

Your Medical

The classes; the options

Maybe you want to learn to fly and you don't want it to be any harder than it has to be. Or perhaps more relevant to a country aero club member, you're getting old, your eyesight's fading, your joints are creaking, your heart isn't what it used to be, but you still want to fly. What's the best and easiest path to a valid medical certificate?

Class 1

You need a Class 1 to get a CPL or an ATPL. If you've been down that path, you'll know it's valid for 1 year regardless of your age.

Class 2

You need a Class 2 for an RPL or PPL. Also, Gren Putland can use his balloon CPL on a Class 2 medical. It's valid for 4 years if you're under 40, and 2 years once you turn 40.

You can also do commercial flights without passengers on a Class 2 medical, which means Ray and I only need a Class 2 to instruct. However, the years that you take off your life watching students go solo mean that it's a good idea to see a DAME every year anyway!

Basic Class 2

A Basic Class 2 is easier to get than a normal Class 2 certificate, but it's less flexible because it's not issued by a DAME, that is, someone trained in managing medical conditions that may affect your flying. You can get one from any doctor who does medicals for commercial vehicle drivers. It limits you to:

- Private day VFR flight;
- 5 passengers;
- Piston-engine aircraft no heavier than 8618 kg (19,000 lb);
- No operational ratings such as instrument or agricultural ratings;
- No flight activity endorsements, such as low level or aerobatics.

Also, to get a basic Class 2, you have to meet the **unconditional commercial** driver's licence medical standard. That means you have to meet the Austroads standards for factors such as cardiovascular conditions, musculoskeletal conditions and diabetes.

However, to make things easier, the "unconditional" bit doesn't include glasses or hearing aids. That's a good thing because the unconditional commercial driver's licence standard includes items such as your **uncorrected** visual acuity having to be at least 6/9 in your good eye, and no worse than 6/18 in either eye. Unlike the Austroads people, CASA doesn't care what your uncorrected visual acuity is, as long as you can put your glasses on and be at least 6/12 in each eye and 6/9 with both eyes together.

So apart from glasses and hearing aids, if you don't meet the unconditional commercial driver's licence medical standard, you need to go to the effort of finding a DAME and applying for a Class 2 medical.

Class 5 medical self-declaration

This is an option if you want to get an RPL. It's an alternative to the Basic Class 2. As the title suggests, there's a bit of trust involved. You need to do some online training and meet some pretty

basic health and fitness requirements. In return, your operational limits are stricter than for a Basic Class 2, and include:

- Private day VFR flight;
- MTOW no more than 2000 kg (which covers pretty everything private pilots fly);
- No more than 1 passenger;
- No operational ratings;
- No aerobatics or formation flying.

Recreational aviation medical practitioner's certificate (RAMPC)

Like the Basic Class 2, you can get this one from any doctor who does medicals for commercial vehicle drivers. And like a Basic Class 2, it's less flexible because it's not issued by a DAME. It requires you to meet the Austroads **unconditional private** driver's licence medical standard (so less stringent than the Basic Class 2), and of course it comes with restrictions:

- Single-engine piston aircraft with MTOW no greater than 1500 kg;
- Day VFR;
- No more than 1 passenger;
- No aerobatics.

As for the Basic Class 2, you may have medical conditions that disqualify you, but don't stop you from going to the effort of finding a DAME and doing a normal Class 2 medical exam, and getting through that because the DAME can say, "Yes, you have a condition that could disqualify you, but I'm a DAME and I know how we can manage that."

So there are a few options, which is handy if you live 500 miles from the nearest DAME. But if you want to be relatively unrestricted, to fly at night and to fly upside-down, you need to see a DAME and get the good old Class 2. As for the other options being cheaper, weigh up the savings against what an hour of flying costs, and you may decide that a Basic Class 2, a Class 5 self-declaration, or the RAMPC are options just because they're easier, not because they're cheaper, and you can live with the restrictions.

Being out of action

Another rule that I'm sure a lot of pilots overlook is about being unfit to fly for certain periods. If you're unfit to fly for more than 30 days (or 7 days if it's a Class 1 medical), you are required to get a certificate from a DAME saying you're good to go. If you have a RAMPC, you only need to see a normal doctor who can give you the appropriate certificate.

Where does it say that?

CASR Part 67 covers medicals. Subpart 67C covers medical certificates, and includes 67.155, which sets out the criteria for getting a Class 2 medical.

Subpart 67D covers the driving medical standards that are relevant to flying, and Subpart 67E covers responsibilities such as that one about seeing a DAME if you're unfit to fly for more than 30 days. As with all the CASR's, they're written by lawyers for lawyers so they're full of legal mumbo-jumbo, so if you have any questions about the requirements, ask your DAME or find a knowledgeable flying instructor who may be able to help you!

Kevin