

Royal Air Force Airman or Airwoman

Royal Air Force airmen or airwomen work in a wide variety of support roles, mostly in **ground support**. A smaller number of airmen or airwomen are **aircrew** and have flight duties. All RAF airmen or airwomen must be ready to go to war. They may provide support on the ground or fly aircraft.

The Work

In ground support you could be:

- working in one of many different professions: Air and Space Operations, Cyberspace, Engineering, Ground Combat and Security, Hospitality, Intelligence, Logistics, Medical Services, Music and People Operations
- working in a machine shop, office or outdoors, depending on your trade
- supporting aircrew in a war zone.

In aircrew you could be:

- flying on multi-engined aircraft or helicopters
- operating weapon systems
- looking after equipment while on flights
- taking part in patrol and observation flights
- flying in combat zones, in time of war.

In both areas you could be:

- taking part in training exercises, in the UK or overseas, to practise for battle
- undertaking exercise programmes in order to keep fit.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- what job you do.

New recruits start at £26,300 a year whilst in professional training. You get extra allowances in some jobs and for being overseas. Salary rises with promotion and time served.

The RAF provides subsidised food and accommodation as well as uniforms and protective clothing, free healthcare and a pension.

Conditions

- Working conditions vary, depending on where you are and what you are doing.
- Most RAF personnel live on base although some homes are rented or privately owned. If you are married

or in a partnership you may be able to live in Service Families' Accommodation.

- You may be away from home and family for several months at a time, especially if on short term posts abroad.
- You can be sent anywhere in the UK or abroad, sometimes at short notice.
- You might have to work in very hot or very cold weather or in other extreme conditions.
- Generally you work normal office hours, but sometimes you are required to work longer, irregular hours and you might have to work shifts.
- You are entitled to 38 days holiday a year.
- It is not always adventurous and exciting; there is a lot of routine work.
- Many RAF staff rarely fly in the course of their work.

You should be aware that in the RAF, you may at times be operating in difficult and dangerous conditions and there may be the risk of injury or death.

Getting In

Specific entry and eligibility requirements vary depending on the role you choose, but in general are as follows.

- For most jobs you can join from the age of 16, but for some trades you must be 17.
- The maximum joining age is 47, but may depend on the type of job.
- If you are under 18 your parents or guardians must agree to you joining.
- Qualifications vary depending on role but you generally need 2-5 subjects at National 4 or 5. English, Maths and a science subject or a language would be preferred, and may be necessary for some roles.
- For some roles, such as musician, you must have the necessary qualifications before you join the RAF.
- You must meet residency and nationality requirements – they are shown on the [RAF website](#).
- There are 6-7 stages to the application process, depending on the role: aptitude test; selection interviews; health assessment; fitness test; specialist interview/pre-recruit training course; and finally acceptance followed by training. This process normally takes around three months.
- You must be fit and healthy with your body weight in proportion to your height.

The conditions on leaving and how much notice is required varies depending on which branch or specialism you are in. The RAF or Armed Forces recruitment offices would advise on this.

There is a National 4 Skills for Work course in Uniformed and Emergency Services, which introduces school pupils to careers in the armed forces, emergency services and Merchant Navy. Some colleges also run Entry to the Uniformed Services courses.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- brave
- reliable and adaptable
- responsible
- practical
- able to accept strict discipline and follow instructions quickly

- good at working in a team
- able to react quickly
- able to remain calm and to work in dangerous situations.

Training

- Most entrants do a 10-week Basic Recruit Training Course (BRTC) at RAF Halton in Buckinghamshire.
- This is followed by role-specific training for your chosen job.
- Some aircrew roles also involve a 10-week training course in leadership and management skills, at RAF Cranwell in Lincolnshire.
- RAF Regiment Gunners do an additional 24-week training course at RAF Honington in Suffolk.
- You will continue to do short training during your time in the RAF, to keep you up to date.

Getting On

- Promotion for airmen or women depends on how well you do, and taking RAF training courses can help you get on – for some jobs you must pass certain training courses.
- To become a corporal and sergeant you go through a selection process.
- The highest non-commissioned officer rank is that of warrant officer, but you can apply to become a commissioned officer if you are suitably qualified.
- When you leave the RAF, you will be able to use a lot of your skills in other jobs.

More Information

For detailed information about the Royal Air Force, phone 0345 605 5555 or visit the [Royal Air Force](http://www.raf.mod.uk/recruitment) website to find your nearest recruitment centre.

Contacts

Royal Air Force Careers

Tel: 0345 605 5555

Website: www.raf.mod.uk/recruitment

X: [@RAF_Recruitment](https://twitter.com/RAF_Recruitment)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/RAFRecruitment

Statistics



Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](http://LMIforAll)

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.