

RAF Aviator

What is it?

An RAF (Royal Air Force) aviator is a highly skilled professional who operates aircraft as a pilot within the Royal Air Force. RAF aviators are responsible for flying a variety of aircraft, including fighter jets, transport planes, and helicopters, depending on their role and specialization. They play a crucial role in national defence, humanitarian missions, and supporting military operations both in the UK and abroad.

Qualifications/Experience Required:

To become an RAF aviator in the UK, you typically need at least five GCSEs at grade 4 (C) or above, including English and Maths, and two A-levels or equivalent qualifications. Additionally, candidates must pass a series of rigorous selection tests, including medical and fitness assessments. A university degree can be beneficial but is not always required. All RAF pilots undergo extensive training at the RAF College Cranwell.

What the Work Involves:

Piloting various types of RAF aircraft, depending on your role, such as fighter jets, helicopters, or transport planes. Participating in national defence missions, including air defence, reconnaissance, and search and rescue operations. Conducting humanitarian missions, including disaster relief and medical evacuation. Working as part of a team with ground crew, air traffic controllers, and other military personnel to ensure successful mission execution. Maintaining a high level of physical fitness.

Future Prospects – Labour Market Information:

The RAF offers a structured career path with opportunities for advancement to higher ranks and leadership roles. Experienced RAF aviators may progress to positions such as squadron leader, flight instructor, or move into strategic planning and management roles within the RAF. After completing their service, many RAF aviators transition to civilian aviation careers, such as commercial airline pilots or aviation consultants.

Average annual Salary - £18,600 - £25,200

Typical weekly hours – variable

Type of person who may be suited to this job:

This job may be suited to individuals who have a strong sense of duty, excellent problem-solving skills, and the ability to remain calm under pressure. RAF aviators need to be physically fit, possess excellent hand-eye coordination, and have a strong aptitude for mathematics and technical subjects.

Money/Wage Guide:

RAF aviators receive a competitive salary, which varies depending on rank and experience. Starting salaries for newly commissioned officers (Pilot Officer) begin at around £27,000 per year. As you progress through the ranks, salaries can increase significantly, with experienced aviators earning between £45,000 and £70,000 annually.

Related Opportunities:

- Commercial Airline Pilot
- Flight Instructor
- Air Traffic Controller
- Military Aircraft Engineer

Further Information:

Royal Air Force Careers:
[RAF Recruitment | Home | Regular & Reserve | Royal Air Force \(mod.uk\)](#)
Ministry of Defence (MOD):
[MoD – Hub | Civil Service Careers \(civil-service-careers.gov.uk\)](#)