



SECTION ONE
THE RULES FOR THE
WRITTEN EXAMINATION

Issued December 2003

PART I WRITTEN EXAMINATION

IMPORTANT RULE CHANGE

The Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) role based structure was implemented with effect from 7 November 2003. This has implications for the future of the statutory examinations, which will be phased out.

The final examination date for the Sub-Officers' written examination will be **October 2004**. After that date ONLY candidates who have passed at least ONE paper will be able to progress to complete their examination at further re-sit examination dates.

Separate rules will therefore apply (see paragraph 4) to the transitional arrangements for the Sub-Officers' written examination **in and after** October 2004 and where appropriate, will replace existing Rules. Candidates MUST ensure they are aware of the implications of these changes in paragraph 4 when reading the whole of Section 1.

Recognition will be given to candidates' examination success of their Part I examination within IPDS.

INTERPRETATION

The Fire Services Examinations Board (FSEB) reserves to itself the interpretation of its rules.

1. Admission:

Admission to the Part I examination is restricted to whole-time employees of fire authorities established under the Fire Services Act 1947 (as amended) in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland who are engaged, or may be required to engage in firefighting. They must be so employed on both the closing date for the receipt of entries by the appropriate local examination board and the date of sitting the examination. In addition, they must have passed the qualifying examination for promotion to the rank of Leading Firefighter.

2. Applications:

Application to enter for the Part I examination must:

- (a) be made on the prescribed form obtainable from the brigade or the secretary of the appropriate local examination board;
- (b) be countersigned by the candidate's Chief Fire Officer/Firemaster; and
- (c) be received by the secretary of the appropriate local examination board not later than 1 August of the year in which the candidate wishes to sit the examination.

Candidates should note that a closing date is given for the receipt of entry forms by the secretaries of the appropriate local examination board and that Chief Fire Officers/Firemasters may require candidates to submit their entry forms by an earlier date.

3. The Written Examination:

- (a) Unless varied by the FSEB, the examination will normally comprise a single sitting and will be held in the early part of October each year.
- (b) The written examination will consist of four papers
- (c) The examination is taken, at the discretion of the candidate, over a period of three consecutive years. Candidates must take a minimum of TWO papers in the first of these three years.
- (d) Candidates who fail all papers in the first year must take a minimum of two papers in the second year.
- (e) Candidates may determine how many papers they undertake each year of the three-year period, subject to compliance with (2) and (3) above.
- (f) Failure to pass all of the papers in the three-year period means failure in the whole examination and, therefore, candidates must start Part I again. Any papers passed within the three-year period become null and void.

Thursday 7 October 2004

Paper One – Operations

09.30 - 11.15 (1 Hour 45 Minutes)

Section	Subject Area	Questions to answer
Section A	Operational Procedures and Incident Command	2
Section B	Firefighting & Rescue Incidents	2
Section C	Science & Firefighting	2
	Total	6

Paper Two - Fire Safety, Education & Enforcement

1330 - 1515 (1 Hour 45 Minutes)

Section	Subject Area	Questions to answer
Section A	Fire Defence & Alerting Systems	3
Section B	Fire Investigation	3
	Total	6

Paper Three - Human Resource Management

1530 - 1715 (1 Hour 45 Minutes)

Section	Subject Area	Questions to answer
Section A	Employment	2
Section B	Training & Development	2
Section C	Health, Safety & Welfare	2
	Total	6

Paper Four - Business Administration

1130 - 1240 (1 Hour 10 Minutes)

Section	Subject Area	Questions to answer
Section A	Key Skills – Application of Number	2
	Total	2

4. Transitional Arrangements

- (a) For the purposes of transitional arrangements 'three consecutive years' or 'three year period' means 'three consecutive examinations'.
- (b) Only candidates who have passed at least ONE paper at the October 2004 examination or previous and are still within the 'three year period' will be able to progress into the transitional arrangements. Candidates without any paper passes will be expected to enter directly into the IPDS process.
- (c) Candidates MUST re-sit their outstanding papers at the next available examination and will be expected to have completed their examination by the 2nd re-sit date. As with current rules candidates will be permitted a maximum of three attempts.
- (d) Only candidates who enter for the first time in October 2004 and subsequently have an appeal upheld through absenteeism or their entry deferred because of extenuating circumstances, will be able to avail themselves of the 3rd re-sit date. However, candidates would be expected to enter at the next available opportunity i.e. the first re-sit date and can only progress if at least ONE paper is passed.
- (e) Candidates must enter each re-sit examination in accordance with the Rules pertaining to 'Applications – Paragraph 2' but must be aware of the appropriate closing dates to FSEB below.
- (f) Candidates should forward their entry form for their re-sit examination **immediately** to their brigade on receipt of their examination result.

Examination Date		Closing date for Entry to FSEB
1st re-sit date	Wednesday 2 March 2005	24 December 2004
2nd re-sit date	Wednesday 14 September 2005	15 July 2005
3rd re-sit date	Wednesday 22 February 2006	23 December 2005

- (g) Examination times will be as follows:

Paper 1	9.20 - 11.05 (1 hour 45 minutes)
Paper 4	11.50 - 13.00 (1 hour 10 minutes)
Paper 2	13.45 - 15.30 (1 hour 45 minutes)
Paper 3	16.15 - 18.00 (1 hour 45 minutes)
- (h) In case of failure candidates will have the right to appeal in accordance with the Rules outlined in paragraph 14.
- (i) The bibliography for the re-sit examinations will be as that stated for the October 2004 examination.
- (j) There will be no further examinations after February 2006.

5. Study Material

- (a) Questions in the written examination will be based on technical or reference material that has been published nine months or more prior to the examination.
- (b) Section Two of the handbook specifies the syllabus for the examination and the bibliography used to set the examination.
- (c) Where legislation applying to Scotland differs from that applying to England and Wales, candidates will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of the legislation as specified in the syllabus as it applies to the brigade by which they are employed at the time of entering for the examination.

6. Calculators

The FSEB will provide candidates with calculators in the examination room for Paper 4 only. Candidates are **not** permitted to bring into the examination room their own calculator. Any candidate found to be in possession of one not supplied by the FSEB will be liable to disqualification from the examination.

7. Assessment

In order to pass each paper, a candidate must normally obtain a minimum of 50 per cent of the marks.

However, by a system of compensation described in the following tables, candidates who fail to achieve 50% in one paper may pass by compensation if sufficient extra marks are obtained in the paper(s) passed.

The system of compensation relates solely to those papers undertaken in a given year.

The tables below show the minimum aggregate required to pass two, three or four papers. Candidates who achieve less than the lowest percentage shown are not eligible to pass by compensation.

(i) Two Papers:

Percentage in lowest paper	49	48
Aggregate required in two papers	101	102

(ii) Three Papers:

Percentage in lowest paper	49	48	47	46	45
Aggregate required in three papers	153	156	159	162	165

(iii) Four Papers:

Percentage in lowest paper	49	48	47	46	45
Aggregate required in four papers	203	206	209	212	215

8. Closing Date for Withdrawals or Other Changes

- (a) The last date for the receipt by the FSEB of notification from the local board secretary for a candidate to withdraw from the whole examination, or from individual papers, will be **6 weeks prior to the first day of the examination**.
- (b) The same date will apply to the notification to the FSEB of any other necessary changes to a candidate's entry including request to transfer to another examination centre.
- (c) Such notification must be made via the candidate's brigade through the secretary of the appropriate local examination board.
- (d) The FSEB will acknowledge the withdrawals.
- (e) Candidates who have notified their withdrawal from the examination in the first year under 8(a) will be deemed to have not entered the examination. However, candidates withdrawing from the whole or part of the examination in the second year should note that they must complete the examination within the three-year examination period. Candidates who fail to complete the examination in this three years period are subject to rule 3 (f).
- (f) Candidates will only be permitted to withdraw from papers for which they have previously entered. They will not be allowed to enter for a different paper.

9. Sickness

Any candidate who is either medically or self-certificated sick or who is on 'restricted duties' either through illness or injury, must provide a certificate from their Brigade Medical Examiner confirming they are fit to attend the examination. The certificate must be handed in at the time of registration at the examination centre.

10. Declaration Notice

You should note that during the briefing by the Supervisor/Invigilator, you will be asked to sign your candidate attendance form which will include a declaration notice confirming that:

'In making the decision to undertake the examination, I acknowledge that I agree to abide by all the rules of the Fire Services Examinations Board; am fit and suitably prepared to tackle the examination; and that I understand that it is unlikely that any factors which should have been apparent to me at the time, can later be used to support a challenge to either the fairness of the examination process or the assessment of my performance.'

If you decline to sign the declaration notice, then it is unlikely that your examination scripts will be marked.

If you are aware of any **extenuating circumstances** prior to or on the day of the examination that may affect your performance, you must advise the Supervisor immediately on arrival at the examination centre. It will then be your decision as to whether to sign the declaration notice and attempt the Part I examination or decline to attend and leave the examination centre. In this latter situation you would then be treated as absent from the examination and the rules for Absent candidates then applies (Paragraph 12).

Lack of preparation prior to the examination is not considered to be extenuating circumstances.

You must then notify in writing to the Secretary of the Fire Services Examinations Board, not later than **14 days** after the date of your examination, full details of the extenuating circumstances raised.

Any candidate who then attends the examination without disclosing information regarding sickness or any other extenuating circumstances that might affect or unfairly influence their examination performance, will not be eligible to submit either as grounds for consideration of special circumstances or as a basis of an appeal.

11. Deferred Entry through Extenuating Circumstances

- (a) In exceptional circumstances, such as long term illness, injury or maternity leave, a one-year deferral of a candidate's entry over the permitted three years, may be allowed by the FSEB.
- (b) Application to defer should be made in writing to the FSEB as soon as the extenuating circumstances are known and no later than the day of the examination.
- (c) The FSEB will acknowledge the candidate's application to defer.
- (d) Under no circumstances will the examination period be extended beyond 4 years.
- (e) The FSEB decision on the deferral will be notified in writing to the candidate as soon as possible.
- (f) The FSEB will not enter into any further correspondence once the decision of the application has been notified.

12. Absenteeism

- (a) Candidates who have entered for the examination and who are absent for any paper of the examination will be reported to their Chief Fire Officer/Firemaster. These candidates will not be penalised by the FSEB, but they will be expected to complete the examination within the three-year period from the date of entering the examination.
- (b) In exceptional circumstances, absent candidates will be allowed to appeal to the FSEB for an extra year to complete their examination.
- (c) Candidates must make any such appeal in writing to the FSEB (not the brigade), within 21 days of the completion of the examination. Any appeals received after the 21 day period will not be considered by the FSEB.
- (d) The FSEB will acknowledge the candidate's appeal.
- (e) Under no circumstances will the examination period be extended beyond four years.
- (f) Where an appeal is upheld and the candidate fails to complete the examination successfully within the extended time, any papers passed within the four year period will become null and void.
- (g) The FSEB's decision on the appeal will be notified to the candidate at the same time as the results of the examination are published.
- (h) The FSEB will not enter into any further correspondence once the decision of the appeal has been notified.

13. Notification of Results:

- (a) Candidates must NOT attempt to contact the FSEB to try to find out their results.
- (b) The FSEB will provide Chief Fire Officers/Firemasters with a list of examination results for the candidates from their brigade.
- (c) The FSEB will notify candidates, who were registered to attend the examination, of their results in writing. Marks obtained will not be disclosed but for each paper sat, candidates will be given a result of pass or fail and a grade of 1 to 8 according to the following table:

Grade for Paper	Represents Marks in the Range
1	70 - 100%
2	60 - 69%
3	50 - 59%
4	40 - 49%
5	25 - 39%
6	15 - 24%
7	5 - 14%
8	0 - 4%

- (d) When candidates have taken all four papers within the three year period, they will be given an overall result of pass or fail for the whole examination.
- (e) Following the publication of results, no correspondence will be entered into concerning the results.

14. Appeals Procedure

- (a) Any candidate who wishes to appeal against their result in the written examination must register their appeal in writing to the FSEB **within 28 days** from the date on their result letter.
- (b) Appeals should be addressed to the Secretary of the FSEB and must state the grounds for the appeal. Candidates are required to give reasoned arguments and not rely upon their expectations of passing the examination.
- (c) The FSEB will acknowledge the candidate's appeal.
- (d) An independent examiner will be asked to re-mark the requisite script(s) and submit a report for consideration by the appeals panel.
- (e) The appeals panel will consist of the Secretary of the FSEB, the Lead Assessor and the General Assessor for Scotland. **The decision of the appeals panel is final.**
- (f) The appeal may be upheld or denied and the Secretary will write and inform the candidate of the result. The Chief Officer of the candidate's brigade will also be advised of the result.
- (g) Where an appeal is upheld and the outcome is that the candidate has now 'passed' the examination, that candidate will receive special dispensation to enter the next level of examination if the closing date for entries has now passed.
- (h) The FSEB will not enter into any further correspondence once the decision of the appeal has been notified.

15. Dangerous Practice

When it is considered that a response provided by candidates in their written examination papers, if applied in the real world, would have resulted in the lives of firefighters and/or the general public being placed at serious and unacceptable risk, the Board have agreed a procedure for confirming and then advising both the candidate and their Chief Fire Officer of the 'dangerous practice', with a recommendation that the candidate receives counselling, guidance and appropriate training.

The counselling being provided does not imply a failure result in the examination.

16. Top Candidate

A certificate is awarded to the candidate who obtains the highest marks in the examination subject to achieving at least 70% of the marks in each paper in a single sitting.

17. Dyslexia

Candidates who believe they have a form of dyslexia are required to inform the FSEB in the first instance who will give guidance on procedure. The candidates will then be required to provide an assessment report, no more than 2 years old, as to the nature and extent of their dyslexia. This report must be completed by an educational psychologist who is accredited by the British Psychological Society and **MUST** be submitted to the FSEB **as soon as possible and by no later than the closing date for entries**. Consideration will then be given as to what, if any, allowances ought reasonably be made during any part of the examination procedure. Candidates will be advised in good time, prior to the examination, of any adjustments to be made.

18. Disabilities

Candidates who believe they have a form of disability are required to inform the FSEB in the first instance who will give guidance on procedure. The candidates will then be required to provide an assessment report, no more than 2 years old, as to the nature and extent of their disability. This report must be completed by a specialist in their form of disability and **MUST** be submitted to the FSEB **as soon as possible and by no later than the closing date for entries**. Consideration will then be given as to what, if any, allowances ought reasonably be made during any part of the examination procedure. Candidates will be advised in good time, prior to the examination, of any adjustments to be made.

19. Disqualification

Any candidates found to be in breach of the Rules or who has introduced into the examination room unauthorised material will be liable to disqualification by the Board.

20. Ombudsman

An independent Ombudsman will adjudicate on identified issues and concerns arising from the examinations or through the appeals process. Candidates therefore have the right of appeal to the Ombudsman against any decision of the Board, where there are reasonable grounds for believing that:

- The Board did not act in compliance with its rules; or
- There is fresh evidence for further consideration of a decision of the Board.

Letters must be clearly marked 'Ombudsman for the FSEB, Layden House, 76 – 86 Turnmill Street, London, EC1M 5LG'.

21. Suspension

Candidates who are suspended from duty will be required to provide written authority from their appropriate Chief Fire Officer/Firemaster allowing them to attend either part of the examination under whatever circumstances the Chief Fire Officer/Firemaster considers to be appropriate. This written authority must be handed in at the time of registration at the examination site; prior notification must have been received by the Board.