AVIATION LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY FAQs

Why do I need an Aviation Language Proficiency Qualification?

Following a number of international aviation accidents and incidents, where human factors - including language proficiency - were contributory factors, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) introduced measures designed to increase the safety of international air travellers.

Effective from 5 March 2008, ICAO confirmed English as the language for standard use in international aviation communication and introduced standards of compliance requiring all international pilots, flight navigators, Air Traffic Control personnel and aeronautical station operators to have an Aviation Language Proficiency (ALP) Qualification.

For New Zealand based candidates a full description of the testing requirement is provided by Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand (CAANZ) and is contained in circulars: AC 61-1, Rule 61.11, for Pilots and AC 65-1 for ATC personnel. These documents may be accessed by selecting the following links:

- Pilots
- ATC

The ALP tests provided by ASL

ASL provides a stand-alone testing service to meet the ICAO requirements for aviation language testing. This service was developed by ASPEQ (parent company to ASL) and is fully compliant with the Manual on the Implementation of the ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements - Doc 9835-AN/453.

The ASL aviation language testing system has been designed with question banks to cover pilot and air traffic controllers. Two tests are currently available that meet the ICAO standard (6 levels):

- Level 6 Proficiency Demonstration (L6PD). This is a semi-direct 10 minute test taken over the telephone and is provided for candidates at the top level of aviation language proficiency.
- Formal Language Evaluation (FLE) - This test is conducted over the telephone and contains both direct (10minutes) and semi-direct interviews (approximately 7minutes) conducted for candidates requiring testing at levels 1-6.
  - Semi-direct: the exam is delivered over the telephone by connection with ASL’s Chatterbox computer platform. Questions and prompts are delivered over the phone using a recorded human voice.
  - Direct: Questions are delivered in a live interview conducted over the telephone.
Are there pre-requisites before I can take an ALP test?

Yes, current requirements are that as a pre-requisite to undertaking an ALP candidates must:

**Pilots**
- hold a PPL written examination credit; or
- hold a New Zealand aeroplane or helicopter pilot licence; or
- hold a valid armed forces flight experience and qualifications assessment indicating that the person meets the criteria for issue of a New Zealand pilot licence; or
- hold a current foreign aeroplane or helicopter pilot licence.

**Air Traffic Service Personnel**
Hold a flight radiotelephone operator rating; and either:
- have passed examinations required by rule 65.103 (a)(5); or
- have passed examinations required by rule 65.203 (a)(4); or
- hold an aeroplane or helicopter pilot licence issued in accordance with Part 61; or
- hold a current foreign air traffic service licence.

What is tested by the ALP tests?

The tests are designed to fairly assess candidates proficiency in the English language in an aviation context. ICAO has established categories for testing candidate’s language proficiency skills as follows:

- **Pronunciation** – Manner of speaking, stress, rhythm and intonation. Influence of dialect or first language on ability to be understood.
- **Structure** – Basic and grammatical structures and sentence patterns.
- **Vocabulary** – Vocabulary range and accuracy
- **Fluency** – Ability to speak at length. Ability to vary speech for effect.
- **Comprehension** – Ability to understand spoken language
- **Interactions** – Interaction with another speaker/listener

Proficiencies are measured for each skill on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>Qualification valid for life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>Extended</td>
<td>Qualification valid for 6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Operational</td>
<td>Qualification valid for 3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Pre-Operational</td>
<td>No qualification issued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>No qualification issued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Pre-elementary</td>
<td>No qualification issued</td>
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</tbody>
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Note that: A candidate’s lowest rating for any of the categories is the rating applied as the overall test result.
**Should I take a L6PD or a FLE test?**

The FLE test is more comprehensive than the L6PD demonstration and assesses candidates over the full range of proficiencies from level 1 to level 6. This test contains both direct and semi-direct elements and will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The cost to take a FLE test is greater than that of a L6PD test; however the range of possible outcomes is also greater.

The L6PD test is a shortened version of the FLE and is designed to confirm level 6 capabilities only. The only outcomes for this test are 'achieved level 6' or 'not determined'. Therefore only those candidates believing that they have this level of proficiency should undertake this test. An L6PD test can be taken only once and a 'not determined' result will then require the candidate to undertake the full FLE process.

**How do I book an ALP test?**

Candidates can book an ALP test [here](#).

Click [here](#) to view a schedule for when and where you can take an ALP test.

If you have any problems with booking an ALP test please phone ASL on 04 9139812.

**What if I need to have an urgent assessment?**

If you wish to sit an Aviation Language exam urgently or on a date other than those recorded on the timetable please contact ASL and we may be able to arrange a date that suits you.

Our ability to arrange a special sitting will be subject to supervisor and venue availability.

There are fees associated with special sittings – see price list [here](#).

**How are the ASL ALP tests conducted?**

Candidates are required to report in person to an ASL examination centre (session as pre-booked by the candidate) and examinations are conducted one at a time in a supervised environment. ASL provides the exams by semi-direct method using a recorded human voice. In addition the FLE exam contains a direct element as a one-to-one interview conducted by an Interviewer. Both the direct and semi-direct test elements are conducted over a telephone connection.

The exam Supervisor will connect you via telephone link to ASL’s computer based platform which randomly selects the prompts and questions from the Question Bank and records your responses to those prompts.

After the completion of the test, expert raters will access the recorded responses and assess them according to the ICAO specified criteria.

Separate versions of the tests are provided for pilots and ATC personnel. Select the following links to access a detailed description for each of the exam process.
FLE
- FLE Test description for Pilots
- FLE Test description for ATC personnel

L6PD
- L6PD Test description for Pilots
- L6PD Test description for ATC personnel

**When will my results be available?**

Ratings are undertaken by raters independently at the conclusion of the test.

The raters will listen to the recordings produced from the exam and apply their rating.

Once completed, the results are published to the ASL website.

Normally ratings are concluded within 3 - 5 days, however results are frequently available within a lesser timeframe.

Candidates are able to access their results by logging on to http://caanz.aspegexams.com and accessing their personal results page by clicking on ‘My Account’ then ‘My Results’.

Candidates should arrange to print their own results. If requested, ASL will print the result but will charge a fee per copy for this service. Result notices printed by ASL will be on plain white paper and mailed to the candidate. It costs $25 for a printed result notice.

Email info@aviation.co.nz to order this.

**Can I retake the test if I fail?**

The L6PD demonstration can only be taken once. Candidates who fail the L6PD would then be required to pursue the FLE exam process.

Candidates who fail the FLE can re-sit this exam. Candidates may sit the FLE exam up to three times in a three month period. If three attempts are failed in a 3 month period the candidate will be required to undertake a three month stand down before being permitted to attempt the exam again. This will allow a period of re-training.

**Can I appeal my results?**

Yes, you can appeal the results of a test.

A review may be requested up to 1 month after completion of the ALP exam. Candidates can apply for this online or via email or post.

On receipt of payment of the associated review fee ASL will assign a third (independent) senior rater to conduct a review of the assessment. The fee for a L6PD Review is $62 and an FLE Review is $117.

If the review results in a change to the initial result this will be confirmed in the Tasman website by an update of the previous result.
The final outcome, whether changed or not, will be confirmed by letter to the candidate with the outcome of the review and result notification (this will also include the rater’s comments).

A refund of the review fee is only to be made if the changes are due to negligence or gross error by ASL or the raters. A change in result/rating is not, by itself, sufficient grounds for a refund.

Candidates are advised that if lodging a review the exam should not be retaken before the outcome of the appeal is known. This is because the result of the most recent test taken is the result that will be applied as the candidate’s final result. Therefore if a further sitting is taken and results in a Fail before the outcome of an appeal is known - even if the appeal results in a Pass the Fail result of the later sitting will still apply as it is the result of the most recent test taken.

**Why do I have to sit this test that seems very easy and does not seem to address any specific aviation competencies?**

CAA in compliance with international agreements must ensure that all pilots have adequate English skills. A trained linguistic expert can easily determine a native English speaker from people with English as a second language with a relatively small sample of speech segments. While apparently trivial to most native English speakers it is not so for everyone.