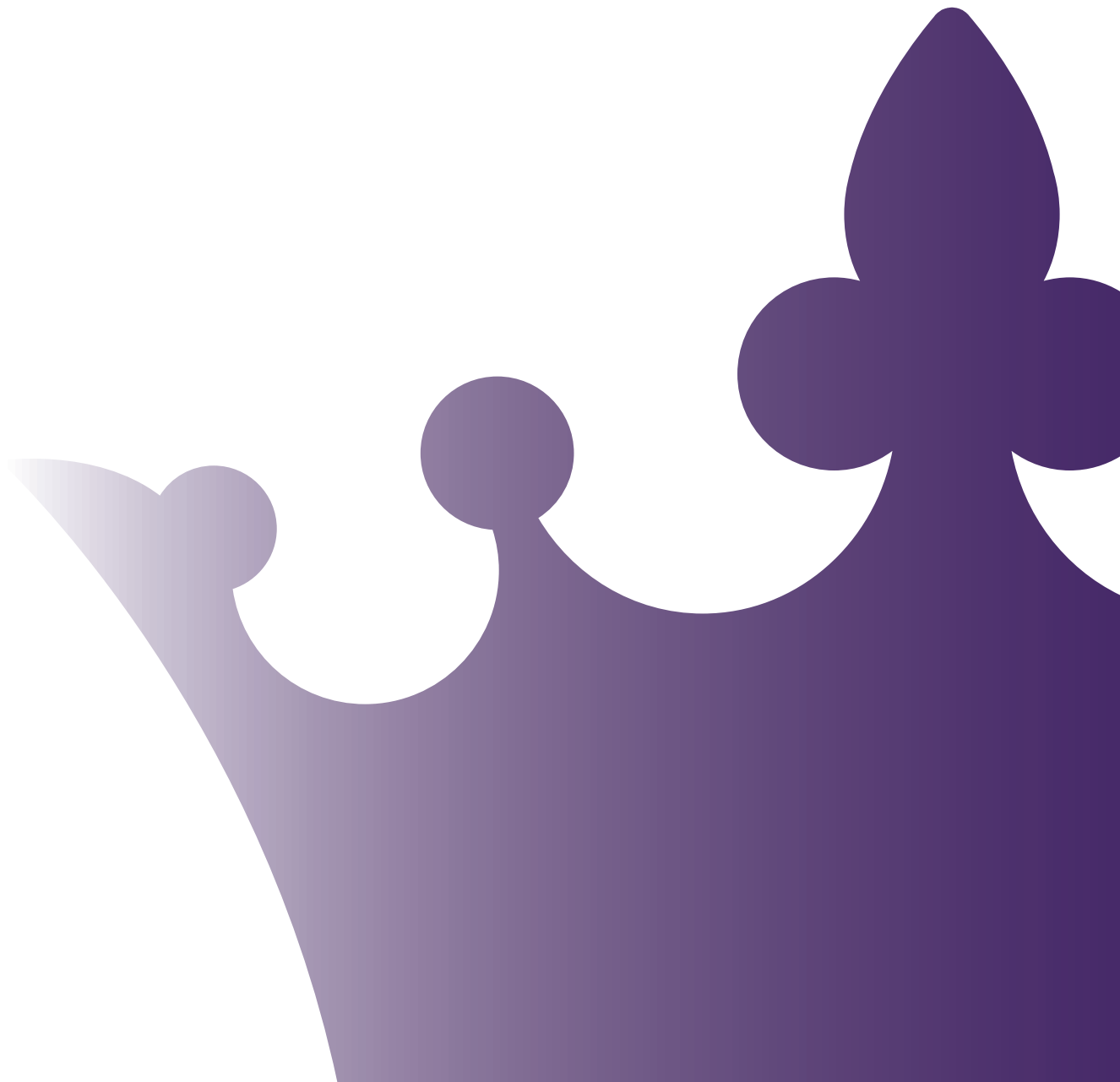




# **Qualification Handbook**

## **Introduction to Fire Investigation**



# Qualification Handbook

## SFJ Awards Level 2 Award in Introduction to Fire Investigation

Qualification Number: 601/8720/7

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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  
1st Floor, Unit C  
Meadowcourt Business Park  
4 Hayland Street  
Sheffield  
S9 1BY

Tel: 0114 284 1970  
Fax: 0114 284 1978

E-mail: [info@sfjawards.com](mailto:info@sfjawards.com)  
Website: [www.sfjawards.com](http://www.sfjawards.com)

# 2 The Qualification

## 2.1 Overall Objective for the Qualification

This handbook relates to the following qualification:

- SFJ Awards Level 2 Award in Introduction to Fire Investigation

The main objective of this qualification is to improve awareness of fire investigation amongst Watch Managers, Crew Managers and Junior Scenes of Crime Officers (SOCOs). It does not qualify individuals as competent Fire Investigators which is a much more advanced and specialised role. Achievement of the qualification will enable Watch Managers, Crew Managers and SOCOs to make more accurate and effective judgements, taking into account their professional and legal responsibility.

## 2.2 Pre-entry Requirements

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

## 2.3 Units and Rules of Combination

### Level 2 Award in Introduction to Fire Investigation

This qualification is made up of one mandatory unit. To be awarded this qualification the learner must achieve the unit as shown in the table below.

Mandatory Unit				
Unit Reference Number	Unit Title	Level	TQT	GLH
R/508/2965	Introduction to Fire Investigation	2	20	8

## 2.4 Total Qualification Time (TQT)

Total Qualification Time comprises of the following two elements.<sup>1</sup>

- (a) The number of hours which an awarding organisation has assigned to a qualification for Guided Learning, and

<sup>1</sup> Total Qualification Time criteria, Ofqual September 2015  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/total-qualification-time-criteria>

- (b) An estimate of the number of hours a Learner will reasonably be likely to spend in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training, including assessment, which takes place as directed by – but, unlike Guided Learning, not under the immediate guidance or supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

The Total Qualification Time for this qualification is 20 hours, of which 8 hours are Guided Learning.

## **2.5 Age Restriction**

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

## **2.6 Opportunities for Progression**

This qualification creates a number of opportunities for progression into further study or qualifications in the fire and rescue sector.

## **2.7 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.

# 3 Centre Requirements

Centres must be approved by SFJ Awards and also have approval to deliver the qualifications they wish to offer. This is to ensure centres have the processes and resources in place to deliver the qualifications. Approved centres must adhere to the requirements detailed in the SFJ Awards Centre Handbook, which includes information for centres on assessment and internal quality assurance processes and procedures and is available in the centres' area of the SFJ Awards website <http://sfjawards.com/approved-centres>.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that their assessor and internal quality assurance staff:

- are occupationally competent and/or knowledgeable as appropriate to the assessor or IQA role they are carrying out
- have current experience of assessing/internal quality assuring as appropriate to the assessor or IQA role they are carrying out, and
- have access to appropriate training and support.

Information on the induction and continuing professional development of those carrying out assessment and internal quality assurance must be made available by centres to SFJ Awards through the external quality assurance process.

This qualification handbook should be used in conjunction with the SFJ Awards Centre Handbook, the SFJ Awards Assessment Policy and the SFJ Awards Quality Assurance (Internal and External) Policy. All policies are available on the website [www.sfjawards.com](http://www.sfjawards.com).

# 4 Assessment

## 4.1 Assessors

### 4.1.1 Occupational Competence

Due to the risk-critical nature of the work, particularly when assessing in the justice and health sectors, and the legal implications of the assessment process, assessors must understand the nature and context of the learners' work. This means that assessors must be occupationally competent. Each assessor must therefore be, according to current sector practice, competent in the functions covered by the units they are assessing. They will have gained their occupational competence by working within the sector relating to the units or qualification they are assessing.

Assessors must 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.

### 4.1.2 Occupational Knowledge

Where assessors are assessing knowledge-based qualifications, they must be occupationally knowledgeable.

### 4.1.3 Qualification Knowledge

Assessors must be familiar with the qualification units they are assessing. They must be able to interpret and make judgements on current working practices and technologies within the area of work.

### 4.1.4 Assessor Competence

Assessors must be able to make valid, reliable and fair assessment decisions. To demonstrate their competence, assessors must be:

- qualified with a recognised assessor qualification, or
- working towards a recognised assessor qualification, or
- able to prove equivalent competence through training to appropriate national standards, for example, National Occupational Standard 9: Assess learner achievement<sup>2</sup>.

Approved centres will be required to provide SFJ Awards with current evidence of how each assessor meets these requirements, for example certificates of achievement or testimonials.

### 4.1.5 Continuing Professional Development

Assessors must actively engage in continuous professional development activities to maintain:

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<sup>2</sup> National Occupational Standards for Learning and Development, LLUK 2010



- occupational competence and knowledge by keeping up-to-date with the changes taking place in the sector(s) for which they carry out assessments
- professional competence and knowledge as an assessor.

## **4.2 Internal Quality Assurers**

### **4.2.1 Occupational Knowledge**

Internal quality assurers (IQAs) must 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, particularly in the justice and health sectors, 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 who carry out the functions covered by the qualifications, 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.

### **4.2.2 Qualification Knowledge**

IQAs must understand the content, structure and assessment requirements for the qualification(s) they are internal quality assuring.

Centres should provide IQAs with an induction to the qualifications that they are responsible for quality assuring. IQAs should also have access to ongoing training and updates on current issues relevant to these qualifications.

### **4.2.3 Internal Quality Assurer Competence**

IQAs must 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
- conduct pre-delivery internal quality assurance on centre assessment plans, for example, to ensure that any proposed simulations are fit for purpose
- visit and observe assessment practice
- review the assessment process by sampling assessment decisions
- ensure that assessment has been carried out by assessors who are occupationally competent, or for knowledge-based qualifications occupationally knowledgeable, in the area they are assessing
- lead internal standardisation activity
- resolve differences and conflicts on assessment decisions.

To demonstrate their competence, IQAs must be:

- qualified with a recognised internal quality assurance qualification, or
- working towards a recognised internal quality assurance qualification, or

- able to prove equivalent competence through training to appropriate national standards, for example National Occupational Standard 11: Internally monitor and maintain the quality of assessment<sup>3</sup>.

Approved centres will be required to provide SFJ Awards with current evidence of how each IQA meets these requirements, for example certificates of achievement or testimonials.

#### **4.2.4 Continuing Professional Development**

IQAs must actively engage in continuous professional development activities to maintain:

- occupational knowledge by keeping up-to-date with the changes taking place in the sector(s) for which they carry out assessments
- professional competence and knowledge as an IQA.

### **4.3 External Quality Assurers**

External quality assurers (EQAs) are appointed by SFJ Awards to approve centres and to monitor the assessment and internal quality assurance carried out by centres. SFJ Awards are responsible for ensuring that their external quality assurance team have:

- sufficient occupational knowledge
- current experience of external quality assurance
- access to appropriate training and support.

External quality assurance is carried out to ensure that there is compliance, validity, reliability and good practice in centres. EQAs must have appropriate occupational and verifying knowledge and expertise.

#### **4.3.1 External Quality Assurer Competence**

To demonstrate their competence, EQAs must be:

- qualified with a recognised external quality assurance qualification, or
- working towards a recognised external quality assurance qualification.

#### **4.3.2 Continuing Professional Development**

EQAs must maintain their occupational and external quality assurance knowledge. They will attend training and development designed to keep them up-to-date, facilitate standardisation between staff and share good practice.

### **4.4 Expert Witnesses**

Expert witnesses, for example line managers and supervisors, can provide evidence that a learner has demonstrated competence in an activity. Their evidence contributes to performance evidence and has parity with assessor observation. Expert witnesses do not however perform the role of assessor.

#### **4.4.1 Occupational Competence**

Expert witnesses must, according to current sector practice, be competent in the functions covered by the units for which they are providing evidence.

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<sup>3</sup> National Occupational Standards for Learning and Development, LLUK 2010

They must 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.

#### **4.4.2 Qualification Knowledge**

Expert witnesses must be familiar with the qualification unit(s) and must be able to interpret current working practices and technologies within the area of work.

#### **4.5 Assessing Competence**

The purpose of assessing competence is to make sure that an individual is competent to carry out the activities required in their work.

Assessors gather and judge evidence during normal work activities to determine whether the learner demonstrates their competence against the standards in the qualification unit(s).

Competence should be demonstrated at a level appropriate to the qualification. The skills required at the different qualification levels are defined in Ofqual's level descriptors.<sup>4</sup> Further information on qualification levels is included in the SFJ Awards Assessment Policy.

Evidence must be:

- Valid
- Authentic
- Sufficient
- Current
- Reliable.

Assessment should be integrated into everyday work to make the most of opportunities that arise naturally within the workplace.

#### **4.6 Methods for Assessing Competence**

Qualifications may be assessed using any method, or combination of methods, as stipulated either by SFJ Awards or within specific qualifications, and which clearly demonstrate that the learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been met. Some sectors may have specific assessment requirements that apply to their qualifications and where these apply, details will be included in the qualification-specific handbook.

Assessors need to be able to select the right assessment methods for the competences that are being assessed, without overburdening the learner or the assessment process, or interfering with everyday work activities. SFJ Awards expect assessors to use a combination of different assessment methods to make a decision about an individual's occupational competence. Assessment methods which are most likely to be used are outlined below. However these are included for guidance only and there may be other methods which are suitable. Further information on assessment methods is included in the SFJ Awards Assessment Policy.

##### **4.6.1 Observation**

SFJ Awards believe that direct observation in the workplace by an assessor or testimony from an expert witness is preferable as it allows for authenticated, valid and reliable

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<sup>4</sup> Qualification and Component Levels: Requirements and Guidance for All Awarding Organisations and All Qualifications, Ofqual 2015, [www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualification-and-component-levels](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualification-and-component-levels)

evidence. Where learners demonstrate their competence in a real work situation, this must be done without the intervention from a tutor, supervisor or colleague.

However SFJ Awards recognise that alternative sources of evidence and assessment methods may have to be used where direct observation is not possible or practical.

#### **4.6.2 Testimony of witnesses and expert witnesses**

Witness testimonies are an accepted form of evidence by learners when compiling portfolios. Witness testimonies can be generated by peers, line managers and other individuals working closely with the learner. Witnesses are defined as being those people who are occupationally expert in their role.

Testimony can also be provided by expert witnesses who are occupationally competent **and** familiar with the qualification unit(s). Assessors will not need to spend as long assessing expert witness testimony as they would a witness testimony from a non-expert. Therefore if expert witnesses are involved in the assessment strategy for a qualification a greater number of learners can be managed by a smaller number of assessors.

The assessor is however responsible for making the final judgement in terms of the learner meeting the evidence requirements for the qualification unit(s).

#### **4.6.3 Work outputs (product evidence)**

Examples of work outputs include plans, reports, budgets, photographs, videos or notes of an event. Assessors can use work outputs in conjunction with other assessment methods, such as observation and discussion, to confirm competence and assure authenticity of the evidence presented.

#### **4.6.4 Professional discussion**

Discussions allow the learner to describe and reflect on their performance and knowledge in relation to the standards. Assessors can use discussions to test the authenticity, validity and reliability of a learner's evidence. Written/audio records of discussions must be maintained.

#### **4.6.5 Questioning the learner**

Questioning can be carried out orally or in written form and used to cover any gaps in assessment or corroborate other forms of evidence. Written/audio records of all questioning must be maintained.

#### **4.6.6 Simulations**

Simulations may take place either in a non-operational environment which is not the learner's workplace, for example a training centre, or in the workplace. The qualification handbook will specify whether simulations are allowed for the qualification and/or units within it. Proposed simulations must be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose as part of the IQA's pre-delivery activity.

Simulations can be used when:

- the employer or assessor consider that evidence in the workplace will not be demonstrated within a reasonable timeframe
- there are limited opportunities to demonstrate competence in the workplace against all the assessment criteria

- there are health and safety implications due to the high risk nature of the work activity
- the work activity is non-routine and assessment cannot easily be planned for
- assessment is required in more difficult circumstances than is likely to happen day to day.

Simulations must follow the principles below:

1. The nature of the contingency and the physical environment for the simulation must be realistic
2. Learners should be given no indication as to exactly what contingencies they may come across in the simulation
3. The demands on the learner during the simulation should be no more or less than they would be in a real work situation
4. 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
5. There should be a range of simulations to cover the same aspect of a unit and they should be rotated regularly.

#### **4.7 Assessing Knowledge and Understanding**

Knowledge-based assessment involves establishing what the learner knows or understands at a level appropriate to the qualification. The depth and breadth of knowledge required at the different qualification levels are defined in Ofqual's level descriptors.<sup>5</sup> Further information on qualification levels is included in the SFJ Awards Assessment Policy.

Assessments must be:

- Fair
- Robust
- Rigorous
- Authentic
- Sufficient
- Transparent
- Appropriate.

Good practice when assessing knowledge includes use of a combination of assessment methods to ensure that as well as being able to recall information, the learner has a broader understanding of its application in the workplace. This ensures that qualifications are a valid measure of a learner's knowledge and understanding.

A proportion of any summative assessment may be conducted in controlled environments to ensure conditions are the same for all learners. This could include use of:

- Closed book conditions, where learners are not allowed access to reference materials

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<sup>5</sup> Qualification and Component Levels: Requirements and Guidance for All Awarding Organisations and All Qualifications, Ofqual 2015 [www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualification-and-component-levels](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/qualification-and-component-levels)

- Time bound conditions
- Invigilation.

#### **4.8 Methods for Assessing Knowledge**

SFJ Awards expect assessors to use a variety of different assessment methods to make a decision about an individual's knowledge and understanding, which are likely to include a combination of the following:

- Written tests in a controlled environment
- Multiple choice questions
- Evidenced question and answer sessions with assessors
- Evidenced professional discussions
- Written assignments (including scenario-based written assignments).

Where written assessments are used centres must maintain a sufficient bank of assignments which are changed regularly.

#### **4.9 Assessment Planning**

Planning assessment allows a holistic approach to be taken, which focuses on assessment of the learner's work activity as a whole. This means that the assessment:

- reflects the skills requirements of the workplace
- saves time
- streamlines processes
- makes the most of naturally occurring evidence opportunities.

Planning assessment enables assessors to track learners' progress and incorporate feedback into the learning process; assessors can therefore be sure that learners have had sufficient opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge to perform competently and consistently to the standards before being assessed. The assessment is therefore a more efficient, cost effective process which minimises the burden on learners, assessors and employers.

#### **4.10 Standardisation**

Internal and external standardisation is required to ensure the consistency of evidence, assessment decisions and qualifications awarded over time.

##### **4.10.1 Internal standardisation**

IQAs should facilitate internal standardisation events for assessors to attend and participate, in order to review evidence used, make judgments, compare quality and come to a common understanding of what is sufficient.

##### **4.10.2 External standardisation**

SFJ Awards will enable access to external standardisation opportunities for centres and EQAs over time.

Further information on standardisation is available in the SFJ Awards Quality Assurance (Internal and External) Policy and the SFJ Awards Standardisation Policy.

#### **4.11 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

'Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is the process of recognising previous formal, informal or experiential learning so that the learner avoids having to repeat learning/assessment within a new qualification. RPL is a broad concept and covers a range of possible approaches and outcomes to the recognition of prior learning (including credit transfer where an awarding organisation has decided to attribute credit to a qualification)',<sup>6</sup>

The use of RPL encourages transferability of qualifications and/or units, which benefits both learners and employers. SFJ Awards support the use of RPL and centres must work to the principles included in Section 6 Assessment and Quality Assurance of the SFJ Awards Centre Handbook and outlined in SFJ Awards Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.

#### **4.12 Equality and Diversity**

Centres must comply with legislation and the requirements of the RQF relating to equality and diversity. There should be no barriers to achieving a qualification based on:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation

Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure that learners who are disabled are not disadvantaged in any way. Learners must declare their needs prior to the assessment and all necessary reasonable adjustment arrangements must have been approved by SFJ Awards and implemented before the time of their assessment.

Further information is available in the SFJ Awards Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and the SFJ Awards Equality of Opportunity Policy.

#### **4.13 Health and Safety**

SFJ Awards are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of learners, employees and volunteers and expect everyone to share this commitment.

SFJ Awards foster an open and supportive culture to encourage the safety and well-being of employees, learners and partner organisations to enable:

- learners to thrive and achieve
- employees, volunteers and visitors to feel secure
- everyone to feel assured that their welfare is a high priority.

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<sup>6</sup> After the QCF: A New Qualifications Framework, Ofqual 2015  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/after-the-qcf-a-new-qualifications-framework>

Assessment of competence based qualifications in the justice sector can carry a high risk level due to the nature of some roles. Centres must therefore ensure that due regard is taken to assess and manage risk and have procedures in place to ensure that:

- qualifications can be delivered safely with risks to learners and those involved in the assessment process minimised as far as possible
- working environments meet relevant health and safety requirements.



# 5 Qualification Unit

<b>Unit Number</b>	R/508/2965	
<b>Unit Title</b>	Introduction to Fire Investigation	
<b>Level</b>	2	
<b>TQT</b>	20 hours	
<b>GLH</b>	8 hours	
<b>Learning Outcomes</b> <i>The learner will:</i>	<b>Assessment Criteria</b> <i>The learner can:</i>	
1. Understand the principles and responsibilities of fire investigation	1.1	Describe why fire investigation is needed
	1.2	Explain the levels of fire investigation and agencies involved
	1.3	Identify the legal requirements for a fire investigation
	1.4	Describe the limits of own responsibility within fire investigation
2. Understand the methods used in fire investigation	2.1	Describe the relevance of post fire indicators
	2.2	Identify different types of burn patterns
	2.3	Identify indicators of deliberate fires
	2.4	Describe effective scene preservation by initial crews
3. Understand the recording of evidence by a Fire Investigation Officer	3.1	Identify the types of evidence gathered by a Fire Investigation Officer
	3.2	Explain the reasons for contemporaneous notes
	3.3	Describe what is meant by 'the chain of evidence'
	3.4	Summarise the information recorded by a Fire Investigation Officer
4. Be able to investigate a fire within own level of responsibility	4.1	Identify the point of origin of a fire
	4.2	Investigate the cause of a fire
	4.3	Explain the development of a fire
	4.4	Record information relating to a fire

## Assessment Guidance

This unit should be assessed using a variety of assessment methods.

For the knowledge and understanding content (Learning Outcomes 1, 2 and 3) assessment methods may include: multiple choice questions, a written assignment, extended questions, professional discussion, assessor questioning of the learner.

For the performance content (Learning Outcome 4) assessment methods may include: simulations, observation of performance by assessor, professional discussion, a written report and post course assessment (e.g. e-assessment). Photographs, film and simulated environments may be used as the basis of the fire investigation. However, it is understood that access to simulated environments may not always be possible; in which case photographs and film based scenarios will be sufficient.