




Maldives Civil Aviation Authority
Republic of Maldives

SOP 527

English Language Proficiency

Procedures

Document Control

Document Number:	Chapter 520 (SOP 527)
Document Owner:	Director Flight Operations
Issue/Date:	1.00 / 12 February 2025
Revision History:	[Refer to page 11]
Superseded Docs:	None
Approval:	Mohamed Mansoor, Director Flight Operations Sign:  Date: 12 February 2025

Controlled Material attached to this SOP

Issue	Date	Document Name / Description
-	01.01.2015	CAA Form 1199
-	01.01.2015	CAA Form 2119

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1. Purpose

The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) of which the Maldives is a Contracting State establishes international standards and recommended practices (SARPS) for, among other things, the licensing of aviation personnel. These SARPS which ICAO Member States are obliged to implement are published in Annex 1 – Personnel Licensing to the Convention on International Civil Aviation (ICAO Annex 1).

Applicable from 5 March 2008, ICAO introduced into ICAO Annex I, a requirement for all pilots of aeroplane, helicopter, airship and powered lift aircraft, all flight navigators who use radiotelephony equipment in aircraft and all air traffic controllers, to be proficient in their command of the languages that they use for radio communication. A proficiency scale of 1 to 6 is specified, with Level 6 being the standard of an expert speaker of the language. ICAO Annex 1 specifies the minimum standard for the holder of a licence to be Level 4.

It also specifies that licence holders assessed as Level 4 or 5 shall be re-tested periodically but that a person assessed as Level 6 need not be re-tested. The maximum periods between tests stated in the ICAO documents for Levels 4 and 5 are recommendations only. If the language proficiency of an individual is assessed as being below Level 4 (i.e., 1, 2 or 3) that individual may not hold a licence that includes radiotelephony privileges. The ICAO standards apply to the language “used for radio communication;” ICAO permits languages other than English in circumstances where flight crew and air traffic controllers share another common language.

CAA ensures that the requirements set out in the MCAR Aircrew Regulation for Part-FCL (3) licences meet ICAO standards. Similarly, the CAA is required under the CAA Act to ensure that national licences comply with ICAO standards where applicable.

The ICAO standards for language proficiency have been in use in the Maldives for some time, but the MCAR Aircrew Regulation makes their application mandatory and imposes a common format for showing language proficiency on Part-FCL licences.

For Part-FCL licences, language proficiency standards are set out in Part-FCL. Part-FCL requires that holders of an Instrument Rating shall demonstrate language proficiency in English.

The ICAO Annex I Language Proficiency Ratings are reproduced in MCAR Aircrew Part-FCL.

2. Legislation

Table 1

ORIGIN	RULE
Acts	Article 8 of Maldives Civil Aviation Authority Act 2/2012 Articles 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 24 of Maldives Civil Aviation Act of 2/2001
ICAO	Doc 7300, Doc 9835
MCAR	MCAR Air Aircrew Part-FCL.055

3. Language Proficiency Implementation and Assessment

3.1. General

The CAA applies the ICAO standards and procedures to Part-FCL licences. The Maldives regulations include language proficiency standards (as they are included in ICAO Annex 1)

3.2. Licences Requiring Language Proficiency Endorsement

The language proficiency level and validity shall be stated on a Part-FCL licence. Therefore, pilots must hold a valid language proficiency level prior to the issue of a licence in accordance with Part-FCL. Language proficiency must be assessed as Level 4 or higher before any CAA licence requiring such proficiency is issued.

Part-FCL specifies that pilots who are to use radiotelephony shall demonstrate language proficiency. Such proficiency is required, in ENGLISH, for the issue of a CAA Licence. Where a pilot accepts the limitation of flying non-radio only, or the pilot is the holder of a sailplane or balloon licence, Part-FCL does not require language proficiency to be demonstrated.

For safety reasons, the language proficiency standards should be complied with by students flying solo (under the direction of an instructor) on any flight where the radio may be used. The student should not be permitted to fly solo using the radio unless/until they are assessed as level 4 or higher in the English language.

3.3. Minimum Language Proficiency Levels

The applicant for a language proficiency endorsement shall demonstrate, in accordance with MCAR Aircrew Appendix 2 to Part-FCL, at least operational level (Level 4) of language proficiency in phraseologies and plain language.

Level 4 Operational level – validity 3 years
Level 5 Extended level – validity 6 years
Level 6 Expert level – non-expiring

4. Means of Assessment of Language Proficiency

4.1.1. Methods of Testing

- a) With an ELP Assessor

During the practical test CAA with a CAA authorised ELP Assessor who has Level 6 proficiency in English, will assess the applicant's proficiency in English. Where the examiner assesses the candidate as being Expert Level 6, 5 or 4, he may certify to that effect by submitting a CAA Form 1199 to the CAA.

If the Examiner considers that the applicant is not at Level 4 or above, the Assessor must not give proficiency endorsement.

b) At a Flight Test

Class Rating Examiners (CREs), Flight Examiners (FEs), Flight Instructor Examiners (FIEs), Instrument Rating Examiners (IREs), Synthetic Flight Examiners (SFEs) and Type Rating Examiners (TREs) who have themselves been assessed as proficient at Level 6 in English and are authorised by the CAA, may include assessment of the language proficiency for new or existing holders of licences issued by the CAA (Part-FCL), as part of the skill test, proficiency check or assessment of competence that is conducted for the issue, revalidation or renewal of a licence, rating or certificate. Examiners can only assess candidates as being Expert Level 6 in English.

Where the assessment was conducted in association with a Skill Test, Proficiency Check, Assessment of Competence then the Examiner will complete the appropriate Examiners Report confirming that the candidate has demonstrated proficiency at Level 6.

Where the examiner cannot be satisfied that the applicant is at Level 6 the examiner must not give a proficiency endorsement. In such cases the alternative means of assessment must be used as detailed below:

c) Through an ATO

Applicants choosing to be tested by an ATO should verify that the ATO is approved by the CAA for the purpose of language assessment.

d) Other Acceptable Means

Language proficiency may also be assessed by other means acceptable to the CAA. Such means of assessment may be determined by an operator or organisation to make efficient use of their own resources, but in any case, must be approved by the CAA and meet the requirements of Part-FCL.055 before being put into effect. One such acceptable means, for 'expert speakers' Level 6 only, is for the holder of a CAA issued examiner certificate (as listed in (a) and (b) above) to conduct a language assessment as a face-to-face aviation-related conversation that is not associated with a Skill Test, Proficiency Check, Assessment of Competence or Flight Radio Telephony practical test. The face-to-face language assessment will take the form of an aviation related conversation initially established through a general conversation, then radio phraseology and pronunciation. Discussion topics could include the planning of a navigation exercise; discussing en route navigational issues; NOTAMs and weather; conducting the pre-flight inspection of the aircraft or similar, so that the examiner can assess the candidate's language proficiency in accordance with Appendix 2 to Part-FCL. The student and the examiner must be together at the same location when the language assessment is to take place, so that the discussion is effectively face-to-face. The examiner must be satisfied that the person presenting themselves for assessment is who they claim to be. This may be achieved by means of photographic identification; (e.g., passport or driving licence with photograph).

5. Licence Endorsement Process

5.1. Part-FCL licences

Pilots applying for the initial issue of a Part-FCL licence for aeroplanes, helicopters or airships must demonstrate the appropriate level of language proficiency. This may be notified to the CAA by completion of either the examiner's skill test report form or the application for the ELP.

Unless a previously completed language assessment has been submitted to the CAA, and remains valid, applicants will need to provide evidence of proficiency (by any of the methods set out in 2.4 above).

5.2. Charges

Fees will be levied for the administration of the licence in accordance with the Scheme of Charges of MCAR-187.

6. Appendix 1 – AMC to Part-FCL FCL.055

GENERAL

- (a) The language proficiency assessments should be designed to reflect a range of tasks undertaken by pilots but with specific focus on language rather than operational procedures.
- (b) The assessment should determine the applicant's ability to:
- (1) Communicate effectively using standard R/T phraseology;
 - (2) Deliver and understand messages in plain language in both usual and unusual situations that necessitate departure from standard R/T phraseology.

Note: refer to the Manual on the Implementation of ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements (ICAO Doc 9835), Appendix A Part III and Appendix B for further guidance.

ASSESSMENT

- (c) The assessment may be subdivided into three elements, as follows:
- (1) Listening: assessment of comprehension;
 - (2) Speaking: assessment of pronunciation, fluency, structure, and vocabulary;
 - (3) Interaction.
- (d) The three elements mentioned above may be combined and they can be covered by using a wide variety of means or technologies.
- (e) Where appropriate, some or all these elements may be achieved through the use of the R/T testing arrangements.
- (f) The assessment may be conducted during one of the several existing checking or training activities, such as licence issue or rating issue and revalidation, line training, operator line checks or proficiency checks.
- (g) The CAA may use its own resources in developing or conducting the language proficiency assessment or may delegate this task to language assessment bodies.
- (h) The CAA should establish an appeal procedure for applicants.
- (i) The holder of a licence should receive a statement containing the level and validity of the language endorsements.
- (j) Where the assessment method for the English language established by the CAA is equivalent to that established for the assessment of use of the English language in accordance with AMC 2 FCL.055, the same assessment may be used for both purposes.

7. Appendix 2 - AMC 2 to Part-FCL FCL.055

BASIC ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

(k) The aim of the assessment is to determine the ability of an applicant for a pilot licence or a licence holder to speak and understand the language used for R/T communications.

(1) The assessment should determine the ability of the applicant to use both:

(i) standard R/T phraseology;

(ii) plain language, in situations when standardised phraseology cannot serve an intended transmission.

(2) The assessment should include:

(i) voice-only or face-to-face situations;

(ii) common, concrete, and work-related topics for pilots.

(3) The applicants should demonstrate their linguistic ability in dealing with an unexpected turn of events, and in solving apparent misunderstandings.

(4) The assessment should determine the applicant's speaking and listening abilities. Indirect assessments of grammatical knowledge, reading and writing, are not appropriate.

(5) The assessment should determine the language skills of the applicant in the following areas:

(i) pronunciation:

(A) the extent to which the pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are influenced by the applicant's first language or national variations;

(B) how much they interfere with ease of understanding.

(ii) structure:

(A) the ability of the applicant to use both basic and complex grammatical structures;

(B) the extent to which the applicant's errors interfere with the meaning.

(iii) vocabulary:

(A) the range and accuracy of the vocabulary used;

(B) the ability of the applicant to paraphrase successfully when lacking vocabulary.

(iv) fluency:

(A) tempo;

(B) hesitancy;

(C) rehearsed versus spontaneous speech;

(D) use of discourse markers and connectors.

(v) comprehension:

(A) on common, concrete and work-related topics;

(B) when confronted with a linguistic or situational complication or an unexpected turn of events.

Note: the accent or variety of accents used in the test material should be sufficiently intelligible for an international community of users.

(vi) interactions:

(A) quality of response (immediate, appropriate, and informative);

- (B) the ability to initiate and maintain exchanges:
 - (a) on common, concrete and work-related topics;
 - (b) when dealing with an unexpected turn of events;
- (C) the ability to deal with apparent misunderstandings by checking, confirming or clarifying.

Note: the assessment of the language skills in the areas mentioned above is conducted using the rating scale in AMC2 FCL.055.

(6) When the assessment is not conducted in a face-to-face situation, it should use appropriate technologies for the assessment of the applicant's abilities in listening and speaking, and for enabling interactions (for example: simulated pilot or controller communication).

ASSESSORS

(l) It is essential that the persons responsible for language proficiency assessment ('assessors') are suitably trained and qualified. They should be either aviation specialists (for example current or former flight crew members or air traffic controllers), or language specialists with additional aviation-related training. An alternative approach would be to form an assessment team consisting of an operational expert and a language expert.

- (1) The assessors should be trained on the specific requirements of the assessment.
- (2) The assessors should not test applicants to whom they have given language training.

CRITERIA FOR THE ACCEPTABILITY OF AN ATO LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

(m) To ensure an impartial assessment process, the language assessment should be independent of the language training.

(1) To be accepted, the language assessment Organisations should demonstrate:

- (i) appropriate management and staffing;
- (ii) quality system established and maintained to ensure compliance with, and adequacy of, assessment requirements, standards and procedures.

(2) The quality system established by a language assessment body should address the following:

- (i) management;
- (ii) policy and strategy;
- (iii) processes;
- (iv) the relevant provisions of ICAO or Part-FCL, standards and assessment procedures;
- (v) organisational structure;
- (vi) responsibility for the development, establishment and management of the quality system;
- (vii) documentation;
- (viii) quality assurance programme;
- (ix) human resources and training (initial and recurrent);
- (x) assessment requirements;
- (xi) customer satisfaction.

(3) The assessment documentation and records should be kept for a period 10 years and made available to the CAA, on request.

(4) The assessment documentation should include at least the following:

- (i) assessment objectives;
- (ii) assessment layout, time scale, technologies used, assessment samples, voice samples;
- (iii) assessment criteria and standards (at least for the levels 4, 5 and 6 of the rating scale mentioned in AMC2 FCL.055);
- (iv) documentation demonstrating the assessment validity, relevance and reliability;
- (v) assessment procedures and responsibilities:
 - (A) preparation of individual assessment;
 - (B) administration: location(s), identity check and invigilation, assessment discipline, confidentiality or security;
 - (C) reporting and documentation provided to the CAA or to the applicant, including sample certificate;
 - (D) retention of documents and records.

Note: refer to the 'Manual on the Implementation of ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements' (ICAO Doc 9835) for further guidance.

8. Appendix 3

Applicable PQs contained in this SOP.

3.001, 3.655, 3.657, 3.001, 3.655, 3.657
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9. Record of Revisions

Table 3 – Record of Revisions

Issue	Date	Description of Changes	Author
1.00	2024.02.15	Initial issue	Fathimath Nathasha Latheef