

Version 1.1

Edition date 08 February 2018

ELPAC

English Language Proficiency for Aeronautical Communication
ELPAC paper 2 test specifications

ELPAC is developed in cooperation with:

ENOVATE

ENOVATE is responsible for the technical infrastructure to host and operate the ELPAC test including the provision of technical support to users on request.

Zürich University
of Applied Sciences



ZHAW is responsible for the English language and linguistic aspects of the ELPAC test including the evaluation of ELPAC test items, test validity, test format and ELPAC examiner training.

ELPAC ATC Paper 2 Oral Interaction – Test Specifications

General Matters

- All three phases of the oral performance shall be recorded.

General Purpose of Paper 2

- To determine if the test-taker complies with the minimum requirements of ICAO (operational level 4).
- To determine if the test-taker meets the ICAO requirements for level 4 and 5.

Specific Purpose of Paper 2

The test-taker must be able to understand communication in routine (30%) and non-routine (70%) situations between pilots and air traffic controllers and between air traffic controllers and other air traffic controllers, in which the pilot or controller:

1. Prepares or provokes actions:
 - a. request approval or clearance
 - b. gives or denies approval,
 - c. gives or denies instructions,
 - d. requests the controller to do something,

The following functions are also characteristic of aeronautical communication but shall not be explicitly tested:

- e. offers to do something,
 - f. accepts or refuses to do something,
 - g. requests advice,
 - h. gives advice,
 - i. makes suggestions on what to do,
 - j. undertakes to do something,
 - k. refuses to do something.
2. Shares Information:
 - a. request information,
 - b. give information,
 - c. requests reasons or purposes
 - d. gives reasons or purposes.

3. Manages the pilot – air traffic controller relationship:

The following functions are also characteristic of aeronautical communication but shall not be explicitly tested:

- a. thanks and responds to thanks,
 - b. apologises and responds to apologies,
 - c. expresses concerns,
 - d. reassures and encourages,
 - e. complains and reprimands,
 - f. accepts or rejects complaints or reprimands
4. Manages the communication
- a. reads back and acknowledges controller's and pilot's messages,
 - b. checks, confirms and clarifies.

Criteria of Assessment

- The test-taker's performance is evaluated using the ELPAC assessor sheet.

Pass Mark

- The test-taker is marked in every task and for every one of the six descriptors in the ICAO rating scale.
- The test-taker's final mark is the lowest level they achieve in any one of the six criteria.

Assessment Team

- The paper 2 assessment is conducted by team of two persons: one operational expert and one English language expert.
- Both assessors must undergo training to become accredited ELPAC assessors.
- Both assessors must undergo annual refresher training.

Assessment Location

The assessment shall be conducted in a room that is quiet and where there are no distractions.

Assessment Materials

- A clock or watch for time keeping.
- A pen for the test-taker and a pen each for the two assessors.
- A screen to separate the interlocutor and the test-taker in task 1.
- A recording device to record the performance.
- The time keeping device and the recording device shall not be a mobile phone.
- The complete test documents consist of:
 - a) the ICAO rating scale for the operational expert and the English language expert,
 - b) the assessor sheet in duplicate.
 - c) the interlocutor framework for the English language expert,
 - d) the script for the operational expert,
- The ICAO rating scale document:
 - a) consists of two pages,
 - b) the front page contains the rating scale,
 - c) the second page contains a description of the adverbs of frequency used in the rating scale,
 - d) the document shall be printed twice,
 - e) the document shall be printed double-sided.
- The assessor sheet document:
 - a) consists of three pages,
 - b) the first and second page contain the assessor sheet,
 - c) the third page contains the candidate result sheet,
 - d) the document shall be printed once only,
 - e) the document shall be printed one-sided only.
- The interlocutor framework for the English language expert:
 - a) consists of six pages,
 - b) the first four pages contain the instructions and version specific questions,
 - c) the fifth and sixth pages contain the picture to be used in task III,
 - d) the document shall be printed once only,
 - e) the document shall be printed one-sided only.
- The script for the operational expert:
 - a) consists of six pages,
 - b) the first four pages contain the scripts for task I and the questions for task II,
 - c) the fifth and sixth pages contain the chart to be used in task I,
 - d) the document shall be printed once only,
 - e) the document shall be printed one-sided only.
- The test-taker shall not be given any additional, blank sheets of paper to write on.

Task Ia – Simulation of the OPS room

Duration:

- 7 to 8 minutes

Interlocution:

- The interlocutor in phase I is the operational expert.
- The operational expert receives specific training to fulfil the role of the interlocutor in phase I.
- There is no visual contact between the interlocutor and the test-taker.
- The English language expert delivers the instructions.

Speed of delivery:

- for the instructions: 130 to 170 words per minute
- for the interaction in task 1: 100 words per minute

Target Language Use:

The test taker should be able to understand and respond to communications from pilots in routine and non-routine situations in which the pilot or controller:

- a) request approval or clearance,
- b) gives or denies approval,
- c) gives or denies clearances,
- d) gives or denies instructions,
- e) request information,
- f) gives information,
- g) requests reasons or purposes,
- h) reads back,
- i) acknowledges controllers' or pilots' messages,
- j) check, confirm, clarify and correct.

The test-taker shall demonstrate the ability to:

- a) use correct ICAO standard phraseology,
- b) switch between ICAO standard phraseology and Plain English,
- c) respond appropriately to transmissions,
- d) resolve misunderstandings,
- e) negotiate meaning in an unexpected situation,
- f) avoid unclear or ambiguous transmissions,
- g) deal effectively with the pilot – air traffic controller interaction.

Specification:

- The scenario shall be drafted in the paper 1 OPE template.
- There shall be 14 routine and non-routine pilot transmissions in total.
- **7** transmissions focus on routine ICAO standard phraseology – which are referred to as Prepared Pilot Messages (PPM).
- **7** transmissions involve non-routine requests and a precise response – which are referred to as Unexpected Situations (US).
- **1** chart showing the initial traffic situation. There are four aircraft on the chart, including the aircraft which will develop a problem.
- The call-signs that are used are of operational airlines. Preference shall be given to airlines operating globally.
- The call-signs of airlines that are culturally or politically sensitive should be avoided.
- The default name of the aerodrome or sector is 'KANDOU'.
- The chart is of either an airport map, an en route sector, an approach sector, or a tower sector.
- Communication with all the other aircraft must be finished before the air traffic controller has to deal with the non-routine aircraft which has developed an issue.
- The responses by the test-taker are not scripted.
- The test-taker's performance is marked by both the operational expert and the English language expert.
- The English language expert assesses the linguistics aspects of the test taker's performance.
- The operational expert will assess the professional accuracy and appropriateness of the test taker's performance.

Description:

In the scenario there is an aircraft which develops an unusual situation.

Task Ib – Simulation of a Report to Supervisor

Duration:

- 3 to 4 minutes

Interlocution:

- The task is face-to-face.
- The supervisor in task II is the operational expert.
- The operational expert receives specific training to fulfil the role of the supervisor in phase II.
- The English language expert delivers the instructions.

Speed of delivery:

- for the instructions: 130 to 170 words per minute
- for the interaction in task 2: 180 words per minute

Target Language Use:

The test-taker should be able to:

- a) give information,
- b) give reasons,
- c) give the purpose of something,
- d) check, clarify and confirm.

The test-taker shall demonstrate the ability to:

- a) make a report in Plain English
- b) use technical vocabulary correctly,
- c) resolve misunderstandings.

Specifications:

- The scenario shall be drafted using the paper 1 OPE template.
- The report is based on the non-routine situation in task 1 of the oral interaction test.
- There is a key events check list with the **six** key features of the non-routine situation in Phase I.
- There is a list of 7 standard questions and suggestions for follow-up questions.
- The questions are designed to elicit information about the key events from the test-taker.
- The number of questions and suggested follow-ups that is used by the interlocutor is determined by the test-taker's output.
- The test-taker's performance is marked by both the operational expert and the English language expert.

Description:

The test-taker is instructed to give a report to their supervisor on the unusual or unexpected situation which occurred in task I.

Tasks II and III – The Oral Performance Interview

Duration:

5 to 8 minutes.

Interlocution:

- The task is face-to-face.
- The interlocutor in phase III is the English language expert.
- The English Language expert also delivers the instructions.

Speed of delivery:

- for the instructions: 130 to 170 words per minute
- for the interaction in task 3: 180 words per minute

Target Language Use:

- The aim of the task is to determine if the test-taker is proficient at ICAO level 5.
- The task questions are designed to elicit extended speech from the test-taker on topics related to aviation.
- The oral performance interview is designed to assess how test-takers behave when confronted with an unexpected turn of the conversation and having to use unrehearsed language.

The test-taker shall demonstrate the ability:

- a) speculate,
- b) hypothesise,
- c) present an argument,
- d) give an opinion,
- e) evaluate (pros & cons)

in Plain English.

Specifications:

- The questions shall be drafted in the paper 2 interlocutor framework template.
- The first task for the test-taker is a picture description.
- There is a picture prompt for the first task.
- There is a list of 5 to 6 standards questions and suggestions for follow-up questions for the picture.
- The questions are designed to elicit a detailed description of the picture from the test-taker.
- The picture is removed after the picture description.
- For the extended discussion part of the task there are 5 to 6 scripted questions and suggested follow-up questions.
- The number of questions and suggested follow-ups that is used by the interlocutor is determined by the test-taker's output.
- The English language expert receives specific training to fulfil the role of the interlocutor in phase III.
- The test-taker's performance is marked by both the operational expert and the English language expert.

Description for the picture:

- The picture shall depict at least one of the following: aircraft, airport, ops room, control tower, ramp/apron, runway, taxiway.
- The picture shall depict a scene in which something is happening – this can be an aircraft movement, persons interacting with each other, etc.
- The picture shall not show a real life emergency in which persons were grievously harmed or injured and infrastructure or aircraft were destroyed.
- The owner of the picture must give their written consent for ELPAC to use the picture and must be aware of the purpose for which the picture shall be used.

Description of the questions:

- Open questions are preferable.
- Closed questions may be used as long as a follow-up question is also suggested, e.g. 'Please explain your answer'.
- There shall be no personal questions.
- The following topics shall not be referred to in the questions: personal experience, previous experience with real emergencies, politics, religion, race, gender.