



Test Documentation

Introduction

This document provides guidelines to help Test Service Providers (TSP) prepare and present the information ICAO needs to confirm that a test of aviation English meets established criteria and can be endorsed. TSP are encouraged to follow these guidelines and provide ICAO with clear, focused and informative documentation. While ICAO will carefully review everything received, it is not responsible for the quality of the test documentation provided nor for interpreting incomplete or confusing documentation.

ICAO Document 9835

The fundamental reference used to evaluate all tests of aviation English remains ICAO's Document 9835, "Manual on the Implementation of ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements" (2nd edition, 2010), Chapter 6 and Appendix C in particular. By carefully reviewing this document, TSP can anticipate the questions ICAO will ask when reviewing test documents.

Example:

Appendix C of Document 9835 - "Checklist for Aviation Language Testing" – states that

*Testing service providers (TSPs) should document **adherence** to the ICAO recommended criteria for aviation language testing by completing the checklist below and submitting **evidence** for each item on the checklist, referencing the criterion item number. Item numbers correlate to the criteria found in Chapter 6, paragraph 3.*

Given the following criteria from Appendix C,

6.3.2 TEST DESIGN AND CONSTRUCT

Reference	Item	Reply	Notes
6.3.2.1	Is the test is designed to assess speaking and listening proficiency in accordance with each component of the ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale and the holistic descriptors in Annex 1?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	

ICAO test evaluators will look specifically for evidence showing that the test purpose reflects this criterion, that it was designed and is being used accordingly. Tests that are not clearly intended to assess speaking and listening proficiency, or that don't reflect the criteria of Doc. 9835 shall not be endorsed.

Document 9835 addresses the following needs in particular:

- The need to demonstrate the ability to use plain language during radiotelephony communication in unexpected or unusual situations where ICAO standardized phraseology no longer suffices.
- The need to use tasks for tests that are operationally relevant and that allow using plain language in situations described above.
- The need to follow proven practices to develop, use and update tests.
- The need to use appropriate resources for test development and use.
- The need to ensure using appropriate testing conditions.
- The need to use qualified testing and operational experts to develop, administer and maintain the test.

The need to *use tasks for tests that are operationally relevant and that allow using plain language in situations that require it* is fundamental and critical for test endorsement. ICAO must receive clear evidence through the test documentation that test tasks are appropriate to endorse a test.

Evidence

To be fair and reliable, test evaluations must rely on clear evidence confirming how a test meets stated criteria. *Without such evidence, there is no opportunity for ICAO to determine the merits of a test and endorse it.* When reviewing test documentation, ICAO will not assume the meaning of statements or explanations but will instead look for evidence of actual practice to confirm what is said about a test.

TSP must therefore state explicitly in their documentation how a test meets ICAO criteria in Doc. 9835. *Blanket statements that a test meets the ICAO requirements are not acceptable:* indicate instead how each criterion from Doc. 9835 is addressed in your test.

TSP should therefore:

- Avoid any blanket or general statements about their test. Provide examples of specific features or characteristics instead and explain how they reflect ICAO's criteria.
- Specifically link comments about a test and ICAO's criteria. Refer to specific paragraphs in Doc. 9835 whenever relevant.



It is not appropriate to argue for or against using ICAO's Language Proficiency Requirements (LPR) or related criteria in your test documentation, nor can such arguments be used to explain why a test does not meet ICAO's criteria. Test evaluators are instructed and expected to strictly apply existing criteria to evaluate tests. Suggestions for improvements should be sent to ICAO separately.

Tell us specifically what you've done to create a good test, why you did those things and how you use your test to meet ICAO's requirements!

Presenting Your Test Documentation

ICAO strongly encourages TSP to keep the following in mind to prepare and submit their test documentation.

1. Stay focused and to the point:
 - Write short, clear statements about your test to individually address a specific point or criteria.
 - DO NOT reproduce in your test documentation passages from scholarly works, books or other references on language testing or test design you may have consulted. Instead, identify your references as you would when preparing a document for publication: list your references separately and refer to them in the text as needed.
 - *Submitting additional documentation that is not required to understand your test design and use may prevent ICAO from properly evaluating your test and endorsing it. Focus on quality, not quantity!*
2. ICAO recommends reproducing the table of criteria in Appendix C of Doc. 9835 and answering each question in that table with short, precise but complete comments or statements. For example,

Reference	Item	Comments
6.3.2.1	Is the test is designed to assess speaking and listening proficiency in accordance with each component of the ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale and the holistic descriptors in Annex 1?	<i>(Your comments on how your test addresses this criterion).</i>

This format can be adjusted as needed, by entering comments below each criterion instead of in a table cell, for example. Answering below may provide more space than the table allows.

As a minimum, ensure your test documentation answers all of the **Items to Address** listed below. TSP should be able to easily cross-reference these items with ICAO's criteria in Doc. 9835.

Submitting Audio Samples

ICAO requires that TSP submit *2 examples of test audio recordings for each level tested*. Samples must be recent and reflect the current test being used. Samples used for training or for other purposes are not considered valid evidence of current testing practices. Samples must therefore,

- Have been recorded less than 6 months ago.
- Be long enough (duration) to allow evaluators to assess the quality of test tasks and the interaction taking place (samples should last 10 to 15 minutes each).
- Feature an actual test candidate for which complete test results are available.
- Feature regular raters and/or interlocutors (i.e. those used regularly to test candidates).
- Reflect the same testing conditions as those usually in place.
- Include all relevant information, like instructions to test takers, raters or interlocutors (ICAO must understand how audio samples were collected and what they represent).
- Be clear and easy to understand. ICAO will not attempt to improve the quality of poor audio recordings, and may reject a test with inappropriate or unintelligible samples.

Submitting Your Test Documentation

When ready to submit your test documentation, you will be directed to a website where you can upload your complete test documentation. You will receive specific instructions to follow when appropriate.

1. You will be directed to a secure folder reserved for your documentation. You will find a file there called 'Test Documentation Register'. Download it, list in it the files submitted to ICAO and upload it back to Box when ready. The test evaluation team will review the register and confirm having all files before starting the test evaluation.
2. ICAO accepts files in PDF, DOC, XLS or PPT (or compatible) file formats. TSP remain responsible for ensuring all their files can be viewed as intended. ICAO will not convert files to another format or otherwise attempt to fix problems with files.
3. Make sure file names represent their content well and can be easily identified by test evaluators. For example,

Unacceptable File Name	Acceptable File Name
T6&tempfin	ABCD110599 – Audio Test Sample 6.PDF
Cover letter	ABCD120716_Cover_Letter.DOC

4. Include the address of any website used with your test. For example, if test candidates can access a website with information about your test or with test practice items, provide the site's address and any necessary login credentials.
5. The total number of pages for your test documentation should not exceed 50 pages. If your current test documentation is longer, submit only what is needed to confirm how the test meets ICAO's criteria. Be concise and stay focused! *DO NOT include marketing materials.*

ICAO considers all information received as strictly confidential and will take all necessary steps to protect it.

Items to Address in Your Test Documentation

1. Test design and construct

Clearly define the purpose of the test and explain its construct with appropriate reference to the ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements – a set of holistic descriptors and the ICAO Rating Scale.

2. Target language use/domain analysis/needs analysis

Explain how you investigated the language needs of the test target population. Describe the procedures used to analyze this information and draw conclusions.

3. Test specifications (blueprint)

Provide the complete specifications for your test including explanations of the rationale followed to develop them.

4. Test design and development

Provide a detailed description of the procedure used to design and develop your test. Show how the test aligns to your stated test purpose.

5. Item writing

Describe how you select your item writers and the training they receive. Indicate the source material you use as the basis for writing test items e.g. “live” recordings, incident reports, aviation articles, photographs etc. Do you have copyright on these materials? Does your test accommodate recording/using different accents?

6. Test trialing

Describe the procedures used to trial your test. How representative was your trialing population of the test population. Did you have difficulty getting sufficient numbers (+/- 50, +/- 100?) for trialing? Were you able to control trialing conditions in all centers?

Show how you obtained information about your trialing population (e.g. bio data, language proficiency of candidates) and feedback from all involved in trialing. Discuss in particular how trialing results were analyzed and interpreted, and how decisions impacted on test design. Was re-trialing and further analyses conducted? How is trialing of new items, new test versions conducted?

7. Rating procedure

Describe the procedure used to rate the performance of candidates on your test. Explain which standards are applied and how they are applied. Provide 2 recorded (audio) sample ratings of each language proficiency level covered by your test. For example, if the test is designed to measure language proficiency at ICAO levels 4 and 5, provide 2 samples of actual rated performances for each of these levels, including the assessment sheets used by the raters. Clearly explain how any difficulties with ratings are resolved.

8. Professional qualifications of testing personnel: e.g. test administrators, raters, interlocutors, markers, staff responsible for setting standards for test items

Describe the professional qualifications you require of your test administrators, raters, interlocutors and other members of your testing team. Include information on initial and recurrent training, and any other activity completed regularly or as needed with regards to professional qualifications. Who provides accreditation for your testing personnel?

9. Testing guidelines

Describe the guidelines provided to test takers, and to members of your testing team to introduce the test, the testing procedure or otherwise explain how testing takes place. How can these guidelines be accessed? Are they regularly reviewed and updated?

10. Test familiarization procedures

Indicate if and how test candidates may learn more about the test and/or complete practice items. Is test familiarization left to the initiative of candidates or do you provide/encourage familiarization sessions? If you offer test familiarization sessions, describe that process.

11. Standard setting (for test items / tasks)

Explain how you confirm which language proficiency level is measured in your test: how do you standard set individual items/tasks? Also describe any procedure used to set scoring standards or otherwise handle scores to obtain a final result.

12. Testing administration

Describe your testing environment, in terms of the physical environment in which tests occur, typical testing conditions, the use of equipment or other tools for testing, time management or other aspects of test administration. Do you provide guidelines for test administration? Explain if and how feedback about the test is collected from test takers and how it is processed, as well as how student complaints or appeals are handled.

13. Test Security

Describe all measures taken to ensure test security and how related problems are addressed. What measures, for example, are followed to prevent and/or deal with cheating or attempts to influence results? What procedures do you have in place when a test/test version is compromised?

14. Test sustainability

Describe measures in place to revise and improve the test over time. When new test versions are developed, what procedures are used to address/ensure equivalency across test versions? What information do you capture in your test database and how is it used to improve tests over time?



15. Test limitations or constraints

Describe any limitations or constraints that may condition or otherwise influence how your test may be used. Explain how you address them.

16. Complete test

Include in your documentation a copy of a complete test version with all related instructions or guidelines, as used for actual testing. As indicated above, include recorded (audio) samples of actual rated performances for each language proficiency level covered by your test.