



International Virtual Aviation Organisation

# **Senior Private Pilot (SPP) exam**

## Briefing Guide and Flight Test Standards

English version

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*Note:* Left vertical revision marks indicate changes from previous version

## 1. Requirements

- *Previous rating requirements:* have your Private Pilot (PP) for at least 60 days and at least 100 hours flying time logged time on IVAN (controller hours are not taken into account),
- *Theoretical exam:* complete the Senior Private Pilot (SPP) online test (45 minutes to answer 20 questions randomly chosen in the database),
- *Practical exam:* perform an IFR flight under the guidance of a nominated examiner.

## 2. Applying for the exam

The theoretical exam can be requested through the [Exams / Request Theoretical Exam] menu of the IVAO [Training department page](#).

After your successful theoretical exam, you can apply for the skills test. Unlike the theoretical exam, which is automated and centralised, the practical exam is done by your division. If you are not a member of an active division, or your division doesn't have a competent examiner, we will assign one from another country. The practical exam can be requested through the [Exams / Request Practical Exam] menu of the IVAO [Training department page](#). In case your practical exam has previously been cancelled, you should follow the procedure described on our [Exam Policy page](#) (Practical exams – General points).

Once your exam is registered, the examiner will contact you via your e-mail address on your details page. *Before requesting for the exam, check that this e-mail is valid since it is the only way for the examiner to get in touch with you.*

In case you do not attend the exam at the agreed date/time, the examiner will wait for 15 minutes. You will have 48 hours to provide a valid reason for not having attended the exam. If a valid reason is not given, your exam will be marked 0/100 which means a delay of 90 days will apply before a new exam can be asked for.

## 3. Validation of the exam

After the flight test your examiner will send his evaluation to the Training Director who will assign a validator; the validator will verify the marking based on the comments and marking sheet of the examiner. If your exam is validated as a success your rating will be updated at 1200z the following day.

## 4. Skills Test

The SPP exam is a series of tasks to appreciate your basic IFR theoretical knowledge and your practical flying skills in performing simple IFR exercises.

Note that **these are our minimum standards**. *Your local division may have set additional requirements that should be published on its web site.*

### 4.1 IVAO software and communication modes

You can use any IVAO approved client for the exam. Visit the [IVAO virtual pilot client web page](#) (IvAp) for a complete list (the page also includes a link to the [IvAp manuals](#)).

Although it is part of the PP exam, *your ability of correctly using the main functions of IVAO software and your knowledge of connection procedures could be checked*. This includes: text and voice communications, ATIS retrieval and interpretation, use of the different transponder modes, METAR and TAF retrieval. In case there are serious deficiencies in this area, the exam will be marked as failed.

You must use IVAO approved software with *IVAO weather* enabled. We discourage the use of other weather sources to ensure examiner and examinee use the same reference.

We strongly recommend voice communication for the exam. We do not recommend a "text-text" or "text-voice" communication method due to the increased level of difficulty and incompatibilities with certain tasks. Should a member be unable to use voice or the voice/text method, please contact the HQ Training Department before requesting the exam in order to establish an individual procedure. For some exercises, the examiner will also request you transmit in text mode either on the active frequency or in a private (chat) mode.

### 4.2 IFR theoretical knowledge

You will be assessed on your theoretical IFR knowledge as part of the exam. During the briefing or at some times during the flight, the examiner will ask you a few short questions regarding the following items:

- *Aircraft knowledge and performance*: basic weights, standard take-off parameters, usual operating cruise speed(s) and flight levels, approach/landing configurations and speeds,
- *Chart reading, IFR procedures*: IFR charts (SID, STAR, IAP) interpretation, semi-circular rules, RVSM airspace, applicable flight minimum altitudes, precision approach minima,
- *Flight instruments and navigation equipment*: aircraft flight instrument systems (altimeter, airspeed indicator, VSI, AI, HIS, heading indicator), altimeter

settings, TAS and GS estimation, aircraft navigation systems (VOR, ADF, DME, ILS), transponders,

- *Meteorology*: METAR and TAF interpretation,

Most of the required knowledge can be found on the [IVAO Academy](#) site. You will find in [Appendix I](#), a suggested list of training materials you could refer to.

### 4.3 IFR skills flight

The skills test is a series of tasks laid out to evaluate your basic IFR flying skills.

#### 4.3.1 General requirements

(a) A *light or medium (L/M) twin-engine piston, turbocharged or turboprop aircraft* (such as a Baron 58, Beech King 200, Beech 1900 or similar) must be used for the flight test. *Jet aircrafts are not allowed for this exam.* Basic NAV and COM equipment is needed to fulfil exam requirements (this includes at least 2 VOR, 1 ILS, 1 ADF and 1 DME). Make sure you choose an aircraft you know well and are comfortable with.

*You will have to inform your examiner of the aircraft you will use for the exam beforehand.*

(b) Use of the autopilot, FMC and/or GPS are permitted during the exam. However, be aware that autopilot and/or advanced navigation systems might not be able to fulfil some manoeuvres exceeding their capabilities. You are free to use them at your own risk.

(c) Your examiner will advise you of the departure and destination airports prior to the exam but you will have to plan the route yourself. As a general rule, you will be requested to fly between two airports at least 50 nm apart under instrument flight rules. The flight will include a standard instrument departure (SID) and arrival (STAR) and a precision approach.

(d) You will be expected to find the necessary IFR charts yourself (check your [country's AIS](#) for online chart availability). If you have difficulties doing so, contact your examiner prior to the exam. In all cases, you may have to coordinate with the examiner so as to determinate which charts will be needed.

(e) Current departing/arrival weather conditions must be above applicable minima for the flight to take place. When starting the exam, you will have to decide if the current weather is acceptable for the intended IFR flight.

(f) You should connect to IVAO at your departure airfield using the following callsign: EXMxxxx where xxxx are the last 4 digits of the exam number. Your radiotelephony callsign will be "Exam ####". Your exam number can be found on the [My details] page under the Training tab.

(g) The examiner will usually be connected as an observer and will "simulate" an active ATC position although he may also connect as an active ATC or collaborate with another ATC in charge of the airspace where the exam takes place. In all cases, comply with all instructions normally.

(h) Unless you are disconnected from the network, we require *you submit your flight plan once*, when starting the test flight, and on examiner request. You should not change any item and/or resubmit your flight plan thereafter.

### 4.3.2 IFR flight

The test flight will mainly assess the following:

- IFR flight plan; we encourage you to carefully learn how to correctly fill a flight plan by consulting [this Academy chapter](#); unless you are disconnected during the exam, we request that you send your flight plan *only once* at the beginning of the flight and on request of the examiner,
- IFR departure procedure (as published or prescribed by examiner),
- En route IFR navigation (accuracy of navigation based on radionavigation aids); during the flight, your examiner may ask you to make some exercises (turns to specified headings, climbs/descents to assigned altitude, crossing a defined fix at a specified altitude, intercepting and tracking some VOR radials),
- Standard IFR arrival procedure via a prescribed or published route,
- Hold over a VOR,
- ILS approach, including initial approach segment (as published or required by examiner),
- Missed approach,
- Phraseology (use of correct phraseology, prompt and accurate readback, proficiency in spoken English).

## 5. Evaluation and marking method

The examiner will score **all** required tasks separately (including both theoretical questions and practical exercises) on a dedicated marking sheet.

Each score will reflect the accuracy and depth of your knowledge and your ability to accurately perform the required tasks.

Your examiner will calculate your final score. The maximum score is 100 points. The pass mark is 75/100. In all cases, your examiner will give you a detailed break-up of your score during the debriefing so you can identify your errors and correct them.

*Certain minimum requirements* are expected for some tasks: (i) basic IFR theoretical knowledge, (ii) execution of the ILS approach, (iii) compliance with clearances, (iv) radio communications (v) and English proficiency. Failure to perform these tasks at the specified standard will result in the exam being marked as fail regardless of your overall performance and the final exam mark be 49/100 or 0/100 depending on examiner's assessment.

Also, in case you decide to stop the exam at any time after it has begun, your exam will be marked 0/100.

*Some special situations will also result in an automatic exam failure and the score will be at the most 49/100:*

- Not having the necessary charts for the exam (when provided by IVAO, your examiner or freely available on the Internet),
- Connecting on the runway,
- Entering the runway, taking-off or landing without clearance,
- Initiating approach without clearance,
- Failing to intercept and track a VOR radial,
- Descending below minimum safety altitudes at any time,
- Crashing due to terrain collision or aircraft overstress.

However, in such cases, and unless you experienced a crash, *the exam will be continued until all points are covered.*

# APPENDIX I

## Training materials

1. [Academy – Bare basics](#) (including Guidelines for Pilots notes when appropriate)
  - Clearance and instructions
  - Flight rules
  - Flight plan (filing an IFR flight plan)
  - Communications – Phraseology basic words
  - Communications – Alphabet & Call Signs
  - Communications - Numbers
  - Communications - Read Back
  - Altimeter Settings
  - Cruising Levels
  - Squawk codes & Transponders
2. [Academy - Approach](#)
  - Approach procedures
  - SID – Standard Instrument Departure
  - STAR – Standard Instrument Arrival
  - Holdings
  - ILS cat I & II – Instrument Landing System category I-II
  - Performances at Approach
3. [Academy – More information](#)
  - METAR – (Short) TAF: Aviation Weather Reports
  - Speed
4. [Academy – Miscellaneous](#)
  - Navigational charts explained
  - Navigational instruments
5. Other online sources
  - [Missed approach](#) (IVAO Belgium)
  - [Phraseology common mistakes](#) (IVAO Belgium)
  - [Microsoft Flight Simulator Handbook](#) (Part II – Instrument Flight)
  - [Pilot's Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge](#) (especially [Flight instruments](#), [Aircraft performance](#) and [Navigation](#))
  - [Instrument Flying Handbook](#) (especially Flight instruments, Airplane attitude instrument flying, Navigation systems, IFR flight –see TOC for links)
  - [Instrument Procedures Handbook](#)

*Note:* The Training department of your division may also publish some recommended material on its web site (either in English or in your own language) and will include the necessary links in the localized version of this document.