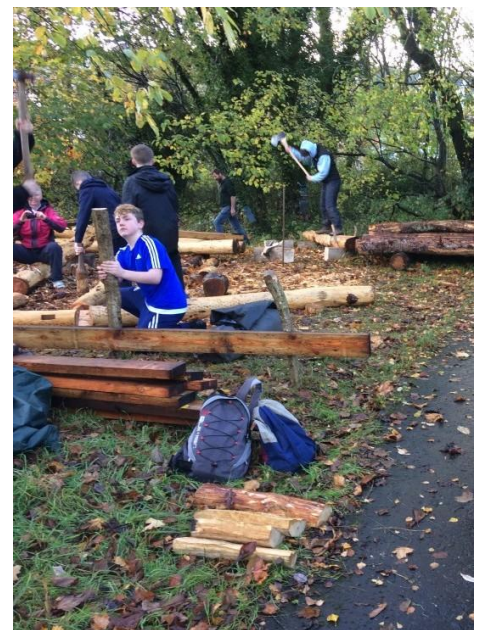


Forest & Outdoor Learning Awards

SCQF Levels 2-6



Qualifications for Secondary Phase students delivered by:

FOLA Approved Centre, Wildside Adventures, Stirling

In partnership with Newbattle Abbey College

10 week qualification, one day per week at your own site (or other). Opportunities for work experience and placements. Prices from £2,500 for group of 10 students. Students with Additional Support Needs welcome.

For more information contact
Judi Legg on 07926 169765 or
email judi@wildside.scot

What are the Forest and Outdoor Learning Awards (FOLA)?

The Forest and Outdoor Learning Awards offer a learner-centred approach to developing the skills and understanding to work sustainably in forest and outdoor environments. They have been developed for the Scottish educational context, but have been designed to apply to all forest and outdoor situations. The awards are credit rated to SCQF levels that are recognized internationally.

At their heart the awards help people learn about how to be in, work in and appreciate forest and outdoor environments in sustainable ways. The awards are grounded in the ethos of 'Forest School' that places the human within the natural environment and supports active and person-centred approaches to learning. They will support Curriculum for Excellence and the Attainment Challenge in Scotland. The awards seek to support the development of skills for Learning, Life and Work to meet the complex demands of a globalized society.

The awards are developed to achieve SCQF levels 2-6, 8 and have been developed in consultation with a range of partners including: the Local Authorities, colleges, schools, the Forest School Association (FSA), Forest School trainers, the Forestry Commission and leaders of outdoor learning. The Awards are an innovation in Scotland which:

- ❑ Introduce accreditation of SCQF level 2-6, 8 to include a wide range of learners and offers clear progression routes to further training or employment
- ❑ Meet the requirements of Curriculum for Excellence explicitly
- ❑ Develop clear progression routes to further study and employment
- ❑ Tailor the requirements of the current Forest School Leader system for the Scottish educational context and SCQF credit rating process
- ❑ Develop a robust Recognition of Prior Learning Policy to accredit a wide range of experienced educators

Approaches to Learning:

- Supports learner autonomy- individual confidence and responsibility is central ❑ Collaborative- all forest learning happens with other learners
- Experiential- the emphasis is on the experience of learning
- Situational- learning is grounded in the forest and outdoor environment
- Practical- hands on skills are an important aspect of the learning
- Reflective- skills are put into practice in the context of understanding ethos and environment
- Creative- making meaningful outcomes is fundamental to the ethos underpinning the approach to all learning
- Accessible- the skills, knowledge and understanding and context can be adapted to meet the needs of all learners
- Sustainable- grounded in approaches that have minimum or positive impact on the environment

In **levels 2-4** the emphasis is on skill development and learning how to be in Forest and outdoor environments in a sustainable way.

Level 5 prepares learners to move from practicing basic skills to applying them as leaders with learners in new contexts.

Levels 6 and 8 support the development of leadership skills, working towards the management of groups in forest and outdoor contexts towards with positive learning outcomes

Overview Forest and Outdoor Learning Awards

SCQF Level	UnitE Title	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6	Unit 7	Unit 8
2	Forest Skills 4 Credits	Ethos and Understanding 1 Credit	Knowledge 1 Credit	Skills 1 credit	Creativity 1 Credit				Legal Compliance in the Outdoors
3	Forest Skills 4 Credits		1 Credit	1 credit	1 Credit				
4	Forest Skills								
5	Developing Forest School and Outdoor Leadership 5 credits	1 Credit	1 Credit	1 Credit	1 Credit	1 Credit			
6	Assistant Forest School and Outdoor Leader 6 Credits	J Credit	1 Credit	1 Credit	1 Credit	Pedagogy	Values		
8	Assistant Forest School and Outdoor Leader 18 Credits	At Level 8, the award could be made up of eg: Units 1-4 at Level 6 – 4 credits Units 5-8 at Level 8 – 14 credits					Ethos-learning Learners	Purpose Decisions Community	Handbook /Policy a
						Total -18credits			

The Principles of Forest School:

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



Benefits to Learners:

- ❑ Develop knowledge, understanding and skills to be in forest and outdoor environments
- ❑ Develop practical and applied skills relevant to all learning
- ❑ Build routes to employment in education, care or environmental management
- ❑ Develop leadership skills to work with learners in new contexts
- ❑ Extend previous experience of teaching, working with groups or outdoor leadership
- ❑ Support positive approaches to health and well-being, especially physical activity and mental health
- ❑ Support the building of confidence, collaborative skills, creativity and problem solving

How to achieve a Forest and Outdoor Learning Award

A learner can join an appropriate course according to their level and previous experience- see table (over) for entry requirements. It is recommended that a course would be covered over a timescale that included transition between seasons. This may be a matter of months or extend beyond one year. This is to ensure all aspects of the units are fully covered.

Models of delivery

Each level requires a notional 40 hours of learning. This is suggested as weekly timetabled 2/3 hour sessions or whole day sessions if preferred. There can be a small amount of self study where appropriate, leading to appropriate assessment. At Levels 5/6/8 the course could be practiced through weekly practical sessions linked to the leadership of a group of early years or primary pupils, or older learners working towards awards at level 2-4. In this case there could be a combination of taught course and practical working with an experienced leader. The Forest School trainers at Wildside Adventures, approved by Newbattle Abbey College, provide leadership, support and assessment. The courses can be delivered on our sites in North Lanarkshire, giving student a flavour of out of school experience, OR in a school's own grounds or a mixture of both. Depending on the support needs of students, groups can undertake the training in groups of between 10- 15 unsupervised OR larger groups with the participation of a school staff member. The Wildside team is also very experienced in delivering FOLA qualifications to students with diverse needs including mobility and communication needs.

Entry and Assessment Requirements:

SCQF Level	SCQF Award Title	Expected Entry requirements	SCQF Credit Value	Assessment Requirements
2	Forest and Outdoor Learning Skills 2	None	2	Tutor records Evidence portfolio
3	Forest and Outdoor Learning Skills 3	Communication or Literacy SCQF 2 or 3 Or Forest and Outdoor Learning Skills 2	4	Tutor records Evidence portfolio
4	Forest and Outdoor Learning Skills 4	Communication or Literacy SCQF 3 or 4 Or Forest and Outdoor Learning Skills 3	4	Tutor records Evidence portfolio
5	Developing Forest School and Outdoor learning Leadership Award	Communication or Literacy SCQF 4 Or Forest School and Outdoor Leader 5	5	Tutor records Evidence portfolio Written/spoken response Observation of session
6	Assistant Forest School and Outdoor Learning Leadership Award	SCQF Level 6 or above and/or Forest School and Outdoor Leader 6	6	Tutor records Evidence portfolio Written/spoken response Observation of session Assistant in Forest School sessions
8	Forest School and Outdoor Learning Leadership Award	SCQF Level 6 or above and/or Forest School and Outdoor Leader 6	18	Tutor records Evidence portfolio Written/spoken response Observation of session Forest school handbook Leadership of 6 session programme of Forest School self evaluation

Who can deliver a Forest Leadership Award?

Wildside Adventures, operates both from school grounds and on a number of local sites in the Central Belt including Nethercroy Woods in partnership with Forest and Land Scotland, and has been an Approved Centre for the delivery of the FOLA Awards since 2019. Newbattle Abbey College is the national credit rating body for the FOLA Awards conferring the Approved Centre status on and coordinating the Quality Assurance Process. External Verification is provided by Newbattle Abbey College. The QA process ensures that the Approved Centre:

- ☐ is qualified and approved to deliver the FOLA Awards at agreed and appropriate levels
- ☐ has demonstrable and established Internal Verification processes
- ☐ hold current Certification in First Aid to at least the Outdoor First Aid 2 Day certification level.

Wildside Adventures has 2 experienced and qualified Forest School Trainers: Judi Legg and Giulia Merendelli, who have regularly delivered Forest School programmes over the past 6 years. Judi is the Director of Wildside and is also a former primary school teacher who has also been delivering high quality and popular CPD training in Outdoor Learning for North Lanarkshire Council for the last 6 years. Wildside also has over 15 years experience in designing and delivering playable spaces with an international reputation, and is an associate of PLAYLINK.

Forest School Ethos

The Forest School ethos has six guiding principles:

Principle 1: Forest School is a long-term process (straddling several seasons) of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements.

- ② A Forest School programme has a structure which is based on the observations and collaborative work between learners and practitioners. This structure clearly demonstrates progression of learning both in technical woodland based skills and in social skills and emotional literacy.
- ② The initial sessions of any programme establish physical and behavioural boundaries, with initial observations feeding into benchmarking and bespoke elements to be integrated into the programme.

Principle 2: Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world with the aim of developing environmental stewardship.

- ② The woodland is ideally suited to match the needs of the programme and the learners, providing a space/ environment in which to explore and discover a priority habitat and develop tool based bushcraft skills.
- ② A Forest School programme constantly monitors its ecological impact and works within a sustainable site management plan agreed between the landowner/ manager, the forest school practitioner and the learners.
- ② Forest School aims to foster a relationship with nature through regular personal experiences in order to develop long-term, environmentally sustainable attitudes, practices using natural resources for inspiration, to stimulate ideas and encourage intrinsic motivation.

Principle 3: Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners

- ② Where possible, the Forest School leader will aim to link experiences at Forest School to home, work and /or school education.
- ② Forest School programmes aim to develop, the physical, social, cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of the learner at a level appropriate to the individual.

Principle 4: Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

- ② Forest School opportunities are designed to build on an individual's innate motivation, positive attitudes and/or interests.
- ② Forest School uses tools and fires only where deemed appropriate to the learners, and dependent on completion of a baseline risk assessment.
- ② Any Forest School experience follows a Risk–Benefit Management process.

5. Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

- ② There is a appropriate ratio of practitioner/adults to learners.
- ② Practitioners and adults regularly helping at Forest School are subject to relevant checks into their suitability to have contact with children, young people and vulnerable people.
- ② Practitioners need to hold an up-to-date first aid qualification, which includes paediatric (if appropriate) and outdoor elements.
- ② Forest School is backed by relevant working documents, which contain all the policies and procedures required for running Forest School and which establish the roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers.

6. Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning

- ② A learner-centred pedagogical approach is employed by Forest School that is responsive to the needs and interests of learners using appropriate dialogue and relationship building
- ② Choice and experimentation are integral to the learning process.
- ② Forest School provides a stimulus for all learning preferences and dispositions.
- ② Reflective practice is a feature of each session to ensure learners and practitioners can understand their achievements, develop emotional intelligence and plan for the future.
- ② Practitioner observation is an important element of Forest School pedagogy. Observations feed into 'scaffolding' and tailoring experiences to learning and development.

Curriculum for Excellence—Core Skills

In addition to vocational based learning for the older secondary phase, the FOLAs also support the development of Curriculum for Excellence core skills and delivery of STEM priorities:

1. Communication: Learning approaches are dialogic so develop language use at all points. There are multiple opportunities for making spoken and written text in the context of the environment,
2. Numeracy : There are multiple opportunities for specific curriculum outcomes to be built in e.g. special awareness, data collection, data display, large scale measurement awareness
3. Problem Solving: forest based challenges demonstrate the skills of problem solving with many opportunities for evaluation of the outcome of challenges, team building that are congruent with forest based learning
4. Working with others: Forest based learning is a collaborative and dialogic activity. Records and self-evaluation of work can provide evidence for a learners growing skills at working with other people
5. Information Technology: Use of portable devices to record work, present evidence and through informative and creative use of Apps. Use of ICT in the classroom and in independent study to support knowledge, understanding and skill. Use of ICT to present evidence of achievement in outcomes.



The FOLAs offer many opportunities to integrate learning with other subject areas. Wildside is experienced in providing imaginative and relevant integrated Experiences and Outcomes such as:

Literacy and Communication—storytelling, transactional writing, reading and listening about the forest as a learning context, forest as traditional story setting, making writing materials, writing with a range of natural materials etc, report writing, broadcasting/bloggging and creating instructions.

Languages - Using the forest as a context for languages e.g. Gaelic alphabet based on native trees, inclusion of multicultural festivals based in the natural world as a context for shared vocabulary.

Science— Practical engagement with flora and fauna relating to biology and life sciences. Forest learning is ideal for active and practical delivery of STEM subjects and their many links to the Learning for Sustainability and Sustainable Development Goals which are central to our practice. Engaging students in the application of STEM learning's vital role in finding solutions to real world issues or challenges such as protecting biodiversity, pollution and tackling climate change.

Maths—numeracy and applied data collection as part of project work; regular integrated practice with number and measure, shape, position and movement in craft skills using a variety of natural materials for woodworking, ; information handling, mapping etc

Expressive Arts—Stimulus for visual art eg practicing Andy Goldsworthy inspired ephemeral art, sounds of the forest or using the forest as an imaginative context for drama, creating natural musical instruments, forests in folklore

Social Science - Geography project work , Historical landscape contexts including local heritage and land use changes over millennia

Health and Well Being - Personal Safety, Sustainability, Physical development

Technologies— ICT, Design , Practical tool use and tool care.

Our FOLA programmes support students in a rich breadth of development: growing our understanding and appreciation of the natural and physical world; interpreting and analysing data and information; research and critical enquiry, developing and testing ideas; problem solving and risk assessment; experimentation, exploration and discovery of new knowledge, ideas and products; creativity and innovation; development of new products and approaches; collaboration and working across fields and disciplines.

Wildside Adventures are also committed to approaches and reflective practice which aim to reduce equity gaps in relation to gender, deprivation, rurality, race, disability and for care leavers.