

# Police and Public Safety Institute

## Pre-Service Firefighter Education and Training 6236X01FWO Additional Information

In the late 1990's, the Office of the Fire Marshal of Ontario (OFM) and the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs (O AFC) decided to release a curriculum called "Pre-Service Firefighter Education and Training Program" to Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAATs) so that they could deliver this curriculum to students interested in a career in the fire service. The new program is modeled closely on the Ontario Firefighter Standards that form the basis of training programs being delivered to new recruits by the Ontario Fire College and Fire Departments throughout Ontario. It consists of the delivery of theory and skills courses to familiarize students with the career, followed by individual skills testing and a Pre-graduate Experience with additional individual and team-based skills development through practice.

Colleges who agreed to deliver this curriculum had to sign an agreement with a local fire service, design a program according to the rules and regulations from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), and submit their plan for a rigorous review by the Endorsement Review Board (ERB) of the OFM/O AFC.

Algonquin College sought and obtained endorsement by the ERB which requires that its endorsement be mentioned in the following way:

*"The O AFC and OFM Endorsement Review Board endorses the content of the program. The Board expressly does not endorse the delivery, tools, and/or equipment used in the delivery of the program."*

The process means that graduates of the College program are allowed to challenge special examinations prepared by the Office of the Fire Marshal. Applicants will be advised if they have been successful in the exams, both written and practical, and will be allowed to inform prospective employers of such. If hired by a fire service, candidates, on the Chief's recommendation, will be able to request a certificate of achievement from the OFM, which is equivalent to the certificate received by those candidates who are hired by fire services, and go through the firefighter curriculum with their employer (fire department) or at the Ontario Fire College.

### **The Algonquin College Program**

The Pre-Service Firefighter Education and Training program at Algonquin College consists of three semesters for a total of 38 weeks. During the first two semesters of 15 weeks each, students learn the theory and skills from the curriculum. Semesters run from the Tuesday following Labor Day until mid-December and then again from early January to the end of April with a week off in mid-February.

Theory courses are delivered at the College, lab/skills courses are either at the College or at locations off campus, such as area fire department stations/training facilities. All our courses, except English and Psychology, are taught by firefighters with the expertise in the field. During these two semesters, students have about 20 hours of classes per week scheduled at any time between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. The class consists of about 50 students in lectures and is sub-divided into three or four groups for labs/skills teaching. For the Fire Ground Operations courses, students are divided into smaller groups of different sizes, depending on the subject to be mastered. The College provides bunker gear and self-contained breathing apparatus for all students. Students must buy a helmet, gloves, boots, and flash hood to wear with these (the College provides guidelines to ensure these are appropriate for firefighting).

The third semester is up to eight weeks; the first two are for intensive testing, during which period all students are evaluated for all skills according to OFM specifications. This evaluation is done as part of

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scenarios with a very small student-to-evaluator ratio (all evaluators must have the Trainer/Facilitator designation from the OFM).

The last part is made up of **individual and team-based skills development and may involve attendance at the following locations for up to\***:

1 day in the emergency room of a hospital,  
2 days with fire prevention group,  
1 day in public education with the Fire Service,  
1 day at a communication center with the Fire Service, and  
2 days of community service.

\* *Some activities may take place during the first two semesters.*

We have eliminated the need for the fitness test prior to entering the program. We need to inform you, however, that early in the second semester, students will be administered an “in house” physical ability test similar to the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) used by most fire services in North America to evaluate firefighter recruit candidates. Students may need to meet minimum physical requirements in order to be allowed to participate in the “Live Fire” training component late in the second semester.

Applicants who meet the admission requirements and qualify for the program will be rank ordered in February using the average of the four pre-requisite high school subjects, Math, English, Chemistry, and Biology. Recognition of previously earned post-secondary credentials is given during the selection process for this program.

Letters indicating your status will be mailed by the Registrar’s Office around March 5, 2014. Those students accepted into the program will need to confirm their acceptance by May 1, 2014. Applicants who fail to confirm by that date will be automatically removed and their place will be offered to the next person on the waiting list. Applicants from the waiting list can be called as late as the end of the first week of classes in September. (The waiting list will then be discarded and those interested in applying for the following year will need to re-apply through [ontariocolleges.ca](http://ontariocolleges.ca)).

## Fire Service Recruitment

All Fire Services have different recruitment procedures. Competition for jobs within the fire service is very intense with the number of applicants far exceeding the number of jobs available.

The OFM has a website describing some of the requirements for becoming a firefighter. It can be found at:

[http://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/FireMarshal/EducationTestingCertification/EducationTraining/BecomingFirefighterOntario/OFM\\_become\\_a\\_ff.html](http://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/FireMarshal/EducationTestingCertification/EducationTraining/BecomingFirefighterOntario/OFM_become_a_ff.html)

The City of Ottawa has a website describing the recruitment procedure for Ottawa Fire Services at: [www.ottawa.ca/en/city\\_hall/careers/fire/index.html](http://www.ottawa.ca/en/city_hall/careers/fire/index.html)

Every two years applicants are invited to send their application for a job by a certain deadline identified on their website.

Applicants whose submission is acceptable are invited for testing a few months later. The written test consists of two 3-hour exams: a reasoning/problem exam and a psychological profile test. Those who

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score better than 70% on both exams are invited to the Candidates' Physical Ability Test (CPAT) a few months later. The City gives all applicants an opportunity to preview the test 8 weeks prior to the administration of the actual test which is described in the website. Applicants who perform at or above the acceptable level in CPAT are placed on a hiring list for two years (usually starting in January). Only applicants who are on this hiring list are eligible to be hired by the City.

When vacancies occur, the Human Resources department reviews the hiring list for candidates with related knowledge, skills, and education. Those applicants who have the required qualifications are invited to an interview or series of interviews which determines who will eventually be hired for the job. Ottawa Fire Services has indicated to us that graduates of our Pre-Service Firefighter Education and Training program will be given the same credit as experienced volunteer firefighters in the hiring process.

We encourage you to read the [Pre-Service Firefighter Education and Training](#) information.

For more information, refer to the Police and Public Safety Institute website at [www.algonquincollege.com/ppsi](http://www.algonquincollege.com/ppsi).