

“WINGS Things” a CFI or DPE, or ASI Ought to Know

These are suggested questions for use in a Plan of Action for any CFI certification test. Any CFI (and you!) ought to know the answers to these questions. There is much more to know, but this could adequately sample what the applicant knows about WINGS at the time of testing.

“If you test it, they will train it.”

--Orlando FSDO axiom

References:

- (a) AC 61-91J: “WINGS – Pilot Proficiency Program” dated 2/16/11
 - (b) Official website: www.faasafety.gov
 - (c) AC 61-65G: “Certification: Pilots and Flight & Ground Instructors” dated 8/25/17
- (NOTE: AC 61-65H released 8/27/2018 is the most recent AC at the time of this posting)*

Q – (Point to your metallic FAA WINGS pin(s) on your lanyard...) ...What is this?

A – That, sir, is the official pin for Basic (or Advanced or Master) FAA WINGS! The Basic WINGS pin is a copper-colored miniature set of wings; Advanced is pewter-colored, and Master is brass-colored metallic wings. Applicants ought to be able to explain how to earn it. After achieving Phase 1 of any Level, you may order a one-time free WINGS pin representing that Level.

Q – What is the WINGS Program?

A – The “WINGS” Program is the nickname given to the FAA’s longstanding Pilot Proficiency Award Program. The WINGS Program is a structured plan for lifelong learning for pilots. It consists of Knowledge components and Flight components organized in defined Levels and Phases. The WINGS Program is voluntary. Pilots achieve distinct Phases at a Level appropriate to their proficiency. FMI: See reference (a) or (b).

Q – How is the WINGS Program structured?

A – See reference (a). There are three Levels of achievement: Basic, Advanced, and Master. These Levels correspond to the proficiency standards for Private, Commercial, and ATP, respectively. Within each Level, there are an infinite number of distinct “Phases”. So we have Basic WINGS Phase 1, Basic WINGS Phase 2, etc, Advanced WINGS Phase 1, Advanced WINGS Phase 2, etc. and Master WINGS Phase 1, Master WINGS Phase 2, etc. There is no upper limit of Phases one can achieve. A “Phase” simply means the completion of all Knowledge and Flight elements prescribed for that Phase. A participating pilot must start at Basic WINGS Phase 1 and progress from there to other Phases and other Levels.

Q – How do I earn WINGS credit?

A – See reference (b) for hands-on functions. Completion of any Phase requires completion of Knowledge elements and Flight elements. Knowledge elements can be achieved by completing on-line courses or webinars, attending certain safety seminars, or a combination of these. Flight elements can be achieved by completing prescribed training flights with an instructor, or by passing a practical test. Certain approved programs can qualify for both Knowledge and Flight credit. Flight schools are an ideal environment for earning WINGS Phases!

Q – How much does it cost to participate in WINGS?

A – Participation is FREE in most cases! There are no sign-up fees or dues in this program! Even the miniature wings you can earn are FREE! Some courses or activities are cost-based; the “Free” vs. “Cost” nature of a given activity is shown in the look-up tables on the website. See reference (b).

Q – Why should someone participate in WINGS?

A – Completion of any Phase of WINGS satisfies the requirements of a Flight Review [See 14 CFR 61.56(e)]. A pilot can earn actual miniature metallic wings upon accomplishment of Phase 1 of any Level in the program. WINGS participants statistically seem to have fewer accidents and incidents, perhaps because they are continually engaged in structured learning and proficiency flying. Accordingly, aircraft owners may realize an insurance discount due to participation in WINGS.

Q – How do I get started?

A – See reference (b); go to www.faasafety.gov [Reference b)] and create a free account. Once you are registered as a User, you can manage your WINGS activity from this site via the “My WINGS” pages of the website. It helps to have someone familiar with the site introduce you to its features and capabilities when getting started.

Q – How do I find out about safety seminars near me?

A – See reference (b); configure or modify your “WINGS Profile” via the faasafety.gov website, “My WINGS” pages under WINGS at a Glance - WINGS Tools - WINGS Profile along the right side of the screen. Once you are properly set up, you are able to receive e-mailed notifications of upcoming events and other information of interest to you. Most seminars are advertised two weeks ahead of time.

Q – Does earned credit ever expire?

A – Yes and No. For purposes of applying earned credit toward a given Phase of WINGS, those credits, whether they are Knowledge credits or Flight credits, have a 12 calendar-month expiration from the date earned. So once any work on a Phase is started, you should finish all the elements of that Phase within a year. The achievement, even if expired, remains part of your permanent WINGS record, but you can only use it for earning a Phase for 12 calendar months after earning it.

Q – I see a course prescribed for me that I am not interested in. Can I change it?

A – Yes! In the “My WINGS” section of the faasafety.gov website, you can perform a Search function for any knowledge or Flight element that may be of interest to you. Click on the Search button at the end of the line showing the event you wish to change. Browse available events on the ensuing pages and select one that interests you and which you can achieve.

Q – What CFI endorsements are associated with achieving a WINGS Phase?

A – Check out reference (c), Appendix 1, endorsement number A.65, “Completion of any Phase of an FAA-sponsored Pilot Proficiency Program (WINGS)”. Because a WINGS Phase counts as a Flight Review, this endorsement has the same effect as endorsement number A.64, “Completion of a Flight Review”. Note: A WINGS Phase does not count as an Instrument Proficiency Check (IPC), but an IPC can earn you WINGS credit at the Basic and Advanced levels!

Q – How can an active CFI renew his CFI Certificate through the WINGS Program?

A – Check out reference (a), Paragraph 6(e). The renewing CFI must himself be a WINGS participant, have performed at least 15 WINGS instructional flights, and signed off at least 5 pilots for any Phase of

WINGS, and of course, keep good records of this activity. For purposes of the renewing CFI's 8710-1, this would be a renewal based on "Activity".

Prepared by:

Robert Jex

FAASTeam Program Manager (Ops)

Orlando FSDO-15

407-487-7064

Robert.jex@faa.gov