



***BRITISH MODEL FLYING ASSOCIATION***

**THE R/C ACHIEVEMENT SCHEME**

**APPROVED INSTRUCTOR TEST**

**GUIDANCE for AREA CHIEF  
INSTRUCTORS**

**2023 ISSUE**

## Achievement Scheme Information & Communication

The BMFA Achievement Scheme provides every RC flyer the opportunity to set themselves an achievement target to aim for, and then have their progress assessed and confirmed by an examiner. It is important that **all** those involved in training, examining and preparing for the tests, are well informed and up to date with all that the scheme has to offer. To this end, and to aid communication, important information regarding scheme developments, as well as details of all of the tests and their associated guidance documents, are made available to everyone via a number of sources, which include:-

- The Achievement Scheme website - <http://achievements.bmfa.org>
- The BMFA website - <http://bmfa.org>
- The BMFA News
- The Achievement Scheme closed Facebook group

It's important to appreciate that ALL of the scheme documents are reviewed and updated on an annual basis. Whichever document you are using, you will know if you have the right one, simply by looking at the date on the front cover. If it's not dated with the current year, it's the wrong one!

Most BMFA Clubs have Club Instructors/Examiners who will be familiar with the scheme and what is expected of anyone thinking of participating. If your club does not have a club examiner then each BMFA Area has an Achievement Scheme Coordinator (contact details can usually be found on the BMFA Area website) who can usually help in coordinating tests, or answering queries about tests etc.

All BMFA Areas have Area Chief Examiners who would normally undertake Club Examiner tests, but are also available to help out with club tests, if requested. Importantly, they are also very knowledgeable about the scheme and its requirements. Area coordinators can often find an ACE that is close to your club, if you are having difficulty arranging for a test.

All BMFA Achievement Scheme & training documents are available to download from the BMFA Achievement Scheme website <http://achievements.bmfa.org>. You can also register your email address with the Achievement Scheme website and receive email notification of any news flashes, notification of scheme events and updates to documentation etc. as soon as they are published.

The Achievement Scheme also has a closed Facebook group (you just have to apply to be included) where comments and queries can be posted and examiners/instructors and members of the Achievement Scheme Review Committee can answer questions, or offer clarification.

## Legal Responsibilities

Only pilots with a suitable model that are operating legally are eligible to take the test.

There are clearly defined legal requirements for the operation of Small Unmanned Aircraft (model aircraft), from passing a CAA (or BMFA) legal & safety knowledge test before piloting a model, to registering with the CAA as an SUA Operator (can also be done via the BMFA) if the pilot is also the owner and operator of the model aircraft, then ensuring the SUA Operator identity number is appropriately attached to the

model. There are also restrictions on where a model can be flown and the heights and distances from people, property, vehicles or structures that the model can be operated. Finally, there is a legal requirement to operate the model safely e.g. ensuring the model is 'fit for safe flight' and the pilot is in a fit state to undertake that flight, as well as the site and weather conditions being suitable.

**If you have any query about the scheme or constructive comment on the scheme you can contact the Power/Silent Flight Scheme Controller (RCPAS@bmfa.org), or the Achievement Scheme Review Committee, via the BMFA Office.**

## THE RADIO CONTROL INSTRUCTOR SCHEME

The R/C instructor scheme is an important step towards safer flying in several ways:

- (a) Clubs participating in the scheme will be able to offer new pilots an approved flying training course leading to BPC or 'A' certificate standard.
- (b) BMFA recognised Instructors will, of necessity, have to maintain a high standard of personal flying in order to retain the respect due their status.
- (c) By training new R/C pilots in a safe and professional manner right from the start of their flying.

It is to the advantage of every club to participate fully in the instructor scheme and to enable the scheme to be easily available to all who need it.

### The RC Flight Training Manual

BMFA Instructor scheme is based on the RC Flight Training Manual '**A Flying Start**'. All Instructors must agree to train using this manual and you should stress this to the candidate prior to the test. If the candidate is successful, their agreement to this will be recorded when they sign the completed test form.\* **See item (2) Flight Exercise from 'A Flying Start' in Part (2) THE ASSESMENT below.**

### The Four-Tier Scheme

The BMFA R/C Instructor Scheme is made up of four types of instructor ;

- (1) The BMFA Registered Club Instructor
- (2) The BMFA Approved Instructor
- (3) The BMFA Qualified Instructor
- (4) Area Chief Instructors

### BMFA Approved Instructors

The BMFA Approved Instructor (AI) is the second stage in the Instructor Scheme.

Approved Instructors must be current members of the BMFA and initially be put forward by a club to be tested by an Area Chief Instructor, in much the same way that a Club Examiner is tested by an Area Chief Examiner.

Approved Instructors must also **have held a relevant 'A' certificate for a period of six months.**

Approved Instructors are free to move between clubs and are expected to take the lead in maintaining the standard of instruction at club and individual level.

Approved Instructors may be ratified by their club(s) on the annual affiliation form, but this is not a mandatory requirement, as the AI rating is an award with similar status to any 'A', 'B' or 'C' certificate.

### BMFA Qualified Instructors

Appointment as a Qualified Instructor (QI) is automatic and there is no test to take, but individuals must satisfy two conditions:

- (1) They must hold an Approved Instructor rating and have held it for a minimum of one year,  
And

(2) They must hold the relevant 'B' certificate and have held it for at least six months.

Individuals will be awarded Qualified Instructor status automatically if they already meet or attain these criteria.

Note that the QI rating depends on an individual retaining both the AI and the 'B' Certificate ratings. If either of these is lost, in the AI case for instance, by not renewing membership the QI rating will also be lost.

Qualified Instructors may be ratified by their club(s) on the annual affiliation form, but this is not a mandatory requirement, as the QI rating is an award with similar status to any 'A', 'B' or 'C' certificate.

## **POWER ACHIEVEMENT SCHEMES**

### **Guidance For Chief Instructors**

The job of a Chief Instructor is to "assess applicants for the post of Approved Instructor and to promote and maintain the standards of the R/C Power Achievement Scheme by example and by visiting clubs who require their services".

When assessing a candidate for Approved Instructor, your task as a Chief Instructor can be split into three distinct phases, and the final decision made by you will actually be controlled by three distinct questions about phase 2 during the test. The phases are:

- (1) Your own preparation.
- (2) The Assessment
- (3) Conclusion

### **GUIDELINES FOR PART (1), PREPARATION**

As in all walks of life the success or failure of any venture can be dependent on the initial preparation. As Chief Instructor who has been called upon to examine a prospective Approved Instructor, you should make every effort to discuss the upcoming test with one or more senior members of the club in order to get as much background knowledge as possible of the candidate's experience and attitude. The test should be conducted at the candidate's club site, and if you haven't already, you should take the opportunity to discuss the candidate's suitability with any club members present on the day of the test.

This preparation is vital, not only to give you some advance information on the candidate, but also to make you conversant with any local club rules which may affect the test. This is especially important if you are taking the test at a club with whom you do not normally fly.

You should also ensure before the test that the candidate is fully aware of what is expected of him so that misunderstandings do not occur when the model is in the air.

### **PART (2), THE ASSESSMENT**

The candidate should have studied the BMFA Members Handbook 2017 (sections 8 through to 24 inclusive, including any amendments), the Achievement Scheme Handbook and any

local site rules (if applicable). Besides being excellent guides to the safe flying of model aircraft, most of the questions asked at the end of the test will be from these sources.

He should also be thoroughly familiar with 'A Flying Start'\* and have prepared for the assessment. If the candidate cannot demonstrate a good working knowledge of 'A Flying Start'\* and has obviously not prepared for the test, then he should not be considered suitable for Approved Instructor status at that time and the assessment should not take place.

The assessment will consist of 2 parts, the same procedures and methods will apply for all Approved Instructor assessments in all disciplines.

#### Part 1) Demonstration flight.

The candidate will be asked to fly the manoeuvres from the 'A' certificate as if he was demonstrating them to a pupil. The candidate may have a helper and caller if he wishes, however the candidate is expected to be fully conversant with the manoeuvres and the order in which they are to be flown.

The candidate will be expected to fly the 'A' test well enough to pass, the Chief Instructor carrying out the assessment must be satisfied that the candidate has the ability to demonstrate all the manoeuvres in the 'A' test of the relevant discipline, however it is not expected that the candidate fly a perfect 'A' test. Whilst this is not an assessment to be an Examiner, it is not unreasonable to expect an Approved Instructor to have a good understanding of the requirements of the 'A' test. Therefore, upon landing and completion of the post flight checks, the candidate must brief the Chief Instructor on the flight, and as part of the briefing he must inform the Chief Instructor whether he considers the flight to have been a "pass", and also point out any errors made where appropriate. The Chief Instructor will be expecting an honest and accurate appraisal of the flight and if he feels this isn't the case, or the candidate does not mention an obvious error from the flight in the briefing, the candidate should be considered as not suitable at that time.

#### Part 2) Flight Exercise from 'A Flying Start'.

The candidate will then be asked to conduct one of the flight training exercises from 'A Flying Start', the exercise to be chosen by the Chief Instructor. For Rotorcraft (Helicopter and Multi-Rotors) and Silent Flight tests, for which there is currently no type specific 'A Flying Start' available, the candidate and Examiner should agree on a suitable exercise, ideally based on one of the manoeuvres from the appropriate 'A' test, along the lines of those in the fixed wing 'A Flying Start'.

For the purposes of the test, the 'pupil' may be either an actual student pilot, or, in the event that no student is available, the Chief Instructor.

The candidate will be expected to give a pre-flight briefing to the pupil explaining the exercise and what it is hoped to achieve. When flying, the Approved Instructor candidate will be expected to coach, encourage and provide constructive criticism as appropriate to the pupil during the flight. The candidate should also conduct a post-flight de-briefing with the pupil, to both discuss and explain what has gone well and also pointing out any aspects that need to be repeated in future exercises and or where improvements could be made.

The Chief Instructor will make his final judgement on suitability for Approved Instructor status based on both parts of the assessment, and to award Approved Instructor status, the Chief Instructor must be satisfied that the candidate has a suitable level of knowledge, flight safety, flying ability and importantly also has the required approach to coaching candidates.

When deliberating on the assessment, you must rely solely on your judgement. You will have talked with the candidate at some length so as to gain an impression of the depth of their knowledge, experience, and importantly their ability to communicate effectively with a pupil under tuition. You will also have checked that they are fully conversant with 'A Flying Start' and all the safety codes etc.

With regard to the candidate's standing within their own club, they will have been recommended by their club committee in the first place, so they should rate quite well on that score, but you should check with other club members if you are not sure. There are no guidelines beyond this point; you must form your own impression and make your decision.

### **GUIDELINES FOR FLIGHT SAFETY**

Your decision on the candidate's flight safety standards will be based on a much more objective view of their performance both during and, perhaps even more importantly, before and after the flying elements of the test.

You should be looking for evidence that the candidate has very high standards in this category from the moment you meet them on the flying field until the moment you finally sign their certificate. This is most important as anyone can pay 'lip service' to safety standards for a short period but if they are unsafe when they think you are not watching them, they should not pass.

The basic safety standards are laid down in the safety codes and you should not expect much less than perfection in this area.

Note that the category of flight safety also includes both pre and post flight safety checks so these will not be discussed in relation to flying standards.

It will be a point in the candidate's favour if they show a measure of common sense during their whole time with you on the flying field and a general and sympathetic awareness of other flyer's problems might also be a positive indicator for you.

### **GUIDELINES FOR PART (3), CONCLUSION**

Finally, you should remember that Approved Instructors will have a direct impact on the standards within their clubs, either consciously or unconsciously, and your final decision should be taken with this in mind. At the completion of the test and assuming that you have deemed the candidate to be successful, you should then make sure that the new Approved Instructor thoroughly understands his future responsibilities to his fellow club members and to model flying as a whole.

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