

# Information Leaflet 2021



PAN PAN

TEST OF ENGLISH FOR AVIATION



# A TEST OF PLAIN ENGLISH IN AN AVIATION CONTEXT FOR LICENSING PURPOSES

Approved by CAO IRI

@ Civil Aviation Technology College



## RECORD OF AMENDMENTS

[illegible]



## Introduction

Having worked in an operational environment as a pilot or an air traffic controller for many years using ICAO standard phraseology every day, you might start wondering why you need to take this test. “Standard phraseology, however, cannot address all of the non-routine, abnormal or, occasionally, emergency situations that occur, nor is it sufficient to convey additional information about any situation such as reasons for a delay, the state of a sick passenger, the weather situation, the nature of a failure, or an obstacle on the runway.” (ICAO Circular 323, 3.8.3)

The requirement for air traffic controllers and pilots to demonstrate their proficiency in English was introduced in 2008 by ICAO. The language proficiency requirements were introduced as the result of investigation reports of a series of severe incidents and accidents in which poor communication or a lack of language skills were contributing factors.

The PAN PAN Test of English for Aviation has been designed and developed specifically to meet the ICAO LPRs used for aeronautical radiotelephony communications pursuant to CAO IRI Aircrew Regulation -FCL.055 and CAD 5001(Air Traffic Controller Licence). The test is conducted at Civil Aviation Technology College through a method of assessment approved by the Civil Aviation Organisation of IR.Iran; the examiners have been designated and certified by CAO IRI. The test is constructed to assess your ability in using plain English in the context of aeronautical communication as well as your ability to move seamlessly between standard phraseology and plain English when phraseology does not serve the intended purpose. It is worth noting that this is a test of your ability to communicate in English effectively, and not a test of your operational knowledge or airmanship skills.



## Test Modules

There are two modules of the PAN PAN Test of English for Aviation; the **Effective Communication Module**, and the **Expert Module** (Level 6). The former assesses language proficiency at ICAO levels 2, 3, 4, and 5. If you wish to sit the latter, you must first demonstrate your proficiency by passing the Effective Communication Module at level 5. You can apply for the Expert module within 6 months of your exam date.

## Test Versions

There are **3** specific versions that have been designed for **ATCOs**, **IR Pilots** (i.e. Instrument Rating holders/ applicants), and **Helicopter Pilots**. Although a test of plain language and not a test of operational procedures or technical knowledge, it is not recommended for *ab-initio* pilots and ATCOs.

## Assessment

The rating team consists of two qualified examiners- an **interlocutor** and a **rater**. The interlocutor, who is a trained examiner with experience in radiotelephony communications, will conduct the test. In all parts of the test, you will only communicate with the interlocutor. The rater, however, acts as an observer/assessor and does not take part in the interaction. Once the test is done and you have left the test room, the two examiners assess your language proficiency in all the 6 criteria (Pronunciation, Structure, Vocabulary, Fluency, Comprehension, and Interaction) using the **ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale** (Attachment A to Annex 1), and the **Holistic Descriptors** (Appendix 1 to Annex 1). It is the **LOWEST** of these 6 marks which decides the overall score. A senior rater, who is assigned by the supervisor, would be consulted in case of divergent overall scores. You will be informed of the outcome within 1 week.



Despite the fact that PAN PAN examiners have an operational background either as a pilot or controller, there are no extra marks to be gained from talking about correct operational procedures. Equally, nothing is lost by not knowing about a particular area of operations.

## Registration

Before taking the test, you must register online at <http://st.catc.ac.ir/spcatc/lprexam> and book your exam date and slot time. To complete your registration, you will need to pay the test fee online.

## On Arrival

On the day of the exam, you need to show up half an hour in time. Upon arrival, the clerical staff will verify your identity; you can only use these forms of valid photo-identification; either your national ID card or passport. (If you fail to produce sufficient ID on the day of exam, you can NOT take the test.) Then, you will be asked to fill out an application form. You are also required to submit a recent photo of yourself ( standard-size 3\*4) which will be attached to the form.

Remember that you are not allowed to take anything except your identification into the examination room. When your slot time arrives, the staff will store your belongings including your bag, mobile phone, smartwatch, any recording devices etc. Then you will be shown to your test room. The interlocutor will introduce himself to you, and you will take a seat. Then the test will begin. At the start of the test, your identity will be verified once again by the interlocutor.

## Test Materials Archive

The test is recorded for audit purposes. It will be used if the examiners assign different overall scores to you or in case you appeal against your test result. Your personal information and test documentation will be archived. The personal data collected during



the test may be used for rater training, research and development purposes. These data might be disclosed to CAO IRI pursuant to Aircrew Regulation - Article 11b.

## Appeals Procedure

If you wish to appeal against your overall score, you need to complete the 'Enquiry on Results' form and submit it to us within 4 weeks of your exam date. Once we receive your form and payment, the appropriate test materials will be sent to two different raters to be re-marked. You will be informed of the outcome of your appeal within 1 week.

## Rescheduling & Cancellation

You may postpone your test at no additional cost if you notify the centre up to 7 days before the exam date. You may also cancel your test 7 days in advance and receive a full refund.

CATC reserves the right to cancel an examination session in the event of an emergency, an act of God, an insufficient number of candidates (less than 6 people), or if no examiner is available on that day. Candidates will either have their fee refunded or will be registered for another available exam date, at their convenience. The test centre will inform candidates of any change as soon as possible.



## Effective Communication Module Structure

There are three parts to this module and may take up to 34 minutes to complete.

### PART 1: RADIOTELEPHONY ROLE-PLAY (12-14 min)

You will take the role of the pilot or ATCO in **2 role-play scenarios**. The scenarios are based on departure, en-route or arrival phases of flight. Remember, you will only be assessed on your language proficiency, and not your skills as a pilot or ATCO.

At the beginning of each scenario, the interlocutor will give you instructions for this part of the test. You will be provided with some essential **basic information** about the scenario such as flight number, aircraft type, departure airport, destination airport, flight level, position, RWY-in-use etc. Also, you will be shown a task card containing **instructions to guide you** through the role-play. The examiner will give you **1 minute** to look at this information and get ready. When the role-play task begins, you communicate directly with the interlocutor who takes the opposite role (ATCO or pilot). You communicate by **responding to the interlocutor's messages** (speaking prompts), and by using the task card. Remember that part 1 tests **voice-only communication**, so there is **no eye-contact** between you and the examiner.

This part of the test is testing your ability to use plain English on the radio in non-routine situations. This includes your ability to:

- ◆ communicate effectively on common, concrete and work-related topics with accuracy and clarity;
- ◆ use appropriate communicative strategies to exchange messages and to recognise and resolve misunderstandings (e.g. to check, confirm, or clarify information) in a work-related context;





- ◆ handle successfully and with relative ease the linguistic challenges presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events; and
- ◆ use a pronunciation which is intelligible to the aeronautical community.

During the role-play scenarios, you need to read back the interlocutor's ATC calls (if you are a pilot) or hear back the interlocutor's pilot calls (if you are an ATCO) and use standard ICAO phraseology. However, you are neither assessed on your phraseology, nor on your skills as a pilot or controller. The examiners will only assess your plain English in the non-routine situations presented. You may ask for repetition or clarification if you do not understand something.

At the end of the first scenario, the interlocutor will move on to the second role-play scenario and you will repeat all of the tasks above.

At the **end of the second scenario**, there is a face-to-face task in which you need to give a **verbal report on the events** in the **second task** using plain English to the interlocutor, who is now playing the role of your supervisor/ DMD of operations. You can still use the task card and may be asked to clarify some points in your report.



# Sample Role-Play Task Card (IR Pilots)

## Candidate's Role-play Task Card

Problem: Crack in Windshield  
ATC Unit: Neverland ACC  
Callsign: ABC 493  
Type: B737  
OIBK to OIFM  
FL 320  
Position: 30 NM North of OISS

Declare <b>urgency</b> , state NATURE, need to descent to FL260.	
	ATCO
Need time to state intention.	
	ATCO
Have to land at Shiraz aerodrome.	
	ATCO
Need to lose weight.	
	ATCO
Have to dump fuel (5mins).	
	ATCO
Declare <b>emergency</b> , inform ATC (emergency descent to 10000 ft ).	
	ATCO
Request initial approach fix.	
	ATCO
Have to land overweight.	
	ATCO
Ask for an ambulance; a passenger has fainted!	
	ATCO
Explain what you mean by "fainted".	



## PART 2: PICTURE DESCRIPTION & DISCUSSION (6-10 min)

This is a face-to-face task with the interlocutor in which you are shown an image of a non-routine situation in an aviation context on the computer screen and asked to describe it. After that, the interlocutor will show you a second picture to describe. This task tests your ability to describe two work-related situations in plain English at length. When you are describing the images, try to extend your description (anything between 30 to 60 seconds on each picture), and give as much relevant information as you can. You have 30 seconds to think about your answer before you start describing each one. This task tests your ability to:

- ◆ Speak at length about work-related topics;
- ◆ Use a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary.

When you have finished the second description, you might be asked some **further questions** about the topics presented in the pictures to push you to the limit of your ability. When answering these questions, try to give full answers and give as much information as possible. You may ask for clarification if you do not understand a question.



## Sample Picture Description

Picture 1



Picture 2



## Sample Discussion

1. Which situation would you consider to be more serious? Why?
2. What could have caused the incident in each situation?
3. What effect would each situation have on operations?
4. What should happen next in each situation?
5. What could be done, if any, to avoid such incidents?



### PART 3: LISTENING COMPREHENSION (6-10 min)

In this last part of the test, your understanding of radiotelephony communications in routine and non-routine situations is being evaluated. The recordings are all based on authentic material and range from short standard pilot/controller transmissions to longer communications in which air traffic controllers and pilots deal with non-routine or unusual situations on the frequency. This part of the test lasts approximately 6-10 minutes.

Section 1: (**ATCOs only**) You will listen to an **ATC route clearance** given by a controller. You will then **hear the readback** given by the pilot and must decide if the readback was correct. If not, you should be able to report the mistakes. If you miss anything at the first attempt, you can ask for repetition. Remember that you cannot hear the recording a third time. It is highly recommended that you **take notes** during the listening.

Section 1: (**Pilots only**) You will listen to an **ATIS broadcast** and report all the key information. If you miss anything at the first attempt, you can listen again. Remember that you cannot hear the recording a third time. It is highly recommended that you **take notes** during the listening.

Section 2: (**ATCOs & Pilots**) You will listen to a **non-routine transmission between a pilot and an air traffic controller**. Then you need to give a spoken report of the non-routine event(s) from the recording. It is highly recommended that you **take notes** during the listening. You will give this report face to face with the examiner. The examiner will not ask you any questions about the recording, so you should try to give as many details as you can in your report.



You should try to include:

- ✓ The flight number(s) of the relevant aircraft;
- ✓ Detailed information about the problem(s) or the event(s);
- ✓ Any actions and/or intentions of the flight crew or the air traffic controller;
- ✓ Any instructions, or requests; and
- ✓ Any other information you think is important.

If you miss anything at the first attempt, **you can listen again**.  
Remember that you cannot hear the recording a third time.



## Expert Module

“It should also be noted that the descriptors for Expert Level 6 exceed the demands of aeronautical radiotelephony communications. Level 6 has a very wide coverage since it is intended to account for most first-language speakers with native or native-like proficiency as well as second- or foreign-language speakers with a high level of proficiency. Attainment of Level 6 should be considered as being beyond the realistic expectations of most second- or foreign-language learners. Furthermore, it is not an indispensable requirement for successful aeronautical communication.” (ICAO Doc 9835, 4.5.9)

Since Level 6 descriptors in the ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale refer to linguistic and paralinguistic features of language proficiency that go beyond the work-related context, formal assessment of Level 6 would involve test tasks and contexts that go beyond the subject matter of radiotelephony communications.

Having demonstrated your language proficiency by passing the Effective Communication Module at level 5, you can now apply for the Expert module no later than 6 months of your exam date. This test is meant to assess your English proficiency at an advanced level in 6 criteria using the ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale:

- ✓ Pronunciation: Pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation almost never interfere with ease of understanding;
- ✓ Structure: Both basic and complex grammatical structures and sentence patterns are consistently well controlled;
- ✓ Lexical Resource: 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;



- ✓ **Fluency:** Able to speak at length with a natural, effortless flow. Varies speech flow for stylistic effect, e.g. to emphasise a point. Uses appropriate discourse markers and connectors spontaneously;
- ✓ **Comprehension:** Comprehension is consistently accurate in nearly all contexts and includes comprehension of linguistic and cultural subtleties;
- ✓ **Interaction:** Interacts with ease in nearly all situations. Is sensitive to verbal and non-verbal cues and responds to them appropriately.

The rating team consists of three Level 6 examiners- an **interlocutor** and **2 raters**. The interlocutor will only conduct the test. The raters, however, will not be present. Once the test is done, the recording will be sent to 2 independent expert examiners to assess your language proficiency in all the six criteria using the **ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale and Explanation of Rating Scale Descriptors** (ICAO Doc 9835, 4.6). A senior rater, who is assigned by the supervisor, would be consulted in case of divergent overall scores. It is the **LOWEST** of these 6 marks which decides the overall score. You might again be awarded level 5 or live up to level 6.

### Expert Module Structure

There are four parts to this module and may take up to 25 minutes to complete.

#### PART 1: Interview (3-4 min)

The interlocutor will introduce him or herself and ask you to introduce yourself and confirm your identity. The interlocutor will ask you general questions on familiar topics, e.g. your work/ studies, your





interest in aviation, your English background and so on. This section should help you relax and talk naturally.

### PART 2: Monologue (4-5)

The interlocutor will give you a task card which asks you to talk about a particular job experience, including points to include in your monologue. You will be given one minute to prepare and make notes. You will then be asked to talk for 2 minutes on the topic on your own. You will not be interrupted during this time, so it is important to keep talking for the full length until the interlocutor asks you to stop. In the end, the interlocutor will ask you some questions on the same topic. In this part, the interlocutor wants to see how well you can speak at length on a given topic using appropriate language, communicate information, and organise your ideas logically.

### PART 3: Discussion (6-8)

The interlocutor will get involved in a two-way discussion with you on global issues related to Aviation. These questions are designed to give you an opportunity to discuss more abstract ideas. The examiner wants to see how well you can express and justify your opinions using sophisticated language, analyse, discuss and speculate about issues and organise your ideas coherently.

### PART 4: Listening Comprehension (6-8)

The interlocutor will play two aviation-related recordings, e.g. a report, a talk, an interview or a discussion between aviation specialists. After each recording, you will be asked to give a detailed verbal report. It is highly recommended that you take notes during the listening. The examiner may also ask you some questions. You can listen again if you miss anything at the first attempt, but this will affect your score!