



University of
CUMBRIA

SHAPE THE FUTURE OF FORESTRY

PROFESSIONAL
FORESTER DEGREE
APPRENTICESHIP

PROFESSIONAL

FORESTER

DEGREE

APPRENTICESHIP

The University of Cumbria is home to the National School of Forestry and has a strong reputation for producing award-winning, professional graduates who now occupy some of the most senior positions in the forestry and woodland sector. All our forestry courses are designed to provide you with the skills to enable you to contribute to the future sustainable management of the country's forests.

The National School of Forestry was established by an Act of Parliament in 1965 to provide professional forestry training in response to the closure of the Forestry Commission's own chain of Forestry Schools scattered throughout the country. For over 40 years, the School was based at Newton Rigg near Penrith, until the historic move to its new site at Ambleside in 2014. The School is now part of the University of Cumbria and retains its distinctive identity whilst being able to draw on a wider range of expertise and skills within this larger organisation.

COURSE OVERVIEW

The broad purpose of the apprenticeship is to provide expert technical advice on the planning, creation, management, harvesting and utilisation of woodlands and forests (known as silviculture). Professional Foresters form the link between landowners, contractors, and timber-buyers, providing technical expertise to inform and manage delivery of sustainable multi-purpose forest management outcomes in relation to the UK Government's Forestry Act.

The programme is designed to train people to the occupational standard of Professional Forester to meet the modern needs of industry and be ready to progress to professional membership with the Institute of Chartered Foresters.

The apprenticeship and its End Point Assessment have been designed to be completed in three years and successful apprentices will qualify with a L6 Apprenticeship and BSc (Hons) Professional Forester qualification.

PROGRAMME DESIGN

	MODULE TITLE	AIMS OF MODULE
Academic Level 4	Introduction to Professional Forestry	Explore the fundamental aspects of professional forestry, including past and present forest management in the UK, key common tree species and data collection and presentation skills.
	Measuring Trees and Forests	Learn to apply the standard methods of tree and woodland measurement used in British forestry.
	Silviculture	Provide a grounding in silvicultural practice, to include a thorough and applied understanding of plantation, conservation and amenity woodland establishment and maintenance.
	Practical Forest Skills	Introduce a range of traditional and modern practical forestry skills. The safe and effective use of tools is central to the module with an emphasis on the planning and organisation of working sites.
	Wood Utilisation & Processing	Provide an understanding of the utilisation of wood as a raw material. During this module students will cover the biology of wood and how the properties of wood relate to their potential utilisation. The main uses for wood will be considered and the process applied to conversion of wood into the end product will be considered in detail.
	Woodland Ecology	Provide a broad introduction to ecology and ecological processes, the study of interactions between organisms and with their environments, provides a theoretical and practical framework for managing and working with natural and semi-natural ecosystems, but also in managed landscapes. This module focusses on woodlands.
Academic Level 5	Geographical Information Systems	Provide a sound understanding of the theory and application of GIS in a manner relevant to their field of study and potential future employment.
	Forest Policy & Governance	Provides an understanding of forest policy, and challenges and approaches to forest and land use governance at local, regional, national and international levels.
	Forest Health & Protection	To identify, understand and manage the main biotic (pests and pathogens) and abiotic (nutrient and climate) factors that adversely affect trees and forests.
	Managing Forest Operations	Provide the skills necessary to manage the full range of forest operations they are likely to encounter during their career in forestry, through the principles of good planning, and the financial, legal and regulatory frameworks within which they will have to operate.
	People & Forests	To explore the socio-economic benefits, which trees, forests and woodlands provide in a UK context.
	Forestry Professional Practice	To reflect upon the first two years of the apprenticeship. To consider personal growth, develop a skillset as a professional forester, and potential and current contribution to professional forestry. To consider the ethical considerations of being a professional forester.
Academic Level 6	Forest Plan Development	To engage in a systematic and integrated approach to objective-led forest management planning in accordance with the principles and criteria of sustainable forest management.
	Advanced Silviculture	Further understanding of silvicultural practices and their role in ensuring the productive and sustainable management of forests across a range of objectives in both temperate and tropical regions. The module will also support development of general skills such as scientific writing, and presenting a technical subject to an audience.
	Climate Smart Forestry	Provide an overview of the causes and impacts of anthropogenic climate change, the adaptation strategies necessary and mitigation options available.
	Business Skills	Develop skills in business planning, develop objectives for a self-selected business; evaluate in a structured way the impacts upon a business and plan the resources required. You will learn to apply a range of business tools and how to write and present a business plan.
End Point Assessment	An apprentice enters End Point Assessment once the university and employer are satisfied the individual has met the gateway criteria of enough academic credits, a professional portfolio and sufficient off-the-job hours.	



Approach to delivery

Each academic module is delivered face-to-face on campus in either Ambleside, Carlisle, or at the Forestry Commission's bases in Cannock or Kielder. Some modules will include off-site industry visits by minibus, organised and managed by the University. These week-long academic modules are supplemented by online learning to develop work-based skills.

Individual delivery plans may vary year-on-year reflecting feedback, enhancements, or operational changes. We will provide a delivery plan to prospective employers and learners so they can plan their learning and consider their exposure to professional practice in the workplace.

Assessment

Each academic module has up to two forms of assessment: these are formally marked and will contribute to the academic grade. These grades will form the basis for the BSc Professional Forester degree awards.

End Point Assessment

End Point Assessment requires the apprentice to complete independently a woodland management plan or woodland creation plan over a 12-week period. Post completion this is presented, with questioning by an independent assessor. The assessor will also review the apprentice's portfolio and ask them questions on their work-based learning.

Learners finalise their portfolio to compliment their management or creation plan, based on evidence developed over the three-year programme, coached and supported by their teaching team and professional colleagues in work.

Entry Criteria

Apprentices on this programme will typically have 96 UCAS points and English and Maths at GCSE C/4 or above. Other relevant qualifications or prior industry experience can be considered if these criteria are not met.

Applicants must be in a suitable professional role aligned to those set out in the Professional Forester apprenticeship standard and be based more than 50% of their contracted time in England. Applications are subject to individual funding eligibility checks.

For any learner with qualifications acquired outside the UK, the University will use standard guidance from the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) to determine whether these are acceptable. We will also need evidence of a job description and confirmation that the learner is enrolled on your PAYE system.

Who is the apprenticeship for?

Any individual who seeks to provide expert advice on woodlands and forests, working in governmental, non-governmental, private, public, charitable, and local authority organisations, acting as direct employees of landowners, or acting as consultants or contractors. Employees in this field are responsible for:

- **Autonomous decision making relating to land use change pertaining to woodland operations**
- **Appropriate decisions making within organisational structures** (e.g. Woodland Officer report to Field Manager)
- **Budget management, including applying for or administering grant funding**
- **Awarding and managing contracts to contractors**
- **Procurement and sales**
- **Gathering, analysing, interpreting and communicating information**
- **Regulatory compliance**

Typical job titles include

- **Beat Forester**
- **Community Forester**
- **District Forester**
- **Forest and Woodland Advisor**
- **Forest Manager**
- **Forest Officer**
- **Forester**
- **Forestry Consultant**
- **Head Forester**
- **Planning Forester**
- **Social Forester**
- **Woodland Creation Officer**
- **Woodland Officer**

What is the role of employers?

For the degree apprenticeship to be successful, learners will need a line manager to help provide the right level of professional supervision and mentoring (whether directly or as part of a wider team of professionals). In addition, employers must ensure the learner has the opportunity to develop their skills in the settings consistent with the skills of the Professional Forester degree apprenticeship.

Any employers who feel they might struggle to expose their learner to a range of settings are encouraged to contact the University, as other organisations are supportive of providing placements or projects to help smaller organisations who may not have all the work-based opportunities needed for learners to complete the programme.

In the periods between taught delivery, apprentices should be supported to develop their skills and shape evidence for their portfolio. Learners are expected to submit an off-the-job-hours log showing their learning, which can include academic research, assignment /assessment writing, supervised learning in the workplace and personal development (professional networking, industry events etc.).

Employers will be asked to sign a Training Plan which includes commitment to supporting the learner, providing the opportunity to learn, train and develop in the role. Employers are expected to actively attend and contribute to reviews approximately every 12 weeks. Managers will be supported with an induction workshop and employer guide.



Why the University of Cumbria?

The University of Cumbria National School of Forestry provides education, training, and development designed for professionals who work in woodland management and creation in Britain.

Our specialist lecturing team brings real-world project experience from industry. Members of our teaching team were part of the Trailblazer group and actively involved in the development of the Degree Apprenticeship Standard.

Our degree programme was written alongside the Standard and is fully aligned to the apprenticeship.

The University is one of the leading providers of degree apprenticeships, with over 2,200 learners sponsored by 340 employers throughout England. Our expert academic teams are supported by a dedicated professional support team and the latest software to manage your learning and apprenticeship management.

Find out more

To discuss your training needs and how to sponsor learners on the apprenticeship, request a call from our business team

Email: apprenticeships@cumbria.ac.uk

Visit: cumbria.ac.uk/apprenticeships

Call: 01228 888726



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