

Advisory Circular

AC61-1

Pilot Licences and Ratings—General

Revision 9
22 March 2018

General

Civil Aviation Authority advisory circulars contain guidance and information about standards, practices, and procedures that the Director has found to be an **acceptable means of compliance** with the associated rules and legislation.

However, the information in the advisory circular does not replace the requirement for participants to comply with their obligations under the Civil Aviation Rules, the Civil Aviation Act 1990 and other legislation.

An advisory circular reflects the Director's view on the rules and legislation. It expresses CAA policy on the relevant matter. It is not intended to be definitive. Consideration will be given to other methods of compliance that may be presented to the Director. When new standards, practices, or procedures are found to be acceptable they will be added to the appropriate advisory circular. Should there be any inconsistency between this information and the rules or legislation, the rules and legislation take precedence.

An advisory circular may also include **guidance material** generally, including guidance on best practice as well as guidance to facilitate compliance with the rule requirements. However guidance material should not be regarded as an acceptable means of compliance.

An advisory circular may also include **technical information** that is relevant to the rule standards or requirements.

Purpose

This advisory circular provides guidance on general requirements related to pilot licences and ratings, to assist applicant(s), to meet the requirements of Civil Aviation Rule Part 61 *Pilot Licences and Ratings*.

Related Rules

This advisory circular relates to Civil Aviation Rule Part 61 *Pilot Licences and Ratings* – specifically Subpart A.

Change Notice

Revision 9:

- acknowledges that the air law exam required after a BFR has lapsed by 5 years or more is the air law exam appropriate to the level of licence privileges intended to be exercised
- removes guidance information on existing licence holders.

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Rule 61.5 Requirement for Pilot Licence and Ratings

Validation Permit for a foreign pilot licence

Rule 61.9 details the issue of a validation permit by the Director.

Information on validation of a foreign pilot licence is available from the [CAA website \(pilots\)](#).

Trans -Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997

The Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997 (TTMRA) permits persons registered for professional occupations in Australia to register for the same occupation in New Zealand. This provides for persons holding professional licences (CPL and ATPL) issued by CASA to have the equivalent New Zealand licence issued by completing the appropriate CAA form (Form 24061/09 [CAA website \(forms\)](#)), and producing evidence of the CASA licence. A New Zealand licence will then be issued if the Act is complied with.

Full details on TTMRA application and registration are available at [CAA website \(pilots\)](#).

Note: Private pilot and recreational pilot licences are not covered by the TTMRA.

Recognition of an Overseas Flight Crew Licence and Rating

Information on recognition of overseas flight crew licences and ratings is available from the [CAA website \(pilots\)](#).

Operation of NZ Registered Aircraft Overseas

Licensing requirements differ from country to country therefore pilots must ensure they comply with the pilot licensing requirements of the country they are operating in (as applicable) and the relevant New Zealand Civil Aviation Rules as appropriate [see rule 61.5(b)].

Operation of Foreign Registered Aircraft in NZ

Pilots operating foreign registered aircraft must ensure they are aware of the licensing requirements of the country of registry of the aircraft that they are operating. While New Zealand rules allow foreign registered aircraft to operate in New Zealand under certain circumstances [see rule 61.5(c)]. These rules do not override the authority of the country of registry in respect of those aircraft.

Category A Flight Instructor—Aircraft Type Ratings

Rule 61.5(o) refers to a Category A instructor holding “an aircraft type rating for a single engine aeroplane of similar configuration.” The rule does not define what configuration is similar, however the type of single engine configurations that are likely to apply include—

- Single engine, fixed pitch, fixed tricycle undercarriage, land aeroplanes.
- Single engine, fixed pitch, retractable tricycle undercarriage, land aeroplanes.
- Single engine, constant speed, fixed tricycle undercarriage, land aeroplanes.
- Single engine, constant speed, retractable tricycle undercarriage, land aeroplanes.
- Single engine, fixed pitch, fixed undercarriage tail wheel, land aeroplanes.
- Single engine, constant speed, fixed undercarriage tail wheel, land aeroplanes.

Note: Before carrying passengers or giving instruction in a single engine aeroplane of a similar configuration, a Category A flight instructor will need to meet the flight experience requirements of this provision as detailed in advisory circular AC61-10.

Rule 61.11 Application and Qualification

English Language Proficiency Requirements for Pilot Licence Applicants

Rule 61.11(b) requires an applicant for a pilot licence to have sufficient ability in reading, speaking, understanding and communicating in the English language to enable the applicant to adequately exercise the privileges of that licence.

The acceptable means of compliance with rule 61.11(b) by all applicants for the issue of an aeroplane or helicopter private pilot, commercial pilot or air transport pilot licence, is by demonstrating proficiency to at least Level 4 (Operational) of the ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale and the following tasks—

- communicate effectively in voice-only (radiotelephone) communications
- communicate on common, work-related topics with accuracy and clarity
- use appropriate communication to exchange messages and to recognize and resolve misunderstandings in a general or work-related context
- handle successfully, and with relative ease, the linguistic challenges presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events that occurs within the context of a routine work situation or communicative task with which they are otherwise familiar
- use a dialect or accent which is intelligible to the aeronautical community.

The foregoing requirement also applies to applicants for a higher aeroplane or helicopter pilot licence (e.g. a recreational pilot licence (RPL) holder applying for a private pilot licence (PPL) or PPL holder applying for a commercial pilot licence (CPL) whose language proficiency has not been assessed.

Language Proficiency Endorsement

Applicants for an aeroplane or helicopter private pilot, commercial pilot or air transport pilot licence or other ICAO recognized licence holders who wish to have a language proficiency level endorsed on their licence, must have demonstrated English language proficiency to at least Level 4 (Operational) in all language categories specified in the ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale. Satisfactory evidence of such a demonstration is an assessment credit issued by a delegated service provider.

Applicants for the issue of a pilot licence will have their demonstrated language proficiency level endorsed on the new licence at no added charge. Existing licence holders who demonstrate language proficiency may, upon application to the Director and payment of the applicable licence amendment fee, have their language proficiency level endorsed on their licence.

Licences are endorsed as language proficiency level 4, 5 or 6 in accordance with the respective assessment credit. Language proficiency demonstration currency periods are as follows.

- Level 6 (Expert) valid for the lifetime of the holder of the pilot licence
- Level 5 (Extended) valid for six years from the date of assessment
- Level 4 (Operational) valid for three years from the date of assessment

A current language proficiency endorsement held by a person applies to all pilot and air traffic service licences held by that person. A person who holds a current language proficiency endorsement and who applies for a higher or different type of ICAO licence will have that language proficiency endorsed on the new licence for the remaining currency period.

Aeroplane or helicopter pilot licence holders who do not have evidence of having their language assessed may not have their licences accepted by other ICAO Contracting States. Those who intend

to operate in foreign airspace are strongly recommended to obtain a language proficiency endorsement.

Language Proficiency Assessment

The language proficiency assessment is a demonstration of the ability to communicate in an aviation context. Therefore, all language proficiency candidates are expected to have a basic aviation awareness of at least the subject matter contained in the private pilot licence theory syllabuses specified in advisory circular AC61-3, Appendix II.

Thus, as a prerequisite to undertake a language proficiency assessment, a person is to hold at least:

- a written examination credit for PPL, CPL Glider or CPL Balloon; or
- a New Zealand aeroplane or helicopter pilot licence; or
- 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
- a current foreign aeroplane or helicopter pilot licence.

To adequately cater for a wide variation in language proficiency levels, two forms of English language proficiency assessments are available and persons may undertake the assessment they consider most suitable.

1) Level 6 Proficiency Demonstration

The Level 6 Proficiency Demonstration is designed to confirm that native or very proficient non-native English speakers can clearly meet ICAO Level 6 language criteria. It is a relatively short semi-direct assessment delivered by telephone that confirms that the speaker can communicate at level 6 for pronunciation, structure, vocabulary, and fluency. This assessment is suitable for pilots who are confident that they are able to communicate at Level 6 in all respects. The only outcomes are “Level 6” or, if a candidate does not clearly demonstrate Level 6 proficiency, “not determined”. The acceptable means of compliance with rule 61.11(b) for an applicant who does not clearly meet “Level 6” criteria on the first attempt is to complete a Formal Language Evaluation.

2) Formal Language Evaluation

The Formal Language Evaluation complies with all ICAO recommendations. It consists of a semi-direct assessment delivered by telephone to evaluate pronunciation, structure, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, followed by a brief direct telephone assessment, specifically to evaluate comprehension and interactions. This assessment may be taken by all pilots. The outcome is the overall level achieved plus the levels achieved in each language category.

All assessments are directly supervised by Conducting Officers under the control of a delegated service provider and candidates are to provide evidence of identity as specified by rule 61.17(a) for written examinations.

Language proficiency candidates who wish to dispute an overall rating may apply to the delegated service provider for a review of their language proficiency assessment.

ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale

The Language Proficiency Rating Scale in Appendix 1 to this advisory circular is extracted from Annex 1 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation. The overall proficiency rating is determined by the lowest rating level assigned in any particular category.

The Level 4 (Operational) descriptors are the safest minimum proficiency skill level determined necessary for aeronautical radiotelephony communications and represent the minimum required for a language proficiency level to be endorsed on a licence.

Rule 61.17 Written Examinations—Prerequisites and Grades

Acceptable Means of Identification

All means of identification must be current and valid. The types of photographic identification that are acceptable to the Director for purposes of rule 61.17(a)(1) are:

- a NZ or foreign passport; or
- photographic identity cards issued by the New Zealand Defence Force, New Zealand Police or the New Zealand Fire Service; or
- CAA Airport Identity Card; or
- New Zealand Fire Arms Licence; or
- statutory declaration of photographic identity made in accordance with the Oaths and Declarations Act 1957.

Qualifying Period for Written Examination Credit

The qualifying period for obtaining a written examination credit commences from the date on which confirmation of the first examination pass is given and expires on the confirmation date of the last examination pass.

Aspeq does not issue a document evidencing the written examination credit. Instead a written examination report detailing passes in all the prescribed subjects within the applicable qualifying period is sufficient evidence for the purposes of rule 61.17(c).

The written examination credit has an expiry date as set out in rule 61.17(d), after which period the applicable written examinations must be taken again. This is to maintain the currency of the applicant's theory knowledge which is equally important as the practical flying skills.

NOTE: It is the applicants' responsibility to plan their study and written examination sittings to meet these qualifying and validity periods.

RPL, PPL, CPL and Instrument Rating Exam Credit

The concept of the RPL, PPL, CPL and I/R exam system is that a RPL, PPL, CPL or I/R written examination credit gained within the three year qualifying period prescribed in rule 61.17 (c), is valid for three years from the date the last subject was passed.

ATPL Exam Credit

The concept of the ATPL exam system is that an ATPL written examination credit gained within the three year qualifying period prescribed in rule 61.17(c) is valid for ten years from the date the last subject was passed.

However, at the time application is made for the issue of an ATPL, the pass held for ATPL air law, must not be more than five years old.

If the ATPL air law pass is more than five years old, the applicant will be required to gain a new pass in the subject to ensure that their written credit remains valid. In such cases, the original written examination credit expiry date will not be extended but remains the same as the original date.

Rule 61.21 Flight Tests

Knowledge Deficiency Reports (KDR)

A KDR is issued by Aspeq on completion of a written examination. It details syllabus references for all incorrectly answered questions. A person who wishes to undertake a flight test must produce all relevant KDRs to the flight examiner, and provide evidence of knowledge improvement that has been certified by a Category A or B flight instructor. The most reliable way in which to provide evidence of remedial action is for the student to research the subject and provide the flight instructor with written answers relating to the deficiency. This record should be retained by the pilot and submitted with the application for licence issue.

KDR references may be found in the applicable advisory circular under the examination syllabus appendices. Each KDR number includes the subject number, topic and item number.

For archived syllabuses refer to the [CAA website – Pilot Syllabus Assistance](#).

NOTE: For those applicants who achieved a score of 100% for a written examination, there will not be any KDR entries to be certified by a flight instructor.

Validity of Flight Test

A flight test is only valid for three months [rule 61.21(b)]. Pilots are advised to apply for the issue of their licence or rating within this period. Failure to do so would mean that the flight test must be completed again.

Rule 61.25 Flight Training and Testing—General Requirements

Acceptable Means of Simulating Instrument Flight in VMC

The use of a hood, foggles or screens that prevent peripheral external visual reference to the pilot are acceptable to the Director as means of simulating instrument flight in VMC for the purposes of rule 61.25(c)(2). This includes the recording of flight time in which instrument conditions are simulated but does not include take off, landing or visual manoeuvring time.

Rule 61.29 Pilot Logbooks—General Requirements

Recording of Flight Time

Where several flights are conducted on the same date, where the departure, intermediate landing point, and place of arrival are the same, then they can be summarised into one entry. This covers topdressing loads, glider tows, parachute loads, helicopter operations for the purposes of rule 61.29(c)(2)(iii).

For example—

21-7-04 AS350 HGO Self Heliski Treble Cone 3.8 Hours

Rule 61.29(e) provides for the correction of a logbook entry. Correcting fluid (e.g. Twink), stickers or labels do not meet this rule requirement.

Note: Flight time is defined in Part 1 – Definitions and Abbreviations.

Rule 61.35 Medical Requirement

Medical Certificates

A person may not exercise the privileges of their licence if they do not hold the appropriate, current medical certificate. There are a number of medical conditions that will cause either a temporary or permanent change in a person's health or fitness that renders them unfit to fly. The provisions detailing the requirements in this regard are set out in Part 2A of the Civil Aviation Act 1990 and Civil Aviation Rule Part 67. Specific details relating to the reporting of changes in medical conditions are also set out in the Medical General Directions issued by the Director. All these documents may be viewed on the [CAA website – Medical Certification](#).

The completed New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) DL9 form required for the issue or maintenance of a recreational pilot licence is not recognised as a medical certificate by the Director under the rules for the purposes of Part 2A of the Act. The issue of this medical certificate requires a medical examination to be conducted by a medical practitioner with reference to the document issued by the Director of Land Transport entitled: “*Medical Aspects of Fitness to Drive: A Guide for Medical Practitioners*”.

Rule 61.37 Recent Flight Experience

Appropriately Qualified Flight Instructors

The rule does not define what qualifications are considered appropriate for flight instructors assessing competence in take-off or landing manoeuvres under rule 61.37(a)(1)(iii). However it is recommended that such instructors hold a Category A, B or D flight instructor rating.

Rule 61.39 Biennial Flight Review

Obligation to complete Biennial Flight Review

A Biennial Flight Review (BFR) is a flight or a series of flights where the manoeuvres and procedures applicable to the pilot licence privileges are reviewed. During these flights the flight instructor is pilot in command and the flights are dual flight instruction for the purpose of log book entries.

The BFR is based on the flight test requirements for the applicable licence. Because the BFR is conducted as dual over as many flights as it takes to achieve competence **there are no optional components**. The BFR will continue, and may be recorded in the pilot's logbook as flight instruction, until the flight instructor is satisfied that they can sign the flight review off in the pilot's logbook as having been satisfactorily completed to the licence level for which the applicant wishes to exercise privileges. For more details, see next section “Use of lower pilot licence or rating”.

Where a pilot holds licences for more than one category of aircraft (aeroplane and helicopter for example), a BFR is required for each category on which the pilot wishes to remain current. Because a BFR is a dual exercise, the instructor concerned must hold a type rating for the aircraft being used for the BFR.

CAUTION: *If the licence holder does not meet the currency requirements of rule 61.39, the holder may only exercise student pilot privileges.*

Rule 61.41 Use of Lower Pilot Licence or Rating

Exercising the Privileges of a Lower Licence or Rating

The use of lower privileges is allowed by the rules in specified circumstances. An example of how this works in practice is as follows: The holder of an ATPL or CPL whose Class 1 medical certificate has expired may, subject to satisfactory completion of the appropriate BFR, continue to exercise the privileges of a PPL (if a valid and current Class 2 medical certificate is still held). If the Class 2 medical certificate expires, then PPL privileges can no longer be exercised, but a pilot may still fly dual in accordance with Part 61, Subpart C, and may still undergo any BFR while flying dual.

The holder of an ATPL or CPL may exercise the privileges of an RPL if a current New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) DL9 form has been issued and the holder meets the currency requirements of rule 61.361.

In accordance with rule 61.37, a licence holder who has not met the requirements of rule 61.39 for a period of five years or more who wishes to exercise the privileges of a lower licence under rule 61.37(i), is required to pass the air law examination appropriate to the level of licence at which they intend to exercise the privileges.

For example:

- An ATPL holder in this situation who wishes to exercise CPL, PPL or RPL privileges, must pass the appropriate air law exam; or
- In the case of an ATPL only, the holder completes the appropriate operational competency checks required in Parts 121, 125 or 135 (whichever is applicable), prior to exercising any privileges.

Appendix 1 ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale

1.1 Expert, extended and operational levels

<i>LEVEL</i>	<i>PRONUNCIATION</i> <i>Assumes a dialect and/or accent intelligible to the aeronautical community.</i>	<i>STRUCTURE</i> <i>Relevant grammatical structures and sentence patterns are determined by language functions appropriate to the task.</i>	<i>VOCABULARY</i>	<i>FLUENCY</i>	<i>COMPREHENSION</i>	<i>INTERACTIONS</i>
Expert 6	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation, though possibly influenced by the first language or regional variation, almost never interfere with ease of understanding.	Both basic and complex grammatical structures and sentence patterns are consistently well controlled	Vocabulary range and accuracy are sufficient to communicate effectively on a wide variety of familiar and unfamiliar topics. Vocabulary is idiomatic, nuanced, and sensitive to register.	Able to speak at length with a natural, effortless flow. Varies speech flow for stylistic effect, e.g. to emphasize a point. Uses appropriate discourse markers and connectors spontaneously.	Comprehension is consistently accurate in nearly all contexts and includes comprehension of linguistic and cultural subtleties.	Interacts with ease in nearly all situations. Is sensitive to verbal and non-verbal cues and responds to them appropriately.
Extended 5	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation, though influenced by the first language or regional variation, rarely interfere with ease of understanding.	Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns are consistently well controlled. Complex structures are attempted but with errors which sometimes interfere with meaning.	Vocabulary range and accuracy are sufficient to communicate effectively on common, concrete, and work-related topics. Paraphrases consistently and successfully. Vocabulary is sometimes idiomatic.	Able to speak at length with relative ease on familiar topics but may not vary speech flow as a stylistic device. Can make use of appropriate discourse markers or connectors.	Comprehension is accurate on common, concrete, and work-related topics and mostly accurate when the speaker is confronted with a linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of events. Is able to comprehend a range of speech varieties (dialect and/or accent) or registers.	Responses are immediate, appropriate, and informative. Manages the speaker/listener relationship effectively.
Operational 4	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are influenced by the first language or regional variation but only sometimes interfere with ease of understanding.	Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns are used creatively and are usually well controlled. Errors may occur, particularly in unusual or unexpected circumstances, but rarely interfere with meaning.	Vocabulary range and accuracy are usually sufficient to communicate effectively on common, concrete, and work-related topics. Can often paraphrase successfully when lacking vocabulary in unusual or unexpected circumstances.	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. Can make limited use of discourse markers or connectors. Fillers are not distracting.	Comprehension is mostly accurate on common, concrete, and work-related topics when the accent or variety used is sufficiently intelligible for an international community of users. When the speaker is confronted with a linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of events, comprehension may be slower or require clarification strategies.	Responses are usually immediate, appropriate, and informative. Initiates and maintains exchanges even when dealing with an unexpected turn of events. Deals adequately with apparent misunderstandings by checking, confirming, or clarifying.
<i>Levels 1, 2 and 3 are on subsequent page</i>						

1.2 Pre-operational, elementary and pre-elementary levels

LEVEL	PRONUNCIATION <i>Assumes a dialect and/or accent intelligible to the aeronautical community.</i>	STRUCTURE <i>Relevant grammatical structures and sentence patterns are determined by language functions appropriate to the task.</i>	VOCABULARY	FLUENCY	COMPREHENSION	INTERACTIONS
<i>Levels 4, 5 and 6 are on preceding page.</i>						
Pre-operational 3	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are influenced by the first language or regional variation and frequently interfere with ease of understanding.	Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns associated with predictable situations are not always well controlled. Errors frequently interfere with meaning.	Vocabulary range and accuracy are often sufficient to communicate on common, concrete, or work-related topics, but range is limited and the word choice often inappropriate. Is often unable to paraphrase successfully when lacking vocabulary.	Produces stretches of language, but phrasing and pausing are often inappropriate. Hesitations or slowness in language processing may prevent effective communication. Fillers are sometimes distracting.	Comprehension is often accurate on common, concrete, and work-related topics when the accent or variety used is sufficiently intelligible for an international community of users. May fail to understand a linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of events.	Responses are sometimes immediate, appropriate, and informative. Can initiate and maintain exchanges with reasonable ease on familiar topics and in predictable situations. Generally inadequate when dealing with an unexpected turn of events.
Elementary 2	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are heavily influenced by the first language or regional variation and usually interfere with ease of understanding.	Shows only limited control of a few simple memorized grammatical structures and sentence patterns.	Limited vocabulary range consisting only of isolated words and memorized phrases.	Can produce very short, isolated, memorized utterances with frequent pausing and a distracting use of fillers to search for expressions and to articulate less familiar words.	Comprehension is limited to isolated, memorized phrases when they are carefully and slowly articulated.	Response time is slow and often inappropriate. Interaction is limited to simple routine exchanges.
Pre-elementary 1	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.	Performs at a level below the Elementary level.

Note.— *The Operational Level (Level 4) is the minimum required proficiency level for radiotelephony communication. Levels 1 through 3 describe Pre-elementary, Elementary, and Preoperational levels of language proficiency, respectively, all of which describe a level of proficiency below the ICAO language proficiency requirement. Levels 5 and 6 describe Extended and Expert levels, at levels of proficiency more advanced than the minimum required Standard. As a whole, the scale will serve as benchmarks for training and testing, and in assisting candidates to attain the ICAO Operational Level (Level 4).*

Source: *Personnel Licensing Annex 1 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation*