

ICAO RATING SCALE

The Six Skill Areas of ICAO Language Proficiency

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THE SIX SKILL AREAS

PART II: ICAO LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY RATING SCALE (Attachment A)

1.1 Expert, extended and operational levels

LEVEL	PRONUNCIATION	STRUCTURE	VOCABULARY	FLUENCY	COMPREHENSION	INTERACTION
Expert 6	Assumes a dialect and/or accent intelligible to the aeronautical community.	Relevant grammatical structures and sentence patterns are determined by language functions appropriate to the task.	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.		
Extended 5	Pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation, though influenced by the first language or regional variation, rarely 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 common, concrete, and work-related topics. Paraphrases consistently and successfully. Vocabulary is idiomatic.	Able to speak at length with relative ease on familiar topics but may not vary speech flow and use stylistic devices. May not make use of appropriate discourse markers or connectors.		

- The ICAO Rating Scale covers the six skill areas of language performance: pronunciation, structure, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and interaction.
- For each skill, your performance is rated according to 6 levels. Levels 1 to 3 are considered unfit for use in aviation. Level 3 is therefore called the pre-operational level.
- Only levels 4 and above are acceptable. Level 4 is called the operational level, 5 the extended and 6 the expert level.

THE RATING SCALE – PRE-OPERATIONAL LEVEL 3

Pronunciation	Structure	Vocabulary	Fluency	Comprehension	Interactions
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, and work-related topics but range is limited and word choice often inappropriate. Is often unable to paraphrase successfully when lacking vocabulary.	Produces stretches of language but phrasing and pauses are often inappropriate. Hesitations or slowness in language processing may prevent effective communication. Can make limited use of discourse markers or connectors. 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 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.

Source: ICAO Doc 9835 AN/453, “Manual on the Implementation of ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements”, Second Edition, 2010

THE RATING SCALE – OPERATIONAL LEVEL 4



Pronunciation	Structure	Vocabulary	Fluency	Comprehension	Interactions
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.

Source: ICAO Doc 9835 AN/453, “Manual on the Implementation of ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements”, Second Edition, 2010

THE RATING SCALE – EXTENDED LEVEL 5

Pronunciation	Structure	Vocabulary	Fluency	Comprehension	Interactions
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.

Source: ICAO Doc 9835 AN/453, “Manual on the Implementation of ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements”, Second Edition, 2010

THE RATING SCALE – EXPERT LEVEL 6

Pronunciation	Structure	Vocabulary	Fluency	Comprehension	Interactions
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.

Source: ICAO Doc 9835 AN/453, “Manual on the Implementation of ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements”, Second Edition, 2010



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