



SOUTHWEST FIRE ACADEMY

POLICY 600-007 Rev.002

POLICY

SECTION: 600 - Procedures

TITLE: Assessment and Evaluation Challenge Policy

Date Approved:
August 1, 2015

Revision Dates:
July 2, 2025

Subject:

Policy Intent and Application

Scope:

This policy applies to internally developed assessments conducted by Southwest Fire Academy. It does not apply to third-party certification exams (e.g., Office of the Fire Marshal, IFSAC, ProBoard), which have their own appeal processes.

Purpose:

This policy outlines the process for students to challenge the validity or fairness of individual test items, grading outcomes, or assessment methodologies within Southwest Fire Academy's training and certification programs. The intent is to ensure transparency, fairness, and continuous improvement of assessment tools.

Procedures:

A student wishing to challenge an assessment item or outcome must follow this three-step appeal process:

Step 1: Instructor/Test Proctor Appeal

- The student must submit a written request outlining the concern within **24 hours** of completing the assessment.
- The instructor or proctor will review the concern and provide a written response within **48 hours**.
- The instructor may:
 - Grant credit for the item if the challenge is valid
 - Deny the request with justification
- A written summary will be submitted to the Director of Academic Operations to document the resolution and ensure the issue is reviewed before future testing sessions.

Step 2: Lead Instructor Appeal

- If dissatisfied with the instructor's response, the student may submit a further written appeal to the Lead Instructor within **24 hours** of receiving the response.
- The Lead Instructor may:
 - Interview the student, instructor/proctor, or others involved
 - Review testing materials and applicable standards
- A written decision will be issued within **5 business days**, with a rationale provided to the student, instructor, and the Director of Academic Operations.
- If appropriate, the Director of Academic Operations will ensure adjustments are made to the test bank or methodology before future assessments.

Step 3: Director of Academic Operations Appeal

- If still unresolved, the student may appeal in writing to the President of SFA within 24 hours of receiving the Lead Instructor's response.
- The Director of Academic Operations will determine the appropriate steps to investigate the concern.
- A final written decision will be provided to all parties within 30 business days.

Guidelines for Submitting a Challenge

At each stage, students must clearly:

- Identify the test item(s) or issue being challenged
- Provide a rationale for the concern (e.g., ambiguity, inconsistency with taught material, outdated reference)
- Reference any supporting materials (textbooks, lesson content, standards)

Record-Keeping and Continuous Improvement

- All assessment challenges will be documented and retained in the student file and quality assurance records.
- The Director of Academic Operations will review recurring or validated concerns to improve assessment design and instructional delivery.

References: