



Level 3: Forest School Practitioner Training Course Guidance

2023

QCF Level 3 Descriptors:

Students must demonstrate through their work that they:

- 1. have factual, procedural and theoretical knowledge***
- 2. can interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas***
- 3. are aware of the nature of the area of study***
- 4. are aware of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study.***

We deliver the nationally recognised Level 3 Certificate for Forest School Leaders approved by the Forest School Association

This is a 12 month course. The 9 training days are the start of your journey to becoming a Forest School leader. We will be spending all day outdoors in all weathers based in the heart of the Kent Weald at the renowned National Pinetum at Bedgebury*. It consists of 8 training days run once a week for consecutive weeks with an additional skills assessment & portfolio review day a few months after the last day of the training. You must be able to attend all the days.

During your time with us you will be learning about the Forest School ethos that promotes learning and development in children; practical steps for managing behaviour and supporting emotional development.

You will also learn how to plan, deliver and evaluate Forest School sessions and develop appropriate policies and procedures.

We will be putting theory into practice and spending time participating in Forest School activities, learning how to use and demonstrate the use of a variety of hand tools including knives and axes. You will become proficient at fire lighting, knot tying and outdoor cooking. You will also learn about UK woodland ecology.

All of this delivered by our professional and supportive trainers in a fun and relaxed environment. Our communal campfire banquets have become legendary!

*Alternative sites maybe used depending on necessity

The course is made up of five units

Unit 1: Forest School and the Woodland Environment

Unit 2: Learning and Development as a Forest School Programme

Unit 3: Practical Skills for a Forest School Programme

Unit 4: Planning a Forest School Programme

Unit 5: Delivery of a Forest School Programme

Guidance provided by our certifying body states that this qualification should take around 200 hours to complete including contact teaching time and self-directed study.

We provide:

- **Course Handbook covering most aspect of the taught elements of the course**
- **Sample templates for most forms i.e. Risk Assessment, Ecological Impact Assessments and Wellbeing and Involvement evaluations**
- **Templates, tables and clear guidelines for questions**
- **Ongoing tutor support for the duration of the course**

In addition to attending the training days you will need to:

1. Complete a portfolio of written work with 12 months of the course start date. This is a significant body of work and would be at least 25,000 words. As part of the portfolio students will also need to produce a policies and procedures document which would be an additional 10,000 words.
2. Plan, deliver and evaluate a 6 session Forest School pilot programme.
3. Undertake either of these first aid options:
 - a. A 16-hour ITC outdoor first aid certificate or equivalent.
 - b. A tailored two-day First Aid in the Outdoors, delivered and certified by a provider registered with the HSE
4. If you wish to cook on your pilot programme we recommend doing a Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate

The training and course notes are meant to be a starting point for your Forest School journey. You will be expected to undertake research, develop your practical skills and gain further experience under your own initiative.

Information for employers/organisations/Senior Leadership Teams

Many school and educational institutions are keen to offer Forest School to take full advantage of what Forest School has to offer. Organisations need to be prepared to support students for the whole duration of the course.

This course requires a significant investment of time and effort outside the actual training days. As detailed above students need to complete a significant amount of written work.

The students will also need additional support to run the Pilot programme and future Forest School programmes.

It is vital that any organisation sending their employee has a plan in place to support them.

Pre-requisites for prospective students:

Students must be 21 years or over and be able to show a current DBS check.

You do not have to have achieved the Level 1 or 2 qualification.

As part of the course students are expected to run their own six session Forest School pilot programme. Before being accepted on to the course you must demonstrate that you have access to a suitable group of children or young people and have gained land owner permission for appropriate woodland or green space in which to run your programme.

This level 3 training is suitable for people who have experience and or qualifications in working with children and young people, or individuals with a background and qualifications in conservation.

This training is recommended for people with a qualification in

- Teaching / teaching assistant
- Youth work
- Conservation/ countryside management
- Play work
- Forest School level 2

If you are unqualified but have regularly volunteered in any of the above roles we will also consider your application. This list is by no means definitive and if you feel that you have relevant qualifications and experience, please get in touch.