UK Civil Aviation Authority

UK Part-BFCL BPL conversion report

CAP 3142



Published by the Civil Aviation Authority, 2025

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First published July 2025
Edition 1.1 October 2025

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The latest version of this document is available in electronic format at: www.caa.co.uk/CAP3142

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Introduction

This conversion report describes the credits that a student that has been training for the ANO PPL(BA) (but has not applied for said licence by 30th September 2025) is eligible for, when applying for a UK Part-BFCL BPL from 1st October 2025. The report also describes credits for training towards the addition of a class (where the individual does not hold a BPL), conversion details for CPL(B) to commercial passenger and non passenger operation ratings, and conversion details for the new FI(B) and FE(B) privileges.

Theoretical knowledge examinations

The following lists the theoretical knowledge examinations for each licence.

PPL(BA)

- Aviation Law, Flight Rules and Procedures
- Human Performance and Limitations
- Meteorology
- Navigation
- Airmanship and Balloon Systems

BPL

- Air Law
- Human Performance
- Meteorology
- Navigation
- Principles of Flight*
- Operational Procedures*
- Flight Performance and Planning*
- Aircraft General Knowledge*
- Communications

* These BPL examinations are considered equivalent to the PPL(BA) Airmanship and Balloon Systems examination. The CAA are working with our exams provider to investigate whether these can be combined into one examination.

For the PPL(BA), all examinations must be passed within the 24 months prior to licence application. For the BPL, all examinations must be passed within 18 months, and once all examinations have been passed, the student has 24 months from the date of the last pass in which to complete training and apply for a licence. The BPL requirements will apply from 1st October 2025.

Credits

- If the student has passed all five PPL(BA) examination subjects by the 30th September 2025, these will be credited as valid for BPL application after the 30th September. The student is still required to pass the BPL Communications exam (if the student holds a valid FRTOL, they are credited with a pass in BPL Communications). The BPL Communications exam must be passed within 18 months commencing the 1st October 2025. Once all examinations have been passed, the student has 24 months from the date of the last pass in which to complete training and apply for a BPL.

- If the student has not passed all five PPL(BA) examination subjects by the 30th September 2025, the exams that have been passed will be credited as valid for BPL application. The student must pass the remaining equivalent BPL examination subjects prior to licence application. (If Airmanship and Balloon Systems has not been passed, the four equivalent BPL examinations must be passed. If the four examinations are combined into one examination as above, the one examination must be passed.) The student is still required to pass the BPL Communications exam (if the student holds a valid FRTOL, they are credited with a pass in BPL Communications). The remaining examinations must be passed within 18 months commencing the 1st October 2025. Once all examinations have been passed, the student has 24 months from the date of the last pass in which to complete training and apply for a BPL.
- If the student has not passed any of the PPL(BA) examination subjects by the 30th September 2025, all the BPL examinations must be passed prior to licence application. All examinations must be passed within 18 months. Once all examinations have been passed, the student has 24 months from the date of the last pass in which to complete training and apply for a BPL.

Note:

In order to qualify for credits for PPL(BA) examination subjects, the student should send to CAA a copy of the form that the examiner has recorded the exams passed on (either SRG1115 or SRG2166). This should be sent to licenceapplications@caa.co.uk with a subject of “PPL(BA) TK exam passes [CAA reference number]” and the body of the message stating name and CAA reference number. This should have been sent no later than 14th October 2025.

Flight training

The following lists the flight training requirements for each licence.

PPL(BA)

- Not less than 16 hours total flying time
- 6 ascents by day under the instruction of a licensed balloon pilot of which 4 ascents must be made under the instruction of a BBAC instructor
- 1 solo ascent by day of not less than 30 minutes duration under the supervision of a CAA appointed examiner or delegated instructor (to be completed within the 6 months preceding licence application).
- 1 tethered flight

BPL

- At least 16 hours of flight time, including at least:
  - 4 hours of dual flight instruction comprising at least 4 flights (delivered by an FI(B))
  - 10 inflations and 20 take-offs and landings
  - 1 solo flight of at least 30 minutes supervised by an FI(B)
- 12 of the hours required may be flights with a licensed BPL holder who has a minimum of 50 hours PIC
- 2 tethered flights, the final tethered flight supervised by an FI(B)

Credits

- Flight time with a BBAC instructor will be credited as flight time with an FI(B).
- Flight time with a PPL(BA) holder will be credited as flight time with a BPL holder.
- The solo flight for PPL(BA) will be credited as the solo flight for BPL.
- The tethered flight for PPL(BA) will be credited as one of the tethered flights for BPL (if the flight was supervised by a BBAC instructor, it will be credited as supervised by an FI(B)).

Note:

- All flights must be evidenced.
- The final tethered flight must be supervised by an instructor (BBAC instructor prior to 30th September 2025, BPL FI(B) from 1st October 2025).

The ATO, DTO or FI(B) overseeing the training (from 1st October 2025) must create a mapping of the flight exercises undertaken to ensure that all BPL exercises have been undertaken (either the BPL exercises or their equivalent for PPL(BA)).

General flight test

The following lists the flight test requirements for each licence.

PPL(BA)

- Flight test with CAA Authorised Balloon Examiner (flight test is valid for licence issue for 9 months from the date of passing.)

BPL

- Skill test with FE(B) (Application for licence must be made within 6 months of passing skill test.)

Credits

- A PPL(BA) flight test pass will be credited as a BPL skill test pass. (The PPL(BA) flight test pass will be valid for 9 months from the date of passing.)

Training for the addition of a class

If a PPL(BA) licence holder (who has not converted to a BPL) is training for the addition of a class to their PPL(BA) prior to 30 September, they will receive credits towards the addition of the class to a BPL from 1st October.

For the addition of a class to the BPL there is no requirement for Theoretical Knowledge examinations, therefore no credits are given for a PPL(BA) TK exam pass.

Gas Balloon Class

The following lists the flight training and examination requirements for the addition of a gas balloon class.

PPL(BA) Free Balloons Gas Filled Rating

- 50 hours Pilot In Command of hot-air balloons
- 10 hours flying training on gas filled balloons under the instruction of a BBAC Gas Balloon Instructor or CAA appointed Gas Balloon Examiner which must include not less than 2 ascents
- Flight test with CAA Authorised Examiner

BPL Gas Balloon Class

- Training course at a DTO including at least 5 dual instructional flights
- Skill test with FE(B).

Credits

- Flight time with a BBAC instructor will be credited as flight time with an FI(B). (In order to satisfy the requirements of BFCL.150(c)(1) and allow an ATO/DTO to recommend a candidate for a skill test, a record of the instruction given shall be kept that indicates the flying exercises covered.)
- A PPL(BA) flight test pass will be credited as a BPL skill test pass. (The PPL(BA) flight test pass will be valid for 9 months from the date of passing.)

Note:

- All flights must be evidenced.

The ATO, DTO or FI(B) overseeing the training (from 1st October 2025) must create a mapping of the flight exercises undertaken to ensure that all BPL exercises have been undertaken (either the BPL exercises or their equivalent for PPL(BA)).

Hot-Air Airship Class

The following lists the flight training and examination requirements for the addition of a hot-air airship class.

PPL(BA) Hot-Air Airship Rating

- 5 hours Pilot In Command of hot-air balloons
- 5 hours flying training on hot-air airship including at least 3 hours dual instruction and one supervised solo flight
- Flight test with CAA Authorised Examiner

BPL Hot-Air Airship Class

- Training course at a DTO including at least 5 hours of dual instruction time
- Skill test with FE(B).

Credits

- Flight time with a BBAC instructor will be credited as flight time with an FI(B). (In order to satisfy the requirements of BFCL.150(c)(1) and allow an ATO/DTO to recommend a candidate for a skill test, a record of the instruction given shall be kept that indicates the flying exercises covered.)
- A PPL(BA) flight test pass will be credited as a BPL skill test pass. (The PPL(BA) flight test pass will be valid for 9 months from the date of passing.)

Note:

- All flights must be evidenced.

The ATO, DTO or FI(B) overseeing the training (from 1st October 2025) must create a mapping of the flight exercises undertaken to ensure that all BPL exercises have been undertaken (either the BPL exercises or their equivalent for PPL(BA)).

CPL(B) to BPL commercial non-passenger operation rating and/or commercial passenger operation rating

As per Article 3(b)(6) of UK Regulation (EU) 2018/395, a Commercial Pilot's Licence (Balloons) (CPL(B)) issued in accordance with Article 152 of the Air Navigation Order 2016 may be converted to a Balloon Pilot Licence (BPL) endorsed with either a commercial non-passenger operation rating or a commercial passenger operation rating, depending on the experience and qualifications of the licence holder.

- In the case of a CPL(B) where the ratings are current and valid with a valid Certificate of Test, the BPL may be endorsed with both a commercial non-passenger operation rating and a commercial passenger operation rating.
- In the case of a CPL(B) where the ratings are current and valid with a valid Certificate of Experience, the BPL may be endorsed with a commercial non-passenger operation rating.
- In the case of a CPL(B) where the ratings are not valid, prior to application to convert the CPL(B) to a BPL, the licence holder must pass:
    - A skill test in accordance with BFCL.215 (b)(4), if a commercial non-passenger operation rating is sought.
    - A proficiency check in accordance with BFCL.220 (d)(3)(ii) if a commercial passenger operation rating is sought.

BFCL FI(B) and FE(B) new privileges

There are two new FI(B) privileges, one new FE(B) privilege and one changing FE(B) privilege. These new privileges are being deemed to be held for some licence holders so that instruction and examination in the activities can be undertaken.

FI(B) privileges:

- BFCL.315(a)(5) conduct flight instruction for commercial non-passenger operation rating
- BFCL.315(a)(6) conduct flight instruction for commercial passenger operation rating

FE(B) privileges:

- BFCL.415(b) skill tests and proficiency checks for the commercial non-passenger operation rating
- BFCL.415(ba) skill tests and proficiency checks for the commercial passenger operation rating

If on 30th September 2025 the holder of a Flight Examiner (Balloons) certificate held the privilege BFCL.415(b), the holder is deemed to hold BFCL.315(a)(5), BFCL.315(a)(6) and BFCL.415(ba).

APPENDIX A

Abbreviations

ATO	Approved Training Organisation
BBAC	British Balloon and Airship Club
BPL	Balloon Pilot Licence
CAA	Civil Aviation Authority
DTO	Declared Training Organisation
FE(B)	Flight Examiner (Balloons)
FI(B)	Flight Instructor (Balloons)
PPL(BA)	Private Pilot Licence (Balloons and Airships)