



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: Ryanair ATO

ADDRESS: Building 65
Ambassador Road
Castle Donnington
Derbyshire
DE74 2SA

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Captain Senan O'Shea

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 20 May 2022

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation, 27 July 2022

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

Ryanair Approved Training Organisation (Ryanair ATO/the Provider) is the pilot-training division of Ryanair Airline, which is owned by Ryanair Holdings PLC. It provides courses to cadet pilots recruited by Ryanair who have already completed basic flight training and hold a European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) Frozen Air Transport Pilots' Licence (ATPL). The courses train recruits to pilot specific types of passenger plane, depending on which airline they will be joining at the end of the training.

The Provider is based at East Midlands Airport near Castle Donnington in Derbyshire. In addition to the East Midlands Training Centre (EMT), the Provider occasionally makes use of Ryanair training facilities at Stansted Airport in Essex. Both centres provide access to flight simulators.

Ryanair ATO shares the same aim as the airline, which is to conduct its air transport activities safely.

The Provider is led by the Head of Training, who reports to the Accountable Manager, who is a member of the Senior Management Team of Ryanair Holdings PLC. The Head of Training is responsible for the content and quality of training provided by Ryanair ATO. He is supported by the Training Administration Manager and the Deputy Head of Training, who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the training provision.

Ryanair ATO was established in 2001 at EMT. In 2010, it opened the training centre at Stansted, which is used primarily for delivering training to existing staff. Further training centres were opened in Bergamo, Italy in 2016 and in Dublin in the Republic of Ireland in 2020. BAC accreditation covers only the United Kingdom (UK) provision for new recruits.

2. Brief description of the current provision

Ryanair ATO provides courses in flying Boeing 737 and Airbus 320 passenger planes to newly recruited pilots. On successful completion of these courses, participants achieve either an A320 or a B737 300–900 Type Rating, which allows them to operate those aircraft with passengers on board.

Courses comprise Ground School, which covers the underpinning theoretical learning, and practical simulator training. Ground School includes in-person and online delivery. Ground School is usually taught through a combination of in-person sessions in classrooms at the centre and self-study using the e-learning platform. All practical sessions are delivered in person using flight simulators. At the time of the inspection, part of the Ground School was being delivered virtually. The virtual element will return to being classroom-based delivery from June 2022. The content of courses is determined by EASA and approved by the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA). Certification is awarded by the IAA.

At the time of the inspection, there were 256 participants enrolled on courses. The participants were aged between 20 and 42 years. The large majority were in their 20s and most were male. The very large majority of participants are British, with Irish as the second largest nationality group. Other participants are mainly from the European Union (EU). Ryanair ATO can accommodate up to 1,000 trainee pilots a year, with a maximum of 256 at any one time. The Provider does not recruit participants under the age of 18 years.

Courses are open only to Ryanair's cadet pilots. Applicants for pilot positions are required to hold an EASA Frozen ATPL and to have a suitable level of English certified on their licence in accordance with International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) standards. Following success in the application process, the new recruit is allocated to a course specific to the type of aircraft used in the region in which they are to be deployed.

Courses begin weekly throughout the year and last for three months. The Provider also delivers a range of courses for Ryanair's fully qualified pilots, flight instructors and examiners, which they are required to take at prescribed intervals to maintain their licensed status. These courses do not form part of the BAC accreditation.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was conducted on site at EMT in one day by one inspector. Meetings were held with the Deputy Head of Training, the Chief Instructor Simulator, the Training Administration Manager, a group of instructors and course developers, and a group of participants. Training sessions were observed, and documentation and records on the Provider’s database were reviewed. All requested information was provided promptly and the Provider co-operated fully with the inspection process.

4. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	6–7 & 9 April 2021

PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the provider.

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

At the time of the previous inspection, the majority of Ground School teaching was delivered virtually. At the time of the inspection, virtual delivery continued, but the next intake of cadets is to complete Ground School following the original format of in-person classroom training and self-study online.

2. Response to action points in last report

No action points were identified in the previous inspection report.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

The Provider should further develop appraisal procedures for administrative staff to support performance enhancement.

The original form used for administrative staff appraisals only recorded the appraisee's self-evaluation. This has been extended to include a section for recording the outcome of the appraisal discussion and any targets set, together with any new tasks or areas of work in which the administrator would like to be involved and a related Continuing Professional Development (CPD) plan. This provides a clear record to support administrative staff at all levels to develop in their roles, in accordance with the ATO's priorities.

It is recommended that appraisal records for staff involved in course development should be extended to acknowledge their contributions to ongoing or completed projects and include targets for the following year.

The appraisal form now includes a section for listing the projects in which course developers have been involved, what they have most enjoyed and what additional skills they have acquired over the previous year. It also records the future projects in which they would like to participate. Staff involved in course development confirm that having a formal record of their project work has facilitated planning for their future development. Opportunities to acquire new skills are now built into their training plan, rather than just arising from the demands of project work.

The Provider is recommended to provide ongoing information on local events and activities to increase opportunities for participants to socialise.

Two notice boards are used to display information on a range of local events and activities. Participants confirm that they know where they can find this information and that they have suitable opportunities to socialise.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Management of Ryanair ATO is effective, with good lines of communication between managers and the extensive team of instructors, examiners, course developers and administrators working at the EMT. Staff consider that Ryanair ATO is a very positive environment to work in and enjoy the challenges and opportunities open to them.

Efficient administrative systems are in place to record all training, licences awarded and their expiry dates. This ensures that instructors and examiners are qualified to perform their roles in Ryanair ATO at all times and accurately captures the progress of cadets through their course to completion and achievement of their Type Rating.

Staff performance is regularly reviewed through external audits, feedback from a range of stakeholders and annual appraisals. Outcomes inform provision of high-quality CPD. This includes the required pilot, instructor and examiner refresher training, opportunities for administrators to shadow their counterparts at other Ryanair facilities, and opportunities for course developers to acquire further technical skills for the production of training resources.

Quality assurance is rigorous. Ryanair has a compliance monitoring system that is used to audit training delivery and facilities at Ryanair ATO. Audits include regular training observations for instructors. Feedback is taken from participants at the end of each course and analysed to identify areas for improvement.

Participant feedback is available only at the end of the courses and it, therefore, arrives too late for managers to address issues that might have been resolved during the course.

Managers have an open-door policy and staff confirm that managers are responsive to their views and suggestions. Recent changes in response to feedback have been the creation of a new facilities manager role and improvements to the way in which Information Technology (IT) issues are resolved.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Management of training is effective. Instructors and examiners, training rooms and all necessary resources are allocated through the airline's rostering system, which ensures that all requirements are in place at the outset of each course.

Provision of resources is excellent. Course materials are of a consistently high quality. Participants access the learning platform and all the reference documents they need through a pre-loaded tablet computer issued to them at the start of their training. Simulator training exceeds the hours required by regulatory authorities, supporting good rates of progress.

The fixed-base simulators are available for cadets to book for additional practice when these are not in use. However, their availability has been limited for the most recent cohort of participants because of maintenance taking place outside course hours.

Course managers and instructors are suitably qualified in line with EASA standards and regularly attend update training. Cadet training sessions follow an approved plan, but delivery is interactive and instructors demonstrate good rapport with the participants, responding effectively to their needs.

A series of suitable techniques are used to check learning. Participants state that instructors are very supportive, and they particularly value the feedback instructors provide during the simulator sessions. Inspection findings confirm their views.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Participants receive sufficient pre-enrolment information to settle quickly onto the course.

This will be the last group to start Ground School in virtual format. An initial online meeting was successful in promoting communication between the group of new recruits. They are well supported by their mentor, whom they initially met online and who will continue to be their first point of contact with any concerns during the in-person training.

There are good, supportive relationships among the participants and between participants and staff. Participants are satisfied with the training they receive.

Ryanair ATO has appropriate policies in place to support the well-being of participants. These include robust policies and procedures to address the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The premises are fit for purpose, secure and well maintained. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure the health and safety of participants and staff.

Training facilities comply with EASA regulations and are audited regularly for suitability. Classrooms are spacious and well equipped with IT and specialist resources. Levels of lighting, heating and ventilation are good.

Simulator briefing rooms contain a full-scale mock-up cockpit and rooms are usually available to participants outside training sessions for individual practice. Specialist learning areas include fixed-base and full-flight simulators, which allow for effective delivery and assessment of the practical training component.

Administrative offices are spacious and well equipped, supporting effective administration.

Both buildings at EMT have kitchens for staff and participants to prepare hot drinks and to store and microwave food. There are suitable relaxation areas. Food is available from a range of sources, including a mobile catering company that visits the premises daily. These facilities meet the requirements of everyone at Ryanair ATO.

4.5 Online, Distance and Blended Learning (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

Virtual course delivery is effective. Trainers are proficient in the use of the conferencing software and training sessions are highly interactive, with regular checking of learning and good levels of cadet participation.

The self-study materials on the learning platform are well designed and engaging. Participants are positive about the online element of the course, particularly as they can learn at their own pace and revisit sections when they encounter difficulties.

4.6 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

The efficient administrative systems support the effective operation of the Provider very well.

Rigorous procedures for monitoring and reviewing all aspects of performance result in continuous improvements in provision.

The committed, enthusiastic staff work effectively as a team to ensure delivery of consistent high-quality training.

The provision of appropriate resources online, in classrooms and in specialist training areas successfully promotes participants' progress and achievement.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
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RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT *(to be reviewed at the next inspection)*

It is recommended that the Provider formally requests feedback during the course as well as at its end, enabling managers to identify any issues at an early stage in order to address these promptly.

The Provider should consider informing participants of times when there will be limited access to simulators for individual practice to better manage their expectations.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

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