

Aviation Language Proficiency (ALP) Testing

ICAO mandated Aviation Language Proficiency (ALP) is currently available from ASL and evidence of this language competency will be required with all new licence and licence upgrade applications submitted to CAA with effect from 8 May 2008.

A full description of the testing requirement is contained in AC 61-1, Rule 61.11, which can be accessed here: http://www.caa.govt.nz/Advisory_Circulars/AC61-1.pdf

ASL has created two tests specifically tailored to meet the requirements of the ICAO English language proficiency requirement – the Level 6 Proficiency Demonstration (L6PD) and the Formal Language Evaluation (FLE)

Level 6 Proficiency Demonstration (L6PD)

The L6PD is designed to confirm the level 6 capability of proficient English language speakers. The test of 7 to 10 minutes is conducted over the telephone which connects to the testing computer. Human voice prompts are stored in a computer and randomly selected. The candidate responses are stored by the computer and rated off line via internet access to the computer. Although the test is effectively run by a computer, the candidate only hears a recorded human voice. The test has been designed by the Auckland University Head of Linguistics with assistance from pilots and the responses are listened to and rated by trained and formally qualified linguists. The test which uses English in an aviation context was designed specifically to meet the ICAO Document 9835 guidelines. The L6PD is rated for Pronunciation, Structure, Vocabulary and Fluency. The only outcomes of this test are ‘achieved Level 6’ or ‘not determined’. If level 6 proficiency is not achieved the candidate is required to do the FLE.

Formal Language Evaluation (FLE)

For persons who fail the L6PD or, who opt to take the FLE (for example persons for whom English is not a first or a very good second language) the FLE is available. This test has both a direct and an indirect element and will take 20-25 minutes. The indirect element is very similar to the L6PD described above and is conducted in the same way. The direct element is an interview with a live rater and is designed to test comprehension and interactions (in addition to the four characteristics rated from the indirect element - refer to the ICAO Proficiency Rating Scale contained in AC-61-1). The result from this test will be one of the following: level 6, level 5, level 4 or failed. (given the more thorough nature of this test it still possible to obtain a level 6 result even after getting a ‘not determined’ result from the L6PD). On completion of the semi direct element of the FLE the candidate is then connected to a live rater (the interlocutor) who conducts a conversation covering aviation topics, which is recorded and then rated. The FLE is rated by two raters independently. Again, this test has been purpose designed to conform to the requirements of the ICAO Document 9835 and the rating conventions prescribed in this document are followed (for example, the test outcome is the lowest rating achieved in across all of the rated parameters).

All of the testing is conducted via the telephone because that more accurately replicates the operating environment and eliminates body language communication that would occur in face to face interviewing.

Cost

The charge for the L6PD is \$99 and for the FLE is \$246. It is important that candidates get good advice on which test to take. While it may be tempting to try the cheaper test, those candidates who do not have English as a first language or very good second language should be encouraged to complete the FLE as their first option because if they fail the L6PD they will then have to take the FLE and their \$99 for the L6PD will be 'wasted'. For the L6PD only one attempt is allowed. The FLE can be attempted 'as many times as it takes'.

Some testing venues may add a venue charge which will be collected locally.

Validity

A level 6 result is valid for all time. A level 5 requires a retest after 6 years and a level 4 requires retest after 3 years. These results do not 'time expire' like normal exam results, except for the retest to ensure continued proficiency as mentioned above.

Prerequisites

To be eligible for this test candidates are required to have successfully passed their PPL exam subjects. This is to ensure that they will have sufficient aviation knowledge in order to give adequate responses to the questions posed.

Bookings

Bookings for the test can be made using the form available from the ASL web site at:

<http://www.asltasman.com/TOL/StaticWithoutMenus.aspx?PageTitle=ALP&ContentID=458>

Test Availability

Currently (16 April 2008) these tests are available in Auckland Wellington and Christchurch. Venues at Palmerston North, Dunedin, Motueka, Tauranga and Hamilton will be added by 5 May with others following shortly thereafter (based on demand).

Venues

The test needs to be supervised in the normal manner and for this a room large enough to accommodate the candidate and the supervisor is required. Only one candidate can be tested at a time. The room also needs to have a telephone (or jack point) which can access a 0800 number. Very small rooms are not recommended as this can result in too little separation between the candidate and the supervisor. Our first preference is to use suitable rooms within training organization premises and the support of training organizations and Aero Clubs in providing suitable premises will be much appreciated (and will assist with containing the cost of delivering the test).

Aviation Language Proficiency (ALP) Testing – FAQ's

- Q. From what date will all licence issue and upgrade applications need to include a pass result for Aviation Language Proficiency?
- A. 8 May 2008
- Q. Who needs the qualification?
- A. All applicants for new licences or change of licence (but not for addition of ratings [such as instructor rating])
- Q. What prerequisite is required before sitting the ALP test?
- A. PPL exam credits
- Q. Why are PPL exam credits required?
- A. To ensure the applicant has sufficient aviation knowledge in order to answer the questions that are posed in the test? ICAO requires the test to have an aviation language context.
- Q. Who should attempt the Level 6 Proficiency Demonstration (L6PD) (the \$99 test)?
- A. Those who have English as a first language or very good second language
- Q. What are the possible results from an L6PD?
- A. A pass (level6) or 'not determined'.
- Q. How many times can you sit an L6PD?
- A. Once only

Q. Who should opt for the Formal Language Evaluation (FLE) (the \$246 test)

A. Those who have English as a second language

Q. What are the possible results from an FLE?

A. Level 6, or level 5, or level 4, or Fail.

Q. How many times can you sit an FLE?

A. As many times as it takes to get a pass

Q. What is the validity period for English language test results?

A. The test results do not time expire except that level 5 personnel need to be retested every six years and level 4 personnel need to be retested every three years.

Q. Who do I contact to get the test done?

A. ASL . See the website

<http://www.asltasman.com/TOL/StaticWithoutMenus.aspx?PageTitle=ALP&ContentID=458>

Q. Who do I contact at ASL if I have an enquiry about the testing?

A. Jakki Brodie at 04 9162058 or Jakki.brodie@aviation.co.nz