

The International Fire Service Accreditation Congress

Certificate Assembly

Submitting Additional Levels for Accreditation through Administrative Review

A Guide for Entities

Introduction

- **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to those entities preparing to submit materials to the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) Administration for administrative review for accreditation of additional levels. It identifies those essential materials which **must** be submitted, and offers advice as to how these might be organized and presented in order that they can be reviewed and evaluated in an efficient, reliable, and valid manner. The document also identifies those types of materials and information which need **not** be submitted as part of the administrative review process.

- **Target Audience**

This document is intended for those individuals who are responsible for preparing and submitting materials for administrative review.

- **Scope**

This document is a **basic** guide and covers the essentials only, an approach that has been taken so that people referring to it can easily access the core information in it. However, the guidelines presented are, if followed carefully, sufficient to ensure these materials submitted for review can be evaluated fairly and effectively, and that any decisions about accreditation for additional levels are both credible and substantiated.

- **Further Information**

If this document does not provide sufficient guidance or advice for your needs, then please contact IFSAC Administration at (405) 744-8303 for further information.

1. Administrative Reviews - the Basic Principle

Entities having one or more levels accredited by IFSAC may submit materials for review so that an **additional** level, or levels, can also be accredited. Materials submitted to IFSAC Administration are forwarded to a member entity representative for administrative review. The reviewer is normally one of the individuals who was involved in the original site visit of the entity submitting the materials.

In order for accreditation to be granted, administrative reviewers focus their review of the material provided by the entity on the testing and assessment mechanisms used in association with the program for which accreditation is sought. Put another way, the reviewer examines the material with the following simple question forming the basis of the evaluation.

Has the entity provided sufficient evidence that it can test, examine, or assess all of the standards which define the learning objectives of the program for which additional accreditation is sought in ways which are valid, reliable, and consistent?

There are two other important points to emphasize at this stage.

1. For accreditation to be given for an additional level, the entity must show that it **can** test **all** of the standards relating to the program. However, this does not mean that the entity **actually has to test** all of the standards every time an examination or assessment is given; it merely has to demonstrate that it is capable of doing so.
2. The reference to the term “standards” currently means National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards as far as administrative reviews are concerned. However, as the work of the Committee on International Standards Acceptance progresses, it is possible that administrative reviews which evaluate materials based on standards other than NFPA will be acceptable.

2. Administrative Reviews - the Materials Needed

The following are the **essential** items or categories of material which entities must prepare and submit to IFSAC Administration. The word **essential** is critical here because if any of the items listed in this section are missing, or incompletely submitted, then the review cannot be completed, and it will not be possible to grant the accreditation sought.

2.1 An Application Form for administrative review

2.2 Correlation Sheets

2.3 Performance Skill Evaluation Sheets

2.4 Written Test Bank

Further, detailed explanations about these items or categories of material are provided in the following sections.

2.1 Application Form

This is a simple form which entities complete when applying for accreditation of a program through administrative review. It contains basic information which will enable IFSAC Administration and the reviewer to:

- a) identify the level for which additional accreditation is being sought;
- b) check that all essential material has been submitted by the entity;
- c) know the name and contact details of the person at the entity responsible for submitting the material.

An Application Form is provided in Appendix A.

2.2 Correlation Sheets

Correlation sheets form a matrix which:

- lists **all** the standards relating to the program for which accreditation is sought.
- states whether a particular standard is tested by **written** and/or **practical** assessments.
- identifies where particular written or practical items are **located** in the material supplied.

By way of example, a portion of a sample correlation sheet is presented below:

| Standard Reference | Written Test Location | Practical Test Location |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 3-2.1 | p. 18 #60 - 72 | |
| 3-2.1.1 | p. 19-290, #73-94 | A-1 |
| 3-2.2 | p. 21-22,#93 - 112 | |
| 3-3.1 | | A-2 |

2.3 Performance Skills Evaluation Sheets

Performance Skills Evaluation Sheets are documents which are used by an evaluator when assessing a student's performance of practical skills demonstrated during a test. Evaluation sheets will be structured and organized in such a way that the evaluator can use them to confirm that **all** essential elements comprising a particular performance have been demonstrated satisfactorily during the test by the student. While there must be an evaluation sheet for all objectives that require the performance of a skill, it is obvious that the practical objectives listed in NFPA standards vary in terms of their complexity and the range of performance defined, and in the way different practical objectives might relate to one another. In light of this it is difficult to define prescriptive and rigid requirements with respect to the preparation of evaluation sheets. Instead, the following points are offered as general guidance.

- Evaluation sheets may be one of two types, namely:
 - I. the **Checklist** type
 - II. the **Score sheet** type

The Checklist type

With this type of evaluation sheet, the essential elements that define the performance objective are listed, with a space against each element to indicate whether the student has demonstrated performance of a particular skill. Thus, while observing a student during a test, the evaluator's decision is limited to stating either that a particular skill **was** demonstrated satisfactorily, or that it **was not** demonstrated. An example of this type of Checklist Evaluation Sheet is provided in Appendix B.

The Score Sheet type

This is a slightly more sophisticated version of the checklist type. Again, the key elements that define the performance objective are listed, but this time there is the facility for the evaluator to allocate a mark, or score, against each of the elements listed. Thus, the allocation of a mark not only indicates that a particular performance **has been** demonstrated, but also permits, where this is appropriate for selected elements, an indication of **how well** that performance has been carried out. In this way, the relative importance of certain elements within a performance objective can be reflected by **weighting** the marks allocated to particular elements. An example of this type of score sheet is provided in Appendix C.

2.4 Written Test Bank

2.4.1 Definitions

- **TEST FORM**

This is the actual version of the administered written test. A test form is comprised of questions from the Test Bank

- **TEST BANK**

This is a compilation of all possible test questions

2.4.2 Key Requirements of Test Banks

- There should be a **minimum** of one question per learning objective, or subset of a learning objective.
- More than one question may be required for each learning objective, if a single question does not adequately address the standard.
- The test bank must be large enough to support different versions of the test form. For this requirement to be met, there should be between two to four times the number of questions in the test bank than are used in the test form.
- Questions should be grouped by the relevant standard.
- The test bank should contain numbered questions and page numbers in order to facilitate the location of questions.

2.4.3 The Format of Test Bank Questions

Test bank questions should be in the following format:

- a) question
- b) possible answers (i.e., distracters and answers)
- c) answer indicated
- d) applicable standard stated
- e) reference stated

A sample test bank extract is shown in Appendix D.

2.4.4 Test Bank Information

In order for an administrative reviewer to carry out an effective review of the material submitted, a thorough study of the entire test bank is necessary. Only in this way can a credible decision as to whether an entity is capable of testing **all** those standards requiring a written test be reached.

Test banks may be of three kinds:

- a) Those which have been purchased from recognized providers and where there have been no changes or amendments to the items in the bank.
- b) Those which have been purchased, but where the entity has made some changes or amendments to a range of the items in the bank in order to “customize” the test to meet local situations, or to improve on the effectiveness of some items.
- c) Those which have been created entirely by the entity.

There are sometimes difficulties when entities are asked to send in their test banks as part of the range of materials submitted for review. Quite understandably, entities can be concerned about issues such as confidentiality, ownership of intellectual material, and professional propriety. In addition, those entities who use purchased test banks (as described at [a] and [b] above) sometimes face a conflict situation, in that administrative reviewers need to see the test bank for review purposes yet the license agreement under which the bank was purchased may prohibit the copying or supply of the test to any other person or organization.

There is not an easy answer to this conflict, but entities need to be reassured of the very strict security which IFSAC requires in relation to materials being reviewed. All materials must be kept in secure, restricted access locations and, during the actual review process itself, be seen only by the individual conducting the review.

The entity requesting an administrative review where a purchased or testing service test bank is used must contact the company that holds the copyrights to the test and request specific permission to release the test bank for administrative review. A separate request must be issued for each incident requiring the submission of their test banks. The entity must mail the test bank and a copy of the permission letter to IFSAC Administration by registered mail. All test bank mailings from IFSAC Administration will be done through registered mail.

3. Organizing and Presenting Material

It would be very helpful to administrative reviewers if the following suggestions are adopted when the materials that entities gather for submission are finally assembled.

- Materials submitted should be collated and presented in the following order.
 - a) The **Application Form**
 - b) **Correlation Sheets**
 - c) **Performance Skill Evaluation Sheets**
 - d) **Test Banks**
 - e) Any other **Additional Information**.
- It is helpful if the sections listed above are separated by labeled index tabs.
- A simple front cover, identifying the **entity**, the **level** for which additional accreditation is being sought, and the **date** of submission is useful since it enables the reviewer to easily recognize what the material is.
- Page numbering will prevent loose pages from becoming disorganized.
- Finally, binding all the materials together will ensure security. The following methods have proven to be effective:
 - ◇ 3-ring binders
 - ◇ spiral binding
 - ◇ plastic tape binding

4. Some final points

4.1 What NOT to send for the Administrative Review

This document identifies the materials which are necessary for an administrative review process to be carried out. If entities have provided the materials indicated, then there is no need for anything additional to be sent. Unwanted or unnecessary material is both an extra burden for the entity, in terms of preparation, and can often confuse reviewers when detailed examination of items are being conducted as part of the review.

The following list identifies items which are not needed for the administrative review process:

- curriculum plans and outlines
- lesson plans and schemes
- teaching and presentation notes

- student notes and handouts
- presentational material (e.g., overhead transparencies)
- resource descriptions (e.g., plans, photographs or videos of teaching rooms, installations, fireground)
- lists and resumes of teaching and training staff
- general administrative material not linked to correlation sheets, evaluation sheets or test banks.

5. **Sending Materials to IFSAC**

Materials should be addressed clearly to:

**The Manager
International Fire Service Accreditation Congress
Oklahoma State University
1700 West Tyler
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078-8075**

with the words **Accreditation Review Material** written on the outside of the packet.

Appendix A Application for Administrative Review for Accreditation at Additional Level

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Name of Entity: | |
| Address of Entity: | |
| Name of contact person: | |
| Telephone Number: | |
| Fax Number: | |
| E-Mail address: | |
| Level(s) for which additional accreditation is being sought | |
| NFPA Standard and Edition | Title |
| | |
| | |

| The following materials are submitted | | |
|--|------------|-----------|
| Correlation sheets | Yes | No |
| Performance Skill Evaluation Sheets | Yes | No |
| Test Banks <small>Note: Entities requesting an administrative review where a purchased or testing service test bank is used must contact the company that holds the copyrights to the test and request specific permission to release the test bank for administrative review. A separate request must be issued for each incident requiring the submission of their test banks. The entity must mail the test bank and a copy of the permission letter to IFSAC Administration by registered mail. All test bank mailings from IFSAC Administration will be done through registered mail.</small> | Yes | No |
| Other (please state) | | |

| | |
|---|--|
| I certify that the certification policies and procedures for this/these level(s) remain the same as those presented at the initial site visit and on record with IFSAC. NOTE: Any variance from the policy and procedures on record must be reported and explained. | |
| Signed _____ | |
| Position: | |
| Date: | |
| Date Materials sent to IFSAC: | |

Appendix B

Performance Skill Evaluation Sheet (checklist type)

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Evaluator's Name | |
| Candidate's Name | |
| Date | |

Personnel Classification **Airport Fire Fighter**

OBJECTIVE: **NFPA Standard 1003, Chapter 3, Paragraphs 3-2.3**

TASK **Communicate to the incident commander information they require to develop a plan of attack**

PERFORMANCE CONDITIONS:

SETTING: **Training area or simulated incident/accident scene**

TOOLS/EQUIPMENT: **Grid map, scenario of an incident/accident, radio equipment**

ATTAINMENT STANDARD: **Successful of all elements/steps within 5 minutes**

ELEMENTS/STEPS

- 2. Demonstrate the ability to communicate necessary information over the radio to the incident commander

STANDARDS

In accordance with Local Policies and Procedures. Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting

| | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| A. Correct use of the incident command system | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. Correctly identify the location of the incident | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1. Terrain | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Wind direction | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Access route(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C. Identify the scene | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1. Fire/no fire | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Victims/injuries | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Environmental damage | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Equipment needs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D. Other information outlined in local procedures | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Appendix C

Performance Skill Evaluation Sheet (score sheet type)

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Evaluator's Name | |
| Candidate's Name | |
| Date | |

Personnel Classification **Fire Service Instructor - Level II**

OBJECTIVE: **NFPA Standard 1041, Chapter 3**

| ITEMS AND STANDARDS | POINTS | | COMMENTS |
|---|----------|---------|----------|
| | Possible | Awarded | |
| 1. INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING | | | |
| a) Lesson plan current, accurate and easy to follow | 14 | | |
| b) Classroom arranged properly | 1 | | |
| 2. PREPARATION | | | |
| a) Effective introduction | 1 | | |
| b) Objectives clearly stated | 4 | | |
| c) Lesson related to students' existing knowledge and past experience | 1 | | |
| 3. PRESENTATION | | | |
| <u>Content and Structure</u> | | | |
| a) Presented in a logical sequence | 1 | | |
| b) Accurate information given | 1 | | |
| c) Met objectives/key points reviewed | 3 | | |
| d) Level of instruction appropriate | 1 | | |
| <u>Presentation Skills</u> | | | |
| a) Effective teaching methods | 2 | | |
| b) Eye contact made with students | 1 | | |
| c) Notes used as reference | 1 | | |
| d) Relaxed appearance | 1 | | |
| e) Gestures used for emphasis | 1 | | |
| f) Avoided distracting activities | 1 | | |
| g) Maintained control of class | 1 | | |
| h) Managed time appropriately | 1 | | |
| <u>Communication Skills</u> | | | |
| a) Appropriate volume and variation | 1 | | |
| b) Paced for student understanding | 1 | | |
| c) Correct enunciation and grammar | 1 | | |
| d) Avoided distracting mannerisms | 1 | | |

Appendix C - (continued)

| ITEMS AND STANDARDS | POINTS | | COMMENTS |
|--|----------|---------|----------|
| | Possible | Awarded | |
| <u>Demonstration Skills (if applicable)</u> | | | |
| a) Properly introduced and demonstrated | 1 | | |
| b) Key points and safety stressed and enforced | 1 | | |
| | | | |
| <u>Teaching Aids</u> | | | |
| a) Appropriate aids used effectively | 1 | | |
| b) Teaching aids of good quality | 1 | | |
| | | | |
| <u>Questions/Feedback</u> | | | |
| a) Phased questions clearly | 1 | | |
| b) Encouraged student participation | 1 | | |
| c) Answered questions adequately | 1 | | |
| | | | |
| 4. APPLICATION | | | |
| a) Complete directions given | 1 | | |
| b) Time permitted to practice | 1 | | |
| c) Supervised practice | 1 | | |
| | | | |
| 5. EVALUATION | | | |
| a) Test preparation | 4 | | |
| b) Test administered properly | 4 | | |
| c) Test reviewed/feedback given | 2 | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Total points awarded | | | |

Total points possible 60
Total points needed to pass 45

Appendix D

Extract from a sample Test Bank

Description of Duty

42. Response includes the timely arrival at an accident with the ability to suppress fire and:
- a) re-service vehicles.
 - b) determine cause.
 - c) perform rescue. (CORRECT)
 - d) control crowds.

Ref: NFPA 1003, 1994 Edition, p.5, Descr: 3-2.1

43. In accordance with NFPA Standard 1003 Airport Fire Fighter duty could also include:
- a) Station duty and physical training.
 - b) Hazardous conditions and station duty.
 - c) Physical training and performing standby operations.
 - d) Hazardous conditions and performing standby operations. (CORRECT)

Ref: NFPA 1003, 1994 Edition, p.5, Descr: 3-2.1

Prerequisite Knowledge for Response

44. Parallel runways are distinguished by:
- a) letters. (CORRECT)
 - b) different colored lights.
 - c) letters followed by numbers.
 - d) a compass heading between 0 - 360 degrees.

Ref: Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting, 3rd Edition, p. 13. Descr: 3-2.2.1