



## APPLICATION & PROCESS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TESTING

### SECTION 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

#### 1.1. PURPOSE

This advisory circular (AC) provides guidance for individuals and organizations for compliance with the English Language proficiency and testing requirements specified in Schedules 8 and 14 of the Bahamas Aviation Safety Regulation.

#### 1.2. STATUS OF THIS ADVISORY CIRCULAR

This is a revised issue of this AC.

#### 1.3 BACKGROUND

A. The use (or misuse) of language has been determined to contribute directly or indirectly to several accidents. At other times, language is a link in the chain of events which exacerbates the problem.

B. There are three ways that languages can be a contributing factor in accidents and incidents—

- 1) Incorrect use of standardized phraseologies;
- 2) Lack of plain language proficiency; and
- 3) The use of more than one language in the same airspace.

C. The International Civil Aviation Organization has adopted language proficiency Standards to ensure minimum English language proficiency for international air traffic control communications.

D. As a signatory to the ICAO Convention, the Bahamas complies with these Standards as outlined in this advisory circular.

#### 1.4 APPLICABILITY

This AC is applicable to all individuals who intend to exercise unrestricted privileges of certain licenses issued by the BCAA. These licenses include—

- Advisory Circulars are intended to provide advice and guidance to illustrate a means, but not necessarily the only means, of complying with the Regulations, or to explain certain regulatory requirements by providing informative, interpretative and explanatory material.
- Where an AC is referred to in a 'Note' below the regulation, the AC remains as guidance material,
- ACs should always be read in conjunction with reference regulations

- 1) Private pilots of aeroplanes, helicopters, powered lift and airships for international operations;
- 2) Commercial pilots of aeroplanes, helicopters, powered lift and airships for international operations
- 3) Airline transport Pilots of aeroplane and helicopters for international operations
- 4) Air traffic controllers
- 5) Flight and Ground Instructors
- 6) Flight Dispatchers
- 7) Aeronautical Station Operator
- 8) All holders of instrument ratings and
- 9) All persons who elect to have a license endorsement for radiotelephone operator privileges

### 1.5 RELATED REGULATIONS

The following regulations are directly applicable to the guidance contained in this advisory circular—

- BASR Schedule 8, Personnel Licensing,8.205
- BASR Schedule 10, Operations of Aircraft,10.078
- BASR Schedule 14, AOC Personnel Qualification,14.061;14.063

### 1.6 RELATED PUBLICATIONS

For further information on this topic, individuals are invited to consult the following ICAO publications —

- Annex 1, Personnel Licensing,
- Annex 6, Operation of Aircraft,
- Annex 10, Aeronautical Telecommunications,
- Annex 11, Air Traffic Services.
- Document 9835-AN/453, Manual on the Implementation of ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements
- Circular 318, Language Testing Criteria for Global Harmonization
- Circular 323, Guidelines for Aviation English Training Programmes
- Doc 4444, Air Traffic Manual

Copies may be obtained from Document Sales Unit, ICAO, 999 University Street, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3C 5H7.

## 1.7 DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS

### 1.7.1 DEFINITIONS

A. The following definitions are used in this advisory circular—

- 1) **Accent.** A distinctive pronunciation of a language which is usually associated with a geographical region (for first language speakers) or with the phonological influence of another mother tongue (for second or foreign language speakers). All speakers of all languages have an accent.
- 2) **Dialect.** A distinctive variety of a language, usually associated with social or Geographical distinctions, which is characterized by differences in accent, vocabulary and grammar with regard to other varieties of the same language.
- 3) **Language proficiency skills.** The knowledge and abilities which impact on the capacity of a given individual to communicate spontaneously, accurately, intelligibly, meaningfully and appropriately in a given language
- 4) **Plain language.** The spontaneous, creative and non-coded use of a given natural Language.
- 5) **Response.** The candidate's linguistic performance elicited by the input of a test item (e.g. an answer to a question).
- 6) **Test delivery.** The physical means by which test input is made available to the candidate during test administration (e.g. paper documents, computer screen, audio sound-source, etc.).
- 7) **Test Examiner** A suitably qualified and trained person who administers the test a score to a candidate's performance in a test based on a judgment usually involving the matching of features of the performance to descriptors on a rating scale.
- 8) **Test Administrator** - Manages the daily operations of the ELP testing department. Interprets ELP Testing Service policies and clarifies procedures of the administration of ELP testing program and administers ELP tests.
- 9) **Candidate.** The person who is tested.

### 1.7.2 ACRONYMS

The following acronyms are used in this manual—

- 1) **AOC** – Air Operator Certificate
  - 2) **BASR** – Bahamas Aviation Safety Regulation
  - 3) **BCAA** – Bahamas Civil Aviation Authority
  - 4) **BCAA-FSI** – BCAA Flight Standards Inspectorate
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- 5) **ICAO** – International Civil Aviation Organization
- 6) **SARPs** – Standards and Recommended Practices.
- 7) **ELPT** – English Language Proficiency Test

## SECTION 2 BAHAMAS AVIATION LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY POLICY

### 2.1 MINIMUM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

All holders of Bahamas PEL licenses listed in the “Applicability” section of this advisory circular must satisfactorily complete English language proficiency testing in a manner acceptable to the BCAA.

BASR Schedule 8 specifies the ICAO Level 4 English language proficiency requirement for each of the licenses in this AC.

### 2.2 COMMON LANGUAGE IN COCKPIT

A. The BASR requires that flight crews of Bahamas AOC holders must have a common language where all members of the crew have a minimum language proficiency of Level 4.

BASR Schedule 14 requires that an AOC holder employing crews must ensure that the operational common language is at least ICAO Level 4 (English).

B. At the present time, that language must be English, the only language proficiency that is tested by the BCAA.

### 2.3 CORRECT USE OF STANDARDIZED PHRASEOLOGIES

A. The BCAA is committed to the use of standard ICAO phraseologies in aviation communications. In some countries, the only English words those controllers clearly understand are the ICAO recommended phrases.

The purpose of phraseologies is to provide clear, concise, unambiguous language to communicate messages of a routine nature.

B. Studies of real en-route radiotelephony communications revealed that 70 per cent of all speech acts uttered by native and non-native speakers, and for which a phraseology is prescribed, are not compliant with the recognized standards.

For phraseologies to have the most significant safety impact, all parties need to use ICAO standardized phraseology.

## 2.4 VALIDATION & CONVERSION

- A. Flight crew members applying for a Bahamas PEL license based on validation of a foreign license that has been annotated with English-language proficiency will be issued a Bahamas License with such an annotation.
- B. Flight crew members applying for a foreign license or ratings to be converted through validation to a Bahamas license must satisfactorily complete the BCAA language proficiency testing process.

## SECTION 3 ASSESSING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

A. The Bahamas uses a structured assessment process to determine English language Proficiency of PEL license holders consisting of satisfactory completion of either—

1) A formal test administered by trained BCAA-FSI personnel, to determine the English language proficiency of PEL license holders; or

2) A formal aviation English-language proficiency test administered by an internationally recognized organization.

The BCAA-FSI maintains a list of organizations that are acceptable for this testing.

|B. The ICAO SARPs outlines 6 levels of language proficiency. For the purpose of administration of the BCAA language proficiency program. The following levels will be assigned:|

- 1) “Expert” (corresponding to ICAO Level 6)
- 2) “Extended” ( corresponding to ICAO Level 5)
- 3) “Operational” (corresponding to ICAO Levels 4); or
- 4) “Below Operational” (corresponding to ICAO Levels 1-3)

C. The following qualification and recurrent testing requirements apply to the results of language proficiency testing—

- 1) Those assessed at the “Below Operational” level ***do not*** qualify for a Bahamas crew or air traffic controller license.
- 2) Those assessed at the “Operational” level must be re-tested every 3 years;
- 3) Those assessed at the “Extended” level must be retested every 6 years.
- 4) Those assessed at the “Expert” level require no further testing;

D. The BCAA will accept an “Expert” assessment resulting from testing by an internationally recognized language testing organization.

The BCAA-FSI does not maintain the testing capability to give a valid assessment of an “Expert” English language speaker without traces of dialect or accent.

E. The acceptability of such a test will be based on the following four characteristics as an appropriate assessment of aviation language testing—

Contact the BCAA-FSI to determine the acceptability of a test and testing organizations before submitting to such a test.

- 1) The test must be a proficiency test of speaking and listening.
- 2) The test must be based on the ICAO Rating Scale and holistic descriptors.
- 3) The test must test speaking and listening proficiency in a context appropriate to aviation.
- 4) The test must test language use in a broader context than in the use of ICAO phraseologies alone.

#### **SECTION 4 TESTING METHODS & STANDARDS**

A. The test is a proficiency test of speaking and listening. It is scored using a rating scale and holistic descriptors developed by ICAO.

- It tests language in a broader context beyond the use of ICAO phraseologies.
- The test is designed to measure language proficiency in an aviation context.

B. The ELPT will focus on assessment of the candidate—

- 1) Listening comprehension
- 2) Speaking ability; and
- 3) Responses to different scenarios

C. The language proficiency testing will include situations designed to invoke the following holistic descriptors, allowing the test taker to—

- 1) Communicate effectively in voice-only via telephone
  - 2) Communicate on common, concrete and work-related topics with accuracy and clarity;
  - 3) Use appropriate communicative strategies to exchange messages and to recognize and resolve misunderstandings (e.g. to check, confirm, or clarify information) in a general or work-related context.
  - 4) Handle successfully and with relative ease the linguistic challenges presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events that occurs within the context of a routine work situation or communicative task with which they are otherwise familiar; and
  - 5) Use a dialect or accent which is intelligible to the aeronautical community.
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D. The following minimum standards must be met for all 6 areas of verbal communications during the course of the test—

- 1) **Pronunciation:** The test taker will not be expected to ‘sound like a native (English) speaker’ but their local accent/dialect must only “sometimes interfere with ease of understanding”, the core sounds of words should most of the time be clear.
- 2) **Structure:** The test take should demonstrate at least basic English grammar (verbs, word order etc) competency without making mistakes, but for “unusual circumstances” small errors can be made, but it must be understandable to overall meaning.
- 3) **Vocabulary:** Ability to communicate in Aviation context. if in doubt of words the test taker must be able to “paraphrase successfully” using communication strategies, e.g. “container for animals” instead of “cage.”
- 4) **Fluency:** Good speed of communication should be made, although when changing from phraseology to plain English there may, on small occasions, be a pause or a small mistake made.
  - *“Fillers should not be distracting,” which means words like “you know” and “like” do not interrupt flow of interaction.*
- 5) **Comprehension:** The test taker should for the most part understand what is spoken to them and then for them to respond or take action.
  - *However, if there is a non-routine situation the test taker should be able to get around it by a system of checking, confirming and clarifying.*
- 6) **Interactions:** There should be “immediate and informative” interaction between the test taker and pilot/controller, the test taker must never stop communicating in any type of interaction (routine or non-routine).
  - *If there are “misunderstandings”, test taker must be aware of this and check, confirm and clarify.*

## SECTION 5 Outline of the TEST

### 5.1 SCHEDULING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TEST

A. Individuals wishing to complete the test should contact the BCAA Flight Standards Inspectorate to schedule the test. The test taker will be provided a date and time for the test, as well as instructions for the completion of the test.

### 5.2 FORMAT OF THE TEST

A Test Administrator shall monitor the ELPT –

- The Test Administrator presents the candidate with the test instructions and test paper.
- Candidate accesses the ELPT system by telephone. It is fully automated and does not require an examiner in the room with you.

- The test consists of seventy-eight (78) questions with duration of twenty-five – to thirty (30) Minutes.
- The candidate answers the test questions and the answers are scored automatically.
- The Test Administrator retrieves the candidates score from the online reporting system.

### **5.3 QUESTIONS TYPES**

This is a test of speaking ability. It is not a test of Aviation knowledge. Only your speaking and listening ability will be scored. There are eight types sections:

- 1) Aviation Reading
- 2) Common English Reading
- 3) Repeat
- 4) Short Answers Questions
- 5) Readback
- 6) Corrections and Confirmations
- 7) Story – Retelling
- 8) Open Questions

Performance from each section of the test contributes to the scoring of six ICAO sub skills:

- 1) Pronunciation
- 2) Structure
- 3) Vocabulary
- 4) Fluency
- 5) Comprehension
- 6) Interactions

### **5.4 TEST EQUIPMENT –**

To Take the ELPT test, the candidate will need –

- A Completed Application form
- Candidate is provided with the test instructions and test paper.
- Candidate uses a unique test identification number to start the test by telephone.
- A pen or pencil and a piece of paper to make notes.

### **5.5 SCORING OF THE TEST (BCAA-FSI ADMINISTERED)**

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A. Candidate should receive their results from the test examiner shortly after the test is completed.

- The candidate may see a copy of the results to process additional temporary privileges.
- The candidate should receive their formal results within three weeks after successful completion of the test.

B. A letter will be sent from the BCAA-FSI with a single score for the entire test; you will not receive a score for each spoken response.

C. The test examiner cannot give the candidate his / her score over the telephone, but you can contact the administrator later on after the assessment calculations have been completed.

D. Overall score will be at one of the following ICAO levels.—

- 1) “Expert” (corresponding to ICAO Level 6)
- 2) “Extended” ( corresponding to ICAO Level 5)
- 3) “Operational” (corresponding to ICAO Levels 4); or
- 4) “Below Operational” (corresponding to ICAO Levels 1-3)

## 6.0 Operators Responsibility

AOC holders are to ensure that their flight crews are English proficient at Level 4 or above as required by BASR 14.061(a) and 10.078 (d)

*“14.061(a) No person may serve and no person may be assigned to a flight crew with duties that include the use of the aircraft communications radio unless the AOC holder has evaluated this person to determine that he is capable of communicating with air traffic services in English at the Extended Level (Level 4).”*

*“10.078 (d) Operators subject to the requirements of Subpart L of this Schedule shall ensure that flight crew members demonstrate the ability to speak and understand the language used for aeronautical radiotelephony communications as specified in Annex 1.”*

Verification of this requirement is to be provided to FSI so that the flight crew license can be endorsed. AOC holders are to have flight crews tested to by an independent ELP test facility to verify their ELP level. See appendix 1 for Aviation English Test Centers

## 7.0 FSI Responsibility

Once flight crews or ATC Personnel has verified their ELP level through the results of the formal testing, their Airman license will be endorsed and a copy of the test results kept on their file.

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## 8.0 Test Providers

Listed below are several acceptable English language proficiency test providers.

Title	Test Provider	website
Pearson Education Inc.	Versant Aviation Test	<a href="http://www.VersantTest.com">www.VersantTest.com</a>
<b>TEAP</b> : Test of English for Aviation Personnel	Anglo-Continental Aviation English Division	<a href="http://www.anglo-continental.com/en/uk/courses/Aviation/aviation-test.htm">http://www.anglo-continental.com/en/uk/courses/Aviation/aviation-test.htm</a>
<b>ELPAC</b> : English Language Proficiency for Aeronautical Communication	European Organization for the Safety of Air Navigation	<a href="http://elpacsample.info/">http://elpacsample.info/</a>
<b>TELLCAP</b> : Test of English Language Level for Controllers and Pilots	Complang Russia	<a href="http://www.tellcap.ru/index.php?lang=en">www.tellcap.ru/index.php?lang=en</a>
<b>ELP</b> : English Language Proficiency	Aero solutions Training	<a href="http://www.aerosolutions.be/?Article=ELP">http://www.aerosolutions.be/?Article=ELP</a>
<b>TEA</b> : Test of English for Aviation	Mayflower College, Plymouth, U.K.	<a href="http://www.tea-test.com">www.tea-test.com</a>
<b>TELPA</b> : Test of Language Proficiency for Aviation		<a href="http://aviationenglish.org/">http://aviationenglish.org/</a>
<b>TOEFA</b> : Test of English for Aviation		<a href="http://www.toefa.com">www.toefa.com</a>
<b>ETA</b> : English Test for Aviation	Emery Roberts	<a href="http://www.emery-roberts.co.uk/testing/eta/">http://www.emery-roberts.co.uk/testing/eta/</a>
<b>RELTA</b> : RMIT English Language Proficiency for Aviation	Royal Melbourne Inst. Of Technology	<a href="http://www.rmitenglishworldwide.com/aviationenglish.html">www.rmitenglishworldwide.com/aviationenglish.html</a>