

Forest and Outdoor Learning Awards (FlexiFOLA) SCQF levels 5 to 8 (modular format)

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New FlexiFOLA Course

Updated Aug 2020: This document is an updated version of the FOLA Course Information, which reflects the changes to some of our courses in response to the Covid-19 restrictions. The result is the new FlexiFOLA course; a 'blended learning' approach that delivers part of the course content online, and the practical elements in a woodland at a later date.

To book: download booking form from www.forestschooLtraining.co.uk and email to admin@forestschooLscotland.co.uk

To make enquiries: please email admin@forestschooLscotland.co.uk

Forest School Training Collaborative Ltd (FSTC) Course directors:

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About Forest School and 'Forest and Outdoor Learning Awards' (FOLA)

Forest School is an internationally recognised, empowering and creative person-centred approach to supporting the learning and development of children, young people and adults.

Forest School offers participants the opportunity, through repeated visits, to engage sustainably with the richness of our wild environments to help build; confidence, curiosity, resilience, problem solving and creativity, compassion, care, sustainable dispositions, and healthy bodies and minds.

FSTC are delighted to have adopted the Scotland-specific Forest School award system, called the 'Forest and Outdoor Learning Awards' (FOLA), having worked with Newbattle Abbey College to develop and pilot them.

The awards support Curriculum for Excellence and the Attainment Challenge in Scotland. They also seek to support the development of skills for Learning, Life and Work to meet the complex demands of a globalised society.

For more information see:

- Newbattle Abbey Forest College - www.newbattleabbeycollege.ac.uk/forest-college/
- About Forest School - <http://owlsotland.org/local-options/forest-schools/>
- Forest School Association: www.forestschoolassociation.org

About FSTC training

FSTC have been at the heart of Forest School training in the UK and Scotland since the early 2000s. We value and work towards quality and inclusion. Our training is as experiential as possible, because we know that you have to experience Forest School to understand it, and to feel Forest School to be able to work within the ethos with others.

Lead course tutors Aline Hill and Mike Brady are passionate Forest School practitioners of many years' experience. They have been delivering highly-regarded Forest School training in Scotland for more than ten years with FSTC. They work regularly with Forestry & Land Scotland, various Councils and Borders Forest Trust amongst others.

They works with an experienced team of co-leaders, assistants and developing tutors to deliver training. All have long-term experience of Forest School delivery and areas of specialist knowledge. For more information see: www.forestschooltraining.co.uk/team/

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Estimated course commitments

How much work will I have to do?

See table below for a breakdown of the course contact time (taught hours) and the estimated non-contact time (self-study hours) you will need to commit to.

SCQF level	Online: taught hours	Woodland: taught hours	Tutorial hours	Self-study hours	Total hours
Level 5	8	12	0	28	48
Level 6	12	24	1	23	60
Level 6 to 8 step-up	12	21	1	86	120
Level 8	24	39	2	115	180

What do I need for the Zoom sessions?

You need an online device of some kind with a 'send and receive' video camera and an ability to hear the audio. A microphone is also essential.

There are times during the sessions where we share documents (word or pdf) for you to download. You may also be asked to create simple text documents during a session.

Therefore, we do not recommend using a mobile phone as you will not be able to join in fully with some of the sessions, and you may lack some other required functions.

You can find further information about Zoom's requirements here: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362023-System-requirements-for-Windows-macOS-and-Linux>

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What are the entry requirements?

SCQF level	Recommended entry requirements
Level 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate Literacy SCQF Level 4 or Level 5, or Forest and Outdoor Learning Skills at Level 4. • Be over 16-years of age. • Find and have access to a Forest School programme run by a FSA recognised L3/FOLA L8 qualified Forest Leader.
Level 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate Literacy SCQF Level 5, or Forest and Outdoor Learning Award Level 5 or equivalent. • Be over 16-years of age. • Hold current, clean Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme membership by the time you are assisting with the 3 consecutive sessions of Forest School. • Have experience of working with children or young people. • Find and have access to assisting in 3 consecutive sessions of a Forest School Programme run by an FSA recognised L3/FOLA L8 qualified Forest School leader.
Level 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate Literacy SCQF level 6/7, or Forest and Outdoor Learning Award Level 6 or equivalent. • Be over 18-years of age • Be a qualified teacher, early years, play, youth or support worker (to SCQF level 6 or equivalent) OR compile a portfolio of at least 2 years' experience of working with your chosen client group in a leadership capacity. • Hold a current, clean Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme membership by time of leading 8-session practice block. • Hold a current and relevant First Aid certificate (minimum 2-day Outdoor First Aid or 2-day Paediatric First Aid) by time of leading 8-sessions practice block. • Find and have access to a group with whom you will run an introductory 8-week Forest School Programme, including appropriate public and private liability insurance cover.

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Which level of training is for me?

See also entry requirements above for each level.

SCQF Level 5: Introduction award

This takes place through four 2-hour sessions online, and 1.5 days in the woodland. It introduces the four core units of Being, Knowing, Working and Making in the woodland. An additional unit focuses on 'Learning', introducing the Forest School approach of active, person-centred learning in woodland and outdoor environments and starts to explore what this means for supporting others.

Module 1

During this module, we will cover:

- Nature connection
- Being in the forest sustainably and safely, including working with risk assessments
- Knowledge and understanding of forest and outdoor environments
- Practical skills and creativity in including story, rope and knots and basic tool use
- Encouraging others in all of the above
- Introduction to the Forest School ethos, behaviour, and learning and teaching including the key contribution of play and self directed learning.
- How the above can support positive outcomes for participants.

How will I be assessed?

We try to make assessment varied and useful. Our assessment methods can be tailored to suit candidates' preferences and previous experience of learning. Candidates are encouraged to suggest alternative ways of evidencing performance criteria and discuss their suitability with their tutor.

- Tutor recorded evidence:

- Written records of students engaging in practical activities and/or professional dialogue within training sessions.
- Observation report/checklist of achievement of performance criteria.

- Learner recorded evidence:

- Learning journal; in a journal, scrap/floor book, or blog which records key activities and experiences. Candidates should reflect on the meaning or significance of observations. These will include observing one Forest School session run by a qualified practitioner. This is organised by the student.
- Extended written responses where appropriate/preferred.
- Basic Site survey, which could include annotated photographs, Video 'guided walk', descriptive text, sketch and notes.

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SCQF Level 6: Assistant award

This level of training supports a person to become an 'Assistant Leader', who can plan and support learning for small groups learners within a Forest School or other outdoor learning context.

Learners develop skills and understanding in core units of Being, Knowing, Working and Making in the Forest and Outdoors, and complete units focused on 'Learning' and 'Leading'. Participation in the award should build confidence to move beyond the practice of skills towards collaborating in leading others in forest and outdoor contexts.

Level 6 begins with module 1 above (four 2-hour sessions online, and 1.5 days in the woodland) and then continues to cover module 2 (a further two 2-hour sessions online, and another 1.5 days in the woodland).

Module 2

During this module we will:

- build on module 1 learning in the four core units of 'being', 'knowing', 'working' and 'making' with further practical experiences of woodland management, more tool use, and an introduction to fire.
- explore further useful theory and approaches to person-centred teaching and learning in the outdoors.
- demonstrate personal competency in practical skills.
- combine the above to plan and test a short session of small-group, person-centred teaching and learning in the outdoors.
- continue to develop risk assessment and woodland management skills
- begin working towards 3 consecutive sessions of planning, assisting, reflecting and adapting with a qualified Forest School leader, including supervised leadership of small sub-groups of learners.

How will I be assessed?

We try to make assessment practical, varied and useful. Our assessment methods can be tailored to suit students' preferences and previous experience of learning. Candidates are encouraged to suggest alternative ways of evidencing performance criteria and discuss their suitability with their tutor.

- Planned tutor recorded evidence:

- Written records of students engaging in practical activities and/or professional dialogue within training sessions.
- Observation report/checklist of achievement of performance criteria and required level.

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- Planned learner recorded evidence:

- Learning journal; in a journal, scrap/floor book, or blog which records key activities and experiences. Candidates should reflect on the meaning or significance of these. Will include observing one Forest School session run by a qualified practitioner. This is organised by the student.
- Extended written responses where appropriate/preferred.
- Basic Site survey, which could include annotated photographs, Video 'guided walk', descriptive text, sketch and notes.

SCQF Level 8: Leader award

This enables you independently to lead Forest School, or other Forest and Outdoor learning. You will become secure in the knowledge and skills of being in forest and similar environments, and will be confident to communicate those skills to others. The approach to learning is to focus on people holistically within the forest and outdoor environment, to their mutual benefit.

You will develop your understanding of the process of learning, develop leadership skills, and be able to implement these skills to support the learning of others. You will also become proficient in the overall management of a Forest School or other Forest and Outdoor Learning project, as well as the planning, practice and adaptation of learner-centred pedagogy to create a Forest School programme.

Qualified educators working at this level should be able to support others to FOLA 4; and after 2-years experience may wish to build on their leadership skills, and engage in further training to support others to achieve FOLA levels 5-8.

Students must understand the commitment of moving from level 6 to level 8 in terms of the loading of assessment and allocation of time. The additional credit value of moving to level 8 equates to a further 114 hours of learning. This reflects the depth and breadth of running a Forest School for groups of learners. It also demonstrates the shift from level 6 where a leader is supporting other leaders, to level 8 where a leader is responsible for the group and often reports to an organisation and is bound by legislation and guidance.

Level 8 begins at module 1 and continues through module 2 - see information above. In addition to this, students cover modules 3, 4 and 5 (a further six 2-hour sessions online, and another 3 days in the woodland). During this time, students will also work towards leading their 8-session practice Forest School block.

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Module 3

During this module we will:

- Explore how values frame and influence approaches to learning and teaching.
- Relate theory to practice in learner-centred provision and interaction.
- Understand behaviour and positive methods to make a community for learning.
- Relate the Forest School principles and criteria for good practice to their own planned provision and context, identifying and challenges and planning to overcome them.
- Begin to plan the management and leadership of their 6-session practice Forest School programme, including framing key values, identifying appropriate learning and development goals and possible lines of development, and understanding requirements for up to date legal and good practice compliance, including daily operating procedures and (benefit) risk assessment.
- Exploring strengths and challenges within the intra- and inter-personal skills of leading communities of learning and support teams.

How will I be assessed?

We try to make assessment practical, varied and useful. Our assessment methods can be tailored to suit students' preferences and previous experience of learning. Candidates are encouraged to suggest alternative ways of evidencing performance criteria and discuss their suitability with their tutor.

- Planned tutor recorded evidence:

- Written records of students engaging in practical activities and/or professional dialogue within training sessions.
- Observation report/checklist of achievement of performance criteria and required level, including knots, tools, fire, campfire cooking and food hygiene competency, and supporting others in the above.
- Observation report/checklist of achievement of performance criteria of leadership of a forest school session in line with handbook, forest school ethos and values, and views expressed during professional discussion.

- Planned learner recorded evidence:

- Learning journal; in a journal, scrap/floor book, or blog which records key activities and experiences. Candidates should reflect on the meaning or significance of these. Will include leading 8-session practice Forest School block. This is organised by the student. Also, observation and evaluation of impact of Forest School sessions on three learners, with recommendations for future developments. Finally, an evaluation of effectiveness of practice Forest School programme in meeting

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planned aims, with reference to Forest School ethos and criteria for good practice, with associated recommendations for future practice.

- Extended written responses to performance criteria where appropriate/preferred.
- Site evaluation, which details ecology and could include annotated photographs, Video 'guided walk', descriptive text, sketch and notes. Could also detail learning opportunities.
- Basic site management plan, including responsible access and involvement of learners
- Handbook of safe and legally compliant practice
- Written responsive plans and evaluation of operational issues and learning

During module 4 (covered during course time) students will put some of their learning into practice with their Practical Skills assessment.

During module 5 (in students own time after the end of the taught part of the course) students will undertake the delivery of their 8-session practice Forest School programme.

Overview of FOLA Leadership Awards

SQCF level	Unit Title → High level descriptor ↓	Unit 1 Being in the forest	Unit 2 Knowing the forest	Unit 3 Working in the forest	Unit 4 Making in the forest	Unit 5 Learning in the forest	Unit 6 Leading a Forest School	Unit 7 Managing a Forest School	Unit 8 Legal compliance in the outdoors
5	Developing Forest School and Outdoor Leadership	Ethos and understanding	Knowledge	Skills	Creativity	Pedagogy Ethos Learning	Not for Level 5		
6	Assistant Forest School and Outdoor Leader						Values Purpose Decisions People	Not for Level 6	
8	Forest School and Outdoor Leader					Pedagogy Ethos Learning and Evaluate learners	Values Purpose Decisions People Teams Community Handbook Evaluation	Implement-ation Planning Evaluation	Handbook Policy Reflective discussion

Green units show course content covered for that level.

Grey units show content not covered for that level.