



# Qualification Handbook

## Fire Investigation



# Qualification Handbook

## SFJ Awards Level 5 Certificate in Fire Investigation (QCF)

Qualification No: 600/9032/7

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 About us

SFJ Awards is part of the Skills for Justice Group. For the last 10 years Skills for Justice has been working with employers, Governments of the UK and agencies within the skills system, to better equip workforces with the right skills now and for the future.

During this time Skills for Justice has earned an enviable reputation for its knowledge of the sector and its proactive approach to the development of skills and qualifications, along with an ability to deliver genuinely workable solutions for the employers it represents.

SFJ Awards is an awarding organisation that builds upon this reputation, and understands the specific challenges facing the Policing, Community Safety, Legal and Armed Forces sectors, enabling us to quality assure learning outcomes that are suited to the needs of the sectors.

Customer satisfaction is the cornerstone of our organisation, and is delivered through an efficient, customer-led service, providing excellent value for money.

## 1.2 Customer Service Charter

Our Customer Service Charter is published on SFJ Awards website giving the minimum level of service that Centres can expect. The Charter will be reviewed annually and revised as necessary in response to customer feedback, changes in legislation, and guidance from the qualifications Regulators.

## 1.3 Centre Support

SFJ Awards works in partnership with its customers. For help or advice contact:

SFJ Awards  
Distington House  
Atlas Way  
Sheffield  
S4 7QQ

Tel: 0114 231 7379

Fax: 0114 261 8038

E-mail: [info@sfjawards.com](mailto:info@sfjawards.com)

Website: [www.sfjawards.co.uk](http://www.sfjawards.co.uk)

## 2 The Qualification

This handbook relates to the following qualification:

- Level 5 Certificate in Fire Investigation

### 2.1 Overall Objective for the Qualification

This qualification has been designed to accredit the knowledge and skills of learners who investigate, report and present evidence related to incidents involving fire and/or explosion.

### 2.2 Pre-entry Requirements

There are no pre-entry requirements for enrolling to complete this qualification.

### 2.3 Unit Content and Rules of Combination

#### 2.3.1 Level 5 Certificate in Fire Investigation

This qualification is designed to accredit the knowledge and skills required for working in fire investigation. The qualification consists of four mandatory units, which give learners a total of 22 credits.

Unit Reference Number	Unit Title	QCF Level	Credit Value
J/503/2256	Present evidence related to fire investigations in court and at other hearings	5	4
L/503/2257	Prepare to investigate an incident involving fire and/or explosion	5	6
R/503/2258	Investigate an incident involving fire and/or explosion	5	8
Y/503/2259	Report on the investigation of incidents involving fire and/or explosion	5	4

The detailed content of each of the units in the above qualification is provided in Section 5.

## **2.4 Age Restriction**

This qualification is available to learners aged 18 years and over.

## **2.5 Opportunities for Progression**

This qualification creates a number of opportunities for progression from, and into, existing fire and rescue related qualifications.

## **2.6 Exemption**

No exemptions have been identified.

## **2.7 Credit Transfer**

Credits from identical QCF units that have already been achieved by the learner may be transferred.

# 3 Centre Requirements

Centres offering this qualification must have approval from SFJ Awards.

The assessment centre must:

- ensure that there are sufficient people trained or qualified to assess the number of learners they anticipate to register and qualify
- provide quality assured training for those people identified as being responsible for assessing learners
- have quality assurance systems and Internal Quality Assurers in place to ensure that all assessments are valid, reliable, authentic and sufficient
- provide quality assured assessment that meets the requirements of SFJ Awards for those people identified as being responsible for internal quality assurance
- ensure that there is a system of standardisation in place to ensure that all assessments are consistent and fair
- ensure that those undertaking the roles of quality assurance and assessment maintain their skills, knowledge and competence
- comply with the requirements of SFJ Awards and the qualifications Regulators.

Centres offering this qualification must provide internal quality assurance to ensure assessment meets all SFJ Awards requirements and is standardised across individual assessors, assessment locations and learners.

# 4 Assessment

## 4.1 Assessors

All assessors must:

1. be occupationally competent. This means that each assessor must, according to current sector practice, be competent in the functions covered by the units they are assessing. They will have gained their occupational competence working within the Justice and Community Safety sector or within an appropriate occupational sector. They are not required to occupy a position in the organisation more senior than that of the Learner they are assessing. However, Centres must be alert to the risks that all such arrangements could present and ensure that sufficient quality controls are in place through the internal quality assurance process to minimise the possibility of collusion between learners and assessors
2. be able to demonstrate consistent application of the skills and the current supporting knowledge and understanding in the context of a recent role directly related to the qualification units they are assessing as a practitioner, trainer or manager
3. be familiar with the qualification units; and must be able to interpret and make judgements on current working practices and technologies within the area of work
4. maintain their occupational competence by actively engaging in continuous professional development activities in order to keep up-to-date with developments relating to the changes taking place in the Justice and Community Safety sector. These activities may include those offered by the Awarding Organisation, Skills for Justice or other relevant providers in the sector
5. Assessors must be appropriately qualified or be able to prove equivalent competence as specified in the SSC Assessment Strategy
6. Approved Centres will be required to provide SFJ Awards with current evidence of how each assessor meets these requirements; for example certificates of achievement, testimonials, references or any other relevant records.

## 4.2 Internal Quality Assurance

All Internal Quality Assurers must:

1. be occupationally knowledgeable across the range of units for which they are responsible prior to commencing the role. Due to the risk-critical nature of the work and the legal implications of the assessment process, they must understand the nature and context of the assessors' work and that of their Learners. This means that they must have worked closely with staff that carry out the functions covered by the qualification, possibly by training or supervising them, and have sufficient knowledge of these functions to be able to offer credible advice on the interpretation of the units. Those conducting internal quality assurance must also sample the assessment process and resolve differences and conflicts on assessment decisions

2. understand the content, structure and assessment requirements for the qualification they are quality assuring
3. maintain their occupational competence by actively engaging in continuous professional development activities in order to keep up-to-date with developments relating to the changes taking place in the Justice and Community Safety sector. These activities may include those offered by the SFJ Awards, Skills for Justice or other relevant providers in the sector
4. be appropriately qualified or be able to prove equivalent competence as specified in the SSC Assessment Strategy
5. occupy a position in the organisation that gives them the authority and resources to coordinate the work of assessors, provide authoritative advice, call meetings as appropriate, visit and observe assessment practice, and carry out all the other important roles of internal quality assurance
6. have an appropriate induction to Justice and Community Safety qualifications that they are quality assuring, provided to them by the Centre, and have access to ongoing training and updates on current issues relevant to this qualification. Information on the induction and continuing professional development of carrying out internal quality assurance must be made available to the Awarding Organisation through its external quality assurance process

### **4.3 Workplace Assessment**

SFJ Awards believes that direct observation by a competent assessor (as outlined above) or testimony from an Expert Witness is always preferable.

Expert Witness testimony has parity with assessor observation unless otherwise stated in unit evidence requirements. The assessor is responsible for making the final judgement in terms of the Learner meeting the evidence requirements for the unit.

SFJ Awards recognise that there are alternative evidence sources which may be used where direct observation is not possible or practical, e.g. work products, records, reflective accounts, professional discussion etc.

In order to ensure that the evidence used to assess Learners is valid, all Centres must demonstrate that Learners have access to the types of resources commonly in use in the sector and that the pressures and constraints of the workplace are reflected.

It is accepted that the assessment of some knowledge and understanding may take place in a different environment, for example in a training and development centre or another environment, which is not the immediate workplace. However, the assessment of this knowledge and understanding should be linked directly to workplace performance and should include performance evidence.

### **4.4 The Expert Witnesses**

When using Expert Witnesses as a source of evidence, Expert Witnesses must:

1. be occupationally competent. This means that each Expert Witness must, according to current sector practice, be competent in the functions covered by the units to which they are contributing. They will have gained their occupational competence working

within the Justice and Community Safety sector or within an appropriate occupational sector

2. be able to demonstrate consistent application of the skills and the current supporting knowledge and understanding in the context of a recent role directly related to the qualification unit that they are witnessing as a practitioner, trainer or manager
3. be familiar with the qualification unit; and must be able to interpret current working practices and technologies within the area of work.

#### **4.5 Use of languages**

SFJ Awards conducts its business activities in English and the qualification handbook for this qualification is provided in English. The SFJ Awards policy on the use of languages (Welsh and Irish) is available on the website.

SFJ Awards will provide assessment materials and qualification handbooks expressed in English. If there is sufficient demand in Wales, materials will be provided in English and Welsh or Welsh. In Northern Ireland assessment materials will be provided in English and Irish.

For vocational qualifications, SFJ Awards will support the assessment of Learners in Irish or Welsh provided that sufficient notice is given to ensure that an assessment in a language other than English is comparable.

SFJ Awards carries out its business activities in English and may employ the services of a translator for quality assurance purposes.

Reasonable adjustments may be made by carrying out the assessment in British or Irish Sign Language.

The qualification handbook for this qualification is currently available in English

#### **4.6 Simulations**

Assessment in a simulated environment should only be used in the following circumstances:

1. where evidence in the workplace will not be demonstrated within an acceptable time frame
2. where the nature of the work activity presents high risk or danger to the Learner and others, for example, personal safety.

Simulations must be agreed between SFJ Awards and the Centre contact from the Assessment Centre prior to use.

All simulations should follow these basic principles:

1. a Centre's overall strategy for simulation must be agreed and approved by SFJ Awards
2. the nature of the contingency and the physical environment for the simulation must be realistic and Learners should be given no indication as to exactly what contingencies they may come across
3. where simulations are used they must reflect the requirements of the qualification units

4. the location and environment of simulation must be agreed between SFJ Awards and the Centre contact prior to it taking place
5. all simulations must be planned, developed and documented by the Centre in a way that ensures the simulation correctly reflects what the specific qualification unit seeks to assess and all simulations should follow these documented plans
6. There should be a range of simulations to cover the same aspect of a unit so that the risk of Learners successfully colluding is reduced.

#### **4.7 External Quality Assurance**

The monitoring and standardisation of assessment decisions will be achieved by robust and strong Centre monitoring and quality assurance according to SFJ Awards requirements.

The mechanisms required to achieve these requirements are outlined in Ofqual's 'Regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework'. In addition to the Regulator's requirements, SFJ Awards will evaluate all external quality assurance reports and other data relating to the Centre and any risks relating to quality control will be identified and addressed.

External quality assurers (EQA) will be appointed by SFJ Awards to approve centres and to monitor the assessment and internal quality assurance carried out by centres. External quality assurance is carried out to ensure that there is validity, reliability and good practice in centres. To carry out their quality assurance role, quality assurance staff must have appropriate occupational and verifying knowledge and expertise. SFJ Awards quality assurance staff will attend training and development designed to keep them up-to-date, to facilitate standardisation between staff and share good practice.

## 5 Qualification Units

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Present evidence related to fire investigations in court and at other hearings</b>	
<b>Level:</b>	5	
<b>Credit value:</b>	4	
<b>GLH:</b>	15	
<b>Learning outcomes</b>	<b>Assessment criteria</b>	
<i>The learner will:</i>	<i>The learner can :</i>	
1 Understand legal and organisation requirements relating to presenting evidence in court and at other hearings	1.1 explain rules of evidence applicable to cases involving fire investigation 1.2 summarise procedures, practice and protocols in courts and hearings involving fire investigation 1.3 explain disclosure rules in relation to evidence and unused materials 1.4 summarise key features of legislation, organisational requirements and guidelines in relation to presenting evidence in court and at other hearings 1.5 explain reasons why it is important to present evidence in accordance with relevant legal and organisational requirements 1.6 explain the roles and responsibilities of the agencies and personnel involved in courts and hearings	
2 Understand the requirements for providing evidence relating to fire investigations	2.1 explain the importance in keeping up to date in own field of expertise 2.2 explain how opinion is used in courts and hearings in relation to fire investigation 2.3 explain how to compile factual statements and reports for use in courts and hearings 2.4 explain the importance of presenting evidence in courts and hearings which is consistent with written materials provided	

<p>3 Be able to prepare for court or other hearings</p>	<p>3.1 respond promptly to any warnings, citations or notifications received from courts or other hearings</p> <p>3.2 compile all evidence, including documents, real, notes and records and interview transcripts, in accordance with conventions for recording, labelling and presentation</p> <p>3.3 maintain an audit trail of information and materials requested by and provided to the court or hearing</p> <p>3.4 make available relevant exhibits, maintaining their continuity and integrity at all times</p> <p>3.5 review all evidence in advance of the hearing in order to identify the relevant issues, facts and opinion</p> <p>3.6 liaise with agencies and individuals involved in the case</p>
<p>4 Be able to present evidence relating to fire investigations to court or other hearings</p>	<p>4.1 appear at court in accordance with court protocols, procedures and practice for attendance and behaviour</p> <p>4.2 provide oral evidence that is consistent with written evidence provided as part of the case</p> <p>4.3 provide opinion when requested based on the facts established in the investigation</p> <p>4.4 respond to questions in accordance with court proceedings and protocols</p> <p>4.5 liaise with court officials in accordance with court protocols</p>
<p><b>Additional information about the unit</b></p>	
<p>Unit aim(s)</p>	<p>This unit is about presenting evidence related to fire investigations in court and at other hearings.</p>
<p>Assessment requirements specified by a sector or regulatory body (if appropriate)</p>	<p>For the knowledge and understanding component of the unit, assessment from a learning and development environment is allowed.</p> <p>For the practical components, simulation or scenario-based evidence in a learning and development environment is recommended.</p>
<p>Endorsement of the unit by a sector or other appropriate body (if required)</p>	<p>Skills for Justice</p>
<p>Location of the unit within the subject/sector classification system</p>	<p>1.4 Public Services</p>

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Prepare to investigate an incident involving fire and/or explosion</b>	
<b>Level:</b>	5	
<b>Credit value:</b>	6	
<b>GLH:</b>	18	
<b>Learning outcomes</b>	<b>Assessment criteria</b>	
<i>The learner will:</i>	<i>The learner can :</i>	
1 Understand the principles of investigation of fire and/or explosion	1.1 evaluate the levels and types of investigation of fire and/or explosion 1.2 explain the purposes and priorities of fire investigation in relation to community fire safety, criminal proceedings, insurance considerations, civil litigation, research and potential outcomes 1.3 summarise the principles of hazard identification, risk assessment and management in the context of fire and/or explosion investigation 1.4 summarise the principles of the investigative process based on scientific method and practice 1.5 explain the use of science to determine the origin, cause and behaviour of fire and/or explosion 1.6 summarise how the principles of fire and/or explosion dynamics are applied to an investigation 1.7 critically compare the use and application of resources typically used in an investigation of fire and/or explosion 1.8 determine factors and actions which influence the potential and actual contamination of a scene	
2 Understand the legal and organisational requirements in relation to investigation of fire and/or explosion	2.1 explain the powers of entry for fire investigation personnel 2.2 summarise the legislative and organisational requirements when dealing with members of the public 2.3 explain the requirements for data protection and sub-judice 2.4 summarise the requirements for obtaining consent to carry out a scene investigation 2.5 evaluate the benefits of taking an	

	<p>interagency team approach</p> <p>2.6 summarise the relevant standard protocols and joint memorandums of understanding in relation to fire and/or explosion investigation</p> <p>2.7 summarise the current relevant health and safety legislation and its application to fire investigation</p> <p>2.8 summarise the role, responsibilities and limits of authority of specialists and other agencies involved in fire/explosion investigation</p>
3 Be able to determine the nature and scope of the investigation	<p>3.1 confirm the type, location, extent and circumstances of the incident</p> <p>3.2 determine scene priorities in relation to the fire and/or explosion investigation</p> <p>3.3 evaluate available information relevant to the incident</p> <p>3.4 establish the need for the involvement of specialists and other agencies in the investigation</p>
4 Be able to set up working arrangements to carry out an investigation	<p>4.1 agree with internal and external personnel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• arrangements for the safety and security of the scene</li> <li>• the methodology, timing, people and resources required for the investigation</li> <li>• primacy, roles, responsibilities and levels of authority and confidentiality for those involved</li> <li>• arrangements for the preservation, recovery and storage of evidence</li> </ul> <p>4.2 obtain relevant consent for the investigation to go ahead</p> <p>4.3 confirm all agreements and arrangements are recorded</p>
<b>Additional information about the unit</b>	
Unit aim(s)	This unit is about preparing to investigate an incident involving fire and/or explosion
Assessment requirements specified by a sector or regulatory body (if appropriate)	<p>For the knowledge and understanding component of the unit, assessment from a learning and development environment is allowed.</p> <p>For the practical components, simulation or scenario-based evidence in a learning and development environment is recommended.</p>

Endorsement of the unit by a sector or other appropriate body (if required)	Skills for Justice
Location of the unit within the subject/sector classification system	1.4 Public Services

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Investigate an incident involving fire and/or explosion</b>	
<b>Level:</b>	5	
<b>Credit value:</b>	8	
<b>GLH:</b>	41	
<b>Learning outcomes</b>	<b>Assessment criteria</b>	
<i>The learner will:</i>	<i>The learner can :</i>	
1 Understand the methods and science of fire/explosion investigation	1.1 explain the methods and equipment for handling and storing evidence to preserve continuity, avoid damage and any cross contamination 1.2 explain the purpose of gathering information from victims and witnesses of incidents 1.3 compare methods of interviewing victims and witnesses 1.4 explain the fire science used in fire investigation 1.5 analyse the process for identifying, eliminating and confirming potential ignition sources 1.6 explain the principles of correlating burn patterns to identify area of origin and evaluate fire/explosion behaviour 1.7 analyse the structural and environmental factors which may influence fire suppression and development 1.8 evaluate the potential and actual contribution of the structure, finishes, fittings, equipment and processes to the development of an incident	
2 Understand the requirements of working on scene	2.1 summarise the benefits of conducting an internal and external survey of the structure and surrounds in relation to the investigation of fire development 2.2 describe the process for identifying and recording evidence of both accidental and deliberate causes of fire 2.3 explain the principles of fire scene reconstruction 2.4 explain the importance of maintaining continuity and integrity of evidence 2.5 evaluate techniques for excavating fire	

	<p>debris whilst preserving key evidence</p> <p>2.6 describe methods for recovering evidence from incidents including fatalities</p> <p>2.7 explain the requirements for dealing with the deceased in a dignified manner whilst giving due regard to the objectives of the investigation and the nature of risk</p> <p>2.8 describe methods for recording the scene</p> <p>2.9 analyse the behaviours of people involved in fire</p>
3 Be able to recover and preserve physical and documentary evidence relevant to the investigation	<p>3.1 evaluate those factors that may have a bearing on the origin, cause and development of the incident</p> <p>3.2 protect, recover and preserve evidence</p> <p>3.3 confirm the investigation processes using the relevant Personal Protective Equipment and resources identified during the Risk Assessment process</p>
4 Be able to manage the collection and preservation of evidence	<p>4.1 liaise with the people and agencies to achieve the handover of all relevant information and evidence where the responsibility for investigation is beyond their legitimate scope</p> <p>4.2 comply with relevant legal, ethical and regulatory requirements in relation to fire/explosion investigation</p> <p>4.3 organise evidence in a way that will assist analysis</p> <p>4.4 confirm all evidence is accurately preserved and stored</p>
5 Be able to collect witness evidence relevant to the investigation	<p>5.1 confirm details of people who may have information about the incident and their involvement</p> <p>5.2 gather information from relevant people to support the investigation</p> <p>5.3 carry out planned interviews with witnesses and victims in accordance with relevant legislation and organisational requirements</p> <p>5.4 gather information in a way that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promotes co-operation</li> <li>• encourages open and honest response</li> </ul>
6 Be able to compile and provide available evidence	<p>6.1 confirm the validity, relevance and sufficiency of evidence</p> <p>6.2 confirm available evidence is complete to resolve discrepancies where possible</p> <p>6.3 record and disclose discrepancies,</p>

	<p>omissions, anomalies or inconsistencies in the evidence</p> <p>6.4 follow the specified requirements for labelling and despatching evidence</p> <p>6.5 confirm that intended recipients receive compiled evidence and supporting report</p>
<b>Additional information about the unit</b>	
Unit aim(s)	This unit is about investigating an incident involving fire and/or explosion
Assessment requirements specified by a sector or regulatory body (if appropriate)	<p>For the knowledge and understanding component of the unit, assessment from a learning and development environment is allowed.</p> <p>For the practical components, simulation or scenario-based evidence in a learning and development environment is recommended.</p>
Endorsement of the unit by a sector or other appropriate body (if required)	Skills for Justice
Location of the unit within the subject/sector classification system	1.4 Public Services

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Report on the investigation of incidents involving fire and/or explosion</b>	
<b>Level:</b>	5	
<b>Credit value:</b>	4	
<b>GLH:</b>	16	
<b>Learning outcomes</b>	<b>Assessment criteria</b>	
<i>The learner will:</i>	<i>The learner can :</i>	
1 Understand the requirements for reporting on the investigation of incidents involving fire and explosion	1.1 explain legal and organisational requirements for the recording and secure storage of information relating to incidents 1.2 explain the purpose and importance of samples recovered from the scene in relation to the formulation of a report 1.3 explain the contribution of fire and explosion debris analysis to a report 1.4 explain the relevance of reporting the contribution of the structure, finishes, fittings, equipment and processes to the incident 1.5 explain the relevance of reporting the contribution of Fire Safety measures and practice in relation to the incident 1.6 explain the process for forming and testing hypotheses in relation to the scientific methodology 1.7 explain the principles of developing and presenting a final hypothesis and conclusions	
2 Be able to evaluate the results of an investigation	2.1 record information relating to the investigation in a way that supports validation and scrutiny 2.2 classify records and supporting information in a logical sequence for evaluation 2.3 review information to identify any adaptations to accepted working procedures and practices 2.4 analyse numerical data for its relevance and support to the investigation outcomes 2.5 clarify access to and availability of supplementary materials that support the report in accordance with the rules of disclosure	

	2.6 confirm records and supporting materials relating to the investigation are maintained in a durable and retrievable form
3 Be able to report the conclusions of an investigation	<p>3.1 confirm the report includes information that is accurate, current, valid and relevant to the investigation</p> <p>3.2 confirm the report conforms to legal requirements with reference to case notes and related materials</p> <p>3.3 present hypotheses and conclusions in clear and unambiguous terms</p> <p>3.4 support conclusions with factual evidence and reasoned, impartial arguments</p> <p>3.5 clarify reasoning for discounting or eliminating specific hypotheses</p> <p>3.6 produce the report in an agreed format</p> <p>3.7 provide a disclosure list containing material not contained within the report</p> <p>3.8 confirm receipt of report by all intended authorised recipients</p>
<b>Additional information about the unit</b>	
Unit aim(s)	This unit is about reporting on the investigation of incidents involving fire and/or explosion.
Assessment requirements specified by a sector or regulatory body (if appropriate)	<p>For the knowledge and understanding component of the unit, assessment from a learning and development environment is allowed.</p> <p>For the practical components, simulation or scenario-based evidence in a learning and development environment is recommended.</p>
Endorsement of the unit by a sector or other appropriate body (if required)	Skills for Justice
Location of the unit within the subject/sector classification system	1.4 Public Services