

Task I.E: Instructor Responsibilities and Professionalism

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Lesson Overview

Overview

The student should develop knowledge of the elements related to flight instructor characteristics and responsibilities as necessary in the CFI PTS.

References

- Aviation Instructor's Handbook (FAA-H-8083-9A)
- Certification: Pilots and Flight and Ground Instructors (AC 61-65H)
- Currency Requirements and Guidance for the Flight Review and Instrument Proficiency Check (AC-61-98D)
- [Slide Presentation](#)
- [PDF Version](#)

Elements

1. Aviation Instructor Responsibilities
2. Flight Instructor Responsibilities
3. Professionalism
4. Evaluation of Student Ability
5. Aviation Instructors and Exams
6. Professional Development

Schedule

1. Discuss lesson objectives
2. Present Lecture
3. Ask and Answer Questions
4. Assign homework

Equipment

1. White board and markers
2. References
3. iPad / Projection Device

IP Actions

1. Discuss lesson objectives
2. Present Lecture
3. Ask and Answer Questions
4. Assign homework

SP Actions

1. Participate in discussion
2. Take notes

3. Ask and respond to questions

Completion Standards

The student understands the responsibilities associated with instructing as well as the characteristics related to being a professional.

Instructor Notes

Attention

These are the characteristics that will make you a great flight instructor, and the responsibilities of being one.

Overview

- Review Objectives and Elements/Key ideas.

What

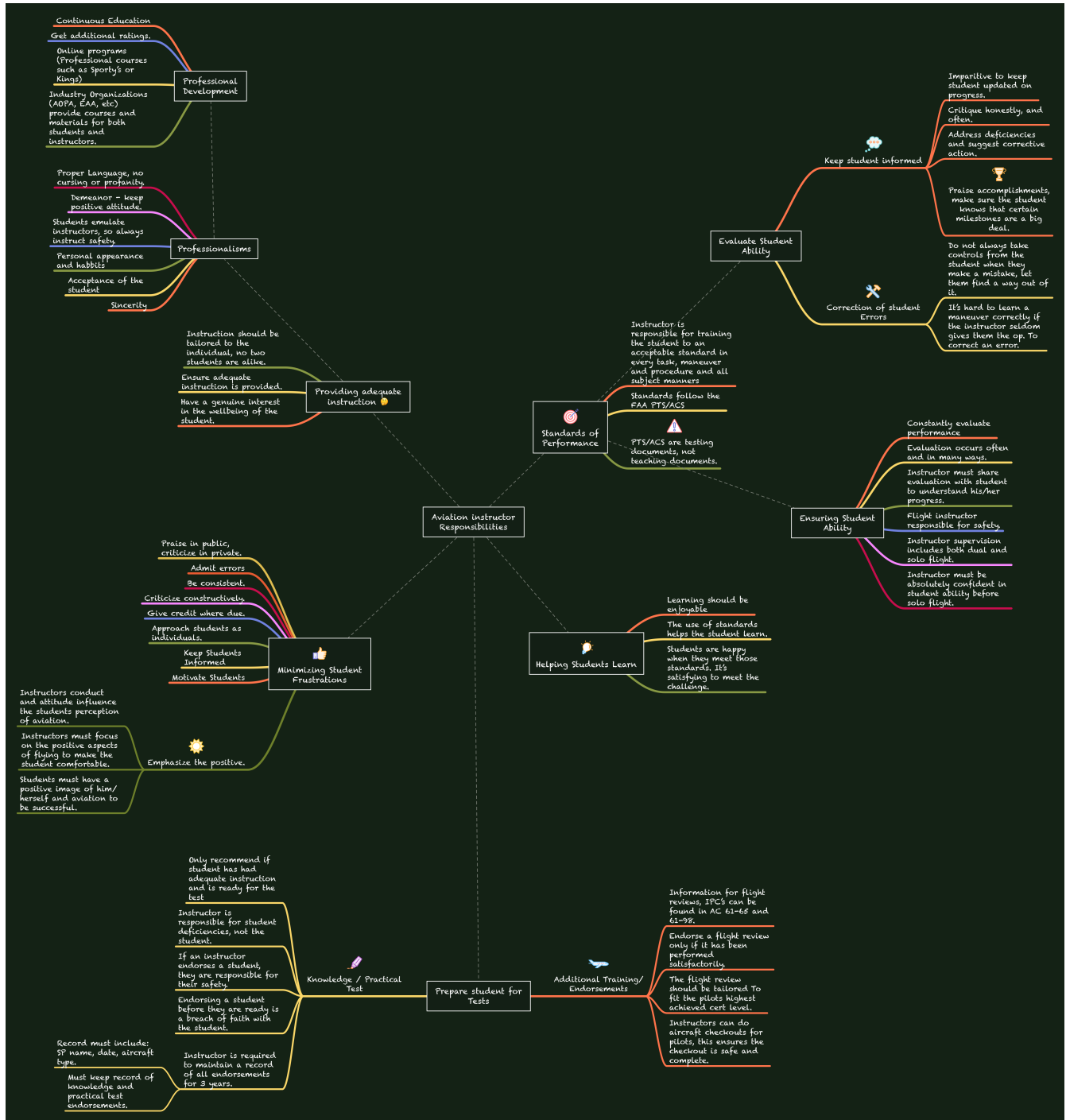
This lesson discusses the scope of responsibilities for instructors and enumerates methods they can use to enhance their professional image and conduct.

Why

It is important that aviation instructors not only know how to teach, but they also need to project a knowledgeable and professional image.

Lesson Details

Aviation instructor responsibilities



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Help students learn

The flight instructor has a unique set of responsibilities, with the primary one being to help students learn effectively and with the necessary skills. Students learn best when the process is enjoyable and interesting, and the students are able to see their own growth against clear standards.

Provide adequate instruction

Instructors fail to provide competent instruction when they permit their students to get by with substandard performance, or without thoroughly learning necessary knowledge. Accepting lower standards just to please the student does not benefit the student (or instructor) and an earnest student does not resent reasonable standards that are fairly applied.

In enforcing standards it is best to emphasize the positive. This is true in the way that instructors conduct themselves, the attitudes they display, and the way in which the instruction is developed contribute to either a positive or negative impression on the part of the students. Success ultimately depends upon the student forming a positive image and attitude about aviation. Emphasize the positive because positive instruction results in positive learning.

Minimizing Student Frustration

Learning to fly requires acquiring a new, and foreign, set of skills. The process of acquiring those skills can have moments of frustration, and it is the instructor's task to attempt to minimize those frustrations. Approach each student as a unique individual, and understand what they need to avoid becoming frustrated during the learning process.

It is critical that the student be motivated to learn, as more is gained from someone wanting to learn rather than being forced to learn. This is aided by insuring the student sees the benefit of a given lesson so the effort they are making seems worthwhile.

It is also important to keep the student informed of their progress. Without that they can become insecure, or uncomfortable, not knowing what is expected of them or what will happen next. This can be accomplished by giving them a syllabus at the start of training, updating their progress against that syllabus, and giving them advance notice of expectations.

Be sure to give credit/praise when it is due, and always insure criticisms are of a constructive nature. Do not over-praise, as that devalues it. Similarly as criticisms are delivered not only should the errors be clearly identified but how to correct those errors must be given as well. This gives students a clear path to improve their performance.

The instructor has a responsibility for being consistent, and prepared, as well. It must be remembered that the student is spending money (for many, a lot of money) and they deserve a well-prepared instructor. It is also critical that for the instructional time paid for by the student that they get the full attention of the instructor, else they are being cheated.

Additional Responsibilities

Along with the issues already covered, the instructor has a number of other key responsibilities. The instructor must watch for physiological obstacles to the student's progress. This can include a basic fear of small planes, reactions to unexpected/unfamiliar noises, or G-force/motion sickness. Each of these issues, if they occur, must be addressed.

The instructor also has the responsibility to **accurately assess the student's ability**. Most critically, they must insure that prior to solo flight the student is adequately prepared. Before endorsing the student for solo flight they must display consistent ability to perform all the required maneuvers.

The student must also be capable of handling ordinary problems that can occur during flight.

Finally, the instructor must provide requisite ground instruction on issues identified as "special emphasis areas". They should be current on all the latest procedures regarding training, certification, and safety. Ideally they (or the organization for whom they are providing instruction) should maintain a current library of information.

Professionalism

The degree of professionalism demonstrated can make a large difference in how students respond. The instructor should always approach the students in a straight forward and honest manner. Never should deficiencies be hidden behind a smokescreen or unrelated instruction. Teaching is based on the acceptance of the instructor as being qualified, and as an expert pilot.

Conversely, the instructor must accept each student as they are, including all faults and problems. Under no circumstances should an instructor engage in behavior that would be degrading to the student. Acceptance rather than ridicule, and support rather than reproof, will encourage learning.

Instructors are expected to be neat, clean, and appropriately dressed. Attire worn should be to a professional status. Personal habits can have a large effect on the professional image, and common courtesy is perhaps the most important of these habits. Cleanliness is important as well, because a lack of cleanliness can be distracting.

Along with habits, the overall demeanor of the instructor is important. Attitude and behavior can contribute much to a professional image. This requires a calm, thoughtful, and disciplined manner, though never somber. Instruction is best done in a calm, pleasant, thoughtful approach putting the student at ease. Portraying competence in the subject matter and a genuine interest in the student's well being promotes learning. Finally, language selected has an impact and should at all times be positive and avoid profanity.

Evaluation of student ability

The evaluation of student ability involves a number of components. At the top of the list is the evaluation of demonstrated ability. The evaluation considers the student's mastery of the elements taught, rather just the overall performance. The evaluation must be performed against established standards of performance, though those standards should be modified for the individual student's experience.

Part of the evaluation process should entail keeping the student informed of their progress. Keeping a record of the performance and progress is important, and kindly pointing out deficiencies and how to correct them should always be done. If possible point out where errors originated, and if possible suggest corrective actions.

How student errors are managed is such that it is often beneficial to allow an error to progress to the point where it is recognized by the student, and then corrected by the student (within the limits of safety, of course). If a procedure is performed correctly, but isn't fully understood, it can be advisable to require it to be varied or combined with another operation to deepen understanding.

Aviation instructors and exams

There are various exams which the student will have to take to earn their pilot's certificate, and the instructor is responsible for helping the students prepare for these tests. The student will need an endorsement for some of the written knowledge tests, and these endorsements are documented in AC 61-65. The instructor is held accountable for deficient instruction, so it is to the instructor's advantage to insure the student is genuinely ready for examination. If a student fails an exam there will be additional instruction required prior to a re-examination.

Signing a student off for the practical test is a serious responsibility, and the instructor is held accountable for any deficient instruction. The student must be able to demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed for any aspect of the ACS, and in no instance should it be less than the complete procedure in the ACS.

Be very protective of your record as an instructor. Never sign someone off who is not genuinely ready for the checkride!

Flight Instructor Endorsements

Examples of proper endorsements can be found in AC-61-65 and those examples should be followed when endorsing students. Failure to ensure that a student pilot meets the requirements for a given endorsement is a serious failure, and the instructor is held accountable. This also is a breach of faith with the student.

Additional Training Endorsements

Along with the normal student related endorsements, there are many other endorsements which an instructor might issue. These are documented in AC-61-98 and include flight reviews (formerly known as BFRs), instrument proficiency checks (IPCs), and aircraft specific endorsements.

Flight reviews are not a checkride, and are not pass/fail, but are a mandated instructional service designed to assess knowledge and skills. They must be based on specific objectives and standards, and should include a through check of the appropriate skills based on the certificate/ratings held by the pilot. Before beginning the instructor and pilot should agree upon the objectives and standards, and as the flight/training continues the pilot should be kept aware of progress towards the agreed upon goals.

An instrument proficiency check validates that the pilot is prepared to venture into IMC. It should use the instrument PTS as the primary reference for the maneuvers and tolerances expected.

Aircraft checkouts and transitions vary depending upon the endorsement sought. They can be for high performance, tail wheel, or high altitude operation. It must be stressed that by performing these evaluations and issuing these endorsements you are taking a large responsibility for the pilot and any future passengers. All checkouts should be conducted to the performance standards in the PTS, and you should never perform a checkout in an aircraft with which you are not familiar. Record, in detail, what was accomplished and if the performance was inadequate the pilot should schedule time for further training.

Professional development

The instructor training doesn't cease with the issuance of a CFI certificate, but must be an ongoing process. Also, the instructor needs an ongoing supply of material to help make training interesting for the students. So a continuing education stance is required.

Continuing education can take many forms. The government provides opportunities for training (e.g. FAA seminars, articles, ACs, pilot proficiency awards, gold seal flight certificates, etc.). Independent training institutions provide other opportunities (e.g. community college and technical school classes). Commercial organizations provide training, as well as industry organizations (e.g. articles, training programs, publications).

1. Continuing Education resources

- a. Government — Pilot Proficiency Awards Program, Gold Seal CFI certificate, FAA Safety Seminars.
- b. Educational/training institutions — local community colleges, technical schools etc.
- c. Commercial organizations — provide videos, computer-based training, printed material, etc.
- d. Industry organizations — AOPA, Air Safety Institute, etc.

2. Sources of material

- a. FAA regulations
- b. Aeronautical Information Manual
- c. Airman Certification Standards
- d. Practical Test Standards
- e. FAA Handbooks

Conclusion

The responsibilities of the instructor are great, and the consequences of not executing those responsibilities in a professional manner are extreme. Understanding how to execute those responsibilities in a thorough manner are critical for success.

ACS Requirements

To determine that the applicant exhibits instructional knowledge of instructor responsibilities and professionalism by describing:

1. Aviation instructor responsibilities:
 - a. Helping students learn.
 - b. Providing adequate instruction.
 - c. Standards of performance.
 - d. Minimizing student frustrations.
2. Flight instructor responsibilities:
 - a. Physiological obstacles for flight students.
 - b. Ensuring student ability.
3. Professionalism.
4. Evaluation of student ability.
5. Aviation instructors and exams.
6. Professional development.

Memory Sheet

1. Aviation instructor responsibilities:

- a. Helping students learn - Learning should be Enjoyable and Interesting
- b. Providing adequate instruction
 - i. Carefully and correctly analyze each learner's personality, thinking, and ability
 - ii. Incorrectly analyzing a learner may result in the instruction not producing the desired outcome
 - iii. Learners experiencing slow progress due to discouragement/lack of confidence should be assigned sub-goals which are easier to attain than the normal learning goals
 - iv. Instructors fail to provide competent instruction when they permit their learners to get by with substandard performance, or without thoroughly learning necessary knowledge
 - v. Fast learners may assume correcting errors is unimportant since they make few mistakes
 - vi. Individuals learn when they are aware of their errors
- c. Standards of performance.
 - i. Instructors fail to provide competent instruction when they permit their learners to get by with substandard performance, or without thoroughly learning necessary knowledge
- d. Emphasizing the Positive (Not in PTS)
 - i. The way instructors conduct themselves, the attitudes displayed, and the manner instruction is developed contribute to the formation of either positive or negative impressions by their learners.
 - ii. Success depends on the ability to present instruction that develops a positive image of aviation, You are an Ambassador!
 - iii. Every reasonable effort should be made so instruction is given under the most favorable conditions
 - iv. **Emphasize the positive because positive instruction results in positive learning**
- e. Minimizing student frustrations.
 - i. Motivate Learners
 - ii. Keep Learners Informed
 - iii. Approach Learners as Individuals
 - iv. Give Credit When Due
 - v. Criticize Constructively
 - vi. Be Consistent
 - vii. Admit Errors
 - viii. Be Well Prepared (Over prepare)

2. Flight instructor responsibilities:

a. Physiological obstacles for flight students.

- i. Do not ignore negative factors
 - A. Fear of small aircraft
 - B. Strange noises
 - C. G-forces/Motion sickness

b. Ensuring student ability.

- i. Flight instructors have the responsibility to provide guidance and restraint with respect to solo ops.
- ii. Before endorsing solo flight, the learner should display consistent ability to perform the maneuvers.
- iii. Provide adequate flight and ground instruction for each item in the applicable ACS/PTS, including “special emphasis areas”.
- iv. Be current on the latest procedures regarding training, certification, and safety.
- v. Maintain a current library of information.

3. Professionalism.

a. The instructor is the central figure in aviation training and bear responsibility for all phases of training. The instructor needs to be professional

b. Sincerity

- i. Be straight forward and honest at all times
- ii. Do not attempt to hide some inadequacy behind a smokescreen or unrelated instruction

c. Acceptance of the Learner

d. Personal Appearance and Habits

- i. Their life is in your hands, look the part.

e. Demeanor

- i. Instructors are expected to be neat, clean, and appropriately dressed
- ii. Instruction is best done with a calm, pleasant, thoughtful approach putting the learner at ease
- iii. The instructor must constantly portray competence in the subject matter and genuine interest in the learner’s well being

f. Proper Language

- i. The professional instructor speaks normally, without inhibitions, and speaks positively and descriptively, without profanity.
- ii. This can be hard with younger generations that don’t see profanity as profanity. **Keep it professional and don’t get too comfortable.**

4. Evaluation of student ability.

a. Demonstrated Ability

- i. The evaluation considers the learner’s mastery of the elements involved in the

maneuver or procedure, rather than merely the overall performance

ii. Evaluation of ability during flight must be based on established standards of performance

b. Keeping the Learner Informed - Keep the learner up to date with progress

c. Correction of Learner Errors

i. It is often better to let learners make a mistake and get out of it on their own (safety permitting)

5. Aviation instructors and exams.

a. Knowledge Test

i. Learners will need to be endorsed for some knowledge tests

ii. AC 61-65 for endorsements

iii. Instructor is held accountable for deficient instruction

A. Must give additional instruction and sign test for re-endorsement for written retake

b. Practical Test

i. Signing a recommendation imposes a serious responsibility on the instructor

c. Flight Instructor Endorsements (AC 61-65)

i. Failure to ensure that a learner pilot meets the requirements of regulations prior to endorsing solo flight is a serious deficiency in performance - *the instructor is held accountable*

A. This is also a breach of faith with the learner

d. Additional Training Endorsements (AC 61-98)

i. Flight Reviews

A. This is not a test/check ride, but an instructional service designed to assess knowledge and skill

B. Must be based on specific objectives and standards

I. Should include a thorough checkout appropriate to certificate/ratings held

II. Before beginning agree fully on the objectives and standards

III. As training progresses keep the pilot informed of progress toward achieving the goals

ii. Instrument Proficiency Checks

iii. Aircraft Checkouts/Transitions (High performance, tail wheel, high altitude training)

6. Professional development.

a. Successful, professional aviation instructors do not become complacent or satisfied with their own qualifications and abilities, and are constantly alert for ways to improve their qualifications, effectiveness, and the services they provide to learners

b. The instructor needs a steady supply of fresh material to make instruction interesting and up to date

- c. Continuing Education
- d. Sources of Material
 - i. Maintain access to current flight publications
 - A. Regulations, AIM, PTS, ACS, ACs, etc.
 - ii. Commercial handbooks, periodicals, technical journals