

Recommendations from the review of LF and LSO selection processes

1. There should be a single stage selection process for *progression* to both Leading ranks, with the two stage process (the second of which is an interview and a practical assessment) being reserved for the selection of applicants for *promotion* to Station Officer or Inspector.
2. There should be two components to the LF tests: firstly, cognitive and behavioural psychometric tests; and secondly, a test based on the firefighting skills, knowledge and experience that a Senior Firefighter with two year's service at that rank could reasonably be expected to hold.
3. The LF test's firefighting component should be in multiple choice format in order to avoid the complaints of former promotion examinations as pointless "speed writing" assessments or mindless "memory tests".
4. The LF test's firefighting component should be randomly generated from a suitably large bank (the previous Pre-Entry Test's bank of 500 questions may provide guidance for the scope contemplated for the LF test's firefighting component).
5. Only the LF test's firefighting component should operate on the basis of a minimum standard or mark, which should be 65%. The remaining assessments for both Leading ranks should be used to select successful applicant(s) where there are more eligible applicants for an area than there were positions advertised, but should not be used to cull applicants.
6. The current Award requirement at subclause 13.7.3 for the Leading Firefighter tests to be "conducted by an independent assessment centre" should be removed and all tests once again conducted internally by FRNSW, although supported by appropriate advice/assistance from external providers for the psychometric components.
7. There should be two components to the LSO assessment: firstly, cognitive and behavioural psychometric tests; and secondly, a portfolio of evidence.
8. The psychometric tests should be relevant to the role (Leading Firefighter or Leading Station Officer) and understood as such by both management and members, including a clear understanding in advance of the sort of behavioural styles and situational judgments that would be considered appropriate and/or desirable for the role.
9. Applicants should be required to produce photo I.D. before being permitted to undertake the tests.
10. The tests should be conducted online and whenever practicable, at the applicant's own station workplace under the observation of an FRNSW assessor or senior officer.
11. Applicants should be permitted to undertake the tests at any time (subject to their provision of reasonable notice and the availability of an observer) and to subsequently rely upon those tests' results for not less than twelve months and not more than three years for any position that is subsequently advertised and for which they are eligible to apply provided that once discarded, a test result could not again be relied upon.
12. Each applicant should undertake both tests at the same location and on the same day, with a ten minute break provided in the case of the LF test between the firefighting component and the psychometric component.
13. Applicants should not be responded to incidents while sitting the tests.

14. The test environment should be as secluded and as quiet as possible, bearing in mind the practical limitations presented by operational fire stations and the need for incident commanders to be able to think clearly and calmly in loud and hostile fireground environments.
15. The tests should be timed and, if there is any equipment/computer problem experienced, suspended until the problem can be rectified.
16. The Department should provide all applicants with calculators of an agreed standard, or applicants should be able to purchase a calculator and be reimbursed for that cost by the Department.
17. Senior Firefighter applicants should receive a copy of their firefighting test results and answers, including confirmation of the correct answers.
18. The post-test feedback on the psychometric test should be sufficiently detailed to allow unsuccessful applicants to properly understand their test strengths and weaknesses relative to those who were successful.
19. The Award requirement at subclauses 13.7.3 and 13.9.3 to accept the same number of eligible applicants as there were positions advertised should not be departed from for any reason save for a shortage of eligible applicants.
20. Positions should continue to be advertised for four weeks, but the eligible applicants should be restricted to those who had both completed the necessary minimum service at rank and who had undertaken the relevant tests, thereby allowing the successful applicants to be known quickly following closure of applications.
21. Eligibility lists of unsuccessful applicants for promotion to Station Officer or Inspector should be considered contrary to spirit and intent of the Award, and therefore not supported.
22. The Award should be amended in order to give effect to all of these recommendations.
23. The next series of LF and LSO positions should be advertised as soon as possible following the implementation of these recommendations in order to emphasise the shift away from the previous Awards' system of annual (or longer) pre-entry tests.
24. Point 11 notwithstanding, the unsuccessful applicants for the first LF tests and LSO assessments conducted earlier this year should be given the option within this first 12 months (only) of retaining their initial psychometric result or discarding it and undertaking a new psychometric test.