degrees, etc., have enough knowledge already to undertake the level 4, whilst others need extra reading / research / training to achieve the foundation needed for success. Please take some time to look at the level 2 to make sure you would be comfortable answering questions, especially the tree physiology and soil science units, before undertaking the level 4.

Here's the link to the [level 2 certificate](#) in arboriculture syllabus.

The level 4 diploma is a fantastic qualification; however, it is also very intense and requires quite a lot of time to research and answer the assignments and online multiple-choice quizzes (no final exam). As it is a financial investment and time commitment, we want to make sure the course is right for you, that you will be happy undertaking the assignments and that you will successfully achieve the qualification. If you do not have the minimum qualifications, with enough industry experience, on application we may require tree physiology entry questions to be answered, to enable us both to be confident it is the right course for you.

Qualification guide – how the qualifications work

SEG level 4 award in arboriculture

If you wish to complete the award, either as a solo qualification or a step towards the diploma, you must complete 1-2 units, based on the rules below. SEG Awards (the 'awarding body') dictates how you can combine credits to build qualifications.

Level 4 Award in Arboriculture			
Rules of Combination: Learners must achieve a minimum of 9 credits and a maximum of 12 credits from any of the units below. A minimum of 7 credits must be at Level 4 or above.			
Unit	Level	Credit Value	GL
Woody vegetation formation and physiology [D/503/3316]	4	6	35
Tree biomechanics and maintenance [M/503/3319]	4	7	40
Pest, disease and disorder identification	3	5	24
Principles of tree management [T/503/3323]	5	9	45
Development and tree protection [A/503/3324]	4	5	25
Selection, planting and design with hardy nursery stock for amenity and landscape purposes [L/503/3330]	5	8	40
Principles of woodland establishment and management [F/503/3325]	3	5	25
Tree related damage to built structures [L/503/3327]	4	4	20

This means, you would take 1 - 2 units that add up to between 9 and 12 credits from the list above, as long as 7 of the credits were at level 4 or above.

Example 1 (currently offered as award unit at The Training Tree as from April 2019)

Principles of tree management
= 9 credits at level 5, also meeting the criteria.

Example 2

Pest, disease and disorder identification (level 3 with 5 credits)

+

Tree biomechanics and maintenance (level 4 with 7 credits)
= 12 credits in total, meeting the criteria.

Click [here](#) for the SEG's L4 qualification intro and [here](#) for the actual L4 syllabus.

SEG Awards level 4 certificate in arboriculture

*If you wish to complete the certificate, either as a solo qualification or as a step towards the diploma, you must complete FIVE (5) units, based on the rules below. SEG Awards (the 'awarding body') dictates how you can combine credits to build qualifications.

Level 4 Certificate in Arboriculture

Rules of Combination: Learners must achieve a minimum of 31 credits. This must include 27 credits from the mandatory units.

Unit	Level	Credit Value	GL
Mandatory Units			
Woody vegetation formation and physiology [D/503/3316]	4	6	35
Tree biomechanics and maintenance [M/503/3319]	4	7	40
Pest, disease and disorder identification [M/503/3322]	3	5	24
Principles of tree management [T/503/3323]	5	9	45
Optional Units			
Development and tree protection [A/503/3324]	4	5	25
Selection, planting and design with hardy nursery stock for amenity and landscape purposes [L/503/3330]	5	8	40
Principles of woodland establishment and management [F/503/3325]	3	5	25
Tree related damage to built structures [L/503/3327]	4	4	20

This means, you would need to take all of the mandatory units:

Pest, disease and disorder identification (5 credits)
Tree biomechanics and maintenance (7 credits)
Woody vegetation formation and physiology (6 credits) and
Principles of tree management (9 credits)
 = 27 credits and...

+

ONE (1) optional unit. We are currently offering the

Tree related damage to built structures unit (4 credits)

= 31 credits (the minimum amount needed)

Click [here](#) for the SEG's L4 qualification intro and [here](#) for the actual L4 syllabus.

SEG level 4 diploma in arboriculture

If you wish to complete the diploma, you must complete all of the units, based on the rules below. SEG Awards (the 'awarding body') dictates how you can combine credits to build qualifications.

Level 4 Diploma in Arboriculture

Rules of Combination: Learners must achieve a minimum of 49 credits. This must include 40 credits from the mandatory units.

Unit	Level	Credit Value	GL
Mandatory Units			
Woody vegetation formation and physiology [D/503/3316]	4	6	35
Tree biomechanics and maintenance [M/503/3319]	4	7	40
Pest, disease and disorder identification [M/503/3322]	3	5	24
Principles of tree management [T/503/3323]	5	9	45
Development and tree protection [A/503/3324]	4	5	25
Selection, planting and design with hardy nursery stock for amenity and landscape purposes [L/503/3330]	5	8	40
Optional Units			
Principles of woodland establishment and management [F/503/3325]	3	5	25
Tree related damage to built structures [L/503/3327]	4	4	20

Click [here](#) for SEG's L4 qualification intro and [here](#) for the actual L4 syllabus.

Reading materials

You are expected to have a basic understanding of tree physiology and soil science (see previous section on course prerequisites).

It is advised you read Peter Thomas' *Trees; Their Natural History* (ideally 2nd edition) before starting coursework and complete it before or during your course enrolment. It is an enjoyable read and it will help many of the assignments.

It is your responsibility to arrange access to the books in the attached [The Training Tree reading list](#), as they are required to complete the course.

Relevant industry books and British Standards can be obtained from [Summerfield Books / Tree Source](#), the [Arboricultural Association](#), [The Stationary Office](#) (online), [The Forestry Commission](#) and the [Ancient Tree Forum](#). See individual websites for details.

The attached [SEG reading list](#) is a guide to resources that *may* be used to complete your diploma. Although it is not a requirement to read them all and we will provide resources needed to complete your studies, you may wish to invest in selected titles for your professional library.

It is recommended where possible, students arrange access to relevant British Standards for the *principles of tree management* unit (BS3998: 2010 Tree Work - Recommendations), the *tree protection and development* unit (BS 5837: 2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations) and *selection, planting and design* unit (BS 8545: 2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape - Recommendations and BS3696-1: 1992 Nursery stock specification for trees and shrubs). These provide more depth to the topics; however, we provide sufficient info to support your studies.

Staff

The Training Tree are proud of our staff – they are hand-picked and all at the top of their game in terms of industry experience, dedication and passion for ensuring you learn to the best of your abilities.

Course structure

This course is written assignment and online test based (no formal exams) with a final qualification awarded by SEG Awards (the 'awarding body'). Some classroom sessions may include group work that counts towards your portfolios.

The award, certificate and diploma courses are divided into units (as detailed in the previous section "**Qualification guide – how the qualifications work**").

Each unit is split into learning outcomes (LOs). For example, the *pest, disease and disorder identification* unit has 5 learning outcomes in total, e.g. learning outcome 4:

4. Understand how fungi colonise woody tissues.

Each learning outcome has a number of assessment criteria (AC). The ACs break down the learning outcomes into bite size pieces and your knowledge is tested in these areas.

In the example of learning outcome 5 above, there are 3 ACs = 4.1-4.3:

Learning outcome

Assessment criteria

4. Understand how fungi colonise woody tissues	<p>4.1 Describe the four principal strategies employed by tree decay fungi to colonise woody tissues</p> <p>4.2 Describe each of the following types of rot and give an example of a fungal pathogen for each</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ white – selective delignification ○ white simultaneous ○ brown ○ soft <p>4.3 For each of 20 principal decay fungi identify the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ common hosts ○ colonisation strategy ○ type of rot caused ○ arboricultural significances ○ parts of host affected ○ any preventative measures/treatment
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You will see SEG's learning outcome and assessment criteria numbers on Moodle headings, assignments and some reading materials. We present the assessment criteria to you in the form of assignment briefs and online tests, sometimes using scenarios to make it easier to relate them to real life. You then show you understand the assessment criteria by completing assignments and online tests. Sometimes, prior learning can be used (e.g., PTI certificate).

In order to pass a unit, you need to pass all of the assessment criteria within that unit.

In order to obtain an award, certificate or diploma, you need to pass all assessment criteria within all of the required units in your plan (all assessment criteria for all units for the diploma). That means achieving 100% - that's right, 100% of your course work must be passed.

Time commitment and course workload

Zoom sessions will be provided for group and individual tutorials. Group sessions will be recorded, so attendance is not mandatory. This will be an opportunity for Q&A and also for opportunities to explore assignments questions and answers together.

It is possible to complete the diploma course within the timescales provided; however, it does take quite a considerable amount of time and commitment, especially if you are already working full time and have other commitments. After they've started, most students are surprised by the amount of time and effort that is required to qualify. Do not underestimate the time and effort commitment required! Equally, please do not underestimate the sense of achievement you will feel once you qualify.

The amount of time needed depends on a few factors, e.g., whether you have existing qualifications (level 2 certificate in arboriculture or similar), your experience, whether you need further study to fill in knowledge gaps, how comfortable you are with academic work (writing assignments), your typing speed / computer skills and how much uninterrupted time you have (as opposed to 5 minutes here and there).

SEG Awards recommend that the total qualification time required to complete the full diploma is 490 hours. That's worth thinking about.

For the year-long classroom diploma, students spend 10-18 days in the classroom for guided learning (approx. 6 hours each day) and they say they spend an additional:

- between 2-4+ week day evenings + between ½ - 2 days on the weekend.

(Based on completing the majority of the work within 1 year, this varies for each individual).

100% of all assessment criteria must be achieved for all assignments and units.

You must work in accordance with our assessment planner (provided on enrolment). Failure to meet these deadlines incurs marking late fees and can result in your qualification not being achieved.

Please remember this is a valuable yet intense qualification, that commitment, time & focus are needed for success and that once you're glowing from your achievement, you regain your life again. And we will support you through it.

What you will need

The use of:

- Microsoft Word or MacBook Pages (MacBook documents to be submitted in a Word friendly format),
- reliable internet access,
- Brave or Google Chrome browser (Internet Explorer may work but the system and most websites work much better on Google Chrome),
- access to books (see prior knowledge and reading materials above),
- reliable email (checked regularly),
- a PDF reader,
- the ability to meet deadlines,
- a lot of time and focus to do assignments,
- determination for success and
- an understanding that it is hard work and once finished, you will earn a valuable qualification.

Learning support

We are experienced in working with students who have dyslexia and are happy to talk to you about how we can help. We recommend using this font (century gothic) as it is recommended by the [British Dyslexia Association](#). We are working towards changing as much of our learning materials as possible. We also recommend using a screen text to speech reader, although please note that this does not work with our materials that have been copied (with permission) from publications (these are in the minority). An example is 'natural reader' software. For text-to-speech with PDFs, you can try something like [vBooks PDF reader](#). Your word software can also read back to you what you have already typed out.

It is also worth exploring coloured screen filters that soften screen glare, protect the eyes and making reading easier. For example, this software will allow you to change your screen colour and even add a horizontal movable ruler so that you can track your reading. You can also purchase physical filters that you put directly over your screen too. For example, [Crossbow Education](#) can supply the physical screen filters and the software.

Forums and emails

Moodle contains interactive message forums, where you can discuss assignments, sources of information and topics of arboricultural interest with other students. Announcements and news may also be sent via email and through Moodle.

Tutorials and guidance

You have communication with your course tutor via email, through Moodle, Zoom and by phone during office hours.

On occasion, out of office hours tutorials can be arranged.

Completing the course

All centres offering SEG Awards qualifications must have their processes and learners work checked before qualification certificates are issued (called an 'external moderation'). When you complete your coursework, your portfolio is moderated at the next scheduled moderation after your end date. Once complete, SEG Awards issue your qualification certificate. Please bear with us, this can take some time for the process and for your qualifications certificates to be sent out. For example, for courses completed in summer 2024, certificates may not be sent out until winter 2024 / 2025.

The online system

When you enrol onto the course you will be assigned a course tutor and given login instructions to Moodle, our online learning system or virtual learning environment (VLE). This protected area is where you access reading materials, PowerPoints, research papers, book extracts, forums, videos, assignments and online tests. Materials are in PDFs, Word (PC), Excel (PC) and HTML format. Our digital content is monitored, updated and backed up regularly with a professional VLE hosting and support company.

You then work your way through the units by learning the material provided, and submitting online your assignments and tests. You are given instructions on how to do this. Assignments are then marked and returned to you online. The process sends automatic email notifications to you at every stage so you can keep track of your progress.

You will manage your own time to work towards unit end date goals set between you and your course manager.

Assignments

You will be marked with either:

- pass (you have met all of the assessment criteria) or
- refer (some or all answers need further information to meet the assessment criteria).

If your work is referred, your assessor will return this to you with feedback to support you in passing the assessment criteria. You can then resubmit your assignment online for marking.

You are given TWO (2) attempts (submissions) for each assignment to be marked under the enrolment fees. Further submissions to be marked may be chargeable. You are allowed to retake online tests as many times as you like during your enrolment until you pass.

Your completed assignments (example attached) form what is called a portfolio. This portfolio is evidence that you have passed the assessment criteria. It is a students' responsibility to ensure they manage and save their portfolio of marked work in a professional and safe manner.

Submitted work goes into a queue. We try to mark and return the work within 2 weeks of it being submitted (for students currently enrolled on 1 or 2-year academic courses), however, there are times when there will be longer delays due to holidays, enrolment periods, external moderation periods and sickness. We apologise in advance for delays and will get to your marking as soon as possible.

Enjoyment

Most of all, whatever route you choose, please enjoy the learning. Once you start, it will take you down paths of knowledge and career opportunities not travelled before and with determination, will ultimately lead you to great success.

The level 4 and beyond

This qualification has been developed in collaboration with industry, training providers and LANTRA for those learners working in arboriculture. It encourages learners to follow a programme of structured continued professional development, facilitates access to higher-level management qualifications, and improves job prospects by formalising professional skills and training.

Progression routes - what's next? Learners who achieve these qualifications could progress to other higher-level qualifications such as the foundation degree / degree courses with universities, gain promotion to more senior positions within existing employment, be provided with new employment opportunities for a variety of job titles, or begin entrepreneurial activities such as starting or expanding their own business. See the Arboricultural Association website for more info <https://www.trees.org.uk/Careers>.

A Taster

Check out our [YouTube video](#) for an insight into The Training Trees online learning system.

Transformational Life Coaching

Not sure if this path is right for you? Not sure how to fit everything in? Want a better work life balance? Want to make some big changes to your life but you're not sure how? The course manager is also a human potential transformational life coach. Discounts may be available for potential students and are available for existing and past students. Please [click here](#) for more information.