

IFE Level 4 Certificate in Fire Risk Assessment

Qualification Specification

Qualification Number: 610/7130/4

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 the 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. The 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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Introduction

This qualification has been developed by the Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE), Fire Risk Assessors and Fire Safety specialists in both private sector roles and public sector roles in the Fire and Rescue Services.

Aims of the Qualification

The IFE Level 4 Certificate in Fire Risk Assessment has been designed to enable individuals to demonstrate a wide range of critical knowledge and understanding required to carry out fire risk assessments in moderate-risk premises. It builds on foundation understanding and focuses on applying structured, evidence-based approaches in line with UK fire safety legislation, guidance, and British Standards.

Target Audience

This qualification will be appropriate for experienced professionals working in Fire Safety with experience in medium complexity buildings such as:

- ◆ Public venues
- ◆ Mid-rise residential properties
- ◆ Buildings with moderate occupancy or fire safety systems.

Learning Outcomes

Candidates who achieve this Certificate should be able to:

- ◆ Apply intermediate fire risk assessment methods to moderate-risk environments.
- ◆ Understand the duties of duty holders and enforcing authorities under UK fire safety legislation.
- ◆ Recognise how building design, fire strategies, and human factors influence fire safety outcomes.
- ◆ Evaluate fire development, spread, and control measures, including passive and active systems.
- ◆ Recommend proportionate improvements where fire risks are identified as intolerable.
- ◆ Produce structured, evidence-based fire risk assessment reports suitable for a range of stakeholders.

Membership of the IFE

Achievement of this qualification enables candidates to meet the academic requirement for membership of the Institution at **Technician (TIFireE) Grade**.

Achievement of **three Level 4 Certificates** enables candidates to meet the academic requirement for membership of the Institution at **Associate (AIFireE) Grade** or **Member (MIFireE) Grade**.

To achieve the full **Level 4 Diploma**, candidates must complete this mandatory qualification **in addition to** the following:

- ◆ The mandatory Level 4 Certificate in Fire Safety
- ◆ The mandatory Level 4 Certificate in Fire Safety
- ◆ One additional IFE Level 4 Certificate

All four qualifications must be achieved **within a five-year period**.

Qualification Content

The content of the qualification is set out in the section entitled “Content” below. This section provides information on the range of topics that must be studied including the way that candidates need to show their understanding (Assessment Criteria) and the scope/range/contexts in which they can be tested (Knowledge, Understanding and Skills).

The syllabus content is very broad and deep and therefore not all topics can be tested in all examinations. Candidates are advised to prepare for the examination by covering all topics 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 Certificate, candidates must obtain at least 80 marks out of the available 100 in the relevant examination.

Achievement is not graded. Successful candidates are issued a Certificate 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.

Candidates should spend around 260 hours preparing for the examination.

Total qualification time is 262 hours comprising:

- 260 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 4. Other types of qualifications that are set at Level 4 include Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE), Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Level 4 NVQs.

The qualifications regulator, Ofqual, has provided the following descriptors to illustrate the knowledge and understanding expected from those who hold qualifications at Level 4.

Level 4 Knowledge Descriptor

The candidate:

- ◆ Has practical, theoretical, or technical knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to address problems that are well defined but complex and non-routine.
- ◆ Can analyse, interpret, and evaluate relevant information and ideas.
- ◆ Is aware of the nature of approximate scope of the area of study or work.
- ◆ Has an informed awareness of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.

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

Progression

Candidates who are successful in achieving this qualification may consider progression to Level 5. A Level 5 qualification in Fire Risk Assessment is available from the IFE.

Further Information

Further information on examination conditions is available on the IFE website.

Recommended Reading

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

This qualification is designed to build on prior learning. Candidates are expected to have an awareness of the knowledge and principles assessed in the IFE Level 3 Award in Fire Risk Assessment.

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 7974 and all Published Documents (PDs) – particularly PD 7974-6 (human behaviour)
- ◆ 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 9997 – Fire Risk Management Systems – Specification with Guidance

- ◆ BS 8674:2025 Built environment - Framework for competence of individual fire risk assessors - Code of practice
- ◆ BS 8214:2016 – Fire-resisting and smoke control doors – Practical considerations concerning specification, design and performance in use – Code of Practice
- ◆ PAS 9980:2022 – Fire Risk Appraisal of External Walls
- ◆ 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
- ◆ [HM Government Fire Risk Assessment Guides](#)
- ◆ [BRE Digest 398 – Compartmentation in Buildings](#)
- ◆ [Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats](#)
- ◆ SCA Smoke Control Guidance Notes – Smoke Control Association
- ◆ BRE Guide to Fire Doors and Hardware
- ◆ Fire Safety Engineering: Design of Structures – John Purkiss
- ◆ Fire Safety Journal or IFE Fire Professional
- ◆ NFCC Guidance for Specialised Housing
- ◆ NFCC Fire Risk Assessment Competency Framework (3rd Edition)
- ◆ Fire Safety Risk Assessment Guide 'Healthcare Premises' - DCLG
- ◆ HTM 05-02 Firecode
- ◆ Fire Safety Risk Assessment Guide 'Educational Premise' - DCLG
- ◆ BB100
- ◆ Project Management - Absolute Beginners Guide 3rd edition by G, Horine
- ◆ APM Body of Knowledge 8th edition
- ◆ Fire Safety Risk Assessment Guide 'Large Places of Assembly' – DCLG
- ◆ [Engineering Council Statement of Ethical Principles](#)
- ◆ [IFE Code of Conduct](#)

Content

1. Principles and Scope of Fire Risk Assessments

Assessment Criteria	Knowledge, understanding and Skills
1.1 Understand advanced theoretical and practical approaches to fire risk assessment	- Principles and application of intermediate fire risk assessment methods in moderate-risk environments. - Application of evidence-based approaches for problem-solving during fire risk assessments. - Identification of key risks and their systematic evaluation. - Analyse existing fire strategies including environmental and societal impact. - Understand the Reasons to suspect the FRA is no longer valid. - Significant changes in building use, structure, layout or risk profile of occupants, etc. - Judging risk assessment outcome against current control measures in place.
1.2 Apply principles for delivering proportionate advice for moderate-risk premises	- 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 require information - Assessment of likelihood of fire. - Hazard identification. - Consequences of fire (risk). - Action plan and control measures. - Importance of documenting findings and providing recommendations for moderate-risk buildings. - Principles of prevention (RRO). - Providing reasonably practicable recommendations, taking into account realistic implementation.
1.3 Identify situations where fire risks are intolerable and the corresponding actions required	- Assessing risk level. - Advising urgent interim measures and actions - Identify situations where interim measures need to be implemented immediately and managed, or the building can no longer be occupied until remedial action is taken. - Formulate an action plan and understand the effect of each solution. - Providing options where possible. - Advising timescales
1.4 Understand how to effectively manage resources and communicate complex information to stakeholders	- Basic principles of resource estimation, including time and cost requirements in the context of fire risk assessment projects. - Information required to support the undertaking of a fire risk assessment. - Understand various methods by which data can be gathered and organized using a variety of mediums and sources. - Communicating fire safety issues to specialist and non-

	specialist audiences. • Best practices for creating clear, actionable fire safety reports.
1.5 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.

2. Fire Safety Legislation and Guidance

Assessment Criteria	Knowledge, understanding and Skills
2.1 Identify the roles, responsibilities, and powers of enforcing authorities under 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. • Interpreting legal responsibilities and enforcing compliance. • Ethical principles. • Codes of conduct.
2.2 Recognise the technical standards for firefighting facilities and access	• Technical standards – Approved Document B: B5, BS9991, BS9999. • Legal overlap with other legislation.
2.3 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 of Article 50 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

3. Fire Development and Spread in Complex environments

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. • Direct and indirect ignition sources.
3.2 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.
3.3 Understand the importance of compartmentation in	• Compartmentation principles and construction. • Understanding fire stopping. • Role and specifications of fire doors.

restricting fire development	Risks of compartmentation failure.
3.4 Understand the impact of external wall systems on fire growth and spread	- Role of external walls in fire development. - Different types of external wall systems and the effect on fire behaviour. - Fire risks associated with various cladding systems.
3.5 Assess the impact of building contents, occupancy, and usage on fire development	- How fire load can affect fire development. - How high fire loads can affect the structural stability of a building. - How processes can affect the risk of ignition. - Familiar / unfamiliar occupants and their behaviours within the built environment (arson, accidents, housekeeping, etc.)
3.6 Identify the need for further investigation where fire risks are deemed intolerable	When additional investigation is necessary to address high-risk fire safety concerns e.g. carrying out Type 4 Fire Risk Assessments.

4. Building Design, Construction and Maintenance in Moderate Risk Buildings

Assessment Criteria	Knowledge, understanding and Skills
4.1 Knowledge of various specialist protection systems and how they integrate with overall fire safety strategies	- Principles of fire detection and alarm systems. - Standards such as BS 5839 for fire alarms and BS 5266 for emergency lighting. - Voice alarm systems. - Smoke control systems e.g. SCA guides. - Door and fire curtain controls. - Knowledge of how housekeeping, security, and signage contribute to overall fire safety.
4.2 Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of product certification, testing, and specification	- Certification processes. - Testing standards and specification (found in Approved Document B) - Fire Doors - External Wall Systems - Linings (Wall) - Fire Alarm Systems
4.3 Understand principles of providing informed advice on building maintenance to ensure fire safety	- Best practices for maintaining fire safety components and systems including active and passive systems. - Principles of advising on maintenance to ensure continued fire safety compliance. - Awareness of fire safety engineered solutions and how they can be used to provide safety where it cannot be achieved using prescriptive standards and guidance.
4.4 Identify key elements of fire safety management systems, including compliance with BS 9997	- Key elements of fire safety management systems. - 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. Fire Safety Management Systems

Assessment Criteria	Knowledge, understanding and Skills
5.1 Understand the importance of appropriate management systems for the maintenance of both active and passive fire safety systems	• Explain the maintenance measures which are applicable across a range of fire precautions • Explain the importance of housekeeping measure • Identify the 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. • Recommend improvements or maintenance actions as necessary. • Ability to identify and manage risk when any system is faulty or impaired, and to manage unwanted fire alarm signals.

6. Personal Development

Assessment Criteria	Knowledge, understanding and Skills
6.1 Identify best practices for mentoring less experienced assessors	• Guiding foundation level fire risk assessors. • Fostering professional growth and skill enhancement. • Delivering CPD initiatives. • Fire Sector Federation Benchmark Standard 2022 • Recording Fire risk assessments and their outcomes • Selecting relevant guidance (e.g. Article 50, guides)
6.2 Apply principles of task management to meet deadlines and manage fire risk assessment resources effectively	• Task management. • Time management. • Resource allocation

7. Technical Calculations

Assessment Criteria	Knowledge, understanding and Skills
7.1 Apply mathematical and scientific principles to fire safety problems	• Use knowledge of mathematics, statistics, and natural sciences to solve well-defined problems related to fire safety and risk assessment. • Employ appropriate computational and analytical techniques to address specific fire risk scenarios. ○ Occupational limits. ○ Stair capacities. ○ Door width calculations. ○ Travel time and travel distances.