

CIVIL AVIATION DIRECTORATE
Personnel Licensing Section

Transport Malta, Malta Transport Centre, Pantar Road, Lija LJA 2021 Malta. Tel: +356 2555 5000 | cadpel@transport.gov.mt | www.transport.gov.mt

Language Testing Bodies (LTBs) – Testing Personnel Requirements

Background

The intention of this notice is to:

- define the different roles of personnel that manage, conduct and/or assess language proficiency tests within a language testing body.
- establish the minimum requirements for language testing bodies engaging personnel that manage, conduct and/or assess test takers during a language proficiency test.
- establish the minimum requirements for initial and recurrent training of personnel conducting language testing.
- establish the language assessment administration records to be maintained by LTBs.

Definitions

Interlocutor - A suitably qualified and trained person with whom a test taker interacts during a language assessment to complete a speaking task.

Rater/Assessor - A suitably qualified and trained individual who assigns a score to a candidate's performance in a test based on a judgement usually involving the matching of features of the performance to descriptors on a rating scale.

Language Specialist - A rater/assessor with linguistic expertise, who shall hold or have attained language training at an accredited university or language school and has two years English language teaching experience

Aviation Specialist - A rater/assessor with operational expertise, who satisfies one of the conditions below:

- hold or have held an ATPL or CPL pilot's license or equivalent*
or
- hold or have held an air traffic controller's license

Note: In accordance with ATCO.B.040, an ATCO test taker must be assessed by a suitable qualified ATC assessor or a specifically approved assessor by TM-CAD.

**a PPL license holder with 350 block hours and flying experience in 3 or more ICAO states*

Language Test Development Team - is responsible for the design, development, and maintenance of the language assessment. The team shall include individuals with an operational, test development and linguistic expertise.

Test Taker - this is the candidate taking the ICAO Language Proficiency assessment.

PEL Notice No. 94 Version 2

Reference: ICAO Doc9835, Part FCL and Part ATCO



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Minimum Requirements for Interlocutors

An individual who has the role of an interlocutor shall:

- have successfully completed initial interlocutor training
- successfully complete recurrent interlocutor training once every 12 calendar months
- have appropriate aviation operational or language testing expertise, or both

If the test is designed to assess ICAO Level 6 proficiency, interlocutors must demonstrate language proficiency at Expert Level 6.

When the test is designed to assess ICAO Level 5 proficiency, interlocutors must at least demonstrate language proficiency at Extended Level 5.

Minimum Requirements for Raters/Assessors

An individual who has the role of a rater/assessor shall:

- hold or have attained a Level 6 on the ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale or equivalent*
- qualify as an aviation specialist or language specialist (as defined in this notice)
- have successfully completed initial rater/assessor training
- successfully complete recurrent rater/assessor training once every 12 calendar months

*a CEFR C1/IELTS 6.5 level or higher

A rater/assessor is sufficiently qualified to take the role of an interlocutor.

Additionally, raters/assessors shall be authorised by the Director General for Civil Aviation.

Note: In accordance with ATCO.B.040, an ATCO test taker must be assessed by a suitable qualified ATC assessor or a specifically approved assessor by TM-CAD.

Conducting Language Proficiency Assessments

When conducting assessments of test-takers, Language Testing Bodies (LTBs) shall utilise the dual expertise of both an aviation specialist and a language specialist.

In cases where a rater/assessor is qualified both as an aviation and language specialist. TM-CAD may consider, with prior approval an assessment method that is administered by one individual, as an acceptable means of conducting an assessment.

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Minimum Requirements for Language Test Development Team

All members of the language test development team shall be familiar with the following publications:

- a) ICAO SARPS and recommended practices of Annex 1
- b) ICAO Holistic descriptors (Appendix 1 to Annex 1) and ICAO Rating Scale (Attachment A to Annex 1)
- c) Manual on the Implementation of ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements (Doc 9835)
- d) ICAO Rated Speech Samples
- e) EU Regulation 1178/2011 Part-FCL requirements on Language Proficiency
- f) EU Regulation 2015/340 Part-ATCO requirements for student air traffic controllers and air traffic controllers on Language Proficiency
- g) Applicable PEL Notices as published on the TM-CAD website

Additionally, members of the language test development team shall satisfy one or more of the conditions below:

- experience in aeronautical operations as a professional pilot (ATPL/CPL) or air traffic controller
- specialisation or work experience in training and assessment development
- hold a university degree and certification in TESL (or equivalent)

Training Requirements for Interlocutors, Raters or Assessors

Initial training for interlocutors/raters/assessors shall consist of at least 40 hours of training.

Initial training requirements for raters/assessors shall include:

- ICAO Regulation Requirements
- EASA Regulation including language requirements in Part-FCL & Part-ATCO (as applicable)
- TM-CAD Requirements and PEL Notices (as applicable)
- Aviation Safety & Communication
- ICAO Language Proficiency Holistic Descriptors & Rating Scales
- Test Structure, Design and Rationale
- Test Administration Procedures
- Aviation Terminology and R/T Phraseology (if required)
- How to conduct objective assessments
- Rating test-takers using ICAO Rating Scale & Holistic Descriptors
- Report Writing
- Practical and on-the-job training

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Recurrent training for interlocutors/raters/assessors shall consist of at least 24 hours of training.

Recurrent training requirements for raters/assessors shall include:

- New developments on Language Proficiency requirements
- Operational aspects related to language proficiency
- Updates on accident/incident reports related to communication errors (if required)
- Updates in aviation terminology and R/T phraseology (if required)
- Test Developments/ Feedback/ Test Washback
- Standardisation and practical training

Both initial and recurrent training programmes for interlocutors/raters/assessors shall be documented in the language testing body operations manual and approved by TM-CAD.

Language Assessment Administration Records

LTBs shall maintain records of the details of the language assessment and the test taker.

Language assessment administration records shall include at least the following details:

- Date of Test,
- Test Taker's Surname & Name,
- Identification Document Nr.,
- Assessment Score/Rating
- Interlocutors' Details (if applicable)
- Assessors' Details.

These records shall be kept up-to-date and periodically submitted to TM-CAD. As a minimum, LTBs shall communicate the above-mentioned records every month.

Guidance Material

- EU Regulation 1178/2011 – Part FCL
- EU Regulation 2015/340 – Part ATCO
- ICAO Doc 9835 - Manual on the Implementation of ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements