ACS Benefits

The ACS:

- Provides clear information on what an applicant must *know*, *consider*, and *do* to qualify for a given airman certificate or rating.

- Allows the FAA to ensure that test questions are aligned to the standards and supported by H-series handbooks and other guidance.

- Increases standardization.

- Enhances safety by ensuring that standards, guidance and testing for airman certification all work together effectively.

Photo by Chris Morris

Federal Aviation Administration

Introducing the ACS:

Airman Certification Standards

For More Information

ACS Focus Team (9-AVS-ACS-Focus-Team@faa.gov)

Airman Testing (www.faa.gov/training_testing/testing/acs)

An Integrated Approach

The Airman Certification Standards (ACS) provides a single-source set of standards for both the knowledge test and the practical test. It also enables the FAA to keep standards aligned with H-series handbooks and knowledge test questions.

Built on the Practical Test Standards (PTS), the ACS adds the aeronautical knowledge and risk management elements needed to support each PTS Task. It does not change or lengthen the practical test.

The ACS provides a clear, easy-to-use "flight plan" for the material the FAA expects an applicant to know (knowledge), consider (risk management), and do (skill) to qualify for an airman certificate or rating.

The ACS replaced the PTS for Private Pilot Airplane (PAR) and Instrument Rating Airplane (IRA) June 15, 2016, and for Commercial Pilot Airplane (CAX) on June 12, 2017.

Background

Since September 2011, the FAA has been working with aviation community stakeholders to help improve standards, guidance, and test development practices for airman certification.

Under the auspices of an Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC) and the industry's Aviation Rulemaking Advisory Committee (ARAC), three industry working groups have developed and refined the ACS framework. These groups have also made recommendations to improve the FAA's H-series handbooks and bring knowledge test development procedures in line with accepted best practices.

ACS documents for the ATP, Instructor, and AMT certificates are in development. The FAA and aviation community members of the ACS Working Group will jointly establish priorities for expanding the ACS framework to other airman certificates and ratings.

ACS Coding

The ACS assigns a unique code to each knowledge, skill, and risk management element. These codes are anchored in the ACS, unlike today's reference-based Learning Statement Codes.

ACS codes will provide better feedback to applicants, instructors, and evaluators. The ACS codes also enable the FAA to keep standards clearly aligned with H-series handbooks and test questions, and to develop timely and relevant test questions.

Example from Commercial Pilot Airplane ACS CA.I.F.K2f

CA = Commercial Pilot Airplane (applicable ACS)
I = Preflight Preparation (Area of Operation)
F = Performance & Limitations (Task)
K2f = Weight & Balance (Task element)

I. Preflight Preparation

Task	F. Performance and Limitations
References	FAA-H-8083-1, FAA-H-8083-2, FAA-H-8083-3, FAA-H-8083-25; POH/AFM
Objective	To determine that the applicant exhibits satisfactory knowledge, risk management, and skills associated with operating an aircraft safely within the parameters of its performance capabilities and limitations.
Knowledge	The applicant demonstrates understanding of:
CA.I.F.K1	Elements related to performance and limitations by explaining the use of charts, tables, and data to determine performance.
CA.I.F.K2	Factors affecting performance, to include:
CA.I.F.K2a	a. Atmospheric conditions
CA.I.F.K2b	b. Pilot technique
CA.I.F.K2c	c. Aircraft condition
CA.I.F.K2d	d. Airport environment
CA.I.F.K2e	e. Loading
CA.I.F.K2f	f. Weight and balance
CA.I.F.K3	Aerodynamics.
Risk Management	The applicant demonstrates the ability to identify, assess and mitigate risks, encompassing:
CA.I.F.R1	Inaccurate use of appropriate manufacturer's performance charts, tables, and data.
CA.I.F.R2	Exceeding aircraft limitations.
CA.I.F.R3	Possible differences between actual aircraft performance and published aircraft performance data.
Skills	The applicant demonstrates the ability to:
CA.I.F.S1	Compute the weight and balance, correct out-of-center of gravity (CG) loading errors and determine if the weight and balance remains within limits during all phases of flight.
CA.I.F.S2	Demonstrate use of the appropriate aircraft manufacturer's approved performance charts, tables, and data.

Aeronautical Knowledge

Aeronautical Decision Making & Special Emphasis

PTS-based Flight Proficiency

Know

Consider

Do