

Forest School and Outdoor Learning Awards (FOLA) FAQs

The Award

Q: Is this still a Forest School award?

A: Yes, the award you receive at the end will still be called a Forest School award.

Q: Who is the awarding body?

A: Newbattle Abbey College, near Edinburgh, is supporting this qualification as part of their Forest College and the awards are accredited to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

Q: Will this Scottish qualification be recognised by employers?

A: We have been working closely with Forest School Association to ensure this award is recognised by them. The FSA is the industry professional body for quality and standardisation in the UK so, if they recognise it as equivalent, there is no reason why any employer wouldn't. We don't foresee any reason why the award won't be recognised by them as valid a Forest School award.

These Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) website pages help to explain this: [SCQF Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework \(SCQF\) \(pdf\)](#) and [Frameworks in England and Wales \(pdf\)](#)

Q: What are these qualification levels equivalent to within the UK & Ireland?

A: This SQA document compares them: [Qualifications Can Cross Boundaries \(pdf\)](#)

Q: How do these new qualifications relate to the OCN or other FSA-recognised Forest School qualifications?

A: Level 1 (introduction) = FOLA Level 5; Level 2 (assistant) = FOLA Level 6; Level 3 (leader) = FOLA Level 8.

Q: What is the difference between Forest School award and FOLA?

A: As well as being tailored more in line with the Scottish curriculum, the leadership modules are slightly more in-depth plus it has an additional section on legal compliance.

The Course

Q: How many days of the taught course is required in total for Levels 5, 6 & 8 in the FOLA?

A: Level 5 (introduction) = 3-days; Level 6 (assistant) = 5-days; Level 8 (leader) = 10-days. There will be additional self-study or assessments required to reach each level, whether that be written coursework, observations or delivery of sessions.

Q: How long does it take to finish the Level 8 qualification?

A: That depends upon you and your individual circumstances. Most people are able to complete their coursework and deliver their 8 Forest School sessions with their group of learners within about 12-months of the end of the taught course. Some people can complete it within 6-months whereas others take longer.

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.