FAA Airman Testing: Policy Update

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ATEC Conference

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Federal Aviation Administration

What is the ACS?

- The ACS concept forms a **more comprehensive standard for what an applicant knows, considers, and does** for the safe conduct and successful completion of each subject to be tested on the knowledge (written) test and oral and practical tests.

What is the outcome?

- The **goal** of the airman certification process is to **ensure the applicant possesses knowledge, risk management, and basic skills** consistent with the privileges of the certificate or rating being exercised.

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Why change?

- Previously, the knowledge test **did not** correspond to defined knowledge test standards, or metrics for the aeronautical knowledge elements

- **FAA and industry identified need to:**

  – Provide clear standards for aeronautical knowledge.

  – List specific behaviors for risk management and aeronautical decision making.

  – Consolidate overlapping tasks in practical testing standards (PTS)

  – Tie the many "special emphasis" items to knowledge and skill.

How we created ACS

Industry-led development:
Aviation training industry groups with diverse representation, along with the FAA, helped develop and refine the ACS.
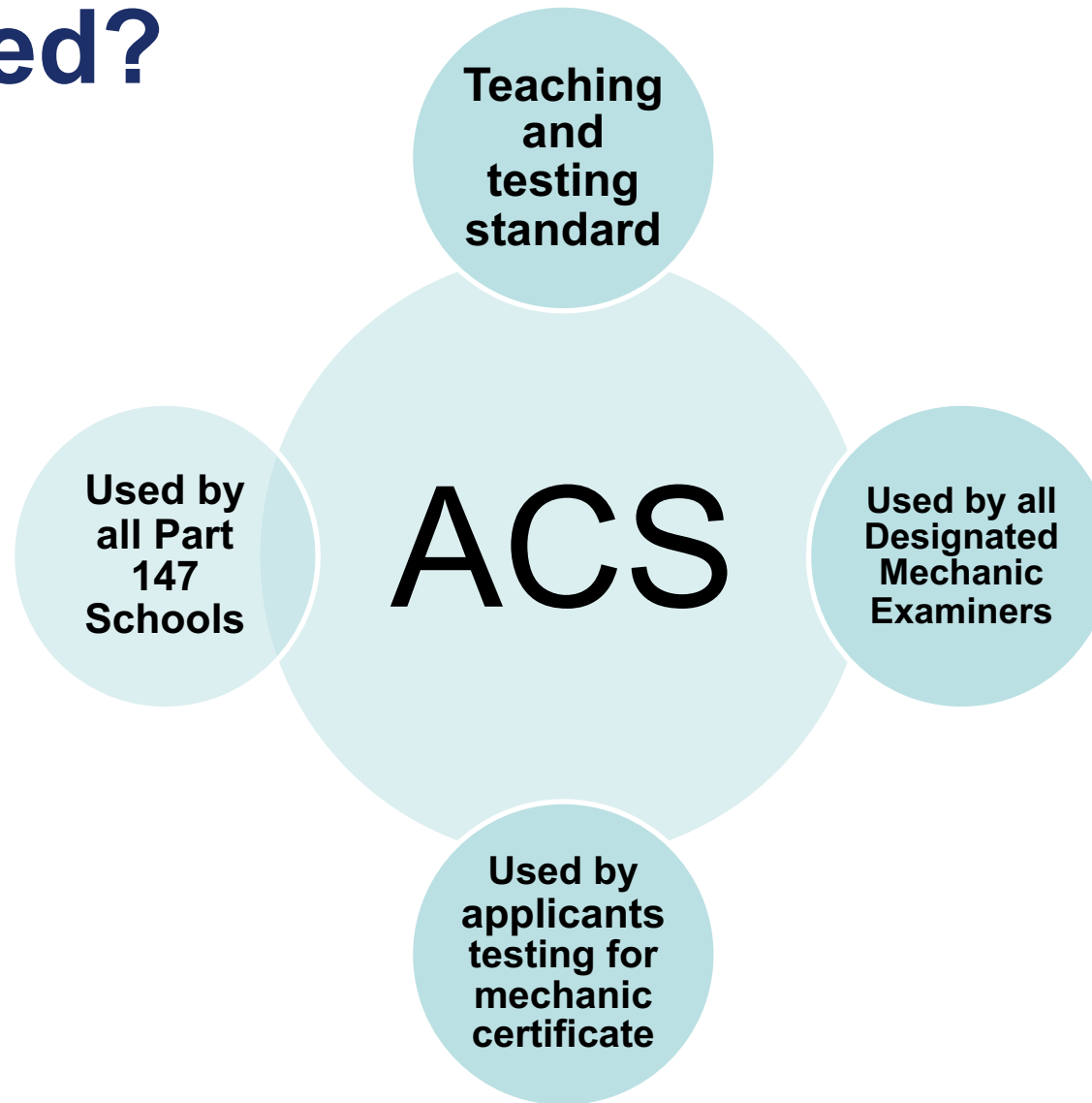
Public comment:
FAA established several avenues to receive public comments.

ARAC Reviews:
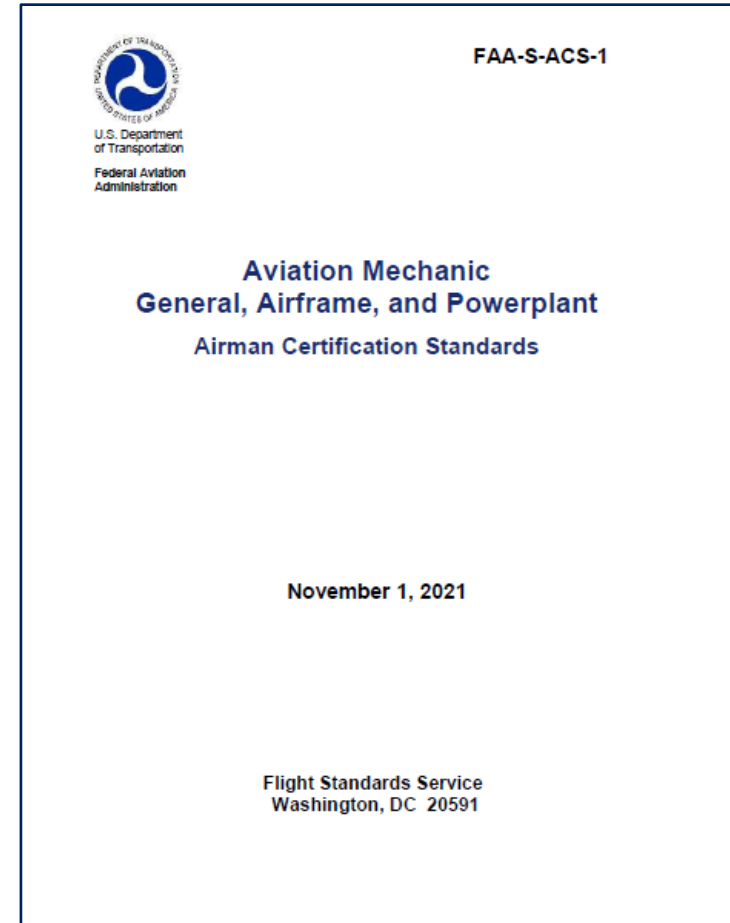ACS Revisions will be include the ARAC ACS stakeholders

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How is it used?

Teaching and testing standard

Used by all Part 147 Schools

ACS

Used by all Designated Mechanic Examiners

Used by applicants testing for mechanic certificate

Key Aspects of the ACS

- Clear baseline of required knowledge for the **"Knowledge Test" (computer-based)** and correlated with the oral test

- More specific coding of missed knowledge test questions and validates basic knowledge of subjects during the oral portion of the test

FAA-S-ACS-1

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Aviation Administration

Aviation Mechanic
General, Airframe, and Powerplant

Airman Certification Standards

November 1, 2021

Flight Standards Service
Washington, DC 20591

Key Aspects of the ACS

Subject/Element level skill performance data

Communicates basic requirements for Risk Management

Risk Management is identification and control of hazards.

NEW

The BENEFITS . . .

- **The ACS testing process will . . .**
  - move away from rote memory.
  - enhance the applicant's ability to demonstrate their understanding of the required knowledge.
  - enhance the applicant's correlation of that knowledge with the ability to perform the basic skills.
  - enhance the applicant's ability to demonstrate an understanding of the safety risks as a certificated mechanic.

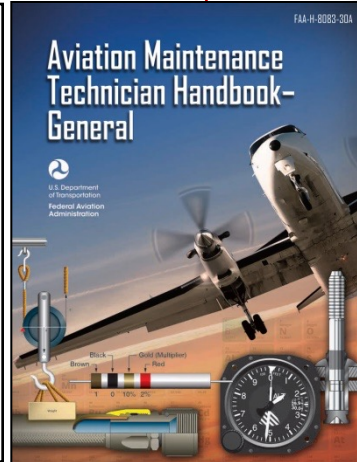# •Let's work the problem
Purpose + Process + People = Product

Airman Certification System

Changes: Regulations, Policies, Procedures, Feedback

FAA-S-ACS-1

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Aviation Administration

Aviation Mechanic
General, Airframe, Powerplant
Airman Certification Standards

TBD

Flight Standards Service
Washington, DC 20591

FAA-H-8083-30A

Aviation Maintenance Technician Handbook– General

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Aviation Administration

•*Knowledge exam questions are meaningful, relevant, aligned with standards and guidance.*

•*Oral and practical tests are more focused and more efficient.*

Airman Testing

Frequently Asked Questions (PDF)

What's New and Upcoming in Airman Testing

•*ACS codes enable continuous alignment*

Standards
•*Combined certification standards for knowledge, risk management, and skill*

Guidance
•*Rules, H-series handbooks, Advisory Circulars, other FAA information sources*

Testing
•*Knowledge exam, oral and practical tests for issuance of certificate or rating*
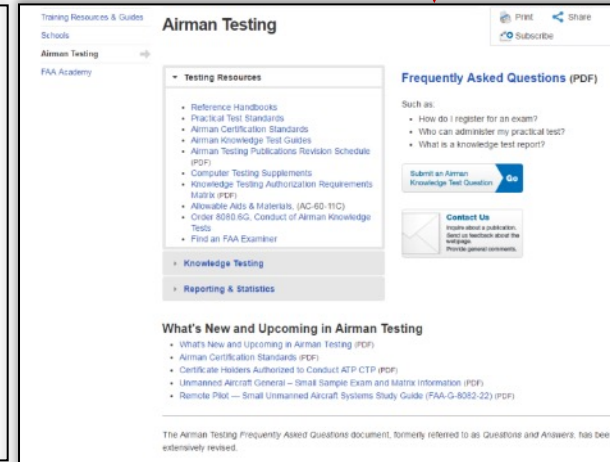
Change Management
•*Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement via disciplined change management plan with associated communications strategy*

Alignment as appropriate with other Certificates / Ratings

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ACS Evolution: CtA Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** Congress immediately engage with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to eliminate the recent and unnecessarily restrictive interpretations of the Administrative Procedure Act, which are delaying publishing time-critical aviation safety information, and implement a transparent pathway for effectively and efficiently publishing and maintaining the ACS documents that accommodates safety needs (including NTSB, FAA, and stakeholder input), permits timely changes, provides for predictable revisions, permits for public consultation, promotes continued communication and interaction with community partners.

- **Recommendation** 2—Establish a semi-permanent industry/agency collaborative body within FAA to maintain and update the ACS to ensure that training and testing remains correlated and corresponds to current regulations, procedures, equipment, aviation infrastructure, and safety trends. This could be accomplished through the continuation of the ACS WG under the ARAC as a permanent industry/agency body, to see this large task, and other taskings within the ACS WG completed.

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CtA Recommendations continued

- **Recommendation 3**—Publish an ex parte policy that supports a more welcoming approach to public stakeholder feedback, clearly and broadly defines informal rulemaking and handling of non-governmental feedback, and incorporates into a process that supports ongoing development of the ACS, informational documents and FAA Knowledge Exams using the agency/industry collaboration that resulted in the successful pilot ACS already published. This will require creation and implementation of an ex parte training session to ensure all affected parties are educated on the policy, what constitutes informal rulemaking, when a communication is considered ex parte, and how to properly give and receive ex parte communications.

- **Recommendation 4**—Establish a means for ongoing data evaluation based on the ACS codes, airman knowledge test reports, and practical exam reports for the purpose of ongoing improvement and collaboration between training and testing and to support emerging technologies.

- **Recommendation 5**—Establish a process for continual improvement to the FAA standards, guidance, and testing with change management and communication maintained with the training community, including, but not limited to, methods to ensure a balanced test map and means to include new and/or change existing requirements for a sound airman certification process.

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New Data for 147 schools

The ACS provides uniform standards for ensuring a comprehensive description of the necessary knowledge and functionality requirements for airmen in both training and written, oral, and practical testing. The ACS will, therefore, provide a common basis for both training and certification testing.

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Change Management – Stay Informed

https://www.faa.gov/training_testing/testing

Community Advisory

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Questions?