

## CHARTERED FORENSIC PRACTITIONER

### How it works – in detail

Each year the Society will make one or more 'calls for ChFP applications'. This will take the form of a general email to all Members/Fellows, and notification via our news feeds on social media, and in our monthly bulletin.

Depending on the responses received, the Society will set up assessments in the specialties covered. It is not always possible to cater for single requests. E.g. if a single CSI contacts us, it is unlikely that we would be able to invite them to Stage 1 of the process. However, if two or more from the same specialty contact us, then Stage 1 and 2 for that specialty will likely go ahead.

### Stage 1

Complete and return an Application Form and a Portfolio form, along with evidence of professional competency and commitment to CPD. Forms are available from [membership@csofs.org](mailto:membership@csofs.org) or download [here](#).

It is important that candidates give evidence of how they are competent to give expert testimony in their specialty. They will either have successfully completed a CSFS CPC programme, or be working as a forensic practitioner for a UKAS-accredited organisation <https://www.ukas.com/search-accredited-organisations/>

The application fee (currently £75) must be paid when the completed forms are submitted to [membership@csofs.org](mailto:membership@csofs.org) for consideration.

*Anyone who has not completed a CSFS CPC programme, and does not work for an accredited organisation is encouraged to contact the Society's Training Officer [training@csofs.org](mailto:training@csofs.org)*

If a candidate does not pass Stage 1 they will be given feedback and may reapply after 12 months.

Candidates MUST recognise that the Society may, at any point of the process, withdraw the offer of assessment. Any assessments withdrawn would of course be rearranged as quickly as possible.

### Stage 2

A candidate for Stage 2 must have first passed Stage 1 within the last 12 months and must pay the non-refundable Stage 2 assessment fee. Currently, this is £225.

At Stage 2 there are two formal Panel interviews – Expert and Professional. These interviews may take place at a venue arranged for the purpose or may be undertaken remotely as a video/phone conference.

*Expert Panel* comprises three assessors. It will be chaired by an expert in the candidate's specialty and whenever possible at least one of the other assessors will also be from the same specialty. Shortly before entering the interview, the candidate is given a scenario to read through. This forms the basis of the questions asked by the Expert Panel. Immediately following the interview, the panel will discuss the candidate's performance and the Chair will give an overall panel score, based on that discussion. Panellists comments and scores will be recorded but will not be disclosed to candidates.

*Professional Panel* comprises 3 experienced forensic scientists from a range of specialties. This Panel examines the candidate's breadth of knowledge about the profession in general – current awareness and an in-depth understanding of issues central to the practice of forensic science are key. Immediately following the interview, the panel will discuss the candidate's performance and the Chair will give an overall panel score, based on that discussion. Panellists comments and scores will be recorded but will not be disclosed to candidates.

Candidates will be told whether they have passed or failed their ChFP assessment within a week.

Successful candidates will have reached a score of 60% or more in each Panel and will have scored an average of 70% across both Panel interviews. They will be upgraded to Chartered Forensic Practitioner and their membership expiry date will be adjusted accordingly – one year ahead of the month in which

they received their results. Paper, stamped certificates will normally be presented in person – often at a formal event (e.g. Conference). The ChFP cycle is three-yearly, so there will be two more subscription payments of £300 to be made, followed by a re-take.

Unsuccessful candidates will be advised whether they need to re-sit one or both Panels. Resits MUST be completed within two years of the original application

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### **An overview of costs**

The financial outlay for Chartered Forensic Practitioner is substantial, but the Society does not aim to make a profit from running the ChFP assessments. Some candidates have asked for a breakdown of costs, so that employers providing financial assistance can be assured of this. Please see below if this is of interest.

CSFS is a fairly small organisation with around 3000 members yet we manage to keep costs to almost the same level as much larger membership organisations. Over three years it would cost a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry about £750 to achieve chartered status. A Fellow of CSFS would pay £900. But the RSC has more than 50,000 members.

Our process involves

- A sift by member(s) of the Expert Panel
- Time and effort of the administration by members of the CSFS team to manage both the assessors and candidates, book venues/organise remote sessions, planning and communicating before and after the assessment phase.
- Preparation time for the range of case scenarios and also the questions for both Panels. The estimate for this is 1.5 days per discipline. We are routinely running 3 disciplines per day (so there are costs of approx. 4.5 days at £250 per day).
- The assessment day requires 6 assessors at a cost of £250 per person, plus the time of a CSFS administrator, with extra costs of the venue (when we don't run remotely), plus travel and subsistence for the panel member as required.

The whole process costs the Society in the region of £4500 for each block of 6 candidates (often from a range of disciplines) plus, there are still the standard membership costs associated with getting S&J and all of the other membership benefits.

The pass rate sits at approx. 4 in every 6, so in a 3-year cycle the Society brings in approximately £4200.