

## FAQ's

1. How much extra work for operational officers with crewmembers on a programme?

The training of firefighters/officers in a TAPS core progression programme is primarily the responsibility of National Training however the OIC and crew will be involved.

Students on the programme will have distance learning that will require some theory based study which will be spread between personal and work time. Work-based study should be programmed into the day and is an SMS output measure. There is a heavy practical focus to the programmes. This means there will be a need for students to undertake particular drills or revise a variety of practical based skills to prepare for the practical course. This will need to be done on shift and requires guidance from the OIC or, in the case of recruit or qualified firefighter, a suitable senior firefighter. Once again this is an SMS output measure.

Basically, as an officer, TAPS is providing you a structured means to fulfill your responsibility to train, mentor and coach your crew members.

Each programme has a consolidation period. By referring to a students consolidation log book an officer will be provided a list of ideas/suggestions for drills as it provides a list of drills and practical activities that the student needs to complete.

All of these activities are relevant on job training and will provide quality training opportunities for the entire crew. In the case of the senior firefighter programme, the student is tasked to plan and conduct a variety of drills and tasks so the student is in effect completing some of the OIC's workload.

2. What difference is there between volunteer and career TAPS?

Advancement in the career arm of the service is attained by completing the career TAPS programmes in conjunction with the requirements of the Collective Employment Agreement. Advancement in the volunteer arm is attained by completing the relevant volunteer TAPS programmes.

The main difference in the programmes themselves exist in the relative depth and breadth of content (subject matter), duration and links to qualifications.

You can compare the programmes by referring to the detailed information for all programmes at Firenet/Training/TAPS.

3. How will the Fire Service manage the transition to TAPS?

The Fire Service and the NZPFU have agreed on how to transition staff to the TAPS programmes. The transition has the goal of “no disadvantage”. This means that while the majority of firefighters will take their next progression step through TAPS, some may stay on the phase course system until that particular progression step has been completed. Some may get their promotion fast-tracked. An example of fast-tracking is firefighters currently part-way through QF in the old system who will be eligible for promotion after only two years service instead of three as stated in the current CEA (this will only occur for those who would be disadvantaged compared to others who will qualify to QF under TAPS). This transition will be explained fully during the road show and those affected will be advised individually.

Anyone starting a new progression step will do so in the TAPS environment.

4. So how long will we be in transition?

Transition will continue until everyone in the “old” system has completed their progression step on this system. This will mean completing relevant phase courses, passing the exam and serving the appropriate time. This should take approximately 12 months.

5. What happens to me if I end up with a part pass in SO? Will my paper A, B or C be recognised, how and for how long?.

In the case of A or B part pass you will have one final opportunity to gain the other paper during a restricted entry exam which will occur in June 2008. In the case of paper C, there will be a limited time ( approximately 12 months during transition) where you should sit and pass paper C.

If you still have only a part pass (paper A or B) after the final restricted entry exam then you will need to complete part of the TAPS SO programme. This will be managed by you completing the distance learning assignments that correlate to the paper you require, followed by an exam based on distance learning. If, at this stage, you gain the qualification then you will move on to the TAPS SO practical course and the consolidation phase, after which you will be deemed qualified. If, however, you fail to gain the required paper you will have to start the TAPS SO programme from the beginning.

For the few firefighters that have only paper ‘C’ you will, if you wish, be put on to the full SO programme.

6. How much time will be involved in each progression step?

The Collective Employment Agreement (CEA) requires you to complete two years service at each rank to be eligible for promotion. Each TAPS programme is designed to be completed within this timeframe. Actual anticipated timeframes for progression can be found in the guide or on the Firenet.

The main differences between TAPS and the “old system” is that recruits can make QFF in two years instead of three and that it will take a minimum of six years to progress from recruit to SO.

7. What happens if you fail any part of the programme?

National Training has developed a Reassessment Policy which sets out in detail what happens if an individual is struggling or doesn't pass a given component of a programme. A change from the phase course system is that all theory and practical components of a TAPS programme are assessed and are pass/fail. An important aspect of TAPS is that your programme trainer will be providing you feedback throughout the programme, this means that any problems or difficulties can be picked up early and corrective actions can be put in place. There are no 'attendance only' courses in any TAPS programme.

8. How do I gain entry to a programme?

For new firefighters the TAPS programmes are streamed in a logical sequence and are aimed at keeping groups (called cohorts) together right through to promotion to senior firefighter. For those wishing to start a new progression step they will need to apply for that programme through the normal channel. The relevant pre-requisites are as per the CEA.

9. Could there be variation on assessment standards across the country?

Trainers and assessors have all been carefully selected and trained to ensure consistency. All are approved by the NZPFU and National Training. All assessments are subject to moderation and are recognised by the New Zealand Qualification Authority. National Training has a National Moderator who is responsible for ensuring absolute consistency nation wide.

10. Who are the assessors and who will be doing my assessments?

These are NZFS GTE registered assessors, approved by the NZPFU and assigned to each programme and cohort. They have completed the TAPS Train the Trainer programme for the programme they train and assess in.

11. What specialist programmes are available for volunteer support officers, trainers, fire safety officers etc.?

Training for these specialist roles will be delivered on an individual basis as the need arises. As soon as National Training has bedded TAPS in for career operational staff, they will turn their attention to the development of programmes for specialist roles.

12. Do I have to have time in a specialist role to gain promotion?

No. All progression is as per the Collective Employment Agreement. However, time in one or more specialist fields may be an advantage at interview time.

13. Will I get time during shift to study?

Your crew OIC manages your time as per the Station Plan.

Study time and skills maintenance are both SMS outputs and TAPS is both personal development and progression within the Fire Service.

As part of their obligation to train, coach and mentor you, your OIC should allocate you reasonable time on shift. You will however be expected to also commit personal time to completing study and assignments.

14. What if I hold brevet rank in a specialist role?

To gain substantive rank you must meet the requirements of the Collective Employment Agreement which includes the relevant TAPS programme.

15. What plans are there, if any, for TAPS in the next 5-10 years?.

TAPS is a significant change for the NZFS. The first thing is to bed the new system in. National Training plan to closely monitor the first cohorts to complete the programmes and address any issues that may arise. Improvement to the learner material is expected as we get feedback from staff actually doing the programmes. In the longer term, other than incremental improvements, we wish to adopt the principal of e-learning for example, to enhance the learner experience.