



Manage complex systems and weapons as part of the crew of a front-line RAF aircraft.

As a Royal Air Force front-line Weapons Systems Officer (WSO) you might fly the E7 Wedgetail, P-8A Poseidon, RC-135W Rivet Joint, MQ-9 Reaper and Protector RG1. The roles of our WSOs are as varied as our aircraft with the field of Intelligence, Surveillance Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) offering the most opportunities. Whatever you end up flying you will be posted to an aircraft type and role according to operational requirements and your ability. You would then specialise on that aircraft type for the initial part of your career. As a WSO in the ISTAR Force, your primary role could be to manage complex sensors and weapons during operational missions whilst gathering intelligence and supporting forces on the ground. You could also be managing a mission crew of highly capable Weapon Systems Operators (WSOps) or even be a Flight or Squadron Commander on the previously mentioned aircraft types plus also the Shadow R1 or Defender aircraft. On the P-8A Poseidon, you will track submarines and enemy ships or provide long-range search-and-rescue. On the Protector you might operate overland in support of land-based combat operations. With experience, you may become an instructor and train fellow RAF aircrew. Like most people in the RAF you will probably change roles every few years, each role is known as a tour, and move between RAF bases in the UK and overseas to carry out your operational and training role. As your career develops, you could also take on mission planning and ground-based staff duties. For your first few years you will probably spend periods of time overseas - from anything from a few days to a few months at a time. You could fly on a training exercise in allied airspace or carry out your role on operations near/over hostile territory.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Weapon Systems Officer (WSO)

Age: 17½ - 32*

*Civilian candidates must enter MIOT before their 33rd birthday.

Qualifications:

You will need a minimum of 5 GCSEs (or acceptable equivalents) at a minimum of Grade C (Grade 4 to 5 with effect from Aug 17), including English Language and Mathematics or Scottish National 5 (Grades A – C) in 5 subjects including English Language and Mathematics.

In addition, two A2 Levels / three Highers at grade C or above (excluding General Studies, Critical thinking and Citizenship Studies), which must total a minimum of 64 UCAS points.

Alternatively, if you hold a UK degree at Grade 2:2 or higher (or acceptable alternative) you only need Mathematics and English Language GCSEs at a minimum of Grade C (Grade 4 to 5 with effect from Aug 17) **or** Mathematics and English Language Scottish National 5 (Grades A-C).

Initial Officer Training

RAF officers begin their career by completing the Modular Initial Officer Training Course (MIOT) at the RAF College Cranwell in Lincolnshire. You will complete a challenging modular 24-week course, split into 4 distinct terms designed to develop your robustness, fitness, leadership and academic skills through several indoor and outdoor exercises across the UK.

Specialist Training

Your specialist training would begin with a one-week course at RAF Henlow in Bedfordshire to learn how the human body reacts to the airborne environment. You would then have a comprehensive academic package covering aircraft and mission systems as well as aviation related subjects to prepare you for basic flying training. This training over the next 9 months will be a combination of live flying, utilising the Avenger aircraft at RNAS Culdrose, and simulators to demonstrate proficiency in managing an array of aircraft systems. You would then progress to an Operational Conversion Unit for up to 6 months on the aircraft to which you have been assigned.

Foundation Tour

For your first tour you would be posted to a flying station where your specialist aircraft type is based. You would carry out an operational and training role which may include frequent overseas detachments, and which will test your training and your aircraft in what may be hostile conditions. There will be other more experienced WSOs there to whom you can turn for advice and support, but they will be relying on you as a full team member of a front-line squadron.

Your Career Prospects

You will join the RAF on an Initial Commission of 12 years and will be selected to serve on a pension earning commission of 20 years' service or to age 40, whichever is the later, on completion of your first Operational Conversion course. Promotion to the rank of Flight Lieutenant is on a time served/satisfactory service basis 2½ years after completing MIOT. Further promotion to Squadron Leader and above is by competitive selection.

Ongoing Development

As a WSO, you will have opportunities for further professional development throughout your career. As well as training to fly different aircraft, there are opportunities for structured command and staff training as your career progresses.

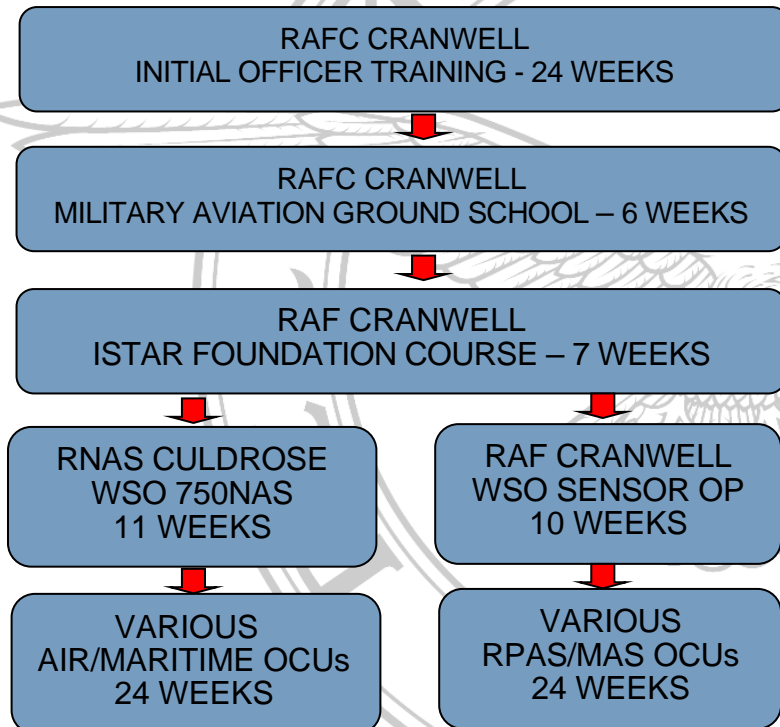
In-Service Degree

An In-Service degree for RAF WSOs on completion of their flying training is currently being implemented with a separate information sheet due soon for publication. with a separate information sheet due soon for publication.

Transferable Skills

The skills and experience you would gain throughout your career as a WSO could directly equip you for a number of civilian jobs, including: ROV Sensor Operator; project manager, aviation instructor, aerial or maritime surveyor. Some WSOs use their flying knowledge, skills and experience to train as a Commercial Pilot or re-train to become Pilots within the Royal Air Force.

TRAINING PIPELINE (COURSE LENGTH APPROXIMATE):



Residency:

Whether or not you were born in the United Kingdom, you should have resided there for the 10 years immediately preceding your application but candidates with a minimum of 7 years will be considered.

Nationality:

Must be a citizen of the United Kingdom since birth and must not hold (and must never have held) any other nationality or citizenship (including joint nationality) with the exception of dual British Irish citizens.

Pay:

For current information visit: <https://www.raf.mod.uk/recruitment/roles/roles-finder/aircrew/weapon-systems-officer>

Fitness:

As well as the RAF Fitness Test, you must pass the Aircrew Swim Test prior to starting flying training. Applicants must be able to swim.

Selection:

Initially, you must pass the aptitude tests at the Officer and Aircrew Selection Centre (OASC) at RAF College Cranwell. If you pass the aptitude tests, you will be invited to return to the OASC for the one-day selection process where we will assess your potential for training. If you are deemed competitive for selection, you will be invited back to the OASC for a final time for a specialist medical.

A Modern Force:

The RAF recognises the value of a person's ability no matter their ethnicity, social background, religion or belief, gender identity, sexual orientation or marital status/civil partnership.

University Bursary:

We could provide a bursary of up to £3000 a year during your 2nd and 3rd years of your studies plus approximately £1200 for 30 days of training, if you, gain entry to a UK university for an acceptable degree and aim to join the RAF. See the Sponsorship page on the RAF website for more detail.

To register your interest in this role online:

<https://www.raf.mod.uk/recruitment/roles/roles-finder/aircrew/weapon-systems-officer>

or

Telephone:

0345 605 5555

This information was last updated on 23 Jun 21, but may have changed since. If you have any queries, please check with RAF staff at any Armed Forces Careers Office.

Search online for other branches both Regular and Reserve
<https://www.raf.mod.uk/recruitment>



**NO
ORDINARY
JOB**