



FOCA GM/INFO

Guidance Material / Information

How to Become an Assessor

Guidelines for Application



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List of Abbreviations

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The following abbreviations are used in this GM/INFO:

Abbreviation	Definition
AMC	Acceptable Means of Compliance
ARO	Authority Requirements for Air Operations
ATC	Air Traffic Control
ATPL	Airline Transport Pilot Licence
CPL	Commercial Pilot Licence
DOC	Document
EASA	European Aviation Safety Agency
EC English	European Commission English
FCL	Flight Crew Licencing
FOCA	Federal Office of Civil Aviation
GM/INFO	Guidance Material / Information
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
IFR	Instrument Flight Rules
IR	Instrument Rating
LP	Language Proficiency
LPR	Language Proficiency Requirements
NCAA	National Civil Aviation Authorities
ORO	Organisation Requirements for Air Operations
PANS-ATM	Procedures for Air Navigation Services – Air Traffic Management
PPL	Private Pilot Licence
R/T // RTF	Radiotelephony
SARP	Standard And Recommended Practices
TT	Total Time
VFR	Visual Flight Rules

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0 Introduction

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All Guidance Material/Information (GM/INFO) are intended to assist the organisation/operator in administrative matters. The administrative requirements and processes will facilitate liaising with the Federal Office of Civil Aviation (FOCA). It is to be considered a tool for the organisation/operator in order to ease processes of obtaining required and defined approvals and authorizations issued by the FOCA. Using the GM/INFO will be conducive to establishing compliance with FOCA requirements and will lead through the respective certification or variation process in regard to administrative tasks.

This manual is intended as a reference document for language assessors working for the Swiss Federal Office of Civil Aviation (FOCA). The information aims to assist language assessors in order to become familiar with the different aspects of language assessing and, in particular, the language components used in the ICAO rating scale. It includes background information on ICAO recommendations and EASA legislation as well as Swiss national legislation relevant to the system for assessing pilots language proficiency in an aeronautical context in Switzerland.

It supports all material given during language assessor training courses and refresher workshops and provides a central reference document for all language assessors.

It remains the property of FOCA and must not be used for any other purpose than for which it is intended, nor may it be sold to 3rd party beneficiaries.

0.1 Legal References

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- Artikel 24 Absatz 1 und 25 Absatz 1 der Luftfahrtverordnung vom 14. November 1973
- Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1178/2011
- Verordnung (EU) 2018/395
- ICAO Document 9835
- Verordnung des UVEK über die europaweit geregelten Ausweise und Berechtigungen für Flugpersonal (VEAF) vom 18. Dezember 2020

In accordance with Art. 24 Abs. 1 and Art. 25 Abs.1 of the Aviation Ordinance, the FOCA must delegate the provision of training and assessor refresher courses to a suitable organisation. The prerequisite is that this LAB is authorised by us and holds a corresponding certificate from an EASA Member State.

0.2 Purpose of this GM/INFO

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This GM/INFO provides prospective assessment professionals with clarity on the process and training to become a Language Assessor as well as the requirements and preparation to undergo the training. This GM/INFO has been prepared on the basis of the requirements described in Part-FCL and the Aviation Act for obtaining the language assessor authorisation.

1 Basic English Level 4 Assessor Course

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1.1 Course Purpose

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The purpose of this training course is to equip future ICAO Level 4 language assessors with the necessary knowledge, skills, and practical experience to conduct language proficiency assessments in accordance with the standards set forth by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Through a comprehensive curriculum covering assessment principles, interview techniques, simulation exercises, and rating sessions of speech samples, participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of the ICAO Language Proficiency Scale and its application in evaluating aviation personnel's language proficiency. By the end of the course, participants will be prepared to uphold the highest standards of fairness, consistency, and accuracy in assessing ICAO Level 4 language proficiency, thereby contributing to the safety and efficiency of international aviation communication.

1.2 Prerequisites

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- Hold a Swiss pilot license with a valid language proficiency endorsement at minimum level 5
- Hold a valid rating as instructor/examiner (recommended but not mandatory for airline pilots involved in multi-pilot OPS)
- Very good understanding of English language structure. Experience in language teaching and/or testing is advantageous, but not mandatory.

1.3 Enrolment

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Use the link to find the document [«Language assessor courses and refresher workshops»](#). Please send the completed registration to: theory-examination@bazl.admin.ch.

1.4 Course Duration, Location, and Fee

Ch. 1.4 ISS 2 / REV 0 / 01.01.2025

- 2 days interactive online session, one day self-directed learning
- CHF 300 (incl. course material)

1.5 Course Content

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- Introduction to ICAO Language Proficiency requirements
- Language Proficiency assessment principles
- ICAO Rating Scale and Holistic Descriptors
- Language Testing methods and standardization
- Interview training and assessor behavior
- Assessment procedures and simulation exercises
- Rating session of speech samples

As part of the training program, participants will engage in a full day of self-directed learning. During this self-directed learning day, participants will delve into the specifics of ICAO Document 9835, focusing on the guidelines and recommendations for language proficiency testing. Additionally, participants will be tasked with preparing test questions tailored to different target groups, such as private pilots, commercial pilots, helicopter pilots, and student pilots, ensuring the relevance and appropriateness of ICAO Level 4 language assessment materials for each category of aviation personnel. Moreover, participants will have the opportunity to practice their assessment skills by rating voice samples provided and applying the ICAO Language Proficiency Scale and Holistic Descriptors learned during the training. This day of self-

directed study serves as a valuable opportunity for participants to deepen their understanding of language proficiency Level 4 assessment principles and refine their practical skills in test preparation and evaluation.

During the training sessions, participants will have the opportunity to actively participate and engage in various exercises and role-plays. This interactive approach enables participants to apply theoretical knowledge in practical scenarios and receiving valuable feedback regarding their performance and opportunities for improvement.

Additionally, on Day 3, participants will undergo assessment to evaluate their readiness as future ICAO Level 4 Language Assessors. This assessment will include two practical assessments with a dummy candidate, allowing participants to demonstrate their proficiency in conducting interviews and simulations. Furthermore, participants will complete a short, written test assessing their knowledge of ICAO Document 9832 and their own language skills, ensuring comprehensive understanding and readiness for certification.

1.5.1 Case Studies and Practical Exercises

- Review of real-life ICAO Level 4 assessment scenarios
- Hands-on practice in conducting ICAO Level 4 assessments, providing feedback, and rating Level 3 and Level 4 speech samples
- Discussion of ethical issues in language assessment
- Ensuring fairness and impartiality in assessments

1.5.2 Evaluation and Certification

- Assessing trainees' competency as future language assessors
- Certification process for becoming an ICAO Language Proficiency Assessor

1.5.3 Q&A and Wrap-Up

- Addressing any remaining questions or concerns
- Recap of key takeaways from the training

2 Course Preparation

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Our GM/INFO (Handbook for English Language Assessors) provides basic support for language assessors in the preparation and completion of language proficiency assessments. It is intended to ensure that all parties involved have clarity about the process before, during, and after an English language proficiency assessment.

This GM/INFO was created on the basis of the requirements for obtaining licenses and certificates described in Part-FCL and contains supporting regulatory information.

3 Basic English Level 5/6 Assessor Course

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The purpose of this training course is to equip future ICAO Level 5 and 6 language assessors with the necessary knowledge, skills, and practical experience to conduct language proficiency assessments in accordance with the standards set forth by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Through a comprehensive curriculum covering assessment principles, interview techniques, simulation exercises, and rating sessions of speech samples, participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of the ICAO Language Proficiency Scale and its application in evaluating aviation personnel's language proficiency. By the end of the course, participants will be prepared to uphold the highest standards of fairness, consistency, and accuracy in assessing ICAO Level 6 language proficiency, thereby contributing to the safety and efficiency of international aviation communication.

3.1 Prerequisites

Ch. 3.1 ISS 2 / REV 0 / 01.01.2025

- Holder of a language assessor authorization issued by FOCA
- Holder of an English language proficiency endorsement level 6
- Very good understanding of English language structure

3.2 Enrolment

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Use this link to find the document [«Language assessor courses and refresher workshops»](#).
Please send your completed registration to: theory-examination@bazl.admin.ch.

3.3 Course Duration, Location, and Fee

Ch. 3.3 ISS 2 / REV 0 / 01.01.2025

- 2 days interactive online session, one day self-directed learning
- CHF 300 (incl. course material)

3.4 Course Content

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This comprehensive training program includes an introduction to ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements, sessions on the features of speech according to the ICAO rating scale, interview techniques, simulation exercises, and rating sessions of speech samples, providing trainees with practical skills and knowledge for conducting effective ICAO Level 6 language proficiency assessments.

- Welcome and introduction to ICAO Language Proficiency requirements
- ICAO Language Proficiency assessment principles
- ICAO Rating Scale and Holistic Descriptors
- Language testing methods and standardization
- Interview training and assessor behavior
- Assessment procedures and simulation exercises
- Rating session of speech samples

As part of the training program, participants will engage in a full day of self-directed study between Day 1 and Day 2. During this self-directed learning day, participants will delve into the specifics of ICAO Document 9835, focusing on the guidelines and recommendations for language proficiency testing. Additionally, participants will be tasked with preparing test questions tailored to different target groups, such as private pilots, commercial pilots, helicopter pilots, and student pilots, ensuring the relevance and appropriateness of ICAO Level 5 and 6 language assessment materials for each category of aviation personnel. Moreover, participants will have the opportunity to practice their assessment skills by rating voice samples provided and applying the ICAO Language Proficiency Scale and Holistic Descriptors learned during the training. This day of home study serves as a valuable opportunity for participants to deepen their understanding of language proficiency Level 5 and 6 assessment principles and refine their practical skills in test preparation and evaluation.

This course provides participants with specific training on how to ask appropriate Level 6 questions during interviews, with a focus on the ICAO Rating Scale for structure and content. Additionally, it includes practical exercises on rating real exams and speech samples to determine proficiency levels, with particular attention to distinguishing between ICAO Level 6 and Level 5 proficiency.

During the training sessions, participants will have the opportunity to actively participate and engage in various exercises and role-plays. This interactive approach enables participants to apply theoretical knowledge in practical scenarios and receiving valuable feedback regarding their performance and opportunities for improvement.

Additionally, on Day 3, participants will undergo assessment to evaluate their readiness as future ICAO Level 5 and 6 Language Assessors. This assessment will include two practical assessments with a dummy candidate, allowing participants to demonstrate their proficiency in conducting interviews and

simulations. Furthermore, participants will complete a short-written test assessing their knowledge of the ICAO document 9832 and their own language skills, ensuring comprehensive understanding and readiness for certification.

3.4.1 Case Studies and Practical Exercises

- Review of real-life ICAO Level 5 and 6 assessment scenarios
- Hands-on practice in conducting ICAO Level 5 and 6 assessments, providing feedback, and rating Level 5 and Level 6 speech samples
- Discussion of criteria distinguishing ICAO Level 5 and Level 6 proficiency
- Discussion of ethical issues in language assessment
- Ensuring fairness and impartiality in assessments

3.4.2 Evaluation and Certification

- Assessing trainees' competency as future language assessors
- Evaluation of participants' readiness as language assessors
- Focus on examiners' language proficiency to determine their ability to assess ICAO Language Level 6
- Written test covering knowledge of ICAO documents and language skills, including assessment of participants' own language proficiency.
- Certification process for becoming an ICAO Language Proficiency Assessor

3.4.3 Q&A and Wrap-Up

- Addressing any remaining questions or concerns
- Recap of key takeaways from the training

4 Refresher Workshops for English Language Assessors

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4.1 Workshop Purpose

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The purpose of the refresher training is to provide experienced ICAO Level 4, Level 5, and Level 6 assessors with an opportunity to review and reinforce their knowledge, skills, and competencies in language proficiency assessment. Through a combination of interactive sessions, practical exercises, and discussions, the training aims to refresh participants' understanding of assessment principles, update them on any changes in legal requirements or industry standards, and provide a platform for continuous learning and professional development. Additionally, there will be a specific focus on handling difficult-to-rate voice samples and tests, equipping participants with strategies to effectively assess challenging cases and maintain consistency in their evaluations. The training also aims to support examiners by offering guidance, resources, and peer collaboration opportunities to address any assessment-related issues or concerns they may encounter. By revisiting key concepts, sharing experiences, and engaging in hands-on activities, participants will enhance their confidence and effectiveness as language assessors, ensuring the continued delivery of fair, reliable, and high-quality assessments in accordance with ICAO standards.

4.2 Prerequisites

Ch. 4.2 ISS 2 / REV 0 / 01.01.2025

- Holder of a valid or expired language assessor authorization issued by FOCA
- Holder of a English language proficiency endorsement Level 5 or 6

4.3 Enrolment

Ch. 4.3 ISS 2 / REV 0 / 01.01.2025

Use the link to find document [«Language assessor courses and refresher workshops»](#).
Please send your completed registration to: theory-examination@bazl.admin.ch.

4.4 Course Duration, Location, and Fee

Ch. 4.4 ISS 2 / REV 0 / 01.01.2025

- 1-day interactive online session
- CHF 100 (incl. course material)

4.5 Workshop Content

Ch. 4.5 ISS 2 / REV 0 / 01.01.2025

- Presentation of any new legal requirements or changes in regulations related to language proficiency assessment
- Recap of ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements
- Review of key concepts from previous training sessions
- Practical Exercises: Rating session of voice samples
- Participants rate voice samples representing various proficiency levels
- Group discussion on rating discrepancies and consensus building
- Practical exercises: Challenging L4, L5, and L6 assessments
- Participants engage in interview and simulation role-plays with feedback from peers
- Emphasis on applying learned techniques to real-life scenarios
- Advanced assessment techniques

4.6 Q&A session

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This recurrent training program prioritizes practical exercises, group discussions, and peer feedback to reinforce learning and support participants in their role as ICAO Language Proficiency Assessors. It also emphasizes adaptability to participants needs and evolving legal requirements to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of the training.

4.7 Course Preparation

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Read the updated [GM/INFO «Handbook for English Language Assessors»](#).