

# BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

## INTERIM INSPECTION (College)

**INSTITUTION:** Stapleford Flight Centre

**ADDRESS:** Stapleford Aerodrome  
Stapleford Tawney  
Essex  
RM4 1SJ

**HEAD OF INSTITUTION:** Captain Colin Dobney

**ACCREDITATION STATUS:** Accredited

**DATE OF INSPECTION:** 31 October 2018

**ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:** Continued accreditation 31 January 2019

### **1. Background to the institution**

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Stapleford Flight Centre (the Institution) is a family owned and run business. It was established in 1969, as a recreational flight training business. In the late 1980s, it introduced commercial flight training and, by the end of the 1990s, this training accounted for approximately 30 per cent of the business. The Institution is based in the county of Essex. As well as training and office space, it has a large airfield, cafeteria with outside space, three flight simulators and student accommodation on the airfield.

The Institution is set up as a private limited company. The Board is made up of the owner, who carries out the roles of Chairman and Accountable Manager and his daughter, who is the Chief Executive. Management of the day-to-day training operations is delegated to the Head of Training. There is also a Head of Maintenance and a Quality and Compliance Manager.

The Institution aims to create a flight training organisation, that provides its customers with a cost-effective means to a successful career as a pilot. It also aims to provide the airline and general aviation industries with highly competent and safety conscious pilots.

The Institution's activities are regulated by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). The administration and implementation of EASA's regulations are carried out, on behalf of EASA, by the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). This entails regular audits to ensure that standards are maintained. Recently the CAA's regulations have changed and full audits are now carried out triennially. Flight simulators and associated quality assurance procedures are inspected annually.

### **2. Brief description of the current provision**

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The Institution offers a range of private pilot training courses including Private Pilot Licence (PPL), PPL Night Rating, PPL Multi-Engine Rating (PPL/ME), PPL Instrument Rating (PPL/IR), PPL Instrument and Meteorological Rating Course (PPL/IMC) and Aerobatic flying lessons.

The Institution also offers a range of commercial pilot training courses, which enable students, who have never flown before, to obtain a Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL) so that they can apply for a role as a first officer with a commercial airline. The process takes approximately 18 months to two years depending on the students' ability and the amount of time students can spend getting flight practice due to weather conditions. The commercial pilot training courses include Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL), Multi-Engine Piston Rating (MEP) Multi-Engine Instrument Rating (ME/IR), Flight Instructor Course (FIC), Multi-Crew Co-operation Course (MCC) and Jet Orientation Course (JOC).

The underpinning theoretical knowledge is provided by the CAA recognised EASA Air Transport Pilot Licence (ATPL) theoretical knowledge course. This course is delivered by the Institution and provides training to a level of theoretical knowledge required for the Air Transport Pilot's Licence for Aeroplanes (ATPLA) and prepares the candidate for the EASA ATPL theoretical knowledge examinations. The course is two years in duration. The theoretical aspects are covered over seven months with six examination sittings to complete the course.

The Institution also offers a full-time Integrated Pilot training course. From the outset of this course, students cover both flying and theoretical knowledge. The course also includes training for operating multi-crew jet aircraft. The integrated course is 80 weeks in duration and enables cadets, some of whom may never have flown before, to obtain a Commercial Pilot Licence. Graduates can then apply for First Officer positions. In addition, there are two new courses. These are a Single Engine Turbine (SET) course during which experienced pilots train to fly fast pressurised turbo propeller aircraft and a new enhanced MCC course called Airline Prepared Standard MCC (APSMCC).

All students enrolled are over the age of 18. At the time of the inspection, there were 36 students booked on the full-time commercial courses. Most students were male and from the United Kingdom (UK). Other countries of origin are India, Italy, France, the Ukraine, the Netherlands and Romania.

Entry requirements are General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) or an equivalent level in mathematics and physics and competence in the English language.

Stapleford Flight Centre offers its courses in the UK only.

### 3. **Inspection process**

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The inspection was carried out by one inspector over one day. Meetings were held with members of the staff, including the Head of Training, the General Manager, an instructor and the Quality and Compliance Manager who is also the Quality Auditor. In addition, a classroom session was observed and a meeting with a group of participants took place. The site where the new classroom and accommodation building is being constructed was also inspected.

### 4. **Inspection History**

<b>Inspection Type</b>	<b>Date</b>
Full Accreditation	8-9 November 2012
Interim	14 November 2013
Re-accreditation	14-15 September 2016

## **PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE**

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*The following judgments and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution.*

### **1. Significant changes since the last inspection**

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The course provision has changed since the last inspection. The full-time Integrated Pilot training course is now being run more often. Two students have just completed the course and two more are currently undertaking it. A new course has started in November 2018 and the programme is full until July 2019. It is a demanding course and the rigour of the selection criteria has been increased. Prospective students are now assessed with regard to their mathematics and physics knowledge before being enrolled on the course. In addition, the Institution has started to offer a Single Engine Turbine (SET) course. This is for experienced pilots. The Institution has recruited an additional instructor for the course and have leased an aircraft to use for the training.

At the time of this inspection, the Institution had just received permission to run a new enhanced MCC course called Airline Prepared Standard MCC (APSMCC) where the basic MCC course is extended from eight to fifteen days' content, of which ten hours are simulator based. The development of this course has been led by Ryanair, which wants to recruit pilots better prepared to fly swept wing jet aircraft. The course covers more management aspects such as cockpit resource and cabin crew management and the management of threats such as terrorism.

The previous Chief Theoretical Instructor has stepped down and been replaced by the previous deputy, who was interested in having greater responsibility. This has not had a major impact as the relevant instructor systems were already in place and the previous incumbent is still working at the Institution. The Head of Training's deputy left in September 2018 to start work for an airline. This role is not currently being replaced. A new Chief Flying Instructor has been recruited to help with the increasing workload.

The Institution is enrolling fewer students on short term study visas. This is due to the fact that the airlines have been recruiting pilots from the UK and the rest of the European Union and this has been meeting their recruitment requirements.

The number of students studying on the Commercial Pilot Licence course has increased due to better timetabling of the course allowing students to attend at the weekends only.

It is now possible to book flight practice electronically from home. This provides greater flexibility for the students.

The Institution is in the process of building a new classroom and accommodation block in order to house the increased number of students.

### **2. Response to actions points in last report**

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There were no action points in the last report.

### **3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report**

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*A suitable staff appraisal system, for non-teaching staff, has recently been developed and has been implemented with some staff. This needs to be rolled out to all staff and include clear and measurable performance targets and a relevant training and development plan.*

Most non-teaching staff, including the course co-ordinators and the administration staff who are responsible for dealing with students on a daily basis, have undergone a formal recorded appraisal since the last inspection. The process makes use of a comprehensive template to record the results and includes the setting of future performance

goals, including for training and development. The goals that have been set are clear and relevant although not all are sufficiently measurable to ensure they are met. A minority of appraisal records do not include any objectives. Staff who had undergone an appraisal commented that it gave them a good opportunity to consider and discuss their performance with their manager.

*Consider establishing a formal system for obtaining feedback from all staff to improve methods for ensuring continuous improvement.*

There are various appropriate methods through which staff feedback is obtained. In June 2018, the Institution introduced an online forum through which the instructors can share information and any problems they are experiencing. The forum is accessible to all the staff and allows them to share possible solutions to any issues that are raised. This method is suitable for the Institution as it provides an immediate and, therefore, more regularly used way of communicating and receiving feedback from the staff. The performance review process and related meetings provide another opportunity for the staff to raise any issues regarding the management of the Institution as there is a specific question regarding how the Institution's management can be improved in the appraisal record. There is no formal method of obtaining anonymous feedback from all the staff to ensure everybody's views are heard.

*Consider establishing a system for ensuring that students are made aware of what has been done to respond to their feedback.*

The students are made aware of what has been done to respond to their feedback. This is done through personal contact with the individual student who has provided the feedback. Information, which would include any changes made, is also provided to students in a monthly newsletter.

*Amend the teaching observation template so that it also focuses on the students' learning to ensure they benefit fully from the teaching sessions.*

The records of lesson observations include appropriate information to demonstrate that students are learning and making progress and that the instructor is responding to their different abilities in class.

*Provide additional information on the website for international students so that they have a good understanding about the life and culture in the UK before they arrive at the Institution.*

This recommendation has not been actioned because there have been very few international students attending the Institution and, therefore, providing additional information on the website has not been a priority.

#### 4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

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##### 4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

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The standards are judged to be:

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

**Comments**

The Institution is effectively managed. The management structure is well defined and understood although the organisation chart does not include some staff roles, such as the reception staff and course co-ordinators. The administration staff are well supported by the managers. Both informal one-to-one and formal communication channels, such as staff meetings, work well to ensure that the staff are aware of the priorities and are able to perform their roles well.

The staff have access to a qualified Human Resources Adviser who comes to the Institution once a week. Effective staff recruitment procedures, including interviews, verifying qualifications for full-time staff, obtaining references and checking right to work in the UK, ensure that appropriate staff are employed.

A formal application process, which includes checks on prospective students' flying experience, English language level, where appropriate, and medical fitness ensures that the enrolled students are suitable for their courses. Students' attendance is effectively monitored and recorded using daily attendance registers.

Effective mechanisms are used to obtain student feedback. These include the use of feedback forms, which include good questions to elicit useful quantitative and qualitative feedback. Students are also asked for their feedback in meetings. As a result, managers are aware of the students' views on their experience at the Institution.

Good quality assurance procedures are used, which comply with CAA requirements. The pass rates on the CPL and IR courses are analysed year-on-year so that any trends can be identified. The results of the analysis show that the pass rates have remained consistent at over 97 per cent. Recorded staff meetings, including management review meetings, are purposeful and include up-dates, outputs from audits carried out by the Quality and Compliance Manager and action points. The Quality and Compliance Manager confirmed that he had raised findings from his audits, in his non-conformity reports, to the Head of Training and that the Institution had responded appropriately within the given timescales.

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##### 4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

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The standards are judged to be:

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

**Comments**

Academic management is effective. The Head of Training works well with the instructors to ensure that the programme delivery meets the students' needs and that the instructors are suitably supported and have access to appropriate training materials. The detailed course syllabuses and materials are approved by the CAA. The materials include very detailed instructor notes to ensure consistency.

Instructors are knowledgeable and use their own experience effectively to illustrate the theoretical points in the classroom sessions. In the session observed, the students were clearly engaged and responded well to the instructor's questions. Instructors receive useful information about the students and their strengths and weaknesses so that they can take this into account in their classroom delivery. The students interviewed confirmed that the instructors were passionate about their subject areas and were very knowledgeable. The instructors make the teaching sessions practical and interactive and provide good support to the students.

Student training records are maintained and include debriefs of training sessions in the simulators and other assessments such as formative subject tests. As a result, students' progress is appropriately monitored. Feedback given to the students is also recorded in their training records.

The students said that they were able to access useful advice about employment opportunities. The Institution invites speakers from airlines to talk to the students and other advice is available as required, for example, from the instructors.

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#### 4.3 Student Welfare (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

**Comments**

Students receive good information before and on arrival at the Institution. Before arrival, this is supplied through the comprehensive website, the open days and informal communication channels. As a result, the students interviewed confirmed that they received accurate information and were fully aware of the timescales for each module and for completing their course as well as the full cost. They said that their questions were answered promptly and that the administration staff worked well as a team to meet their needs appropriately.

The students receive a suitable induction on arrival. This includes a full explanation, by instructors, of the course structure and the assessment schedule. Students say that they get to know the instructors well and that they know who to approach with any personal problems. As a result, they are well supported throughout their course. They say that their views are taken into account and were able to provide examples of when this had occurred.

The students receive a useful manual on arrival. This includes information about the course assessments and how progress is monitored and what happens if this is not satisfactory. It also provides relevant information relating to the local area and the transport facilities. The students sign to say they have received the manual. As a result, they are fully aware of what is expected of them whilst studying.

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#### 4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

**Comments**

The premises and facilities are fit for purpose and include a spacious cafeteria, where students and staff can relax and talk. The students are given an appropriate briefing regarding health and safety through the student manual and the induction programme.

The classrooms are suitable for the lessons taking place and the three flight simulators provide an excellent practical learning environment for the students.

The new classroom, which is under construction, is spacious and will accommodate up to 20 students. The new block will also include additional student accommodation, a cafeteria and toilet facilities. It is anticipated that it will be completed by the end of January 2019.

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#### 4.5 Compliance Declaration

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**Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.**

Yes     No

**PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS**

**STRENGTHS**

The staff, including the administration team, work well together to meet the individual students' needs.

Good investment is being made to provide additional classroom and accommodation space for the students.

**ACTIONS REQUIRED**

None

High

Medium

Low

**RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT *(to be reviewed at the next inspection)***

The Institution should ensure that all staff appraisal records include measurable performance goals and that all staff carrying out appraisals are suitably trained.

The Institution should consider introducing regular anonymous all-staff feedback surveys to ensure that everybody's views are heard and can be actioned appropriately.

The Institution is recommended to keep the content of the website under review and, should the number of international students grow significantly in the future, provide additional information for those students so that they have a good understanding about the life and culture in the UK before they arrive at the Institution.

The management structure should be reviewed and amended so that it includes all the staff roles.

**COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE**

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