



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Aviation
Administration

Advisory Circular

Subject: English Language Skill Standards
Required by 14 CFR parts 61, 63,
and 65.

Date: 8/4/10

AC No: 60-28

Initiated by: AFS-800

Change: 1

1. PURPOSE. This advisory circular (AC) provides guidance for airman applicants, training organizations, designated examiners, and aviation safety inspectors (ASI) in determining English language skills currently required for airman certification as required by the Administrator under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) parts 61, 63, and 65.

2. PRINCIPLE CHANGES. This AC incorporates minor changes to Paragraph 2 of AC 60-28. Paragraph 7, containing contact information, has also been added.

PAGE CONTROL CHART

Remove Pages	Dated	Insert Pages	Dated
1 through 3	09/23/07	1 through 3	8/4/10
		Appendix 1	8/4/10

for

John M. Allen
Director, Flight Standards Service



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1. PURPOSE. This advisory circular (AC) provides guidance for airman applicants, training organizations, designated examiners, and aviation safety inspectors (ASI) in determining English language skills currently required for airman certification as required by the Administrator under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) parts 61, 63, and 65.

2. BACKGROUND. There are distinct regulatory English language eligibility requirements in part 61 for pilots and flight and ground instructors; part 63 for flight engineers and flight navigators; and part 65 for air traffic control (ATC) tower operators, aircraft dispatchers, mechanics, repairmen, and parachute riggers. In addition, the standards found in International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Annex 1 require that certain airman certificates have an endorsement for English language proficiency in order for those airmen to act as required crew of an aircraft internationally.

a. Part 61 Requirements. Part 61 requires that pilots must be able to read, write, speak, and understand the English language. If the applicant cannot meet the English language eligibility and proficiency requirements, an airman certificate cannot be issued. For medical reasons, an appropriate limitation may be placed on the certificate in accordance with §§ 61.103(c), 61.123(b), or 61.153(b).

b. Part 63 Requirements. Part 63 requires that if a flight engineer or flight navigator cannot read, write, speak, or understand the English language, an appropriate limitation may be placed on the certificate in accordance with §§ 63.2, 63.23, 63.31(b), 63.42 or 63.51(b).

c. Part 65 Requirements. Part 65 requires that if a mechanic cannot read, write, speak, or understand the English language, an appropriate limitation may be placed on the certificate, in accordance with § 65.33(c).

d. ICAO Annex 1 Requirements. As of March 5, 2008, ICAO Annex 1's personnel licensing language proficiency standards require the following persons to have the "English Proficient" endorsement on their airman certificates:

- Persons holding a Private, Commercial, or Airline Transport pilot airman certificate with an airplane or helicopter rating issued under part 61,
- Persons holding a Flight Engineer or Flight Navigator airman certificate issued under part 63, and

- Persons holding an Aircraft Traffic Control Tower Operator airman certificate issued under part 65.

(1) A part 61 applicant for a Private, Commercial, or Airline Transport pilot airman certificate with an airplane or helicopter rating meeting the English eligibility standards of part 61 will be eligible for an airman certificate with the “English Proficient” endorsement. Applicants who cannot hear or speak due to medical reasons may be eligible for an airman certificate under part 61 issued with specific operational limitations.

(2) A part 63 applicant for a Flight Engineer or Flight Navigator airman certificate meeting the English eligibility requirements of part 63 will be eligible for a certificate with the “English Proficient” endorsement. An applicant not meeting the English language eligibility requirements of part 63 will not be eligible for a Flight Engineer or Flight Navigator airman certificate with the “English Proficient” endorsement. In that case, the applicant may be eligible for an airman certificate with an appropriate limitation in accordance with part 63 and may not be able to act as required crew of an airplane or helicopter outside the United States, its territories, or possessions.

e. Consequences of Failing to Meet the English Language Proficiency Requirements.

Unless otherwise authorized by the Administrator, no person may exercise the privileges of an airman certificate issued under parts 61, 63 or 65 unless that person meets the English language proficiency requirements of those parts. If a person holding an airman certificate issued under these parts does not meet the English language proficiency requirements, the Administrator will take action to suspend, revoke, or reissue that person’s airman certificate; this action is permitted under Title 49 of the United States Code section 44709.

3. COMPETENCY GUIDANCE. The FAA English proficiency standards currently required for airman certification should be assessed in accordance with the following guidelines, which clarify the already existent practices:

- The authorized designated examiner will determine the applicant’s ability to read, write, speak, and understand the English language, and
- The authorized designated examiner will evaluate the applicant’s speech and accent, if any, relative to sentence patterns, sentence structure, spelling of written text, and in the case of an ATC clearance, use of standard clearance terminology in accordance with the English language proficiency standards found in the appendix of this AC.

a. For All Certification Testing. For all certification testing, the applicant will be required to read a section of a technical manual, and then write and explain their interpretation of that reading. An appropriate technical manual in this sense means an airplane flight manual, a maintenance manual, or any other publication appropriate for the certificate or desired rating.

b. For Flight Service Station (FSS) En Route Service Practical Tests. For practical tests involving airport tower services and FSS en route services, examiners will simulate typical communications and require the applicant to copy and read back the communication.

c. For ATC Instrument Flight Rule Clearance Practical Tests. For practical tests requiring the receipt and acknowledgment of ATC instrument flight rule clearances, examiners will simulate typical clearance deliveries and require the applicant to copy and read back the clearances.

d. Receiving the “English Proficient” Endorsement. New applicants who successfully meet the already existent language proficiency standards found in parts 61, 63 and 65 (and clarified in the attached appendix) will automatically receive the “English Proficient” endorsement on their airman certificates to comply with the ICAO requirements. Current airmen who have already successfully demonstrated their English proficiency required under the FAA regulations are strongly encouraged to apply for replacement certificates with an “English Proficient” endorsement to prove their actual compliance with the ICAO requirements.

e. When English Language Skills Remain In Question. All airman applicants whose English language skills are still in question shall be referred to the local Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) for evaluation by an ASI.

4. RESPONSIBILITY. It is important that all airman applicants meet the basic eligibility requirements and demonstrate their ability to read, write, speak, and understand the English language. Each applicant must demonstrate an ability to mentally grasp critical information, which often must be read and understood while conducting a variety of aviation operations. The responsibility for ensuring applicants meet the English language eligibility and proficiency requirements is shared by flight and ground instructors, aviation schools, designated examiners, and ASIs. Ultimately, the authorized designated examiner and the ASI are required to evaluate each applicant’s eligibility, including English proficiency, prior to beginning the practical test or accepting an application for an airman certificate or rating, or accepting an application for a medical examination issued under part 67.

5. CONTACT. For additional information, please contact FAA AFS General Aviation and Commercial Division, AFS-800, 800 Independence Ave, SW., Washington, DC 20591, phone 202-267-8212..

APPENDIX 1, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS FOR AN AIRMAN CERTIFICATE ISSUED UNDER 14 CFR PARTS 61, 63 AND 65

The following English language proficiency standards* must be met by the applicant and evaluated by the designated examiner or aviation safety inspector (ASI) when determining if the applicant meets the English language eligibility requirements of 14 CFR parts 61 and 63:

- 1. PRONUNCIATION.** Assumes that English is not the applicant's first language and that the applicant has a dialect or accent that is intelligible to the aeronautical community. Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are influenced by the applicant's first language, but only sometimes interfere with ease of understanding.
- 2. STRUCTURE.** Relevant grammatical structures and sentence patterns are determined by language functions appropriate to the task. Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns are used creatively and are usually well controlled by the applicant. Errors may occur, particularly in unusual or unexpected circumstances, but rarely interfere with meaning.
- 3. VOCABULARY.** The applicant's vocabulary range and accuracy are usually sufficient to communicate effectively on common, concrete, and work-related topics. The applicant can often paraphrase successfully when lacking vocabulary in unusual or unexpected circumstances.
- 4. FLUENCY.** The applicant 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. The applicant can make limited use of discourse markers or connectors. Fillers are not distracting.
- 5. COMPREHENSION.** Comprehension by the applicant is mostly accurate on common, concrete, and work-related topics when the dialect, accent, or variety used is sufficiently intelligible. When the applicant is confronted with a linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of events, comprehension may be slower or require clarification strategies.
- 6. INTERACTIONS.** Responses by the applicant are usually immediate, appropriate, and informative. The applicant initiates and maintains exchanges even when dealing with an unexpected turn of events. The applicant deals adequately with apparent misunderstandings by checking, confirming, or clarifying.

* Level 4 Rating Scale adopted from the ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale found in ICAO Document 9835 and the attachment in ICAO Annex 1.