



Forest School
Training

Level 2 Award in Forest School Programme Support



Course Information - England

What is 'Forest School'?

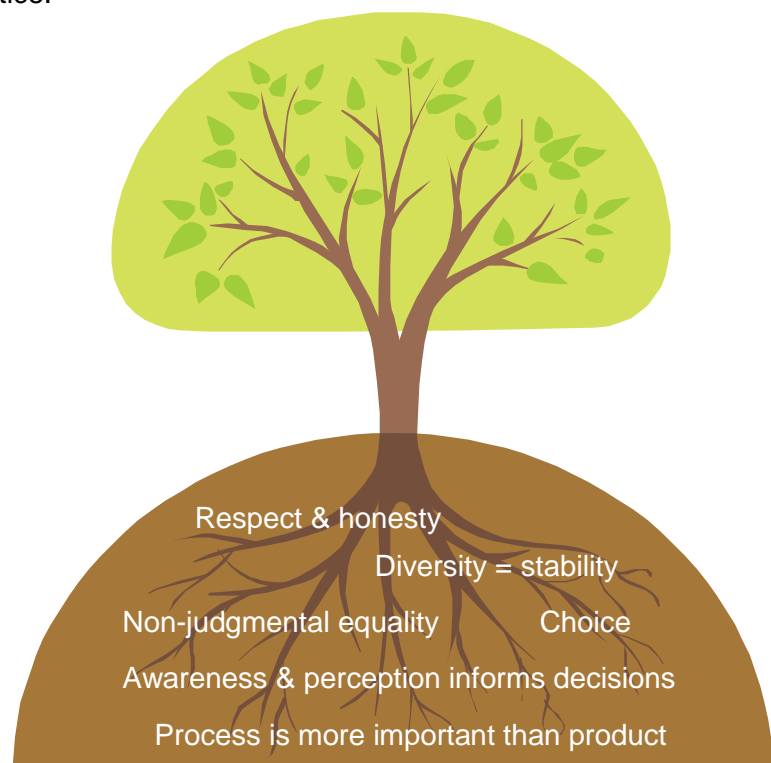
Forest School is a long term, learner-led, continuous learning process that takes place over a period of time using a natural space (not necessarily a Forest!). Forest School is a specific type of outdoor learning which originates from Scandinavian educational approaches. The Forest School ethos focuses on building relationships with one another and the natural world to develop personal, social and emotional skills. Forest School practitioners facilitate this process through careful application of theoretical and practical skills to designed to raise self-esteem, develop confidence, independence, a sense of connection, awareness and mindfulness.



Every Forest School programme will be unique, depending on the group, site and leader, however there are some key principles, recognised by the Forest School Association (www.forestschoollassociation.org), please visit their website for more information:

- FS is a long-term process of regular sessions, rather than a one-off or infrequent visits; the cycle of planning, observation, adaptation and review links each session.
- FS takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.
- FS uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for being, development and learning.
- FS aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.
- FS offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.
- FS is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

We at the Forest School Training Cooperative (FSTC) believe that Forest School is a powerful approach, through which people of all ages can find their way to connect with nature, develop their awareness, questions and reflect on what is truly means to be human. At FSTC we believe that there are some core values that are the roots upon which our Forest School practice and training grow & bloom:



Forest School Training

Forest School is delivered by qualified practitioners. People from many different backgrounds train in Forest School; teachers, playworkers, rangers, ecologists, artists, learning support assistants, parents and conservation volunteers may all come to Forest School to provide meaningful outdoor learning experiences for the children they work with.



Forest School
Training

There are 3 levels of training. To deliver 'Forest School' the practitioner must have completed a Level 3 Forest School Practitioners Award.

- Level 3 – Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership (1 credits = 180 hours)
- Level 2 – Award in Forest School Programme Support (6 credits = 60 hours)
- Level 1 – Award in Introduction to Forest School Principles (3 credits = 30 hours)

FSTC as a Training Provider



The Forest School Training Cooperative has evolved from the Forest School Training Company, who has been providing Forest School training across the UK since 2004. We are a group of people who feel strongly that quality processes are important and have united to work together to promote Forest School.

All our Forest School training courses are accredited by the Open College Network West Midland Region (OCNWMR) and are nationally recognised qualifications on the Qualification & Curriculum Framework (QCF). FSTC is a member of the UK Forest School Training Network, and is involved in the standardisation and development of Forest School qualifications within the UK. This ensures FSTC training is continually up to date with current UK practice.

FSTC training is delivered with the belief that the training of Forest School should model the Forest School ethos as far as is practical (and yes, we recognise that the irony is that it is a qualification!):

- **Long Term, extended experiences** – Our unique modular training format, breaks learning into small achievable chunks which build and develop, allowing learners to consolidate skills & understanding. We have developed our course to ensure topics are covered in sufficient depth and in an experiential way so that practitioners can develop their own processes relevant to their Forest School, rather than prescribing set methods.
- **First Hand experiences in natural places** – Our training focuses on real life & first hand experiences in natural places. All our training venues have access to woodland areas that will be used throughout the training. Our training courses begin with a woodland transition day focusing on outdoor living skills and culminate with a woodland sleep out as we feel that these are fundamental skills for the Forest School Leader and they have to be 'lived' to be understood fully.
- **We celebrate diversity** – We recognise that everyone is a unique human being who have different interests and strengths and aim to facilitate a community of mutual appreciation and respect. Our training uses learner centred approaches to help

practitioners find the right process and methods for them, their situation and ultimately the Forest School they shall be establishing. We encourage questioning and sharing and focus on processes rather than prescribed outcomes. We use a wide variety of assessment methods throughout the training (such as practical demonstration, verbal questioning, written essay, presentation etc), to ensure a fair representation of a learners knowledge and skills.

- **Flexibility & adaptability** – Our modular training allows students to ‘top up’ their training to a higher level, without having to start from the beginning again. The methodology of training allows some adaptability in the training activities delivered meaning we are able to modify the training to better meet individuals and the groups needs. This process based approach allows learners some choice over the content of their learning journey.
- **Awareness of impact** – Our training includes and promotes ecological understanding and sustainable use of woodlands. We feel that a key part of Forest School is to encourage people to think about and question the lifestyle choices they make.
- **Specialist Tutors** – All our lead tutors are qualified Forest School practitioners themselves and have run a wide variety of long term Forest School programmes themselves. They also have background experience and/or qualifications in a range of practical, environmental and/or educational skills (often both). They also all are active members of national and local Forest School networks such as the Forest School Association or Forest Education Initiative groups. You can read our tutors biogs on our website.



What do our past students say?

“It has been a brilliant course. It has made me question my own practice... I am motivated and equipped to develop the outdoor practice and environment in school.” – Teacher

“This was a well delivered, thought provoking course which all schools & settings would benefit from attending.” – Local Authority Advisor

“I know this may sound silly, but it has been a life changing experience.... it has made me question things within my own life, not just professionally but personally.” – Special Needs Teacher

“This was an excellent course which completely convinced me of the value of outdoor learning, the connection with child development and how it could be translated into school.” – Freelancer

Contact Information:



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The OCNWMR Level 2 Award in Forest School Programme Support

The level 2 training course is designed for practitioners who regularly assist at an established Forest School programme led by a level 3 leader. The course covers a variety of practical skills and theory that will develop understanding of key elements of Forest School and consider how to apply these whilst supporting Forest School sessions. I



What does the qualification cover?

This OCNWMR course carries a total of 6 credits at level 2 and consists of 2 units;

- Skills for the Forest School Programme Assistant
- Supporting Learning and Development at a Forest School Programme

Skills for the Forest School Programme Assistant

Working safely and practically within a natural environment is key to the effectiveness of Forest School. This unit develops skills and understanding in the safe and sustainable use of woodlands and natural materials for learning. Topics covered include:

- Tool use at Forest School – personal skills & safe practice, personal protective equipment, storage and maintenance
- Useful knots and lashings for Forest School
- Shelter building – applying skills to construct temporary shelters.
- Fire lighting, safety and management – understanding fire preparations, techniques and extinguishing
- Using natural resources – applying practical skills to make craft items from natural materials
- Woodland ecology & structure – understanding succession in the UK, the history of British woodlands and comparing native broadleaf and coniferous plantations
- Woodland species identification and observation
- Sustainable management of woodland – considering how Forest School can affect the woodland and how this can be managed
- The role of risk at Forest School – considering the benefits of appropriate risk for and how this can be managed



Supporting Learning and Development at a Forest School Programme

Forest School supports holistic development and is particularly effective at building confidence and self esteem in children and young people. Its ethos is formed through a combination of the natural physical environment and the safe, open and trusting community created by the supporting adults. This unit covers some of the theoretical components that underpin the Forest School ethos. Topics covered include:

- Understanding the Forest School approach to learning – considering its benefits to participants and the role of the assistant in facilitating the ethos

- The importance of holistic development and how it can be promoted at Forest School
- The role and benefits of play at Forest School
- How self esteem can be developed at Forest School and its impact on learning & behaviour
- Assisting with the planning and delivery of Forest School sessions
- Observing individual learners over time and evaluating impact

Who is the qualification designed for?

The level 2 training course is designed for practitioners who are currently (or who will be in the future) supporting an existing Forest School programme, led by a level 3 leader. Practitioners have come to Forest School training from a variety of different backgrounds – environmental education, ecologists, countryside rangers, artists, teaching assistants, teachers, Early Years practitioners, child minders, parents, scout/guide leaders, youth workers and many more.



Entry Requirements for a FSTC Level 2 Course

- A passion for spending time with nature (personal outdoor experience is useful but enthusiasm is essential!)
- To be at least 18 years old
- Have experience of working with/supporting groups (children, young people, adults)
- A playful attitude to life & learning

Towards the end of the training course you will also need:

- Access to support an existing Forest School programme for a minimum of 3 consecutive sessions. This needs to be arranged by the student, however, if you do not already have links with a Forest School we will be able to signpost you to some during the training.
- Appropriate Safeguarding Checks (DBS, CRB) – if working with under 18's or vulnerable adults. Please see guidance on the Disclosure & Barring Services website (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service) if needed.

How is the training course delivered?

The OCNWMR Level 2 Award in Forest School Programme Support carries 6 credits at Level 2 and is usually delivered over approximately a 6 month period. Level 2 is the equivalent standard of an A-C grade GCSE standard and 6 credits refer to 60 hours of learning time, approximately 48 hours of these are guided learning hours where students have contact with a tutor/assessor (36 hours is the 5 days training and approximately 12 additional hours for assessments, tutorials and correspondence). The remaining 12 hours are self directed learning hours by the student for subject reading, practice of skills, preparation for assessments and coursework. Please note that these learning hours are designed as a guide, the actual number of learning hours necessary will vary from student to student, depending on their prior knowledge and skill level.

The Guided Learning Hours

FSTC delivers the training course in a unique modular format, which we believe is more flexible and supportive for students. This modular format enables level 2 and level 3 students study side by side at the beginning of the course. The course begins with 'Immersion' (an experiential outdoor induction day) followed by 2 modules of 2 days each, usually 4 – 6 weeks apart.

- **Immersion** – 1 day induction within the woodland, focusing on outdoor living skills, establishing processes for the learning community and connection to the woodland environment. This day aims to be an immersive experiential experience for practitioners to acclimatise to the natural world and focus on their own skill & knowledge level.
- **Module 1** – 2 days. Often this module follows directly on from the woodland welcome day.
- **Module 2** – 2 days

Assessment of the qualification

We understand that people have different learning styles and preferences for demonstrating understanding, so within our training we use a range of assessment methods to gauge how our students are meeting the requirements of the qualification. The nature of the qualification means that evidence is either complete or not (there is no grading system), however we will support our students to provide additional evidence if required, meaning students are provided with every opportunity to pass the qualification. Our assessment methods include:

- **Practical Demonstration** – The practical components of the qualification will be assessed by tutor/assessors observing students applying their skills and understanding.
- **Verbal Questioning** – Some criteria will be assessed by question & answer with a tutor/assessor. Some of this will be done by topic, over the phone or Skype and booked by the student when they feel ready.
- **Witness Statement** – The Forest School leader you support will be asked to provide a witness statement of your practice.
- **Written assignments** – Some criteria will be assessed by written essay.

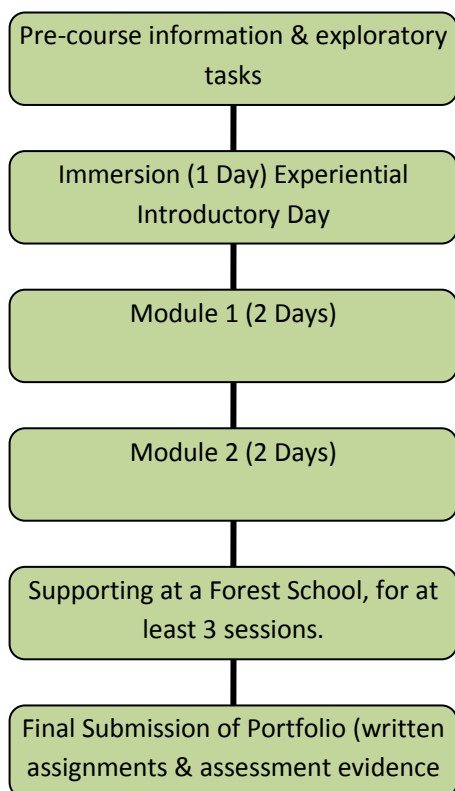


Student Support for Self Directed Learning

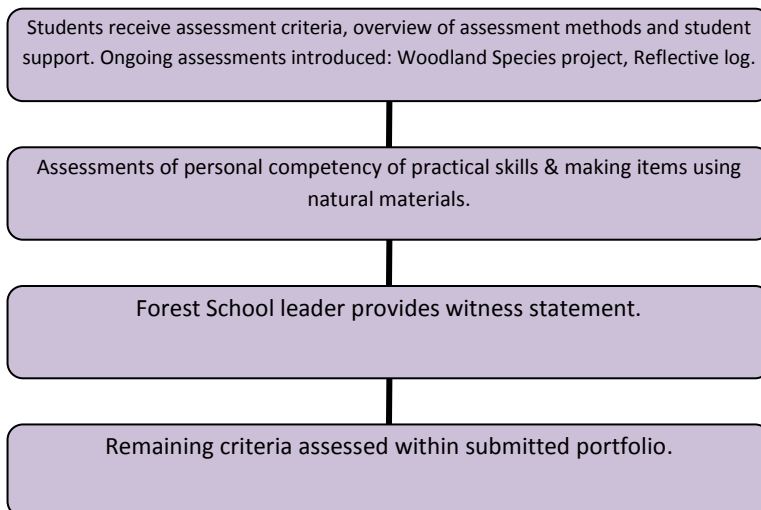
As some of the time is expected to be self directed learning by the student. We recognise that some students will find it useful to have a starting point for this, as well as advice and guidance on some issues. We aim to support our students during this self guided time as well as the contact time with tutors and have a variety of methods available for this:

- **Student Web pages** – All students will be issued with a username and password in order to access the student sections of our FSTC website. Within these web pages are reading list and links on various topics, handouts and resources, as well as electronic copies of all resources used during the training course.
- **'Tutor on call' days** – We have regular days where a FSTC tutor/assessor will be 'on call' for students to book tutorials or assessments with. Students will be made aware of these days during their training & on the student web pages.
- **Video Tutorials** (Coming soon!) – FSTC will be creating a series of video tutorials for different course elements, that will be available on the student web pages.

The Training Journey



Assessment Information



Venues & Facilities

We use a variety of different training venues throughout the UK. Where possible we try to use venues of organisations who share a similar environmental and/or educational ethos as us. When choosing a venue we balance the facilities it offers (both indoors and outdoors), the need of the training and environmental sustainability. We aim to use a venue that can sustain all elements of the training course, however in some cases it may be that venues cannot provide for all elements, in which case we may use more than one venue for the duration of the course to cover the different elements. Module 1 & 2 will have both indoor and outdoor facilities, however the immersion day may only have access to outdoor spaces. All training venues will have access to drinking water, toilets, & parking.

The majority of our training courses require participants to bring a packed lunch, however hot drinks and snacks will be provided.



Forthcoming Dates, Details & Booking

All forthcoming course details are posted on our website www.forestschoolltraining.co.uk, please look at the course dates pages. Each course will have a downloadable flier detailing venue, dates & prices.

To make a booking please complete and submit an online booking form, found within the website. Please read our terms & conditions (found on website) before booking.