

IFE Level 3 Award in Fire Risk Assessment

Qualification Specification

Qualification Number: 610/7128/6

About the Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE)

The IFE is the professional institution for those working in the fire sector.

The IFE is a registered charity working for societal benefit. Founded in 1918, the IFE's mission is to promote, encourage and improve the science, practice and professionalism of fire engineering with the overall aim of protecting and saving lives. Members of the IFE share a commitment to ensuring that the fire profession remains relevant and valued, protecting people, property and the environment from fire.

The IFE Awarding Organisation

The IFE's awarding organisation is non-profitmaking.

The aim of the of the awarding organisation is to encourage those who work in the sector to engage with, and develop, the critical understanding needed to operate effectively and safely and to best professional standards so that they can protect and save lives. In doing this, the awarding organisation contributes to three of the IFE's (six) over-arching strategic priorities i.e.:

- ◆ *Facilitate awareness of fire issues and developments through the communication of ideas, knowledge and information.*
- ◆ *Foster professionalism by establishing and maintaining pathways and recognised standards of fire professionalism and competency.*
- ◆ *Increase knowledge in the science, practice and professionalism of fire engineering.*

All of the IFE's qualifications are designed for those working in the fire sector and to meet the above priorities. Qualifications and their associated assessments (examinations and practical activities/assignments) provided by the IFE are designed, assessed and quality assured by experts with extensive experience of working within the fire sector.

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IFE Level 3 Award in Fire Risk Assessment

Introduction

The IFE Level 3 Award in Fire Risk Assessment has been developed by the Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE), and other fire professionals. The content and structure of the qualification has been established to reflect best professional practice.

Aims of the Qualification

The IFE Level 3 Award in Fire Risk Assessment has been designed to enable individuals to demonstrate a wide range of critical knowledge and understanding relevant to fire risk assessment.

Target Audience

This qualification will be appropriate for new entrants to the field of Fire Safety with knowledge of simple, low-risk buildings such as:

- ◆ Small offices
- ◆ Shops

Qualification Content

The content of the Award is set out in the information presented below. The relevant sections below provide information on the range of topics that must be studied to achieve the Award including the way in which candidates need to show their understanding (Assessment Criteria) and the scope/range/contents in which they can be tested (Knowledge and Understanding).

Candidates are advised to prepare for each examination by covering all topics in the unit content so that they are able to provide comprehensive responses.

Assessment

The assessment takes the form of a two-hour online examination.

Certification

In order to achieve the Award, candidates must obtain at least 80 marks out of the available 100 in the relevant examination.

Achievement is not graded. Successful candidates are issued an Award which recognises that candidates have passed the examination.

Entry Requirements

There are no formal entry requirements. As the examination is provided in English only, candidates will need to have a comprehensive understanding of the English language in order to access the examination questions

Qualification Learning Time

The length of time needed to prepare for this examination will vary depending upon the starting point for each individual.

Total qualification time is 112 hours comprising:

- ◆ 110 hours of study. Study may be self-study (please see the section on recommended reading below) and may include relevant training programmes.
- ◆ 2 hours of assessment (directed time) i.e., one 120-minute examination.

Qualification Level

This qualification has been designed to enable candidates to demonstrate that they have attained knowledge and understanding at Level 3.

Other types of qualifications that are set at Level 3 include A level, AS level, international Baccalaureate diploma, level 3 diploma, and level 3 NVQ.

The qualifications regulator, Ofqual, has provided the following descriptors to illustrate the knowledge and understanding expected from those who hold qualifications at Level 3.

Level 3 Knowledge descriptor

The holder (of the qualification):

- has factual, procedural and theoretical knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to complete tasks and address problems that while well-defined, may be complex and non-routine.
- can interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas.
- is aware of the nature of the area of study or work.
- is aware of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work

Candidates are advised to bear these descriptors in mind in preparing for examinations and when presenting responses during examinations.

Progression

Candidates who are successful in achieving the IFE Level 3 Award in Fire Risk Assessment, can progress to the IFE Level 4 Certificate in Fire Risk Assessment.

Recommended Reading

This qualification covers an extensive range of specialist topics and candidates are advised to prepare for questions on all topics.

Candidates should be aware that this reading list is not exhaustive. The IFE recommends that all candidates read widely in order to extend the depth and breadth of their knowledge and understanding.

The IFE has applied the following criteria in determining which resources should be included on this recommended reading list:

- ◆ the resource provides information which will be of benefit to the candidate in their professional life, providing depth and breadth of understanding;
- ◆ the resource contains some information that will be relevant to part of the syllabus;
- ◆ the resource is recognised by industry professionals as providing valuable information.

Candidates preparing for the examinations should use the below reading list along with the content as the starting point for their study.

- ◆ BS 9792:2025 - Fire risk assessment. Housing. Code of practice
- ◆ BS 9991 – Code of Practice for Fire Safety in the Design, Management and Use of Buildings (familiarity with layout and intent only) Residential buildings
- ◆ BS 9999 – Code of Practice for Fire Safety in the Design, Management and Use of Buildings (familiarity with layout and intent only) Non-residential buildings
- ◆ BS 8674:2025 Built environment - Framework for competence of individual fire risk assessors - Code of practice
- ◆ BS 5839-1 – Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems for Buildings
- ◆ BS 5839-6 – Fire Detection and Fire Alarm Systems for Buildings
- ◆ BS 5266-1 – Emergency Lighting
- ◆ PAS 79-1
- ◆ Case studies on Higher Risk Buildings, post-Grenfell reforms, and safety cases
- ◆ IFE and NFCC Webinar Libraries – for case law, expert opinion, and CPD
- ◆ [Approved Document B \(Fire Safety\) Volumes 1 and 2](#)
- ◆ Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- ◆ Fire Safety Act 2021
- ◆ Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- ◆ [HM Government Fire Risk Assessment Guides](#)
- ◆ Guide to Fire Precautions in Existing Non-Residential Premises – FPA
- ◆ Fire Safety and Risk Management: For the Nebosh National Certificate in Fire Safety and Risk Management – FPA
- ◆ [BRE Digest 398 – Compartmentation in Buildings](#)
- ◆ [Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats](#)
- ◆ Project Management - Absolute Beginners Guide 3rd edition by G, Horine
- ◆ APM Body of Knowledge 8th edition
- ◆ Fire Safety Risk Assessment Guide 'Offices and Shops' - DCLG
- ◆ Fire Safety Risk Assessment Guide 'Factories and Warehouses' - DCLG
- ◆ Fire Safety Risk Assessment Guide 'Sleeping Accommodation' – DCLG
- ◆ Fire Safety Risk Assessment Guide 'Small and Medium Places of Assembly' - DCLG

Content

1. Principles and Scope of Fire Risk Assessments

Assessment Criteria	Knowledge, understanding and Skills
1.1 Understand the basic principles of fire risk assessment	• Hazard identification. • Risk evaluation. • Risk control. • Knowledge of PAS 79-1 and BS 9792 and other relevant benchmarks. • Ability to define and apply the concept of a "fire risk assessed approach" to various fire safety scenarios.
1.2 Recognise the steps required to conduct structured fire risk assessments in low-risk buildings	• Steps required to conduct a structured fire risk assessment. • Apply principles of PAS 79-1 or BS 9792 (in preparation) and include the nine steps to fire risk assessment or other approved benchmarks, must include ○ Gather required information ○ Hazard identification. ○ Assessment of likelihood of fire. ○ Consequences of fire (risk). ○ Action plan and control measures. • Importance of documenting findings and providing recommendations for low-risk buildings. • Providing recommendations.
1.3 Identify key criteria for evaluating the adequacy of existing fire risk assessments and providing informed advice to duty holders	• Make an assessment of fire risk • Decide if fire risk is tolerable • Understand the reasons to suspect the FRA is no longer valid. ○ Significant changes in building use, structure, layout or, Risk profile of occupants ○ Judging risk assessment outcome against current control measures in place.
1.4 Understand human factors and their impact on fire safety decisions and fire risk assessment outcomes	• How individual judgment and perception can influence responses during fire incidents. • Diverse needs of building occupants, including those with disabilities or other vulnerabilities. • Importance of developing evacuation plans that accommodate these needs.
1.5 Identify best practices for creating clear, actionable fire safety reports	• Communicating fire safety issues to non-specialist audiences. ○ Clear structure ○ Accessible language. ○ Persuasive and confident manner.
1.6 Understand the role of fire risk management	• Components and principles of effective fire risk management systems. ○ Ignition source control.

systems, policies, and procedures	○ Management of combustible materials. ○ Arson control. ○ Housekeeping. ○ Maintenance of fire safety systems. ○ Passive fire protection. ● Developing and implementing fire safety policies and procedures.
1.7 Identify situations where fire risks are intolerable and the corresponding actions required	● Assessing risk level. ● Advising urgent interim actions. ● Providing options where possible. ● Timescales. ● Advising solutions.

2. Fire Safety Legislation and Guidance

Assessment Criteria	Knowledge, understanding and Skills
2.1 Understand the duties imposed by relevant fire safety legislation	● Core provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 ○ Responsibilities of duty holders and key stakeholders. ○ Role of fire and rescue services in enforcement and firefighting operations including their access and facility requirements. ● Ethical principles.
2.2 Understand how to research and apply up-to-date legal standards and best practices in fire safety	● Interpreting and applying laws in various contexts. ● Finding appropriate legislation and applicable government guidance. ● Understanding the role of Article 50 guidance as per the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

3. Fire Development and spread

Assessment Criteria	Knowledge, understanding and Skills
3.1 Understand the mechanisms of combustion and fire spread, including products of combustion	● Chemical and physical processes of combustion. ● Key stages of fire development. ● How fire spreads within and between structures. ● Factors influencing fire spread.
3.2 Identify direct and indirect sources of ignition and analyse hazardous situations	● Common ignition sources in residential and commercial settings. ● Difference between direct and indirect ignition sources.
3.3 Analyse existing fire safety measures and recognise where additional controls are necessary	● Controlling fire and smoke spread. i.e. compartmentation, ventilation ● Controlling ignition sources. i.e. eliminating sources of ignition. ● Controlling flammable materials. i.e. housekeeping.

3.4 Understand the importance of compartmentation in restricting fire development	• Compartmentation principles and construction. • Understanding fire stopping. • Role and specifications of fire doors. • Risks of compartmentation failure.
3.5 Understand the impact of external wall systems on fire growth and spread	• Role of external walls in fire development. • Fire risks associated with various cladding systems.

4. Building Design, Construction and Maintenance

Assessment Criteria	Knowledge, understanding and Skills
4.1 Understand building design principles related to fire safety, including passive and active fire protection	• Building design principles and the relation to fire safety. • Differences between passive and active fire protection systems. • Compartmentation principles and how passive fire protection systems can limit fire spread. • Fire performance of common building materials, product suitability and their influence on fire behaviour. • Means of Escape and its importance in contributing to occupant safety. • State an Awareness of buildings designed to common building design, e.g. ADB, Enhanced guidance e.g. BS 9991 and BS 9999, and finally the Engineered approach.
4.2 Understand the role of maintenance in ensuring the effectiveness of fire precautions	• Role of maintenance in ensuring fire precautions remain effective. • Developing maintenance plans to ensure fire precautions remain effective.
4.3 Identify how housekeeping, security measures, alarm systems, and fire signage contribute to overall fire safety	• Knowledge of how housekeeping, security, and signage contribute to overall fire safety. ○ Keeping exits clear. ○ Signage where necessary to direct occupants. ○ Ensuring accessibility of exits is not compromised by security measures. • Identifying and addressing weaknesses in these areas.
4.4 Interpret standards related to fire detection, alarm systems, and emergency lighting	• Principles of fire detection and alarm systems. • Standards such as BS 5839 for fire alarms and BS 5266 for emergency lighting.

5. Fire Risk Management Systems

Assessment Criteria	Knowledge, understanding and Skills
5.1 Identify key elements of fire safety management systems	- Assess the key elements of fire safety management systems. E.g. Fire risk control, identify people at higher risk, Fire actions and procedures, Staff training and roles, testing and maintenance, records etc - Understand the impact of fire risk management systems on overall fire safety. - Implications of human behaviour in maintaining the effectiveness of fire safety systems, including the impact of possible malicious acts.
5.2 Assess existing fire safety management systems and identify areas for improvement	- Assess current fire safety systems both active and passive. - Identify and manage risk when any system is faulty or impaired, and manage unwanted fire alarm signals Recommend improvements or maintenance actions as necessary.

6. Technical Calculations

Assessment Criteria	Knowledge, understanding and Skills
6.1 Apply mathematical and scientific principles to fire safety problems	- Occupational limits. - Door width calculations. - Travel time and travel distances.