



## Information for EPC TEP Test-takers

In March 2003, the ICAO Council adopted amendments to Annex 1, Annex 6 — Operation of Aircraft, Annex 10, Annex 11 — Air Traffic Services, and the Procedures for Air Navigation Services — Air Traffic Management (PANS-ATM, Doc 4444) relating to language proficiency in international civil aviation.

Annex 10 SARPs clarify that ICAO phraseology shall be used whenever possible. Annex 1 SARPs describe how language should be used for radiotelephony communication. The language proficiency requirements in Annex 1 apply equally to native and non-native speakers.

ICAO Annex 1 – *Personnel Licensing* Appendix sets up a 6-level language proficiency scale:

- ICAO Level 6: Expert
- ICAO Level 5: Extended
- ICAO Level 4: Operational
- ICAO Level 3: Pre-Operational
- ICAO Level 2: Elementary
- ICAO Level 1: Pre-Elementary

Pilots and controllers are required to demonstrate Operational Level 4 language proficiency in the use of both ICAO phraseology and plain language from 2008.

A Standard in Annex 1 stipulates recurrent testing for pilots and controllers who demonstrate language proficiency below Expert Level 6.

Annexes 6 and 11 stipulate service provider or airline oversight of personnel language proficiency.

### **The test is called Test of English for Pilots (TEP).**

The test has been developed to meet the ICAO language proficiency requirements and is based on the ICAO Rating Scale requirements. It can measure ICAO Level 5, Level 4 and Level 3 (fail).

The test aims at

- measuring speaking and listening skills;
- measuring candidates' language proficiency in aviation-related (language) environment;
- assessing the test taker's ability to understand voice-only messages and respond to them using the required ICAO phraseology.

The test has five parts, during which candidates are rated in the six criteria required by ICAO: pronunciation, fluency, structure, vocabulary, comprehension, interaction.

According to the ICAO rating scale, candidates must demonstrate proficiency at Level 4 **in all six categories** in order to receive a Level 4 rating.

If a candidate demonstrates proficiency at Level 5 **in all six categories** they will receive a Level 5 rating.



The test takes about 25 minutes and will be recorded.

## **Description of the ENTRY POINT CENTRAL TEST FOR PILOTS (EPC TEP)**

### **I. QUESTIONNAIRE**

After the candidate has identified him/herself, (s)he gets a QUESTIONNAIRE sheet, which (s)he has to fill in with his/her answers or thoughts within 3 minutes. The candidate is instructed by the examiner not to write full sentences. While the candidate fills in the QUESTIONNAIRE with his/her answers/thoughts, the Assessor fills in the Marking Sheet with the personal data of the candidate and the identification numbers of the examination materials used during the test.

After the three minutes are up, the Interlocutor asks the candidate for the QUESTIONNAIRE and based on the information given starts a conversation with the candidate, first with general introduction, then about topics on the QUESTIONNAIRE.

(Duration: 5-6 minutes)

The aim of the QUESTIONNAIRE task:

- a) warm-up conversation about general and professional (aviation related) topics;
- b) to assess all the six criteria: pronunciation, structure (grammar), vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and interaction;
- c) to assess especially the criteria of interaction: the candidate hears questions from the examiner and has to react in a spontaneous way;

### **II. PICTURE DESCRIPTION**

The candidate is given an aviation related picture. (S)he has 30 seconds to study the picture and prepare for the task. Then (s)he has to describe it on his/her own. Then the examiner asks questions from a question-database related to the picture. The question database contains a list of questions for each picture, and the examiner is allowed to use only these questions and is not allowed to make up new questions. The questions are not knowledge-based (e.g. Tell me how it works...) because the test is not aimed at assessing the professional knowledge of the candidate. Based on the questions, the candidate can give his/her opinion (What do you think...? Why do you think...?) and the candidate's command of the English language can be assessed.

(Duration: 2-3 minutes)

The aim of the PICTURE DESCRIPTION task:

- a) the assessment of the creative use of the English language based on pictures;
- b) to assess five criteria: pronunciation, structure (grammar), vocabulary, fluency and comprehension;
- c) contains professional topics so it requires a wider professional vocabulary than the previous task; the candidate can demonstrate Level 5 in vocabulary
- d) the task is especially suitable for assessing fluency as the candidate has a chance to speak at length about a topic. He can demonstrate Level 5 in fluency.

### **III. LISTENING COMPREHENSION**

The candidate listens to a 30-35 sec. recording of a professional topic read by an English native speaker, then (s)he has to retell what (s)he has heard. While (s)he is

listening to the recording, (s)he can take notes (on a piece of paper ~~and with a pen~~ provided by the examiner). The candidate can listen to the recording twice. The recordings run from a CD. The examiner has the transcript of the recording on the LISTENING TASK SHEET and a list of five questions related to the key events of the recording. The examiner can follow the given answers on the LISTENING TASK SHEET and checkmark the questions on the checklist to which the candidate has already given an answer. The examiner then asks the questions which the candidate has not answered.

(Duration: 5-6 minutes)

The aim of the LISTENING COMPREHENSION task

- a) the comprehension of a recorded text read by an English native speaker, without visual contact between the speaker and the listener;
- b) able to assess five criteria: pronunciation, structure (grammar), vocabulary, fluency and comprehension;
- c) both the topics and the vocabulary are professional (aviation related), the listening task was developed using the FAA Accident and Incident database;
- d) able to assess candidates at ICAO Level 5 in vocabulary due to the use of professional vocabulary and in fluency due to speaking at length when re-telling what (s)he has heard.

#### **IV. RADIOTELEPHONY COMPREHENSION/INTERACTION**

The candidate listens to 10 messages from air traffic controllers, and he/she has to respond using standard ICAO phraseology. The messages are read by non-native speakers. The candidate can listen to each message once. The interlocutor stops the recording after each message so that the candidate can respond it. The examiner has the transcript of the recorded messages on the LISTENING TASK SHEET and can checkmark the questions on the checklist to which the candidate has given an answer or can write a remark in the spaces provided.

(Duration: 5-6 minutes)

The aim of RADIOTELEPHONY COMPREHENSION/INTERACTION task:

- a) to assess the test taker's ability to understand recorded RT messages;
- b) to assess the test taker's ability to respond to them using the required ICAO phraseology;
- c) in case of doubt whether the response is accurate enough, an operational expert is invited to judge its appropriateness.

#### **V. SITUATIONAL DIALOGUE**

The candidate listens to the recording of three messages: from ground handling, from air traffic control and/or from a flight attendant. Before each message the candidate can hear a recorded instruction, and the candidate has to react according to the instruction and the content of the message. The instructions are read by an English native speaker while the messages are read by non-native speakers. The candidate can listen to each message once. The examiner stops the recording after each message and re-starts it after the candidate has given an answer. In the SITUATIONAL DIALOGUE task, if no response is given by the candidate, the next recording can be started after 15-20 sec. The examiner has the transcript of the recorded messages on the LISTENING TASK SHEET and can checkmark the questions on the checklist to which the candidate has given an answer or can write a remark in the spaces provided.



(Duration: 4-5 minutes)

The aim of the SITUATIONAL DIALOGUE task:

- a) spontaneous response to recorded messages with professional (aviation related) topics; to assess especially the criteria of interaction, to assess if responses are immediate and appropriate
- b) the responses to the recorded messages are relatively short, not longer than one or two sentences, that is why the task is not suitable to assess fluency, but the other five criteria can be assessed: pronunciation, structure (grammar), vocabulary, comprehension and interaction;
- c) the messages in the recordings are aviation related, and among the different tasks this is closest to the general language used by pilots in their work.