

# GARDINER ASSOCIATES

## TRAINING & RESEARCH (GATR)

NEWSLETTER - January 2019

### Management Buyout

We can now formally announce that GATR is no longer part of the Hawkins group of companies and is under the management of a new Board of Directors. (See Page 3)

### Interactive Training

Our March Practical and PDR fire investigation training courses are almost full to capacity. Our next series of inter-active courses run from May to June and September to October. (See Pages 3, 7 & 8)

### Online Learning (Theory) Level 2 Introduction

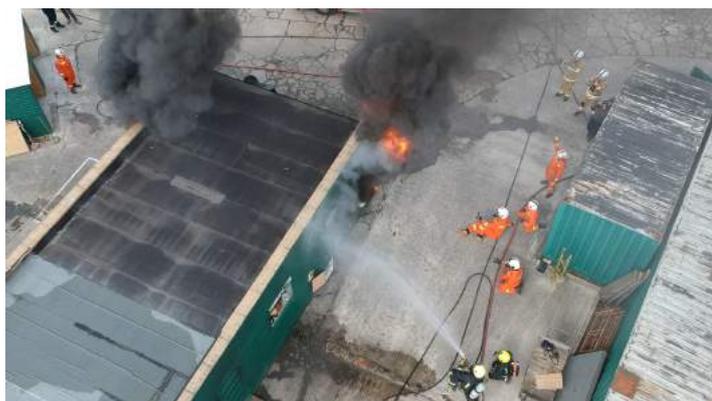
Following completion of pilot trials of our online Level 2 'Introduction to Fire Investigation' theory learning course with inter-active assessments, GATR are now offering this option to Fire & Rescue Service crew/watch managers, Police Service and others with similar routine 'Tier One' roles and responsibilities.

### Other Online Options

Our team of subject matter experts are currently designing a range of other Online learning theory options supporting practitioners whose role involves 'Tier Two' investigations.

### SFJ Awards - Level 5 Certificate 130 plus candidates

Over a five-day period at the end of our 2018 training season another twenty seven *experienced practitioners* undertook the initial stages of our assessment process aligned to the Skills for Justice Awards Level 5 Certificate in Fire Investigation. This brings the current total number of successful GATR candidates to over 130. (See Page 2)



Phoenix Heights - Compartment from on high

### Trainers and Assessors

Our Head of Centre recently designed and delivered bespoke training to new groups of trainers/assessors, which now brings our total number of subject matter experts to over twenty.

### NFCC Fire Investigation Competency Framework - Preparing for 2020

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Competency Framework provides authoritative Guidance on appropriate levels of competency and defines Tier 1 and Tier Two fire scene investigations. (See Page 3)

## Online Theory Options Level 2 Introduction

We are delighted to announce the launch of our online learning site.

GATR plan to deploy Information only modules; Stand-alone online courses; Online courses with elements of guided-learning from experienced online tutors/trainers; Online modules/courses, which are part of blended-learning solutions ; Courses, which include accreditation to Skills for Justice Awards qualifications; Continued Professional Development modules and Re-accreditation modules



During October/November over twenty delegates representing Metropolitan and rural Fire & Rescue Services in England, Wales and Scotland, successfully completed our Online Level 2 Introduction To Fire Investigation pilot course. After responding to feedback from the delegates and their supervisors we are now in a position to open registration to others.

Registrations are invited from organisational co-ordinators or individuals for our Level 2 Introduction to Fire Investigation Course which is completed entirely online. Please visit <http://gatr.co.uk/level2>.

For more information see page 5 or see our flyer page 16.

## SFJ Awards Level 5 Certificate (L5C) in Fire Investigation - Consultation

GATR have recently submitted stakeholder feedback to the SFJ Awards development team regarding: Unit content; Qualification structure; Unit level; Credit values; Guided Learning Hours; Total Qualification Time and proposed changes.

SFJ Awards were the first organisation to answer repeated calls from the UK fire investigation community to convert the National Occupational Standard (NOS) into a professional award.

Throughout the original consultation processes and lengthy design & development stages both the NOS and SFJ Awards L5C qualification have remained 'fit for its original purpose'. The pre-entry requirements demonstrate it was designed for experienced practitioners and not as an add onto an initial training course.

### L5C GATR Candidates 2015 - 2018

To date over 130 experienced practitioners have either completed or are currently registered to undertake our robust four-stage assessment process include representatives of the UK private sector, police service and F&RS personnel from rural and metropolitan areas of England Wales and Scotland. They include fire investigators with a full-time role e.g. Merseyside, Scottish Fire Service and LFB and those with add on responsibilities e.g. Avon & Somerset, Mid & West Wales, Shropshire and West Sussex (See Pages 9 to 16)



## Practical - Five Day

Day one focuses on key theory topics drawn from NFPA 921 & Kirk's Fire Investigation. Day two delegates are mentored through five fire-damaged rooms before undertaking a full scene investigation on day three. On days four and five they present their findings in court and class environments and take part in inter-active workshops before being shown photos of the compartments' pre-fire conditions, with DVD films from ignition to extinguishing which include time/temperature graphs.



## PDR - Three Day

This programme is designed for experienced practitioners and includes inter-active theory sessions, practical exercises and focuses on the SFJA Assessment Criteria and accreditation processes. These training events now precede some of the L5C assessment dates at Phoenix Heights.



## Business Matters Updates

### Board of Directors

The new board of directors includes one of the GATR co-founders taking on the role of Managing Director and another continuing in the role of Business Development. Other board roles and areas of responsibilities are now shared amongst some of our established teams of product designers and service providers e.g. trainers and assessors, Head of Assessment Centre and Phoenix Heights facility Development team.

### NFCC Fire Investigation Competency Framework

Over twenty years ago our associates introduced the concept of Three Levels of Fire Investigation which was subsequently adopted as the UK national model. Over the intervening years the term Levels has become more commonly associated with training and accreditation and has been causing some confusion. Therefore GATR supports the recent decision of the NFCC to simplify the process and adopt a Two Tier approach to fire scene investigations.

The NFCC Fire Investigation Competency Framework provides authoritative guidance on appropriate levels of competency i.e.

*“Personnel performing Tier 1 (routine) scene investigations should be trained and competent to a level equivalent to meet all of the Skills for Justice Level 2 Introduction to Fire Investigation assessment criteria.*

*Fire Scene Investigators (FSI) carrying out Tier 2 Investigations should be trained and competent to a level equivalent to meet all of the Skills for Justice Level 5 Certificate in Fire Investigation assessment criteria and be working to the standards prescribed within the code of Practice for fire investigators within the UK Criminal Justice System”*



## Professional Assessor Training

Since 2015, GATR have been training their own assessors to meet the requirements for delivering Skills for Justice Awards qualifications. This is to meet and retain approved assessment centre status. Last year we commenced training another 4 assessors. We are now in a position to offer Professional Assessor training to any of the associated skills sets within the fields of forensic investigation; for example crime scene investigation. If you would like any further information regarding this aspect please contact us.

## Mobile Crime Scene & Demonstration Units

These units can be brought to, and temporarily sited at, the client's local/regional venue. This allows experts in various forensic fields to augment theory programmes with practical exercises.



## UKAS and ISO 17020

As Oct 2020 gets closer a pilot group of four organisations are continuing to prepare for their accreditation. The full details of what will be involved in their assessment are not yet available.

## Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences (CSFS)

We are currently in the process of updating our list of CPD training courses validated by CSFS.



The  
Chartered  
Society of  
Forensic  
Sciences

## The Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE)



As a long established 'Recognised Training Provider' we are in the process of updating our profile for the IFE website.

## Streamlining Forensics

From the 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2019 a joint pilot for Fire Investigation under the Streamlined Forensic Reporting (SFR) process will be carried out across the East Midlands by Police forces in conjunction with the regional Fire and Rescue Service Fire Investigators and Cellmark Forensic Services.

(SFR) first introduced in 2012 provides national consistency. It Aims to avoid the cost and delays, when full scientific evidence is produced, then not disputed in Court.

This process aims to replace the present Initial and Full fire investigation reports currently completed.

The SFR process ensures only contested forensic evidence is fully prepared for trial. It is a simple process whereby the participants identify and agree which issues are contested

## GATR's \*NEW\* Online Learning Portal

---

Our new Online learning portal has been designed to deliver online learning courses, modules and information to registered participants.

GATR will be deploying the following online training:

- Information only modules
- Stand-alone online courses
- Online courses with elements of guided-learning from experienced online tutors/trainers
- Online modules/courses, which are part of blended-learning solutions
- Courses, which include accreditation to Skills for Justice Awards qualifications
- Continued Professional Development modules
- Re-accreditation modules



Currently, we are offering our new Level 2 Introduction to Fire Investigation which can be accredited as a Level 2 Award by Skills For Justice Awards. 2019 candidates for our Level 5 will also have access to online information via the learning portal. (for Level 2 information please see page 16.)

### Registration

Registration is available by going to the appropriate course/module page on the GATR website ([www.gatr.co.uk](http://www.gatr.co.uk)) and submitting the registration form. Once the application is processed by GATR administration, the learner/candidate will receive a username and password by email to access the site. Information about how to navigate the site is included in an online-video guide.

### Site Front Page

We are developing the Site Front Page with a view to providing generic information for all fire Investigators or those who have registered and are interested in Fire Investigation. Even when you have completed a course you are welcome to access this page for updated information and discussions.

### Course content

On most courses and modules there will be an administration area that provides information about the course and how the course should be completed. The learner will see the aims and objectives of the course.

Courses will usually be split into lessons and modules and will contain learning within the lesson activities. Lesson activities may contain images, videos, sound bites, interactive discussion forums, questions and assignments. These activities are monitored by the system and will show whether the learner has completed the activity. It will also show the overall progress of the learner throughout the

course. This information is available to the learners from their dashboard area, but it will also be available to the Course manager and Site administrator. In most cases, the learner will not successfully complete the course unless all the requirements of the course, including elements and activities, are completed.

Activities can be taken in any order and at any time within the constraints of the course deployment. It should be noted that some courses have commencement and completion dates.



### **Questions and knowledge checks**

As part of the lesson or course, simple questions and knowledge checks will be required to be undertaken. In most cases the system will mark the learners' response and will provide immediate feedback. If a question is answered incorrectly, the learner may have to revisit a lesson or part of a lesson again or may have the opportunity to make another attempt at the question. In some cases,

the learner may not be allowed to continue the course until a correct answer is given. Usually the learner will be able to see which question was answered incorrectly, but they will not be able to view the correct answer. In the case of certain courses, the assessment area will not be available to the learner until certain criteria are met.

### **Accreditation assessment**

If the course is accredited with an awarding body, for example Skills for Justice Awards, there may be a requirement to provide additional activities in the form of an additional assessment or online professional discussion. This may be an online exam, a knowledge check, a practical scenario, chat or forum-based discussion or an assignment. The process for an accreditation-based assessment is that the learner, in most cases, must undertake the assessment or knowledge check under examination conditions in an area where an invigilator is present. The invigilator can be a line-manager or independent person who is willing to provide a witness testimony of the learner's performance without assistance during the assessment. For online discussions, dates and times will be provided to learners in advance of the event.

### **Learner support**

On registering for the online course, the form will ask whether the learner needs any kind of individual learning support. The course will be adapted on an individual basis depending on the requirements of the learner. Assistance can be provided at any time by posting a query on the course 'Questions and Problems' forum. Unlike some online learning sites, the learner is supported throughout the course by the course manager, and experienced fire investigator.

For all courses please contact  
enquiries@gatr.co.uk  
Tel: 07581 843737 or visit our website:  
www.gatr.co.uk



## 2019/20 – CORE INVESTIGATION TRAINING

<b>(A) INTRODUCTION THEORY ONLINE OPTION (See page 16)</b>	Designed for F&RS Crew/Watch Managers and Police Service personnel and others with similar roles at Tier One scene investigations
<b>(B) INTRODUCTION THEORY - INTERACTIVE</b> 1 to 2 days (10 CPD points per day) Delivered at clients' venue	As above
<b>(C) THEORY - INTERACTIVE</b> 1 to 2 days (10 CPD points per day) Delivered at clients' venue	As (B) above Augmented with mobile demonstration units
<b>(D) THEORY - INTERACTIVE</b> 1 to 2 days (10 CPD points per day) Delivered at Phoenix Heights	As (B) ABOVE Augmented with fire compartment examinations
<b>FOUNDATION THEORY</b> 1 to 4 days (10 CPD points per day) Delivered at clients' venue *Online Option in development	Designed for F&RS Crew/Watch Managers and/or Police Service personnel and others with similar support roles at 'Tier Two' scene investigations
<b>PRACTICAL 5 days (45 CPD points)</b> Travelodge Haverhill and Phoenix Heights	Designed for F&RS Crew/Watch Managers and Police Service personnel and others with similar roles at 'Tier Two' scene investigations.
<b>PRACTICAL DEVELOPMENT REFRESHER (PDR)</b> 3 Days (30 CPD points) Travelodge Haverhill and GATR Phoenix Heights facility	Designed for experienced practitioners, the programme includes interactive theory sessions, workshops and practical exercises, focusing on the SFJA Level 5 Certificate in Fire Investigation assessment criteria and the GATR accreditation processes.

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS (PDO)

<b>ADVANCED FIRE &amp; EXPLOSION</b>	Bespoke advanced options designed for experienced practitioners delivered on request to the client's local/regional venues.
<b>ELECTRICITY &amp; FIRE: CPD Modules</b>	Electricity for fire investigators (2 days) plus two other modules <a href="http://www.gatr.co.uk/electrical-courses-fire-investigators/">http://www.gatr.co.uk/electrical-courses-fire-investigators/</a>
<b>INFORMATION GATHERING:</b>	Bespoke 2 days - local/regional venues
<b>PHOTOGRAPHY &amp; FIRE:</b>	Bespoke 2-4 days - local/regional venues
<b>SCENE DOCUMENTATION:</b>	One-day preparatory for SFJ Awards L5C candidate groups. Local regional venues
<b>FIRE &amp; FORENSIC AWARENESS:</b>	Bespoke programmes designed for interested parties e.g. Coroner's Officers, Forensic Medical Examiners, Pathologists representatives of the Legal Profession
<b>ARSON &amp; FATAL FIRE AWARENESS:</b>	Half day at client's local or collaborative venue. For Police Senior Investigating Officers, Crime Scene Managers & Scene Examiners.

### Working with Other Established Providers

GATR continues to work in collaboration with other established training providers such as Park Lodge International - Vehicle Fire Investigation [www.parklodge.org.uk](http://www.parklodge.org.uk) & Legal Experience Training who offer a three day Advanced Professional Award accredited by Pearson Learning in: Evidence Law and Practice, Advanced Report Writing and Witness Familiarisation for Coroners and Courts The course is cross-mapped against the L5C [www.legalexperiencetraining.com](http://www.legalexperiencetraining.com)

## Interactive Training Courses - Delegates Feedback

---

### **Fire Investigation Co-ordinator - Group Manager**

*The benefit derived from my group of four newly appointed investigators and larger group of experienced practitioners attending the recent fire investigation training courses has been tangible. Working with all at GATR has made training 22 staff in 12 months so easy, nothing was too much trouble”*



### **Practical Course Delegate**

*A thoroughly enjoyable course, it was a full week with plenty of practical scenarios, excellent visiting lecturers and all the Gardiner instructors had huge amounts of experience and knowledge to share with the course plus... the food was outstanding!!!*

### **Practical Course delegate**

*This interactive training course is second to no other I have attended over the past twenty years. It allowed me to put theory into practice by examining real fire scenes in real compartments. From the introductions to the close of the course it was obvious that the instructors are experts in their fields. The team deliver subjects with infectious passion which builds confidence.*

### **Practical Course Delegate**

*I was impressed with the enthusiasm and motivation that Mick and his team displayed, the course was very well structured and explained well. The team cascaded their underpinning knowledge in a productive manner making learning sessions enjoyable.*

### **PDR Course Delegate**

*Many thanks really great refresher training course. Most enjoyable and interesting and will add value to my fire investigation role. With this CPD course under my belt I am looking forward to undertaking the Level 5 assessments at the earliest opportunity.*

### **PDR Course Delegate + L5C Candidate**

*An exceptional PDR Course. The setup is excellent, providing real post fire incidents and with the addition of the knowledge of the instructors, provided an interesting and enjoyable course. This has aided me greatly in my subsequent investigations. Not only was the PDR course a really good refresher, I also learnt and gained far more skills in Fire Scene Examination with the addition of a Level 5 qualification to back it up. Looking forward to my next course with you.*

### **PDR Course Delegate + L5C Candidate**

*There was so much more to the course than just obtaining the qualification, a unique opportunity to benefit from the exposure to a wide range of fire scenes and a valuable opportunity to access the vast amount of knowledge and experience from the trainers all of who were always very conscientious and considerate. Thank you GATR.*

## **Annual Training Conference, 28-29 January 2019, Leeds**

The 2019 United Kingdom Association of Fire investigators Annual Training Conference will be held at the Queens Hotel, City Square, Leeds LS1 1PJ. The theme for the two-day training conference will be "Fatal Fire Master Class". The cost of the two-day conference is £295 (members booking before 1 January 2019), £350 (members booking after 1 January 2019), £590 (non-members). The registration includes the two-day conference programme, Monday night accommodation with breakfast, conference dinner and refreshments throughout both days. Accommodation for Sunday 27 January 2019 can be booked via the Queens hotel. <https://www.uk-afi.org/seminars/annual-training-conference-2019> or contact [chris.ward@gatr.co.uk](mailto:chris.ward@gatr.co.uk) to book a place.

## **General Training - Private-Sector**

Drawing on the combined experience of the GATR and GFI teams and other business associates with backgrounds in the Police Service, Fire & Rescue Services, Forensic Science Providers and other disciplines, GATR and their business partners are able to provide a range of bespoke training programmes for private sector first responders and managers:

- Risk Assessment
- Fire Awareness
- Forensic Awareness
- Response to Major Incidents
- Communication Skills
- Information Gathering
- Information Presentation
- Personal Safety

## **Fire/Crime Related Research Projects**

Over the past two decades our team of international experts has set, filmed and instrumented hundreds of compartment fires 'in the name of science', giving us the opportunity to carry out numerous fire/arson related research projects such as:

- Fingerprint retrieval and identification
- DNA retrieval e.g. drinks containers, condoms and cigarettes etc.
- Blood Pattern Analysis
- Retrieval of data from computer hard drives and mobile phones
- Electrical Arc Mapping
- Damage to glass by impact, flame impingement, heat and smoke
- Retrieval of Ignitable liquids

## **Phoenix Heights Training , Research and Assessment Facility**

Our Phoenix Heights fire facility in Wethersfield, Essex, is constructed of building blocks and other standard building materials. The six compartments are realistically furnished, electrically energised from the mains supply and subject to realistic ventilation conditions. The site currently includes two semi-permanent crime scenes, exhibit examination room, syndicate rooms, classroom, refreshment areas, metal and concrete storage containers and a fresh supply of fire damaged vehicles. In the 2019/20 financial year GATR plan to add another purpose built demonstration unit and make further improvements to the site. GATR only use metal shipping containers for storage and demonstration purposes.

## UK Occupational Standards (NOS) SFJA Level 5 Certificate (L5C) in Fire Investigation

---

### *National Occupational Standards*

Since 1996 members of our team have contributed to the design and development of the UK Fire Investigation NOS, which in 2013 SFJ Awards translated into a Level 5 Certificate. All GATR course topics can be cross-mapped to the NOS Units and Certificate Assessment Criteria and can be tracked through all of our training programmes from Basic Level to Professional Development Options.



### *SFJA Level 5 Certificate in Fire Investigation*

The Level 5 Certificate, which has been developed by Skills for Justice Awards (SFJA) for the Qualifications and Credit Framework, is a translation of the UK National Occupational Standard (NOS) for Fire Investigation which members of the GATR team helped design and develop.

The GATR UK Assessment Centre in Essex, allows us to offer candidates an accreditation and qualification process which includes the investigation of real fires in real compartments, which are subject to prevailing climatic conditions.

Previous attempts to qualify practicing fire investigators have relied predominately on an academic approach for testing technical knowledge with little regard for practical ability or on the laborious process of building large portfolios of testimonies and statements.

Representatives of the UK fire investigation community began drafting the original NOS almost twenty years ago. At long last thanks to the efforts of SFJA and GATR, experienced practitioners have the opportunity to attain a qualification that testifies to their level of competency, as well as proof of their technical knowledge and understanding of fire investigation matters.

### *L5C Candidates and assessment dates*

The first cohorts of L5C candidates, with backgrounds in the fire & rescue service, police service, FSS and private sector, have successfully completed the assessment process and been awarded their certificates. For those experienced practitioners wishing to take up the opportunity to obtain a formal qualification which is based upon the UK NOS and that uniquely testifies to both their technical knowledge and practical skill, GATR maintains a register of interest and has more dates scheduled throughout 2019/2020.

For all courses and assessments  
please contact  
enquiries@gatr.co.uk  
Tel: 07581 843737 or visit our website:  
www.gatr.co.uk

## A Streamlined Four-Stage Assessment Process

**Stage 1** - Candidates attend the GATR Phoenix Heights Training and Accreditation facility where they will: carry out an examination of a real compartment fire; gather information from witnesses; document their findings regarding origin, cause and fire behaviour.



**Stage 2** - From the evidence gathered at the fire scene the candidate submits an expert witness report complete with fire-ground contemporaneous notes, photographs and unused material. This report is submitted and assessed within agreed time frames.



**Stage 3** - On the same day as the practical assessment at our Phoenix Heights facility in Essex, candidates will be assembled in a classroom environment and sit a technical examination consisting of both multiple choice and written subjective answers.

**Stage 4** - The inquisitorial hearing, during which the candidate is required to qualify their Stage 1 findings, will be carried out at regional venues throughout the UK. The final assessor, and Chair of the hearing, will have all the assessor's evidence from the practical assessment and the candidate's report and will guide the candidate through a professional discussion to complete the competencies required of the qualification.

The price for the complete assessment is £1750 + VAT  
Please register an interest for further information and assessment dates  
email [enquiries@gatr.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@gatr.co.uk)  
Tel: 07581 843737 or visit our website: [www.gatr.co.uk](http://www.gatr.co.uk)



## **SFJ Awards Level 5 Certificate in Fire Investigation GATR Assessment Process - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

---

### ***(1) What is the cost of the GATR two-day four-stage assessment process?***

£1750 + VAT per candidate.

### ***(2) Does the cost cover all stages of the assessment?***

Yes. It covers all four stages of the assessment, registration and certificate.

### ***(3) Does the price include refreshments and accommodation?***

GATR provides refreshments at our Phoenix Heights Assessment Centre and can direct L5C candidates to local accommodation options for the night/s before they undertake the initial stages of an assessment, including the Travelodge (formerly Days Inn) Haverhill, from where GATR hosts training events.

### ***(4) What does the Level 5 Certificate equate to in academic and NVQ terms?***

NVQs are still in existence but have largely been replaced by the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) process. The title of each qualification contains details of the size e.g. award, certificate or diploma and level of difficulty (Entry to Level 8). The Level 5 Certificate is roughly equivalent to foundation degree level or NVQ level 4-5.

### ***(5) Who designed the Level 5 Certificate and how does it relate to the National Occupational Standard (NOS)?***

The National Occupational Standards (NOS) was designed and developed by many members of the UK fire investigation community between 1996 and 2013, when Skills For Justice Awards (SFJA) translated it into a professional award. The NOS Units and components can be cross referenced to the Level 5 Certificate learning outcomes and assessment criteria and GATR professional development training programmes (Also see CFOA IFE UKAFI Code of Practice - April 2017)

### ***(6) Who was the NOS designed for and the GATR Level 5 Certificate targeted at?***

Experienced practitioners responsible for carrying out Tier Two investigations.

### ***(7) Are there any pre-entry requirements for the GATR L5C assessment process?***

Yes. Since designing our robust assessment process we have delivered the product with the original design of the NOS in mind

The current version of the SFJ Awards Qualifications Handbook Pre-entry Requirements states: "Learners who wish to undertake this qualification must be experienced fire investigation practitioners. It is difficult to define a precise time period or a number of incidences a practitioner needs to investigate in order to gain appropriate experience. However to give an indication, it is anticipated that the length of time needed to gain the required experience could range from a minimum of one year in a post as 'full-time' investigator with a large UK Metropolitan Fire & Rescue Service (F&RS), to a number of years for a practitioner (F&RS, police or other service) working in a quieter part of a rural region with fire investigation as an 'add on reference' to their role.

“Learners with queries as to whether their level of experience is sufficient for starting this qualification should contact their prospective Centre for further guidance”.

***(8) How long does it take to achieve the award?***

From attendance at the practical assessment to obtaining the results will take approximately 16 weeks depending on the availability of both candidate and assessor for the final Inquisitorial process.

***(9) What do I have to do?***

Demonstrate competence, knowledge and understanding of all of the assessment criteria set by SFJ Awards. These criteria cover preparing to investigate a fire scene, investigating a fire scene, reporting on the investigation and presenting evidence of your findings. We assess you against the criteria by observing you investigating the fire scene; providing you with a written exam to test your knowledge and understanding; assessing a report you make following your investigation and finally, providing you with a chance to discuss your findings at an Inquisitorial hearing. It is very important you understand all the criteria and know how to evidence them.

***(10) When reading the handbook and criteria, I notice my skills do not cover all aspects required of the qualification. How do I overcome this?***

You must thoroughly prepare to meet all the criteria in the handbook in order for you to be awarded the qualification. This may mean preparing yourself by seeking resources for your own development or attending training or preparatory events delivered by organisations that can show you how to do this.

***(11) Can I explain to the assessor what I am doing?***

Yes. It will help both you and the assessor if you explain your actions as you are going along. Don't forget the assessor will be looking to mark off criteria as you are completing the assessment and he/she may not see or understand everything you are doing.

***(12) What happens if I do not achieve one part of the assessment but pass the others?***

We will give you every opportunity to satisfactorily meet all the criteria, but if there is an area that requires significant development, we will detail this in your feedback and make arrangements for you to retake that particular area after a period of self-development (additional costs may apply).

***(13) I am busy at work. How long do I have to submit the report?***

The report stage simulates an expert witness report being submitted to an inquisitorial court. There are deadlines that must be met and the required criteria recognises this. You will have 8 weeks to submit your report. Only in exceptional circumstances will late reports be considered. We also encourage you to get the report checked by a supervising officer before submission to our assessors.

***(14) What will GATR supply on the practical assessment?***

GATR will provide scene lighting, tools and evidence packaging. The candidate must provide PPE, note-taking and photographic equipment.

***(15) Will I investigate a real fire scene?***

Yes. A real fire set in a real building, subject to real weather conditions.

***(16) What if I'm wrong about the cause of the fire in my submitted report?***

The assessment isn't about whether you are right or wrong. It's about the process and how you came to your hypothesis. You may be challenged on this during the Inquisitorial stage – but it is assumed you are the subject matter expert.

***(17) I get nervous when being watched and assessed by one of my peers.***

All GATR/SFJA assessors are trained to sensitively observe and assess the candidate. They will put you at ease if you are nervous but they will not interfere with your investigation. They may ask you to clarify your actions but the fire scene is yours to investigate.

***(18) Do I receive feedback?***

Yes. Feedback on each part of the process will be terms of the amount of evidence you have provided during the assessment and how well you met the criteria i.e. Very Strong evidence; Practice Standard; Adequate Awareness; Little or No evidence. For each part of the process you will receive a total score, which is categorised as Excellent; Practice standard with identifiable strengths; Practice standard with opportunities for development; Significant development required.

***(19) How can I prepare for the certificate?***

Those registering interest are provided with additional information including a list of the SFJ Awards assessment criteria cross-referenced, wherever possible, to the appropriate sections of the recommended reading materials. The analogy is that of a driving test. Even the most experienced would have to revisit the Highway Code prior to retaking a driving test and preparation is everything!

It also helps to develop the four-stage approach including preliminary exterior and interior scene examinations, which may no longer carry the prominence detailed in the NFPA 921 guide, together with forensic and safety strategies.

For those experienced practitioners, who in recent years, have not carried out many Level (Tiers) 2/3 investigations and/or attended an appropriate professional development training courses, the majority of our three-day PDR events are followed by assessments on the fourth and fifth days. Those GATR trainers involved in overseeing the PDR practical exercises will not be involved in the same practitioners' Stage 1 assessment process.

To express further interest see:  
[www.gatr.co.uk/level-5-certificate-in-fire-investigation](http://www.gatr.co.uk/level-5-certificate-in-fire-investigation)

To formally register candidates should do so via:  
[www.gatr.co.uk/level5-registration](http://www.gatr.co.uk/level5-registration)



## GATR Assessment Centre News

### *External Quality Assurance*

Every year Skills for Justice Awards quality assures our assessment centre to see if we are retaining the high standard expected an SFJ Awards Approved Centre. In September last year, the external verifier had these words to say about GATR's Assessment Centre in his report:



*“The centre continues to deliver, assess and IQA the L5 Fire Investigation programme to a very high standard, and has an excellent understanding of the required quality management systems and processes to replicate this with the introduction of the L2 Fire Investigation programme later this year.*

*The centre exhibits a number of best practice activities in the delivery, assessment and IQA of the current programme, including excellent learner review and progress reports and excellent learner feedback/evaluation processes,*

*that allow the centre to monitor its own performance and improvements by learner outcome and satisfaction.”*

### *Online Learning*

The launch of our Online Learning site has been challenging but we are delighted to announce that the pilot Level 2 course was met with success from the 8 participating organisations. We were also delighted to accredit the course as a Skills for Justice Level 2 qualification. This means that future participants will have the option of gaining the Level 2 qualification or just undertaking the course as an Introduction to Fire Investigation.

We are also adding the learning and information elements for the Level 5 Certificate in Fire Investigation to the site. That means all information for the assessment will be in one place.

You would think that participants undertaking online learning are left to get on with it; but we have made sure that there is always someone on hand to help and assist. All you have to do is ask.

Even when you have finished a course, you can still have access to the site. We have discussion forums, news articles and information for everyone to refer to.

Please visit our web site [www.gatr.co.uk](http://www.gatr.co.uk) and head for the SFJ Awards section.

*Paul Mayne - Head of GATR Assessment Centre*

**GARDINER ASSOCIATES  
TRAINING AND RESEARCH**

## Level 2 Online Course Introduction to Fire Investigation

### What is it?

A certified online learning theory programme designed to meet SFJ Awards Level 2 Assessment Criteria.



### Who is it for?

Fire & Rescue Services Crew/Watch Managers  
Police Personnel  
with similar roles at Tier One Fire Investigations



### How long does it take?

Candidates will take an estimated 20hrs to complete the online learning course including online assessments.

### Accreditation

This course can be accredited as a **Level 2 Award Introduction to Fire investigation** by SFJ Awards

### How much does it cost?

Guide price £120+vat per person  
For further details and to register online go to <http://gatr.co.uk/level2> or phone 07581 843737  
Please enquire for multiple registrations



Gardiner Associates Training & Research (GATR) – founded in 1995.

Registered Office: Phoenix House, 251 Carr Road, Northolt, UB5 4RN

Contact Tel: 07581 843737 Email: [enquiries@gatr.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@gatr.co.uk)

## **SFJ Awards Certificate Level 5 - Candidate Feedback**

---

### **Group Manager: Fire Investigation Co-ordinator - L5C**

*The acquisition of the SFJ Level 5 qualification has not only raised the competence of my team but also their personal levels of confidence in approaching the task.*

### **Group Manager: Head of Training Delivery - PDR + L5C**

*'I found the PDR course and SFJ Level 5 process very informative, appropriate and provided me with greater confidence when undertaking the challenging role of fire scene investigation'.*

### **Group Manager: PDR + L5C**

*I have been undertaking Level 2 Fire Investigation for 6 years and the GATR Fire Investigation PDR offered exactly the level of personal development and knowledge review that I was looking for, the learning environment and knowledge review activities are tailored to existing Fire Investigators whilst still offering an opportunity to brush up on some basic skills. The range of scenarios created at their training facility provided an unique opportunity to develop several aspects of Fire Investigation skills and techniques ranging from vehicle fires to complex workplace scenarios. The instructors have a comprehensive background in Fire Investigation and as well as technical expertise in this field are able to offer real life experiences to support learning objectives. I would highly recommend this course to anyone who has a role to play in the field of Fire Investigation.*



*The Level 5 qualification process provides a robust and evidenced based pathway to achieving the standard whilst remaining relevant to the work activities of the candidate. The various elements of the assessment process was largely in line with existing Fire Investigation practices that we utilise within our Fire & Rescue Service so as well as being a route to achieving a recognised standard it also provided an opportunity to challenge some of the ways I had approached scenes and developed reports in the past. The work undertaken for the qualification and the self-recognition that I had achieved this standard has provided me with greater confidence during subsequent Fire Investigation activities.*

### **Station Manager PDR + L5C**

*As always it was a pleasure to return to Gardiners for advancement in my Fire Investigation learning journey. The Level 5 qualification was very well managed by their team and I can say that I have learned a great deal which will definitely support me for the future.*





For more information regarding our Skills For Justice Accredited Assessments

Please visit [www.gatr.co.uk/sfja](http://www.gatr.co.uk/sfja)

