



**DECISION BY THE CAA
FOLLOWING A REGULATORY REVIEW**

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**A DECISION BY THE CAA FOLLOWING A REVIEW PURSUANT TO REGULATION 6 OF THE
CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY REGULATIONS 1991 HELD ON 3 JANUARY 2013 AT CAA HOUSE**

**REVIEW OF CONDUCT OF INSTRUMENT RATING SKILL TEST IN ACCORDANCE WITH
REGULATION 6 OF THE CIVIL AVIATION REGULATIONS 1991**

Background

The applicant failed an instrument rating skill test.

The applicant requested the CAA to carry out a review of the conduct of that test under Regulation 6(5) of the Civil Aviation Authority Regulations 1991.

The CAA appointed a Panel to conduct the review. The Panel consisted of two Board Members who are themselves appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport, namely Captain Roger Whitefield and Dr Catherine Bell.

Both the applicant and officials of the CAA's Safety Regulation Group (SRG), submitted written representations. The applicant submitted comments on the SRG brief.

The applicant did not wish to attend the review and the Panel reached its decision on the basis of the papers supplied.

The grounds on which the review is requested

The test comprises 6 Sections. The applicant failed Sections 4 and 5 whilst passing the remaining Sections. The consequence is that the applicant would be required to undertake a complete re-test.

As noted above, the applicant failed Sections 4 and 5 of the test. The applicant accepted that Section 5 was failed. However, the applicant requested a review of the conduct of Section 4, which requires the candidate to undertake a precision approach.

The reason given for the failure of Section 4 was summarised in the SRG brief as a loss of control of a stabilised approach, with a loss of handling accuracy and descent below published minima on the ILS.

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The applicant disputed whether there was any significant loss of control of the approach and the extent of any descent below published minima. The Panel however accepted the circumstances as described in the SRG brief and by the examiner.

The core of the applicant's argument concerned the time at which control of the aircraft was returned prior to making the approach for Section 4 of the test.

The SRG brief stated that instrument handling exercises are normally flown with the examiner taking control of the navigation and flight management. Control is returned to the examinee for the arrival phase. This is what occurred in this case.

There was some dispute as to the precise point at which control was handed over. The Panel found that control was handed over at a relatively late stage on the downwind leg.

The applicant argued that if given the controls earlier, he could have properly configured both the instruments and the aircraft for the approach instead of having to rush the preparation.

The SRG case

The SRG brief stated that any handover before the base turn would have provided more than 6 or 7 minutes of flying. This, the brief argued, is more than adequate time and opportunity to configure and trim the aircraft for the approach. The examiner commented that all responsibilities were handed back in plenty of time to settle into flying the approach. The examiner stated that before the hand-back, he checked with the applicant that the applicant was ready to take over all the aircraft responsibilities. The examiner denied rushing the applicant.

The issue to be determined

The Panel had to consider whether the test was properly conducted.

The decision

The Panel noted that neither the Standards Document nor the Flight Examiner's Handbook referred to in the SRG brief expressly address the issue of when control should be handed back. The Panel stated that it would be helpful, in order to achieve clarity and consistency, for them to do so.

The Panel found that accurate execution of this type of approach requires forward planning, timely and measured configuration changes so that the aircraft is correctly positioned and stable at the start of the final approach. The Panel concluded that control was handed over to the applicant in a position where the applicant may have felt under pressure of time to complete the necessary actions prior to flying the approach. It did not appear from the SRG brief or the documents referred to in the brief that requiring a candidate to prepare for an approach under pressure of time forms part of the test.

The Panel saw no reason why control should not be handed back, when conducting a test of this sort at a somewhat earlier stage.

For this reason the Panel determined that Section 4 of the test was not properly conducted.