

Police and Public Safety Institute

Pre-Service Firefighter Education and Training 6236X01FWO Additional Information

In April 2014 the Province of Ontario officially adopted the National Fire Protection Association Professional Qualifications (NFPA Pro-Qual) standards for firefighters. The move to the new Ontario model required changes in the Pre-Service Firefighter Education and Training program provincially, and these changes have resulted in the addition of new competencies as well as increased emphasis on student hands-on learning.

Those students who successfully complete the required components of the Pre-Service Firefighter Education and Training Program, and who satisfy the necessary pre-requisites as outlined in the National Fire Protection Association 1001 standard, will be eligible to apply for and complete a series of written and practical examinations leading to NFPA 1001 Firefighter I or Firefighter II certification. It should be noted that NFPA 1001 certification is inclusive of NFPA 472 Hazardous Materials Operations level requirements, and that certification is not a mandatory part of the Pre-Service Firefighter Education and Training program requirement. Certification is administered by the Office of the Fire Marshal.

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 semester, student will be introduced to a range of fire service subject matter, including operational, prevention, and medical, theory and techniques. The second semester will include learning about hazardous materials, enhanced emergency medical response training, and further fire ground operational knowledge and skills.

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. During these two semesters, students have about 25 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 60 students in lectures and is sub-divided into three or four groups for labs/skills teaching. 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). Students must also pay for mandatory fit testing, to ensure proper fit for the required respiratory protection.

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 scenarios with a very small student-to-evaluator ratio

There is currently no fitness test prior to entering the program. We need to inform you, however, that 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 may be rank ordered in February based on their proficiency in secondary school English. Recognition of previously earned post-secondary credentials is given during the selection process for this program.

Police and Public Safety Institute

Letters indicating your status will be mailed by the Registrar's Office on March 5, 2015. Those students accepted into the program will need to confirm their acceptance by May 1, 2015 through ontariocolleges.ca. 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).

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

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

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 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.