

FIJI AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION CIRCULAR



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REQUIREMENTS FOR PROFICIENCY IN AVIATION LANGUAGE USED FOR RADIOTELEPHONY COMMUNICATIONS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), taking note of several accidents and incidents where pilots' and air traffic controllers' inadequate language proficiency were contributory factors, adopted amendment 164 to the Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs), Annex I to the Convention on International Civil Aviation—Personnel Licensing which requires language proficiency for pilots, air traffic controllers and aeronautical station operators.
- 1.2 There are also amendments to Annex 6 and Annex 11 that put the requirements for language proficiency on the aircraft operator and the air traffic service providers.
- 1.3 It also calls for high-quality aviation-specific language training materials and programs, as well as the development of academically-sound language testing services.
- 1.4 The purpose of this Circular is to advise air operators, air traffic service provider, training institutions, pilots, and air traffic controllers that the implementation date is March 2008.
- 1.5 Attention is also drawn to the most recent AIC on Flight Crew Licensing procedures which discusses Language Proficiency Rating.
- 1.6 Accordingly, from 05 March 2008, all Pilot, Air Traffic Control, and Flight Service Operator licences issued by the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji will require an English Language Proficiency Rating.

2. Assessment

- 2.1 Language proficiency assessments are used to evaluate a candidate's knowledge of the English language that is used in everyday aviation radiotelephony.

- 2.2 The assessment is set in a broad aviation-related context, in which applicants are expected to be able to explain common and less common aviation-related tasks. The language proficiency assessment is not a test of theoretical knowledge. It is an assessment that requires an applicant to demonstrate their ability to communicate in an aviation context.
- 2.3 The assessment, using an approved test instrument, will be administered by the organization employing the licence holder. The test instrument scale for language proficiency has been recommended by ICAO.
- 2.4 Personnel shall be required to demonstrate at least ICAO operational Level 4 language proficiency in the use of both ICAO phraseologies and plain language by 5th March 2008.

3. Regulatory stance and requirements

- 3.1 The Authority is responsible for aviation personnel licensing in the Fiji. Its role is to establish and promulgate the process that ensures the operators and service providers will comply with the requirements of ICAO Annexes 1, 6 and 11 and Doc 9835 on language proficiency and the testing protocol.
- 3.2 The Authority will approve and oversight the language testing agencies conducting the assessment, and issue an endorsement to the licence on advice from the assessing body.

Appendix 1 attached.

Note: The Operational Level (Level 4) is the minimum required proficiency level for radiotelephony communication. Levels 1 through 3 describe Pre-elementary, Elementary, and Pre-operational levels of language proficiency, respectively, all of which describe a level of proficiency below the ICAO language proficiency requirement. Levels 5 and 6 describe Extended and Expert levels, at levels of proficiency more advanced than the minimum required Standard. As a whole, the scale will serve as benchmarks for training and testing, and in assisting candidates to attain the ICAO Operational Level (Level 4)

The language proficiency of aeroplane, airship, helicopter and powered-lift pilots, air traffic controllers and aeronautical station operators who demonstrate proficiency below the Expert Level (Level 6) shall be formally evaluated at intervals in accordance with an individual's demonstrated proficiency level, as follows:

- (a) those demonstrating language proficiency at the Operational Level (Level 4) should be evaluated at least once every three years; and
- (b) those demonstrating language proficiency at the Extended Level (Level 5) should be evaluated at least once every six years.

Anyone wishing further or full details of these requirements should email their request to standards@caaf.org.fj.

Appendix 1: TEST INSTRUMENT SCALE FOR LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY RATING

PRONUNCIATION – Assumes a dialect and or accent intelligible to the aeronautical community	
Level	Description
Expert 6	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation, though possibly influenced by the first language or regional variation, almost never interfere with ease of understanding
Extended 5	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation, though influenced by the first language or regional variation, rarely interfere with ease of understanding
Operational 4	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are influenced by the first language or regional variation, but only sometimes interfere with ease of understanding
Pre-operational 3	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are influenced by the first language or regional variation, and frequently interfere with ease of understanding
Elementary 2	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation, are heavily influenced by the first language or regional variation and usually interfere with ease of understanding
Pre-elementary 1	Performs at a level below the Elementary level
STRUCTURE – Relevant grammatical structures and sentence patterns are determined by language functions appropriate to the task	
Level	Description
Expert 6	Both basic and complex grammatical structures and sentence patterns are consistently well controlled
Extended 5	Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns are consistently well controlled. Complex structures are attempted but with errors which sometimes interfere with meaning
Operational 4	Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns are used creatively and are well controlled. Errors may occur, particularly in unusual or unexpected circumstances, but rarely interfere with meaning
Pre-operational 3	Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns associated with predictable situations are not always well controlled. Errors frequently interfere with meaning
Elementary 2	Shows only limited control of a few simple memorised grammatical structures and sentence patterns
Pre-elementary 1	Performs at a level below the Elementary level

VOCABULARY –	
Level	Description
Expert 6	Vocabulary range and accuracy are sufficient to communicate effectively on a wide variety of familiar and unfamiliar topics. Vocabulary is idiomatic, nuanced, and sensitive to register.
Extended 5	Vocabulary range and accuracy are sufficient to communicate effectively on common, concrete, or work-related topics. Paraphrases consistently and successfully. Vocabulary is sometimes idiomatic.
Operational 4	Vocabulary range and accuracy are usually sufficient to communicate effectively on common, concrete, or work-related topics. Can often paraphrase successfully when lacking vocabulary in unusual or unexpected circumstances..
Pre-operational 3	Vocabulary range and accuracy are often sufficient to communicate on common, concrete, or work-related topics, but range is limited and the word choice often inappropriate. Is often unable to paraphrase successfully when lacking vocabulary.
Elementary 2	Limited vocabulary range consisting only of isolated words and memorised phrases
Pre-elementary 1	Performs at a level below the Elementary level
FLUENCY -	
Level	Description
Expert 6	Able to speak at length with a natural, effortless flow. Varies speech flow for stylistic effect, e.g. to emphasise a point. Uses appropriate discourse markers and connectors spontaneously.
Extended 5	Able to speak at length with relative ease on familiar topics but may not vary speech flow as a stylistic device. Can make use of appropriate discourse markers or connectors.
Operational 4	Produces stretches of language at an appropriate tempo. There may be occasional loss of fluency on transition from rehearsed or formulaic speech to spontaneous interaction, but this does not prevent effective communication. Can make limited use of discourse markers or connectors. Fillers are not distracting.
Pre-operational 3	Produces stretches of language, but phrasing and pausing are often inappropriate. Hesitations or slowness in language processing may prevent effective communication. Fillers are sometimes distracting.
Elementary 2	Can produce very short, isolated, memorised utterances with frequent pausing and a distracting use of fillers to search for expressions and to articulate less familiar words.
Pre-elementary 1	Performs at a level below the Elementary level

COMPREHENSION

Level	Description
Expert 6	Comprehension is consistently accurate in nearly all contexts and includes comprehension of linguistic and cultural subtleties.
Extended 5	Comprehension is accurate on common, concrete, and work-related topics and mostly accurate when the speaker is confronted with a linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of events. Is able to comprehend a range of speech varieties (dialect and/or accent) or registers.
Operational 4	Comprehension is mostly accurate on common, concrete, and work-related topics when the accent or variety used is sufficiently intelligible for an international community of users. May fail to understand a linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of events.
Pre-operational 3	Comprehension is often accurate on common, concrete, and work-related topics when the accent or variety used is sufficiently intelligible for an international community of users. When the speaker is confronted with a linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of events, comprehension may be slower or require clarification strategies.
Elementary 2	Comprehension is limited to isolated, memorised phrases when they are carefully and slowly articulated.
Pre-elementary 1	Performs at a level below the Elementary level

INTERACTIONS

Level	Description
Expert 6	Interacts with ease in nearly all situations. Is sensitive to verbal and non-verbal cues and responds to them appropriately.
Extended 5	Responses are immediate, appropriate, and informative. Manages the speaker/listener relationship effectively.
Operational 4	Responses are usually immediate, appropriate, and informative. Initiates and maintains exchanges even when dealing with an unexpected turn of events. Deals adequately with apparent misunderstandings by checking, confirming, or clarifying.
Pre-operational 3	Responses are sometimes immediate, appropriate, and informative. Can initiate and maintain exchanges with reasonable ease on familiar topics and in predictable situations. Generally inadequate when dealing with an unexpected turn of events.
Elementary 2	Response time is slow and often inappropriate. Interaction is limited to simple routine exchanges.
Pre-elementary 1	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.