

Royal Air Force Officer

Royal Air Force (RAF) officers carry out flying duties or specialise in one of a wide range of ground duties. They lead and manage teams of RAF airmen or airwomen. They are responsible for the training, welfare and discipline of the men and women under their command.

The Work

There are around 20 different officer roles to choose from to suit your skills and ambitions including: pilot, weapons systems officer, police officer, intelligence officer, air traffic control officer, chaplain, doctor, dentist, nursing officer and engineer. All RAF officers must be ready to serve anywhere in the UK and overseas and must be prepared to go into combat zones at any time.

You could be:

- working under fire in a war zone
- piloting or navigating an aircraft or helicopter
- controlling air traffic
- collecting intelligence
- taking part in humanitarian or peacekeeping duties
- taking part in search and rescue missions
- doing administrative work at your base, in the UK or abroad
- working in your specialist job such as chaplain, dentist, doctor, nurse or lawyer.

Pay

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

- where you work
- what job you do.

Many officers, including pilots, engineering and personnel officers, are paid £26,504 a year during training and £31,800 after training. There are different pay scales for certain specialist officers and for people who join with a degree or a professional qualification, such as chaplains and legal officers.

- Pilot Officer/Flying Officer - £31,800 to £35,212
- Flight Lieutenant - £40,825 to £48,550
- Squadron Leader - £51,425 to £61,588
- Wing Commander - £72,175 to £83,572
- Group Captain - £87,441 to £96,122.

You get extra allowances in some jobs and for being overseas. 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.
- You may be away from home and family for several months on end.
- 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.
- Hours might be irregular 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.
- Some 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 and death.

Getting In

- You need at least 3 Highers plus 5 subjects at National 5, including English and Maths. There are some RAF scholarships for school students taking Highers.
- You are more likely to get in if you have a degree, and for some specialist jobs, for example engineering officer, you must have a degree or equivalent qualification in a particular subject. There are some RAF cadetships and bursaries for students taking a degree.
- You must meet residence and nationality requirements – they are shown on the [RAF website](#).
- You must pass a series of tests which assess aptitude, character and personality, pass an interview and take a physical test. These take place over 2 days at the Officer and Aircrew Selection Centre (OASC) at RAF College Cranwell in Lincolnshire.
- You must usually be at least 17 years and 6 months old, but for some officer roles, such as nursing or dental officer, you need to be older.
- If you are under 18 your parents or guardians must agree to your joining.
- There is a strict medical examination. You must be fit and healthy with your body weight in proportion to your height.
- If you are accepted you join on an Initial Commission of 12 years. During this time you may be selected to serve on a pension earning commission of 20 years' service or up to age 40, whichever is later.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- a good leader, able to take responsibility and inspire confidence
- able to enforce discipline
- courageous and self-disciplined
- resilient and resourceful
- a good organiser
- able to stay calm and work effectively, even in battle
- able to react quickly and take decisions under pressure
- able to deal with complex information
- able to work alone and also as part of a team.

Training

- You will complete a challenging 30-week Initial Officer Training (IOT) course at RAF College Cranwell.
- This is followed by role-specific training for the job you will be doing.
- If you join as one of the Specialist Branch officers, such as medical officer (doctor), you will complete a 13-week Specialist Entrant and Re-entrant (SERE) course at RAF College Cranwell.
- You keep up to date by attending training courses throughout your time in the RAF.

Getting On

- There is a clearly defined promotion route from pilot officer to flying officer, flight lieutenant, squadron leader, wing commander and beyond.
- Your chances of promotion are better if you take further training.
- Experience in the RAF can be useful for a variety of jobs after you leave.

More Information

For detailed information about the Royal Air Force, phone 0345 605 5555 and visit its website at [Royal Air Force](#) to find your nearest recruitment centre.

Contacts

Royal Air Force Careers

Tel: 0345 605 5555

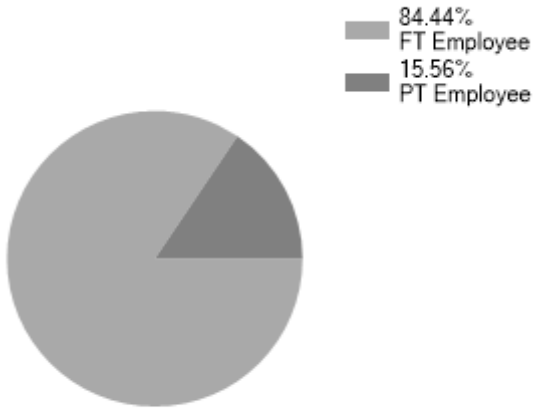
Website: www.raf.mod.uk/recruitment

Twitter: @RAF_Recruitment

Facebook: www.facebook.com/RAFRecruitment

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.