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A mechanic test overhaul is long overdue. Industry and FAA are working together to get it fixed.



## Mechanic Certification: Developing New Testing Standards

By: Jackie Spanitz, Curriculum Director, Aviation Supplies & Academics

An FAA and industry working group are currently developing new airman certification standards (ACS) which will replace current practical test standards (PTS). The ACS will dictate the knowledge and skill needed to obtain an FAA mechanic certificate, including those tested through both the oral and practical (O&P) and written exams. The purpose of the new ACS is to ensure applicants, educators and evaluators understand what the FAA expects an applicant to *know*, *consider*, and *do* in each phase of the certification process.

The first ACS was initiated in 2011 as an effort to fix the pilot knowledge tests. With many questions that seemed outdated, irrelevant and more “tricky” than “meaningful,” test preparation became an exercise in memorizing correct answers solely for the purpose of passing the test. The first ACS for Private Pilot Airplane and Instrument Rating Airplane applicants is effective June 2016.

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Given the similar challenges presented in mechanic certifications, the pilot working group was expanded to include maintenance. Once the mechanic ACS is established, an FAA/industry review board will evaluate all general, airframe and powerplant knowledge exam questions against the ACS. If a question no longer “fits” (because it is not relevant, meaningful, or current to today’s technologies, regulations and practices), it will be rewritten or tossed. New questions will be written consistent with the ACS. In this way, the ACS will serve as guidance for the test writers, ensuring applicants are tested on subjects that really matter to safe maintenance operations.

ATEC has a big role in developing the new ACS, [get involved](#) to ensure your curriculum and training guidance remain aligned with the FAA testing standards. You can also visit and subscribe to the FAA [airman testing web page](#) to stay informed of FAA activities.

*Jackie Spanitz is curriculum director for Aviation Supplies & Academics (ASA, Inc.). She has participated on all three of the committees that worked on the ACS development over the last five years. Having spent over 20 years working with FAA knowledge exams and documents, she is grateful to her industry and FAA colleagues who have worked so diligently to improve the training and testing environment. Questions? Contact her*

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## More on Mechanic Testing

### **FAA/Industry Invite Comment on Mechanic Testing Standards**

The first draft ACS, dictating general knowledge and skill testing standards, is available for comment . All ATEC members are encouraged to review and submit comment by July 8. [Read more.](#)

### **FAA Webinar: ACS Explained**

An FAA webinar is scheduled for June 25, 2016. The briefing will provide a historical perspective on the ACS and describe how it will be used. [Read more.](#)



## Spring 2016 Journal Published

ATEC's peer-reviewed publication is [available for download](#) (member password is required ) . With contributions from instructors, students and industry practitioners, the journal will keep you and your classroom current on the latest teaching techniques, technologies and research.

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## Member Alerts

### **ATEC Submits Supplemental Part 147 Comments**

In response to an FAA request, ATEC submitted additional information to the docket. In its letter ATEC reiterated its request that the agency remove prescriptive requirements from the rule and allow AMTS to incorporate competency-based learning models into their programs. [Read more.](#)

### **ATEC Fly-In: Save the Date**

On Thursday Sept. 8 industry leaders will gather in Washington for the council's annual Fly-In. Attendees will crisscross the nation's capital to meet members of Congress and staffers to sound a unified message: Help aviation maintenance schools build the technical workforce of the future. [Read more.](#)

### **FREE Classroom Media**

The council's media library just got an upgrade. Content previously available only on DVD via snail mail are now in "the cloud" (no more shipping and handling fees!). Institutional members are invited to download a sample free of charge. [Read more.](#)

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**Annual Conference: Dates and Location Announced**

Next year's ATEC Annual Conference will take place in Seattle on April 1-3, 2017 at the Hilton Seattle Airport & Conference Center. [Read more.](#)

**Scholarship Deadlines Approach**

The summer is a great time to mark your calendars for the coming year's application deadlines. Here are a few upcoming due dates to note. [Read more.](#)

**Happy AMT Day!**

In celebration of Aviation Maintenance Technician Day, members provided materials and resources that could be used in the classroom to commemorate the efforts of aviation maintenance professionals and the achievements of Charles Taylor. [Read more.](#)

**Member Job Board**

Looking for a new career opportunity? Searching for that perfect candidate? Take advantage of ATEC's job board, a free service to members. [Read more.](#)



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