

Apprentices use cutting-edge technology to log progress

Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) is the first institute in the UK to have used cutting-edge technology to log students' progression towards operating forest machinery.

At the start of Scottish Apprenticeship Week 2019 (4-8 March), four forestry apprentices have been using simulators at the Barony campus in Dumfries to work their way through a TimberSkills training course, developed by the machinery giant John Deere to monitor the progress of trainee foresters as they hone their skills before moving to real forest machines.

After gaining the basic skills and knowledge to start work on forwarders – the vehicles used to carry felled logs – apprentices Gemma Brown, 30, Jack Marshall, 17, Kris Faulder, 22, and James Thomson, 24, are now putting their training into practice on site in Galloway Forest District.

“Some of the key advantages of the TimberSkills course, over the previous use of simulators, is that there is a structured learning programme, it measures the progress of students and quickly identifies aspects of the student's work that needs to be worked on”, said Paul Fotheringham, Senior Instructor in Forestry at SRUC.

“Importantly, it prevents the development of bad habits from the outset, meaning that time doesn't need to be spent ironing these out later on.”

Jock McKie, Country Manager at John Deere Forestry, said: “It is great that we are using this cutting-edge technology here in Scotland to benefit the student learning



experience – it is an integral part of their development before we throw them the keys to a £400,000 machine.

“We are delighted to continually support SRUC through the provision of the simulators and machines as we strive to find the operators of the future.”

The trainees were the first to be accepted onto the pilot Forest Machine Operator Modern Apprenticeship scheme – developed by the Scottish Forest and Timber Technologies Industry Leadership Group, in partnership with SRUC and other pub-

Modern Apprentices Jack Marshall, Kris Faulder and James Thomson with Senior Instructor in Forestry Paul Fotheringham
Below: Modern apprentice Jack Marshall hones his forestry skills on a Jack Deere simulator

lic and private organisations – which trains young people to operate the hi-tech machinery used in the harvesting and primary processing of timber.

They will spend their first year working for Forest Enterprise Scotland (FES), with training carried out at Barony and in Galloway Forest District.

Two will remain with FES for the second year and two will be employed by forestry contractors Treetop Forestry and Elliot Henderson Timber Harvesting.

The pilot is being funded through the Skills Development Scotland (SDS) Modern Apprenticeship programme, with additional employer support provided by Forestry Commission Scotland.

As part of the scheme, four harvesting machines have been provided by John Deere and Komatsu, with other companies providing fuel and ancillary equipment.

The pilot scheme will be reviewed after one year with a view to offering more apprenticeship places to young people in the future.



Future Foresters Skills Day for students is back

Up to 300 forestry and arboriculture students, apprentices and 'new starters' are expected to come together in October for a unique Future Foresters Skills Day which will introduce them to some of the most advanced thinking and technologies in the sector.

Sponsored by City and Guilds, Sorbus International, Haglof of Sweden and the Forestry Commission, the Royal Forestry Society's second National Student Conference and Demo Day is being held at Shuttleworth College in Bedfordshire on Friday, 04 October aimed at FE, HE, postgrad students, apprentices and those who may

have just started work.

Morning speakers will take a student-centred view of the challenges facing today's future foresters in the jobs market and in their careers. The afternoon will see hands on demonstrations by some of the biggest names in the industry. Participating colleges will also have the chance to win £2000 of Haglof equipment.

Tickets: £7.50. Booking and further details are available at www.rfs.org.uk/events/conferences-and-seminars by following the Future Foresters links.

SAVE
THE DATE
04 OCT



Forestry apprentices sign up as new era for forestry begins

Rural Economy Secretary Fergus Ewing has marked Scottish Apprenticeship Week by welcoming eight new forestry apprentices to the Scottish School of Forestry at Inverness College UHI.

The male and female students successfully applied for the School's first Modern Apprenticeship (MA) in Trees and Timber, a two-year programme supported by Forest Enterprise Scotland, that will allow them to study and work at the same time.

Mr Ewing visited the School to personally congratulate the apprentices in their decision to pursue a life-long career in a hugely successful industry.

He said: "Forestry in Scotland has never been in a stronger position than it is now and young people who are learning forestry skills are in high demand across the sector. It is very heartening to see that young women and men have recognised forestry is a hugely rewarding career path.

"They have also entered forestry at a hugely exciting time, when forestry itself is about to embark on a new chapter with the creation of two new agencies - Scottish Forestry and Forestry and Land Scotland.

"These new agencies will be instrumental in helping Scottish forestry to deliver more benefits to people, the environment, communities and businesses over the next 50 years and beyond.

"It is heartening to know that more and more young people are lending their sup-



port to that endeavour."

The eight new apprentices will receive on the job experience and training with Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) from May 2019 and will also develop their skills through a recognised SVQ2/3 qualification from the Scottish School of Forestry.

FLS, which has come into being on 01 April, aims over the next few years to

increase the number of apprentices and other trainee routes in forestry roles as well as in professions such as civil engineering, digital and business administration.

It is anticipated that industry support for the apprenticeship programme will continue to increase and help to meet the current and growing demand within the sector for trained, skilled people.



Tilhill/BSW launches new forestry diploma course

The Tilhill Diploma in Forestry and Woodland Management is a new forestry diploma course that Tilhill/BSW will be launching this September. The new course will be taught at Coleg Llysfasi, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in partnership with Tilhill/BSW.

It will focus on training forestry workers from L2 to diploma and degree level. The diploma is split into two distinct stages, beginning at Level 3 and progressing onto Level 5. Entry is possible at either stage, depending on experience and qualifications.

Tony Lockey, learning and development manager at BSW Group highlights the ben-

efits of this course:

- Industry-tailored training for a successful career in forestry and forest management.
- Training to manage trees and woodlands safely, sustainably, efficiently, economically and to high environmentally responsible standards.
- Training in forestry technical skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Skills in business management, behaviours, and people management.

For more information and details on how to apply follow the link: www.cambria.ac.uk/apprenticeships/tilhill/

Industry working together to enhance skilled workforce

Nearly 30 forestry employers, associations and educational providers have pledged to work together to attract the very best of young and new talent into the sector.

The five-year Forestry Skills Plan aims to increase numbers of new entrants and improve the skills of the current workforce so that the growing forestry industry can reach its full potential in coming years.

The plan tackles identified shortages of skilled forest machine operators, chainsaw operators and tree planters, and suggested a need for a more rounded set of practical and business skills in graduate recruits. It also aims to promote forestry as a career within schools, attract a diverse range of new entrants to the industry, and halt a decline in numbers of forestry degrees and forestry training in colleges

The Forestry Skills Plan has four themes: talent attraction, skills and technical knowledge, education provision and employer support. The themes have been split into



separate action plans that partners will develop and deliver over coming years.

Caroline Harrison, Confor's England Manager said "Forestry isn't just about trees, it is also about people. This plan will facilitate a long term, coordinated, targeted approach to tackling skills issues. All the members of the Forest Skills Forum are committed to using the plan to prioritise activity, work together efficiently and take control of the skills agenda in order to develop a skilled forestry workforce for the future."

New-style courses start next year

T Levels are new courses coming in September 2020, which will follow GCSEs and will be equivalent to three A Levels. These two-year courses will be developed in collaboration with employers and businesses so that the content meets the needs of industry and prepares students for work.

T Levels will offer students a mixture of classroom learning and 'on-the-job' experience during an industry placement of around three months. They will provide the knowledge and experience needed to open the door into skilled employment, further study or a higher apprenticeship.

FTN WEB RESOURCES



More about
T Levels

Forestry Skills Plan 2019 -
2024 for England and Wales
www.confor.org.uk/ftnweb

Confor Woodland Show 2019

An essential event for all students of forestry. See p31.

#TheFutureIsForestry award 2019 to include video prize

Confor has expanded its annual competition for students and young forestry professionals for 2019 by adding a video prize.

The inaugural #TheFutureIsForestry prize last year was awarded for an essay only. For 2019, forestry professionals aged 30 and under and full-time students (of any age) will be invited to submit an essay or short video. Prizes of £500, £250 and £100 will be awarded to the top three entries in both the essay and video category.

The precise title of the essay and video will be revealed at a later date, but will include Confor's key theme for 2019, the link between forests, wood and tackling climate change.

The 2018 essay - launched to celebrate the contribution of young professionals and students to forestry and wood processing - asked 'How can forestry and wood processing help deliver a Green Brexit and a more sustainable society in the UK?' It was won by Lorna Johnson, a Masters student at Harper Adams University.

Tilhill Forestry and BSW Timber have agreed to sponsor the 2019 competition.

Stuart Goodall, Confor Chief Executive, said: "We are delighted to build on that



success by adding a video prize in 2019 - to recognise the importance of telling the positive forestry and wood story through a range of different media."

The competition will be officially launched at a summer reception at Westminster on the evening of 11 June. To express an interest in attending, please email neil@publicaffairs.coop

Professional Development Award in Forestry provides new CPD route

The new Professional Development Award (PDA) in Forestry offered by the Scottish School of Forestry (SSF), Inverness College UHI is proving to be a popular route for both non-foresters entering the profession and for those who are already working in the sector who are looking to progress in their career. The qualification which was piloted in 2017/18, has seen an intake of 18 students in 2018/19 with numbers looking healthy for the next academic year. The PDA, which comprises half of the traditional HNC in Forestry, is a part-time course delivered online with students attending two field weeks at SSF in Balloch, near Inverness, to complete practical work required for course assessments.

Those undertaking the qualification study four units including Forest Science, Forest Mensuration and Thinning Control, Health and Safety and Employment Legislation for the Land Based Industries and a choice of either Harvesting or Establish-

ment of Woodland.

The course has proven popular with many employers and currently there are seven Forestry Commission Scotland employees enrolled along with three from BSW Tilhill and one each from Scottish Woodlands, RTS, Jenkinsons and SAC Consulting. The cohort is completed by a small number of self-employed individuals. Having completed the PDA if students wish to progress further they can move on to complete the HNC, HND and the BSc Honours or select individual units from these courses. SSF currently has an additional 30 students who are completing various courses Distance Learning and/or Part Time from within the sector.

For further information see www.inverness.uhi.ac.uk/courses/pda-forestry or email the SSF team on ssf.ic@uhi.ac.uk.

The 19/20 intake will start in early September 2019 when the first field week will be held.

OPPORTUNITIES

RFS Spencer Bursaries for students

Deadline 31 May

Five bursaries worth £150 each are on offer to students wishing to attend the Evolving the Forest conference in Devon on 19-21 June.

www.rfs.org.uk/learning/bursaries-and-studentships/rfs-spencer-bursary

RFS Viking Bursary

Deadline 03 June

Applications are now being accepted from students wishing to study any aspect of forestry which benefits the practical management and resilience of woodlands and which is original, independent, self-directed study or research and has clear study/research objectives, methods, outcomes and timeframe. The scope includes course-related dissertations and theses. Worth up to £2000.

www.rfs.org.uk/learning/bursaries-and-studentships/rfs-viking-bursary

Forestry student placements

The Northern Ireland Forest Service has just started the recruitment process for a number of paid work placements for 2019 from 12 weeks up to a 1-year placement. Details coming soon.

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