



Circular Técnica

CT-320-02

SUBJECT: TEST FOR ENGLISH PROFICIENCY RATING

DATE: 09/01/2026

1. OBJECTIVE.

The purpose of this Technical Circular is to provide information to São Tomé and Príncipe aviation community about the English Proficiency Test associated with the ICAO Language Proficiency Standards. It also describes the Aviation Language Proficiency Test (ALPT) requirements and provides procedures and guidance to individuals wishing to complete a language proficiency assessment.

2. APPLICABILITY

This circular is applicable for flight crew, flight operations officer, air traffic controllers and English Proficiency Examiners.

3. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- a) It is intended that the following reference materials be used in conjunction with this document:
 - i) RACSTP Parte 66.1, Subparte 66.1.B.205
 - ii) RACSTP Parte 66.3, Subparte 66.3.E.305;
 - iii) IT-300-27 - Programa de exame para Examinador Aeronáutico de Proficiência de Língua
 - iv) Doc. 9835 - ICAO Guidance Manual for the Implementation of the Language proficiency requirements
 - v) Form F-320-01;
 - vi) Form F-320-50 - Aviation Language Proficiency Test Report Form
 - vii) Form F-320-33 - Authorization for Knowledge Test

4- APPLICATION

- a) The applicant must apply to the National Institute of Civil Aviation (INAC).
- b) The application shall be submitted to the INAC at least thirty (30) days before the date of the test.
- c) The applicant shall fill the application form F-320-01.
- d) The admission process will be delayed if the applicant submits incomplete packets, or fails to submit both packets.
- e) Proof of payment of the corresponding fee.

5- DATE AND LOCATION OF THE TEST

- a. The INAC will publish in its website at www.inac.net a schedule containing the date and locations of the test.
- b. Pilots and air traffic controllers who are required to take the test should contact the INAC to make arrangements to take the test. If the date is cancelled all applicant will be informed immediately.
- c. Before the test the candidate shall present to the testers the Form F-32-033 – Authorization for Knowledge Test.

6- TIME OF THE TEST

The test consists of up to 15 responses and takes about 15 minutes to complete.



7- SCORE OF THE TEST

The overall language proficiency rating will reflect the level reached in the candidate's weakest area. Failure to comply with descriptors in one category at a particular level indicates that the next lower proficiency level should be awarded. For instance, a candidate who is rated Level 4 for the category of Pronunciation but is rated Level 5 for all other categories will be given an overall proficiency rating of Level 4. Hence an individual must demonstrate proficiency at Level 5 in all categories in order to receive a Level 5, and so on for other higher levels.

8. TEST PREPARATION

- a) There is no one book or course that prepares the applicant for taking such a test. However, the English Language Institute (ELI) does offer specific preparatory courses for Aviation English.
- b) The ELI provides specific information (how many hours of instruction, type of courses, etc.) However, the applicant needs to contact the INAC for more detailed information.

9. ORGANIZATION OF THE TEST

Description: The test is conducted by two testers, one a qualified linguist and the other a subject matter expert (Air Traffic Controller/Pilot), who are authorised by the INAC.

10. THE TEST FORMAT

- a) Language proficiency assessments are to evaluate the plain English language used in effective aviation radiotelephony and so are broader than ICAO phraseologies. The test is a proficiency test of speaking and listening which requires face-to-face contact between tester and test-taker, or semi-direct contact, through recorded speaking prompts and recorded responses that are analyzed later by the tester.
- b) It is scored using a rating scale and holistic descriptors developed by ICAO and detailed in STPCAR Part 66.1 NI: 66.1.B.205, STPCAR Part 66.3 NI: 66.3.E.305. It tests language in a broader context beyond the use of ICAO phraseologies. The test is designed to measure language proficiency in an aviation context.
- c) A trained test administrator or Examiner conducts the Aviation Language Proficiency Test. The Examiner will present several different scenarios and ask the candidate to respond as if he or she were part of the scenario ("role-play").
- d) The ALPT will assess:
 - i) Listening comprehension
 - A. Speaking ability
 - B. Responses to different scenarios
- a) Candidates are evaluated on 6 areas of their verbal communications, Pronunciation, Structure, Vocabulary, Fluency, Comprehension and Interactions.
- b) The depth of the evaluation is defined by the holistic descriptors and the standards for Operational Level 4 as detailed in STPCAR Part 66.1 NI: 66.1.B.205, STPCAR Part 66.3 NI: 66.3.E.305.
- c) More detailed guidance can be found in the "Manual on the Implementation of the ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements – Doc 9835-AN/453".
- d) This manual addresses the various training and evaluation issues related to the implementation of the ICAO language proficiency standards.
- e) The test comprises the following four segments:
 - i) **Part 1: Introduction** (2 minutes) In this segment, the testers will ask the candidate a few questions on his personal self and work. The aim is to establish rapport with the candidate and serves as a warm-up for the next two segments.



- ii) **Part 2: Role Play – Standard Phraseology** (5 minutes) In this segment, the candidate will be tasked to play the role of a pilot/air traffic controller while a tester will play the role of a co-pilot or air traffic controller for a given flight situation. The tester will interact with the candidate using standard phraseology based on the scenario. The aim is to test the candidate's ability to use standard phraseology in a typical flight situation.
 - iii) **Part 3: Situational Talk – Natural Language** (5 minutes) In this segment, the candidate would be asked to explain in natural language how he would react in a particular situation, such as a medical emergency during flight, or engine fire prior to descent. The tester will engage the candidate by posing the selected situation and may prompt the candidate, if necessary, during the discussion. The aim is to test the candidate's use of natural language rather than to seek a correct response to the given situation.
 - iv) **Part 4: Closing (3 minutes)** In the final segment, the tester will engage the candidate on an aviation-related topic before bringing the interview to an end. The focus of this segment is on the use of natural language.
- f) The conduct of the test will be carried out using the AAC Form F-320-50 (Aviation Language Proficiency Test Report Form).
 - g) The interview will be recorded by the testers and stored for a period of at least 3 years from the date of testing. Records of such interviews should be made available to the Authority upon request.

11. HOLISTIC DESCRIPTORS

- a) The assessment of a person's language proficiency level is in accordance with a set of holistic descriptors and a rating scale contained in STPCAR Part 66.1 NI: 66.1.B.205, STPCAR Part 66.3 NI: 66.3.E.305.
- b) The rating scale comprises six levels of language proficiency ranging from Pre-elementary (Level 1) to Expert (Level 6) across six areas of linguistic description: pronunciation, structure, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and interactions. (Refer to Appendix 1 for ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale).
- c) Proficient speakers shall:
 - i) Communicate effectively in voice-only (telephone/radiotelephone) and in face-to-face situations;
 - ii) Communicate on common, concrete and work-related topics with accuracy and clarity;
 - iii) Use appropriate communicative strategies to exchange messages and to recognize and resolve misunderstandings (e.g. to check, confirm, or clarify information) in a general or work-related context;
 - iv) 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; and
 - v) Use a dialect or accent which is intelligible to the aeronautical community.

12. ICAO RATING SCALE FOR OPERATIONAL LEVEL 4

- a) A speaker will be rated at Operational Level 4 if the following criteria are met:
 - i) **Pronunciation:**
(Assumes a dialect and/or accent intelligible to the aeronautical community.)
Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are influenced by the first language or regional variation but only sometimes interfere with ease of understanding.
 - ii) **Structure:**
(Relevant grammatical structures and sentence patterns are determined by language functions appropriate to the task.)
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.



iii) **Vocabulary:**

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.

iv) **Fluency:**

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.

v) **Comprehension:**

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.

vi) **Interactions:**

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.

13. VALIDITY OF THE TEST

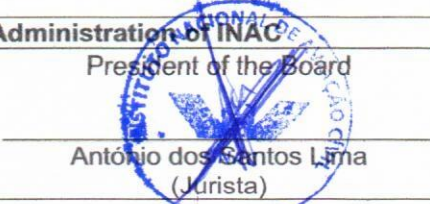
- b) The English language proficiency shall be formally evaluated at intervals in accordance with an individual's demonstrated proficiency level as follows:
- i) Those demonstrating language proficiency at the Operational Level (Level 4) shall be evaluated at intervals not greater than 3 years;
 - ii) Those demonstrating language proficiency at the Extended Level (Level 5) shall be evaluated at intervals not greater than 6 years; and
 - iii) Those demonstrating language proficiency at the Expert Level (Level 6) shall be exempt from further language evaluation.
- c) Pilot licence holders who do not have evidence of having their language assessed may not have their licences accepted by other ICAO Contracting States after 05 March 2008, and so those who intend to operate in foreign airspace are strongly recommended to obtain a language proficiency endorsement.

14. ENDORSEMENT OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVEL

A pilot/air traffic controller who has been assessed to at least Level 4 proficiency level may apply to the INAC to have his proficiency level endorsed on his licence. The language proficiency level, date and date of validity will be annotated in Part XIII.

15. RENEWAL OF LICENCE FOR PILOTS NOT CERTIFIED AT LEVEL 6

A holder of a pilot/air traffic controller licence who has not been certified at Level 6 must ensure that he is re-tested in accordance with the intervals stipulated in STPCAR Part 66.1 NI: 66.1.B.205, STPCAR Part 66.3 NI: 66.3.E.305. He must make his own arrangements to take the test in order to be assessed for his language proficiency, and to submit to the INAC, using Forms F-320-01 (Application Form For Licences, Ratings, Authorizations, Certificates, Validation Certificates And Conversion) and Form F-320-50 (Aviation Language Proficiency Test Report Form), the results of his re- test in order to have his licence endorsed with the new language proficiency level.

Approved by: Board of Administration of INAC	
Date:	President of the Board
<u>04 / 02 / 20</u>	 António dos Santos Lima (Jurista)

APPENDIX 1: ICAO LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY RATING SCALE

(1) Pre-elementary Level (Level 1):

- (i) Pronunciation: Performs at a level below the Elementary Level.
- (ii) Structure: Performs at a level below the Elementary Level.
- (iii) Vocabulary: Performs at a level below the Elementary Level.
- (iv) Fluency: Performs at a level below the Elementary Level.
- (v) Comprehension: Performs at a level below the Elementary Level.
- (vi) Interactions: Performs at a level below the Elementary Level.

(2) Elementary Level (Level 2):

- (i) Pronunciation: Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are heavily influenced by the first language or regional variation and usually interfere with ease of understanding.
- (ii) Structure: Shows only limited control of a few simple memorized grammatical structures and sentence patterns.
- (iii) Vocabulary: Limited vocabulary range consisting only of isolated words and memorized phrases.
- (iv) Fluency: 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.
- (v) Comprehension: Comprehension is limited to isolated, memorized phrases when they are carefully and slowly articulated.
- (vi) Interactions: Response time is slow and often inappropriate. Interaction is limited to simple routine exchanges.

(3) Pre-operational Level (Level 3):

- (i) Pronunciation: Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are influenced by the first language or regional variation and frequently interfere with ease of understanding.
- (ii) Structure: Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns associated with predictable situations are not always well controlled. Errors frequently interfere with meaning.
- (iii) Vocabulary: 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.
- (iv) Fluency: 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.
- (v) Comprehension: 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.
- (vi) Interaction: 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.

(4) Operational Level (Level 4):

- (i) Pronunciation: Pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation are influenced by the first language or regional variation but only sometimes interfere with understanding.
- (ii) Structure: 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.
- (iii) Vocabulary: 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.



- (iv) Fluency: 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.
- (v) Comprehension: 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.
- (vi) Interactions: 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.

(5) Extended Level (Level 5):

- (i) Pronunciation: Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation, though influenced by the first language or regional variation, rarely interfere with ease of understanding.
- (ii) Structure: Basic grammatical structures and sentence patterns are consistently well controlled. Complex structures are attempted but with errors which sometimes interfere with meaning.
- (iii) Vocabulary: Vocabulary range and accuracy are sufficient to communicate effectively on common, concrete, and work related topics. Paraphrases consistently and successfully. Vocabulary is sometimes idiomatic.
- (iv) Fluency: 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.
- (v) Comprehension: 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.
- (vi) Interactions: Responses are immediate, appropriate, and informative. Manages the speaker/listener relationship effectively.

(6) Expert Level (Level 6):

- (i) Pronunciation: Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation, though possibly influenced by the first language or regional variation, almost never interfere with ease of understanding.
- (ii) Structure: Both basic and complex grammatical structures and sentence patterns are consistently well controlled.
- (iii) Vocabulary: 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.
- (iv) Fluency: 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.
- (v) Comprehension: Comprehension is consistently accurate in nearly all contexts and includes comprehension of linguistic and cultural subtleties.
- (vi) Interactions: Interacts with ease in nearly all situations. Is sensitive to verbal and non-verbal cues, and responds to them appropriately.

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