**Forest School Association (FSA)**

**Preamble: Trainer’s Quality Assurance Scheme (V7)**

**What is the Trainer’s Quality Assurance Scheme?**

* The Trainer’s Quality Assurance Scheme has been developed as a reflective process that supports trainers to develop their practice.
* This membership type is a route for those who train and assess Forest School courses to become FSA endorsed through a rigorous Quality Assurance process.
* As a Trainer Member the FSA will be endorsing that trainers are providing quality Forest School Training in line with the 6 core Forest School principles and that they are following a quality training process.
* We will use a three stage process to enable us to fully explore a trainer’s practice: 1) desktop assessment 2) interviews with trainees and 3) a panel interview with the trainer.

**Who is the scheme for?**

* The scheme is currently only open to those who both train and assess Forest School courses (this will be reviewed in due course).
* The Trainer’s Quality Assurance Scheme is open to anyone who facilitates level 1, 2 and/or 3 Forest School Training.
* This membership type applies to the individual trainer (not the organisation) and is therefore a personal and portable endorsement. The FSA have a separate membership scheme suitable for Schools and Organisations who provide Forest School experiences to clients.
* Recently qualified trainers can register for this scheme (i.e. go through Stage 1 and get on the ‘FSA Registered Forest School Trainer’ map/database) before they have trained any trainees. Applicants will need to have trained and assessed at least one cohort in order to pass through Stages 2 and 3 though.

**What are the benefits of the scheme?**

* Trainers in receipt of the FSA endorsement will be able to publically demonstrate that they meet a variety of standards associated with providing quality training experiences in line with the 6 core Forest School principles.
* A personal and portable endorsement of a person’s quality training provision (because it applies to an individual not an organisation).
* A personalised e-badge and a certificate to display to publicise this endorsement.
* Presence on the public map and database of FSA Registered (after Stage 1) and Endorsed (after Stage 3) Forest School Trainers for those seeking prospective trainers.
* Access to FSA branded materials such as clothes and badges.
* Voting rights within the FSA.
* Access to good practice and annual training for Forest School Trainers.

**What costs are involved?**

* Due to the rigour of the scheme there is significant FSA staff and assessor time involved in the endorsement process. There is therefore a cost to trainers to undertake the endorsement, which has been calculated to cover costs only. The FSA Trainer’s Quality Assurance Scheme will not be generating surplus income for the FSA.
* The Quality Assurance Scheme has 2 associated costs 1) a one-off charge relating to the Quality Assurance process itself and 2) an annual charge for membership as a trainer. There are also optional marketing add-ons trainers can choose to subscribe to.
* The one-off charge for taking trainers through the Quality Assurance Scheme is £400 in total. This payment will be spilt into two invoices of £200; one issued upon submission of their Stage 1 application and the other upon endorsement at the end of Stage 3.
* The annual charge relating to membership for a trainer will be £150. This annual charge will be invoiced as soon as trainers start receiving membership benefits (i.e. when trainers get added to the ‘FSA Registered Forest School Trainer’ online map and database at the end of Stage 1) and annually thereafter.
* The optional marketing add-ons trainers can choose to opt into include:
	+ Offering their trainees an FSA Trainee Membership discount code (50% discount). This will cost £10 per student.
	+ Marketing any Level 1, 2 or 3 courses on the FSA website and FSA Facebook and Twitter accounts. This will cost £30 per course.
	+ Purchasing from a selection of ethical ‘FSA Endorsed Forest School Trainer’ branded clothing such as fleeces and T-Shirts. Prices start from £19 and upon Endorsement at the end of Stage 3 trainers are provided with the details needed to order these.

**What do each of the Stages involve?**

* **Stage 1 desktop assessment** - our verifier undertakes a desktop assessment of basic information relating to the trainer, their course/s and their organisation provided via an application form and a series of documents they share with us. The required standard to become a Stage 1 FSA Registered Forest School Trainer is set out in the guidance accompanying each section on the application form. As a guide, we estimate that the completion of Stage 1 application form and the gathering of supporting documents can take between 0.5 and 2 days, depending on how many policies require revision. If all of the criteria are met, applicants will become a Stage 1 FSA Registered Forest School Trainer. Trainers may remain at this stage for a maximum of 2 years. If a trainer is not ready to move on to Stage 2 after 24 months their membership will be cancelled and if they wish to apply for endorsement again they will have to begin Stage 1 again (and be liable for the associated cost). Upon fulfilling our requirements, trainers will be added to our publically searchable ‘FSA Registered Forest School Trainer’ online map and database and issued with an e-badge.
* **Stage 2 interviews with trainees** - our assessors explore the outcomes of training by conducting video interviews with up to 5 recent trainees (trained in the last 2 years). If, through our conversations with trainees, trainers demonstrate sound Forest School Training outcomes they can become a Stage 2 FSA Registered Forest School Trainer. If we still have queries about a trainer’s practice after Stage 2 we can link them with a mentor who can work with them to develop practice in any of our areas of concern. Having successfully come through Stage 2 a trainer will be eligible to remain on our publically searchable ‘FSA Registered Forest School Trainer’ online map and database.
* **Stage 3 interview** - together with a small panel, trainers will participate in a Skype interviewwhere we explore skills and attitudes. Dependent upon the outcome of this interview applicants become a Stage 3 FSA Endorsed Forest School Trainer. If we still have queries about practice after Stage 3 we can link trainers with a mentor (a trainer already in receipt of the FSA endorsement) who can work with them to develop practice in any of our areas of concern. When trainers have completed Stage 3 of the Trainer’s Quality Assurance Scheme they will receive a new, prominent pin on our publically searchable ‘FSA Endorsed Forest School Trainer’ online map and database which enables potential clients to identify a reputable trainer. In addition, trainers will receive an FSA T-Shirt with the words ‘FSA Endorsed Forest School Trainer’, a pin badge stating the same and a new membership card. At this point trainers will also be eligible to opt in to additional paid-for benefits to market your services further through the FSA’s website and social media sites.

**What are my responsibilities after endorsement?**

* In order to remain an FSA Endorsed Forest School Trainer, the FSA will request that trainers complete an annual declaration which asks questions about CPD, course content and changes in practice. Wherever a criteria is no longer met trainers will need to declare this. If some criteria are highlighted as no longer met we will work with trainers to support them in reaching the standard again so that they are able to remain an FSA Endorsed Forest School Trainer.
* All FSA Endorsed Forest School Trainers will be required to attend a biennial Train the Trainers event (once every 2 years) arranged by the FSA. The cost of this event will be heavily subsidised but a nominal fee to trainers may be applied.
* There is an expectation that once trainers reach the standard to become FSA Endorsed they share practice among the network. Practice can be shared through videos, written case-studies or facilitation of sessions at biennial trainer’s events. The FSA will request submission of good practice via our annual declaration.

**Is there any support to help me through this process?**

* An FSA Development Officer (currently Nell Seal) will be available for phone or Skype discussions as trainers work through the three stages of the scheme: Email: salixeducation@gmail.com Skype: nellseal
* The FSA can also signpost to an experienced mentor to support trainers through Stages 2 and 3 if desired. The trainer may be liable for a charge relating to this mentoring and this will be agreed directly with the mentor.
* NB Once an applicant becomes an FSA Endorsed Forest School Trainer they may opt to become a mentor or an assessor, should any vacancies for these roles become available. If trainers do decide to become a mentor or assessor, they will be recompensed for any work they undertake.