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From: **Daniel Demetri** <[ddemetri@post.harvard.edu](mailto:ddemetri@post.harvard.edu)>  
Date: Wed, May 4, 2016 at 11:39 PM  
Subject: Fwd: Commercial Checkride Review  
To: Wes Irish <[wirish@coyotehillconsulting.com](mailto:wirish@coyotehillconsulting.com)>

ASEL Commercial Pilot Checkride

Date: 5/4/16

Location: West Valley Flying Club, KPAO

Examiner: [Scott Rohlfing](http://www.dpe.attheready.com/3301.html)

Outcome: Passed!

Fee: $650

**"Pre-Test" Overview:**

- Deeply, deeply examined logbook.  Did not like entries that were not "clean" (e.g. my long-distance dual night XC flight was logged partially during daytime and partially during the nighttime and had multiple stops, but it wasn't super evident that an eligible leg was conducted entirely at night)

- Did not like that my long-distance solo XC did not begin where the airplane was "dispatched" (I had flown some friends down to KUDD and then flew back alone)

- Asked my instructor, who was thankfully present, to "fix" his endorsement.  The signing areas on the CATS written test is apparently only for if you fail the test.  The instructor review of missed questions is an endorsement that goes in your logbook.

**Oral Test Overview:**

- Oral test was quite practical.  For instance, no review of old-timey weather charts.  Instead, I walked him through how I prepared and briefed my simulated checkride XC.  Thorough review of flight plan and how I was going to navigate.  What would I do if I got lost?

- Definitely no worries that I was planning on using an iPad and Foreflight (I've heard this is an issue with other examiners.  Scott worked at Apple for a long time; he's a huge Apple fanboy).

- Thorough review of airspaces (equipment required, communication required, visibility and cloud clearance - for all airspaces).

- Thorough review of airport signage (he pulled up graphics on his iPad).

- Asked my how a constant speed prop works.  Fortunately I had just learned this in depth and was able to speak knowledgeably.  He also asked me how the landing gear works; we didn't go into crazy detail on it.

**Flight Test Overview:**

- You have to fly to your first checkpoint on the artificial XC, so he let me revise my flight plan to first go to KLVK.

- Before preflight, he made me commit to a flight plan with ETE's and said that the PTS requires they be accurate within 3 minutes.  (Fortunately, especially thanks to Foreflight while enroute, I was able to fly such that I arrived within 1 minute of plan)

- Deviated toward Stockton using Foreflight (piece of cake), then deviated to Byron for the practice landings and take-offs.  1) normal, 2) short field, 3) soft field that he had me turn into a go-around, 4) simulated engine failure (from 200 ft above pattern), 5) precision 180

- Eights on Pylons

- Steep Turns

- Slow Flight

- Power Off Stall

- Power On Stall with 10-degree banked turn

- Accelerated Stall

- Chandelles

- Emergency Descent

- Returning to Palo Alto, performed a (pretty great) soft field landing

**Debrief Overview:**

- Chewed me out for not looking outside more, and not looking around enough; especially around the traffic pattern

- I had forgotten to pull back the prop during the engine-out landing, that could have helped me make the runway more readily.  Also, he recommends shooting for a point 1/3 or 1/2 of the way down the runway; don't shoot for the runway end like on a precision 180.  (I hadn't practiced simulated engine outs in the pattern, and so when we did it, I wasn't entirely sure if we were even doing that or doing a precision 180 - worth asking if you're confused)

- "Fuel gauges have to be accurate as visible by the flight crew."  He hates the rumor that fuel gauges only need to be accurate when they read zero.  [Seems like he's right](http://www.aviationlawmonitor.com/2011/06/articles/general-aviation/aircraft-fuel-gauges-are-supposed-to-actually-work/).

- Make sure in advance that your aircraft logbook shows compliance with *all* recurring AD's mentioned in the compliance report

- He didn't love that I planned to use pilotage for a long XC flight to Nevada.  I had been trying to avoid planning to use a GPS with an out of date database.  He says it's not a problem to use a GPS for VFR flight if you verify that the waypoints haven't moved.  He would have preferred that I plan on using the GPS (or at least VORs I guess).

- Do not come close to saying you will extrapolate performance charts (e.g. for temperatures greater than those listed on the takeoff or landing distance tables).  Only interpolation is kosher.  If the weather is outside of the performance chart, then you shouldn't fly.

- Don't forget that Class A requires DME.  I had forgotten that.

- Avoid helicopter wake turbulence by avoiding helicopters by 3 rotor lengths

- Each hotspot on the Airport Diagram is apparently explained in the AFD

- He super super chewed me out about my recognition of airport signage.  Told me I came super close to failing the checkride because of this.  Definitely read up on your obscure signage, such as "15-APCH" on a red background, or cases where the hold line actually prevents traffic from exiting a runway (because it leads traffic onto a taxiway that goes to another runway)\.