

# Qualification Specification



## LASER's Forest School Qualifications (QCF)

Ofqual Qualification Numbers:

LASER Level 1 Award in Introduction to Forest School Principles (QCF)	601/2023/X
LASER Level 2 Award in Forest School Programme Support (QCF)	601/2125/7
LASER Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership (QCF)	601/2126/9



Qualifications Review Date: 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017

Learn | Progress | Succeed

September 2013 Version

## LASER's Forest Schools Qualifications (QCF)

### Laser Learning Awards

LASER supports its recognised centres to develop flexible and responsive credit based courses. This includes those that widen access to lifelong learning, and address exclusion and participation. The structure of our qualifications enables learners to be recognised for their achievement, to accumulate credit, and use this to access further qualifications and learning over time.

LASER makes sure:

- quality assurance underpins all provision.
- only centres that meet national standards are recognised (for course and qualification delivery and quality assurance).

LASER staff:

- have a wide experience of centre, course and qualification approval.
- support centres to make sure awards are valid and valued.

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# LASER's Forest Schools Qualifications (QCF)

## 1. About the Qualification(s)

There are three LASER Forest School qualifications: a Level 1 Award, a Level 2 Award and a Level 3 Certificate.

The suite is specifically designed to meet the needs of both Forest School learners and Forest School teachers.

The Level 1 Award in Introduction to Forest School Principles (QCF) provides an introduction to the Forest School philosophy and to the benefits of learning in the outdoors.

The Level 2 Award in Forest School Programme Support (QCF) covers the skills required to support Forest School Leaders when conducting Forest School outdoor programmes and activities.

The Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership (QCF) offers an opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to plan and lead groups in Forest School programmes and activities.

A one page Qualification Summary outlining the LASER Forest School (QCF) qualifications is provided in [Appendix 2](#).

To offer these qualifications through LASER, a centre must be recognised by LASER. For further information about becoming a Recognised Centre or working in partnership with a Recognised Centre please contact us, via email [enquiries@laser-awards.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@laser-awards.org.uk) or telephone 01932 569894.

Existing Recognised Centres must complete a [New Course Notification Form](#) before delivering a qualification, and if seeking to deliver the Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership (QCF), also complete a [Qualification Approval Form](#). Tutors delivering the Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership (QCF) must have the following:

- Teaching qualification or a Level 4 training qualification such as PTLLS (or equivalent).
- Level 3 Forest School Leader accreditation.
- A minimum of 2 years of experience leading Forest School with at least one long term (i.e. through the seasons) programme.
- First Aid qualification of at least 16 hours in duration and which includes an outdoor element.

Details of all LASER requirements are provided in the LASER Centre Handbook available from the LASER website [www.laser-awards.org.uk](http://www.laser-awards.org.uk).

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## 2. Offering the Qualification(s)

### 2.1 Aims and Objectives

Each of the LASER Forest School (QCF) qualifications covers the ethos of Forest Schools and can underpin Forest School activity, but with a different focus:

- The Level 1 Award is intended to familiarise the learner with the Forest School way, and is suitable for a wide range of people, such as young people, offender learners, youth workers, teaching assistants, teachers and anyone else with an interest in teaching and learning in the outdoors;
- The Level 2 Award is for anyone 16+ seeking to be an assistant Forest School leader and/or to train to become a Forest School Leader in the future, such as youth workers, teaching assistants and teachers;

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- The Level 3 Certificate is a continuing professional development (CPD) qualification, designed for those currently training as a Forest School Leader, such as youth workers, teaching assistants, teachers and other professionals.

Depending on the qualification, learners will cover:

Forest School Principles OR

Skills for the Forest School Programme Assistance, and Supporting Learning and Development at a Forest School Programme OR

Delivery of a Forest School Programme, Forest School Programmes and the Woodland Environment, Learning and Development at a Forest School Programmes, Planning a Forest School Programme and Practical Skills for a Forest School Programme.

### 2.2 Target Group

The target groups are explained above but in summary:

- the Level 1 Award is suitable for any learner whom the centre has established would benefit;
- the Level 2 Award is suitable for learners aged 16 years or older seeking to assist with Forest School activities;
- the Level 3 Certificate is for professionals wishing to train as Forest School Leaders.

### 2.3 Entry Requirements

There are no specific entry requirements but tutors must ensure that the level of the qualification is appropriate to the learner, and may wish to consult the guidance published by the Forest School Association (see <http://www.forestschoollassociation.org/> for information).

Please note that the Forest School Association recommend a minimum age of 18 for Forest School Assistants and a minimum age of 19 for Forest School Leaders, and that learners have a CRB or DBS disclosure if appropriate.

### 2.4 Achieving the Qualification(s)

To achieve one of the LASER Forest School (QCF) qualifications, the learner must undertake and achieve specified mandatory units, as per the following 'rules of combination':

#### **LASER Level 1 Award in Introduction to Forest School Principles (QCF)**

**Qualification Number: 601/2023/X**

To achieve the LASER Level 1 Award in Introduction to Forest School Principles (QCF) the learner must achieve the 3 credit single mandatory unit.

#### **LASER Level 2 Award in Forest School Programme Support (QCF)**

**Qualification Number: 601/2125/7**

To achieve the LASER Level 2 Award in Forest School Programme Support (QCF) the learner must achieve both of the 3 credit mandatory units, totalling 6 credits.

#### **LASER Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership (QCF)**

**Qualification Number: 601/2126/9**

To achieve the LASER Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership (QCF) the learner must achieve all 5 mandatory units, totalling 18 credits.

To view the units for each qualification, please see [Appendix 3](#).

Each assessment criteria must be evidenced to have been met in order for a learner to achieve a unit. For more detail, please see [Section 3.2](#).

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### 2.5 Guided Learning Hours

The recommended number of guided learning hours is as follows:

Qualification	Credit Value	Min / Max Guided Learning Hours
Level 1 Award	3	25/25
Level 2 Award	6	48/48
Level 3 Certificate	18	96/96

### 2.6 Language Requirements

These qualifications are only available in English.

### 2.7 Progression Opportunities

The LASER qualifications for Forest Schools (QCF) promote progression onto further study and work opportunities, perhaps in the outdoors, but not exclusively, or within teaching and training.

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## 3. How the Qualification(s) will be Assessed

### 3.1 Overview

These qualifications are assessed by the centre. They are subject to LASER's requirements for quality assurance. Please refer to the [LASER assessment guidance](#).

### 3.2 Assessment Design

These qualifications are assessed through the development of a portfolio of evidence. The portfolio should comprise a series of tasks devised by the centre, mapped to the assessment criteria.

Satisfactory completion of the tasks and compilation of the portfolio will provide evidence that the learner has met the requirements of the qualification.

The centre must assess the learner in terms of whether they have met each unit assessment criteria. All the unit assessment criteria in a unit must be met (and evidenced) before a unit can be deemed achieved. Level Descriptors are provided in [Appendix 1](#).

To view the units and assessment criteria, please click on the unit title hyperlinks within the tables in [Appendix 3](#).

Assessment must be valid, reliable and sufficient to meet the outcome, and allow transparent authenticity: this means it must be apparent that evidence produced by a learner is the work of the individual learner, even if they have worked in a group. It is recommended that assessments are internally verified to meet these standards before they are implemented.

Assessed work must be internally quality assured ([See Section 6](#)).

### 3.3 Record Keeping

The use of a [Tutor Assessment Planning Sheet](#) is recommended, as this helps to set out the various tasks, their assessment methods and the evidence needed to be produced, in a simple plan that can be shown to the internal quality assurer and quality reviewer. It also allows the assessor to set out the options where more than one assessment method could be used for any one task: this information can then be transferred as required to the [Individual Learner Record](#) for each learner, allowing for some different methods to be used for individual learners, if individualised learning is

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appropriate. These planning sheets can be customised as centres prefer, as long as all essential information is included.

Also available are specially created 'Forest Schools' [Evidence Logs](#) for centres to record how and when each learner has achieved each unit assessment criteria. These have been pre-populated with unit information for ease of use by the centre. They include room for tutor feedback and learner comments, making them ideal for inclusion in learner portfolios.

It is acceptable to design one large learning record spreadsheet for a group of learners, but it must be printed for verification and quality review, and each learner's achievement must be signed off with an original tutor signature.

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### 4. Special Arrangements for Learners with Particular Requirements

For information on special arrangements please refer to the LASER policy document '[Access to Fair Assessment](#)'. This gives clear guidance on the reasonable adjustments and arrangements that can be made to take account of disability or learning difficulty without compromising the achievement of the assessment criteria.

### 5. Tutor/Assessor/Internal Quality Assurer Requirements

LASER recommends tutors, assessors, and internal quality assurers are experienced, and requires that they have a clear understanding of the subject matter. All staff involved in the delivery of the qualification should have, or be working towards, a relevant teaching/assessing/quality assurance qualification as appropriate.

Tutors delivering the Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership (QCF) must have the following:

- Teaching qualification or a Level 4 training qualification such as PTLLS (or equivalent).
- Level 3 Forest School Leader accreditation.
- A minimum of 2 years of experience leading Forest School with at least one long term (i.e. through the seasons) programme.
- First Aid qualification of at least 16 hours in duration and which includes an outdoor element.

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### 6. Quality Assurance of the Qualification(s)

Recognised centres must have implemented the internal quality assurance arrangements detailed in the [LASER Centre Handbook](#). The LASER appointed quality reviewer will regularly monitor compliance with these requirements. The quality reviewer will report on the progress of any agreed actions for quality improvement.

In brief, centres delivering LASER qualifications must have internal quality assurance systems to underpin the delivery of the qualification. Internal quality assurance is the process by which the centre regularly samples and evaluates its assessment practices and decisions, and acts on the findings, to ensure consistency and fairness. It involves two key processes; verification and standardisation and is done by one or more internal quality assurers.

Systems do vary between centres according to their particular situation, for example practices that work in a large centre are not necessarily effective in a smaller one. However there must be:

- an appropriate quality assurance system in place and
- evidence the system is implemented effectively.

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The outcome of the internal quality assurance process is the recommendation of award of credit to learners (RAC). There are two ways credit can be awarded to learners: through a LASER quality reviewer, or through Direct Claims Status.

### 6.1 Direct Claims Status (DCS)

Direct Claims Status can be awarded when a centre has one or more Approved Internal Quality Assurer (AIQA) for the appropriate sector or course(s). These centres can claim the award of credit directly from LASER. An application for Direct Claims Status must be made by the individual holding AIQA status and must show evidence of good verification practice at the centre for which the application is made. When an AIQA leaves an organisation, Direct Claims Status does not automatically transfer to any new centre. An application must be made in conjunction with the new centre.

AIQA and DCS status is monitored by the quality reviewer and can be withdrawn by LASER at any time if quality systems are not effective.

### 6.2 Standardisation

LASER will hold regular standardisation events to make sure there is consistent application of assessment. Centres are required to contribute to LASER's programme of standardisation and also to carry out appropriate internal standardisation.

LASER hold standardisation events on a rolling basis to make sure comparable standards are being achieved year on year and there is a consistency of delivery and assessment across centres. Quality reviewers will identify samples of learners' work that they want to retain for standardisation purposes during quality assurance visits. Where an AIQA is in place they will identify samples of learners' work to submit to national standardisation events. Centres are required to retain records of the assessment and internal quality assurance processes to contribute to standardisation events. Where units are common to other awarding organisations' qualifications, LASER will work collaboratively to make sure standardisation requirements as set out in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition are met.

Standardisation activities also include opportunities for networking and sharing of resources, together with regular information about new or replacement units. Centres are recommended to attend these annual meetings, in addition to centre visits by Quality Reviewers.

### 6.3 Retaining Evidence

For all qualifications, centres must retain complete and accurate records for at least three years from the end of the academic year to which they relate. These records must be made available to LASER on request.

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## Appendix 1: Ofqual Level Descriptors – Levels 1, 2 & 3

Level	Summary	Knowledge and Understanding	Application and Action	Autonomy and Accountability
<b>Level 1</b>	Achievement at Level 1 reflects the ability to use relevant knowledge, skills and procedures to complete routine tasks. It includes responsibility for completing tasks and procedures subject to direction or guidance.	<p>Use knowledge of facts, procedures and ideas to complete well-defined, routine tasks.</p> <p>Be aware of information relevant to the area of study or work.</p>	<p>Complete well-defined routine tasks.</p> <p>Use relevant skills and procedures. Select and use relevant information.</p> <p>Identify whether actions have been effective.</p>	Take responsibility for completing tasks and procedures subject to direction or guidance as needed.
<b>Level 2</b>	Achievement at Level 2 reflects the ability to select and use relevant knowledge, ideas, skills and procedures to complete well-defined tasks and address straightforward problems. It includes taking responsibility for completing tasks and procedures and exercising autonomy and judgement subject to overall direction or guidance.	<p>Use understanding of facts, procedures and ideas to complete well-defined tasks and address straightforward problems.</p> <p>Interpret relevant information and ideas.</p> <p>Be aware of the types of information that are relevant to the area of study or work.</p>	<p>Complete well-defined, generally routine tasks and address straightforward problems.</p> <p>Select and use relevant skills and procedures.</p> <p>Identify, gather and use relevant information to inform actions.</p> <p>Identify how effective these actions have been.</p>	<p>Take responsibility for completing tasks and procedures.</p> <p>Exercise autonomy and judgement subject to overall direction or guidance.</p>
<b>Level 3</b>	Achievement at Level 3 reflects the ability to identify and use relevant understanding, methods and skills to complete tasks and address problems that, while well defined, have a measure of complexity. It includes taking responsibility for initiating and completing tasks and procedures as well as exercising autonomy and judgement within limited parameters. It also reflects awareness of different perspectives or approaches within an area of study or work.	<p>Use factual, procedural and theoretical understanding to complete tasks and address problems that, while well defined, may be complex and non-routine.</p> <p>Interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas.</p> <p>Be aware of the nature of the area of study or work.</p>	<p>Have awareness of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.</p> <p>Address problems that, while well defined, may be complex and non-routine.</p> <p>Identify, select and use appropriate skills, methods and procedures.</p> <p>Use appropriate investigation to inform actions. Review how effective these methods and actions have been.</p>	<p>Take responsibility for initiating and completing tasks and procedures, including, where relevant, responsibility for supervising or guiding others.</p> <p>Exercise autonomy and judgement within limited parameters.</p>

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## Appendix 2: Qualification Summary for LASER's Forest School Qualifications (QCF)

Ofqual Qualification Numbers:	
601/2023/X	LASER Level 1 Award in Introduction to Forest School Principles (QCF)
601/2125/7	LASER Level 2 Award in Forest School Programme Support (QCF)
601/2126/9	LASER Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership (QCF)
<p>Laser Learning Awards is a credit-based awarding organisation, regulated by Ofqual: the regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland.</p>	
<b>Purpose and aim of qualifications</b>	<p>The Level 1 Award is intended to familiarise the learner with the Forest School way, and is suitable for a wide range of people, such as young people, offender learners, youth workers, teaching assistants, teachers and anyone else with an interest in teaching and learning in the outdoors;</p> <p>The Level 2 Award is for anyone 16+ seeking to be an assistant Forest School leader and/or to train to become a Forest School Leader in the future, such as youth workers, teaching assistants and teachers;</p> <p>The Level 3 Certificate is a continuing professional development (CPD) qualification, designed for those currently training as a Forest School Leader, such as youth workers, teaching assistants, teachers and other professionals.</p>
<b>Entry requirements</b>	<p>There are no specific entry requirements, aside from age restrictions, but please note that the Forest School Association recommend a minimum age of 18 for Forest School Assistants and a minimum age of 19 for Forest School Leaders.</p>
<b>Rules of combination</b>	<p><b>LASER Level 1 Award in Introduction to Forest School Principles (QCF)</b>  <b>Qualification Number: 601/2023/X</b>                      To achieve the LASER Level 1 Award in Introduction to Forest School Principles (QCF) the learner must achieve the 3 credit single mandatory unit.</p> <p><b>LASER Level 2 Award in Forest School Programme Support (QCF)</b>  <b>Qualification Number: 601/2125/7</b>                      To achieve the LASER Level 2 Award in Forest School Programme Support (QCF) the learner must achieve both of the 3 credit mandatory units, totalling 6 credits.</p> <p><b>LASER Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership (QCF)</b>  <b>Qualification Number: 601/2126/9</b>                      To achieve the LASER Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership (QCF) the learner must achieve all 5 mandatory units, totalling 18 credits.</p>
<b>Units</b>	<p>Please follow the link to the <a href="#">unit lists</a> and click on the unit titles.</p>
<b>Assessment</b>	<p>The qualifications are achieved by providing evidence covering the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of each unit. Details of assessment methods are contained within each unit. There is no external assessment: evidence is assessed and internally verified by the provider, and verified externally by LASER.</p>
<b>Price 13-14</b>	<p>For LASER's price list, please click <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<b>Dates</b>	<p>Operational Start Date: 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2014                      Qualifications Review Date: 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017</p>
<b>To deliver</b>	<p>Providers must be recognised by LASER. <a href="#">Click here</a> to find details of Recognition procedures. Recognised Centres should contact their Business Development Manager/Advisor to discuss delivery. <a href="#">Click here</a> to find contact details.</p>

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## Appendix 3: Unit Lists

### LASER Level 1 Award in Introduction to Forest School Principles (QCF) Qualification Number: 601/2023/X

**Rules of Combination:**

To achieve the LASER Level 1 Award in Introduction to Forest School Principles (QCF) the learner must achieve the 3 credit single mandatory unit.

Ofqual Unit Code	LASER Unit Code	Unit Title	Unit Description	Unit Credit Value	Unit Level
J/504/7405	WJB534	<a href="#">Introduction To Forest School Principles</a>	Mandatory Unit	3	Level 1

### LASER Level 2 Award in Forest School Programme Support (QCF) Qualification Number: 601/2125/7

**Rules of Combination:**

To achieve the LASER Level 2 Award in Forest School Programme Support (QCF) the learner must achieve both of the 3 credit mandatory units.

Ofqual Unit Code	LASER Unit Code	Unit Title	Unit Description	Unit Credit Value	Unit Level
Y/504/7408	WJB538	<a href="#">Skills For The Forest School Programme Assistant</a>	Mandatory Unit	3	Level 2
D/504/7409	WJB539	<a href="#">Supporting Learning And Development At A Forest School Programme</a>	Mandatory Unit	3	Level 2

### LASER Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership (QCF) Qualification Number: 601/2126/9

**Rules of Combination:**

To achieve the LASER Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Programme Leadership (QCF) the learner must achieve all 5 mandatory units.

Ofqual Unit Code	LASER Unit Code	Unit Title	Unit Description	Unit Credit Value	Unit Level
H/504/7413	WJB532	<a href="#">Delivery Of A Forest School Programme</a>	Mandatory Unit	3	Level 3
A/504/7417	WJB533	<a href="#">Forest School Programmes And The Woodland Environment</a>	Mandatory Unit	3	Level 3
K/504/7414	WJB535	<a href="#">Learning And Development At A Forest School Programme</a>	Mandatory Unit	6	Level 3
M/504/7415	WJB536	<a href="#">Planning A Forest School Programme</a>	Mandatory Unit	3	Level 3
T/504/7416	WJB537	<a href="#">Practical Skills For A Forest School Programme</a>	Mandatory Unit	3	Level 3

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