



Advisory Circular

CAA-AC-PEL 023
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AVIATION LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TESTING FOR LICENCE ENDORSEMENT

1.0 PURPOSE

This Advisory Circular is issued to provide guidance, information and procedures required to be followed by holders or applicants of pilot, air traffic control, flight engineer and flight radio telephone operator licences in complying with the English Language Proficiency requirements under the Civil Aviation (Personnel Licensing) Regulations.

2.0 REFERENCES AND FORMS

- 2.1 Regulation on English Language proficiency of the Civil Aviation (Personnel Licensing) Regulations specifying requirements for English Language proficiency for pilot, flight engineer, air traffic control and radiotelephone operator aviation licence holders;
- 2.2 Various Regulations in the Civil Aviation (Personnel Licensing) Regulations specifying speaking and understanding English Language as a requirement for grant of the specific aviation licence;
- 2.3 Regulation on Pilots: limitations of the Civil Aviation (Operations of Aircraft) Regulations requiring air operators or owner of aircraft to ensure using flight crew who speaks and understands English language;
- 2.4 ICAO Doc 9835 AN/453 Manual on the Implementation of ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 With effect from 5th March 2008, the holders of pilot, flight engineer, air traffic control licence and radiotelephone operator licences are required to demonstrate speaking and understanding English language at or above operational level (Level 4), of the Rating Scale as established in the Civil Aviation (Personnel Licensing) Regulations.
- 3.2 The Authority has established an acceptable manner for the appropriate licence holders or applicants to demonstrate compliance with the holistic descriptors and the language proficiency levels stated in the First Schedule to the Civil Aviation (Personnel Licensing) Regulations. The process involves testing using an Instrument adopted by the Authority for the purpose.
- 3.3 The six elements of linguistic descriptors which are considered in the testing are Pronunciation, Structure (grammar), Vocabulary, Fluency, Comprehension and Interactions.

3.4 The testing serves two purposes: it fulfils the Civil Aviation (Personnel Licensing) Regulations provisions requiring that pilots, flight engineers, controllers and radiotelephone operators demonstrate language proficiency sufficient for safe and efficient radiotelephony communications, and it provides benchmarks by which the requirement and effectiveness of English language training and learning may be determined or evaluated.

3.5 The above regulatory requirement for English language proficiency implements the international standards and recommended practices 1.2.9.1 to 1.2.9.7 of Annex 1 (Personnel Licensing) to the Chicago Convention. As required by Article 40 of the Chicago Convention, holders of the stated licences who are involved in international operations are required to hold proof of meeting the English language proficiency in international operations otherwise States have right to deny operations by non-conforming flight crewmembers.

4.0 TEST INSTRUMENT

4.1 According to ICAO, tests should evaluate speaking and/or listening skills directly, either through direct interaction or through an audio- or video-taped exchange, to meet the requirements of the ICAO language proficiency testing guidelines.

4.2 The EAC Partner States, with the assistance of the USA – FAA, have adopted the test instrument to be known as EAC Aviation Language Proficiency Tests 1 and 2 (EAC ALP 1 and EAC ALP 2). The test materials are based on the FAA Aviation English Practicum: Testing Course 15007.

4.3 EAC ALP 1 is a “written” paper consisting of a set of multiple-choice questions which, the test takers, having listened to an audio CD played to them, are required to select and mark their response on paper test takers are assessed on vocabulary and comprehension. The EAC ALP 1 is used for the purpose of placement/benchmarking.

4.4 EAC ALP 2 is an oral, where a conversation between the test-taker and the Examiner takes place. The conversation/interview is recorded and is used for assessing the five holistic descriptors in line with the provisions of the Aviation Language Proficiency rating scale.

4.5 Eligibility

4.5.1 Holders or applicants of pilot and flight engineers licence, air traffic control and radiotelephone licences are eligible for the examination to demonstrate the ability to speak and understand English as required by the Regulations.

4.5.2 Holders of the above licenses issued prior to 5th March 2008, will be subjected to EAC ALP 2 test only. License holders issued on or after this date and any new applicants will be required to be tested in both EAC ALP 1 and 2 tests.

5.0 GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES

5.1 English Language proficiency testing will be part of the examinations for applicants of pilots, air traffic control, flight engineer or radiotelephone operator licences. Therefore there will not be any different application form specifically for English language testing.

5.2 Current holders of licenses requiring English language proficiency endorsement are responsible to ensure they are tested prior to the latest date of 31st December 2008 agreed within the EAC Partner States as the latest date for all holders to have undergone the test.

5.3 Employers (air operator in particular) of current holders of pilots, flight engineer, air traffic control and radiotelephone operator licenses are required to liaise with the Authority’s

personnel licensing office to draw up a programme for testing so that it takes into account their operations to avoid disruption of their operation programme. However, both employers and holders of licenses are responsible for ensuring compliance with this requirement.

5.4 Testing and Scoring Procedures

5.4.1 Pilots, air traffic controllers, flight engineers and flight radio-telephone operators are tested in context similar to that in which they work. The test content should therefore be relevant to their roles in the work-place.

5.4.2 The test provides the test-takers with sufficient and varied opportunities to use plain language in aviation work related context in order to demonstrate their ability with respect to each holistic descriptor in the Language Proficiency Rating scale shown in First Schedule to the Civil Aviation (Personnel Licensing) Regulations.

5.4.3 The test involves recording using audio recorder/electronic voice recording device which should be on the table in view of the test taker. The test taker will be briefed on this fact and the assessment method to be used.

5.4.4 The scoring shall be done as soon as possible following the test. For EAC ALP 1 the paper marking shall be corrected in accordance with the marking scheme provided, after the completion of the test. The pass-mark is 70%.

5.4.5 For EAC ALP 2 the examiners assess each speech sample for all the six elements (Pronunciation, Structure, Vocabulary, Fluency, Comprehension and Interaction) in accordance with the rating scale. The lower scale marked is the score level to be granted.

5.5 Re-sit and Appeals

5.5.1 A candidate who scores less than 70% in EAC ALP 1 test only may be allowed to re-sit the examination after making appropriate arrangements, depending on availability of examiners. Three consecutive failures will necessitate the candidate to attend a training course approved by the Authority.

5.5.2 A candidate failing to achieve operational level 4, will be required to undergo Aviation English training and show proof of completion of the approved course before being allowed to re-sit. In such case the candidate will only re-sit the ALP 2 test.

5.5.3 Candidates are allowed to appeal within two weeks of the results. When the appeal is received and accepted the Authority shall constitute a panel of two new examiners from the EAC Region to conduct fresh assessment on the recorded speech samples. The cost of the review shall be met by the appellant.

5.6 Re-evaluation

5.6.1 In accordance with the First Schedule to the Civil Aviation (Personnel Licensing) Regulations, licence holders who demonstrate proficiency level below expert level (level 6) shall be re-evaluated every three years for operational level (level 4) and every six years for the extended level (level 5).



Civil Aviation Authority