



**Focus on Forestry First**

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## **PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS**

Scheme rules

2019 - 2021



# PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS CONTENTS

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## Section A - Introduction

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This guidance is for those working in the trees and timber sector in Wales, who intend to apply for support through the Professional Pathways Scheme for their academic studies. The details contained within this booklet are not exhaustive and may be updated.

### **The purpose of Forestry Focused Future (FFF) is to:**

- Increasing the productivity, diversity and efficiency of the trees and timber sector, improving their competitiveness and resilience, reducing their reliance on subsidies;
- Improving the environment, encouraging sustainable land management practices, the sustainable management of our natural resources and climate action;
- Promoting strong, sustainable rural economic growth and encourage community-led action development.

### **Professional Pathways (PP) - Raising Qualification Levels –**

- To promote access to qualifications.
- To include in other Schemes information about the value of higher qualifications and how FFF will help to achieve these effectively.
- Provide funding to enable beneficiary to complete any outstanding work and achieve the qualifications.
- Where simple steps and skills will provide a higher or further qualification then FFF will enable a beneficiary to complete and submit work for assessment.

### **Overall programme aim is to maximise productivity, efficiency and profitability through developing industry competent staff.**

This scheme also supports the commitment of woodland set out in the Welsh Government's woodland strategy, Woodland for Wales.

Forestry Focused Future is jointly funded by the Welsh Government and the European Commission as part of the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme for Wales 2014-2020.

Forestry Focused Future is governed by the Rural Development Programmes (Wales) Regulations 2014 SI No. 3222 (W. 327) which applies to the Rural Development Programmes, Council Regulations (EU) No. 1305/2013, 1303/2013 and (EU) No. 1306/2013, Commission Regulation (EU) No. 808/2014 and (EU) No. 809/2014 and Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 640/2014 and 807/2014 (all as amended from time to time). Copies of the regulations are available online via [www.gov.wales](http://www.gov.wales) or hard copies can be requested from the Rural Payments Wales Customer Contact Centre.

### **Focus on Forestry First Ltd**

This is the not for profit company that delivers the Forestry Focused Future Scheme on behalf of Welsh Government.



## State Aid

- Grants provided under this scheme are aid which fall within the scope of the State Aid frameworks because Articles 107, 108 and 109 Treaty for the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) apply to support given for rural development under the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme for Wales 2014-2020 (ref: SA 43466).
- From 01 July 2016 the State Aid Transparency requirements set out in article 9 of Commission Regulation (EU) No 702/2014 of 25 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union require any individual awards of aid above a 500,000euro threshold (for Agriculture) to be reported directly to the European Commission on a 6 monthly basis. The information will be published via the Welsh Government and European Commission Transparency Website.
- Grant provided under the following options in this scheme is compliant aid because it respects the conditions set out in Article 32, 33 and 35 of Commission Regulation (EU) No 702/2014 (Agriculture Block Exemption Regulation).

## Section B – Eligibility

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To be eligible for the Professional Pathways Scheme grant you must:

- have a residential or business address within Wales.
- be a public or private business including self-employed, part of a municipality or an association working in the trees and timber sector in Wales.
- Not be in full time education.
- Must be registered as a beneficiary with Forestry Focused Future.

## Section C – Professional Pathways Scheme

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### What is Supported?

- All learning that leads to a qualification that can be completed whilst the beneficiary is in work.
- Modules as well as the full qualification can be supported.
- The organisation or institution offering the qualification does not have to be in Wales.
- The qualifications listed at Appendix 1 are applicable, but others may be supported. Please contact FFF Ltd to discuss if your qualification is not on the list. This will be confirmed as part of the application process.
- Only study leading to a qualification or module that can be achieved before 30 June 2021 will be supported.

### Level of support

- Professional Pathways Scheme will cover 100% of the eligible course fees. The scheme will not reimburse any materials, books, accommodation, expenses or time involved with the study.

### Information we require to enter the Professional Pathways Scheme

The applicant will need to provide the information required as part of the registration process to become a beneficiary of Forestry Focused Future and complete the application process to be part of the Professional Pathways Scheme.

Your company or business must support your study.

Your annual registration as a beneficiary must not have lapsed. This may mean you will need to renew it and pay a further annual registration fee.

If you are a registered beneficiary through the Skills Development Scheme, then you do not need to register again. But you will need to apply to become part of the Professional Pathways Scheme.

## Section D – How to Apply

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### Application for a Place on the Professional Pathways Scheme

You must register as a beneficiary for Forestry Focused Future. If you are already a beneficiary through the Skills Development Scheme you do not need to re-register or pay any additional fees.

You must pay the annual registration fee to become a beneficiary of Forestry Focused Future and receive funding through the Professional Pathways Scheme.

Your annual registration as a beneficiary must not have lapsed. This may mean you will need to renew it and pay a further annual registration fee.

Application to enter the Scheme is then via the Professional Pathways application form. If accepted your course will be included in your training plan and funded by FFF Ltd.

If you have a query then please contact us on [info@focusonforestryfirst.co.uk](mailto:info@focusonforestryfirst.co.uk) or 0808 178 2757.

### Payment

FFF Ltd will enter into an agreement with your course provider and reimburse your course fees directly with them.

### Legislation Changes (Including Changes in Interpretation)

European Regulations may change from time to time and you will be required to abide by any changes imposed following notification from the Welsh Government.

### Changes to Scheme Rules

We may need to make changes to your contract including payment rates. For example, we may need to scheme rules to take account of any changes within the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020 or revise payment rates. We will publicise changes in Gwlad, on the Welsh Government website ([www.gov.wales](http://www.gov.wales)) and will notify you were necessary.

### Complaints Procedure

Complaints will be dealt with under the Focus on Forestry First Ltd Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure. For a copy or for further advice on how to make a complaint please contact Focus on Forestry First Ltd, details in Section F.

In addition, you may also choose to contact: Public Services Ombudsman for Wales,

1 Ffordd y Hen Gae,  
Pencoed,  
CF35 5LJ

Website: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

## Section E – General Data Protection Regulation: Privacy Notice

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This notice informs you about Focus on Forestry First Ltd use of the information used in connection with your application for aid under the Welsh Government's Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme for Wales 2014 – 2020 schemes. It also explains the Welsh Government's processing and use of your personal data and your rights under the General Data Protection Regulation.

The data controller for the information submitted as part of your application is Focus on Forestry First Ltd, 37, Hospital Road, Builth Wells, Powys LD2 3HE.

The data protection officer for the same information is the Data Protection Officer, Focus on Forestry First Ltd, 37, Hospital Road, Builth Wells, Powys LD2 3HE.

Email: [info@focusonforestryfirst.co.uk](mailto:info@focusonforestryfirst.co.uk)

The information will be processed and managed by Focus on Forestry First Ltd in accordance with its obligations and duties under the following European Regulations:

- Council Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013
- Council Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013
- Council Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013
- Commission Regulation (EU) No 640/2014
- Commission Regulation (EU) No 807/2014
- Commission Regulation (EU) No 808/2014
- Commission Regulation (EU) No 809/2014
- General Data Protection Regulation (EU) No 679/2016

The information will primarily be used for the purposes of processing and determining applications for financial support. However, Focus on Forestry First Ltd may also make use of the information supplied for other purposes, which will include those connected with its functions and duties under the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Community and with its statutory environmental obligations.

Focus on Forestry First Ltd does not collect any special category data.

Your information will be stored in accordance with the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 908/2014, "Conservation of Accounting Information".

### Reasons for sharing personal data

EU legislation requires checking of scheme eligibility, and to conduct these checks Welsh Government may share information with:

- Natural Resources Wales
- Animal and Plant Health Agency
- Veterinary Medicine Directorate
- Welsh Local Authorities
- Food Standards Agency Wales
- DEFRA
- Other UK Government Agriculture Offices.
- Regulatory authorities, such as HM Revenue and Customs, Local Authorities, Health and Safety Executive and the Police.



The information may be used for the following:

- compilation of reports of aggregated data and/or summary statistics to be made publicly available
- informing decisions relating to policy changes and funding including research studies conducted on behalf of the Welsh Government to inform Monitoring and Evaluation of Rural Development Schemes
- protecting applicant's interest in land conservation and issues that may arise due to funding queries
- allowing partner organisations to fulfil their legal duties
- shared with fraud prevention agencies who will use it to prevent fraud and money- laundering and to verify your identity
- publication of certain information and responding to requests for information.

### **The Publication and Disclosure of Information**

Your information, including your personal information, may be the subject of a request by another member of the public. When responding to such requests Focus on Forestry First Ltd may be required to release information, including your personal information.

### **Rights under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**

The GDPR gives individuals rights in respect of the personal data held on them. These rights include:

- the right to be informed (this notice)
- the right to ask for and receive copies of the personal data that the Welsh Government holds about them, although the Welsh Government can sometimes withhold some data or not provide copies
- the right, in some circumstances, to prevent or restrict the Welsh Government processing personal data
- the right, in some circumstances, to have wrong data rectified
- the right, in some circumstances, to have data erased (to be forgotten).

If you wish to exercise any of your rights under the GDPR, you should contact the Focus on Forestry First Ltd at the address provided at the beginning of this notice.

Individuals also have the right to ask the Information Commissioner, who enforces and oversees the GDPR, to assess whether or not the processing of their personal data is likely to comply with the GDPR. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane,  
Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF

Telephone: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113

## Section F – Contact Details

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Welsh Government's website: [www.wales.gov.uk/environmentandcountryside](http://www.wales.gov.uk/environmentandcountryside) and bi-monthly Gwlad magazine contain key information.

Contact details are as follows:



### **Focus on Forestry First**

37 Hospital Road,  
Builth Wells, Powys, LD2 3HE

**Tel:** 0808 178 2757

[info@focusonforestryfirst.co.uk](mailto:info@focusonforestryfirst.co.uk).  
[www.focusonforestryfirst.co.uk](http://www.focusonforestryfirst.co.uk)