

Individual Units: Firefighter Foundation Programme

The Scottish Fire Services College (SFSC) has been the regional training centre for Scotland's Fire and Rescue Services since 1954. During this 50 year period the College has provided comprehensive centralised residential development for Fire Service Personnel.



The SFSC's strategic, managerial and administrative functions fall under the auspices of the Fire Branch of the Scottish Executive Justice Department.

The College's core business is the provision of Foundation Development for Trainee firefighters for the eight Scottish Fire and Rescue Services (Central Scotland, Dumfries & Galloway, Fife, Grampian, Highland & Islands, Lothian & Borders, Strathclyde and Tayside). This provision of basic skills, knowledge and understanding is augmented by further development in the areas of Road Traffic Collision Extrication Techniques and Instruction, Breathing Apparatus Instructor Development and more recently Urban Search & Rescue Tools Skills and Mass Decontamination Instructor Development.

Since 2002 the United Kingdom Fire Service has progressively introduced a human resource development system called the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS). The Scottish Learning

and Development Team is located at the Scottish Fire Services College and was established under the auspices of the Scottish Executive to assist in the implementation of all aspects of the IPDS throughout the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services.

The IPDS commences with the eight fire and rescue services operating their Firefighter Point of Entry Selection Testing and supplying screened individuals to the SFSC. The SFSC provides a modularised 'Firefighter Foundation Programme' (acquisition phase) which is centrally funded through the Scottish Executive. The 'Firefighter Foundation Programme' is based upon agreed National Occupational Standards. Prior to graduating from the SFSC, Foundation Programme students register for the Scottish Qualifications Authority vocational qualification in Firefighting in the Community and then enter a programme of further 'on station development' (acquisition and application phase).



ORGANISATION
Scottish Fire Services College
QUALIFICATION /LEARNING PROGRAMME
Individual Units from the Firefighter
Foundation Programme

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Firefighter Foundation Programme Scottish Fire Services College

Firefighters are then further developed in their respective fire stations using this quality assured process. On-station development is supported by series of standardised Development Packages (the Firefighter Development Programme) and on the job learning through an enculturation process. A process of workplace assessment and verification ensures the quality assurance of the on-station development until a Firefighter can fully demonstrate competence within their workplace against the Firefighter National Occupational Standards. Thereafter a Firefighter is deemed to be competent and must maintain their skills, knowledge and understanding by a process of continued personal development (**maintenance phase**).

The Qualification(s)/Learning Programme(s)

The Firefighter Foundation Programme is delivered on a residential basis at the SFSC premises in Gullane. It equips new entrants to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services with basic knowledge, skills and understanding to enable them to undergo further on-station 'acquisition and application' training and development. The programme attendees are drawn from the eight Fire and Rescue Services across Scotland, with the programme running up to three times a year, each cohort typically having 40-80 students.

The programme was subject to a formal review and redesign during 2004 and early 2005 including the modularisation of the programme to facilitate parity in the training and development opportunities for both Whole-Time and Retained Duty system firefighters. In addition, the review's purpose was to ensure that the Foundation Programme was directly linked to the National Occupational Standards and to review the programme content and the teaching, learning assessment and recording methodologies. This resulted in a revised eight module Firefighter Foundation Programme Curriculum which is delivered over a 12 week period.

The eight modules of the Firefighter Foundation Programme are —

Module 1 Support Elements

This Module is designed to induct the learner into the Scottish Fire Services and the Scottish Fire Services College. It provides essential 'soft skills' and risk critical underpinning knowledge.

Module 2 Task and Task Management Skills: Pumps, Ladders and Lines

This Module is designed to induct and up-skill the learner in the use of basic fire and rescue service equipment and techniques. It aims to produce a safe, effective and proficient member of a firefighting crew through basic equipment technical and practical sessions.

Module 3 First aid First Person on Scene

This module is delivered on an outsourced basis and is externally accredited through the deliverer. As SFSC have no direct involvement in the quality assurance of the assessment processes, this module was not included in the overall programme for credit rating purposes, though it is a core part of the overall Firefighter Foundation Programme.

Module 4 Task and Task Management Skills: Road Traffic Collision

This module is designed to induct and up-skill the learner in the knowledge, skills and understanding



necessary for safe, effective and proficient team intervention at road traffic accidents. The theory and practical sessions develop, test and confirm proficiency in all aspects of vehicle extrication and casualty care techniques.

**Module 5 Task and Task Management Skills:
Community Fire Safety**

This module is designed to induct and up-skill the learner with the knowledge, skills and understanding in presenting, informing and educating communities in Fire Safety Information and risks of fire.

**Module 6 Task and Task Management Skills:
Breathing Apparatus**

This module is designed to induct and up-skill the learner in the knowledge skills and understanding in the wearing of breathing apparatus. The theory and practical sessions develop, test and confirm proficiency in the safe operational use of breathing apparatus.

**Module 7 Task and Task Management Skills:
Compartment Training Fire Behaviour**

This module is designed to induct and up-skill the learner in the knowledge skills and understanding of fire phenomena associated with compartment fires. The theory and practical sessions develop, test and confirm proficiency in identifying and mitigating the risk exposure within compartment fires.

**Module 8 Task, Task Management Skills and
Contingency and Environmental Management
Skills: Scenario Based Training**

This module is designed to provide realistic training to enable the student to demonstrate Task Management Skills to recognise and deal with things that go wrong and with the unexpected. This will promote the capacity for individuals and teams to develop a critical, lateral and creative thinking capacity and thus an ability to make individual and team professional judgements in order to control the risks inherent in the varied and unique circumstances of any emergency situation. This module provides 'construct validity' for the Foundation Programme and it is assessed formatively in team based scenarios. This module focuses on team/group assessment, no individual assessment occurs.



The development of the submission was undertaken concurrently with the review work thus giving the opportunity to build in modifications to the assessment of learning to build on the good practice and enable the required levels of quality assurance to be achieved.

A mixture of formative and summative assessments is used throughout the modules. During the formative assessment the instructor uses informal feedback. The feedback enables staff and students to identify areas of students' strengths, weaknesses and developmental areas, and to devise support mechanisms as appropriate.

The first cohort of the Firefighter Foundation Programme commenced on June 13th 2005 and ended on September 2nd 2005 with a total of 53 students.

Reasons for submitting qualification/ learning programme for Credit Rating and Levelling

- ◆ The process allowed the SFSC to build on good practice in the assessment of learning and to benchmark internal practices against recognised national occupational standards. Where changes in process have been introduced, these have added value to the work of the SFSC.
- ◆ Achievement of Credit Rating and Levelling for the programme is extremely important to the SFSC. The Fire Specific modules within training programmes cannot be easily compared to external programmes and where firefighters leave the service, it is very difficult for them to have their learning recognised at the correct level. Leaving the service may happen for a variety of reasons and can arise earlier than anticipated (ie as a result of health issues or changing personal circumstances). In these cases particularly, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Credit and Levelling will have a positive benefit and will make the transition into other employment much easier.

Benefits

- ◆ The SFSC believe that having a programme included within the SCQF will be a very useful driver for setting the standards and processes for the maintenance of the development programme which otherwise might not exist.

OUTCOME	SCQF LEVEL	SCQF CREDIT POINTS
Module 1 Support Elements	5	4
Module 2 Task and Task Management Skills: Pumps, Ladders and Lines	4	11
Module 4 Task and Task Management Skills: Road Traffic Collision	4	4
Module 5 Task and Task Management Skills: Community Fire Safety	4	3
Module 6 Task and Task Management Skills: Breathing Apparatus	6	8
Module 7 Task and Task Management Skills: Compartment Training Fire Behaviour	5	4
Module 8 Task, Task Management Skills and Contingency and Environmental Management Skills: Scenario Based Training	5	4