

EALTS Information for Candidates

A multi-level language proficiency assessment for air traffic controllers and pilots

What is the EALTS?

The EALTS is a multi-level testing system designed to assess the language proficiency of air traffic controllers, commercial flight crew and recreational pilots across all levels of the ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale from **Pre-Elementary Level 1** to **Expert Level 6** and to report results as a score, or rating, on this scale.

The EALTS is the language proficiency testing system developed and administered by Language Testing and Assessment Services (LTAS). LTAS has been approved and certificated by UK CAA as complying in all respects with the Test Service Provider requirements contained in ICAO Doc. 9835 Manual on the implementation of the ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements.

The EALTS assesses the English language skills of speaking and listening in the context of aviation and aeronautical communications. EALTS awards are recognised internationally by employers, professional registration bodies and national licensing authorities for licence endorsement purposes.

The EALTS is recommended for qualified and experienced aviation professionals, flight crew and air traffic controllers or those coming to the end of their professional training requiring an internationally recognised assessment of their English for Aviation language proficiency.

The EALTS does not assess formulaic radiotelephone phraseology, and neither does it assess operational skills or specific technical knowledge of operations. However, although a test of language and not a test of procedure, the EALTS is not recommended for *ab-initio* aviation profession trainees or candidates unfamiliar with aviation operations.

EALTS test administration

The EALTS is deliverable at test centres and within organisations worldwide. Test centres may be established within national licensing authorities, aircraft operators and air navigation service provider organisations, professional and recreational aviation training institutions and language training academies, subject to demand.

Central EALTS Administration certifies local test centres to deliver the EALTS. These centres supervise the local administration of the EALTS tests, including candidate enrolment, the organisation of test locations, facilities and equipment, the provision of trained and qualified examiners, the local management of assessment data, the distribution of Test Reports, and all local EALTS enquiries.

The EALTS is an on-demand testing system subject to availability, with candidates applying and enrolling for the test through approved test centres.

EALTS components

The EALTS comprises the **English for Aviation Language Test (EALT)** for *non-native speakers of English*, and the **ICAO Expert Level 6 Assessment (ICAO ELSA)** for *native or near-native speakers* of the language.

Both components offer direct assessments of communicative competence in listening and speaking allowing organisations to determine the extent to which commercial flight crew, recreational pilots and air traffic controllers are able to meet the ICAO Language Proficiency Standards.

EALT test format

The English for Aviation Language Test (EALT) comprises the **EALT Test of Listening** and the **EALT Test of Speaking**. The two parts of the EALT do not have to be completed on the same day and the order in which they can be taken is not fixed. However, the two parts of the test should typically be taken within seven days of each other. Test schedules are by arrangement with the test centre.

The EALT Test of Listening is presented as an on-line mediated test of aural comprehension. The EALT Test of Speaking takes the form of a direct face-to-face interview with qualified and trained examiners.

There are versions of the EALT for flight crew and air traffic controllers, with further distinct adaptations: pilots of fixed-wing heavy aircraft; pilots of fixed-wing light aircraft; pilots of rotary-wing heavy aircraft; pilots of rotary-wing light aircraft; ground and tower controllers; approach controllers; and, en route controllers. These should be seen as adaptations in the interest of the comfort of the test-taker, not as specialised tests of distinct varieties of language proficiency. It is the responsibility of the test-taker at the time of application to inform the test administrator which version of the test he or she wishes to take.

EALT content

The items and tasks of the EALT are set within operational contexts appropriate to the candidates, with test topics, themes, priority lexical domains and functional language proficiency requirements drawn from guidance provided in ICAO Doc. 9835 Manual on the Implementation of ICAO Language Proficiency Requirements and from further consultation with aviation professionals and subject matter experts.

The EALT does not focus on discrete-point items, either in grammar or in vocabulary.

The EALT does not assess formulaic R/T phraseology, and neither does it assess operational skills or specific technical knowledge of operations.

EALT preparation

The EALT assesses a test-taker's ability to use English in the context of aviation and aeronautical communications. For this reason, the most appropriate way of preparing for the EALT is to practise using English in realistic (real or simulated) aviation-related situations.

While it may not be necessary for all candidates to attend formal EALTS training programmes, candidates are advised to prepare for their test, and in the EALTS Application Form candidates are required to declare some form of preparation. Test-takers should familiarise themselves with the language requirements and format of the EALT. Sample and demonstration material for the **EALT Test of Listening** and the **EALT Test of Speaking** is available through the EALTS website.

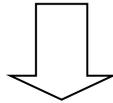
General and specific advice to test-takers and language trainers on how to prepare for the EALTS is given in the EALTS Test Preparation Guide. This guide is available through the EALTS website.

EALT results

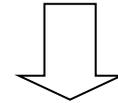
Test results are typically available within ten working days of the completion of the test. Candidates receive a single copy of their Test Report. Candidates will receive their EALTS Test Reports through the Centre where the test was taken. There are no

EALTS Overview

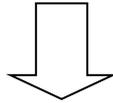
English for Aviation Language Testing System



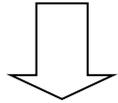
Native or near-native speakers of English



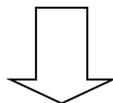
Non-native Speakers of English



ICAO ELSA †
Expert Level 6 Assessment



EALT
English for Aviation Language Test



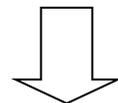
ICAO Expert Level 6 Assessment

Duration: not applicable

The **ICAO ELSA** is a direct interview between the candidate and an interlocutor in which the candidate's language proficiency is assessed across a range of tasks involving both face-to-face and voice only communications. The ELSA is more a language assessment *event* than a test, assessing the language proficiency and linguistic biography of the candidate while he/she takes part in an informal but structured conversation.

Two trained and certificated EALTS Examiners assess the language proficiency of the candidate and determine if the assessment criteria contained at **Expert** Level 6 in the ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale and those contained in the ICAO Holistic Descriptors of operational language proficiency have been satisfied to allow confirmation of ICAO **Expert** Level 6 competency.

The ICAO ELSA assesses only ICAO **Expert** Level 6 competency. In cases where the ELSA is unable to confirm a candidate's proficiency at ICAO **Expert** Level 6, that candidate may be referred to the EALT.



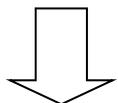
EALT Test of Listening

Duration: Approximately 40 minutes

The **EALT Test of Listening** is a computer mediated adaptive test of voice-only aural comprehension. Test-takers listen to a number of recorded communications. The recordings feature a range of announcements and talk-back exchanges typical of aeronautical communications. The communications concern routine and non-routine situations and include a variety of English accents, both native and non-native speaker.

Test-takers demonstrate the extent of their proficiency in the non-collaborative comprehension of the communications through their responses to aural prompts accompanying the communications. Unless otherwise selected by the test-takers, the communications and their accompanying prompts are heard once only.

A test-taker's proficiency in understanding discourse in non-interactive situations is measured against the criteria for the assessment of aural comprehension contained in the descriptors for *Comprehension* in the ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale.



EALT Test of Speaking

Duration: 17-20 minutes

The **EALT Test of Speaking** is a direct interview between test-takers and an interlocutor in which the test-takers' language proficiency is assessed across a range of tasks involving both face-to-face and voice only communications

Test-takers and examiners are paired for the purposes of the interview. One examiner acts as an interlocutor/assessor and manages the interaction either by asking questions and providing the task cues for the test-takers. The other examiner acts as an observer/assessor and does not take part in the interaction.

The test contains both individual and collaborative tasks, requiring test-takers to exchange information, to explain, discuss and describe situations procedures and events, to monitor, check, confirm, clarify and report, to negotiate meaning and understanding and to produce extended speech – all within the context of aviation communications and related topics and scenarios.

Test-takers are assessed on their performance throughout the test against the assessment criteria contained in the ICAO Language Proficiency Rating Scale and the ICAO Holistic Descriptors of operational language proficiency.

† The principal focus of this EALTS Information to Candidates is English for Aviation Language Test (EALT). For further detailed information concerning the ICAO ELSA, please contact Central EALTS Administration.

English for Aviation Language Test (EALT) Overview

Test / Timing Nature of Task

Test Focus

EALT Test of Listening

40 minutes (approximate)

- Section 1** A test of voice-only aural comprehension at ICAO **Elementary Level 2**. A minimum of 5 and a maximum of 25 short unrelated R/T transmissions of aeronautical communications featuring single speakers or exchanges between interacting speakers followed by two 3-option multi-choice tasks.
- Section 2** A test of voice-only aural comprehension at ICAO **Pre-Operational Level 3**. A minimum of 5 and a maximum of 20 short unrelated R/T transmissions of aeronautical communications featuring single speakers or exchanges between interacting speakers followed by three 3-option multi-choice tasks.
- Section 3** A test of voice-only aural comprehension at ICAO **Operational Level 4**. A minimum of 5 and a maximum of 15 short unrelated R/T transmissions of aeronautical communications featuring single speakers or exchanges between interacting speakers followed by four 3-option multi-choice tasks.
- Section 4** A test of voice-only aural comprehension at ICAO **Extended Level 5**. A minimum of 5 and a maximum of 10 short unrelated R/T transmissions of aeronautical communications featuring single speakers or exchanges between interacting speakers followed by five 3-option multi-choice tasks.
- Section 5** A test of voice-only aural comprehension at ICAO **Expert Level 6**. A maximum of 5 extended unrelated R/T transmissions of aeronautical communications featuring single speakers or exchanges between interacting speakers followed by six 3-option multi-choice tasks.

The tasks of the test seek to elicit evidence of aural comprehension in the context of aeronautical communications.

Candidates are required to understand each aviation-related R/T communication as a whole in both gist and detail and to demonstrate their understanding of the communication by the correct identification of specific information contained in the communication.

The single task type is the identification of factual information and specific detail by means of the selection of the correct response from a three-option multi-choice range.

EALT Test of Speaking

17-20 minutes

- Task 1** In a face to face exchange, the candidates briefly introduce themselves before moving on to talk about common, concrete and operations-related topics drawn from their own area of aviation-related activity.
- Task 2** In a voice-only exchange, the candidates interact with each other in sharing their understanding of an aeronautical communication concerning an unusual circumstance or emergency situation presented as an aural prompt. Candidates are required to use appropriate communicative strategies to exchange understanding and to recognise and resolve mis- or non-understanding as they work towards the negotiated completion of the task by checking, confirming and clarifying the information and details contained in the communication as preparation for their presentation of an accurate and concise report of the incident.
- Task 3** In a face to face exchange, the interlocutor presents each candidate with a scenario of an unusual circumstance or emergency situation. The scenarios are customised to the candidates' own areas of operational activity. Following a series of generalised written prompts, the candidates are required to give a briefing of approximately two minutes' duration explaining the nature of the scenario and how it may be effectively managed. The candidates have one minute to prepare their briefing.
- The briefing allows the candidates to demonstrate the range and accuracy of the linguistic resource they have to draw upon in the successful management of a complication or unexpected turn of events that may occur within the context of a routine operations situation or communicative task with which they are otherwise familiar.
- The listening candidate is instructed to ask one or two rounding-off questions or to comment further at the end of the speaking candidate's turn.
- Task 3 Extended** At his/her discretion, the interlocutor may ask the candidates to participate in a discussion of a more abstract nature, based on verbal questions thematically linked to their Task 3 scenarios.
- The questions asked by the interlocutor are not designed to test the technical knowledge of the candidates, but will examine further the candidates' ability to express thoughts and opinions in English. This task allows the interlocutor flexibility in the use of *high-* and *low-end* LPRS discriminators.
- Candidates are expected to share the interaction and to initiate and respond appropriately.

The EALT Test of Speaking is typically delivered in the paired test format; paired examiners and paired candidates. The paired candidates may know each other, or they may never have met before.

The tasks of the test seek to facilitate the elicitation of a sample of oral language proficiency with reference to the critical skills of operational language proficiency as defined in the ICAO Holistic Descriptors.

Candidates are required to demonstrate their spoken language proficiency in the context of their own aviation-related activity.

Candidates are asked to perform a variety of spoken tasks requiring the use of a range of communicative language skills and strategies in the functional language domains of sharing information, triggering actions, managing the speaker/listener relation and managing the interaction.

The Test of Speaking is audio-recorded.

Further details of the tests of the EALTS, including sample and demonstration material of the EALT Test of Listening and the EALT Test of Speaking are available at www.ealts.com.

Test application and local administration

Central EALTS Administration maintains central management and control of the EALTS but the local administration of the test is organised through local test centres.

Local test centres conduct EALTS testing sessions on behalf of organisations, training institutions or licensing authorities subject to local requirements. Special test sessions can be arranged for individuals wishing to sit the test. Interested parties should contact their local test centre in the first instance.

The following steps outline the application and administration procedure for the EALT.

Enquiry

Test applicants or their sponsors contact a test centre to obtain an application form and to find out about available test dates. The test centre can also provide further details of the EALT as required. Contact details for all EALTS test centres worldwide can be found through the EALTS website.

Application and enrolment

Applicants complete the application form and send it or take it in person to the test centre with the test fee and appropriate additional documentation. Those taking the completed form in person to the test centre will have a digital photograph taken to prevent the possibility of identity fraud. Those sending the completed form should include two recent identical passport-sized photographs (not more than six months old). Further evidence of identity including such details as a unique identifying number, photograph, date of birth and signature, such as a passport, aviation authority licence or national Identity card, will also be required. This same document must be presented at the test centre on the day(s) of the test and must be valid, both at registration and on the day(s) the test is taken.

Candidates must enter the number of their chosen identity document on the application form. A copy of the identity document is to be attached to the application form. Only when all registration procedures are fully completed, including the receipt of the test fee, will an application be processed.

Confirmation of enrolment

After the application has been received by Central EALTS Administration, the local test centre informs the candidate of the dates and times available for them to take the two parts of the test. The test centre and candidate schedule a mutually convenient date and time for both parts of the test to be taken and the tests are formally booked. It is not necessary for both parts of the EALT to take place on the same day. The local test centre confirms the agreed final schedule for both parts of the EALT to the candidate in writing.

Taking the test

The identity of all candidates is checked before they sit either part of the EALT. Photographs of candidates may be taken prior, during or after a test has been taken. Each candidate must have the same evidence of identity as that used to support the application form. No other forms of identification are acceptable. Paper and pens or pencils will be provided by the test centres. Candidates must not take any bags, books, papers, cameras, mobile phones, recording devices, pagers or any other devices, electronic or otherwise, into the test rooms.

EALT administrators meet the candidates, check identification and ensure all candidates know where and when to go for their tests. For the EALT Test of Listening, candidates are given a unique log-in name and password and are assigned a computer terminal. Candidates log themselves in using the details provided and are then approved to begin the test by the EALT Administrator. For the EALT Test of Speaking, candidates are assigned a waiting room and an interview room.

Candidates are encouraged to take notes during both parts of the test, but notes made during either part of the test may not be removed from the test rooms. Candidates are not allowed to leave the test rooms at any time during either test.

The EALT Test of Speaking test is recorded.

EALT Results

Results are awarded by Central EALTS Administration and local test centres are informed typically within 10 working days of the completion of the test. Local test centres are then responsible for notifying their candidates of these results.

Additional notification of results may be undertaken by test centres to organisations, departments or individuals nominated by the candidate or the candidate's sponsor organisation at the time of enrolment.

To reduce the risk of error in the communicating of results, test centres are typically not permitted to give results over the phone, by e-mail or by fax.

Candidates will receive their EALTS Test Reports through the Centre where the test was taken.

A Test Report Verification Service is available through Central EALTS Administration.

