

Job Description - Timber Skills and Resilience Lead (PB4)

Job summary

The Timber Skills and Resilience Lead will lead the development, co-ordination and delivery of Forestry England's Timber Skills Academy and associated capability-building programmes. This role strengthens organisational resilience by creating a structured, high-quality training, mentoring and career development pathway for all staff involved in timber production.

The postholder will focus on ensuring that Forestry England has the skilled workforce needed to deliver the annual timber production plan, mitigate strategic skills-related risks, and support succession planning across harvesting, contract management, forest works management and timber operations.

Key responsibilities & accountabilities

1. Lead Development of the Timber Skills Academy (Immediate Priority)

Design and establish a structured "Timber Skills Academy" model covering training, CPD, skills acquisition, mentoring and career pathways for timber production roles.

Define the "core curriculum" for timber production, including technical harvesting, contract management, negotiation and influencing skills, timber systems, safety, and forest works supervision.

Identify priority roles or areas within the Forestry and Land Management function to target (e.g. Beat Foresters/Managers, Timber Officers, FWMs) and work with them and their managers to develop progression pathways.

Communicate and lead so that there is a good understanding of the objectives and deliverables from our 'Timber Skills Academy' within Forest Districts, Business units and wider Forestry England.

2. Coordinate and Improve Training & Skills Development

Develop an annual skills/professional development plan aligned with organisational timber risks and capability gaps. Commission and deliver new and updated training modules including:

- timber production fundamentals
- Forestry England timber systems/processes (e.g. SCDB, eTimber)
- contract management CPD
- forest works management

Work with Forest Districts and HS&TT to embed consistent training standards and embed quality assurance.

3. Build Mentoring and Support Networks

Establish a national mentoring framework for early-career colleagues and those new to timber production roles.

Identify and procure/create mentoring training for both mentees and mentors to set expectations for both parties.

Pair experienced practitioners with new staff as part of structured learning pathways. Capture and share good practice, drawing on retiring specialists and mid-career expertise before it is lost.

4. Strengthen Workforce Pipelines

Support Forestry England's relationship with Forest Services and external partners to enhance L3 Forest Craftsperson and L6 Professional Forester apprenticeships with timber production-focused content.

In collaboration with Technical Training, coordinate the launch of Forestry England's in-house L4 Forest Works Manager qualification, focusing initially on experienced FWMs lacking formal accreditation.

Contribute to HR/People Board work on "hard to recruit roles" by bringing evidence on timber production skills shortages and retention risks.

5. Build Capability in Data, Systems and Timber Assurance

Support training for staff and contractors involved in inventory collection and SCDB data processing. Work

with Business Systems colleagues on future eTimber development and training needs.

6. Strengthen Organisational Resilience

Contribute to knowledge transfer and succession planning across the National Operations Forestry & Timber team, particularly during periods of high turnover. Provide surge capacity and operational resilience within the Forestry & Timber team during peaks of work, absence or staffing gaps.

7. Stakeholder Engagement & Collaboration

Collaborate widely with Forest District management teams, National Operations teams, Forest Services, Forest Research, and external training partners. Represent the Academy and Forestry England's timber skills approach in working groups as required.

Support clear communication about Forestry England's timber skills strategy and its importance for commercial performance.

And any other tasks, reasonably requested by your line manager.

Skills, knowledge & experience

Essential professional and technical experience

Essential

- Extensive operational and technical forestry knowledge.
- Extensive timber production experience, ideally in harvesting, forest works supervision or timber sales/contract management.
- Demonstrable ability to train, mentor or coach others.
- Excellent communication skills with the ability to engage across multiple teams and levels.
- Strong planning, organisational and project management capability.
- Understanding of Forestry England's systems and processes related to timber production (or ability to learn quickly).
- Ability to work independently, be self-directed, and drive initiatives to completion.
- Commitment to workforce development, safety and continuous improvement.

Desirable

- Experience delivering or designing training programmes.
- Familiarity with SCDB, eTimber or other timber inventory/sales systems.
- Experience in change management or organisational development.
- Understanding of contractor workforce capability and procurement levers that support skills development.
- Member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters or working towards Chartered status.

Additional Information

Your Experience and Technical Knowledge will be tested at the application stage.

Your Technical Knowledge and the following Behaviours will be tested at the interview:

- Developing Others - actively supports growth and learning.
- Leadership - inspires confidence, sets standards, and champions best practice.
- Working Together - builds relationships and collaborates across Forestry England.

Qualifications

Essential

- Maths and English GCSE or equivalent

Desirable

- Degree level forestry qualification or equivalent work experience
- Professional level membership of Institute of Chartered Foresters