

Meteorologist

Meteorologists study the Earth's atmosphere and forecast the weather. This information is of vital importance to the sea transport and offshore industries, as well as those in power generation, the armed services, commercial aviation and agriculture. Meteorologists also use this information to work out future changes in the Earth's climate.

The Work

You could be:

- collecting information on cloud, humidity, temperature and wind
- collecting this information from aircraft, ships, radar stations, satellites and weather stations
- analysing and interpreting the information using charts, maps and computer models
- forecasting the weather for the next few days and sometimes for longer periods
- forecasting climate conditions in the future
- providing weather information through newspapers, radio or television
- providing specialised weather information to industries such as agriculture, air and sea transport or the oil industry
- doing research on processes taking place in the atmosphere and the causes of unusual weather
- helping to develop new instruments to measure and record changes in the atmosphere.

Meteorologists can specialise in either forecasting or research.

Pay

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

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

The starting salary for a Foundation Operational Meteorologist with the Met Office is £26,954 a year. With experience, the base salary is £33,794 a year plus shift allowances and pension benefits. For managerial positions, this could rise up to around £60,000 or more.

Conditions

- Most meteorologists work for the Met Office, the UK's national provider of environmental and weather related services.
- However, you could also work for a research organisation such as the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) or the British Antarctic Survey, or for firms in the oil industry or a university. You might also work for one of the private sector weather service providers in the UK and Europe.
- You might work abroad with the Mobile Met Unit, assisting the Royal Air Force or at sea with the Marine Offshore Consultancy.

- Most meteorologists work in an office, but some are based at weather stations at various locations in the UK. Some of these can be quite remote.
- You would carry out much of your work using sophisticated technical equipment, computers and software.
- You might work shifts, covering days and nights.

Getting In

- This is a small profession and entry is very competitive.
- Most entrants have an appropriate degree.
- The Met Office at least a 2:2 Honours degree (SCQF Levels 9-11) in a related subject such as mathematics, meteorology, physical sciences or engineering.
- Entry requirements are normally 4-5 Highers, including Maths and Physics plus English at National 5.
- There are a limited number of meteorology degrees in the UK. In Scotland, the University of Edinburgh offers a BSc which combines meteorology with either physics or geophysics and is accredited by the Royal Meteorological Society.
- Details of other degrees in meteorology are on the [Royal Meteorological Society website](#).
- Many entrants have a first degree in maths or physics and a postgraduate qualification (SCQF Level 11) in meteorology or a related subject. You need postgraduate study for research posts.
- Some previous work experience in computing or in a laboratory is helpful.
- You need to be able to demonstrate an interest in weather and climate.

The Met Office usually have two intakes of trainees a year, which are advertised around February and August.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- observant
- precise and accurate in your work
- good with figures and computers
- self reliant and responsible
- able to work alone or as part of a team.

You need to have:

- an interest in science and the environment
- an enquiring mind
- good analytical skills
- the ability to deal with large amounts of complex data
- an aptitude for maths and physics
- a logical approach to problem solving
- good communication skills.

Training

- After gaining your initial qualifications, training would be mainly on the job, combined with attendance at relevant courses.
- The Met Office has a structured training programme which includes periods of attendance at its own training college.
- During the training you'll have the opportunity to join the Mobile Meteorological Unit (MMU), a Sponsored Reserve unit of the Royal Air Force.
- You may also study part time for a postgraduate qualification, if you do not already have one.
- You can become a Registered Meteorologist (RMet) and then work up to Chartered Meteorologist (CMet) through the Royal Meteorological Society.

Getting On

- The Met Office has a well established structure with a clear promotion path. It encourages its staff to apply for posts within the Met Office to broaden their experience and skills. For example you can move between research, forecasting, teaching and commercial work.
- Other employers may have fewer routes for progression.
- To gain experience and move on you may have to change your job and move around the country.
- With a lot of experience you may be able to become an independent consultant.

More Information

The Met Office headquarters is in Exeter, but there are also centres throughout the UK, including Aberdeen. As well as reporting on the weather, the Met Office now provides more general environmental scientific and educational services. The Met Office also has international responsibilities as the Regional Specialised Met Centre (RSMC) for Emergency Response and a World Area Forecast Centre for Aviation.

Contacts

British Antarctic Survey

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Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)

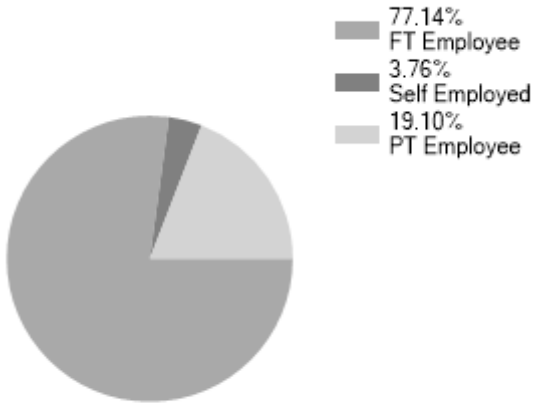
Website: www.nerc.ac.uk
 X: @NERCscience
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/NERC-Natural-Environment-Research-Council-904192853026208

Royal Meteorological Society

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Statistics

Employment Status UK %



Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.