



PRINCIPLE

(OPS.21) Check pilot assessment

February 2024



Acknowledgement of Country

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which our offices are located and their continuing connection to land, water and community, and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

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Terminology

Acronyms and abbreviations

Table 1. List of acronyms and abbreviations

Acronym/abbreviation	Description
EPC	examiner proficiency check
FER	flight examiner rating
FIR	flight instructor rating
FPC	flight instructor proficiency check
FSTD	flight simulator training device
HOTC	head of training and checking
IOS	instructor operating station
MOS	manual of standards
PC	proficiency check
PIC	pilot in command
V _{SSE}	velocity safe speed engine
V _{YSE}	velocity Y, single engine
V ₂	take-off safety speed

Definitions

Table 2. List of definitions

Term	Definition
check pilot	A flight crew member assigned by an operator to carry out flight crew training and checking duties
competency	A combination of skills, knowledge and attitudes required to perform a task to the prescribed standard
nominee	A person nominated by the operator for the position of check pilot
V _{SSE}	Speed to provide a margin against unintentional stall
V _{YSE}	Best single-engine rate of climb speed
V ₂	The speed at which an aircraft will climb in the event of an engine failure

Reference to regulations

Unless specified otherwise, all subregulations, regulations, Divisions, Subparts and Parts referenced in this Principle are references to the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998* (CASR).

1. Assessment scope

CASA, under Subpart 119.E for air transport operators, and Division 138.B.5 for aerial work operators, must be satisfied that the operator has a sufficient number of suitably qualified, experienced and competent personnel to ensure that training and checking activities can be conducted safely and effectively.

To conduct a Part 121 proficiency check, the person must hold an examiner rating or an approval under regulation 121.010. In the case of a flight crew member proficiency check, conducted under Parts 133, 135 or 138, the person must hold an examiner rating if conducting the check through Part 142 contracted training and checking; or if conducted by the operator, must be nominated in writing by the operator for the role. It is important to note that it is the operator's responsibility to ensure a check pilot nominee has completed a course of training and has been assessed as competent for the activities they are required to perform.

To issue an approval under regulation 121.010 to conduct proficiency checks, CASA must be satisfied that the person is competent. In the case of Parts 133, 135 and 138, CASA may test the nominated individual to confirm competence.

An assessment may consist of all or part of the following:

- desktop assessment
- interview
- flight test.

This protocol suite has been designed to assist the inspector in the decision-making process as to:

- whether an assessment is required
- what form that assessment should take
- whether the person is competent for the role.

1.1 Assessment worksheet user instructions

This principle provides guidance to the inspector when using the associated Worksheet (OPS.21). The worksheet provides inspectors with a regulation-based tool for recording the outcomes of the assessment. It is set out as follows:

- user instructions
- assessment worksheets
- assessment summary
- approval data sheet.

2. Desktop assessment

2.1 Relevant Part 61 qualifications

In determining whether a flight test is required, the inspector should take into account the nominees Part 61 qualifications. (relevant qualifications)

Regulation 121.580(3) permits a flight examiner to conduct a Part 121 proficiency check in an aeroplane of that kind. Regulations 133.377, 135.387 and 138.505 require training and checking to be conducted by a person nominated by the operator who meets the relevant Manual of Standards (MOS) requirements; or a Part 142 operator who has a contract to conduct the training and check activities. In the latter case, the person must be authorised under Part 61.U.

For a Part 121 proficiency check (121PC) conducted by a flight examiner, the examiner must hold an IR-A flight test endorsement with a valid examiner proficiency check (EPC).

For a Part 133 proficiency check (133PC), Part 135 proficiency check (135PC) and Part 138 proficiency check (138PC), to meet the requirements for a Part 61 proficiency check the examiner must hold the relevant flight test endorsement with a valid EPC. For example, a Part 135PC or 133PC, which is used to validate an instrument proficiency check (IPC), the examiner must hold an IR-A or IR-H (as applicable) flight test endorsement.

The same principle applies for a Part 138 aerial work activity where a Part 61 qualification requires a proficiency check.

Note: if in-aircraft activities are required, confirm the examiner rating or instructor rating is not restricted to a flight simulator training device (FSTD) (refer to section XIII of the flight crew licence).

For proficiency checks not used to meet a Part 61 requirement, the relevant Part 61 qualifications for a check pilot nominated under the MOS for Parts 133, 135 or 138 are either:

- a flight examiner rating (FER) with the relevant flight test endorsement listed in column 1 of Table 61.1310 for the activity, and a valid EPC
- a flight instructor rating (FIR) with the relevant flight training endorsement listed in column 1 of Table 61.1235 for the activity, and a valid flight instructor proficiency check (FPC).

Note: to be clear, if a nominee holds the relevant Part 61 qualifications a flight test is not required. If the nominee does not hold the relevant Part 61 qualifications, the inspector will need to determine whether a flight test is required (see section 5 of this principle).

2.2 Exposition /operations manual

For an operator to train and assess its own check pilots, its exposition/operations manual must detail:

- the qualifications and experience required for the role; and
- if qualified under Part 61, the check and training system induction training; or
- if not qualified under Part 61, a course of training and assessment suitable to CASA (refer to Appendix A of Multi-part AC 119-11 and 138-02 – Training and checking systems).

If the current exposition/operations manual does not include the above, the application/nomination cannot proceed until the exposition/operations manual is amended to include the training and assessment of check pilots. This change is considered a significant change under CASA exemption *CASA EX87/21 Flight Operations Regulations – SMS, HFP&NTS and T&C Systems – Supplementary Exemptions and Directions Instrument 2021*.

2.3 Training records

To make the decision on whether to conduct an interview and/or flight test, the inspector should consider:

- the quality of the training
- robustness of the assessment process
- maturity of the operator.

The inspector should take into consideration the number of check pilots trained by the operator and the number of successful previous flight tests conducted by CASA.

To be satisfied, the inspector must review the assessment and certification by the head of training and checking (HOTC) that the person is competent to perform the required training and checking activities.

2.4 Suitability of the nominee

To be considered suitable for the role, the inspector should review the nominees RMS and EAP records, taking into consideration the following matters:

- any aircraft accident and/or incident within the previous 5 years
- enforcement action within the previous 5 years.

If an event is over five years old, the inspector may, at their discretion, consider an interview to ensure that the person is suitable for the role.

In addition to previous compliance history, the inspector must be satisfied the nominee has completed a course of training suitable for their qualifications and experience.

3. Knowledge test

If the inspector has determined that a flight test is required, the knowledge test would be conducted concurrent with the flight test. Questions should be developed relevant to the activity and the operators' procedures.

To determine whether a knowledge test is required, the inspector should take into consideration the following (as applicable):

- the nominee holds the relevant Part 61 FER requirements to conduct proficiency checks under Part 61, and has a valid EPC
- the nominee holds the relevant Part 61 FIR requirements to conduct flight training in the activity under Part 61, and has a valid FPC
- the nominee has been assessed by a robust internal assessment process to the satisfaction of CASA
- previous check pilot experience with the operator or another operator with similar operations.

If the inspector determines that a knowledge test is required, they should utilise the knowledge test worksheet as a guide to conduct the assessment. The knowledge test worksheet is intended to provide adequate structure for the assessment, while also providing enough flexibility to handle a range of organisations and a range of nominees experience that may arise. This form provides:

- an introduction to the knowledge test
- questions to start a guided discussion about an aspect being assessed
- options for follow-up questions – which can be pre-prepared, or added later as a record of the discussion that took place (see section 3.1 of this principle)
- space to record notes of the applicant's responses
- a conclusion to the knowledge test.

Not all questions on the worksheet need to be answered. The questions are generic in nature, it is up to the inspector to determine what questions are relevant to the assessment. The inspector may add questions to address matters that are specialist in nature. For example, if the operator conducts low-level NVIS operations, the inspector may wish to ask questions to ensure the nominee understands and is able to develop policies and procedures to manage those operations safely.

The knowledge test should be planned to take no longer than one hour.

Note: Keep the knowledge test friendly and professional. Your role is to get the nominee to perform to the best of their ability, without helping them and without making them nervous.

3.1 Questioning techniques

Open/closed questions

Open questions require the applicant to formulate an answer, whereas closed questions can be limited to yes/no answers (i.e. the applicant has a 50:50 chance of guessing the right answer). Where possible, try to utilise open questions.

Example

Open question: How does your company review safety?

Closed question: Does your company have a formal management review process?

Follow-up questions

Use each question as a discussion starter.

Use your skill and knowledge to ask follow-up questions to:

- elicit more information from a quiet/reserved applicant
- bring a chatty applicant, who goes off on tangents, back to your line of questioning
- prompt the applicant, if you feel they have simply forgotten to mention something they probably know (be careful not to prompt the applicant with a 'correct' answer if they appear to be floundering/guessing)
- elicit information to determine that the applicant is, or will be, able to meet the requirements of the role within their specific organisation. Consider the size and scope of the organisation.

Sample follow-up questions

- Can you tell me a bit more about....?
- Does this include?
- Do you think ... is effective?
- What is your role within the ... system?
- For bigger companies, questions about chain of command and managing relationships with different levels.
- For smaller companies, questions about having one's voice heard.

Note: Always keep the regulation you are assessing in mind. Ensure you have enough evidence that the applicant meets the requirements of the regulation – anything less is underreach. However, you don't need to be interrogating the applicant on details of their role that go beyond the requirements of the regulation (avoid overreach).

4. Flight test – general

The inspector will use the guidance in this principle to reach a decision on whether a flight test of a check pilot nominee is required.

A flight test will not be required in the following circumstances:

- the nominee holds the relevant Part 61 FER requirements to conduct proficiency checks under Part 61, and has a valid EPC
- the nominee holds the relevant Part 61 FIR requirements to conduct flight training in the activity under Part 61 and has a valid FPC.

Where the nominee does not have a valid EPC or FPC, in deciding whether a flight test is required, the inspector should take into consideration the date of the last EPC or FPC. If the EPC or FPC has expired by more than one year, the inspector should consider conducting a flight test, taking into account:

- any relevant training and checking activities conducted in the period
- operational experience in the relevant activity.

When considering the nominee's experience on an aircraft of a particular kind, the inspector should take into consideration:

- for a single-engine aeroplane (SEA) or a multi-engine aeroplane (MEA) class rating, the aircraft kind within the class
- for type ratings, the variant associated with the aircraft type.

Note: See the Part 61 Flight Crew Licensing (Prescribed Aircraft and Type Ratings) Instrument 2023 (as amended) for further information.

If the inspector determines that a flight test is required, they must be qualified to conduct the flight test in accordance with the Flying Qualification and Training Handbook.

The inspector must advise the nominated individual, and the operator, of their intention to conduct a flight test using [Annex A to Principle \(OPS.21\) Check pilot assessment – Flight test notification](#).

At the completion of the flight test, the inspector must notify the nominee and operator of the flight test result using [Annex B to Principle \(OPS.21\) Check pilot assessment – Notice of flight test result](#), and include a copy of the flight test worksheet.

Note: a proficiency check completed by a nominated check pilot who subsequently fails a flight test remains valid.

4.1 Operating an aircraft from a pilot control seat

An inspector operating an aircraft as pilot in command (PIC) or in a control seat must meet the flight crew licencing and recency requirements specified in Part 61 for the particular type of operation (including any applicable IFR recency requirements).

Where a flight test involves the simulation of emergency procedures in an aircraft (including simulated engine failure), the inspector must hold the following:

- an FIR, including a training endorsement for the relevant class or type of aircraft (e.g. multi-engine class rating training endorsement or type rating training endorsement)
- a valid FPC.

Flying operations inspectors must adhere to the part 91 requirements listed in Division 91.D.11 - Causing or simulating failures etc.

4.1.1 Conditions when operating an aeroplane

Any time a flying operations inspector operates a multi-engine aeroplane, they must not initiate a simulated engine failure at any time, less than 600ft AGL and less than a speed specified below relevant to the aeroplane:

- $V_{SSE} + 10$ kts or
- $V_{YSE} + 10$ kts
- V_2

4.1.2 Conditions when operating a rotorcraft

A flying operations inspector must only conduct, or instruct another person to conduct, an autorotative landing, if within the preceding four (4) months, they have completed an autorotative landing in a single engine helicopter as the flying pilot.

If conducting a flight in a rotorcraft and intending to simulate engine failures with an OEI training switch the flying operations inspector must be familiar with its use and give the operator written prior notice of the intention to use the OEI training switch

Before a flying operations inspector conducts, or instructs another person to conduct, an autorotative landing, the flying operations inspector must consider the environmental conditions and ground surface conditions on the day. These include:

- the surface wind velocity - there must be no less than 10 knots of wind within 30 degrees of the landing direction.
- the intended landing surface - conduct a powered running landing to check the surface prior to commencing an autorotative landing.

The flying operations inspector must conduct operations in accordance with the following instructions:

- before conducting an autorotative landing at least one (1) autorotation to a power termination must be completed to assess the conditions.
- during power termination autorotation in turbine-engine rotorcraft, ensure that full power is available and confirmed by 100FT AGL.
- for autorotation in all rotorcraft, a safe airspeed commensurate with the manoeuvre must be attained prior to termination. The rotorcraft must be aligned with the intended landing path prior to flare entry.

Note: the instructions listed above do not apply simulated engine failures at the hover or hover taxi.

4.2 Operating an aircraft from a position other than a control seat

To conduct a flight test from a position other than a control seat, the inspector must:

- not include the *conduct emergency procedures* (including simulated engine failures)
- conduct the flight test in accordance with the requirements contained in section 10.2 of the Flying Qualification & Training Handbook, that is:
 - seating is in the immediate vicinity of operating crew with an unrestricted view of flight crew and instrumentation
 - suitable communication facilities exist to permit the inspector to monitor and communicate with the flight crew
 - a pre-flight briefing is conducted.
- only conduct a flight test when the inspector has evidence that each person at the aircraft controls meets the requirements of regulation 61.385—General competency requirements, specifically in relation to the

manoeuvres (non-emergency procedures) intended to be conducted, and recovery from the above manoeuvres in the event of mishandling

- only conduct the flight test when the inspector has evidence that the relevant person has been adequately trained and considered competent by the HOTC. The flight resulting in the competency recommendation must not be greater than 28 days from the assessment flight.

5. FSTD flight test worksheet

The check pilot flight test competencies reflect those detailed for the equivalent authorisation requirements for the grant of that flight examiner endorsement.

5.1 Pre-training and proficiency check (pre-session briefing)

To be satisfactory, the inspector should observe that the nominee is able to:

- create an open atmosphere where flight crew are encouraged to ask for clarification should they become uncertain on any of the proficiency check elements
- conduct the pre-session briefing in accordance with the exposition/operations manual
- make effective use of pre-flight briefing tools
- deliver the pre-flight briefing at an appropriate pace, allowing sufficient time for the flight crew to review flight dispatch package and charts etc.

At the completion of an effective pre-flight brief, the flight crew should:

- understand what exercises will be conducted
- understand how each simulated emergency/abnormal event will be actioned
- know who the PIC is (where a co-pilot will act as PIC for specific proficiency check exercises, the commencement and completion points of the simulated PIC must be clarified).

If the proficiency check of the flight crew member is being conducted following a failed assessment, the check pilot should review the remedial training records.

5.2 Conduct of the training and proficiency check

An FSTD is a valuable tool when used correctly; however, used incorrectly, it can result in negative training. The nominee should demonstrate effective management of the instructor operating station (IOS) to ensure:

- the aims of the proficiency check are accomplished
- the FSTD is operated in a safe manner.

The check must follow the training and checking syllabus in accordance operator's exposition/manual. The proficiency check should be conducted such that all required components can be assessed in a logical sequence.

The nominee should display timely and appropriate intervention. A competent performance in operating the FSTD IOS is where the nominee is in control of the session and can manage unplanned situations to achieve the desired task outcome.

To be deemed satisfactory, the nominee should not introduce simultaneous, multiple, and unrelated emergencies or abnormal events during the proficiency check. Emergencies and abnormal situations relating to aircraft systems, powerplants and the airframe should be limited to those described in the aircraft flight manual.

As far as possible, the proficiency check should be conducted in real-time with realistic operational support, and realistic air traffic control (ATC) and company support communications (e.g. engineers, cabin crew, company).

The nominee should demonstrate how they collect the evidence to support their proficiency check assessment. The inspector should observe the nominee actively monitoring the flight crew member's performance, including the accurate diagnosis faults.

The inspector should observe the nominee's instructional technique, including in-seat instruction where required, accurately identifying poor performance.

5.3 Post training and proficiency check (post-session briefing)

The nominee must make an accurate assessment of proficiency, based on objective evaluation, using the operator's grading system.

The nominee must advise the flight crew member of the result of the proficiency check and provide feedback on performance and, if applicable, outline remedial training.

To be deemed satisfactory, the inspector should observe that the nominee is able to:

- create an open atmosphere where flight crew are encouraged to ask for clarification should they become uncertain on any of the proficiency check results
- conduct the post-session briefing in accordance with the exposition/operations manual
- make effective use of post session briefing tools
- deliver from a macro to micro perspective (i.e. give a general overview of performance then drill down to specific areas requiring attention to improve competency)
- deliver the post-session briefing at an appropriate pace, allowing self-assessment where appropriate.

At the completion of an effective post-session brief, the flight crew should:

- understand the result of the proficiency check
- understand what, if any, remedial training is required.

In the event of an unsatisfactory or marginal assessment, in addition to the post-session briefing, the inspector should observe that the nominee accurately documents the areas where the flight crew member was not competent on the proficiency check record. The inspector should also confirm the nominee understands the procedures detailed in the exposition/operations manual for an unsatisfactory performance.

6. Aircraft flight test worksheet

Where an in-aircraft assessment is deemed necessary, inspectors must follow the required procedures documented in the Flying Qualification & Training Handbook.

6.1 Pre-training and proficiency check (pre-flight briefing)

The applicant is required to confirm the flight crew hold valid Part 61 authorisations for the activity. A flight crew licence and medical certificate must be carried during flight, with some exceptions stated in Part 91.

To be deemed satisfactory, the inspector should observe that the nominee is able to:

- create an open atmosphere where flight crew are encouraged to ask for clarification should they become uncertain on any of the proficiency check elements
- conduct the pre-session briefing in accordance with the exposition/operations manual
- make effective use of pre-flight briefing tools
- deliver the pre-flight briefing at an appropriate pace, allowing sufficient time for the flight crew to review flight dispatch package and charts etc.

At the completion of an effective pre-flight brief, the flight crew should:

- understand what exercises will be conducted
- understand how each simulated emergency/abnormal events will be conducted
- clarify responsibilities of the flight crew during each simulated emergency/abnormal exercise, including the communication and coordination protocols such as handover/takeover calls and task allocation (e.g. 'I will reset aircraft systems you will...')
- verify what happens in the event of an actual emergency/abnormal situation
- understand who the PIC is (where a co-pilot will act as PIC for specific proficiency check exercises, the commencement and completion points of the simulated PIC must be clarified).

If the proficiency check of the flight crew member is being conducted following a failed assessment, the check pilot should review the remedial training records.

6.2 Conduct of the training and proficiency check

To be deemed satisfactory, the inspector should observe that the nominee is able to:

- conduct a pre-departure safety briefing
- conduct the proficiency check at an appropriate pace to maintain the safety of the aircraft
- display the required non-technical skills (NTS 1 and NTS 2) to ensure safe operations
- safely manage the aircraft configuration
- display appropriate intervention strategies where required
- manage contingencies and any abnormal or emergency situations effectively.

In addition to the above, if the nominee is part of the operating crew, the nominee must:

- demonstrate proficiency in aircraft and flight management systems
- demonstrate situational awareness, threat and error management and decision-making during the flight displayed
- demonstrate they follow the operator's standard operating procedures, except where required to conduct a specific exercise
- operate within specified tolerances in schedule 8 of the Part 61 MOS.

The nominee should demonstrate how they collect the evidence to support their proficiency check assessment. The inspector should observe the nominee actively monitoring the flight crew member's performance, including the accurate diagnosis faults.

The inspector should observe the nominee's instructional technique, including in-seat instruction where required, accurately identifying poor performance.

6.3 Post training and proficiency check (post-flight briefing)

The nominee must make an accurate assessment of proficiency, based on objective evaluation, using the operator's grading system.

The nominee must advise the flight crew member of the result of the proficiency check and provide feedback on performance and, if applicable, outline remedial training.

To be deemed satisfactory, the inspector should observe that the nominee is able to:

- create an open atmosphere where flight crew are encouraged to ask for clarification should they become uncertain on any of the proficiency check results
- conduct the post-session briefing in accordance with the exposition/operations manual
- make effective use of post session briefing tools
- deliver from a macro to micro perspective (i.e. give a general overview of performance then drill down to specific areas requiring attention to improve competency)
- deliver the post-session briefing at an appropriate pace, allowing self-assessment where appropriate.

At the completion of an effective post-session brief, the flight crew should:

- understand the result of the proficiency check
- understand what, if any, remedial training is required.

In the event of an unsatisfactory or marginal assessment, in addition to the post-session briefing, the inspector should observe the nominee accurately documenting the areas where the flight crew member was not competent on the proficiency check record. The inspector should also confirm the nominee understands the procedures detailed in the exposition/operations manual for an unsatisfactory performance.

If required, the nominee should ensure the aircraft is returned to operational status in accordance the exposition/operations manual by removing:

- any ballast required
- equipment such as instrument flight screens
- training checklist etc.

7. Revision history

Amendments/revisions for this principle are recorded below in order of the most recent first.

Table 3. Revision history table

Version No.	Date	Parts / Sections	Details
1.3	February 2024	Section 4	Incorporates TMI 2017-004 re rotorcraft
1.2	December 2023	All	Updated to new format. Additional guidance for relevant Part 61 qualifications and nominee suitability. New Annex A and B.
1.1	May 2022	Consistency and standardisation section Section 4	Update to terminology and definitions table. Remove the need to gain approval of the FARP.
1.0	March 2022	All	First issue