

Waterford Aero Club

FAA/EASA Bilateral agreement – PPL (VFR) – Briefing Notes



[Waterford Aero Club](#) can support you through the process to allow you to apply for an EASA PPL on the basis of your FAA license (PPL / CPL / ATPL). There is no mandatory training defined in the EASA / FAA bilateral agreement, but unless you have flown in Europe before it is likely that a few hours of localisation and refresher training will be beneficial prior to taking the EASA skills test.

In our experience, most pilots applying via this process significantly over estimate the complexity of the process and the standard required to pass the skills test. You are being assessed to see if you can safely operate the aircraft and the standard is not “perfection”. The examiner is looking to see that you fly to at least the same standard as a student who has just completed an ab-initio PPL training course, the fact that you may have 1,000+ hours is immaterial – the pass standard is the same!

Prerequisites to apply via this process

1. You must have a valid FAA medical. If your medical has expired and you require a new one, Dr. Colm Killeen based in the Mountjoy Family Practice in Dublin is authorised to conduct FAA medical exams.
2. You must have a valid FAA flight review, dated within the 24 calendar months prior to the date you make your application to the IAA. If your flight review is expired you can compete a new flight review at Waterford Aero Club as part of the conversion process.
3. You must have a valid EASA medical certificate, issued by the IAA to take the skills test. EASA mandates that licenses must be administered by the authority (country) that holds your medical records, so e.g. a French medical cannot be used to apply for an Irish issue license.

English Language Proficiency (ELP)

It is a requirement of EASA that you prove competency in the English language prior to license issue and you have two options in this regard.

1. EASA will accept your last flight review as confirmation of your English proficiency at “Level 4” meaning you will need to retest in four years. The four year period commences from the date of your last FAA flight review. If you are not a native English speaker this is likely to be the best approach for you.
2. If you are a native English speaker we can arrange for an ELP assessment at Waterford Aero Club and if you achieve “Level 6” this is valid for life and no further English language testing is required.

Flying manoeuvres and flight test standards

The VFR PPL Skills test incorporates the following flight manoeuvres:

1. Navigation – you should be able to prepare for a cross country flight including:
 - a. Navigation log
 - b. Airspace awareness
 - c. Weather briefing (METAR, TAF, winds aloft, Sig WX etc)
 - d. NOTAMs
 - e. Filing a flight plan
 - f. Diversions
2. Stalls

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- a. Power on
- b. Power off (clean configuration)
- c. Power off (with flaps)
3. Slow flight
4. Steep turns
5. Simulated engine failure
6. Basic radio navigation (VOR / NDB identification and your position relative to it)
7. Circuit procedures
 - a. Standard take off
 - b. Short / Soft field take off
 - c. Simulated engine failure on take off
 - d. Go arounds
 - e. Normal landing
 - f. Flapless landing
 - g. Short / soft field landings
 - h. Glide approach (similar to a power off 180 in FAA CPL but without any expectation of landing at a precise point on the runway)

Manoeuvres required for the FAA PPL Flight test that are **NOT** required for the EASA skills test:

1. Turns around a point
2. S Turns
3. Rectangular course
4. Forward slip to a landing

The Skills Test

The skills test is divided into two sections, the oral and the flight test.

During the oral, in addition to the normal questions you may expect on an FAA PPL oral exam the examiner is obliged to specifically check your knowledge of Air Law and Communications. The revision notes that we use for our EASA Ground School are linked in the study material section below. The oral assessment is typically up to 60 minutes in duration. A copy of the material we give to students preparing for their first PPL oral is linked in the study material section below.

The flight element of the skills test typically takes 60-90 minutes to complete and includes a selection of the manoeuvres listed in the syllabus above. A typical skills test profile is:

1. You are asked to plan a VFR cross country flight from EIWF to another Irish airport.
2. You commence the skills test with this navigation profile and then the examiner will ask you to divert to another destination. Once you successfully estimate approximate time, distance and heading this will usually conclude the navigation phase.
3. The next section will include a selection of exercises from the upper airwork part of the syllabus (stall, steep turn, slow flight, simulated engine failure etc.)
4. You will then return to EIWF to complete a selection of circuit exercises to conclude the test.

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Night rating

If your FAA PPL includes night privileges and your logbook includes the below experience, then you can also apply for an EASA night rating by simply ticking the appropriate box on the application form. No further testing / training is required.

Minimum night experience required to apply:

- Five hours of flight at night; including
- 3 hours of dual instruction; and
- 1 cross country at night to a destination at least 50nm away from the origin; and
- 5 solo take offs and 5 solo full stop landings.

Applying to the IAA for the license issue

We will complete the relevant application forms with you as part of the Skills Test and once completed you need to send the below to the IAA (we recommend taking copies of log book pages prior to posting and sending via a courier or some other recorded service).

1. Logbook
2. Copy of your FAA medical
3. Copy of your FAA license (both sides)
4. Copy of your most recent FAA flight review
5. Copy of your ELP test result (if applicable)
6. The completed IAA application / skills test form (including payment details)
7. Copy of your EASA Class 2 medical
8. Copy of the photo page of your passport
9. Copy of the examiners license / examiner approval
10. Copy of the Examiners IAA test notification email

From the date of application it typically takes between four and eight weeks to receive the license. You cannot exercise the privileges of the license until you have it in hand, there is no EASA equivalent of a “temporary airman certificate”.

Our fleet at WAC

Waterford Aero Club operate three Cessna 172 aircraft, all fuel injected, traditional six pack models. We have two C172R models and one C172S model.

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Costs (correct as of May 2023)

The cost of completing the required training and skills test at Waterford Aero Club are:

1. Aircraft rental €170/hr (wet)
2. Flight / ground instruction €50/hr
3. FAA flight review (if required) €250
4. Club membership (link above) €270 (will be valid until 31/12/2023)
5. Landings €4; Touch and Gos €2
6. English language assessment (if required) €50
7. Examiner fee PPL skills test €400

Exclusions

1. If you already hold an EASA FCL licence, any application under this bilateral agreement must be made to the authority (country) that holds your current EASA FCL records. If this is not the IAA and you wish to apply through the IAA you must make an application to change your state of license issue to the IAA before commencing this process.
2. Regardless of the level of licence held in the FAA system (PPL / CPL / ATPL) the EASA license issued will be at PPL level.
3. This agreement covers “Airplane Land” category only. Seaplanes and Helicopters are not included in this agreement.
4. If your FAA licence was issued on the basis of you holding another ICAO license (i.e. the text 61.75 appears on your FAA license) then it is not eligible for use under this agreement.
5. FAA Sport Pilot and Recreational Pilot certificates are not included in the agreement.
6. If your FAA license includes the phrase “Holder does not meet ICAO requirements....” then you are not eligible for this process.

Differences between the FAA system and operations in Europe worth noting

- Millibars v Inches of mercury – in Europe altimeter settings are given in millibars rather than inches e.g. 1013mb = 29.92”
- Terminology:
 - Pattern / Circuit – in the US the term “pattern” is common whereas the EASA equivalent is “circuit”
 - QNH/QFE – in the US the transition level is 18,000 feet whereas in Europe it can be as low as 3,000. In the US everything below the transition altitude is just referred to as “altitude” whereas in Europe it’s referred to as QNH (height above sea level). You may also hear reference to QFE which is the height above the aerodrome.
 - Other “Q” codes – there is a long list of other “Q” codes that are a legacy from the early days of radio communication. The most commonly used ones are:
 - QSY – change radio frequency
 - QDM – Magnetic bearing to a station (navaid)
 - QDR – Magnetic bearing from a station (navaid)
 - Taxi back (USA) / back track (EASA)

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- Flight following – Europe is divided into different Flight Information Regions (FIRs) and within each FIR there will be an “Information” ATC service. In Ireland it is “Shannon Information” or “Dublin Information” depending on your location. They will provide a similar service to “flight following” in the US.
- Flight plans are mandatory for any flight that enters or leaves controlled airspace, crosses and FIR boundary or includes an (extended) over water leg. Flight plans are filed online and use the ICAO (not FAA) format.
- PPR – many airfields in Europe are PPR which means “prior permission required”. You cannot just drop in unannounced as you would in the US. Typically this means contacting the airfield operator by phone or email before departing to secure approval to land.
- Landing fees – almost all airports in Europe charge landing fees and the larger airports also have mandatory handling fees which can be very expensive.
- Charts / Visual charts – you should familiarise yourself with the chart design and layout. These are typically different from one European country to the next. There are also “Visual Charts” for aerodromes that should be printed and kept accessible in the cockpit as they include visual holding points, visual reference points and noise abatement advice.
- ADSB is not mandatory in Europe so devices like Sentry will not pick up all traffic so be aware. There are also no ADSB towers in Europe so you will not receive real time weather over ADSB in Foreflight etc..
- Airspace – Ireland only has Class C and Class G airspace. See the Air Law revision notes for more detail.
- Special VFR – the definitions of weather for SVFR are different – see the Air Law revision notes for more detail.
- AIP – each country publishes an AIP and the aerodrome section is broadly similar to the AFD in the US and provides details of each airfield.
- Overhead joins (as opposed to a 45 join on the downwind) are very common in Europe – you will need to understand this if flying to a non towered airport.
- FISO – some airports have a “Flight Information Service Officer” who provides an ATC like service without issuing any clearances. They will make you aware of the active runway and any traffic they are aware of, but landing / take off are at your own discretion and they can not “clear” you to take off or land.