



College of
Policing

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National Police Promotion Framework

FAQs

April 2020

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For questions not covered in these FAQs please email

NPPF.Enquiries@college.pnn.police.uk

1.0. Step Two: Legal knowledge examination

1.1. How can I apply?

The candidate registration form completed at NPPF Step One must be submitted to your Force Examinations Officer ahead of the registration closing date. The College of Policing should receive this no later than the registration closing date. The closing date is on the website and in the NPPF Step 2 Legal Examination Candidate Handbook found here:

<https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Development/Promotion/Pages/NPPFStep2.aspx>

Candidates must keep a copy of their registration form and a record of both the date they sent it to their force examinations officer and to whom it was addressed. **It is the responsibility of each candidate to ensure, via their force examinations officer, that their completed registration form has been submitted to and received by the Selection and Assessment Unit at the College of Policing by the closing date for applications.** Late candidate registration forms will only be accepted under exceptional circumstances.

Forces should maintain complete candidate registration form records, as the College verifies these with the Force Examinations Officers as correct. Issues can occur when a candidate thinks they have registered but haven't, which is why it is the candidate's responsibility to ensure they maintain their own audit trail, to show if necessary that they've applied correctly and in accordance with the rules, so any concerns can be easily rectified if they are not registered for any reason.

1.2. Why is an examination necessary within the promotion process?

The examination is currently part of the Police Promotion Regulations, which states that officers should undertake a written legal knowledge test. This is to ensure that those who are moving into supervisory roles demonstrate an understanding and application of law and procedure relevant to the rank, not only for themselves but also because they will be supervising and guiding other officers to ensure they make the right decisions. It provides a mechanism whereby only those who demonstrate they have the required knowledge can pass through to the next step of the promotion process.

1.3. Why is the examination designed in the way that it is (ie, multiple choice questions)?

It allows testing of the wide syllabus that we have for the NPPF exams, and is quicker to mark in comparison to extended answers (essay format) for example.

1.4. Why is there a five year validity time limit on the exam?

This was introduced by the Police Promotion Examinations Board (PPEB) and upheld by the NPPF Governance Board. It was brought in to ensure that legal knowledge remains current for officers and reduces the risk factor for forces of promoting officers who have not shown their legal knowledge is current for many years. It also ensures that people enter the NPPF process when ready to pursue promotion rather than taking the exam to 'get it done' and bank the qualification for an extended time period.

1.5. Why are validation questions included within the exam?

Each question paper will contain 10 questions that are being validated, meaning that candidates will be scored on 140 questions. In order to trial as many validation questions as possible and in order to ensure the examinations are continually updated with reliable and fair tests of the syllabus, multiple variations of the examinations are created. The variations of the examination paper only apply to the 10 validation questions, all candidates receive the same 140 marked questions.

The use of validation questions within examinations is accepted as good practice among major testing organisations. Validation questions are included in the examination for trial purposes only.

To ensure the questions are a fair test of the syllabus, the questions are validated before being used as an actual examination question. All of the examination questions are evaluated against standard criteria which are used to show whether questions are of an acceptable standard. Only questions that meet the necessary psychometric criteria are included in future exams because only these questions have been shown to be a reliable and fair test of the syllabus.

Validation questions are included within the examination so that candidates answer them in the same way that they would answer the live questions, therefore providing more realistic statistics by which to decide whether or not the questions can be used in future examinations. This does not mean that all questions covering new areas of the syllabus are validation questions. Questions may have been validated in another way and candidates are advised to treat all questions equally.

By continuing this cycle of pre-testing within the examinations, the College of Policing can continue to provide examinations which test a representative range of the syllabus, whilst also ensuring that all of the questions that are included in the scored examination will be rewarding those candidates who have prepared sufficiently for the test.

1.6. How do I apply for a reasonable adjustment or accommodation?

Candidates should refer to Section 3 of the Candidate Handbook and the Reasonable Adjustment and Accommodation Policy found on the website for further information:

[https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Development/Promotion/Documents/NPPF%20Candidate%20Handbook%20\(2020\).pdf](https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Development/Promotion/Documents/NPPF%20Candidate%20Handbook%20(2020).pdf)

Applications for reasonable adjustments should reach the College of Policing by the registration closing date. Failure to submit in accordance with this deadline could impact on the ability of the Force/College of Policing to coordinate the request in time for the examination.

1.7. How can I provide feedback on the exam?

All candidates will have been emailed a link to the candidate feedback survey. Please complete this survey. All feedback is reviewed after the survey has closed and actioned where appropriate.

1.8. How can I submit an appeal?

Please refer to pages 28 to 30 of the NPPF Step Two Legal Examination Candidate Handbook, which can be found on the website at this link:

<https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Development/Promotion/Pages/NPPFStep2.aspx>

All reports should be countersigned by your line manager and received within seven days of the examination date as per the guidance.

1.9. How can I submit a query about the content of a question?

If you have concerns about the accuracy or content of a question, please email NPPF.Enquiries@college.pnn.police.uk within seven days of the examination with details of your concerns. All of the questions undergo rigorous legal checks to ensure accuracy before use. However, we also check the accuracy again of any question queried or flagged during the marking process for having unusual response statistics.

1.10. When will I receive my results?

All results will be released within 8 weeks of the examination. Please DO NOT contact the College of Policing directly regarding this.

1.11. Why does it take so long to mark the exam and receive results?

There are several stages to the marking process. First of all answer sheets need to be returned to the College of Policing following the examination. All answer sheets are counted to ensure that none are missing and double checked. They are then all scanned into the system. This is a lengthy process as the scanner is very sensitive so if a candidate has changed an answer or the answer sheet has any additional marks on, then it will stop and the correct answer has to be checked and inputted by hand. This is then double checked to ensure that all candidate's answers have been scanned in correctly.

The marking files are then exported and an Occupational Psychologist will mark the examination. They start by analysing the response statistics for all questions within the examination. Any questions with unusual response statistics are reviewed and sent for a further legal check, along with any questions queried by candidates, before being included within the marking process. The legal advisor has to confirm that they are content for all questions to be included before the examination is marked.

All invigilators who deliver the examination are required to complete a test record detailing all events that occur during the examination. The Occupational Psychologist will review each of these test records to ensure that the examination was delivered accurately and fairly for candidates at each site. The Occupational Psychologist will also review all appeals of special considerations. These concern incidents which will have affected all candidates at one site such as a fire alarm occurring during the examination or an administration error during the delivery of the examination. These incidents will be considered against the Special Considerations policy and in discussion with the Operations Manager, this will be applied for the affected sites during the marking procedure if deemed fair and appropriate to do so.

The examination marking is then checked by a second marker to ensure accuracy. Several answer sheets are also dip sampled and marked by hand to ensure accuracy of the marking file.

A report is then produced for the NPPF Debrief Panel detailing the marking procedure, delivery of the examination and any action taken. The results of the examination cannot be released until the debrief panel have ratified this report. Once this has been confirmed, pass/fail lists are released to forces, then the feedback reports are generated and sent to candidates. Due to the large number of candidates taking the examination and the way the system produces the reports, this procedure can take up to two days to release all reports. We ask candidates to please be patient during this time and not contact College of Policing directly. All queries should be directed to your FEO in the first instance.

1.12. Can I have my paper remarked?

There is no provision for candidates to contest their result once these have been released or to request to have their examination paper remarked. As stated above, the marking process is very rigorous and lengthy to ensure that it is accurate. Once the results have been released, these are final and the College of Policing will not remark papers.

1.13. What are the arrangements for extension of the five year validity period for reasons such as part-time working and other extended periods of absence, including maternity related restricted duties and sick leave?

All guidance for this is within the NPPF Candidate Handbook (2020). All requests for extensions will be considered by the Reports and Disqualifications Panel and include requests in terms of maternity, paternity, long term sick, restricted duties and leave for the reasons of care as covered by the Equality Act 2010.

1.14. What are the plans for digital delivery of the legal examination element?

This is a substantial financial commitment and would require significant consultation with forces to establish the appetite for this and how it would be effectively delivered if the money were available to invest in it. It requires consideration from the College Executive Team and all forces before this could be considered in any detail.

1.15. Can an officer currently suspended from duty relating to gross misconduct sit the Step Two examination?

An officer who is suspended can attend the examination but they will be required to provide written authority from their chief officer allowing them to attend on the day of the examination which should be handed in at the time of registration at the examination site; prior notification must be given to the Selection and Assessment Unit.

The officer will have to be escorted to and from the site by officers from their own force. The escorting officers should be at least the rank of inspector.

The Selection and Assessment Unit will also need to be notified through the NPPF enquiries email so selection and assessment can progress.

1.16. Do Sergeants have to complete 12 months in the rank before they sit the NPPF Step 2 Inspectors Legal Exam?

Candidates can only sit the Inspectors exam when they are substantive in the rank of Sergeant. This will be after the successful completion of their 12 month work-based assessment period, or a longer period as necessary in accordance with the relevant provisions outlined in the Operating Manual.

Candidates who are OSPRE qualified to Sergeant will need to complete 12 months in the role of Sergeant before they can be promoted to substantive Inspector, but given the timeframes involved in the NPPF process, this isn't generally an issue that holds anyone up.

1.17. If you are a Special Constable, and have previously passed OSPRE Sgt Pt 1 (ie, passed as a police constable but left the force); could you apply to be a sergeant if the force opened applications externally for promotion?

The Police Regulations have recently been amended to allow officers to re-join the police service at any point and at a higher rank to which they left. Further information and guidance regarding this can be found on the College of Policing web-site using the link below.

<https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Support/Recruitment/rejoiners/Pages/Rejoiners.aspx>

2.0. Step Three: Assessment against rank-specific competencies and matching to vacancies

2.1. Why isn't there a national approach or requirement for the Step Three assessment against competencies?

The College has developed guidance and resources for forces to use in the design and implementation of fair, transparent and robust processes at Step Three. Examples of resources included on the College of Policing's webpages include the NPPF Operating Manual, the Competency and Values Framework, Policing Professional Profiles, etc.

These resources provide an overarching standard and intentional flexibility to enable forces to determine their own assessment and selection processes and adapt the profiles in line with their specific operational needs and local circumstances.

Section 5.2 of the NPPF Operating manual:

It is the responsibility of the force's senior management, in conjunction with human resources specialists, to decide on the structure and techniques used in Step Three in order to select the appropriate candidates to the rank aspired to. It is also the responsibility of the force to ensure they are able to demonstrate how they have shown due regard to the public sector equality duty in deciding which procedures to use. Forces are encouraged to use positive action to encourage applications from officers with protected characteristics that are underrepresented in supervisory ranks.

3.0. Step Four: Temporary promotion and work-based assessment

3.1. Can an officer apply for and transfer part way through the Step Four process to another force?

The College recognises the need for increased operational flexibility in allowing officers to transfer between forces whilst participating in the NPPF. It is now the position that an officer can apply for a transfer laterally to another force while they are at Step Four and in the process of completing the 12-month work-based assessment.

Subject to a comparable Step Three interview process by the recruiting force, it is also the responsibility of the recruiting force to ensure the transferee's work-based assessment portfolio and/or qualification can be transferred to the awarding organisation of the receiving force, where different from the officer's current force's assessment process and/or awarding organisation.

The purpose of NPPF Step Four (12 month) is continuing professional development and performance over a 12 month period before final sign-off for substantive promotion. These will include performance, ongoing development, attendance, and recommendation as appropriate, by a BCU commander or delegated authority before the officer is made substantive.

3.2. Can the 12-month period for the work-based assessment be extended for reasons such as part-time working and other extended periods of absence, including maternity related restricted duties and sick leave?

Step Four is a mandatory 12-month period, during which candidates are assessed in the workplace against the selected RQF units for their new rank and the professional profile or equivalent. This is a regulatory requirement as contained in the Police (Promotion) Regulations 1996 at Schedule 1, para.2A.

Where a candidate has taken maternity or paternity support leave, adoption or adoption support leave, disability related leave, a career break for the purposes of care the period of absence will not count towards the calculation of that 12-month period. Candidates are

protected from discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 and therefore where the absence falls under one of the protected characteristic the WBA period will pause for the duration of that absence and resume when the candidate returns to work.

Forces should refer to Chapter 9 of the Operating Manual for more information on extenuating circumstances for circumstances that fall outside the protection of the Equality Act 2010. In extenuating circumstances the period of temporary promotion can be extended for up to a maximum of a further 12 months. Each case will need to be considered on its own merits and extensions will be based on the needs of each candidate.

4.0. NPPF questions received from, or relating to, non-Home Office forces

4.1. As a current officer seeking promotion from sergeant to inspector, will the Diploma in Police Service Leadership & Management (DPSLM) qualification be recognised in the future for Home Office forces to go alongside/instead of the NPPF Step Two?

The process for promotion in Scotland is different to England and Wales, as the DPSLM is a core requirement for promotion in Scotland, and [qualifies a constable for consideration](#) and but does not entitle the constable to promotion.

We are not currently aware of any information which indicates whether alternative academic policing qualifications will be recognised in the future for Home Office forces on the basis of equivalence/transferability instead of the NPPF Part 2 legal knowledge examination, which is a requirement for promotion to the ranks of Sergeant and Inspector in Home Office forces.

The Promotion Regulations give provision for a pass in a Scottish exam before 1 August 1996 as being valid, but makes no provision for a pass obtained after that date. An officer with the DPSLM qualification seeking promotion to Sergeant in a Home Office force would be required to complete the whole NPPF process.

The NPPF Step Two (legal knowledge examination) pass is valid for five years commencing on the date of taking the examination. If an officer joined a non-Home Office force and was promoted to Inspector by a different promotion process, then it wouldn't be transferable back to another Home Office force.

If an officer prior to joining a non-Home Office force had passed the Step Two examination, this would be valid for a five year period and they could apply for Step Three with another Home Office force, but would have to complete Steps Three and Four with that force. If their five year validity period had expired then they would have to start again at Step One should they wish to transfer back to a Home Office force.

4.2. An NCA officer wishes to transfer to a Home Office force as an inspector, the officer has the NIE qualifications but not the relevant NPPF Exam, is the officer eligible to apply?

The officer is not eligible to apply. If the officer is on secondment to the NCA from a home office force, the officer could transfer laterally at the current rank (Sergeant) and then undertake the NPPF promotion process to Inspector.

5.0. Appendix

NPPF letter to CCs and PCCs: concerning the College's position in response to COVID-19 and the impact on the delivery of the NPPF exams.



Sent via email

7 April 2020

Dear Chief Constables and Commissioners

The College has been working closely with NPCC to monitor the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) on all policing events and activities and working hard to maintain activity that supports and enables policing to continue their frontline operations and protect the public.

The full scale of the national emergency is now becoming clearer and ensuring operational resilience will be vital to keeping everyone safe as we deal with the impact of the virus. We appreciate that many of you will be concerned about your ability to promote sergeants and inspectors whilst delivering frontline policing at this challenging time.

Delivering Examinations Differently

The impact of COVID-19 this year has had an unprecedented impact on the delivery of the NPPF exams. We appreciate this may have affected your ability to promote your officers. We are now looking at alternative ways to deliver the NPPF exams which includes potential online delivery of the exams. However, this will take some time to work through as we identify an appropriate way to do this which ensures assessment standards are not compromised.

Whilst this work takes place we would like to explain how we are planning to support you and your officers. We appreciate that many of your officers in the National Police Promotion Framework (NPPF) may have questions about the implications of the current situation for them and we hope this update will help you to reassure them. We will write to you again by the end of May 2020 to update you on our progress.

Sergeants' NPPF Step Two Legal Exam Validity

We have already advised that all officers who achieved a pass in the 2015 Sergeants' NPPF Step Two Legal exam and who were due to sit the exam in March 2020 will have the validity of their exam pass automatically extended until the date of the rescheduled 2020 Sergeants' exam. This will only apply to those candidates who were registered for the exam on the 31st January 2020, after the official withdrawal date. The College, in conjunction with the NPPF Governance Board, will continue to monitor this situation against the progress we make identifying alternative ways of delivering exams and will let you know whether we will be making further extensions to the validity of officers holding a pass in the sergeants' and inspectors' exams by the end of May 2020.

Rescheduling the 2020 Sergeants' NPPF Step Two Legal Exam

The College will work with forces and in accordance with Government and Public Health England advice, to reschedule the exam as soon as is feasible. No exam will take place between now and the end of June 2020. We understand the time and commitment that officers have put into preparing for this exam and therefore we will provide a minimum of three months' notice before it is rescheduled. Only candidates who were registered to take the exam on the 17th March 2020 will be eligible to take the rescheduled exam. However, we will keep this position under review. In the event we are unable to deliver the exam for a significant period we will revisit this decision.

Officers engaged at NPPF Step Four Temporary Promotion and Work Based Assessment, including officers in the Fast Track Inspector Programme

We understand that officers who are currently at Step Four of the NPPF may be concerned about their ability to meet the requirements of work based assessment in the mandatory 12 month period whilst experiencing extenuating operational demands. We would like to take this opportunity to advise that forces are able to extend this period by an additional 12 months as a result of extenuating circumstances. The College considers the impact of COVID-19 an extenuating circumstance and would encourage forces to extend this period where appropriate to ensure their officers are not disadvantaged.

Inspectors' NPPF Step Two Legal Exam

This is a challenging time and many officers will be finding it extremely difficult to revise for the inspectors' exam scheduled for October 2020. We know that many officers will have had their preparation for the exam adversely affected and we want to try and make sure that no one is unfairly disadvantaged because of this. We also recognise that it is important that we let everyone know what is happening as early as possible. We are reviewing alternative means of examination delivery and will provide an update about this by the end of May 2020.

Thank you for your patience while we work through these issues to provide an appropriate solution which meets the needs of everyone. We will update you as soon as we are able.

Yours sincerely



Mike Cunningham QPM
CEO, College of Policing



Chief Constable Craig Guildford
NPCC Chief Moderator for the NPPF