

Flight Instructor (Initial) Test Information (Jan 2025)

Lesson Plan: You will need to prepare a lesson plan on a maneuver to be taught both on the ground and in flight. Your lesson plan will be assigned when you schedule your test. This changes each test.

Examiner Weight: 165 Pounds

Baggage Weight: 10 pounds, plus whatever you normally keep in the airplane.

Test Fee: Please call current test fee information.

Scheduling and Weather Policy: Please refer to the [Scheduling](#) page for details.

Required Endorsements:

Please refer to the [current edition](#) of advisory circular 61-65. You will need the following endorsements in order to take your CFI practical test. Please have your instructor review your logbook to ensure endorsements are complete and current. Missing endorsements may prevent your test from being completed and may incur a cancellation fee to schedule. Other endorsements may apply, but at the minimum you will need the following:

- A.1 Prerequisites for Practical Test (61.39)
- A.2 Review of deficiencies on Knowledge Test (61.39)
- A.41 Fundamentals of instructing knowledge test (61.183d) (NOTE: If you are exempt from this test, you'll need to bring whatever documentation that reflects that.)
- A.42 Flight Instructor aeronautical knowledge test (61.183g)
- A.45 Spin Training (61.183 i1)
- A.65 Completion of a flight review (61.56) (Yes, you need a current flight review in order to take this test. If you have a previous checkride you're using to meet 61.56, bring that logbook with you so I can verify it)
- A.73 Retesting after failure of a practical or knowledge test (61.49)

Required Documents:

Please ensure that you have ALL of the following documents, in addition to the required endorsements listed above. If you're missing documents or paperwork, I won't be able to conduct your test and we'll need to reschedule for another day. That's not fun for anyone.

- Completed application in IACRA
- Paper copy of the 8710-1 printed from IACRA after CFI signature. (Hopefully we don't need this, but if IACRA is unavailable the paper copy allows us to continue the test)
- Knowledge test results
- Pilot logbook with all pages totaled
- Record of ground instruction received (This is missing **quite often**.) I can't do the test without it. You're paying your CFI to give you ground and flight training, make them log it for you!
- Government issued photo Identification. Passport, US Driver License, Military ID, etc. Foreign Driver Licenses are not acceptable.
- Valid, unexpired medical certificate (Third Class or higher) OR Basicmed
- Pilot certificate
- All aircraft documentation (ARROW, as applicable)
- All aircraft maintenance records (AV1ATES, as applicable. Please confirm any pertinent AD compliance!)
- Lesson plan for assigned maneuver

Test Advice:

-Go through the maintenance records well in advance of the test date. Verify that all the inspections are up to date, ESPECIALLY the airworthiness directives. Remember, 91.7 says that it is your responsibility as PIC to make sure the airplane is airworthy. While it is the owner's responsibility to keep it airworthy under 91.405, it is your job to make sure the owner is doing their job. Please review 91.417 carefully. AD Compliance or lack of, is a consistent issue. If they are not documented correctly, I can not and will not fly your airplane, which means your test is cancelled. Blanket statements such as "All AD's are current" are not acceptable. The FAA is very clear about the requirements. Remember that recurring AD's need to have their next due date listed too. This has been enough of an issue recently that I have adopted a [no-show policy](#), and I will probably charge you a cancellation fee if your test can't be conducted as a result of information that, in reality, is part of the test.

**** CLEAN THE AIRCRAFT WINDSHIELD AND WINDOWS! (No explanation needed) ****

-Please dress comfortably. You are a professional! Dress accordingly.

-Bring some snacks, or better yet, lunch. This test is a long one. We'll take some breaks during the test, and you'll feel better with some food. Trust me on this one.

-Read the manual. Read the handbook. Go find the source. "My instructor said" is almost always the wrong answer on a CFI test. Don't tell your student what the answer is, show them where to find it.

-Take your time. A lot of the mistakes I see during tests are simply the result of people rushing into things without thinking about what they're doing. If you take an extra 10 minutes to finish the test, that's fine. Watch the details.

General advice: Think like an instructor, and think like an examiner. You're supposed to be teaching this stuff. How would you present this material to someone who has never seen it before? If you were sitting in my seat, what information would you want to see to be sure that the applicant knows their stuff? Take the time to read the ACS and think about it from the CFI perspective.

Fundamentals of Instruction: Lots of people run into problems here. I think what happens is that people are just barely comfortable with the material themselves and they forget that they're supposed to have *instructional proficiency* of all these items. In other words, you're supposed to be fully comfortable teaching someone else all about the FOI. I suggest getting familiar and comfortable with the requirements directly from the ACS, and using that as a framework to build your discussion around. That's essentially what I'm looking at when I listen to you talk about the material. For example, if we look at AO I, Task E (which is a required task, hint hint), what I would hope a CFI applicant would do is be comfortable listing off the Instructor Responsibilities quickly, maybe using a whiteboard or scratch paper, and then expand upon each item. For example, that might look something like "What are the responsibilities of an Aviation Instructor?"

"Well, the Aviation Instructor's Handbook tells us that the responsibilities of an aviation instructor are:

1. Helping Students Learn
2. Etc
3. Etc
4. Just like the ACS says

Now, what that means, is that we are responsible for helping students learn by..." and then we can have a discussion about those items.

Technical Subject areas: I would suggest reviewing the ACS to get familiar with the required items. Many people struggle with Task K, Logbook Entries & Endorsements. Basically, you should be able to walk me through the training and paperwork process for a Private Pilot student, Commercial, etc. Task E & G are also common weak areas in AOO II. (Knowledge of Aircraft Systems and the National Airspace). Most people have a general understanding of how some systems work, however they cannot think through problems that might occur. With Airspace, knowledge of cloud clearance, visibility and equipment requirements is weak. They don't really understand the details. Again, remember that you are now the expert that students call when they don't understand how something works.

Lesson Plan: For your test, you'll be assigned a maneuver to prepare a lesson plan. You need to be able to teach it effectively and hit all the required items from the ACS. Remember that sometimes we need to discuss foundational knowledge or skills to have a conversation about the lesson at hand. For example, say we're talking about Slips To A Landing. Does that mean we need to talk about landing skills as well? I'll leave that up to you and how you want to present the material. Break it down into simple terms and remember to use those FOI skills to build an effective presentation. A student who has never even heard of this thing before should be able to understand it when you're finished. Reference the ACS and make sure you have covered all required elements of the task.

Flight Portion: Be comfortable teaching each maneuver. If you need an additional resource for the maneuvers and how to teach them, the University of North Dakota has a fantastic video series on YouTube that does a great job of breaking things down into manageable pieces to help ensure you understand what's going on. They're easy to find, just go to YouTube and search for "[UND Chandelles](#)" or whatever maneuver you want. Think about foundational skills here as well. If you're going to do a Chandelle, what basic skills are involved?

Stalls: Be comfortable taking the airplane all the way to the break in each stall, including the cross-controlled stall. Remember, we're teaching someone else what the airplane looks and feels like. I see a lot of CFIs that are honestly afraid of full stalls. You shouldn't be. Here's a good exercise for you: Think about a cross-controlled stall. If we spin, which way will it go? Now, go try one in the airplane, and let it get deep into the stall. What the airplane does may surprise you (in a good way). Now that you've seen it, why did that happen? Explore it. **Go slow.** I don't

want you to rush through the stalls, I want you to break it down and teach it to me. Being afraid of stalls will NOT inspire confidence in your student.

Engine Failure: We're not teaching this task effectively. If you have a student who has never experienced an engine failure before, what would you want to show them in order for them to understand a successful method for handling it themselves? I'm going to ask you to teach/demonstrate a simulated engine failure. You can teach it any way you want but be advised I'm going to have you do it over a runway and you will be expected to put the wheels on the ground in a controllable manner. Your student should be capable of replicating what you just demonstrated to them. Luck should not be part of the discussion.

Take Off and Landings: We'll do a few to Commercial standards. Normal, Short Field, Soft Field, Power Off 180s (as applicable). You will demonstrate a couple, and I'll be playing student and making some mistakes on at least one landing. The landings don't need to be perfect, but they do need to be technically correct and within ACS. Don't be lazy about crosswind correction, centerline, etc.

-Slips and Skids: I've had a lot of issues recently with people who can't tell the difference. That's a problem. We need to be able to identify each, use the appropriate one, and explain the aerodynamics involved. I've had a number of people who tell me they're going to use a slip, but then show me a skid instead, and don't see that as a problem. Deliberate skids thinking we're doing a slip are not acceptable. Watch for your student doing a skid. This is how spins happen. You should be able to explain the aerodynamics involved, what the difference is, how to identify the slip vs. the skid, and why we care.

Questions?

Text me and ask! I'm here to help. You can try calling me too, but I do spend a lot of time in airplanes and I'm not always available to answer. A text message is the most reliable and preferred way to reach me.