

Questions & Answers (Q&A) – 2023 Police Sergeant Examination

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) will compile candidate questions that could apply to all candidates. These questions and the CSC answers (Q&A) will be included in this document to provide all candidates equal access to the information. The CSC will update this document throughout the 2023 Police Sergeant Examination process.

Questions and Answers

Minimum Qualifications

1. (Q): What are the minimum qualifications to take the Police Sergeant exam? If I have had a break in service, am I still qualified? (4/12/23)

(A): The minimum qualifications to take the exam are three (3) years of continuous accredited service as a permanent appointee in the class of Police Officer immediately prior to the date of the first phase of the examination and possession of a valid motor vehicle operator's license.

Your years of service must be continuous for the three years prior to the first phase of the exam, which will occur on September 6, 2023. That means that if you have had a break in service after September 6, 2020, then your years of service will not be considered continuous and you will not be considered qualified to take the exam.

2. (Q): How do I know whether I meet the minimum qualification of having three years of service? Does my one year probationary period count toward the three years of service? (6/28/23)

(A): Years of service are calculated from the date of appointment to the rank of Officer. A person can find their date of appointment using the City of Columbus Division of Police Seniority Roster. The column showing the revised date of appointment to the Officer rank will be used. The CSC will use the appointment date from the seniority roster that is in effect during the test's filing period to determine whether applicants meet the minimum qualification of having three years of continuous accredited service by September 5, 2023, which is the date immediately prior to the first phase of the examination. Yes, the one year probationary period counts toward the years of service calculation.

Application

1. (Q): When I apply to the Sergeant exam do I need to attach a resume? When I apply it states that I need to include my full work history, will my application be rejected if I don't include my full work history? (7/17/23)

(A): Attaching a resume and/or including your full work history is **not** necessary when applying to the Police Sergeant exam. Your eligibility for the Police Sergeant exam will be determined by whether you meet the minimum qualifications. Please see the Minimum Qualifications section of this document for more details.

2. (Q): How many officers applied to take the Police Sergeant Promotional Exam? (8/2/23)

(A): A total of 170 applications were received for the Police Sergeant Promotional Exam.

Sources

1. (Q): Are we allowed to put our source books into separate binders? For example, can I take out the SOPs, Arrest Search and Seizure Manual, and Emergency Operations Manual from the binders the division provided us and put them into individual binders that I have purchased on my own? I'd have six or so smaller binders. All paperwork inside the binders would remain the same. (4/12/23)

(A): Yes, you can separate the combined sources into smaller individual binders and into personally purchased binders.

During open-book exam phases, you may **NOT** have additional pages in your binders and your sources are subject to inspection by Civil Service staff.

2. (Q): Are we allowed to write notes in the margin and on blank pages of our sources? (4/12/23)

(A): Before test day, you are permitted to write notes in the margins and the blank pages of your sources. However, no additional pages and can be added to sources including blank pages. If you opt to copy a source to single-sided paper and the original source is double-sided, you are **not** permitted to write notes on the blank reverse side of the page. You are **not** permitted to write in your sources during any of the actual test administrations.

3. (Q): May the sources be printed on standard 8.5 x 11 inch sized paper or do they need to remain in the small binders issued by the Division of Police? (4/12/23)

(A): Yes, the sources may be printed on standard 8.5 x 11 inch sized paper. However, you may not add any additional or loose pages. All sources are subject to inspection at the test site.

4. (Q): My police sources came with a cover page that has a badge on it and is blank on the back side, am I permitted to write premade notes on this blank page prior to the exam? (8/18/23)

(A): Each book supplied by the Division has a colored cover page with the badge/patch on one side and blank back side. Chapter/section title pages and the final page of odd-numbered publications also have a blank back side. Since these are part of the original sources and are not pages that have been added to the sources, therefore, you are permitted to write notes on these pages prior to the exam.

Test dates

1. (Q): Are the dates listed on the website the only dates officers are able to take the exam? Are there any makeup dates offered? I have a conflict due to a planned trip, would I be able to take the test at a different time? (5/23/23)

(A): The dates listed in the Important Dates document on the CSC website are the only dates the exam will be offered. If there is any change to the dates due to unforeseen circumstances, these changes will be announced via email, on the CSC website, and/or on the admission notices that will be sent to candidates.

Accommodations may be requested for required military activities and ADA candidates. These accommodations will be handled on a case-by-case basis and will partially depend on the timeliness of the request. Accommodations for any other reason will not be granted. To ensure exam fairness and test security, all candidates are tested on the same day for each phase even when they are granted accommodations.

Test Length

1. (Q): How long are the response times for the open-book (Phase I), closed book (Phase II), and written work sample (Phase III) exams? (7/14/23)

(A): The 2023 Police Sergeant exam is still in development. The information session for the 2023 Police Sergeant exam will be uploaded to the CSC website on August 1, 2023 and will contain more information about the response times for each phase.

Cut point

1. (Q): What is the cut point and is it different this year? How will the cut point be calculated? How does this affect how the overall score is calculated? (4/12/23)

(A): The cut point is a score which the candidate must pass to be considered for future scoring or to be placed on the eligible list. In the past, the cut point was after

the final phase of testing. The cut point is different this year. In this administration, the cut point will be positioned after the third phase, which is the written work sample. The cut point will be calculated based on scores from the first three phases of the exam. Each of these phases will be standardized using z-scores and then weighted at 33.3%, 33.3%, and 33.4%. The top 80 scores will then be considered to have passed and the oral board video responses of those candidates will be scored. Candidates who do not pass the cut point will not have their oral board videos scored. Final scores for candidates who have passed will be calculated by standardizing and weighting all four phases. Finally, seniority points will be added to these scores to determine the final ranks for the exam.

2. (Q): When will candidates be informed of whether they have passed the cut point? (9/8/2023)

(A): Candidates will be informed of whether they have passed the cut point when they are sent their tentative results notices on 11/28/23.

3. (Q): Why was the cut point changed for this administration? (10/12/23)

(A): The decision to change the cut point was discussed and agreed upon at the CUPA meeting. The reason the cut point was moved from after the oral board to after the WWS was to reduce assessor/rater fatigue and thereby increase scoring accuracy by reducing the total number of videos that need to be scored. The CSC believes that this reduction will result in a higher quality of scoring of the oral board videos.

Cell Phone Use

1. (Q): Are candidates allowed to have cell phones with them during the tests? If a candidate is anticipating an important call, will they be able to access their phone? What if a candidate needs to leave during the test? (8/1/23)

(A): Candidates are not allowed to have cell phones and/or other electronic devices, such as smart phones or laptops, during the tests. The CSC staff members will collect any cell phones or electronic devices that are brought to a test and will return the devices upon completion of the test(s). Under special circumstances (i.e., anticipating medical news for a family member), a candidate may request, at the test site, that a CSC staff member monitor their phone for calls/texts from specific individuals during the test. If a call/text from one of these individuals is received during the test, the CSC staff member will alert the candidate and monitor any communications that takes place. After such communication, if a candidate chooses to finish the test, and if there is time remaining, they may do so. However, they will not be given any additional time to complete the exam. For the oral board exam, the oral board exam video will not be paused. If a candidate chooses to leave a test during the testing time, they must submit their materials, and they will not be able to return to finish the exam at a later date or time (see the Test Dates section). Leaving

a test during the testing time will not automatically disqualify a candidate from the testing process.

Multiple Choice and Written Work Sample Phases

1. (Q): How many people were invited to take the Police Sergeant Exam? How many people attended the multiple choice and written work sample phases on September 6th? (9/8/23)

(A): There were 170 applicants who were invited to take the 2023 Police Sergeant Examination. The number of applicants that attended both the open-book and closed-book exam on September 6th was 113. The number of applicants that attended the written work sample on that day was 112.

2. (Q): Can candidates attend more than one day of the multiple-choice appeals? (9/13/23)

(A): Yes, candidates can attend more than one day of the scheduled appeals and may stay as long as they want between the hours of 9:00 am-4:00 pm.

Oral Board Phase

1. (Q): Is the oral board live-action with role players this administration? (4/12/23)

(A): The 2023 Police Sergeant Oral Board exam will be video-based. Both exercises will be presented on a single pre-recorded video. The scenario for each exercise will play out on screen and any role-players to whom candidates are to respond will also be shown on screen only. Thus the 2023 Oral Board exam will **not** consist of live-action scenarios or live in-person role-players. Before the exam begins, during the one-hour preparation period, CSC will hand out exercises that provide specific details regarding each video-based scenario and role-play character(s).

2. (Q): What is the time allotment for each oral board exercise? (4/12/23)

(A): Each oral board exercise will feature one or more timed response periods. The total response time allotted for each exercise will be 8 to 10 minutes. The actual time allotted for each response period and the total time allotted for each exercise will be specified on test day, during the one-hour preparation period that each candidate will receive before their exam begins.

3. (Q): Who will be invited to the oral board? (4/12/23)

(A): All candidates who have attended all of the first three phases of the exam will be invited to take the oral board exam, however only candidates who pass the cut point will be scored. If there are fewer than 80 candidates who take the oral board exam, all candidates will pass.

4. (Q): Can a candidate get feedback on their oral board exam if they don't pass the cut point?

(A): Any candidate that takes the oral board exam will have the opportunity to review their video. Candidates will have the option to bring a CPD mentor who is in the rank of Police Sergeant or above, chosen by the candidate, and who has not participated as a SME during this administration for the oral board phase, when attending the video review of the oral exam. Candidates who pass the cut point will be able to review copies of their 12 oral exam score sheets. The score sheet and video review period will be scheduled on an individual basis and by appointment at each candidate's request. The video is not appealable.

5. (Q): How many candidates attended the oral board exam? (9/22/23)

(A): There were 107 candidates that attended the oral board and completed all four phases of the Police Sergeant Exam.

Results

1. (Q): What will be in the tentative results notice? (10/13/23)

(A): For the tentative results notice, candidates who passed the cut point will receive their raw scores by phase, the high, low, and average for all phases, their average oral board score by dimension, and their seniority points. Candidates who do not pass the cut point will receive a separate notice on 11/28/23 indicating that they did not pass the cut point. This notice will include their scores for the first three phases and the score needed to pass the cut point.

2. (Q): Why is my written work sample score provided in the results notice lower than my score was during appeals/clerical review? (11/28/2023)

(A): Written Work Sample scores provided during appeals/clerical review were **not** your final score. As stated on the pink summary sheet, "These scores are **prior** to appeals and clerical review. Scores may change due to appeals and clerical review."

During appeals, candidates were allowed to appeal to **delete** items from the key. These appeals were then reviewed by sergeants from the Columbus Division of Police. A total of seven keyed points were determined to be flawed and deleted from the key. After appeals, the maximum amount of points a candidate may receive is 144. When an item gets deleted from the key, it is deleted for **all** candidates. If you originally received credit for one of the seven keyed points that were deleted, your score will now be lower.

Seniority Points

1. (Q): How are seniority points calculated? (4/12/23)

(A): Promotional Examinations.

Except as otherwise provided by the Commission, seniority points shall be added to the passing scores as provided in Rule VII.

In the uniformed ranks, seniority points shall be given for all half years of accredited service which have been accrued as of the test date. Accredited service shall mean all time elapsed from the date of appointment to a position in the lowest ranking uniformed classification in the appropriate division as reflected in the Division's Official Seniority Roster in effect at the close of the filing period.

On promotional examinations for Police Sergeant, an applicant may earn up to ten seniority points. Points shall be computed as follows: (1) One point shall be awarded for each of the first four years of accredited service in the division. (2) Six-tenths of a point shall be awarded for each of the next ten years of accredited service in the division.

Seniority points are calculated by subtracting the last date of testing from the hire date. The following are directions for calculating seniority points.

- Enter the Test Date similar to the example below – Year, Month, Day
 - For the 2023 administration that would be – **2023-9-20**
- Enter the hire or appointment date similar to the example above – Year, Month, Day
- When making the calculation you are subtracting the dates. Normal subtraction principals are used. Note that when borrowing for various columns make sure you borrow the correct number. Below is an example:
 - 2023-9-20 ---- First date of testing for the 2021 administration
 - 2010-10-30 ---- Hire date
 - To subtract 30 days from 20 days you must borrow from the months column. You will borrow 30 days. The 20 days now becomes 50 days and the 9 months becomes 8 months. After subtracting the 30 days from the 50 days, this will result in 20 days. To subtract 10 months from 8 months, you must borrow from the year's column. You will borrow 12 months. The 8 months becomes 20 months and the year 2023

becomes 2022. This results in a total of 12 years, 10 months, and 20 days.

- Once you have calculated the dates, use the following *Years of Permanent Service Chart* to find out the total number of seniority points earned:

Years of Permanent Service Chart

Years of Permanent Service in Classes Eligible for Promotion	Seniority Points
1/2 year	0.5
1 year	1
1 1/2 Year	1.5
2 years	2
2 1/2 years	2.5
3 years	3
3 1/2 years	3.5
4 years	4
4 1/2 years	4.3
5 years	4.6
5 1/2 years	4.9
6 years	5.2
6 1/2 years	5.5
7 years	5.8
7 1/2 years	6.1
8 years	6.4
8 1/2 years	6.7
9 years	7
9 1/2 years	7.3
10 years	7.6
10 1/2 years	7.9
11 years	8.2
11 1/2 years	8.5
12 years	8.8
12 1/2 years	9.1
13 years	9.4
13 1/2 years	9.7
14 years	10

- The above example of 12 years, 10 months, and 20 days would earn 9.1 seniority points.
- The seniority is credited for half years of service.
- If a candidate has 12 years and 5 months of service they would receive points for 12 years, or 8.8 points.
- If a candidate has 12 years and 10 months of service they would receive points for 12 1/2 years, or 9.1 points.