

FAQs

Royal Air Force Reserves

How do I apply?

Step one: Visit raf.mod.uk/rafreserves to find out about [squadrons and roles](#) and to apply. If you would prefer to speak to someone, call the careers information line on **0845 606 9069**.

Step two: Attend a squadron information day. You may be asked to sit the airmen's selection test.

Step three: Attend a selection interview.

Step four: Take a medical and fitness test.

Step five: Attend an offer of service interview with the squadron's Commanding Officer.

Step six: You are now a member of the Royal Air Force (RAF) Reserves.

Find out more about the [application process](#).

What skills will I gain from my training?

Through your military training you can gain:

- career related qualifications
- courses accredited up to Masters level
- leadership and other skills

Qualifications are available through:

- [Chartered Management Institute](#)
- [Institute of Leadership & Management](#)
- [City and Guilds](#)

See a list of all [qualifications](#) by service.

How do I choose my squadron?

There are 21 [RAF Reserves squadrons](#) located at bases across the UK. Each one offers a specialist role. Take a look and see which one suits you most.

Will it affect my day job?

You will need to balance your training commitment with your day job. You'll be expected to train with your unit for a minimum number of days each year and will also need time off if you are [mobilised](#).

Although there's no legal requirement for your employer to allow you extra time off for training, many are happy to do so.

Your employer may be able to claim financial assistance to cover certain costs of replacing you whilst you're mobilised. [Find out more](#) from SaBRE (Supporting Britain's Reservists and Employers).

Am I eligible to join?

The criteria and age limit for joining the RAF Reserves varies depending on the service and role you are applying for. Here is an overview but please check the full criteria for details.

- aged 18-50 or 56 if you have previous military experience
- UK or Commonwealth citizen and lived in the UK for the past five years
- be [medically fit](#)

See the full [eligibility criteria](#).

Are there opportunities for progression?

Most people enter the Reserves as an aircraftman. From here you can work your way up to non-commissioned officer level.

If you have specialist professional qualifications you may be able to apply for an RAF Reservist Officer commission.

How fit do I need to be?

You don't need to be a world-class athlete but you will need a good level of basic fitness. Start to get fit as soon as you can before you start basic training.

You can find [fitness tips and training programmes](#) to help you prepare online.

Will I be called up for active duty?

All Reservists may be called up for short periods of active duty (mobilised). If you are called up, your employer will be entitled to financial assistance from the RAF to cover costs whilst you are mobilised.

How long do I need to sign up for?

Usually, you sign up to the RAF Reserves for five years, but shorter periods may be approved in special circumstances.

Will I get paid?

You'll get paid whilst you're training. Once you join, you'll be paid a daily rate for the days you work which is determined by your rank, the trade and branch you belong to and your level of experience.

You'll also receive a tax-free lump sum or bounty when you complete your minimum training including passing basic military tests.

If you are called up for duty, you will qualify for extra pay and allowances. The rates of pay are dependent on rank and are similar to those of the regular RAF.

Find out more about [pay and allowances](#).

Is there a role for me?

Whatever your day job, you can become a Reservist. Some roles, such as medical support, call on specific skills and are suitable for people who already have specialist professional training. For other [roles](#), you won't need any previous training.

Roles you can take on include engineer, media, support, chef, logistics, driver and RAF Police.

Members of the RAF Reserves can perform a variety of functions such as:

- engineering and technical
- medical
- administration
- logistics
- combat
- trade

Take a look at the [roles available by postcode](#).

How much training will I do?

You'll need to do a minimum of 27 days a year which includes a two-week block and at least six weekends. Find out more about the [training online](#).

Officer training

You must pass a series of selection tests over three days at the RAF College Cranwell in Lincolnshire.

If you're successful the next step is basic recruit training with your squadron followed by a Reserve Officer initial training course in Cranwell. This course is a six-month distance learning course made up of four weekends and a two-week block.

Airman training

Initial airman training begins on the squadron and ends in 15 days' continuous training at RAF Halton in Buckinghamshire.

It covers an introduction to life in the RAF Reserves, service knowledge, drill, field training and team building. You'll need to pass this training before you can move to specialised training for your role. This will take place at your own squadron.

Ongoing training

Training typically involves:

- one weekend per month
- an annual training camp lasting 15 days (usually with six months' notice)

Are there opportunities to travel?

Whatever you do, you will serve overseas at some point. You'll also get the chance to experience adventurous training such as skiing, sailing, climbing, canoeing, white water rafting or trekking. There are expeditions to Cyprus, Norway and Germany as part of the winter adventurous training programme. Plus, you could get the opportunity to train overseas as part of your annual 15-day training camp.

Find out more about travelling with the RAF.

Links

Royal Air Force Reserves [career guide](#)

[Royal Air Force Reserve website](#)