

UK Fire Cats

Student Wildland Firefighter Organization

What are the UK Fire Cats?

The UK Fire Cats is a program in partnership with the UK Department of Forestry and Natural Resources, Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF), and the U.S. Forest Service. The purpose of the UK Fire Cats is to provide UK Forestry Majors hands-on experience with wildland firefighting.

UK Fire Cats are paid employees by the Kentucky Division of Forestry and are classified as “Emergency Firefighters.” UK Fire Cats are on-call to fight wildland fire on weekends during the fall and spring fire seasons. There are 21 slots available for UK Fire Cats.

Spring Fire Season - Feb. 15 through April 30

Fall Fire Season - Oct. 1 through Dec. 15

Eligibility

- Full-time student enrolled at Univ. of Kentucky
- Good academic standing (2.0 cumulative GPA or better)
- Successful completion (or anticipated completion prior to start of fire season) of S-130/S-190/L-180/IS-100/IS-700 Wildland Fire Training (*These trainings are usually completed during FOR 255 Forest Fire.*)

Application Process

All new applicants must email the following to Laura Lhotka (laura.lhotka@uky.edu):

1. Resume
2. Cover letter
3. List of 3 references

Applications are due March 31

Students must be willing to participate in a pre-employment interview.

Applicants will be notified prior to the end of spring semester if they are selected.

The UK Fire Cats term begins at the beginning of each academic year with the start of fall semester.

Selection Criteria for 21 Person Roster

- Current Fire Cats automatically accepted
- Preference given to: (*in order*) Forestry majors, NRES majors, then all other majors
- Preference given to: (*in order*) seniors, juniors, sophomores, freshmen, graduate student. (*This is based on year in degree program, not necessarily credit hours.*)
- Ability to participate in mandatory training, which is usually held the weekend after Labor Day
- Anticipated weekend availability during fire seasons
- Successful completion of work capacity test (*walk 3 miles in 45 minutes with 45 lb weighted vest*)

Requirements

- Absences on assigned workdays must be pre-approved by KDF Crew Leader.
- **Three unexcused absences** may result in loss of position on 21 person roster and student must return gear to Laura Lhotka. Students which have forfeited gear may qualify for the program at the next application process.
- Roster vacancies will be filled by alternates that have completed trainings and KDF employment paperwork.

For additional information, contact:

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