

CRITERIA & PROCEDURES

Kansas National Certification Program
Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute
University of Kansas

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Accredited by the:

International Fire Service Accreditation Congress
National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications



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1.0 Certification System Overview

1.1 Forward

In January of 1980, the National Professional Qualifications System (NPQS) accredited the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute of the University of Kansas as one of the nation's first fire service agencies able to issue National Certifications to fire service personnel. In July of 1990, the National Professional Qualifications System, was incorporated as the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (NBFSPQ) and also referred to as the Pro Board. In October of 1991, the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) accredited the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute for the same purpose.

Accreditation from these organizations verifies and confirms the authority for the Institute to award national certifications upon satisfactory completion of the certification exam process.

Certification is a term that is frequently used with definitions ranging from simply receiving a certification of training to a professional license to operate in a given field. In a more descriptive way, National Certification could be stated as National Fire Service Certification as a (insert level). National Certifications that we issue are earned certifications through an accredited, third party, testing process.

National Certification is voluntary in Kansas and is not intended to supplant employer, state or federal requirements. National Certification is "earned" through a testing process designed to evaluate the candidate's knowledge and skill against the requirements of the applicable national standard. Testing may include written exams, skill exams, projects, and other evaluation processes designed to test the requirements of the national standards.

The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute provides this program in support of Kansas firefighters. This Criteria and Procedures document is made available to:

- a. Provide information that will inform certification candidates of the process and systems used to conduct the program and the exams within it.
- b. Comply with accreditation criteria that states relevant information about the system and where to find information on which the tests are based, must be available to all candidates.
- c. Describe the National Certification system in Kansas and the processes used within it.

The driving philosophy behind testing in this program is very simple – "do you know what the standard requires you to know, and can you do what the standard requires you to do?" If you prove that through the testing process, you earn National Certification.

As you seek national certification, the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute welcomes your phone calls and emails. We are here to help.

1.2 Equal Access

1.2.1 Appointment, promotion, admission, and programs at the University of Kansas are administered equally to all without regard to race, color, creed, sex, national origin, disability, religion, age, or veteran status. In addition, university policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual

orientation, marital status, and parental status. The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute is operated in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Equal Opportunity Act as well as other federal and state laws, regulations and guidelines that prohibit discrimination. If you have questions or comments regarding the certification, training or other services provided by the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute, please call toll free 866-804-8841.

1.2.2 [Accreditation by NBFSPQ or IFSAC](#) shall not affect the current status of any previously certified individual. Persons previously certified by NBFSPQ or IFSAC will be recognized for those certifications held and will be allowed to fully participate in the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute certification system.

1.2.3 [The National Certification system/process](#) was created to give Kansas firefighters access to national certification. As such, the certification system grants open access to certification testing to any active member of a Kansas fire department. This open access includes “challenging” the process without documenting training, exceptions to this include Fire Instructor I/II, and Rope Rescue I/II. Only active membership on a Kansas fire department is required to take the national certification exam.

The certification system also allows access to Kansas community college students and Kansas high school students and other Kansas emergency responders (allied professionals) who have completed a course of study designed to meet the national certification standard and meets the additional criteria below:

Certification candidates must have completed a course of instruction specifically designed to meet the national standard for which they are seeking certification.

- a. Candidates must be at least 18 years of age to participate in the skills exam.
- b. Candidates must be at least 17 years of age to participate in the written exam. Projects, homework, and verification forms are included in these criteria and may be completed while 17 years of age.
- c. Community college, high school students and Kansas allied professionals may not “challenge” the certification exam without first completing a course of study for the level of certification being sought.

Out of state residents may access the certification system only through KFRTI, Kansas community college or high school fire training programs.

Out of state residents seeking certification through KFRTI who do not meet the criteria above may request special access to certification through the director of the KFRTI. The Director may grant access based on documentation of need related to participation in the Kansas fire service.

All out of state participants and non-Kansas fire department members (allied professionals) will be subject to the “Non-Kansas Emergency Responders Certification Fees”. A current list of fees is maintained on the KFRTI Web Page.

All certification testing will be conducted within the state of Kansas unless the Director approves a special need. If an out of state exam is approved, the terms and conditions must adhere to all accreditation criteria from applicable accrediting entities.

1.3 Prerequisites for Certification/Incumbent Eligibility/ Grandfathering.

1.3.1 Prerequisites identified by the national standards for which individuals are seeking certification must be in the following manner:

- a. Prerequisites Certifications: When the standard calls for prerequisite levels of certification, the individual must accomplish certification in each of the designated prerequisite levels prior to certification in the level being sought.
- b. Levels within a discipline achieved from a previous edition of a standard will continue to be recognized as complete after new editions of standards are implemented.
- c. Prerequisites other than certifications: In the event of a certification standard (or level) identifying prerequisites other than certification in lower level or related discipline(s), documentation of that experience or skills identified by the standard must be submitted to the Institute for review. The Institute will evaluate the documentation, experience, etc. based on the guidance provided by the national standard as evidenced by the JPRs, and Appendices.
- d. The Institute will accept Emergency Medical Responder, Emergency Medical Technician, or Paramedic Certification issued by the Kansas Board of Emergency Medical Services (KBEMS) to satisfy EMS related JPRs for NFPA 1006 provided that required medical credentials are provided and verified by KFRTI Certification Manager.
“Grandfathering”, or the issuing of certifications based upon previous training or experience, is not allowed.

2.0 Scope of Training

2.1 Mission Statement

The mission of the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute is to train fire fighters for Kansas communities.

2.2 Purpose

The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute, as a unit of the University of Kansas, Professional & Continuing Education, provides technical support and high quality programs that enable firefighters and allied professionals of Kansas to achieve training and national certification based on needs and levels of competency as outlined in nationally recognized and adopted standards.

3.0 Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute as the Certification Entity

3.1 Certification Authority

The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute is authorized by the Kansas Legislature to manage and deliver training and certification programs for the Kansas fire service. The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute is proud of its service record to the fire fighters and fire departments of Kansas. The Kansas Fire

& Rescue Training Institute is committed to continuing this long tradition of delivering high quality training and certification.

3.2 Accreditation by IFSAC and NBFSPQ

The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute is accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress and the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications to certify fire service personnel to accepted national standards. Through this process, Kansas fire fighters and allied professionals achieve national certification.

This accreditation of the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute certification system assures Kansas fire service personnel and allied professionals that programs and standards used within this system adhere to the most current recognized national standards published by the NFPA in their Professional Qualifications series of standards. The assurances gained through the accreditation process provide credibility and prestige for every fire fighter participating in the certification process. Fire fighters certified through the Kansas system are recognized throughout the United States (and the world) as qualified and meeting the standards set forth by the National Fire Protection Association.

3.3 National Certification

After participants have successfully completed an objective evaluation process within the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute certification system, national certification is awarded. The candidate's name is entered in the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute certification system data bank as well as the national certification data banks maintained by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress at Oklahoma State University. With the payment of the required fee to the National Professional Qualification Board in Quincy, Massachusetts, the candidate's name will also be entered in that data bank.

4.0 Certification Guides

4.1 Availability of Certification Preparation Guides

The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute publishes a certification guide for each level and category of certification offered. Certification Preparation Guides contain pertinent information designed to assist candidates in preparing for the certification process, and may be downloaded at no cost by accessing the certification page of the website: <https://kupce.ku.edu/kufire-firefighter-certification>.

They may also be requested in hard copy by contacting the office toll free at 866-804-8841.

4.2 Specific Information

The Certification Preparation Guide provides specific information on:
Objectives and requirements for certification.

- a. Reference lists that will help candidates locate the proper study materials.
- b. Project assignments.
- c. Certification Application Forms.
- d. Other information that will assist in preparing for certification.

5.0 Certification System

5.1 Certification Standards

The International Fire Service Accreditation Congress and the National Professional Qualifications Board adopt standards that may be used in accredited programs for the purpose of issuing national certifications. National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Professional Qualifications Standards are used by the entities accredited by these two organizations. To maintain accreditation, entities must certify fire service personnel to the latest edition of the adopted NFPA Standards.

For specific requirements established by the standards, applicants should reference the appropriate NFPA Standard, or Certification Study Guide published by the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute. NFPA standards may be viewed online for no cost. Visit the NFPA free access portal at:

<https://www.nfpa.org/Codes-and-Standards/All-Codes-and-Standards/Free-access>.

5.2 Certification System Integrity

The requirements, criteria, and processes required to obtain accreditation by IFSAC and NBFSPQ help insure the highest possible credibility and stature for participants. These processes ensure the credibility and guard the integrity of your national certifications.

5.3 Entrance into the Certification System

Qualified personnel within the Kansas fire service may enter the certification system for the purpose of seeking certification by contacting the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute. Upon receipt of a request, the staff will forward appropriate information to members of the fire service about any of the levels or categories of certification available.

6.0 Application for Certification

6.1 Obtaining Applications

National Certification application forms may be downloaded from the KFRTI Certification website or by calling the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute at (toll free) 866-804-8841. Download certification applications at: <https://kupce.ku.edu/kufire-firefighter-certification>.

6.2 Submitting Applications

Every individual seeking certification within the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute certification system must submit an application and the appropriate fee to secure entrance into the system.

6.3 Duplication of Application Forms

An application form is included in this document and may be used and/or duplicated at the local level. ProBoard applications are only sent to candidates that have successfully completed the certification testing process.

6.4 Application Fees

The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute requires registering online, the submission of an application, and payment of fees prior to certification testing. A list of current fee amounts may be obtained by

calling toll free 866-804-8841 or by downloading the document “National Certification Program Fee Schedule” from the website. All checks or money orders should be made out to the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute and reflect the exact amount. Purchase orders from cities/organizations will be accepted in-lieu of prior payment. The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute will not “bill” individuals for the certification fee.

6.5 Approved Methods of Payment

Approved methods of payment are:

- a. Personal Check
- b. Money Order
- c. Credit card
- d. City/Organization Check
- e. Purchase Order from City/Organization

6.6 Applications Submitted Without Fees

Application submitted without payment or purchase orders will not be processed until payment or a purchase order have been received. The Institute will no longer accept the “Invoice my department/agency” form of payment without a purchase order from that organization.

6.7 Refunding Application Fees

The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute will refund application fees only if the individual has not taken any action toward completing certification after submitting his/her application and fee. Contact the Institute for clarification and any other requests regarding the refund of application fees.

6.8 Application Time Limits

Candidates are given one year to complete all steps of certification testing. This time window expires one year from the date of the first testing action taken (written test, skills test, certification project assigned or any other testing action).

6.9 Incomplete Certification Process Status

Candidates that do not complete the certification process within the one-year time window will be required to submit a new application and certification exam fee. Candidates will also be required to retake all portions of the testing process, including the written and practical exam (regardless of the pass/fail status from previous exams) and resubmit homework projects as well as local documentation as required by the certification level.

7.0 Selection of Testing Methodologies for National Certification.

7.1 Review of Methodology

Each standard and level for which certification is awarded undergoes a separate review when adopted for use in the Kansas National Certification Program. The purpose of this review is to select the methodology to be used to test certification candidates.

All selections of testing methodology is driven by the requirements of the national standard to be tested. Factors taken into consideration during this assessment are:

- a. Specific requirements of the standard.
- b. Cost to the candidate and Institute.
- c. Time needed to demonstrate the required skills in the standard.
- d. If the requirement to be met calls for something that can't be performed in a traditional testing environment.

7.2 Methods & rationale for selection of test methodology.

- a. Written Questions (tests)
 - Cognitive (knowledge) elements easily tested with traditional written questions.
 - Question types used are; multiple choice, true/false.
- b. Skills Exams
 - Skills (psychomotor) elements that typically include traditional skills elements and include physical manipulation of tools, equipment or actual performance of a physical task.
- c. Local Verification Form
 - Knowledge elements involving local department processes, policies, procedures or other elements that would make it impractical for the Institute to test on a standardized statewide exam. These normally require the local training officer, chief officer, or program director to sign, verifying accuracy of the responses.
- d. Homework Projects
 - When standards require candidates to perform tasks that are too complex to perform in a traditional testing environment, or traditional testing methods are not appropriate for testing the requirements of the standard.
- e. Portfolio
 - The Institute will accept as a Portfolio an Emergency Medical Responder, Emergency Medical Technician, or Paramedic Certification issued by the Kansas Board of Emergency Medical Services (KBEMS) to satisfy EMS related JPRs for NFPA 1006 provided that required medical credentials are provided and verified by KFRTI Certification Manager.

7.3 Explanation of Methodology

Some standards require performance of a nature that are not easily measured in a written or skills exam. In those cases, KFRTI will use "homework projects", or other methodologies that accurately and fairly measure performance. In these cases, emphasis is placed on individuals doing their own work.

Examples of current practices are a video tape of Instructor I candidates teaching a class, or preparing a pre-plan on a local-business, required of Fire Fighter 2 candidates.

8.0 Testing Practices and Policies

8.1 General Testing Practices and Policies

Certification candidates are given two (2) attempts at each component; written, skills, and projects, as applicable. Candidates must successfully pass all portions of the exam to obtain certification. Any portions of the exam completed successfully are good for one calendar year from the date of the first testing activity. Candidates are allowed retests on any portion of the exam as allowed by the following guidelines:

- a. Candidates are initially allowed two written exams, 1 initial attempt and one retest. Further retests will require an additional certification fee which allows for two written exam attempts per fee. Same day retests are not allowed. To register for a retest, call the Institute at (toll free) 866-804-8841. No walk-in testing is allowed.
- b. Candidates are initially allowed two attempts to pass the skills exam, 1 initial attempt and one retest. (Each Candidate is allowed two tries per station at the skills exam. This is considered one attempt.) Further retests will require an additional certification fee which allows for two skills exam attempts per fee. Same day retests are not allowed. To register for a retest, call the Institute at (toll free) 866-804-8841. No walk-ins testing is allowed.
- c. Candidates are initially allowed two project submissions, 1 initial attempt and one resubmission. Further resubmissions require an additional certification fee which allows for two project submissions per fee. Project resubmissions must be coordinated with the appropriate program manager.
- d. At one year from the initial testing activity if the candidate has not successfully completed all portions of the certification process for the level in question, the candidate must start the certification process over and retest all portions for that level.

8.2 Challenging Test Questions (or other testing items)

Any candidate challenging a test question must do so in writing to the Certification Program Manager. The Certification Program Manager shall review the test question(s), review the standard and reference material, and render a decision. If appropriate, the candidate's test score will be adjusted and the test bank will be corrected.

The same will apply to any other special circumstance that may arise during a test.

If the candidate wishes, any ruling can be challenged using the Appeal Process found in the Due Process section (Section 15.0) of this document.

8.3 Accommodations

KU provides accommodations for certification candidates in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Documentation of the diagnosis from a qualified professional, and a request for accommodation, should be submitted in writing to the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute Certification Manager at least two weeks prior to the exam. The submitted documentation will help

KFRTI identify appropriate accommodations. The two-week advanced notice/request allows the Institute to assemble the resources necessary for the accommodation.

9.0 Written Exam Policies

9.1 Written Exams

Written exams will consist of an appropriate number of questions necessary to test the knowledge requirements of the applicable standard. The total number of questions on the written exam will depend on the certification level being tested. Written exam questions may be composed of multiple choice, true/false.

9.2 Minimum Passing Score

The minimum passing score on written exams is 70%. Each exam will be based on the NFPA standard and constructed from a bank of test questions maintained by the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute.

Candidate may only sit for one written exam per level, per day. No “same day retesting” is allowed. The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute will utilize a variety of exam versions to insure no candidate takes the same version of the written exam more than once, i.e., test and retest.

9.3 Maximum Time Allowance

The maximum time limits are calculated at 30 minutes per 25 questions contained on the exam. Examples:

Fifty (50) question exam: One (1) hour

One hundred (100) question exam: Two (2) hours

9.4 Test Site Preparations and Expectations

Written exams must have enough space to allow for approximately three (3) feet of spacing between candidates, while taking the exam

Chairs and tables must be provided so each candidate, taking a written exam, has a chair and appropriate table to place the exam and answer sheet.

Temperature, in the room for the written exam, shall have appropriate HVAC systems capable of maintain a room temperature between 65°F to 70°F.

9.5 Written Exam Retests

Candidates failing the written exam are responsible for notifying the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute of their desire to retest and enroll at the next scheduled exam that has available space. With the exception of “same day” retesting prohibition, there are no mandatory waiting periods between attempts.

10.0 Practical Skills Performance Policies

10.1 Practical Skills Performance Exam

Candidates are responsible for all of the skills required by the applicable standard during the practical exam. An exact list of specific skills can be found in the appropriate certification preparation guide published by the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute.

10.2 Variable Number of Skills Tested for Each NFPA Standard

The exact number of skills tested for each NFPA Standard may vary by certification level. The number of skills to be tested is listed in the appropriate certification preparation guide. Due to the large number of skills required by some NFPA standards, all skills of a large standard may not be tested at each exam site.

Accreditation criteria allows for testing a representative sampling of the skills if a random selection process is used to select the skills to be tested.

10.3 Prior Knowledge of Practical Skills to be Tested

No prior notification of what skills will be tested will be given to candidates or exam evaluators.

Candidates should be prepared to test on any skill outlined in the standard for which they seek certification. This process is valid IF students/candidate have no knowledge of which skills will be tested. In order to prepare for a randomly selected skills test, candidates must be prepared to test on all skills required by the standard.

The practical skills to be tested will not be revealed to candidates or to exam evaluators prior to the exam. This policy is to prevent prior knowledge by the candidates.

10.4 Practical Skills Pass/Fail Criteria

Practical skill exams are graded on a pass/fail basis. Candidates must successfully complete all skill stations tested at an exam site to receive a passing grade for the skill exam.

10.5 Attempts per Practical Skills Station

Each candidate is allowed two (2) attempts at each station. Candidates will be given the opportunity to repeat a skill station that they did not successfully complete. Candidates will not be informed, by the evaluator assigned to the skill station, if they have passed or failed the second attempt at the station. The Test Site Coordinator will provide the following information confidentially to each candidate upon completion of the practical skills exam:

That all stations have been passed

(or)

Which station(s) the candidate failed.

10.6 Practical Exam Retest

The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute does not automatically schedule retests for candidates who fail the practical exam. Candidates failing the practical exam are responsible for notifying the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute of their desire to retest by preregistering for another regularly scheduled exam.

Candidates may not take the practical exam more than once per day. With the exception of “same day” prohibition on retesting, there are no mandatory waiting periods between attempts.

Candidates retesting on the practical exam must retake the entire practical exam (as randomly selected for the test site at which they are retesting). Candidates will not be allowed to retest only on skills they failed at a previous exam.

11.0 Policy Concerning Projects

11.1 Explanation

Some requirements for certain standards cannot be adequately evaluated through traditional methods. Typically, these objectives relate to local policies, procedures, and actions that individuals must perform. In these cases, candidates are required to complete an individual project.

11.2 Assignment of Projects

The need for a project is dictated solely by the requirements of the standard. The assigned project may be submitted for evaluation by the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute staff, any time after the certification process has begun.

11.3 Documentation of Local Procedures and/or Regulations

If the certification project or local documentation form involves local procedures or regulations, a copy of those regulations or procedures must be submitted if requested by the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute.

Documentation of compliance in these cases is executed via the Local Verification Form. This form is attested to and signed by a Chief Officer in the candidate’s department/organization. For those candidates tested at community colleges, this form is attested to and signed by the candidate’s primary instructor.

If required, the Local Verification Form is included in the appropriate Certification Preparation Guide. Candidates may also contact the Institute for a copy.

Completed Local Verification Forms must be submitted prior to final certification being granted.

11.4 Timely Completion of Assigned Projects

Any assigned project must be completed within the one-year window for certification and prior to final certification being granted. Projects are required to be completed within a year from first testing activity, but encouraged to be completed within a few months of assignment. The purpose of the

shorter time-frame is to encourage candidates to complete the work, while the information from training is still fresh in their mind, and gives them time to complete a second attempt if required.

11.5 Projects Retests

Candidates will be allowed one attempt to correct errors or make designated improvements on a project once it has been submitted. If after one attempt to make improvements/corrections the candidate's project does not receive a passing score, the project is graded as a fail and a "re-test project" will be required prior to certification.

Candidates failing a project will be assigned a retest project. It will be mailed to the candidate along with the notification of failure. The candidate must submit the project retest within the twelve-month certification window.

11.6 Assigned Project Security

The project version assigned to a candidate will be assigned upon receipt of the project at the test site. Candidates will not be allowed to choose the project version they will complete, nor will the assigned version be revealed beforehand.

11.7 Preparation Guides

Detailed information for projects is published in the individual National Certification Preparation Guides for each level of certification. Preparation guides can be downloaded from the Institute's web page.

12.0 Notification of Certification Exam Results

12.1 Processing Exam Results

After candidates have completed the exam process, the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute begins the process of scoring and processing the test results. As soon as grading, processing and documentation are complete, the results are sent to the candidate via U.S. Mail, online via secure system log-in, or the candidate may appear in person at the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute, show official picture ID, and receive the results.

12.2 Confidentiality of Exam Results

To ensure confidentiality, certification exam results will not be released on the telephone, FAX or other electronic mechanisms. Test results should be received by the candidates within 10 – 20 working days of the exam. If candidates do not receive their test results within 20 working days, they should call the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute. Exam scores will still not be released on the phone, but a trace of the delay of notification will begin and the test candidate will be contacted in a timely manner to be given an explanation of the delay.

The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute, University of Kansas adheres to the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Generally speaking, this federal law protects the privacy of educational records. As an individual, other than the Institute staff, you are the only person granted access to those records (including scores on certification exams). Anyone wishing access to your records/scores must obtain a release of records authorization signed by you. That release is the only

mechanism through which we will allow access to your records. The only other way access to your records can be secured is through a court order.

12.3 Completion of the Certification Process

After participants have successfully completed an objective evaluation process, within the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute certification system, national certification is awarded. The candidate's name is entered in the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute certification system data bank as well as the national certification data banks maintained by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress at Oklahoma State University. With the payment of the required fee to the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications in Quincy, Massachusetts, the candidate's name will also be entered in that data bank.

13.0 Certification Policies

13.1 Residency and Membership

Any person seeking certification within the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute certification system must meet the following requirements:

To take the written exam, candidates must be at least 17 years of age on the date of a certification written exam.

Candidates must be 18 years of age to take a skills exam.

Be a current member of a Kansas fire, emergency, rescue, allied professional organization or a student enrolled in (or having completed a high school program described in item "f" below).

Must be a resident of the state of Kansas or live in a border area and serve on one of the organizations listed in item c. Residency is not required if the candidate is a member of the armed services of the United States and is on active duty.

Students enrolled in Kansas community college fire training program who are over 18 years of age may apply for certification in those content areas that are applicable to their course of study.

Students of a Kansas high school or technical school firefighter training program that appears on the Kansas Department of Education's authorized fire fighter training program may take the written exam at age 17. All candidates must be 18 years of age to take the skills exam.

Special exceptions to the residence and fire department/rescue membership requirements may be granted on an individual basis. Individuals not meeting requirements who desire certification should contact the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute's Certification Program Manager.

13.2 Specific Requirements Criteria and Procedures

Each category and level of certification available through the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute's certification system has specific requirements based on the appropriate NFPA standard. Information on requirements for each level and category of certification is published by the Kansas Fire & Rescue

Training Institute in a certification preparation guide for that level. This document is available at no cost from the institute.

13.3 Denial or Revocation of Certification

The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute may deny or revoke an individual's certification if that individual:

Submits false information to the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute.

Fails to successfully complete all elements of certification for the indicated standard within a one year time period.

Cheats during any part of the evaluation process.

Fails to make payment of certification exam fee to KFRTI.

14.0 Conduct

14.1 Cheating and Unethical Conduct

National certification is a major milestone to be achieved by members of the nation's fire service. Once received, national certification provides independent verification of an individual's competence and professional dedication. By awarding certification, the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute validates an individual's efforts and backs that certification with the full weight and prestige of the University of Kansas. For those reasons, the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute takes the issue of cheating and unethical conduct very seriously.

14.2 Cheating During the Exam Process

Any candidate who is caught cheating on any element of the examination process will:

Be denied certification.

Be immediately expelled from the current certification process and any other certification category or levels in which they have active files.

Forfeit all certification fees paid prior to that point.

Not be allowed to apply for any certification for a period of one year.

14.3 Additional Considerations on Cheating and Unethical Conduct

It is impossible to list all of the actions that might be considered cheating or unethical conduct without missing some of them. Common actions are talking with other candidates during a written exam for the purpose of soliciting or giving an answer, copying or modifying another person's project/homework and submitting it as your own.

Perhaps the best way to summarize how to avoid being accused of cheating or unethical conduct is to always do your own work, and do what you know to be professional and right.

No exceptions to this rule will be granted.

15.0 Due Process

15.1 Entitlement to Due Process

All individuals are entitled to due process, including appeal and hearing. Any person believing that they have not received fair treatment within the certification process or having a question about the certification process is entitled to the appeal process.

15.2 Appeal Process

Step 1: The first step in the appeal process is for the candidate to contact the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute's Certification Program Manager. This contact may be in writing, verbally or in person. This first step constitutes a less formal attempt to resolve appeals early in the process. The candidate should state the issue they are appealing and discuss options available with the Program Manager. The Program Manager will respond to the candidate in writing of his/her decision within 14 days. If the decision of the Program Manager is not satisfactory to the candidate, they have the option of appealing to the Director, Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute (2nd step in this process).

Step 2: To initiate the second step of this process, the candidate must submit his/her appeal in writing to the Director of the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute. The appeal should be written in narrative format and describe the details of the appeal. The Institute must receive the appeal within 30 days of the postmark on the notification of testing results mailed to the candidate. The Director will respond in writing within 30 days of receiving the appeal.

Step 3: If the Director's decision is not satisfactory to the candidate, the candidate has the option of asking that their appeal be advanced to the Fire Service Training Commission. The appeal to the Fire Service Training Commission is the last step in this appeal process and the decision of the Fire Service Training Commission is final. To initiate the final step, the candidate must notify the Director in writing within 30 days of the Director's decision (at the conclusion of step 2) that they wish to appeal to the Fire Service Training Commission. The appeal will be placed on the agenda of the Kansas Fire Service Training Commission's next quarterly meeting. The candidate will be notified in writing of the time, date, and location of that meeting. The candidate will be given time to present pertinent information relating to the appeal before the Commission. After any other presentations, questions and/or discussions deemed appropriate by the commission, the commission will render a decision. If present, the Candidate will be informed immediately of the decision. The Candidate will receive official notification of the decision in writing regardless of their attendance at the meeting.

15.3 Final Rule on Appeals

The decision of the Kansas Fire Service Training Commission on appeals will be final.

16.0 Safety at Certification Test (Skills Exams)

16.1 Facial Hair Requirements - OSHA

The Kansas Department of Labor & Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Requirements:

The 1998 adoption of the respiratory regulation by OSHA requires fit testing prior to using an SCBA in Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH) atmospheres. This regulation expressly forbids facial hair in the area covered by the face piece seal. Fire fighters may not participate in any Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute fire ground activities that require the use of an SCBA without being fit tested prior to wearing the SCBA. You cannot be fit tested with a beard or facial hair in the area of the seal. This standard requires users to be “clean shaven” (no stubble allowed).

16.2 The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute Policy Regarding Facial Hair

The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute’s policy prohibits facial hair in the area of the face piece seal. Facial hair in the area of the seal includes sideburns, goatees, beards of any length, as well as stubble. Candidates not in compliance with this policy who wish to participate in Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute activities requiring the use of an SCBA will be given two options:

- a. Shave prior to participating in the activity.
- b. Do not participate in the activity.

No exceptions to this policy will be granted. It should be noted that a one or two-day beard growth (stubble) is considered facial hair. Participants must be visibly clean-shaven in the area of the face piece seal. Required compliance to this policy is noted in each Certification Study Guide where it is applicable.

16.3 Safety

Safety is a paramount concern for all candidates and evaluators during a certification skills exam. All applicable safety standards will be used to ensure firefighter safety during certification exams (including the safety related JPRs with the standard being tested).

16.4 Weather

If weather requires the adjustment of testing, the Test Site Coordinator will make a decision based on best professional judgment and annotate any adjustments on the back of the Certification Exam Summary of Candidates Form.

16.5 Personal Protective Equipment

All PPE designated for use in the exam (identified on the Skills Evaluation Sheet) must be worn/used during the skills exam.

16.6 Unsafe Acts

No unsafe acts will be permitted during an exam. If a candidate is seen committing an unsafe act while performing a skill, the firefighter will be stopped immediately. The candidate will be informed of the unsafe act committed. The candidate’s unsafe performance will be counted as a fail, and the attempt will be counted as one of the two attempts allowed within the skill station.

16.7 Horseplay

No horseplay will be allowed during the exam. Horseplay will be considered an intentional unsafe act and individuals involved may, at the discretion of the exam coordinator and evaluator, be removed from the test. If allowed to continue, the horseplay will be scored as failing one to the two attempts allowed

for that station. Any additional recurrences of horseplay will constitute automatic failure of the skills exam and require re-testing on another day prior to certification.

16.8 Equipment

No unserviceable tools or equipment may be used in skills exams, nor any equipment not specifically made/manufactured for the purpose for which it is to be used.

17.0 Equivalency and Reciprocity

17.1 Review of Requests for Equivalency or Reciprocity

The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute will review requests for equivalent or reciprocal certification from candidates who hold a current certification from another accredited entity. All reviews for equivalent or reciprocal certification are done on a case-by-case basis. The following processes are used in those cases where the review is positive, and recognition is awarded.

Accreditation criteria prevents the Institute from issuing true reciprocity (awarding a Kansas certification based solely on certification from another entity). In lieu of true reciprocity, upon verifying that national certification is valid from another accredited entity, the Institute will issue a letter granting recognition of certifications issued by another entity. This recognition will also be entered into the individual's records at the Institute and document certification at the appropriate level for purposes of meeting prerequisites for future certifications. Once recognition is awarded, the individual will not have to repeat training or certification testing for that level.

17.2 Reciprocity Options

If the candidate wishes to gain a Kansas issued national certification, they may challenge the certification exam for that level. Once the certification requirements (testing & applicable projects, etc.) are satisfactorily completed, a Kansas national certification will be awarded.

17.3 Reciprocity Restricted to the Kansas Fire Service

The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute does not participate in the practice of awarding reciprocal certification to fire fighters from outside of the Kansas fire service. Individuals living outside of Kansas and not serving on a Kansas fire department will not be granted reciprocity. Exceptions to this policy may be granted for persons demonstrating a justifiable need for certification through the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute. In this event, individuals should request reciprocity in writing with an explanation of the need for Kansas certification.

18.0 Certification Test Banks

18.1 Written Exam Test Banks

A dedicated test bank is maintained for each level of certification for which the Institute is accredited (example: Fire Fighter 1 – one test bank, Fire Fighter 2 – another test bank).

All test questions are referenced to the requirements of the standards (JPRs) and the adopted reference text. The National Certification Preparation Guide for each level lists the adopted text for each level of certification.

Accreditation criteria requires test banks to be at least 200% larger than the exam administered. Most of the Institute's test banks are close to 300% larger. In addition to the size, the test bank must include at least one question for each knowledge requirement for that level.

Questions are reviewed by the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute personnel for content and construction prior to use. Test banks are also validated by select instructors from the Kansas fire service.

18.2 Exam Security

Exam security measures have been created for this program to ensure that every candidate is allowed an equal chance for success. These procedures are further intended to prevent any individual or group from gaining an unfair advantage over other candidates.

No one will be granted access to written exam materials other than those persons taking an exam.

No one will be provided advanced knowledge of the contents of an exam (written or practical) prior to the exam.

In limited circumstances, Instructors and chief officers may be granted access to written exams for the purpose of understanding the examination process. In cases where access is granted, this access is only granted under strict controls and rules.

Any challenges to the validity of any item on the exam should be directed to the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute Certification Program Manager. These security measures are designed solely to protect the integrity of the national certification process and to safeguard the value of every nationally certified fire fighter's certification.

18.3 Exams Administered "On-Duty"

The Institute prefers not to administer certification exams to groups of firefighters who are on shift. If an "on-duty" exam is unavoidable, should participants need to leave the exam for an emergency call, the following procedures must be observed:

Only relevant personnel may leave the exam to respond.

"On Duty" Candidates will close their test booklets and turn answer sheets over.

The Test Site Coordinator will collect the test booklets and answer sheets of candidates responding to the emergency call.

If the emergency call is of short duration, the exam coordinator may at his/her discretion, allow candidate to resume the testing process with a different version of the test. Appropriate time adjustments will be made.

If the emergency call is of long duration and/or involves a majority of the class, the Test Site Coordinator shall declare the test invalid. In this case, the Institute will reschedule an appropriate time to retest, with a different version of test.

In the event of a second emergency call, "On-duty" candidates will be required to reschedule a time for another written exam. Only one (1) alternate test will be sent to a test site.

19.0 Policies Regarding Exam Sites

19.1 Responsibilities of Host Departments

Due to the evolving requirements of the NFPA standards, the logistical capabilities required of hosting fire departments has increased. The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute attempts to maintain a supply of specialized equipment that is needed in the testing process. However, the nature of the standards prevent the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute from having all of the equipment necessary to conduct an exam.

19.2 Information Regarding Hosting an Exam Site

A list of the items that the Host Department must provide appears on the certification page of the web site. If the Host Department does not own a particular piece of required equipment and/or cannot borrow the equipment, it should be reported to the Institute prior to the exam. Fire departments wishing to host an exam should contact the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute Certification Program Manager for more detailed information.

19.3 Items Provided by the Host Department

Items/conditions to be provided by the hosting department may include:

- a. Equipment must meet all NFPA Safety Standards (required - no exceptions).
- b. Fire Department Pumpers (equipped as per NFPA 1901) with pumper operators as needed. Water source supplying required GPM for skill stations selected.
- c. Equipment and locations needed to conduct any practical station of the standard being tested.
- d. Space to conduct live burns via a Burn Trailer or LPG Trailer if part of test.
- e. A space, power extrication tools, and the ability to acquire up to four (4) vehicles to be used in an auto extrication exam station. Confirm cost with the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute prior to obligating for the vehicles. Costs will be paid by the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute.
- f. Appropriate buildings so that ladder operations can be conducted (to a pitched roof, to an upper floor window, to a flat roof).
- g. Classroom with tables and chairs suitable to conduct a written test or be used for classroom presentations

19.4 Availability of Items

All of these items must be available if requested by the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute in order to conduct an exam. Every item may not be needed at every exam site, however, because of the random nature of the practical exam selection and the need to keep the skills to be tested confidential, all items must be available within only a few hours notification.

19.5 Non-disclosure of Test Equipment Prior to Exam

The Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute cannot tell local exam hosts exactly what equipment will be needed until only a few hours prior to the exam. Any prior notification beyond this time limit would violate the accreditation requirements that the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute must adhere to in order to issue National Certification.

19.6 Tentative Arrangements for Items Requiring Special Effort

It is suggested that items requiring special effort be tentatively arranged for with the understanding that these items will have to be delivered with a few hour notice. For example, arrangements with a local auto salvage could be made for two autos. The agreement should include that the auto salvage understands that if the autos are needed, it would be on the day of the exam and they would get 4 hour notice to deliver the vehicles (or the test station could be conducted at the local salvage yard if it is close by).

19.7 Detailed Information

Detailed questions on requirements and guidelines for hosting an exam should be directed to the Certification Program Manager at the Kansas Fire & Rescue Training Institute.

19.8 Observation of Test Sites

The National Certification accrediting bodies conduct site visits on approximately a five-year cycle. During these site visits, they may require a visit to an actual test being conducted. Although infrequent, the Institute reserves the right to bring a reaccreditation site team to any exam for the purpose of observation. The site team will not participate in the process. The sole purpose of their visit is to observe the application of our certification testing processes. A full-time KFRTI Staff member will accompany any site team visit.

20.0 Requirements for Each Level of Certification Offered

20.1 Candidate Requirements

The requirements for the candidate are listed in each level's National Certification Preparation Guide. It is important that candidates become familiar with these requirements, particularly as they apply to prerequisite certifications, as these requirements must be met within the one-year certification completion window.

Any questions concerning the requirements for any level should be directed to the Certification Program Manager.

20.2 Prior Certification of Prerequisite and Co-requisite Levels

Prerequisite and/or co-requisite certification levels are listed in each level's Certification Guide. KFRTI highly recommends that candidates complete each prerequisite/co-requisite level prior to testing at the next level, but it is not required. However, prior to being certified at a particular level, candidates must certify at all prerequisite/co-requisite certification levels.

When the standard calls for prerequisite levels of certification, the individual must accomplish certification in each of the designated prerequisite levels prior to certification in the level being sought.

In the event of a certification standard (or level) identifying prerequisites other than certification in lower level or related discipline(s), documentation of that experience or skills identified by the standard must be submitted to the Institute for review. The Institute will evaluate the documentation, experience, etc. based on the guidance provided by the national standard as evidenced by the JPRs, and Appendices.

20.4 Fire Instructor I & II

Prior to attempting the certification test for Fire Instructor I and Fire Instructor II, candidates must successfully complete the associated training courses.

20.5 Rescue Technician – Structural Collapse, Levels I/II & Rope, Levels I/II

Prior to attempting the certification test for any level of Rescue Technician (Structural Collapse Rescue, Rope Rescue, Confined Space Rescue, etc.), candidates must submit documentation of training prior to applying for certification. The Institute will review the documentation and notify the individual if it meets the training requirements prior to the candidate being authorized to challenge the certification exam.

20.6 Certification Expiration and Continuing Education

Certifications issued by KFRTI do not expire. While continued updates and training in all disciplines is always recommended, KFRTI does not impose any continuing education requirements on successful candidates to maintain certifications they have earned.

21.0 Policies Concerning Test Site Coordinators & Evaluators

21.1 Test Site Coordinators

Test Site Coordinators (TSC) shall be selected from seasoned evaluators as needed to fulfill the responsibilities of administering and managing test sites. Test Site Coordinators are the designated representative for the Institute and supervisor for the evaluators assigned to the exam.

TSC will ensure that all KFRTI policies governing testing are adhered to. Test Site Coordinators are empowered to make decisions related to the administration and conduct of the certification exam for which they are assigned. Test Site Coordinators are responsible to ensure a safe, confidential and fair environment for testing.

TSC are authorized to remove anyone from the test site that pose a safety hazard or concern, are creating a distraction to the test environment or otherwise interfering with the safe and fair conduct of the exam.

Any such actions must be documented in writing and submitted to the Certification Program Manager.

21.2 Evaluators

Evaluators must be certified Fire Service Instructor (level 1 or 2) and as a minimum, be certified at the level of certification being tested.

Evaluators must attend a Certification Evaluator Orientation course prior to participating as an evaluator for any certification exam

Evaluators may volunteer to work at test sites as soon as they become certified Instructor I and use their experience as an evaluator during the two years as Fire Department Instructors required before requesting their status be upgraded to Associate Instructors.

After the two-year period is up, evaluators must apply for Associate Instructor status and comply with all stated requirements as such.

21.3 Continuing Education & Training

All Test Site Coordinators and Evaluators must comply with the continuing education and training requirements set forth in the Instructor Program Criteria and Procedures, dated February 2014, available on the KFRTI web page.

21.4 Test Site Coordinators /Evaluator Agreements

All Test Site Coordinators and Evaluators shall sign and abide by the TSC/Evaluator Agreement which requires these individuals to abide by all KFRTI Policies and Procedures governing the Certification Testing Program. Additionally, they will abide by all confidentiality requirements concerning the scoring of skills testing.

Test Site Coordinators will safeguard, maintain positive control over, and not disclose any testing materials (written and otherwise) that is entrusted to their care.

Any infractions of the policy will result in counselling of the individual by the Certification Program Manager, verbally and/or in writing, as is appropriate. The Director, KFRTI will be provided a copy (if in writing) or a synopsis (if done verbally) of the counselling.

Failure to abide by these agreements may result in dismissal from the evaluation cadre and possibly affect one's status as an Associate Instructor. Any such disciplinary actions will be decided by the Director, KFRTI.

21.5 Test Site Coordinators & Evaluator Updates

As changes to the Certification Program occur, the information will be sent out in various ways, depending on which are most appropriate:

Email – If the change is small and/or very specific, an email message will be sent out to each TSC & Evaluator on the KFRTI Evaluator List.

List serves – If the change would benefit instructors as well as evaluators, the information will be posted to the appropriate List serve(s) maintained by KFRTI.

Facebook – Information may be posted on the KFRTI Facebook page for dissemination to the fire service as a whole.

TSC & Evaluator Seminars – As is appropriate and part of the continuing education initiatives for the Associate Instructor Program, Certification Seminars will be presented throughout the state. These will typically be half day (4 hour) presentations at various locations and dates throughout the state. They will generally be greater in scope than the messages and are intended to keep evaluation personnel up to speed on the current state of the program. Attendance at these seminars will be mandatory for evaluation personnel and optional for other instructors.

TSC Meetings – Given the smaller number and more specific duties of TSCs, meeting will be convened as required. These meeting will be presented by the Certification Program Manager and/or the Director, KFRTI, with assistance from KFRTI Staff. These meetings may be convened at the KFRTI location, at an off-site location, or one-on-one.

21.6 Test Site Audit

Unannounced test site audits shall be conducted primarily by the Certification Program Manager but may be conducted by the Director and/or other KFRTI Program Managers.

Said audits shall be conducted for the sole purpose of ensuring test session credibility.