



BRITISH MODEL FLYING ASSOCIATION

THE R/C ACHIEVEMENT SCHEME

**GUIDANCE FOR AREA CHIEF
INSTRUCTORS**

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GUIDANCE FOR AREA CHIEF INSTRUCTORS (ACI)

The job of a Chief Instructor is to test applicants for the award as a BMFA Approved Instructor and to promote and maintain the standards of the R/C Training Scheme by example and by visiting clubs who require their services.

When testing a person for the BMFA Approved Instructor the candidate is expected to demonstrate a good standard of flying and flight safety. The candidate will also be required to demonstrate a good knowledge of R/C flying and full knowledge of the BMFA safety codes, BMFA Flying Training Manuals and local club rules.

The test should be a combination of the candidate instructing the ACI as well as the ACI watching the candidate demonstrate airborne manoeuvres. For example the candidate could demonstrate the 'A' schedule highlighting points during the schedule, e.g. aircraft height, the turns being square or race track. Question the candidate's knowledge regarding the Instruction manuals (Up-and-Away) and the Guidance notes to Chief Examiners and Candidates. After all, their objective should be to instruct pupils to pass the BMFA 'A' (or other) Achievement Scheme

As further guidance and similar to that of an Area Chief Examiner, when assessing a candidate your task as a Chief Instructor can be split into five distinct phases, and the final decision made by you will actually be controlled by three distinct decisions made by you on phases 2, 3 and 4 during the test. The phases are:

- (1) Your own preparation.
- (2) Does the candidate have the right attitude? Are they knowledgeable, experienced, approachable, able to make (sometimes unpopular) decisions and do they have the respect of their fellow club members?
- (3) Are the candidate's flight safety standards high enough?
- (4) Is the candidate's flying performance at a good enough level?
- (5) Conclusion -

It is vitally important that each of the three decisions made during phases 2, 3 and 4 of the test are positive before a candidate is passed

A top class flyer who doesn't fulfil part (2) will not make a good instructor. By the same token, someone whose personal flying standards and, especially, safety standards are not high enough would not command the respect of clubmates when speaking as an instructor.

This means that any instructor you pass should have a reasonable working knowledge of the discipline which is not his main one. This knowledge should at the very least enable them to judge fairly whether an 'A' certificate flight was performed safely and to good standard regardless of whether the flight was performed by a fixed wing model or a helicopter.

The implications of this are that you too should have a similar reasonable working knowledge of the discipline and if you do not then you should certainly make the effort to obtain such basic knowledge.

This does not mean that, for instance, if you are a fixed wing Chief Instructor you should learn to fly a helicopter, but you cannot expect to pass a Club Instructor without at least being able to find out how much he knows about basic helicopter flying.

Finally, you should remember that Club Instructors nearly always set the standards within their clubs, either consciously or unconsciously, and your decisions should be taken with this in mind.

GUIDELINES FOR PART (1), PREPARATION

As in all walks of life the success or failure of any venture can be dependant on the initial preparation. As the Chief Instructor who has been called upon to examine a prospective approved instructor, you should make every effort to discuss the upcoming test with one or more senior members of the club in order to get as much background knowledge of the candidates experience and attitude as possible (see Part 2).

This preparation is vital, not only to give you some advance information on the candidate, but also to make you conversant with any local club rules which may affect the test. This is especially important if you are taking the test at a club with whom you do not normally fly.

You should also ensure before the test that the candidate is fully aware of what is expected of him so that misunderstandings do not occur when the model is in the air.

GUIDELINES FOR PART (2), ATTITUDE

When deliberating on part (2), you must rely solely on your judgement. You will have talked with the candidate at some length so as to gain an impression of their depth of experience and knowledge and you will have checked with them that they are fully conversant with all the safety codes etc.

Many Instructor candidates (and existing Instructors) have the attitude that the flying tests in the Power Achievement Scheme (PAS) are "aerobatics" and must be flown as a strict schedule with no deviations, very much like an FAI competition schedule. This is absolutely wrong and you must be aware of candidates who are convinced that this is the case.

In fact the flying in both the 'A' and 'B' certificates are about the ability of the flyer to be in full and safe control of his model at all times during a flight in which he must fly a set of simple specified manoeuvres competently and with reasonable accuracy.

If an instructor candidate's attitude is fixed on the 'competition schedule' approach and you cannot persuade them otherwise, you should not pass them.

If you encounter instructors who are operating on this basis, you should take whatever steps are necessary to re-orientate them.

With regard to the candidate's standing within their own club they will have been recommended by their club committee in the first place so they should rate quite well on that score but you should check with other club members if you are not sure. There are no guidelines beyond this point; you must form your own impression and make your decision.

GUIDELINES FOR PART (3), FLIGHT SAFETY

Your decision on the candidate's flight safety standards will be based on a much more objective view of their performance both during and, perhaps even more importantly, before and after the flying test.

You should be looking for evidence that the candidate has very high standards in this category from the moment you meet them on the flying field until the moment you finally sign their certificate. This is most important as anyone can pay 'lip service' to safety standards for a short period but if they are unsafe when they think you are not watching them, they should not pass.

The basic safety standards are laid down in the safety codes and you should not expect much less than perfection in this area.

Note that the category of flight safety also includes both pre and post flight safety checks so these will not be discussed in relation to flying standards.

It will be a point in the candidate's favour if they show a measure of common sense during their whole time with you on the flying field and a general and sympathetic awareness of other flyer's problems might also be a positive indicator for you.

GUIDELINES FOR PART (4), FLYING

There is no set flying test for instructors as there is for candidates taking the 'A' and 'B' certificates; instructor candidates are expected to only demonstrate a good standard of flying and flight safety. As a minimum the candidate should demonstrate their ability to fly safely whilst advising the examiner of what is being performed, as well as demonstrating their ability to teach pupils by taking either the examiner or other "students" for lessons.

As detailed above, this doesn't mean that you should simply ask the candidate to perform an 'A' test flight as laid down in the handbook. An Instructor should show the ability to handle unexpected situations. When teaching a pupil there will be numerous occasions when the pupil will make a mistake where the instructor will need to either take recovery action or provide guidance to assist the pupil to recover from the situation.

The general level of performance expected should be good throughout, with few faults and it is essential that throughout the flight the candidate should give you the firm impression that they are in complete control of the model at all times.

GUIDELINES FOR PART (5), CONCLUSION

At the completion of a test and assuming that you have deemed the candidate to be successful, you should then make sure that the new instructor thoroughly understands his future responsibilities to his fellow club members and to model flying as a whole.

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