



Air Traffic Control Policies

Controller Practical Examination Policy

Middle East & North Africa ATC Department

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1. Control Pages

1.1. Document Identification

| Document Identification | |
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1.2. Revision Records

| Revision Number | Date | Summary of Changes | Authors |
|-----------------|------------|---|---------------------------|
| 01/2018 | 04/06/2018 | Initial Document | Chriss Klosowski |
| 01/2020 | 21/08/2020 | Document Overhaul | Chriss Klosowski |
| 02/2020 | 01/12/2020 | Updated examination regulations, Amended online and Sweatbox CPT procedure and requirements, Added provision for C3 examinations, Added a post-examination procedure, New format. | Suprojit Paul, Sam Julnes |
| 01/2021 | 15/01/2021 | Edited policy structure Added examiner rating requirement | Suprojit Paul |
| 01/2022 | 13/05/2022 | Updated date structure for revisions. Removed links to the VATME/VATMENA HQ and replaced with the VATMENA helpdesk. | Chriss Klosowski |

2. General Provisions

2.1. Applicability

This policy shall govern the conduct all controller practical examinations (CPTs) that result in a change of a member's permanent ATC rating within the VATMENA division.

2.2. Changes

This policy is subject to change at short notice/with immediate effect at any time. Members shall ensure they always remain up to date with the latest policy and procedure changes.

2.3. Non-Compliance

All ATC examinations within VATMENA shall only be conducted in accordance with the procedures as described herein.

If it is found that a practical examination fails to meet any of the requirements laid down in this policy, it shall be considered invalid and a re-examination shall be required.

3. Examination Regulations

3.1. Requirement for Examination

A Controller Practical Examinations also known in short as a “CPT” shall be required by each vACC in VATMENA to test a candidate on their practical knowledge and GRP-required competencies on the VATSIM network before a rating upgrade.

This is to ensure that the candidate has a firm grasp on all the essential competencies as required by that rating and is able to provide effective air traffic service.

3.2. Competency Requirements

ATC examinations shall require candidates to meet all specific competencies for the respective ATC rating as laid out in the VATSIM Global Ratings Policy.

The Global Ratings Policy may be found [here](#).

VATMENA shall require that candidates achieve a minimum score of 80% in the practical examination in order to be eligible for a rating upgrade.

3.3. Examination Duration

ATC examinations shall have a minimum duration of 60 minutes and shall not exceed 120 minutes.

Examiners may end the examination at any time during this window provided that all competency requirements have had sufficient time to be assessed.

3.4. Examination Conduct

3.4.1. General

The examination shall aim to simulate a day of normal operations at the respective station.

3.4.2. Special scenarios

Examiners may request other stations or pilots to perform certain normal procedures to challenge the candidate during their examination.

Examiners may request pilots to adjust their aircraft operation (such as speed) in order to assess the candidate's application of separation and traffic management skills.

3.4.3. Adjacent controller conduct

Examiners shall not instruct other stations to intentionally create traffic conflicts for the candidate, nor instruct other stations to apply unreasonably large traffic separation.

3.4.4. Abnormal operations

Notwithstanding the requirements as provided in 3.4.2, examiners shall guard the candidate from unrealistic and excessive abnormal requests by pilots and candidates shall not be penalised for

instructing pilots who are simulating an emergency situation to cancel the emergency or to disconnect from the network.

3.5. Cancellation of an Examination

Examiners may cancel the examination if it is obvious that the candidate is unable to handle the traffic safely and in turn would cause a failure of the practical test.

At least one examiner shall always be ready to take control if it is obvious the candidate is unable to cope with the scenario.

3.6. Verbal Assessment

Examiners may assess the candidate after the examination through verbal means if certain competencies were unable to be assessed during the exam.

3.7. Candidate Preparation

No vACC within VATMENA shall knowingly permit a candidate who is inadequately prepared to appear for examination.

At all times, candidates shall receive sufficient training and practice before the practical examination to allow them to meet all competency requirements.

3.8. Top-Down Regulation

3.8.1. General

All S3, C1 and C3 examinations shall be conducted top-down for the position immediately below, except as provided in 3.3.2.

The following table details the top-down requirement for each examination.

| CPT Type | Top-Down Coverage Requirement |
|-----------|--------------------------------|
| S2 | Ground & Tower |
| S3 | Tower, Departure & Approach |
| C1 and C3 | Departure, Approach & En-route |

3.8.2. Exemption

Due to the immense airspace coverage and complexity, candidates attempting C1 and C3 CPTs in the following vACCs may be permitted one or more approach controllers for a single terminal area at the discretion of the local vACC examiner:

- Egypt
- Iran
- Saudi Arabia
- United Arab Emirates

3.8.3. Temporary Suspension

If during the examination, if traffic levels result in unreasonably high workload for the candidate, examiners may temporarily permit other controllers to connect at the lower position to reduce the workload. For example, if during an S3 CPT, an unreasonably high level of traffic is present, the examiner(s) may permit a tower controller.

Once workload has reduced to a reasonable level, the lower controller(s) shall disconnect from the network and the examination shall proceed as normal.

Where the top-down regulation has been exempted, a log file shall be provided to the VATMENA ATC Training Director to allow for an assessment as to whether the lower controller was necessary. If this is found not to be the case, the CPT shall be considered invalid. As such, this exemption shall be applied sparingly.

3.9. Examiner Requirements

3.9.1. General

Practical examinations for S3, C1 and C3 ratings shall require both a local vACC examiner and a VATMENA divisional examiner to be present.

3.9.2. Examiner Rating

An examiner shall meet the criteria as provided in the VATMENA *Training Policy* with regards to their rating.

In exceptional circumstances, where a suitable examiner cannot be arranged, an exception may be made with prior approval from the VATMENA ATC training director.

3.9.3. Examiner Regulations

If a candidate has had three or more sessions with the same mentor or instructor, then that mentor or instructor shall not be eligible to examine that candidate's CPT.

This may be waived, however, by the VATMENA ATC Training Department if a vACC does not have enough mentors, instructors, or examiners to meet this criterion.

3.9.4. Examination Result

For S3, C1 and C3 examinations, the vACC and VATMENA divisional examiner shall both agree on whether the final result of the exam was a "Pass" or "Fail".

In each case, the relevant post-examination procedure shall be followed.

3.9.5. Disputed Examination Result

If there is a disagreement on the result of the examination between the divisional and local vACC examiner, the matter shall be referred to the VATMENA ATC Training Director along with an appropriate log file for review.

In all cases, the VATMENA ATC Training Director shall have the final say on the result of the examination following which the relevant post-examination procedure shall be followed.

3.9.6. Examiner Policy

Further information regarding local examiners and divisional examiners can be found in the VATMENA Training policy.

4. Examination Request Procedure

4.1. S2 Examination Notification

Local vACC staff shall provide a minimum of seven days' prior notice to the VATMENA ATC Training Director (atc@vatsim.me) before conducting a CPT. This can also be requested by sending a ticket to the ATC department via the VATMENA helpdesk. The following information shall be provided in the CPT request:

- The candidate's name and CID
- The rating being progressed towards
- The proposed date and time of the exam
- The name of the designated vACC examiner who will be performing the CPT

4.2. S3, C1 and C3 Examination Notification

Local vACC staff shall provide a minimum of 14 days' prior notice to the VATMENA ATC Training Director (atc@vatsim.me) before conducting a CPT. This can also be requested by sending a ticket to the ATC department via the VATMENA helpdesk. The following information shall be provided in the CPT request:

- The candidate's name and CID
- The rating being progressed towards
- The proposed date and time of the exam
- The name of the designated vACC examiner who will be performing the CPT

This allows the VATMENA ATC Training Department enough time to arrange a divisional examiner if required.

If the division is unable to appoint a divisional examiner within seven days of the proposed date of examination, the examination shall be postponed until such a time that a divisional examiner may be arranged up to a maximum of 14 days.

The new date shall be mutually agreed upon by the vACC and VATMENA ATC training departments.

If the division once again fails to provide a Divisional Examiner within 14 days from the original examination date, the vACC may proceed with the examination without a divisional examiner present.

4.3. Advertising of the Examination

Practical examinations shall be posted a minimum of two weeks before the agreed date of the examination. Practical examinations may be considered separate to events, but where it is unlikely that this will generate traffic, the practical examination shall be conducted concurrently with an event.

Notification of the examination shall be posted on all of a vACC's VATSIM Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. If, for whatever reason, a vACC is unable to advertise

their CPT, they shall inform the divisional marketing team as soon as practicable who instead shall assist in advertising for the examination.

In addition to the above requirement, all vACCs shall ensure that the CPT is posted to myVATSIM to ensure that it appears on the VATSIM global events calendar.

A vACC's local marketing department shall ensure the CPT is sufficiently advertised, in addition to this the divisional marketing team will reciprocate this to attain the best possible outreach.

4.4. ATC Booking

Candidates shall book their session on the vROUTE ATC booking system as this system syncs with the *VATBook* system ensuring the CPT event appears in as many sources as possible, allowing the event to be visible to as many pilots as possible.

5. Online Examination Procedure

5.1. General

The online practical examination shall be the preferred method of assessing a candidate's competency and shall be conducted live on the VATSIM network.

5.2. Divisional Examiner Briefing (S3, C1 and C3 Examinations)

During practical examinations for S3, C1 and C3 ratings, the VATMENA divisional examiner shall be briefed by the local examiner on any relevant local procedures, differences, or peculiarities as well as a basic run through of the local airspace.

5.3. Examiner Presence

Whilst the CPT examination is taking place, it is required that the examiner(s) stay in the same voice room as the candidate. During this time, the examiners shall ensure they fill in the scoresheet completely or make appropriately detailed notes such that it permits the scoresheet to be completed post-examination.

5.4. Frequency Observation

Both examiners shall ensure they are connected to the VATSIM network and are able to observe through their radar screen. The examiners shall also ensure they have configured Audio for VATSIM correctly to be able to continuously listen to the candidate's frequency.

5.5. Requesting a Network Broadcast

Examiners rated Instructor or above may send a broadcast request by simply sending a **.wallop** message to supervisors with "Broadcast request for CPT". A responding supervisor may confirm which details they need to make the broadcast or may request a transcript of the full broadcast message.

5.6. Candidate Debriefing

At the end of the examination, it is recommended that examiners allow the candidate some time to relax and, if required, step away for a short while. During this time both examiners shall discuss any relevant points that were noted throughout the examination. The local examiner and divisional examiner shall discuss and agree on the appropriate outcome following which the candidate shall be debriefed.

The examiners and candidate may agree on a suitable debrief time, but ideally should be done as soon as possible after the CPT.

The candidate debriefing shall include the following:

- Notification of final result
- Discussion of any errors or deficiencies
- Subsequent steps to be taken as appropriate

5.7. Practical Examination Log Files

For all controller practical tests, a log file is required to be submitted to the VATMENA ATC Training Director. This is required before any rating upgrade can be processed.

If for any reason the local examiner, divisional examiner or candidate fails to save a log file, then that controller practical test shall become void and the candidate will be required to be re-tested at a later date.

This may be waived by the VATMENA ATC Training Director only if there is a legitimate reason for the failure to save the log file.

5.8. Submission of Exam Report

The divisional examiner shall send their final copy of the examiner scoresheet to the local examiner, the local examiner shall ensure the divisional examination sheet has been filled out correctly and shall send this to the VATMENA ATC Training Director for review.

Preferably the final report shall be sent via email (atc@vatsim.me) or a ticket to the ATC department via the VATMENA helpdesk including the following information:

- The candidates first and last name, CID and their new rating.
- The final scoresheets from the examiner(s). This must be the divisional examination scoresheet and shall be provided in PDF format.
- Summary of the examination including if it was a pass or fail.
- The session log file.

6. Sweatbox Examination Procedure

6.1. General

A sweatbox examination shall only be conducted after an online examination has been attempted and it has been determined that there was insufficient traffic to assess all the required competencies and it has been determined that an online re-examination is not suitable.

The Sweatbox shall not be the preferred method of conducting a CPT and will require approval from the VATMENA ATC training director before being conducted. If approval is not granted an online re-examination must be performed.

6.2. Divisional Examiner requirement

For all ratings, if a sweatbox simulation is to be used for a practical examination, a divisional examiner shall be present.

6.3. Divisional Examiner Briefing

During Sweatbox practical examinations, the VATMENA divisional examiner shall be briefed by the local examiner on any relevant local procedures, differences, or peculiarities as well as a basic run through of the local airspace.

6.4. Sweatbox Simulator Server

Preferably, the pseudo pilot shall be the local examiner. The scenario shall be accurate to reflect a slightly above average level of traffic, ensuring the controllers workload is not overstretched but instead allows all aspects of the CPT to be accurately assessed.

6.5. Sweatbox Session Recording

Controller practical tests conducted on sweatbox require a full recording to be submitted to the VATMENA ATC Training Director. This recording shall include the following:

- An unobstructed view of the full Euroscope screen from the candidate's perspective
- All relevant radio communications including coordination between controllers

Recording software such as Open Broadcaster Software (OBS) is recommended by the VATMENA division for recording the examiners screen and audio.

6.6. Examiner Presence

Whilst the CPT examination is taking place, it is required that the examiner(s) stay in the same voice room as the candidate. During this time, the examiners shall ensure they fill in the scoresheet completely or make appropriately detailed notes such that it permits the scoresheet to be completed post-examination.

6.7. Candidate Debriefing

At the end of the examination, it is recommended that examiners allow the candidate some time to relax and, if required, step away for a short while. During this time both examiners shall discuss any relevant points that were noted throughout the examination. The local examiner and divisional examiner shall discuss and agree on the appropriate outcome following which the candidate shall be debriefed.

The examiners and candidate may agree on a suitable debrief time, but ideally should be done as soon as possible after the CPT.

The candidate debriefing shall include the following:

- Notification of final result
- Discussion of any errors or deficiencies
- Subsequent steps to be taken as appropriate

6.8. Practical Examination Log Files

For all controller practical tests, a log file is required to be submitted to the VATMENA ATC Training Director. This is required before any rating upgrade can be processed.

If for any reason the local examiner, divisional examiner or candidate fails to save a log file, then that controller practical test shall become void and the candidate will be required to be re-tested at a later date.

This may be waived by the VATMENA ATC Training Director only if there is a legitimate reason for the failure to save the log file.

6.9. Submission of Exam Report

The divisional examiner shall send their final copy of the examiner scoresheet to the local examiner, the local examiner shall ensure the divisional examination sheet has been filled out correctly and shall send this to the VATMENA ATC Training Director for review.

The final report shall be sent via email (atc@vatsim.me) or a ticket to the ATC department via the VATMENA helpdesk and shall include the following information:

- The candidates first and last name, CID and their new rating.
- The final scoresheets from the examiner(s). This must be the divisional examination scoresheet and shall be provided in PDF format.
- A summary of the examination including if it was a pass or fail.
- The session recording and log file.

7. Post-Examination Procedure

7.1. Examination Results in a “Pass”

Following a candidate successfully passing the examination, the following procedure shall be applied once the VATMENA ATC Training Director has been notified of the result:

1. The examination scoresheet shall be reviewed by the VATMENA ATC Training Director and stored for record keeping
2. The relevant rating upgrade shall be processed within 48 hours from the end time of the examination
3. The completed scoresheet shall be sent to the candidate for review

7.2. Examination Results in a “Fail”

Following a candidate failing the examination, the following procedure shall be applied once the VATMENA ATC Training Director has been notified of the result:

1. The examination scoresheet shall be reviewed by the VATMENA ATC Training Director and stored for record keeping
2. The completed scoresheet shall be sent to the candidate for review
3. The VATMENA ATC Training Director shall have a meeting with the vACC Director to discuss the reasons for the failure and the actions to be taken to rectify the shortfalls
4. The vACC shall take steps to address deficiencies in their training process to ensure that future candidates are able to pass the examination
5. The candidate shall receive additional training to address the deficiencies in their performance
6. If the candidate was under a solo validation, this shall be extended as appropriate
7. Another examination shall be scheduled once the candidate is sufficiently prepared in accordance with the procedures laid down in this policy