

Designed open ground

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Introduction

This note should be read alongside the guidance for Woodland Creation mapping and the eligibility details of the Woodland Creation option(s) you are applying for.

[Woodland Creation](#)

Definition of designed open ground

Designed open ground is an important feature of woodlands and is defined as designed areas left unplanted as part of good forest practice.

The purpose of designed open ground is to improve:

- woodland design
- enhance environmental / conservation value, and
- assist general woodland management

Rules on designed open ground

1. Defining designed open ground

- in order to be eligible to be considered towards the required percentage of designed open ground, each area of designed open ground claimed must be of a 'mappable' (measureable) size of 0.25 hectares or more
- subject to the above mapping requirement, designed open ground can be made up of planned internal open space within your proposed new woodland planting design. Designed open ground can potentially include any of the features in Table 1 provided they are appropriately landscape designed for that particular site

2. Maximum allowances

- grants will be paid on designed open ground up to a maximum percentage for each Woodland Creation option. The percentages you proposed to claim should be clearly shown as 'Open Ground' on the Woodland Creation Components Table
- applications may include higher percentages of designed open ground but in such cases, where this exceeds the maximum allowed under the Woodland Creation options, these excess unplanted open areas will not be included within the payable area and you should therefore indicate any excess percentage as 'Other Land' on your supporting Woodland Creation Components Table (i.e. line C)

[Woodland Creation Component Area Table guidance \(PDF, Size: 194.0 kB\)](#)

3. Unplantable land within your woodland creation area

- unplantable areas, such as those listed in Table 2, which are greater than 0.25 hectares (and are therefore 'mappable') are not eligible as designed open ground. If these areas are within the proposed woodland creation perimeter boundary, they should be classed as 'Other Land' on your woodland creation components table (i.e. line B)
- small unplantable areas less than 0.25 hectares ('unmappable') can be incorporated within the woodland creation planting area boundaries. To take account of any such areas, plant spacing within these areas needs to be adjusted (i.e. trees planted slightly closer together) to ensure average stocking densities meet the minimum specification. Other operational unplanted areas, such as drain sides, internal ATV tracks or areas adjacent to fences / roads, would also require the plant spacing adjustments to ensure that the average stocking densities of the claimed planted area meets the minimum specifications
- small unplantable areas of less than 0.25 hectares ('unmappable') can also potentially be included as a component of designed open ground where such areas are adjacent. The total area that results must be of at least 0.25 hectares in size (i.e. the total area created must meet the 'mappable' requirement)
 o example: a small rock outcrop of 0.07 hectares could be added to the adjacent 0.2 hectare area of designed open ground to create a total area of designed open ground that can now be defined as a component of your proposed woodland creation area

Additional information

You must submit the Woodland Creation Components Table with your application (and subsequently thereafter, amended as necessary, with every planting capital claim you submit).

By completing this table, you will allow us to confirm that the overall areas and percentages of tree species and of designed open ground within each individual woodland block in your application are within the permitted percentage criteria for each of your chosen Woodland Creation options.

Please refer to both the Forestry Grant Scheme [generic mapping requirements](#) and the woodland creation mapping guidance on the [Woodland Creation](#) webpage.

Table 1 – Potential areas for designed open ground

Potential areas for designed open ground
Forest/woodland rides and tracks
Archaeological sites
Deer control areas
Riparian corridors
Landscape areas
Power lines and wayleaved corridors

Table 2 – Unplantable 'Other Land'

Unplantable 'Other Land'
Existing roads
Scree
Rock outcrops
Small lochs
Extensive areas of deep peat (>50 cm deep)

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