

Version 1.1

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ELPAC

English Language Proficiency for Aeronautical Communication
ELPAC paper 1 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 1 Test Specifications

General Matters

The ELPAC test comprises a listening comprehension paper (referred to as paper 1) and an oral interaction paper (referred to as paper 2). There is also a separate test to assess ICAO level 6 (referred to as paper 3).

The specific purpose of paper 1 is described in this document. For a description of the specific purpose of paper 2, please consult document 'ELPAC ATC PAPER 2 Oral Interaction Test Specifications'.

General Purpose of the ELPAC Test and of Paper 1

The general purpose of the ELPAC test is to determine whether the test taker meets the minimum ICAO language proficiency requirements for English as it is used in the context of radiotelephony communications between air traffic controllers and pilots, and between air traffic controllers.

Furthermore, the ELPAC test has been designed to discriminate between test-taker's level of proficiency at ICAO levels 4 and 5 (and level 6 in a separate test).

General Pass Mark for the ELPAC Test

The ELPAC test follows the guidelines in ICAO Document 9835. Accordingly, in the ELPAC test there is no cumulative score. The test-taker must pass both paper 1 and paper 2. The final score, which is the level the test-taker will have endorsed in their license, is the lowest level they achieve in either paper 1 or paper 2.

Specific Purpose of Paper 1

Paper 1 is the listening comprehension part of the ELPAC test. The test-taker hears 25 audio files in which pilots or controllers use radiotelephony communication to:

1. prepare or provoke an action, by
 - a. requesting approval or clearance,
 - b. giving approval,
 - c. denying approval,
 - d. giving clearances or instructions (atco only),
 - e. denying clearances or instructions,
 - f. request the controller or pilot to do something,
 - g. offer to do something,
 - h. give advice or make suggestions on what to do.

2. share information, by
 - a. giving information,
 - b. requesting information,
 - c. requesting reasons, purposes or justifications,
 - d. giving reasons, purposes or justifications.

3. Manage the interaction, by
 - a. reading back,
 - b. acknowledging the pilot's or air traffic controller's message,
 - c. checking, confirming, clarifying and correcting.

Structure of ELPAC Paper 1

There are six parts in ELPAC paper 1:

| | Part 1 | Part 2 | Part 3 | Part 4 | Part 5 | Part 6 |
|--|------------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| number of audio files: | 5 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| total number of audio files per version of the test: | 25 | | | | | |
| number of questions per audio file: | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 5 |
| total number of questions in each part | 10 | 6 | 9 | 5 | 15 | 15 |
| total number of questions per version of the test | 60 | | | | | |
| task type: | SAQ ¹ | MCQ ² | SAQ | TC ³ | SAQ | SAQ |

¹ SAQ: Short Answer Question

² MCQ: Multiple Choice Question

³ TC: Table Completion

Description of the Six Parts of Paper 1

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Part 1 | |
| task type: | SAQ – list |
| task description: | The test-taker writes an answer in alphanumeric format. Occasionally a short word may be required. |
| what is being tested: | recognition |
| delivery: | items are presented on one screen |
| Part 2 | |
| task type: | MCQ – table |
| task description: | There will be one or two correct answers out of three options. The maximum number of ticks (✓) in the table will not be specified. |
| what is being tested: | read back evaluation and accuracy |
| delivery: | items are presented on one screen |
| Part 3 | |
| task type: | SAQ |
| task description: | The test-taker answers questions relating to the content of the audio files of communications between a controller and one or two pilots and between two controllers, in unusual and non-routine situations. The questions shall refer to transmissions made by an air traffic controller. |
| what is being tested: | comprehension in unusual and non-routine situations |
| delivery: | Each communication has three questions and these will be presented on a separate screen. |

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Part 4 | |
| task type: | TC |
| task description: | The test-taker types the appropriate flight level(s) into the table cells. Not all cells will require an answer and the number of answers required will not be specified. |
| what is being tested: | listening for specific information |
| delivery: | The items for this test part will be presented on one screen. |
| Part 5 | |
| task type: | SAQ |
| task description: | The test-taker answers questions relating to the content of the audio files of communications between a controller and one or two pilots and between two controllers, in unusual and non-routine situations. The questions shall refer to transmissions made by an air traffic controller. |
| what is being tested: | comprehension in unusual and non-routine situations (these are longer and more complex transmissions than those used in part 3) |
| delivery: | Each communication has five questions and these will be presented on a separate screen. |
| Part 6 | |
| task type: | SAQ |
| task description: | The test-taker answers questions relating to the content of the audio files of communications between a controller and one or two pilots and between two controllers, in unusual and non-routine situations. The questions shall refer to transmissions made by an air traffic controller. |
| what is being tested: | comprehension and dealing with unusual situations (these are longer and more complex transmissions than found in part 3) |
| delivery: | Each communication has five questions and these will be presented on a separate screen. |

Description of the Recordings used in the Six Parts of Paper 1

| | Level 4 proficiency | Level 5 proficiency |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| source of input | Original audio recordings shall not be used and must be transcribed and re-recorded using different call-signs and airport designations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • live recordings, • simulator recordings, • flight crew reports, • incident and accident transcripts | |
| type of input | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monologues, • dialogues, • phraseology, • Plain English, • phraseology, • formulaic expressions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dialogues, • plain English, • phraseology, • formulaic expressions, |
| duration of input | 5 second to 2 minutes (approximately) | 2 to 2 minutes (approximately) |
| quality of input | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate – background noise shall not be distracting or influence sound quality • when appropriate: repetition, redundancy, rewording • scripted for recording | |
| topics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • common, concrete and work-related topics, • unusual or unexpected situations | |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| speaker characteristics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 or 2 voices, occasionally 3 for redundancy • speed of delivery at 100 to 130 words a minute | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 to 4 voices • speed of delivery at 130 to 170 words a minute |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • native and non-native speakers • male and female speakers • in those audio files with more than one speaker, the speakers shall all have different accents of English | |
| language features | concrete | |
| delivery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • web-based, • keyboard input | |
| test pacing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the speed is controlled by the test: • test-takers shall not access previously completed parts of the test – ‘back’ button’ on the browser is not enabled • the order of the items is ordained by the test | |
| test method | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TC, • SAQ, • MCQ, • the maximum number of words is 4-6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAQ, • the maximum number of words is 4-6 |
| test versions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the shall be a balance of TWR/APP/ENR communications | |
| number of items | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there are 35 items of which • 10 target level 3, and • 25 target level 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there are 25 items |

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| timing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preparation time is 15 to 20 seconds, • completion time is 5 to 15 seconds, depending on the input required from the test-taker | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preparation time is 25 seconds per sub-section of 5 items, completion time is 20 seconds at the end of each subsection |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the test-taker hears every recording once only | |
| length of the test | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ca. 20 minutes, including preparation and completion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ca. 20 minutes, including preparation and completion |
| | <p>Total length of the test (paper 1 and paper 2): ca. 40 minutes</p> | |
| pass mark | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% of the level 3 items, so 7 out of 10 level 3 items <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% of the level 4 items, so 18 out of 25 level 4 items | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% of the level 3 items, so 7 out of 10 level 3 items <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% of the level 4 items, so 18 out of 25 level 4 items <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% of the level 5 items, so 18 out of 25 level 5 items |
| weighting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 point per item | |
| answer key | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for every part of paper 1, except part 2, an acceptable answer and an unacceptable answer shall be defined to assist the marker | |