

University of Illinois
Fire Service Institute
Evaluation Policy and Procedures



Developed by the
Illinois Fire Service Institute
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**University of Illinois
Illinois Fire Service Institute**

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University of Illinois Fire Service Institute
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Director's Signature

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Date



Deputy Director's Signature

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Date



Curriculum, Testing & Certification Director's Signature

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Date

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I. General Information

Sound examination policies and procedures are the cornerstones upon which the Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI) determines whether the student achieved the course objectives. IFSI intends to effectively measure to what degree learning has occurred through a fair and consistent examination process. This policy applies to and shall be utilized for the development, administration, and scoring of all evaluations delivered as a part of IFSI programs. All students are required to complete an “*Enrollment Form*” and sign the “*Acknowledgement of Risks and Release of Responsibility*,” which states that all personal protective equipment meeting NFPA standards must be worn.

II. Certification

Certification, in its simplest form, means an individual has been tested by an accredited agency on a body of clearly delineated material and found to meet or exceed the minimum standard. IFSI provides an opportunity for individuals to pursue both state and national-level certification.

The Illinois Fire Service Institute has received course approval and exam equivalency for many certification levels from the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM). IFSI has also received accreditation for many certification levels through the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board) and International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC). Requirements for each certification level may include specified prerequisites and/or successful performance of required assessments. IFSI submits certificate seal information at least every 6 months to the two accrediting bodies.

The Illinois Fire Service Institute will only allow individuals to advance to the next level of certification when proof of prerequisite requirements is produced. This may consist of documentation verifying the successful completion of acceptable education and training programs or certification by an accredited agency (Pro Board, IFSAC, OSFM). Certificates are accepted/recognized regardless of expiration date status. The certification must include the NFPA standard, level, title, and edition to which the individual is certified. Class Support staff confirm the certificate’s authenticity with the certifying agency. IFSI may accept these types of certifications from other state-level agencies. (Recommended: Once the program has approved a peer state certificate, an approval list shall be maintained.) A course prerequisite is a successful completion requirement before a student is enrolled and allowed to attend the course. Proof of completion of prerequisites shall be submitted upon registering for a course.

The Illinois Fire Service Institute does not delegate certification authority to any other agency, entity, or individual.

III. Course Attendance

The staff at IFSI have worked diligently to ensure the content taught within IFSI courses is relevant and essential to the job duties. All content has been determined to be required knowledge to safely and successfully complete tasks required of first responders in the line of duty. As a result, IFSI requires students to attend or make up all course content to receive their completion certificate. Students are expected to attend class on time and remain in class for the class session. Suppose a student misses any portion of class with an accumulated absence of 20% or less of scheduled class time. In that case, the student will be responsible for arranging the make-up of the missed course content with the instructor or program manager. The student must make up the specific course content that s/he missed, not just the hours. A student must complete all portions of a course, both classroom and practical, to establish eligibility to sit for the end-of-course evaluations within 12 months of the last day of class. Make-ups are limited to eight hours

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of absence per forty hours or 20% of scheduled class time. If a student's absence exceeds 20%, refer to the "true emergencies" section below.

Instructors are required to keep a record of attendance on the Illinois Fire Service Institute Roster according to the following procedures:

- The Class Roster must be filled out at the first class meeting and reflect attendance at all class sessions. The student should review personnel information in the first hour of the first class meeting.
- Attendance is to be taken from the Class Roster at the scheduled start time of each class session.
- Should a student be absent, the lecture(s) and/or practical(s) missed will be documented on the Class Roster. If the absence is excused and less than 20%, the student must work with the lead instructor to complete an Absentee Record.
- The Absentee Record will document the specific content and duration the student missed; and when and where they agree to make it up.
- The Absentee Record will help the student, the program, and Class Support staff confirm when make-up work has been completed; and when the student is eligible to test or receive their certificate.
- The instructor must turn in the IFSI Class Roster and any Absentee Records with other class-closing paperwork at the end of the course.

True Emergencies

The Curriculum, Testing, and Certification Director (CTC) must approve absences beyond 20% on a case-by-case emergency basis. IFSI may choose to make accommodations in a true student emergency. A student may be allowed to make up missed classroom lectures, practical exercises, and exams, should this be the case and the absence is approved. The absence will be considered excused only if extenuating circumstances are documented and provided within seven (7) calendar days of the absence. A student must be able to verify extenuating circumstances such as sickness, death in the immediate family, military deployment, certain legal considerations, or certain work-related emergencies.

Timeliness of Initial and Make-up Exams

Exams are allowed twelve months from the last day of class to make up and complete any missed course content and/or end-of-course evaluations. After one year has passed from that date, a student must re-enroll to retake the course.

IV. Exam Accommodations

It is the policy of the Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI) to administer its end-of-course exams so as not to discriminate against an otherwise qualified applicant. IFSI offers reasonable and appropriate accommodations for the end-of-course examinations for those persons with a documented disability, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

IFSI written examinations are designed to test the knowledge of first responders to provide safe and effective service to the citizens of their community. As such, the content of the examinations reflects the current national, state, and local standards.

IFSI urges students requesting accommodations to submit such requests as early as possible, ideally when s/he registers for the class. This advance notice will provide adequate time to resolve any documentation issues that may arise. The Application for Reasonable Accommodations must be completed in its entirety (click [here](#) to view the Application). It must include documentation

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establishing the specific disability and the reason for the requested accommodation. The submitted documents must provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate how the limitation impacts the student in the testing environment.

The IFSI Accommodations Coordinator will review each request on an individual basis and make decisions relative to appropriate accommodations based on the following general guidelines:

1. To be considered for accommodation under the ADA, the student must present adequate documentation demonstrating that their condition substantially limits one or more major life activities.
2. Requested accommodations must be reasonable and appropriate for the documented disability and not fundamentally alter the examination's ability to assess the essential functions of an identified position/job, which the test is designed to measure.
3. Documentation demonstrating the current level of functioning of the student should be recent to help ensure accommodations are based on an assessment of the disability's current impact on the student's ability to take the examination.
4. Professionals conducting assessments, rendering diagnoses of specific disabilities, and/or recommending appropriate accommodation must be qualified.
5. All documentation submitted supporting the requested accommodation will be kept in confidence and disclosed only to the extent necessary to evaluate the accommodation. Information concerning an accommodation request will be released to third parties with written permission from the student.

Note: Students shall request an exam accommodation for each class, ideally during enrollment, regardless of any past accommodation approval.

V. Challenge Exams

The Challenge Exam Program allows those who have completed training to a given level but do not currently hold IFSAC or Pro Board National Certification to challenge IFSI's evaluations to prove competency and obtain national certification. All Challenge Exams are based on NFPA's Professional Qualification Standards. These Challenge Exams are designed to allow experienced firefighters to obtain a portable certificate recognized in many other states, countries and by government contractors. These evaluations may include a written exam administration and multiple skill evaluations depending upon the specific certification. Please reference each Challenge Exam webpage for details. Upon completing this objective evaluation process, national certification is awarded to the candidate whose name will be entered in the IFSAC and/or Pro Board registries.

IFSI does not review the certification credentials from other IFSAC/Pro Board accredited entities to grant an additional certification or Letter of Reciprocity. IFSI encourages authorities having jurisdictions to accept all IFSAC/Pro Board certifications as equivalent.

VI. Security of Exams

Exam security is maintained in all development steps, including processing, printing, storing, packing, shipping, and exam administration. Test banks, exams, and other items stored on the computer network are only password accessible by the Curriculum, Testing, and Certification staff and the IT staff. Contact with any test material is kept to a minimum number of personnel. Back-up electronic files are secured on the server.

Individual exams are assigned an identification number. A log of each exam created is kept, and a hard copy booklet number is assigned to maintain inventory. Any booklets retired from use are

shredded and recorded in the log. A copy of every test created is maintained permanently in an archived folder. Only the Curriculum, Testing, and Certification staff and auditors have access to copies of exams. All hard exam copies are locked in either the Testing Office or exam kits. Exam questions and/or exams are always supervised in open areas.

During the validation process, the questions are projected onto a screen. Members are not permitted to take notes and are instructed to maintain strict test bank confidentiality. Exam questions are made available on a limited “check-out” basis to Subject Matter Experts for supervised editing and validation. A record of the disbursement of test questions is kept. Such a hard copy of the test questions shall include no more than 25% of the test bank per individual.

If exam questions are believed to be compromised, such as booklets unaccounted for, those test questions will be retired and removed from circulation.

VII. Creation and Local Validation of Exam Items

Methods of Assessment

The Curriculum, Testing, and Certification Office works closely with the Program Managers to determine the best method of assessment for their course, guided by the language in the Job Performance Requirements (JPR), requisite knowledge, and skills. The program must develop evaluation tools that allow testing the entire standard (all the JPRs) for a specific level. The completion of a matrix or correlation sheets ensures this coverage. The program works with the Curriculum, Testing, and Certification staff to determine which evaluation tools are best utilized and completes The Assessment Plan Worksheet outlining how the JPRs will be evaluated.

The Program may choose to assess with a written exam, skill evaluation, portfolio, product, or any combination of those methods. Cognitive JPRs and requisite knowledge may be tested through written or skills examination. JPRs involving skills and requisite skills shall be tested through psychomotor or process. Skills evaluating JPRs that require the individual to produce/develop/create a work product may be tested through the product method. The product method does not evaluate the candidate completing a skill but uses a rubric, where the scorer impartially assesses the deliverable produced by the individual.

Exam Banks

Illinois Fire Service Institute exam banks are comprised of questions developed by IFSI Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and/or from approved exam banks which are based on National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. Separate exam banks are maintained for each course of study. Each bank must consist of at least twice the number of questions used per test generated. A combination of CTC Specialists and SMEs locally reviews test banks. Persons involved with these test bank validations are recorded, and their credentials are stored and filed. During the validation of the test banks, SMEs will review each question to ensure content validity. Every question in a fully validated test bank is cross-referenced to an IFSI course objective and NFPA JPRs. Exam questions must be referenced to a JPR for the specified level to be included on an exam for certification. The SMEs also develop an exam Blueprint for the Program, which determines the makeup of the exam using course objectives.

Correlation work ensures that the evaluation methods equip IFSI to evaluate the entire standard. Exam banks are reviewed by IFSI each time an NFPA standard is released, or the course curriculum is significantly changed.

Test Bank References

One hard copy of the test bank is printed and housed in the CTC Office. Program staff has limited access during validation work under the direct supervision of CTC Support Specialists. All documents associated with test development or validation are shredded upon completion.

VIII. Development of Written Exams

Program staff utilize the Program's Exam Blueprint when developing an exam and ensure the required distribution across the applicable NFPA standard. Then cognitive/written exam questions are randomly selected from a validated bank of questions to form an exam. These exams will be identified by a Test A or B. The goal is to have no more than 75% redundancy between these tests and for students who retest on a given exam to be tested off of Test B. All exams are given a unique identifier number, like a SSN. The number comprises the year, month, and order developed that month. (YYMM#) Example 23032 was the second exam developed in March of 2023.

When developing tests for certification purposes, the test is reviewed to ensure that test items representing the various components of the standard are evaluated. Each level of the standard is graded separately. No parts of exams are weighted. Once a test has been developed, it is proofed and approved by a CTC Support Specialist and the Curriculum, Testing, and Certification Director. If the Program Manager reviews the exam, this review is completed in the Testing Office supervised by a CTC Specialist.

At least five versions (1-5) of each test are printed. The CTC staff then assign the printed test with the appropriate booklet number. Exam booklets are housed in a restricted area of IFSI with limited, controlled access. All outdated and unusable copies of test versions are shredded. A historical log is kept of all exam booklets that have been shredded.

IX. Reliability of Written Exam Items

An ongoing process ensures reliability throughout the life of a written exam question. Questions are categorized by difficulty (p-value) and discrimination (rpb). Questions with a p-value falling below 60% or above 90% correct response and with a negative rpb are evaluated by staff and compared to the lesson plan, textbook, and/or other course materials. These questions may be modified or removed from the bank. Notes will be entered as to the reason for review so the next local validation team will be aware of the poor performance history of the question.

Individual exam statistics and cumulative statistical data for the test banks are automatically captured by the test bank management software when an exam is graded. Curriculum, Testing, and Certification staff review statistics for all newly created exams ("Awaiting 1st Review" Status) to determine question reliability. Exams are otherwise reviewed periodically (i.e., when Student Feedback Forms are received, upon request of the Program Manager, or when a class has a high failure rate, etc.). A high failure rate is 40% or more of the students failing. Grades will not be processed until this review is completed for new exams or for exams that experience a high failure rate. A CTC Specialist then analyzes these questions in consultation with the appropriate Program Director or Manager for language or grammar mistakes and/or errors. If the program staff confirms an error occurred that negatively impacts a student's pass/fail status, the student's record will be changed. IFSI ensures that students are not penalized for errors that occur during the test development process. These reports may be provided to OSFM upon request.

X. Exam Retirement

There are three conditions under which exams are retired: 1) the life cycle of the exam has expired; 2) following a test bank validation; or 3) a critical degree of exam questions falls below

the pass rate, AND those same questions have been marked as “Needs Review.” When an exam is retired, it will be replaced by another exam, and the previous exam will be phased out. Retired exam templates will be “inactivated” in the software system, and a pdf copy will be filed in the **Archived Exams** folder on the shared drive following the procedures outlined on the **Retirement Process Checklist**. Only the Curriculum, Testing, and Certification team members and IT staff have access to this drive.

1. The CTC staff’s goal is to replace exams on a 48-month cycle.
2. A blueprint for writing new exams is created after any test bank validation. When a new edition of the NFPA Professional Qualification standard has been released, the program curriculum has been updated, or the textbook has been changed, a new exam will be created. Upon the new exam’s implementation, previous exams from the old test bank would be retired, as would the test bank.
3. Any exam found having $\geq 10\%$ of the total exam questions falling below the IFSI policy of a 60% pass rate will be brought to the attention of the Curriculum, Testing, and Certification Director for review and suggested retirement.

XI. Development of Skills Evaluation Items

1. Program staff develop the objectives for the course.
2. If applicable, the objectives are referenced to the corresponding national standard (NFPA JPRs). This is done to ensure that the curriculum addresses the applicable standard.
3. Program staff determine which psychomotor or process objectives will be evaluated by a skills exam.
4. Performance Evaluation Checklists (PECs), also referred to as skill sheets are developed. The instructional materials for each psychomotor or process objective are developed based on the performance measures listed on the PEC.
5. Program staff then identify critical performance measures (steps required to pass).
6. PECs are validated and piloted by the Program staff with expertise within that curriculum.
7. Program staff also identify which PECs are mandatory for every student at every session. These PECs are identified by a capital ‘M’ in front of the PEC number and title.
8. Persons involved with the development and validation are recorded, and their credentials are stored and filed. All changes and updates are documented.

XII. Selection of Skills Evaluation Items

Once Performance Evaluation Checklists (PECs) are identified as mandatory or non-mandatory by the Program staff, staff select PECs to be evaluated at each unique evaluation session. Mandatory PECs are administered to every student at every evaluation. Only 25% of the non-mandatory PECs must be tested at any session. Non-Mandatory PECs shall be randomly selected by the Program staff in one of two ways:

- A. Enter the total number of skill sheets into the randomization software. The software (<https://www.randomizer.org/>) randomly selects which PECs to utilize for a given administration (preferred for all examinations).
- B. Write each skill sheet identifier on a slip of paper, folded in half, and draw identifiers until the correct number of items has been selected. Items may only be chosen once. (This method will be used only if the randomization software is unavailable).

In addition to the random selection of non-mandatory PECs, student assignments shall be randomized if all the students are evaluated on different skills. The students shall not be informed in advance of which randomly selected skills were chosen. This notification is done during the student briefing at the start of the evaluation session.

XIII. Development of Products or Portfolios

1. Program staff develop the product(s)/portfolio for the course.
2. The objectives are referenced to the corresponding national standards (NFPA). This is done to ensure all applicable JPRs are satisfied.

Products

3. Program staff determine what objectives will be evaluated by the product(s) or portfolio.
4. A Grading Rubric is developed to establish grading criteria for evaluating the product.
5. A scorer will objectively assess the product using the established rubric.

Portfolio

6. A Portfolio Inventory Sheet is developed to establish the required components for the portfolio.
7. A Review Committee will review the portfolio to ensure all components are included.
8. Persons involved with the development and validation are recorded, and their credentials are stored and filed. All changes and updates are documented.

XIV. General Administration of Evaluations

Qualified Proctors and Evaluators administer evaluations to individuals who have met all the course requirements, including completing all course hours.

Proctor and Evaluator procedures are followed uniformly, regardless of the testing site. Program Leadership is responsible for selecting, monitoring, and evaluating their Proctors and Evaluators. Any immediate problems should be reported to the CTC staff. The CTC staff may also observe evaluation sessions and perform audits to ensure compliance with the policy. Program leadership will occasionally be asked to conduct audits of the Proctor or Evaluator's performance during evaluation administrations. Program leadership will be asked to audit Proctors and Evaluators of other programs. Audits will be conducted with prior notification, documented on the audit form, and filed in the CTC Office. The Auditors shall identify themselves to the Proctor or Evaluator immediately upon arrival and remain at the test site as long as necessary. The Auditors shall discuss all audit findings with the Proctor or Evaluator and record any findings on the audit form. The review process, led by the Curriculum, Testing, and Certification Director, will be based on audit documentation.

Proctors and Evaluators should avoid even the appearance of misconduct and avoid Proctoring or evaluating department members, relatives, or supervisors. Staff should refrain from proctoring or evaluating any administration which they may take in the future. Proctors and Evaluators must immediately alert the CTC staff when they become aware of such circumstances to allow other arrangements to be made.

Time Limits

The maximum time allowed for testing is based on the number of cognitive/written exam items. A specified amount of time will be determined during the validation sessions. If the total exam time does not fall on a whole minute, the exam time will be rounded to the next full minute. Students are given the allotted time for each exam during the exam administration.

XV. Exam Administrations

The Proctor to Test Taker Ratio should be at most 1:36. Best practices are to utilize additional Proctors for larger groups and/or confined quarters to maintain control of the room and traffic flow. Proctors must verify students' eligibility (attendance & identity) to test by checking off the official roster's names. A student appearing at the test site whose name is not on the Official Roster, does not have appropriate signed registration/documentation in hand or is not scheduled for a retest/make-up exam shall not be admitted to the test. The Proctor must verify the student's identity in two ways. Each student must present a valid (unexpired) government-issued identification card (I.D.), having both a photo and signature. The name on the I.D. must match the name on the roster/signed registration to sit for the exam. I.D. verification is 1) the comparison of the signature on the I.D. presented against the signature the student signs in front of the Proctor on the Exam Agreement form, and 2) the checking of the photo on the I.D. to the person present. Any discrepancies or issues must be documented on the Test Administration Report form and reported to the CTC staff. ***If a student is unable to produce the required government-issued I.D., they must not be allowed to test.*** IFSI offers courses through the Cornerstone Program, and these classes do not require students to preregister. Walk-in students such as these will only be allowed to test if they have completed an IFSI registration form and have completed the course requirements. If a student does not show up for the exam, s/he will be marked as a no-show on the roster.

For written exams, the Proctor will read the student instructions aloud to the students **word for word**. The Proctor confirms that all students understand the exam instructions before proceeding. Students should not open the exam booklet until the Proctor has instructed them. Students are asked to list personal and exam information on their answer sheet. The Proctor should note the time the test started and announce when the time limit has been reached.

For computer-based exams, the Proctor reads exam instructions before the day of the exam. Students are given a copy of the CBT exam agreement form to sign after the Proctor verifies the student's identification, as noted above. Exam instructions are presented to students along with a pre-printed ID necessary to gain access to their specific exam. Scratch paper is also provided. The exam software notes the time limit of the exam upon login for each exam.

Upon completion of the examination (regardless of delivery method), the student will return all testing materials to the Proctor. If any student has a question or complaint about an individual exam item, the student shall make a written record of the inquiry, including the item number and comments on the Student Feedback Form.

Breaks

Students are discouraged from taking a break during an exam. If a student must excuse themselves, s/he must turn in all testing materials and electronic devices, such as a cell phone. NOTE: The student's exam time continues, and only one student is allowed out of the room at a given time. The Proctor must record this break on the Proctor Feedback Form. The student must sign out/in with the time noted to show time elapsed (on Test Administration Report).

XVI. Exam Kit – Written Exams

Proctor Receiving Exam Kit

Exam kits will be shipped from the IFSI CTC Department approximately seven to ten days before the exam date. The kit should be received and opened by qualified IFSI Proctors.

Upon receipt, open to verify the kit's contents against the materials checklist in the Proctor Resource Manual. The exam kit will contain the following:

- Pencils

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- Test Booklets
- Proctor Resource Manual
- Testing Sign(s)
- Answer Sheets
- Exam Scratch Paper
- Completed Paperwork Folder
- Student Feedback Forms
- Test Administration Report / Proctor Feedback Form
- Copy of the Illinois Fire Service Institute Evaluation Policy and Procedures
- Return Shipping Label, if applicable

If any discrepancy is found, the Proctor should make a note on the Proctor Feedback Form (back of Test Administration Report) and call the CTC Office (217-333-1978). Upon resealing the exam kit, the proctor should place it in a secure location, such as a locked vehicle or office, where it cannot be accessed.

The “Security Tag # Log Sheet” is included in the exam kit and should be completed by the Proctor receiving an exam kit. This sheet is a five-column, color-coded record of the security seals used on the exam kit for alerting a Proctor of any potential tampering during the kit’s transport, handling, and storage. (Refer to the Proctor Manual and checklist procedure)

Proctor Returning Exam Kit

At the end of the exam, the Proctor will account for the exam booklets used and place the booklets back in numerical order. The Proctor will assemble and return all testing materials to the exam kit. This includes all broken seals. All paperwork from the exam administration must be placed in the “Completed Paperwork” folder. This consists of the scratch paper (used or unused) distributed to each student during the exam. The Proctor will then return the exam kit to the Institute as soon as possible but no later than 7 days after the exam date.

XVII. Exam Kit – Computer-Based Exams

Proctor Receiving Exam Kit

The IFSI CTC Department delivers exam kits on or before the exam date.

The exam kit will contain the following:

- Pencils
- Student ID labels for the exam administration
- Missed Learning Objective label cards
- Acknowledgement of Exam Guidelines Form
- Proctor Resource Manual
- Testing Sign(s)
- Exam Scratch Paper
- Student Feedback Forms
- Test Administration Report / Proctor Feedback Form
- Copy of the Illinois Fire Service Institute Evaluation Policy and Procedures

Proctor Returning Exam Kit

At the end of the exam, the Proctor will account for the student labels and instructions and scratch paper. The Proctor will assemble and return all testing materials to the exam kit. All paperwork from the exam administration must be placed in the “Completed Paperwork” folder. This includes the scratch paper (used or unused) distributed to each student during the exam. The Proctor will return the exam kit and iPads to the Testing Office.

XVIII. Scoring of Exams and Retests

After receiving the answer sheets for a written exam, the Illinois Fire Service Institute uses a scanner to score the test responses. Several checks are used to ensure the accuracy of the scoring process.

Results are provided to Class Support staff, and once this data entry is complete, students are automatically notified via e-mail. This process is to take no longer than six weeks. The Curriculum, Testing, and Certification staff does not provide exam scores or evaluation results.

Records from exam administrations are maintained with the class file in a secure environment under the direct control of IFSI staff. These hard copy records are retained for three years; the electronic records are maintained in the database, which can only be accessed by the student or certain administrative staff.

The lowest minimum passing score on an IFSI cognitive/written examination is 70 percent. Any student who fails to pass an examination has twelve months from the exam date to retest. Students are afforded one initial and two retest attempts within those twelve months. The request for a retest should be submitted 30 days before the date requested. Students can only request a maximum of two exams on any given test date. The attempt is counted as a failure if a student does not attend their scheduled retest (considered a “no show”). If a student fails their third attempt or the twelve months have elapsed, they must re-enroll in the course.

XIX. Administration of Skills Evaluations

The Illinois Fire Service Institute evaluates students’ abilities to successfully perform skills. The process ensures that all or a fair representation of the psychomotor and/or process job performance requirements (JPRs) are tested. Establishing and enforcing the following procedures ensures that testing is appropriate and comprehensive.

Performance Evaluation Checklists (PECs) identifying the performance measures and grading criteria must be used for all students to aid in objectivity. Evaluators will read aloud to the student the directions and task statements on the PECs before the student performs the skill. PECs are provided as part of the curriculum and are available in the Instructor and Student Manuals.

In most cases, Evaluators should only be observing/evaluating one Test Taker at a time. Performance evaluations shall be completed in a standardized and objective manner. All skill stations shall be set up in the same way for each student. Once the evaluation begins, the configuration of the evaluation stations shall not be altered. Evaluations must start and end the same for each participant.

The staff evaluating a particular skill (Evaluator) should be different from the individual who taught that skill. The Evaluation Coordinator, usually the Program Director or Program Manager, is responsible for ensuring that staff assigned to instruct a skill are not then assigned to evaluate the skill.

Each student should have the opportunity to practice and apply knowledge and skills during instruction time. **The student shall be notified when the teaching environment transitions to the testing/evaluation phase.** During an evaluation, the role of the Evaluator is to test the student and not provide any assistance or coaching to the student during testing. Program Managers shall monitor evaluators regularly.

The overall safety of the evaluation process is the role of the Evaluation Coordinator. This includes monitoring weather, rehabilitation requirements, EMS standby requirements, etc. Before the start

of the evaluation, the Evaluation Coordinator shall brief students and Evaluators with specific instructions. The Evaluator ensures that all proper tools and equipment are available for the skills evaluation. In addition, students shall be advised of test security requirements and procedures for leaving the evaluation area, if necessary, before completing the skill evaluation.

At each evaluation session, students will be gathered in a pre-determined staging area that isolates them from the evaluation process and exposure to candidates who have already completed the evaluation. The Evaluator shall ensure evaluation security by properly staging students and ensuring no materials other than those issued for the evaluation are in the staging area. In the event of a suspected security breach, the Evaluator shall terminate the evaluation and deliver the student to the Evaluation Coordinator.

The Evaluator shall be directly responsible for ensuring the safety of all students during all psychomotor/skills testing at their station. Evaluators shall stop the psychomotor/skills evaluation if the *student's or Evaluator's safety* is in question. If the student made the safety infraction, this constitutes an automatic fail of this attempt, and retraining is mandatory before a 2nd (or final) attempt is allowed. Evaluations involving live fire training in acquired structures are led by members of the IFSI Burn Team, who ensure compliance with NFPA 1403.

Failed Attempt(s)

All PECs will be tested on a pass/fail basis. The pass/fail criteria for each psychomotor or process skill are outlined on the PEC/skill sheet. To receive a passing score, students must complete 70% of the non-critical performance measures and 100% of the critical performance measures. Any failure on a critical measure/step results in a failure of that skill (an unsuccessful attempt). If a student fails in their first attempt at completing a skills evaluation, the Evaluator will document an explanation of the skill(s) performed inappropriately. The Evaluator shall tell the student why they failed the first attempt at the skill. The student can be given a second attempt with the same Evaluator. If the student is unsuccessful on a second attempt, a third attempt with a different Evaluator will be conducted. This should be scheduled for a later date after re-training has occurred. If the student is unsuccessful in their third attempt, they must re-enroll in the course.

XX. Administration of Product(s) / Portfolio

A Product is an assignment requiring the application of knowledge to perform a task that is not assessed/evaluated as it is being performed. The student provides a product to be assessed by a scorer using a rubric to determine the candidate's success.

The Portfolio is intended to measure the candidate's accomplishments over time with respect to specific job performance requirements based on the evaluation of a student's experience, training, and education to ensure compliance with the job performance requirements. The review committee uses a Portfolio Inventory Sheet to ensure all required components of the Portfolio are present.

XXI. Cheating & Revoking Certificates

Proctors, Evaluators, and Evaluation Coordinators are given the authority to remove any student from the testing area and testing process if a violation is suspected. Proctors should document any such occurrence on the Proctor Feedback Form. Any Proctor may ask a student to turn in an exam and leave the exam room for any of the following reasons:

- Looking at another student's exam
- Talking to another student during the exam
- Use of an electronic device such as a cell phone

- Looking at notes during an exam, including, but not limited to, notes inside sleeves, on eye patches, hand, desk, or chair
- Unauthorized admission or re-admission into the testing room/area
- Loud or disruptive behavior
- Attempting to remove an exam from the testing room/area or attempting to take items for someone.
- Attempting to impersonate another student.
- Any form of cheating

Any allegation found to be substantiated by the Curriculum, Testing, and Certification staff may result in the denial of a completion certificate. Students may be suspended and not be allowed to attend future IFSI courses. If a certificate was awarded before the conclusion of an investigation, the certificate and associated certification may be revoked. If the student wishes to appeal, it must be done in writing to the Curriculum, Testing, and Certification Director within 30 days after notification of such revocation.

XXII. Emergencies

For emergencies outside of the student's control, such as severe weather, the Proctor has the discretion to decide to discontinue the exam. In the case of acute illnesses, family emergencies, or the legitimate need to respond to an emergency call for service during the exam in which the student must leave the room before completing the exam, the Proctor will document the emergency details. The student must submit an exam request to schedule a make-up exam. The unfinished exam does **not** count as a failed attempt.

XXIII. Appeals

Students who wish to appeal the results of their evaluation (their test score), part of this policy, or any part of the evaluation process should contact the CTC Office in writing (fsi-testingoffice@illinois.edu) within 30 days from their date of exam, voicing their concern. This appeal or challenge will be reviewed by the Curriculum, Testing, and Certification Director and may be reviewed by the Deputy Director of Academic Operations. Students will be informed in writing of the decision rendered.

XXIV. Revision Plan / Schedule

This policy will be reviewed at least each fiscal year. Changes to this policy may take place at other times, as necessary, to meet accreditation or AHJ requirements.

***Any exceptions to this policy may be made at the discretion of the Deputy Director of Academic Operations.**

Appendix I. Proctor Qualifications

Cognitive/written exam Proctors must meet the following requirements:

- Must be an employee of the Illinois Fire Service Institute.
- Read and understand the *Illinois Fire Service Institute Evaluation Policy and Procedures*.
- Must be recommended by IFSI Program Manager/Director or IFSI Leadership.
- Complete Exam Proctor Training Program.
- Must observe one exam administration conducted by the Illinois Fire Service Institute.
- Must be monitored and mentored by an existing Illinois Fire Service Institute experienced Proctor on one occasion.
- Understand the possibility of being audited by an existing Proctor. (This performance evaluation will be documented, stored, and filed)
- Attend/complete required updates.

Or

Be an approved Proctor from another Nationally Accredited Agency, provided the Proctor agrees to follow the procedures of the Illinois Fire Service Institute.

Appendix II. Evaluator Qualifications

Psychomotor/Skills Evaluators must meet the following requirements:

- Must be an employee of the Illinois Fire Service Institute.
- Read and understand the *Illinois Fire Service Institute Evaluation Policy and Procedures*.
- Must be part of the instructional team for the program being administered but should not evaluate the skills of those students whom they have instructed.
- Must hold certification at or above the level they are evaluating or be approved by their Program Director.
- Must successfully complete the Evaluator Training Program.
- Must observe a skills evaluation session conducted by the Illinois Fire Service Institute.
- While conducting an evaluation, must be monitored and mentored on at least one occasion by an existing Illinois Fire Service Institute experienced evaluator.
- Understand the possibility of being audited on their evaluation techniques by an existing qualified Evaluator. (This performance evaluation will be documented, stored, and filed)
- Attend/complete required updates.

Appendix III. Product Scorer & Portfolio Reviewer Qualifications

Staff must meet the following requirements:

- Must be an employee of the Illinois Fire Service Institute.
- Read and understand the *Illinois Fire Service Institute Evaluation Policy and Procedures*.
- Must be part of the instructional team for the program being administered.
- Must be trained by program staff on how to complete rubrics and portfolio inventory sheets fairly and consistently.
- Must hold certification at or above the level that they are evaluating.
- Must be checked on occasion by Program Leadership to ensure inter-rater reliability.
- Understand the possibility of being audited by existing Illinois Fire Service Institute staff on their evaluation techniques. (This performance evaluation will be documented, stored, and filed)
- Attend/complete required updates.