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Please note that the following are the **existing** arrangements for getting a JAR PPL/IR (A). A somewhat slimmed-down Theory syllabus for the IR has been incorporated into version 7 of JAR FCL 1, but the CAA estimate that UK exams based on this syllabus will not be available until late 2009.

This article is a brief overview. The Members' Forum has detailed reports and discussion on every aspect of JAA and FAA IR flight training and theoretical knowledge training.

Medical requirements

You need to have a JAA Class One medical, or a Class Two medical PLUS an audiogram.

Theoretical studies/examinations

You have to pass seven exams:

Day One

- Aircraft General
- Flight Performance and Planning
- Navigation
- Human Performance and Limitations

Day Two

- Meteorology
- Air Law & ATC Procedures
- IFR Communications

You have to take a formal course before you take the exams, and there are only three ground schools in the UK who run the JAA IR theoretical knowledge courses. These are:

GTS: Ground Training Services (Bournemouth)

+ 44 (0) 1202 580809
<http://www.gtserv.co.uk/>
roger@gtserv.co.uk

CATS: Cranfield Aviation Training School

+ 44 (0) 1582 434222
<http://www.catsaviation.com/>
info@catsaviation.com

AFT: Atlantic Flight Training Coventry

+44 (0)845 4500530
http://www.flyaft.com/ground_modules.html
enquiries@flyaft.com

All three of these schools have a good reputation. GTS and Atlantic's courses involve 2 modules, each of 8 weeks study at home (approx 15hrs/week) followed by 1 week of classroom consolidation on-site, just prior to each of the Exam days. CATS course is based on 3 modules of 8 weeks, but with only 1 day of classroom attendance at the end of each. GTS also offer a reduced groundschool option of 2x3days, which can be over weekends by arrangement.

The IR exams have traditionally been a major barrier to PPLs undertaking the JAA IR but we strongly feel that they need not be. The syllabus no longer has material relevant to jet aircraft, and although the volume of study can look daunting, in reality pass rates are very high. People who attend 2 weeks of classroom consolidation always report positively on the experience; equally, candidates who have taken the online course at CATS with only 3 classroom days have had very good results. It's really down to what suits individual preference and circumstances.

Candidates who hold an existing ICAO Instrument Rating (eg. an FAA IR) are exempt from having to take a full approved course. It is down to the Head of Training of a theory school to determine what an individual's requirements are. In general, if you can demonstrate that you are prepared for the exams, you should not be required to attend any classroom training or to complete the full home study programme. PPL/IR members have completed such conversions from an FAA IR successfully with minimal study and revision.

Pilots not based in the UK will need to contact their JAA authority for a list of ground schools that provide this training in their country.

Pre-course/license issue requirements

You need to have passed all of your ground exams before you take your IR Skill Test. This is not a requirement for starting the course, but we strongly recommend that you do not start the course until you have passed all the exams. Some schools' CAA approval may require that candidates cannot begin their flight training until they have passed the ground exams.

You also need the following:

to be the holder of a PPL(A) including a night qualification

OR

to be the holder of a CPL(A).

AND

to be the holder of a Flight Radio Telephony Operator's Licence;

to have at least 50 hours cross country flight time as PIC in aeroplanes or helicopters, of which at least 10 hours shall be in aeroplanes.

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In addition, if a multi engine IR is required you need to have undertaken a Multi Engine Piston Class Rating course prior to commencing the IR course.

Flying Courses

The training course must be done at a Flight Training Organisation (FTO) which is JAA approved to run IR courses.

You need to decide initially whether you want to do a single engine or a multi engine IR.

Single-Engine IR

This is a minimum 50 hour course (45 hours if you hold an ICAO CPL(A)).
Up to 20 hours of the 50 hour course can be completed in a suitably approved FNPT1 simulator.
Up to 35 hours of the 50 hour course can be completed in a suitably approved FNPT2 simulator (up to 30 hours of the 45 hour course).

Multi-Engine IR

This is a minimum 55 hour course (50 hours if you hold an ICAO CPL(A)).
Up to 25 hours of the 55 hour course can be completed in a suitably approved FNPT1 simulator.
Up to 40 hours of the 55 hour course can be completed in a suitably approved FNPT2 simulator (up to 35 hours of the 50 hour course).

Single-Engine to Multi-Engine Upgrade

You can upgrade a single engine IR to a multi engine one (you need to do a Multi Engine Piston Class Rating first).
This is a minimum five hour course of which 3 hours can be completed in a suitably approved FNPT2 simulator.

The Skill Test

The skill test is carried out as follows:

You will be required to depart from the airfield where you are taking the test and join the airways to fly to another airport. You will do either an NDB (or a VOR), or an ILS approach at this other airfield. The ILS may be procedural or vectored. You will then go off and do some General Handling/Emergency procedures, after which you will return to the original airfield to do the other type of approach, followed by a visual circuit to land. If you are doing a multi-engined IR one of the approaches will be asymmetric.

For the Single-Engine to Multi-Engine Upgrade you are required to do another IR Skill Test with a CAA full time examiner, but the test only consists of approaches, i.e. no airways work.

The skill test can only be done in a JAA country and (in the UK) can only be done by a full-time CAA examiner.

Conversion from ICAO IR(A) to JAA IR(A)

If you hold a current ICAO IR(A) you can convert it to a JAR IR(A) as follows:

- Undertake theoretical knowledge ground studies on an "as required" basis with a Theoretical Knowledge school, and pass all seven exams.
- Complete a minimum of 15 hours flight instruction (at an approved FTO) of which 5 hours may be in a FNPT1 or 10 hours in a FNPT2.

If you hold a non-current ICAO IR, you will have to do the whole 50/55 hour course (50 se, 55 me). However, if your school feels that you are ready for test before you get to the end of the course, they can write to the CAA who should allow you to go on test without completing the full 50/55 hours. Thus, it may be preferable to revalidate an expired ICAO IR before commencing a JAA conversion.

There are also rules for other conversions, e.g. ICAO IR(H) to JAR IR(A), JAR IR(H) to JAR IR(A) etc. These rules can be found on the CAA website (<http://www.caa.co.uk>) under Personnel Licensing, Flight Crew Licensing, LASORS, section E.

Using Your Own Aircraft

It is possible to do the training/test in your own aircraft. It will need to be approved by the JAA Authority for the test but this is not too complex. Basically, you will need instrument screens (temporary cardboard ones are acceptable), an approved checklist and a minimum equipment fit, e.g. two altimeters. Your school should be able to help you with all of this. And of course you will need to pay the Authority for this (around £165).

You may do the test in a Foreign-Registered aircraft you own if, in addition to the above, you obtain the required DFT Waiver. Again, this process is not onerous.

The other thing to check before you decide to use your own aircraft is the cost of landing/approach fees at the airport where you are planning to do your training. At around 2.5 landings/approaches per hour of flying training this can soon add up.

Renewal / Revalidation Requirements

The IR remains current for one year. In order to continue using the privileges you need to revalidate/renew it.

If the IR is still current the revalidation can be done in an aircraft, or in an FNPT2 no more frequently than once every other revalidation.

If the IR has passed its expiry date the renewal must be done in an aircraft.

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