

## 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 several specialities.

Please be aware that 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 at that time – we can however, keep your name on file and come back to you when we are able to take the process forward. Generally, if two or more individuals from the same specialty contact us, then Stage 1 and 2 for that specialty will likely go ahead at that time. For a new discipline, in which we have not assessed before, we may wish to wait until we are able to deliver for a full cohort. Forensic Science by its very nature is widely multi-disciplinary and we simply do not currently have the capacity to manage all niche areas or develop an assessment for those working overseas.

Demand is currently relatively low and so if a call for applications renders little interest, or the subjects of interest is largely niche or disparate we may still reserve the right to not run a cohort at that time. 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 Any assessments withdrawn would of course be rearranged as quickly as possible. An monies paid at that time with either be refunded or more likely we will ask to transfer it to the next round of assessments

### 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 downloadable 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.

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

### 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. **You will not be able to sit the assessment if you have not made payment in full at least 7 days prior to the assessment date**

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, usually two from the speciality under assessment. 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. Each candidate is marked independently during the assessment by all three panel members – for the Chair to put forward an agreed mark for each section all 3 panel members must be in full agreement.

*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. Each candidate is marked independently during the

assessment by all three panel members – for the Chair to put forward an agreed mark for each section all 3 panel members must be in full agreement. Panellists comments and scores will be recorded but will not be disclosed to candidates.

Candidates will be told whether they have passed or failed as soon as possible but usually with three weeks. The process of agreeing marks between the panellists and then a review meeting of both panels is required before the candidates are formally notified. All awards are ratified by the MEC committee

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 where appropriate). 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 one year of the original application

\*\*\*\*\*

### **An overview of costs**

We are often told that people feel that the process is expensive! – The Society, as a registered Charity, is a not for profit organisation funded wholly by its activities and so all our processes, including ChFP must be financially sustainable in the longer term. 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 a breakdown below

CSFS is a relatively small organisation with around 3000 members yet we manage to keep costs similar to other 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. We do, however need to be mindful that the RSC has more than 50,000 members and there are always economies of scale.

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, 3 per panel plus office administrative support (the Society as a Charity pay all assessors, irrespective of their role the same – trustees of CSFS are not paid for any trustee work but they are paid if they act as assessors. They are all paid £250 per day, 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, these costs are reduced by running assessments remotely wherever we can.

The entire process costs the Society in the region of £4000 for each assessment diet which can manage a maximum of 6 candidates (often from a range of disciplines) plus, there are still the standard membership costs associated with providing S&J and all of the other membership benefits.

The pass rate currently sits at approx. 4 in every 6, so in a 3-year cycle the Society brings in approximately £4200 per assessment diet for every 6 ChFP candidates assessed.