

English Language Proficiency

Effective and efficient radiotelephony is not just a prerequisite to ensure safety in the air, it is also the key to moving large amounts of traffic through what has become congested airspace in recent times.

Statistics published by ICAO indicate that during the period 1976 to 2000, over 1100 people lost their lives worldwide in aviation accidents where a lack of understanding of the English language was a contributing factor. Accordingly, all new Pilot, Air Traffic Control, and Flight Service Operator licences issued after 5 March 2008 will require an English Language Proficiency credit.

For domestic operations, all licences issued prior to 5 March 2008 do not require the holder to undertake a language proficiency test, but there will be no endorsement on the holder's licence.

Assessment

Language proficiency assessments are used to evaluate a candidate's knowledge of the English language that is used in everyday aviation radiotelephony.

The assessment is set in a broad aviation-related context, in which applicants are expected to be able to explain common and less common aviation-related tasks.

Telephone Interviews

Pilot applicants who are proficient in English are advised to sit the Level 6 Proficiency Demonstration. This is a supervised automated test which is conducted over the telephone. It is used as a quick and efficient test for those who speak English as a first language, or as a very proficient second language.

The only outcomes are "Level 6" or "not determined". If you talk your way through this 10 minute interview and meet level six proficiency, ASL will issue you with a Result Notice which you can forward to the CAA to have a licence endorsement issued.

A "not determined" result on the first attempt will require the candidate to undergo a Formal Language Evaluation. Pilot applicants who are not proficient in English are advised to bypass the Proficiency Demonstration and sit the Formal Language Evaluation. This will save them time and money.

The Formal Language Evaluation takes approximately 30 minutes, and is also supervised and delivered over the telephone. It includes a semi-automated section and a live interview.

To book a Proficiency Demonstration or a Formal Language Evaluation, contact Aviation Services Limited, www.aviation.co.nz.

Levels of Proficiency

In the Formal Language Evaluation, applicants will be assessed and graded to one of the six levels of language proficiency. Levels one to three require an applicant to undergo further English tuition before the endorsement can be issued. An applicant who reaches either level four or five is seen to have reached an 'operationally safe' standard, and an endorsement will be issued with some conditions to their validity. An applicant who demonstrates:

- Level 4 (Operational) will be issued a credit that is valid for three years from the date of assessment.
- Level 5 (Extended) will be issued a credit that is valid for six years from the date of assessment.

Once an applicant reaches level 6 (Expert) the endorsement is issued for the lifetime of the holder.

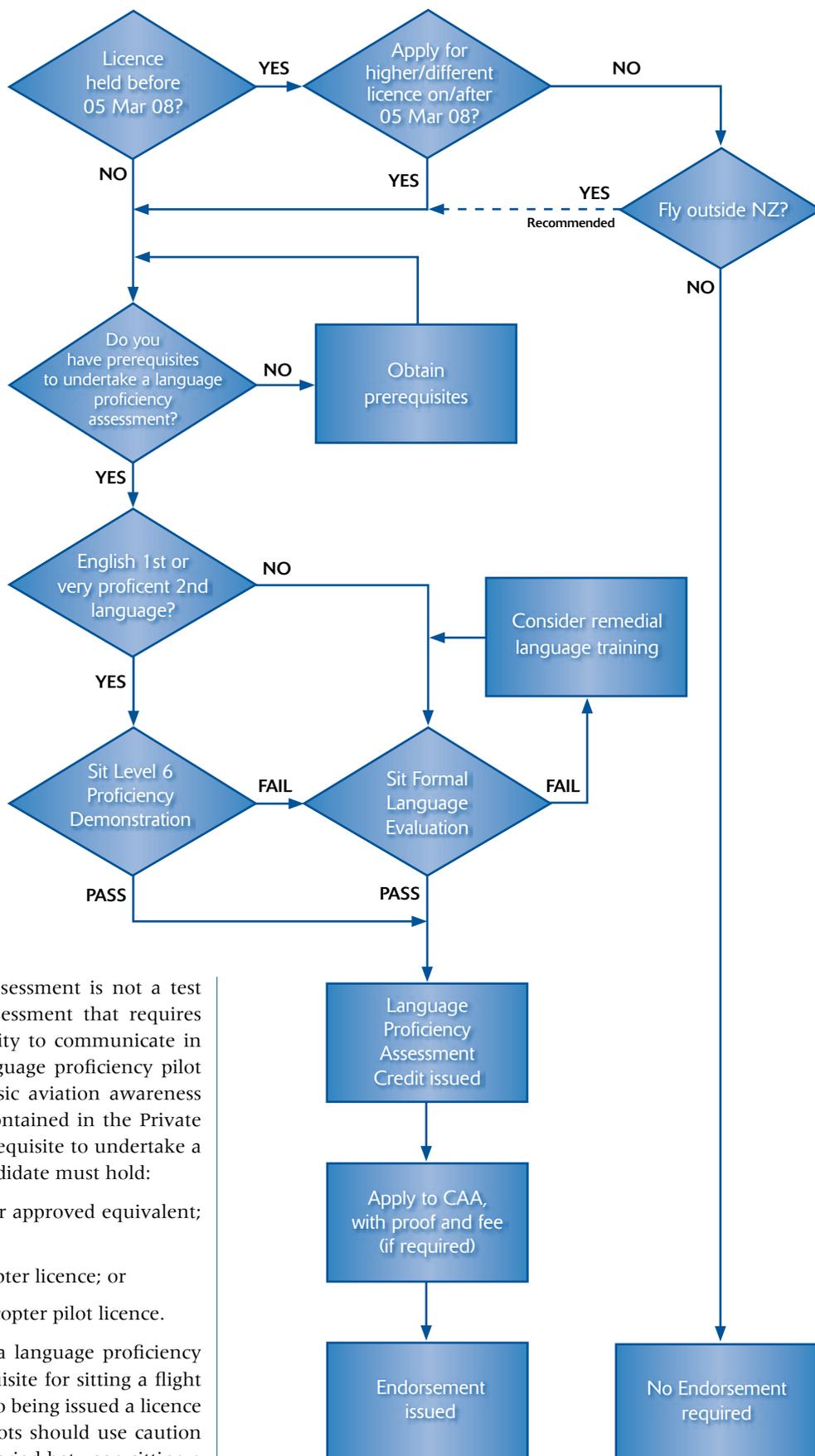
Prerequisites

The Aviation Language Proficiency Assessment is not a test of theoretical knowledge. It is an assessment that requires an applicant to demonstrate their ability to communicate in an aviation context. Therefore all language proficiency pilot candidates are expected to have a basic aviation awareness broadly covering the subject matter contained in the Private Pilot Licence theory syllabus. As a prerequisite to undertake a language proficiency assessment, a candidate must hold:

- A PPL written examination credit, or approved equivalent; or
- A New Zealand aeroplane, or helicopter licence; or
- A current foreign aeroplane, or helicopter pilot licence.

Currently it is proposed that holding a language proficiency assessment credit will not be a prerequisite for sitting a flight test, however, it will be a prerequisite to being issued a licence after 5 March 2008. Consequently, pilots should use caution when eating into the 3 month grace period between sitting a flight test and being issued a licence.

The endorsement can be processed onto your licence for no additional fee as part of the licence issue process. If you wish to have a language proficiency endorsement processed at any other time, you should complete and submit an *Application for Amendment to a Pilot Licence* form with the appropriate licence amendment fee.



For further information on English Language Proficiency endorsements see the CAA web site, "Quick Links – Advisory Circulars – AC61–1 Pilot licences and ratings". ■