

NEW TRAINING STANDARDS DEFINE SKILLS

In a world first, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority and the aviation industry have developed private and commercial pilot VFR training standards based on competency.

THE CIVIL AVIATION SAFETY AUTHORITY and the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) have released national competency standards for pilots of fixed-wing aircraft operating under day visual flight rules (VFR).

The standards detail the skills that must be demonstrated by pilots in order to obtain private and commercial pilot licences.

The standards provide a basis for portable and recognised uniform measurement and evaluation of pilot performance. This is achieved by restating the implied standards of the day VFR syllabus in competency based language.

When assessing pilot competencies, testing officers should use the specified standards as a guide to confirm that approved flying techniques are always used. These flying techniques involve the accurate use of power, aircraft attitude, trim, balance and control applications which are smooth, timely and coordinated.

Training organisations must ensure that their courses provide for the training of all units of competency for the qualification as outlined in the competency standard. The approved competency standard must be met prior to issue of the qualification.

The standards have been developed in close consultation with the aviation industry and

have been endorsed by the industry before being recognised by ANTA.

Development of the competency standards has been funded by ANTA and CASA, with a substantial in-kind contribution by the aviation industry.

The competency standards separate and fix the limits of the tasks that make up a job, then specify the level of performance needed to complete each task to the standard required by the industry. They define the job of flying an aircraft, then they define how well a pilot must do that job.

The standards are based on the ability to:

- Perform at an acceptable level of skill.
- Organise tasks.
- Respond and react appropriately to the unexpected.
- Fulfil the role expected in the working environment.
- Transfer skills and knowledge to new situations.

A guide lists skills and knowledge that underpin performance.

Airmanship: Airmanship is an essential component of competency in flying an aircraft, and includes such intangibles as personal attitude and decision-making abilities.

The competency standards do not attempt to explain what airmanship is, but rather what it does. In some units of competency, the sole criterion for the demonstration of airmanship is stated as: "Situation awareness is maintained". This requires that the pilot be aware of the total immediate environment and its potential hazards. For this to be possible, the pilot must demonstrate a methodical approach and common sense.

While airmanship itself is not easily

measured, its results are – and these are listed as evidence. For example, for compliance with airspace requirements, the evidence that defines "elements of airmanship" includes:

- Awareness of aircraft position is maintained using charts and geographical features.
- Lookout is maintained using a systematic scan technique at a rate determined by traffic density, visibility or terrain.
- Radio listening watch is maintained and information received is acted upon.
- Weather conditions are monitored and reacted to.
- Fuel status is monitored and reacted to.
- Orientation by geographical features is maintained.

These are all functions of the pilot's knowing what is happening in and around the aircraft. Common sense, certainly, but in need of documenting.

Copies of the competency standards may be purchased from Airservices Australia Publications Centre, ph 1300 306 630, for \$12.75. They may also be downloaded from the CASA web site at <www.casa.gov.au>.

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