



# Fire Services Examinations Board

## Newsletter No.3

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Welcome to this issue of the FSEB Newsletter. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide candidates/Officers and other members of the fire service with information about the implications for the statutory examinations following the introduction of the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) role based structure, together with the detail behind the agreed transitional arrangements.

### DCOL/Fmr Letter

DCOL Letter 4/2003 (DFmr letter to follow) was issued on the 23 October 2003 which confirmed the arrangements for phasing out the statutory promotion examinations following the introduction of the IPDS. The letter outlined the changes, confirmed that recognition would be given to the Part I and Part II examinations within IPDS, and set out the final dates when the Part I examinations would be held (transitional arrangements), subject to candidate demands.

The letter also gave various 'points of contact' with regard to IPDS – these are repeated below:

Technical Enquiries	Jan Ozimkowski, Head of People Management & Development Group, Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate, ODPM <a href="mailto:Jan.Ozimkowski@odpm.gsi.gov.uk">Jan.Ozimkowski@odpm.gsi.gov.uk</a>
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### Who's Who in the Office

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### *What are the Transitional Arrangements?*

They are the arrangements during the period when the IPDS is formed within the Fire Service and the statutory fire service examinations cease. The Integrated Personal Development Advisory Board (IPDAB) who have overseen and approved the work for IPDS, have agreed that recognition will be given to both the Part I and Part II examinations within IPDS.

Individuals who have passed their Part I examination will receive recognition at the sift stage of the Assessment Development Centre (ADC) process.

For the Part II qualification, candidates will be permitted to include the relevant content of the practical examinations as evidence in their personal development records. It should be noted, however, that evidence from examinations will need to be supplemented by evidence from workplace activity in order to demonstrate competence against any element of the National Occupational Standards.

For further information contact either Jan Ozimkowski or Christine Symes.

### *So what are the Final Examination Dates?*

With the introduction of the role based system for the Fire Service with effect from 7 November 2003 and amendments to the Appointments and Promotion Regulations, the rank based examinations will effectively need to finish.

Agreement has been reached within IPDAB and subsequently approved by the Fire Services Examinations Board (FSEB) that there will be final examination dates for either the Part I or Part II examinations. These will be:

FINAL EXAMINATION DATES		
Leading Firefighters' Sub-Officers'	Part II Practical Examination Part II Practical Examination	March/April 2004 April/May/June 2004
Leading Firefighters' Sub-Officers'	Part I Written Examination Part I Written Examination	28 September 2004 7 October 2004
Station Officers'	Written Examination	23/24 February 2005

After these dates no new candidates will be able to enter the statutory examinations process. Thereafter, personnel will be deemed to be part of the IPDS process.

### *So what does this mean for the Practical Examinations?*

Unlike the written examinations, candidates either 'pass' or 'fail' their practical examination in any one year. Therefore the implications for the Part II practical examinations for both Leading Firefighter and Sub-Officer are that the last examinations will be 2004. After that date there will be no further practical examinations as they will be effectively replaced by workplace assessment within IPDS. As mentioned previously, recognition will be given to candidates holding the Part II qualification within the IPDS process.

**Last Practical Examinations will be 2004**

### *What if I Fail my Practical Examination in 2004?*

As already stated, there will be no further practical examinations after 2004, irrespective of where you are in the examination system. Failure means you will need to directly enter the IPDS process, but, as long as this wasn't your third attempt, you will have your Part I success.

Of course, you still have the right to appeal against your examination result in 2004 if you believe there are relevant grounds. Full details of the Appeals Scheme are outlined in the Rules in the Candidates Handbook.

**Did you know!  
The Employers' Organisation and its predecessors have been involved with administering the Fire Service Examinations since 1958.**



### *What if I'm Absent from my Practical Examination or on Long Term Sickness?*

It may be possible to have your test re-scheduled by the Senior Examiner if you are absent or on long term sickness. However, this will only be permitted within the current 2/3 month examination period laid down by the FSEB for the Leading Firefighters' and Sub-Officers' Part II practical tests respectively, and only where practical.

If such a situation occurs, you must contact your Senior Examiner immediately to enquire if arrangements can be made to re-schedule at an alternative date, but still within the allowed 2/3 month examination period.

However, there will be no right to a re-scheduled test date and this will only be granted where the Senior Examiner can make such resources and a date available.

### *What are the Implications for the Written Examinations?*

For the Part I Written Examinations it was agreed that any recognition of the examination within IPDS would be applied to the whole examination and not to individual paper passes.

Therefore, it will be necessary to ensure that candidates are given the opportunity to complete their written examination within the appropriate time period.

**Written Examinations - Available for a further two re-sit occasions after the Final Examination Dates**

Candidates will therefore have the choice to either complete their written (Part I) examination to achieve this or choose to directly enter the IPDS process.

### *How am I Eligible to Re-sit my Outstanding Papers?*

Only candidates who have passed at least ONE paper will be allowed to re-sit any outstanding papers necessary to complete their overall success. Candidates without any passes after the Leading Firefighters' or Sub-Officers' examinations in September/October 2004 and Station Officers' in February 2005 will be expected to enter directly into the IPDS process.

### *What if I'm unable to take the 'Final' Examinations?*

If you are in the '3 attempt cycle' and have passed at least one paper, then you will be able to complete your examination, but only within those 3 attempts. For example, if you first took your Leading Firefighters' examination in 2003 and passed 2 papers, but were unable to take it in 2004 you will still have one further opportunity at the first re-sit examination to complete and pass your two remaining papers.

The important rule here is that you are still in the 3 attempt cycle at the final date of entering the examination and have passed at least one paper.

If you are not, and have failed to take the examination at one of the 'final dates' stated, then you will be expected to enter directly into the IPDS process.

### *What are the additional Re-sit Examination Dates?*

As I have explained, two further examination dates will be allocated at roughly 6-monthly intervals to enable candidates to complete their written (Part I) examinations, with a third date held for any successful appeals against absenteeism or deferred entry through extenuating circumstances (see page 4).

### *What if I'm Absent from my Written Examination or on Long Term Sickness?*

The scheme applying to absent candidates and deferred entry through extenuating circumstances will still apply to the final examination dates for entering the written examinations. However, if your appeal is upheld, you would be expected to attempt the examination at the next opportunity ie the first re-sit date.

You would only be able to progress to the 2nd re-sit dates if you pass at least ONE paper, otherwise you will be expected to enter directly into the IPDS process.

### **End of an Era**

**Following a working party report back in 1976 national statutory promotion examinations were established. The first examination was the Leading Firefighters' written in 1978 – 25 years ago!**

## What are the Additional Re-sit Examination Dates?

❖	Leading Firefighter	Closing Dates for Entries
1st	Tuesday 1 March 2005	24 December 2004
2nd	Tuesday 13 September 2005	15 July 2005
3rd	Tuesday 21 February 2006	23 December 2005
❖	Sub-Officer	Closing Dates for Entries
1st	Wednesday 2 March 2005	24 December 2004
2nd	Wednesday 14 September 2005	15 July 2005
3rd	Wednesday 22 February 2006	23 December 2005
❖	Station Officer	Closing Dates for Entries
1st	Tuesday 13 and Wednesday 14 September 2005	15 July 2005
2nd	Tuesday 21 and Wednesday 22 February 2006	23 December 2005
3rd	Tuesday 5 and Wednesday 6 September 2006	30 June 2006

### *Why the Decision to Foreshorten the Dates between Examinations?*

The current Rules allow candidates to complete their Part I examination 'over a period of three consecutive years', although in a successful appeal situation this could extend to '4 years'. If this was to be applied to the timescales outlined on page 2, there would need to be provision for examinations well into 2008.

These sort of timescales were felt unreasonable and as current legislation allows for the examinations to be conducted at 'least once a year', it has been agreed by the FSEB that the period balance re-sits would be foreshortened.

### *I notice that some Examinations will be on the Same Day – why is that?*

As there will be an expected reduction in candidates, it has been agreed to hold examinations on the same days. This will help to maximise centre and supervisory resources yet help reduce overall examination costs.

### *When will the Candidates' Handbooks be Amended?*

The implications to the Rules for each examination as a result of the transitional arrangements will mean that amendments to the Candidates' Handbooks will be published before the end of December 2003.

For both the written and practical sections of the Handbooks, a new paragraph 4 will deal with these Rule changes.

### *What will be the affect to the Bibliography during the Transitional Period?*

It will *not* be the intention to revise the examination bibliography after the final examination dates for entering the examinations.

This will ensure that candidates sitting/re-taking papers on the subsequent re-sit examination dates are not disadvantaged by having to study different examination material.

However, we will of course need to be aware of any fire service material subsequently published during this period that may invalidate existing bibliography.

### *I'm still not clear about the Transitional Arrangements*

Then please contact one of the examinations team either by phone or email or through the bulletin board on the FSEB's web site. Also, keep abreast of the latest news and information on our web site [www.fseb.gov.uk](http://www.fseb.gov.uk) particularly the Q&A Section which we will keep updated with the questions you ask.

### *How does it all relate to me in the IPDS Process?*

The Fire Examinations team can only answer questions relating to the transitional arrangements as they affect the statutory examinations.

Queries relating to the IPDS process or questions relating to the recognition of the qualification **must** be addressed to Jan Ozimkowski or Christine Symes ( see contact names on page 1).