

CAREERS

#GREENCAREERSWEEK

JOB OF THE DAY



Forester

Salary range: £22k-£34k



JOB PROFILE

A **Forester**, also known as a Forest Officer or Professional Forester, plans and manages woodland areas and forests. They are responsible for forest maintenance, development and management through the planting and harvesting of timber.

Foresters carry out a range of supervisory and managerial tasks across all stages of development, from valuing and buying land through to harvesting timber.

Foresters are also involved in wildlife and environmental conservation and practise sustainable forestry. They work closely with landowners, local authorities, and other contractors and advisors.

SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES

Technical knowledge

- Physical strength and mobility to enable the use of tools and machinery such as chainsaws and sprayers
- Maintaining up-to-date knowledge of health and safety, tree protection laws and environmental issues
- Conducting forest surveys and carrying out tree safety inspections
- Tree harvesting, branch removal and preparing measured timber
- Determining risks and protecting against forest fires, diseases and pests
- First aid, fell operations, using equipment safely / tree surgery
- Reporting and other tasks on a computer.

Transferable skills:

- Collaborating – working with landowners, contractors, local authority and the public
- Effective communication – working with volunteers/landowners/local authority/contractors and building good relationships with employers
- Decision making – recruiting, supervising, and managing staff, contractors and forestry projects
- Negotiating and conflict resolution – ability to influence and remain calm when facing challenges
- Planning and prioritising – review resources, consider and manage set budgets
- Problem reframing and resolution.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Foresters typically work full time and may be required to work overtime or at weekends. Hours will often depend on the season. Part-time, contract and casual work is possible and sometimes the work can be more seasonal.

Foresters can spend their time between office and site, working outdoors and travelling some distances (a driving licence is required) throughout all seasons, and so it can be hard, physically. Much of their work will involve desk-based activities such as writing reports. You may need to take courses in certain areas such as first aid, fell operations, using equipment safely or tree surgery.

HOW DOES THIS ROLE ALIGN TO THE GREEN AGENDA?

Reforestation is a key solution to the climate crisis. Trees play an important part in protecting our biodiversity and animal habitats, and can enhance our ecology. They are vital to our mental and physical well-being and support a low carbon economy by naturally absorbing and storing carbon.

Sustainable forest management is the responsibility of ensuring that woodland and forest areas are protected and sustained through the practical application of considered and careful forestry activities. It also involves enabling and addressing the correct social, environmental and economic balance for the future health and maintenance of the forest.

ENTRY ROUTES

There are various routes to take into working in forestry. Organisations may have different qualifications and practical work experience requirements. Some may seek apprentices and others may look for a strong academic background or individuals who have completed relevant training. Practical experience and on-the-job training are necessities, and apprenticeships or volunteering for a woodland or wildlife charity are a great way to achieve these.

- Relevant GCSE subjects include Sciences and Geography
- Relevant A level subjects include Sciences and Geography
- Apprenticeships in Level 3 Forest Craftsperson or Integrated Degree – Professional Forester
- Undergraduate degrees in areas such as Forestry
- RQF Level 2-5 qualifications in areas such as Forestry and Arboriculture, Countryside Management, Emergency Treework Operations, Chainsaw Maintenance, and Countryside Studies
- T-Level in Agriculture, Land Management and Production

POTENTIAL CAREER PROGRESSION

Promotional prospects can vary depending on the nature of the employer. It's important to gain experience and complete relevant training in using different equipment.

Some roles that workers might be able to progress to include Forest and Woodland Management positions, or specialisms in certain areas, such as planning or technical development.

Those experienced in their field may decide to become self-employed and do contract work.

Achieving chartered status from the Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF) is a good way to obtain the right skills and experience. There are two different routes to becoming a Chartered Forester through the institute.