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# CFItoCFI

ASI'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE SERIOUS FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR

# REDUCE CHECKRIDE REJECTIONS

## IMPLEMENT FOLDER AUDITS  BY JASON BLAIR

**I CAN'T SAY THIS ENOUGH: DO A FOLDER AUDIT BEFORE SENDING AN APPLICANT TO A PRACTICAL TEST.**

Our flight training community has been complaining about lack of available DPEs for testing. But on the other side of the discussion, DPEs have been complaining about applicants whom they are unable to test because they lack qualification documentation. In many cases, DPEs have indicated that the qualification rejection rate approaches 30 percent of their scheduled activities. This reduces the number of practical tests that get completed and reduces the number of tests that DPEs can schedule for other qualified applicants.

There is a solution to some of this, however. The recommending CFI needs to get the paperwork correct so the DPE doesn't have to send an applicant home instead of starting, and hopefully completing, a practical test. Any reduction level of the qualification rejection rate can create more efficiency in the practical test provision rate.

**ONE OF THE MOST COMMONLY FORGOTTEN THINGS—THERE NEEDS TO BE *LOGGED GROUND INSTRUCTION*.**

**PAPERWORK IS IMPORTANT AND NONE OF US ARE PERFECT**

There is a bit of paperwork that goes along with signing a student off for a practical test. Some tests have more requirements than others, but any of them require some work on the part of the CFI to get the student's endorsements, experience requirements, and logging of flight and ground training correct.

Getting this paperwork right is important because the DPE can't just let it go. They have to ensure all the paperwork is in order, and that the applicant is "qualified" for the practical test, otherwise they can't proceed. Sometimes what a DPE asks for may seem petty, but it is important. I have seen people's certificates suspended or revoked at a later date when a DPE missed requirements and it was caught at a later time. I have even seen improperly qualified CFI applicants who were issued certificates end up in ugly lawsuits later when a student or they themselves were involved in an accident or incident. Making sure a certificate or rating is only issued to a qualified applicant is critical.

But none of us is perfect. I get paperwork wrong sometimes too. We all do. So, have a mechanism to make sure you get the paperwork correct and have someone else check it before sending your students to a practical test.

**THE CONCEPT OF A FOLDER AUDIT**

Most major flight training providers, especially those that train students in accordance with FAR Part 141 curriculums, do a "folder audit" before they generate a graduation certificate. That folder audit reviews that the applicant has met all training requirements of the training course outline as approved by the FAA for a certificate or rating. Those requirements must be complete to be eligible for the certificate or rating checkride.

Going through a checking process ahead of the practical test day can offer a CFI an opportunity to see if anything is missing.

## WHAT NEEDS TO BE CHECKED

It isn't necessarily going to be a "folder" of material you are going to review. But it might be a bunch of materials you collect into a folder or even a digital record. The gist here is gather the information that collectively documents the experience, tests, training logs, and endorsements that will be required for a student to be eligible for a particular certificate or rating.

**I CAN'T STRESS ENOUGH: JUST GETTING A SECOND PERSON TO LOOK OVER YOUR WORK CAN HELP FIND MISSING DOCUMENTATION OR EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS.**

For most certificates or ratings an applicant will need their knowledge test, and you will have had to reconcile the areas found deficient on this knowledge test and provide an endorsement to this effect. Another endorsement needed typically indicates that you, as the CFI, have provided the required training within the preceding two calendar months. There also will be a couple of endorsements from AC61.65H for the particular certificate or rating. You will have to audit your student's logbook to make sure all of the required experience has been completed in accordance with the applicable section of the FARs. And, one of the most commonly forgotten things—there needs to be *logged ground instruction.*

If any of these are missing, the DPE will likely have to tell your student they will need to be rescheduled. This is especially true if you aren't there to quickly fix something missed.

Checking this ahead of time can avoid this heartbreak for your student; imagine this to happen on the best weather day in some time.

A good, savvy CFI will have a checklist they can refer to when preparing a qualifications folder for their student. Even with this, have a second CFI—especially a senior one who has done this for a while—check over what you have prepared to help find any missing information.

## WHO CAN DO IT

The good news here is that you don't need any special qualifications to do a "folder audit." That means you can reach out to any other fellow CFI who is familiar with the training requirements for the particular certificate or rating you are trying to help a student finish. In larger operations, there may even be a designated person who does all the folder audits. If there isn't, I can't help but think, shouldn't there be?

If your particular flight training operation doesn't do this already, help put a procedure in place where CFIs either rely on each other to help provide a secondary check on qualifications or work with a senior CFI staff member to develop a process that does folder audits.
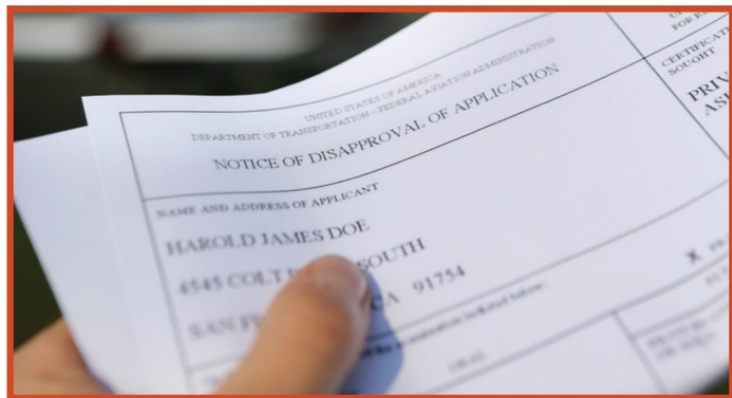


I can't stress enough: Just getting a second person to look over your work can help find missing documentation or experience requirements.

Make it a little challenge if you want. Serve as an auditor for your fellow CFIs, and them for you. Put a wager on it if you want. If you find a problem with your fellow CFI's students paperwork, they owe you something you both agree on or vice versa.

## WHEN TO DO IT

Don't wait until checkride morning to do this folder audit. Do it at least a few days ahead of the scheduled practical test.

This gives you an opportunity to correct or provide missing documentation. It also might give you time to let the student complete missing experience requirements, or at least give you time to notify the examiner of a need to reschedule until the student completes the requirements.

> **FOR MOST CERTIFICATES OR RATINGS AN APPLICANT WILL NEED THEIR KNOWLEDGE TEST, AND YOU WILL HAVE HAD TO RECONCILE THE AREAS FOUND DEFICIENT ON THIS KNOWLEDGE TEST AND PROVIDE AN ENDORSEMENT TO THIS EFFECT.**

Get ahead of checkride day and avoid having that uncomfortable call from the DPE that your student's test can't proceed and will need to be rescheduled. A great tool to do this is the folder audit process.

*Jason Blair is an active single and multiengine instructor and an FAA designated pilot examiner with more than 6,000 hours total time, 3,000 hours of instruction given, and 3000 hours in aircraft as a DPE. As examiner, he has issued more than 2,000 pilot certificates. He has worked for and continues to work with multiple aviation associations focusing on pilot training and testing. His experience as a pilot and instructor spans nearly 20 years and includes more than 100 makes and models of aircraft flown. Jason Blair has published works in many aviation publications with a focus on training and safety.*

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