



Candidate Preparation Guide

Experience, Certification, Training and Education (ECT&E) Claim

Fire Promotional Exams

Fire Alarm Operator Senior/ Principal

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The Experience, Certification, Training and Education (ECT&E) claim is an exam component of the fire promotional exams for the title of Fire Alarm Operator Senior/ Principal.

This section of the exam is similar but not the same as the Education and Experience (E&E) section of previous years. This guide is intended to help candidates familiarize themselves with the ECT&E component of the exam.

Please note these instructions are for candidates taking the current Fire Alarm Operator Senior/ Principal promotional exam. These instructions should not be relied upon for any future exam.

It is strongly recommended you closely read the on-line instructions, download, and print a copy of the claim, and work on it off-line before beginning your on-line submission. This preparation guide includes unique information, not available online. Use the information in this guide to assist in completing the claim.

Claim Submission

Final ECT&E Submission Deadline: 7 days after written exam date, at 11:59 p.m.

- Starting the claim: Make sure the claim is for the correct exam title. If candidates are taking the 2025 Fire Alarm Operator Senior or Principal written promotional exam, they must apply for the 2025 Fire Alarm Operator Senior or Principal ECT&E exam claim. When participating in multiple written promotional exams, candidates must submit an ECT&E application for each appropriate promotional ECT&E application.
- “Saving” VS “Submitting”: The claim can be completed in more than one sitting, and progress can be saved. However, a claim must be submitted by the deadline. A saved claim cannot be scored and will be considered incomplete.
- Changing a submitted claim: Once a claim is submitted, candidates can no longer make changes. If the deadline has not yet passed, changes can be made to submitted claims by emailing: civilservice@mass.gov. Include the candidate’s name, person ID, and ECT&E exam title in the subject of the email (e.g., John S. Smith – 123456 – ECT&E Fire Alarm Operator Senior/ Principal).
- Confirmation of submission: When a claim is submitted, a confirmation email will be sent. If you do not receive a confirmation email, you must resubmit your online application prior to the submission deadline, until you have received a confirmation email. Candidates should retain a copy of their confirmation email for their records. If an email is sent to the Civil Service account with supporting documents, an auto reply will be generated. This is not confirmation that an application has been submitted.

NOTE: The confirmation email is confirmation that your application has been received. It is not confirmation that all your supporting documents have been accepted. Please review the preparation guide carefully to ensure all the proper documentation is submitted.

Weights and Scoring

For the Fire Alarm Operator Senior/ Principal exam, the ECT&E exam component is one of three exam components and is weighted at 20% of the total exam. The ECT&E component has three main sections that have the following weights applied:

Experience	70%
Certifications/Trainings/Licenses	20%
Education	10%

Unlike previous ECT&E claim forms, a candidate will not be able to see point values for the associated claim entries. When exam scores are released, the candidate will receive a breakdown of their final score consisting of their written exam technical knowledge component; written exam situational judgment testing component; and ECT&E claim score.

Background

The ECT&E component has three main sections: Experience, Certifications/Trainings/Licenses and Education. Through collaboration of HRD Civil Service Unit, subject matter experts and the test vendor, the weight distribution was determined through our job analysis test development process. This process consists of multiple panel sessions accompanied by surveys to all civil service departments across the Commonwealth. Each exam is evaluated in partnership with subject matter experts. Components and/or specifications of each component are subject to change with evaluations of each exam.

Supporting Documentation

ALL claims, whether for experience, certification, training, license or education, require supporting documentation. This guide will identify what is supporting documentation for each category. The on-line form includes a section entitled “attachments” for submission of documents. **Please label your document to ensure it is processed accordingly.** A candidate can revisit the “attachments” page as many times as necessary to submit all required documentation before the claim is submitted.

If for some reason you are unable to attach a document to the claim, or you need to make a change see “Changing a submitted claim” above.

NOTE: If you have attached all necessary supporting documents to your online claim, you do **NOT** need to email a second copy to Civil Service.

The image below shows where to submit supporting documentation on your ECT&E claim:

Info **Attachments** **Questions** **Review** **Certify**

Supported file types: .doc, .docx, .xls, .xlsx, .ppt, .pptx, .potx, .pdf, .gif, .tiff, .tif, .jpe, .jpeg, .jpg, .png, .htm, .html, .rtf, .txt, .wpd, .wp, .bmp

+ Add supplemental attachment

** Required attachments must be provided before submission*

Next

Employment Verification Form (EVF)

The EVF for all promotional exams is available on the [Employment Verification Form](#) page of the Civil Service website. Ensure you are filling out the EVF for the **correct exam title**. The experience you provide should only be candidate experience gained on or before the exam date.

The EVF must be signed and dated by your department’s appointing authority or their designee for work in their current department.

NOTE: A resume will never be accepted instead of an EVF.

Current Work Experience

Candidates must submit a current EVF signed by their appointing authority or their designee for work in their current department. The appointing authority must include start/end dates for each grade level (rank), whether it was a full- or part-time position, and reasons for any breaks in service. Time is calculated per rank, and it can include any temporary, provisional, reserve, and/or intermittent time in a rank. Acting time is only accepted in the examination title category.

Leaves of absence: The first six months (180 consecutive days) of a leave of absence can be claimed as time worked on your EVF. Leaves of absences or breaks in service for more than six months must be recorded on the EVF and will not be counted toward work experience.

Work Experience Earned in Another Department

An EVF must be filled out for each department that a candidate is claiming work experience from. If an EVF from another department is unable to be submitted, a letter from an appointing authority on the department letterhead will be accepted.

Calculating Work Experience

The EVF form will be used to calculate work experience at each rank, including temporary and provisional time.

Rounding: Sections I, II, III, & V of the EVF are calculated in years. If a candidate's experience is 6 months or over, round up to the next full year. If experience is less than 6 months, round down to the previous lower year. Days are not considered when rounding to the nearest year. Therefore, if a candidate has 1 year, 5 months, and 29 days of experience in a rank that will round to 1 year of experience in that rank.

Section IV, Acting Time, is calculated in months. If a candidate has 16 or more days of experience, round up the next month. Therefore, if a candidate has 2 months and 16 days of experience of acting time, this will round to 3 months.

For part-time work calculations only, part-time work should be prorated based on a 172 hour/month to produce a months-worked claim. Examples:

- If a candidate worked part time for a total of 220 hours, the calculation would be 220 hours divided by 172 hours, resulting in 1.28 months of work. This would be rounded to credit for one month of work.
- For 670 hours of part-time work, the calculation would be 670 hours divided by 172 hours, resulting in 3.89 months worked. This would be rounded on the claim form, for a submission of 4 months of employment.

For example, if a candidate taking the Fire Alarm Operator Principal examination, has served part time as an acting Fire Alarm Operator Principal from 12/01/2019 – 03/20/2021 for a total of 276 hours, they would input the following:

III. ACTING, TEMPORARY, AND PROVISIONAL SERVICE IN THE DEPARTMENT

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Hours</u> (Please indicate if experience is full-time. If part-time, include number of hours)	<u>Dates of Service</u>
Principal	276	(12/01/2019 - 03/20/2021)

If the individual above had served as an acting Fire Alarm Operator Principal for the same time period, but on a full-time basis, then under "Hours" they would write "Full Time" instead.

Please see the calculation for the EVF example above:

Fire Alarm Operator Experience:

Start: 07/16/2002

End: 10/01/2008

Subtotal: 6 years 2 months and 16 days

Subtract temporary Senior time: 9 months and 19 days

Total Time: 5 years 4 months and 27 days = **5 years**

Fire Alarm Operator Senior Experience:

Start: 10/02/2008

End: 02/15/2025 (exam date)

Subtotal: 16 years 4 months 14 days

Subtract temporary Principal time: 1,030 hours divided by 172 hours = 5 months and 29 days

Total Time: 15 years 10 months and 15 days = **16 years**

Outside Department Experience

This is experience as a Dispatcher or Telecommunicator for a public safety entity outside your current department. This can include experience as an entry-level fire alarm operator outside your current department, as well as non-FAO emergency Dispatcher or Telecommunicator. Work experience can only be claimed once.

Supporting Documentation:

- Outside Department EVF: This experience category requires its own EVF, signed by the relevant appointing authority (for FAO roles).
- A letter on a business letterhead with an original signature indicating start/end dates of employment.
- Full- or part-time position. If the claim is for part-time employment, the letter must indicate how many actual hours were worked or the number of hours worked per week. This will be calculated under the prorated, part-time calculation (172 hour/month).

Supervisor Experience Outside Current Department

This includes supervisory-level experience as an emergency Dispatcher or Telecommunicator for a public safety entity outside your current department. This can include experience as a supervisory-level fire alarm operator (FAO Senior and/or Principal) outside your current department, as well as non-FAO supervisory-level emergency Dispatcher or Telecommunicator. Work experience can only be claimed once.

Supporting Documentation:

- Outside Department EVF: This experience category requires its own EVF, signed by the relevant appointing authority (for FAO roles).

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- A letter on a business letterhead with an original signature indicating start/end dates of employment.
- Full- or part-time position. If the claim is for part-time employment, the letter must indicate how many actual hours were worked or the number of hours worked per week. This will be calculated under the prorated, part-time calculation (172 hour/month).
Supervisory responsibility with official duties listed. Duties include: supervising staff and work processes, enforcing policies and procedures, monitoring employee productivity, and providing feedback, setting performance goals, assisting with scheduling, employee corrective measures.

Experience in a Related Public Safety Profession

This is experience as a first responder (firefighter and/or law enforcement officer) as well as an emergency medical technician (EMT). Experience as a military firefighter or law enforcement officer would be credited under this category.

A candidate can submit their DD214 as supporting documentation of time served as a military firefighter or law enforcement officer if the DD214 specifies that title in block 11. Additional documentation will be needed to support the claim of military firefighter/law enforcement officer if it is not indicated in block 11. Additional documents can include initial orders joining the military with the job of military firefighter/law enforcement officer.

Supporting Documentation:

- Outside Department EVF: This experience category requires its own EVF, signed by the relevant appointing authority.
- A letter on a business letterhead with an original signature indicating start/end dates of employment.
- Full- or part-time position. If the claim is for part-time employment, the letter must indicate how many actual hours were worked or the number of hours worked per week. This will be calculated under the prorated, part-time calculation (172 hour/month).

Outside Supervisor Experience

Claims may also be submitted for employment with supervisory responsibilities in a non-Dispatcher/Telecommunicator position.

Supporting Documentation- Non-Military (candidates must submit all the following details):

- A letter on business letterhead with an original signature indicating start/end dates of employment.
- Full- or part-time position. If the claim is for part-time employment, the letter must indicate how many actual hours were worked or the number of hours worked per week. This will be calculated under the prorated, part-time calculation (172 hour/month).
- Supervisory responsibility with official duties listed. Duties include: supervising staff and work processes, enforcing policies and procedures, monitoring employee productivity, and providing feedback, setting performance goals, assisting with scheduling, employee corrective measures.
- For documentation from a non-governmental company (private or non-profit organization), the tax ID must be included in the supporting documentation.

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NOTE: If a candidate owns their own company, they must follow the same guidelines listed for a private company.

The example below will **NOT** be accepted as supporting documentation for outside supervisor time.



Supporting Documentation- Military:

Non-policing military experience will qualify as supervisory experience in the Officer rank and the following Non-Commission Officer (NCO) ranks:

- Army and Marine Corp: rank of Corporal or above
- Navy and Coast Guard: ranks of Petty Officer 3rd Class or above
- Air Force: ranks of Staff Sergeant or above

A DD214 **must be provided** and include the following information:

- Box 1 - Name
- Box 2 – Department, component and branch
- Box 4a – Grade, rate or rank
- Box 4b – Pay grade
- Box 12 - Record of Service

Along with your DD214, submit any additional documents that support time served in a supervisory position.

Additional Documents:

- Commanding Officer (CO) Letter – **must** be provided by candidates still serving in the military

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Below is an example calculation for a member of the Army:

CERTIFICATE OF RELEASE OR DISCHARGE FROM ACTIVE DUTY				
This Report Contains Information Subject to the Privacy Act of 1974, As Amended.				
1. NAME (Last, First, Middle) LAST NAME FIRST NAME		2. DEPARTMENT, COMPONENT AND BRANCH ARMY/RA		3. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER XXX XX XXXX
4a. GRADE, RATE OR RANK SGT	b. PAY GRADE E05	5. DATE OF BIRTH (YYYYMMDD) YYYYMMDD	6. RESERVE OBLIGATION TERMINATION DATE (YYYYMMDD) 00000000	
7a. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE DUTY		b. HOME OF RECORD AT TIME OF ENTRY (City and state, or complete address if known) STREET ADDRESS CITY STATE ZIP CODE		
8a. LAST DUTY ASSIGNMENT AND MAJOR COMMAND			b. STATION WHERE SEPARATED STATION, STATE ZIP CODE	
9. COMMAND TO WHICH TRANSFERRED N/A			10. SGLI COVERAGE AMOUNT: <input type="checkbox"/> NONE	
11. PRIMARY SPECIALTY (List number, title and years and months in specialty. List additional specialty numbers and titles involving periods of one or more years.)		12. RECORD OF SERVICE		
		YEAR(S)	MONTH(S)	DAY(S)
		a. DATE ENTERED AD THIS PERIOD	2019	01 22
		b. SEPARATION DATE THIS PERIOD	2024	05 20
		c. NET ACTIVE SERVICE THIS PERIOD	0005	03 29
		d. TOTAL PRIOR ACTIVE SERVICE	0000	00 00
		e. TOTAL PRIOR INACTIVE SERVICE	0000	00 00
		f. FOREIGN SERVICE	0001	01 01
		g. SEA SERVICE	0000	00 00
		h. INITIAL ENTRY TRAINING	0000	05 16
		i. EFFECTIVE DATE OF PAY GRADE	2022	03 01

Calculation = Box 12i to Box 12b
 3/1/2022 – 5/20/2025 = 2 years 2 months
 Total supervisor time = 2 years (rounded down)

Trainings and Certifications

Candidates may claim certification and training courses they have earned as of the date of the written exam. The claim will be the sum of all specified certifications and trainings the candidate has completed; the maximum number of trainings and certifications a candidate can be awarded is six.

The following trainings and certifications are accepted for credit and must be certified by APCO International, FEMA/MEMA, IAED or ProBoard:

APCO International Certifications:

- Tactical Dispatch Training
- Communications Training Officer Instructor
- Communications Supervisor Instructor
- Fire Dispatch Instructor

Accepted IAED Certifications:

- Emergency Fire Dispatch

Accepted Proboard Certifications:

- Haz Mat Technician
- Hazardous Materials: Operations Level

Accepted FEMA/MEMA Certifications:

- ICS 100.C: Introduction to the Incident Command System
- ICS 200: Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response

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- ICS 300: Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents
- ICS 400: Advanced ICS
- ICS 700: An Introduction to the National Incident Management System
- ICS 800: National Response Framework, An Introduction

Supporting Documentation:

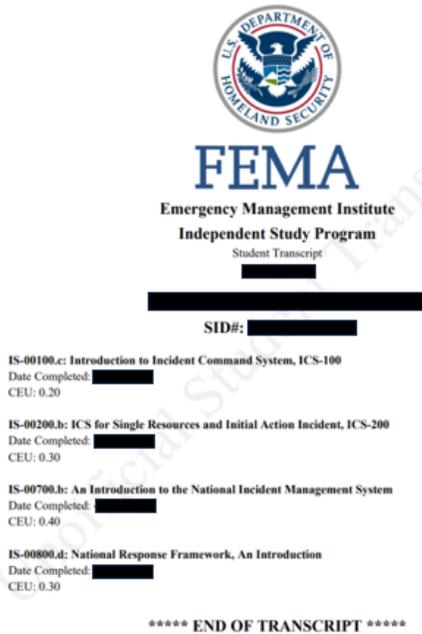
- Screenshots & PDFs: images or copies of the transcripts from either the ProBoard or FEMA website showing the trainings and certifications, as well as clearly showing the candidate's name, are preferred and accepted.
- Certifications: copies of each individual certification from one of the approved certifying agencies.
 - Full certification is required to attain credit for a training. For example, submitting certification of only the practical or only the written portion of a training will **NOT** be accepted.

NOTE: Mass Fire Academy transcripts, or screenshots from the learning management system, are **NOT** acceptable. Certificates of attendance are **NEVER** accepted.

Below is an example of an **accepted** screenshot from ProBoard:

Name	Certification	Date Certified	Standard	Certifying Agency
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	Hazardous Materials First Responder at the Operations Level with Product Control Mission Specific Competency	[REDACTED]	472 - 2008	Massachusetts Fire Training Council
[REDACTED]	Hazardous Materials Technician	[REDACTED]	472 - 1997	MASSACHUSETTS FIRE TRAINING COUNCIL
[REDACTED]	Hazardous Materials Technician	[REDACTED]	472 - 1997	MASSACHUSETTS FIRE TRAINING COUNCIL

Below is an example of an **accepted** FEMA Transcript:



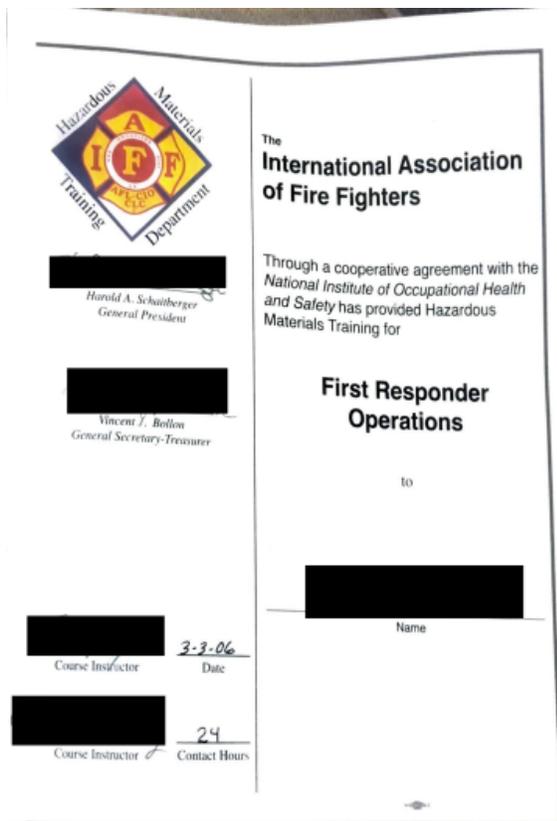
Below is an example of an **accepted** certification:



Below is an example of an **accepted** certification (note the **ProBoard** logo in the orange circle):



This document is **not** accepted as it is **not** a ProBoard certificate **AND** is not an accepted training from the above lists.



This is **not** accepted as this is a **certification** of passing the Written exam only and **not** documentation of the whole ProBoard Certification.



Education

Candidates may receive credit for an associate, bachelor, master, and doctorate degrees from a regionally accredited higher education institutions in the United States; or institutions outside the United States granting degrees or degree program credits that are recognized by one of the United States regional accrediting agencies or that are transferable to a regionally accredited higher education institution in the United States.

Candidates can receive credit for one degree: related degree (listed below) or an unrelated degree. The degrees are listed on the application in order of highest point value. (For example, if the candidate received a related bachelor's and an unrelated master's degree, they should select the "related bachelor's degree" category to receive the most points.) Related degrees are based on job analysis conducted with our subject matter experts. The degree must be earned/conferred before the exam date.

The related degrees in the fire service are: 

- Business Administration
- Business Management
- Computer Science
- Communications
- Emergency Management
- Executive/ Organizational Leadership
- Fire Administration
- Fire Safety
- Fire Service
- Fire Science
- Homeland Security/Security and Intelligence Studies
- Nursing (Principal Only)
- Public Administration
- Paramedic Medicine (Principal Only)

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- Psychology
- Information Technology (IT)
- Social Work (Principal Only)

Supporting Documentation:

- Official Transcript: must include name, major, degree confer date, and institution name.
- Unofficial Transcript & Diploma: must include name, major, degree confer date, and institution name.

NOTE: Transcript links are **NOT** accepted. Please send the transcripts as an email attachment or upload them directly into your ECT&E application.

Veteran's Preference

Any candidate who qualifies for disabled veteran or veterans' preference may receive 2.0 extra points on a passing grade for the examination.

In order to update your Veteran status, a candidate must submit their DD214 or a statement of service/Commanding Officer letter on Official letterhead with appropriate signature and include details of your military service to date that includes:

- Dates of full-time active duty
- Current assignment
- Date of entrance into service
- Estimated time of separation
- Expected discharge type (i.e., honorable)
- Statement confirming that you will receive a DD214 not for training at the completion of your current Active-Duty service.

If a candidate has already been approved for veteran preference, it is not necessary to resubmit documentation to be awarded veteran points. It will automatically be added to your final score. Veteran preference will also be documented on your ECT&E application notice.

NOTE: Veterans status must be attained on or before written exam date.

In order to be awarded your preferential Veterans points, you must achieve a passing grade on the exam.

Appeal Rights

Per [Massachusetts General Law \(MGL\) Chapter 31, Section 22](#), candidates have 17 calendar days from the emailing of the score notice to file an appeal of their ECT&E claim. Instructions on how to file an ECT&E appeal during the 17-day appeal period will be sent to all candidates in their ECT&E score notice.

Claim Audits

HRD reserves the right to audit any ECT&E claim from the time of submission through the life of any eligible list. Candidates should maintain original copies of any documentation submissions in case HRD, or an appointing authority requests them.

Accessing the ECT&E Claim Website

All candidates who are registered to take the Fire Alarm Operator Senior or Principal exam, are sent an email with a link that takes the candidate to the web page. Only on-line claims will be accepted. No other form of submission will be accepted.

Scores are issued from the information on a candidate's ECT&E application.

If a candidate has created two profiles, they must use the profile sent to them to access their on-line claim. It is important to use the same profile when submitting all documentation or inquiries related to their claim.

Submission of the Claim

After candidates complete and review their submission, they must "accept and submit" their ECT&E claim by clicking on the button highlighted below under the "certify" section of the application. Failure to click this button will result in no score for the claim. Candidates should only submit their claim when they have completed the claim; once submitted the claim cannot be revisited. If a revision is needed, a candidate can email Civil Service a civilservice@mass.gov before the application end date.

The screenshot shows the 'Certify' section of the ECT&E Claim website. On the left, there is a navigation menu with options: Info, Attachments, Questions, Review, and Certify. The 'Certify' option is highlighted in green. The main content area is titled 'Certify' and includes a toggle switch for 'Are you interested in receiving text message notifications from this organization?'. Below this, there is a list of reasons for selecting 'on', such as 'Follow-up text messages from potential employers regarding applications you submitted and additional steps in the application process' and 'Notification text messages about your applicant status, assessment score, and other progress notifications'. At the bottom, there is a statement of acknowledgment and two buttons: 'Decline' and 'Accept & Submit'. The 'Accept & Submit' button is highlighted with a red circle and a red arrow.

FAQ's

1. How are the years rounded on the EVF?

Years are calculated by rank and are rounded. (Ex. 6 years/6 months as a Principal FAO=7 years, or 6 years/5 months as a Principal FAO=6 years)

2. Why do I have to submit an official transcript? And why does my diploma not count?

Official transcripts are sent directly from the school registrar and contain coursework information. Unofficial transcripts will be accepted accompanied by a copy of the diploma.

3. What documents do I need to submit to verify my veteran's status?

The non-active duty training DD214 or a statement of service/Commanding Officer letter on Official letterhead with appropriate signature and include details of your military service to date that includes: dates of full-time active duty, current assignment, date of entrance into service, estimated time of separation, expected discharge type (i.e., honorable), statement confirming that you will receive a DD214 not for training at the completion of your current Active-Duty service.

4. I am unable to provide my military documents because the only people who can verify this information are currently deployed.

Even under deployment, a candidate should be able to send an email or reach out to those who can provide the documentation.

5. Who selects the trainings that are eligible for points on the ECT&E claim?

A job analysis was performed prior to this exam. Subject matter experts met to evaluate the criteria for eligible trainings based on the curriculum, and accessibility. A survey was sent out to all civil service departments in the Commonwealth to evaluate what trainings should be eligible for credit.

6. If I have worked in more than one Civil Service department, do I need to submit more than one EVF?

Yes, a candidate must submit a separate EVF form for each department they would like to claim experience for.

7. I have earned my Master's degree from a school that is Nationally accredited. Can I earn points for this school?

Only schools that are regionally accredited will be accepted.

8. What is the difference between “Supervisor Experience Outside Current Department” and “Outside Supervisor Experience”?

“Supervisor Experience Outside Current Department” is limited to emergency Dispatcher/Telecommunicator experience in a supervisory capacity (such as experience as a Senior or Principal FAO), while “Outside Supervisor Experience” includes supervisory experience outside of the Dispatcher/Telecommunicator field. This can include supervisory experience in private companies (such as store manager), as well as military experience in a supervisory rank, such as experience as a Petty Officer second class in the Navy or experience as a Corporal in the Army.

9. I will be finishing up my degree a few weeks after the examination. Can I still submit my transcripts for credit?

No. All credit must be earned through the date of the examination.