**Armed forces officer**

Armed forces officers are the managers of the military world. They lead others in defending their country and supporting international peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts around the globe.

In the UK, officers are employed by the Ministry of Defence and serve in the Army, Royal Air Force (RAF) or Royal Navy. Responsibilities vary widely across the various roles within each branch.

**Typical duties include:**

* planning manoeuvres, assigning duties and communicating effectively with other staff.
* commanding, training and leading others.
* monitoring the welfare and progress of new recruits.
* operating and maintaining warfare systems, equipment and vehicles.
* taking on specialist duties and skills such as engineering, air traffic control, training and administration.
* providing specialist skills, such as medical care, engineering expertise or musical ability.
* producing briefings, reports and presentations.
* Organising the distribution of equipment, resources and manpower.

Armed forces officers may work irregular hours and may have to spend long periods of time away from – and having infrequent contact with – their families. Travel is a major part of the role: officers can be posted at locations around the globe and can experience a wide range of countries and cultures. The choice to work within the armed forces is as much a lifestyle choice as a career move. It is highly demanding, requiring dedication and a consistently high level of mental and physical fitness. Officers face dangerous and sometimes life-threatening situations under immense pressure because they shoulder heavy responsibility not just for their own lives but those of their subordinates as well.

**Graduate salaries**

According to the **Army**, salaries for officer cadets at Sandhurst are around £28,000. Your salary will increase as you progress through the ranks; for example, as a 2nd lieutenant your salary will be around £34,000. The **Navy**reports that officers training at Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth earn around £28,000 initially and £32,000 on completion of their training. As with the Army, your salary will increase as you rise through the ranks. Salaries for those undertaking the **RAF’s**initial officer training at RAF Cranwell are around £28,000. On completion of training, your salary will rise to around £34,000. Armed forces officers have access to subsidised housing along with other benefits such as free financial advice, training and education, and generous holiday allowances.

**Typical employers of armed forces officers**

* British Army, Royal Airforce or Royal Navy

All forces work in the service of the government and in association with global bodies such as the United Nations for peacekeeping and humanitarian causes.

**Qualifications and training required**

There are routes into becoming an armed forces officer for both graduates and school leavers. School leavers need 72 UCAS points across three subjects at A level (or equivalent). You don’t need a degree to become an officer.

If you’re a graduate, you can enrol as an officer with a degree in any subject. Science, engineering and technology graduates are often particularly welcome because of the specialist knowledge they can bring to technological roles throughout the forces. However, recruiters tend to place more importance on your leadership capabilities and suitability to a life in service than on your degree subject. Pre-entry experience and postgraduate qualifications can be beneficial but aren't essential. Time spent in school or university cadet corps can help your application but doesn't guarantee you a place. Competition for places can be fierce. You'll need to take part in several days of interviews and tests designed to assess you both physically and mentally. You will be tested on your ability to think calmly and logically under pressure and must have strong vision and colour perception. You'll also have a medical assessment as part of the recruitment process. Cadets train for a long time at their barracks before they become officers. For example, training for the army can last 40 weeks.

**Key skills for armed forces officers**

* The ability to work calmly in high-pressure situations and excellent leadership and teamwork skills.
* The ability to [communicate concisely and clearly](https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/skills-for-getting-a-job/what-are-communication-skills-and-how-do-i-improve-them) to subordinates and superiors alike, both orally and in written work.
* A high level of physical fitness and determination and self-motivation
* A demonstrable commitment to the forces and have excellent self-discipline.

**Nurse/Doctor**

Nurses and Doctors work as part of a team of professional and medical staff that includes doctors, social workers and therapists. Much of your time is spent with patients, monitoring them, planning and delivering care, and advising them on their health. Shift work is common in nursing, as is a busy workload.

**Typical duties include:**

* Assessing patients and gaining their trust.
* Planning and delivering patients’ care.
* Monitoring patients’ progress.
* Taking samples, pulses, temperatures and blood pressures.
* Monitoring and administering medication.
* Writing records.
* Supervising junior staff.
* Organising workloads.
* Providing emotional support to patients and relatives.
* Tutoring student nurses.
* Advising patients and relatives on health-related issues.

You‘re likely to work shifts of up to 12 hours. However, in the NHS, if you work unsocial hours (weekends, weekdays 8.00 pm–6.00 am, and public holidays) you’ll be paid extra for these.

**Graduate nurse salaries**

Newly qualified nurses in the NHS in England earn around £25,000, according to nurses.co.uk. If you live in an area with a high cost of living (such as London), you’re eligible for a supplementary payment to cover the extra costs.

Nurses at the same level in Scotland earn slightly more than those in England thanks to separate pay agreements.

**Typical employers of nurses**

* Nursing agencies.
* Health centres.
* Schools.
* Companies.
* GP practices.
* Hospitals (NHS and private).
* NHS trusts
* Residential homes.
* Hospices.
* Prisons.

**Qualifications and training required to become a nurse/doctor**

The main route into qualifying as a nurse or to be a doctor is to take a degree in one of the four nursing specialisms: adult nursing, children's nursing, learning disability nursing or mental health nursing or to be a doctor you must study medicine. Some degree courses cover two of these fields and are known as 'dual field' degrees.

Most nursing degree courses are three years long, with the exception of dual field degrees and nursing degrees in Scotland. Nursing degree courses provide a mix of formal teaching and practical experience gained via placements. Medicine degrees are 5 to 6 years

You apply for full-time undergraduate nursing/medicine degrees through UCAS. Application criteria vary but you’re likely to need at least three A levels or equivalent qualifications. One of these should be in science subject. You’ll also need GCSEs of at least a 4/C grade (or equivalent) in maths, English and a science.

All nurses and working in the UK must be registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), Doctors must be registered with the General Medical Council and revalidate their registration every three years. To do this, you need to complete at least 35 hours of continuing professional development and 450 hours’ registered practice over three years.

**Key skills for nurses**

* Excellent people skills, including the ability to listen and have Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
* The ability to use initiative and solve problems.
* The ability to deal with emotionally charged and pressured situations.
* IT skills and the ability to keep patient record up to date with attention to detail.

**Retail**

Retail merchandisers are responsible for ensuring that the right amount of goods are available and are being sold at the right price. As such, merchandisers assess the needs of individual stores and how they might differ based on factors such as store size and their target demographics.

The decisions made by a merchandiser are crucial to the success of the business; if they make a poor choice, there could be financial and logistical implications. If the merchandising team were to give a smaller store the same amount of stock as a larger store then they may run the risk of not being able to sell it all. This could mean having to pay for the stock to be stored in warehouses. Or it could mean having to sell off the stock at a reduced price in order to get rid of it. Alternatively, if the merchandiser underestimated the amount of stock the larger store would get through it could cause a demand problem. Customers might not be able to get the product they want and so may turn to a different retailer.

And the same considerations extend to online retailing, where they also have to consider the number of returns.

**Typical responsibilities of merchandiser jobs include:**

* working closely with [buyers](https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/job-descriptions/retail-buyer-job-description) and other merchandisers to plan product ranges
* meeting with suppliers, distributors and analysts
* managing budgets
* analysing data and trends to predict sales and profits and to assess the sales performance of different ranges
* negotiating quantities and delivery timescales
* managing levels and distribution of stock
* handling supply/production problems as they arise
* setting stock promotions/price reductions as appropriate.

**What is the difference between merchandisers and buyers?**

Buyers choose *which* products the retailer should sell and merchandisers decide *how much* of each product to buy and where the stock should be allocated. In order to make these decisions, merchandisers need to work with buyers to identify customer trends. They also constantly review sales history together and monitor how well different products are performing.

Sometimes the job of a merchandiser and the job of a buyer are combined: you may well see advertisements for a trainee buyer/merchandiser, for example. The salary of a graduate trainee merchandiser is typically somewhere between £21,000 and £37,000, depending on the employer and the location. Our guide to [the highest paying graduate jobs](https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/career-ideas/what-are-best-paying-jobs-graduates) has more information on retail salaries.

**Qualifications and training required**

There are routes into a retail merchandising career for both university graduates and school leavers, although there are generally fewer opportunities available for school leavers.

Postgraduate courses in merchandising are available and can help you develop your knowledge of this area. However, it is worth checking with individual employers to find out their thoughts on postgraduate courses; major retailers don't typically have roles specifically for postgraduates.

Work experience in retail will be hugely beneficial when applying for merchandising jobs. There are some merchandising placements available that could help you get ahead, although any experience of working in a retail environment will give you valuable insights into aspects that a merchandiser needs to consider.

Key skills for merchandisers

* A love of retail and good commercial awareness
* Excellent data analysis skills and confidence working with numbers
* Presentation skills and the ability to explain data clearly
* The ability to use database and spreadsheet software
* Strong decision-making skills
* The ability to identify and offer effective solutions to problems
* Good communication and teamwork skills.

**Finance/Banking/Accountancy**

Facilitating and improving the financial practices and procedures within a company or organisation. Ensuring an employer's adherence to financial regulations and legislation.

**Finance Job Duties:**

* Implement and adhere to the company's or organisation's financial procedures and policies
* Create efficient and effective methods for tracking financial data
* Use spreadsheets and sophisticated calculation software to gather and record financial information
* Coordinate and execute financial transactions and activities, such as bill payment, invoicing, payroll, etc.
* Assist in the audit process by providing information and data as requested
* Complete administrative tasks, such as filling out paperwork and filing records
* Create organised records and files to assist in tax preparation
* Analyse financial information for trends and errors
* Find solutions to discrepancies by working with other employees and correcting any erroneous information or calculations
* Prepare regular financial reports and assist in the presentation of reports to managers and executives
* Create and adhere to budgets for specific departments, projects, and business needs
* Answer questions from co-workers, clients, customers, or stakeholders regarding financial information or issues.

**Finance Skills and Qualifications:**

Bachelor's degree in accounting, business, economics, finance, or a related field; any licenses or certifications required by the employer, such as a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) certification; experience in a business or finance environment; superior mathematical skills; honesty; integrity; reliability; excellent communication skills, both written and verbal; exceptional attention to detail; organisation and planning skills; critical thinking and problem-solving skills; research skills; analytical skills; listening skills; interpersonal skills; computer skills, particularly with accounting software and data entry; understanding of data privacy standards.

**Salary range**

Dependent on qualifications and experience £19,500 - £40,000+

**Personal Attributes**

The individual must maintain strict confidentiality in all aspects of performing the duties of the Finance Officer role to include absolute discretion concerning information shared with peers and colleagues. The Finance Officer must be able to demonstrate the following attributes:

• Be honest and trustworthy

• Be respectful at all times

• Be able to communicate well at all levels.

**Property Development/Estate agent**

Estate agents manage property sales and lettings, which can include land as well as residential and commercial premises. The role involves elements of marketing, sales and administration.

Typical duties include:

* liaising with clients to market properties so that they achieve their maximum price.
* handling enquiries about properties from potential buyers.
* valuing properties.
* surveying properties (if qualified).
* producing online listings, brochures, videos and other promotional information.
* travelling to properties and conducting viewings.
* negotiating the sale and letting of properties.
* carrying out administration to ensure that sales and lettings are completed legally.

Estate agents’ working hours are typically from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm. Depending on the employer, you may be required to work weekends.

You can specialise within a particular property market, such as commercial, residential or rural, as well as within sales or lettings.

**Graduate salaries**

According to property industry online news service *property reporter*, starting salaries for estate agents tend to be around £20,000. However, many agents earn commission as well as a salary. This can increase earnings considerably, depending on the condition of the housing market.

**Typical employers of estate agents**

Estate agents are typically employed by large property firms and local estate agencies, including small independent agencies or local branches of larger firms.

**Qualifications and training required**

You don’t need a degree to become an estate agent. However, if you are interested in working as a surveyor for a large firm, you’re likely to be expected to progress towards becoming a chartered surveyor alongside your work. The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors' (RICS) chartership qualification process is called the Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) – this will enable you to carry out full surveys and valuations of properties.

There are no formal entry requirements for estate agents in local or independent agencies, and both school leavers and graduates can apply for trainee estate agent/junior estate agent/sales negotiator roles.

Some experience of customer service work and an interest in the local property market will be an advantage, as will any studies in relevant subjects such as business, building surveying, real estate or planning and property development.

Once you’re working, you can work towards professional property qualifications. Your employer may expect you to complete these as part of your employment.

**Key skills for estate agents**

To be an estate agent, you’ll need:

* Negotiation and sales skills.
* Good [communication skills](https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/skills-for-getting-a-job/what-are-communication-skills-and-how-do-i-improve-them) and the ability to maintain positive relationships with clients and colleagues.
* Strong [organisation skills](https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/skills-for-getting-a-job/time-management-prioritisation-and-organisation-being-ahead-game), as you may be dealing with more than one property at a time.
* Willingness to take on responsibility, as estate agents will likely be afforded a great deal of responsibility early on.
* Willingness to travel and spend time out of the office; a full driving licence is typically required.
* Understanding of, and interest in, the local property market and the process of buying and selling property.

**Barrister**

Barristers are legal professionals who provide advocacy and legal advice to solicitors and other clients. Solicitors are the first port of call for members of the public who need legal advice, but if a solicitor’s client needs to appear in court, they will be referred to a barrister who will represent them there.

**Typical duties include:**

* providing expert legal advice to solicitors and their clients.
* researching and preparing cases.
* drafting legal documents.
* representing clients and cross-examining witnesses in court.
* liaising with solicitors and other legal professionals.
* negotiating settlements between the client and other parties.
* personal organisation, such as travelling to court and managing expenses.
* Long hours (which can include travel), heavy workloads and tight deadlines are very common.

**Graduate salaries**

Once you’ve completed training, your first role as a barrister will be as a pupil, for which you’ll receive a pupillage award. The Bar Standards Board (BSB) sets a minimum for these that’s around £20,000 for pupillages in London and around £18,000 for those outside. The BSB increases the minimum pupillage award every January

Beyond pupillage, barristers tend to be self-employed and their earnings differ widely depending on the area of law in which they specialise.

**Typical employers of barristers**

**Chambers**: while barristers are technically self-employed, they work within sets of other barristers known as chambers. Chambers tend to specialise in particular areas of law.

**A range of employers and organisations**: there are in-house roles available in a variety of organisations, including governmental organisations, industry, the armed forces and the Crown Prosecution Service.

**Qualifications and training required**

You can only become a barrister if you have a degree, either in a law or non-law subject. This degree will almost always need to be at least a 2.1. If your degree is in a subject other than law, you’ll need to complete a law conversion course known as the graduate diploma in law (GDL). This takes one year to complete full time.

Both law and non-law graduates will need to take the one-year Bar course (formerly known as the Bar professional training course or BPTC). The Bar course is an academically intense, skills-based course that prepares you for pupillage and lays the foundations for future practice. You’ll have to join one of the four Inns of Court to do your course. On completion, having passed twelve qualifying sessions, you will be 'called to the Bar'.

The Inns of Court provide a lot of support for aspiring barristers.

The final stage in becoming a fully-fledged barrister is the completion of a pupillage. This consists of two six-month periods spent in chambers under the supervision of one or more ‘pupil supervisors’. During the first six months you’ll shadow and assist your supervisors; during the second six you will have the chance to take on cases by yourself. It’s possible either to spend all twelve months at the same chambers or to complete the two six-month periods in different chambers. Once you’ve completed a pupillage you will need to find a permanent base from which to practise, known as a tenancy. You may be offered tenancy in the chambers in which you did the pupillage. However, this isn’t always possible so be prepared to look and apply elsewhere. Work experience in the form of mini-pupillages will considerably increase your chances of gaining a pupillage.

**Key skills for barristers**

* The ability to apply legal theory to practice in court with strong presentation and advocacy skills.
* The ability to present a point of view convincingly and to absorb, understand and analyse large amounts of information. With quick-wittedness, self-awareness and excellent persuasion skills.
* Strong interest in how the law works and a willingness to stay abreast of current affairs in the profession.
* Self-motivation and dedication to the legal process.
* The ability to handle pressure, long hours and tight deadlines.

**Solicitor**

Once qualified, solicitors often specialise in one legal area such as family law, litigation, property or tax. Solicitors working in commercial law firms advise large corporate clients on transactions or cases. They might draft the contracts for the construction of a new shopping centre or advise on the merger of one FTSE 100 company with another.

High street solicitors advise smaller companies and individuals on legal matters such as writing wills, property conveyancing, custody cases and divorce settlements.

Typical duties include:

* giving legal advice
* researching cases and legislation
* drafting legal documents
* liaising with clients and other professionals such as barristers.

Some solicitors can represent their clients in court.

Working hours in law can be long: if a deadline is approaching you will be expected to work late – potentially through the night at a commercial London firm.

**Graduate salaries**

Salaries for trainee solicitors can range from £22,000 to £50,000 depending on location and the nature of firms’ work. Some large commercial firms in London, for example, offer salaries of £50,000 to trainees in their first year; high street firms outside the capital are more likely to offer around £25,000. Solicitors’ salaries in Scotland tend to be lower.

Alongside your salary, you may be offered other benefits such as gym membership and private health insurance.

Once you’re qualified, your earnings will increase. A newly qualified solicitor in London could earn over £100,000.

**Typical employers of solicitors**

* Private practice law firms.
* Legal departments within large organisations (known as 'in-house' solicitors).
* the Crown Prosecution Service or CPS.
* The Government Legal Department (GLD).
* Local authorities.

**Primary School Teacher**

Primary school teachers usually teach the broad range of subjects included in the national curriculum, with particular emphasis on the core subjects of literacy, numeracy and science. Some specialise in a particular subject such as maths, languages or science.

Primary school teaching is a rewarding career with a range of opportunities to progress (such as becoming a head of year) and develop specialisms (such as taking on the role of special educational needs coordinator). It’s not always an easy job – hours can be long as there’s usually preparation to be done before and after school hours during term-time. However, you’ll be allocated time for your planning during the day, and you may well be supported by teaching assistants in the classroom. In your first two years, you’ll also have specialist support, including a mentor, to help you settle into your career.

**Typical responsibilities include:**

* lesson planning and preparation
* creating learning resources
* checking pupils' work and providing feedback
* attending parents' evenings
* preparing for inspections
* running extracurricular activities
* undertaking professional development.

Your starting salary is likely to be £25,000 to £32,000. There’s a salary scale for teachers in state-controlled schools that’s negotiated between unions and employers. You’ll start at the bottom of the scale and work your way up as you gain experience.

Typical employers of primary school teachers

* State-maintained and voluntary-controlled (such as religious-aided) schools
* Private schools.
* Pupil referral units.

**Qualifications and training required**

You’ll need a degree along with qualified teacher status if you want to teach in state-maintained primary schools. There are several different graduate [teacher training routes](https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/teaching-and-education/overview-your-postgraduate-teacher-training) available in England. These include the PGCE (postgraduate or professional graduate certificate in education), school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT), employment-based School Direct training programmes and Teach First.

Alongside your degree, you will need fives GSCEs or equivalent at grades 9 to 4 (A\* to C) in English, maths and science, and you’ll also have to pass an enhanced disclosure and barring service check.

Teacher training routes can vary in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

* [Training to teach in Scotland](https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/teaching-and-education/training-teach-scotland)
* [Training to teach in Wales](https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/teaching-and-education/training-teach-wales)
* [Teacher training in Northern Ireland](https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/teaching-and-education/training-teach-northern-ireland)

Most initial teacher training programmes in England and Wales use the centralised [teacher training application system](https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-teacher-training). It’s a good idea to apply early in the final year of your university studies as teaching is a popular postgraduate option and places can fill quickly. You can apply to a mixture of primary and secondary teacher training courses.

There are [bursaries](https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-teacher-training) available for graduates wanting to teach certain subjects where there’s a shortage of specialist teachers.

**Key skills for primary school teachers**

* Excellent communication skills.
* An understanding of how children learn.
* The ability to think on your feet.
* Leadership skills.
* IT skills.

**Secondary School Teacher**

Secondary school teachers specialise in teaching a particular subject. Aside from working with teachers and students, you’re likely to come into contact with parents and carers as well as educational professionals such as psychologists and social workers.

**Typical responsibilities include:**

* lesson planning and preparation, including creating and selecting learning materials
* direct contact time with pupils
* checking and assessing work
* attending staff meetings
* liaising with parents/carers and support professionals such as social workers
* supervising extracurricular activities
* keeping up your own ongoing professional development.

As a secondary school teacher, you’ll focus on teaching a specific subject, which is likely to be the subject you studied at university or one related to it. This makes secondary school teaching a particularly good career choice if you’re enthusiastic about your degree subject and want to share your knowledge of it.

Find out more about what it’s like to work in [secondary education](https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/teaching-and-education/secondary-education-teaching-specialism) from our specialist guidance.

Salaries for secondary school teachers

Newly qualified teachers (also known as early career teachers) working in state schools in England earn at least £25,000. Salaries depend on your location: you can earn up to £32,000 as an early career teacher in inner London. Salaries are reviewed every year.

**Typical employers of secondary school teachers**

* State-maintained schools.
* Private schools.
* Sixth form colleges.
* Pupil referral units.
* Special schools/specialist resource bases.

**Qualifications and training required**

A degree in the subject you want to teach (or one closely related to it) is a standard requirement for anyone who wants to achieve qualified teacher status (QTS) and teach in state-maintained secondary schools. There are some degree courses that incorporate QTS, but other graduates will need to undertake postgraduate teacher training. You’ll also need GSCEs or equivalent at grade 4 (C) or above in maths and English, and to pass a disclosure and barring services check.

You may be able to take a subject knowledge enhancement (SKE) course if your degree is in an area that’s not directly relevant to the subject you wish to teach.

There are several postgraduate teacher training routes open to graduates in England who wish to train as secondary school teachers. These include the PGCE (postgraduate or professional graduate certificate in education), school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT), employment-based School Direct training programmes and Teach First. Teacher training routes can vary in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

To finance your studies, there are loans, bursaries and scholarships available to help with the costs of training as a secondary school teacher. Amounts on offer can vary depending on the subject you want to teach: the most generous are typically for those wanting to train to teach science subjects or maths.

**Key skills for secondary school teachers**

* An understanding of how young people learn.
* The ability to think on your feet.
* Excellent communication skills.
* Leadership skills.
* IT skills.