



**Fire Services  
Examinations  
Board**

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To: Chief Fire Officers/Firemasters  
Senior Examiners  
Chair of Local Examination Boards  
Local Board Secretaries  
Assessors  
Members of the Fire Services Examinations Board

Our Ref DJS/MA

27 October 2003

Dear Sir

**FIRE SERVICES EXAMINATIONS BOARD – TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS TO THE  
INTERGRATED PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM**

The ODPM Executive recently issued a DCOL letter (DFmr to follow) which confirmed the transitional arrangements that would apply for phasing out the statutory examinations with the move to an Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) and role based structure from November 2003.

The DCOL (DFmr) set out final examination dates and confirmed that written (Part I) candidates who had entered by these dates would also have up to a 'final date' by which they could complete their examination. The Circular also confirmed that recognition would be given to a candidate's Part I and Part II success within the IPDS process.

The purpose of this letter is to provide the detail behind these arrangements and explain how the final examination dates will be achieved.

This letter does not deal with the process for candidates once they are in the IPDS process, nor does it give further information on the degree of recognition to be given to a candidate's Part I and Part II success. Further information on these areas should be addressed to either Jan Ozimkowski or Christine Symes at the ODPM.

## Final Examination Dates

Following the amendments to the Appointments and Promotion Regulations, the existing statutory examinations will begin to be phased out. Agreement was reached within the Integrated Personal Development Advisory Board and subsequently approved by the Fire Services Examinations Board that there would be 'final examinations' that would enable candidates to enter the examinations process for either the Part I or Part II examinations. These would be.

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. Thereafter, personnel will be deemed to be part of the IPDS process.

## Practical (Part II) 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 are that entry to the last examinations will be 2004. After that date there will be no further practical examinations as they are effectively replaced by workplace assessment within IPDS. As mentioned above, due recognition will be given to candidates holding their Part II qualification within the IPDS process.

Candidates will be advised of these changes to the Part II practical examinations in amendments to the Rules and supporting documentation for each Candidate Handbook to be issued shortly.

In the case of failure, candidates will still have the right to appeal against their examination result and must follow the process outlined in paragraph 14 of Section 5 (Rules) to the Candidates Handbook.

Candidates unable to undertake their Part II practical test in 2004 because of absenteeism or long term sickness will be permitted to have their test re-scheduled by the Senior Examiner, where practical, but only within the permitted 2/3 month examination period laid down by the FSEB for the Leading Firefighters' and Sub-Officers' Part II practical tests respectively. There will be no consideration given to extending the Part II examination period beyond these dates.

If such a situation is likely to occur candidates must contact their Senior Examiner immediately to see if alternative arrangements can be made to re-schedule them at an alternative date, but still within the previously mentioned 2/3 month examination period. There will be no right to a re-scheduled test date and this will only be granted where the Senior Examiner can make appropriate resources and a date available.

However, the current scheme for absent candidates that allows for an appeal to be submitted within 21 days of the candidate's test, will no longer be available.

### Written (Part I) examinations

For the Part I written examinations it was agreed that any recognition within IPDS would be 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.

Candidates will therefore have the choice to either complete their written (Part 1) examination or choose to directly enter the IPDS process.

However, 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 system.

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 were to be applied to the timescales outlined above there would need to be provision for examinations into 2008.

These sorts 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 Fire Services Examinations Board that the final dates for candidates to complete their Part I examinations will be foreshortened.

Therefore, two further examination dates will be allocated at roughly 6-monthly intervals to enable candidates to complete their written (Part I) examination, with a third date held for any successful appeals against absenteeism or deferred entry through extenuating circumstances that occur at one of the 'final examination dates' on page 2 of this letter.

Leading Firefighter		Closing date 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		
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		
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

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

Candidates will be so advised of these dates to the Part I examinations in amendments to the Rules for each Candidate's Handbook to be issued by December 2004. Candidates will be still required to complete and return an entry form to confirm they are entering the appropriate examination. These entry forms must be received by the appropriate local board secretary by the above entry dates and it will be recommended to candidates that they return them immediately to brigades on receipt of their examination result.

In the case of failure, candidates will still have the right to appeal against their examination result and must follow the process outlined in paragraph 14 of Section 1 (Rules) to the Candidates Handbook.

## Bibliography

It will not be the intention to revise the examination bibliography after the final examination dates as stated on page 2 of my letter. This will ensure that candidates sitting/re-taking papers on subsequent examination dates are not disadvantaged by having to study different examination material. However, we will of course need to be aware of any fire brigade material subsequently published that may invalidate existing bibliography.

## Secretarial Arrangements

Local Board Secretaries will need to make arrangements for securing examination accommodation for the dates specified. At this point in time it is not possible to estimate candidate numbers until the entries have been received for the 'final examinations'. However, examinations will need to be held on the 1st and 2nd re-sit dates and when booking accommodation, secretaries will also need to be aware that some examinations will now be held on the same days.

A further matter for deliberation nearer the time will be to consider regional examination centres within local boards to accommodate candidates and this may be more appropriate for the 2nd re-sit examination dates.

It is not suggested that brigades make provision for the 3rd re-sit dates for each examination at this stage as these dates have only been provided to accommodate any successful appeals/deferred entry candidates and these numbers are expected to be minimal. These centres can be arranged nearer the time when there is found to be a need.

## Eligible Candidates

It will be the intention of the FSEB to circulate to each fire service a report that confirms the status of every candidate in the '3 year period' of the examination system. The Board already provides this information to the fire service and will continue to do so when forwarding the results for each written examination, as this will help to identify every potential candidate who will have the opportunity to complete their Part I written examination.

## Newsletter

It will be imperative that every potential candidate is made aware of the changes affecting the statutory examinations and the significance of the transitional arrangements into IPDS. It will therefore be helpful if this letter is given the widest circulation as possible.

However, we have previously advised candidates of significant changes to the examinations through the publication of FSEB Newsletters. It is again our intention to provide such a publication (Newsletter No.3), which we hope can be forwarded to every potential candidate currently in the examination system.

This Newsletter will be published shortly and will explain through 'questions and answers' the implications of the changes. Copies will also be enclosed with the Leading Firefighters' and Sub-Officers' results due out at the end of November/beginning of December and with the Station Officers' entry notices sent out in January for the 2004 examination, for forwarding to all relevant candidates.

In addition, circulation of the Newsletter to each station will also be helpful in advising all fire service personnel of the forthcoming changes.

Furthermore, all information relating to the transitional arrangements will be published on the Board's web site [www.fseb.gov.uk](http://www.fseb.gov.uk), which will allow for electronic circulation within the fire service.

It is important that all potential candidates are informed in advance of the final examination dates, and the implications for the changes to the statutory examinations.

If there are any queries on any of the changes outlined in my letter, then please either contact myself direct or any member of the Fire Team.

#### Fire Team

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Yours sincerely

D J Stanley  
SECRETARY