

ACL GUIDANCE – SERIES OF SLOTS INCREASING FROM 5 TO 7 SLOTS FROM NORTHERN SUMMER 2027

1. PURPOSE

The following paper provides guidance in response to changes to the Worldwide Airport Slot Guidelines (WASG) definition of a series of slots. The paper sets out how ACL will transition to the new definition and to which airports it will be applied.

2. REFERENCES

Sydney Airport Slot Management Scheme 2025

Worldwide Airport Slot Guidelines (WASG) – Edition 4 01 August 2025

- 1.7.2(e) What are the key principles of Airport Coordination?
- 8.1.1(e) Key Principles of Slot Allocation
- 11 Terms and Abbreviations

3. SCOPE

The following guidance will apply to ACL Level 3 – Coordinated Airports in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, New Zealand and Australia. The change in series length from 5 to 7 slots applies from Northern Summer 2027 (NS27) and will apply to Northern Summer seasons only. For Northern Winter seasons the definition of a series remains at 5 weeks.

This guidance does **not** apply to ACL Level 3 – Coordinated Airports in the following jurisdictions:

- UK and European Union as the Slot Regulations remains unchanged.
- Dubai Airport as series length is governed by a Local Rule.

4. PROCESS

- 4.1. On or before the SHL deadline for the NS27 season (14 September 2026), ACL will distribute its assessment of utilisation related to the Northern Summer 2026 (NS26) season. The SHL will include series of five or more slots as these will have either earned or failed the utilisation requirement in the NS26 season.
- 4.2. Airlines have until the agreed historic deadline (01 October 2026) to discuss and agree the SHL with the coordinator. After which the SHL will be the basis for airlines submission for the NS27 season. For the avoidance of doubt, ACL will not consider extending series of five or six weeks to seven weeks at this stage of the process purely because of the changed definition.
- 4.3. Airlines are requested to make their initial submission no later than 08 October 2026. These submissions should request extensions to any SHL records that are of five or six weeks to seven or more if it is intended that they should become a series under the new definition. Series established in NS26 under the 5-week rule will not automatically qualify for historic status in NS27 unless they are extended to seven and operated in NS27.

- 4.4. Airlines are requested to use action code C/R with the appropriate timing flexibility identifier if they want a revised time should the required time not be available for the historic and extension period and C/L if no offer is acceptable. Please also mention that you have MSL extensions in the SI of the submission so we can consider priority during initial coordination under WASG 8.3.5 – Requests Due to Changes in WASG Principles.
- 4.5. New requests for slots that do not form a series of seven slots will be treated as an adhoc request and will not be considered until the Series Return Deadline (SRD) for Sydney and the Historics Baseline Date (HBD) for all other applicable airports.
- 4.6. During initial coordination, ACL will consider requests for priority under WASG 8.3.5 along with all other requests for priority permitted in the WASG. The allocation assessment will consider the objectives of Airport Slot Coordination (WASG 1.2).
- 4.7. At the HBD for NS27 (31 January 2027) only those series that meet the new definition (series of 7 slots) will be considered for historic entitlement in the subsequent equivalent season. Such entitlement will be subject to meeting the utilisation threshold and operating the slot as allocated.
- 4.8. Any slot that remains a series of fewer the seven slots at the HBD will be considered as an adhoc slot and will not be considered for historic entitlement in the subsequent equivalent season.

5. HISTORIC DETERMINATION

ACL's guidance on Historic Determination has been updated to reflect the change in the definition of a series. This can be found [here](#) for Sydney and [here](#) for all other airports.

6. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1 Why is the series definition changing?

Following a working group examining the potential benefits of increasing the number of slots that constitutes a series, the Worldwide Slot Board agreed that for northern summer seasons that the number of slots required would increase from five to seven.

Q2 Why is the series definition not changing for the northern winter seasons?

The WASB limited the change to northern summer season only and therefore the series definition remains at five for the northern winter season.

Q3 Is their flexibility to apply the existing five weeks where there is no capacity to increase to seven in NS27?

The change to seven was published well in advance of its application to give fair warning. It is not possible to track the situation described so providing a greater notice period allowed airlines to plan accordingly so the transition needs to take place as described in this document.

Q4 Will I lose my historic of five weeks if lack of capacity prevents an extension to seven weeks?

If the number of slots held is not increased to seven for whatever reason, we are unable to consider it for gaining historic status in the subsequent equivalent scheduling period. For NS28, you will need to apply again for the five weeks of slots, and they will be considered along with all other adhoc slot request. However, if the extensions are unsuccessful during initial coordination, the existing 5 or 6 week historic carried over from the NS27 SHL will be retained and confirmed back to the carrier via the NS27 SAL and can continue to be held as a 5 or 6 week series throughout the NS27 process

Q5 Can you guarantee that my five week historic will be extended to seven weeks during initial coordination for NS27?

ACL is required to assess all requests against the declared capacity at the airport concerned. If there is insufficient capacity to allow the allocation, ACL will need to no-slot the request or offer an alternative slot. In both cases the airline will be placed on the waitlist should another carrier return slots to the pool. Should capacity be available, ACL will need to consider all requests based on the priorities detailed in the WASG. In making the allocation, we will consider the objectives of airport slot coordination to achieve the best outcomes across stakeholders. As such we cannot guarantee that extensions to the number of slots will be successful.

Q6 Why is the change in series definition not being applied at UK and EU Level 3 – coordinated airports?

The slot process is governed by Regulation in both the UK and EU. As part of the Regulation the definition of a series is defined as a series of five slots. As the Regulation has not been changed, we must continue to apply the Regulation as written and therefore interpret a series as five slots.