FIVE CAREERS IN AVIATION THAT DO NOT REQUIRE A PILOT LICENCE

News / Maintenance / Trainings

A career in aviation is a dream for many aircraft and aerospace enthusiasts. While becoming a pilot is high on the agenda for most people, the aviation industry has a plethora of potential employment positions to choose from that offer interesting and exciting careers.

Here, we round up a few of the lesser-known roles and explain what makes them great long-term career opportunities.

Aircraft maintenance engineer

Regular aircraft maintenance is imperative to making sure planes are operating safely. Aircraft maintenance engineers or mechanics are responsible for checking the systems on aeroplanes in between flights to ensure they are fit to fly. It’s a highly skilled job with a great deal of responsibility. Successful candidates will need to have meticulous attention to detail and obtain specific qualifications as well as a special licence from the CAA granting them permission to operate.

There are two types of maintenance: line maintenance, such as pre-flight checks and refuelling,

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and base maintenance work, which is undertaken in an aircraft hangar and involves more complex checks and diagnoses.

You can choose to work in one of two areas: mechanics or avionics. Mechanics involves servicing the fuselage, engines, landing gear and airframe systems as well as any associated electrics. Alternatively, avionics covers the electronic systems that power the navigation, communications and flight control systems.

Jobs are available in the commercial and private sectors as well as the military. Engineers are required to work on rotating shifts, so it is likely that you will need to work weekends and overnight as part of the shift pattern.

Becoming an aircraft maintenance engineer takes lots of time and dedication and you will need to obtain relevant engineering qualifications. If you excel in maths, physics and technology subjects, like engineering science, and enjoy problem solving this could be the career for you.

Component sourcing account manager

Aircraft maintenance managers and engineers need to find replacement parts from somewhere. Time is critical – while an aircraft remains on the ground, it isn't earning. This is where component sourcing solutions companies, like Artemis Aerospace, come in.

Tom Shadbolt supports lessors and investors with their aircraft component supplies and repairs needs. He has worked at Artemis Aerospace for eight years. He explains more about his day-to-day work:

"My job is a huge balancing act of making sure I meet the needs of multiple customers and their,

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often very short, deadlines each day. For lessors and investors, they are usually preparing aircraft to be moved on to the next airline so the window of time to undertake a project is usually quite small – while their aircraft isn't leased, it means they are losing money! It pays to be extremely organised, and I often need to think fast.

"I will start my day by picking up on all the requests that have come in overnight. This can be anything from basic switches to cabin interiors, hydraulic components or critical computing and indication systems. With the support of my team, we then get to work sourcing these parts using our global network of suppliers and preparing quotes. Meanwhile, I am managing other ongoing projects to ensure my customers get their aircraft delivered on time. Every day, I get ad hoc requests due to new discoveries made by maintenance teams."

Tom, who formerly worked in administration for a pharmaceutical company, says it is a great job with so much opportunity to progress: "I didn't have any experience in aircraft parts before I joined Artemis. I came in on day one and learned completely on the job."

Logistics is also a really important element of the role.

"I am often having to work out the best, most cost-effective as well as fastest solution to get parts from one place to another," said Tom.

Why does Tom enjoy his job so much? "It's so varied and fast-paced – it's certainly diverse with new things happening every day! I also take great pleasure in helping my customers and doing the very best I can for them. It's always a real achievement when another project has been completed and an aircraft has been moved on to its new home."

Flight simulator support

Flight simulators are essential for airlines. Pilots need to maintain regular training, keep up to date with aircraft revisions and undertake first time training for new aircraft models. This means simulators must operate 24/7 to ensure pilots can access them for these vital training requirements.

Dan Frith works with Tom at Artemis as sales director of flight simulator support. Prior to joining the company six years ago, Dan worked as an export sales manager distributing car parts. He said:

"I manage customers with simulator operations all over the world covering numerous time zones. My day usually starts with checking my requests from Asia – this means I can make sure I respond before they finish their working day or start the next.

"Many are requesting replacement parts for simulators, while others are wanting whole renovations. Simulators are built for each specific aircraft type, so, as well as the more common jets such as the Airbus A320 and Boeing B737, I also take care of simulators for private jets too. These are much more niche and might require extensive research and insight to successfully source parts.

"I am currently putting a quote together to create a whole new simulator for a model of private jet that hasn't long been in circulation. Many sims are built using reconditioned parts from old aircraft and must precisely replicate what the pilot will experience inside a working flight deck, so the newer the model of aircraft the more difficult it becomes to source things like redundant cockpits."

As part of his duties, Dan will regularly travel overseas to specialist shows and exhibitions to meet potential clients and catch up with existing customers.

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“I travel one to two times a month on average. It’s a great part of the job if you like getting out of the office, meeting people and showing what you have to offer.”

Aircraft technical manager

Most aircraft are owned by leasing companies and investment funds. A specialist aviation asset management company will manage an aircraft portfolio on behalf of owners, providing expert advice to maximise value and minimise risk.

The role of aircraft technical manager involves managing the parts, services and costs involved in maintaining an aircraft across its lifetime, from acquisition to disposal. Aircraft technical managers will also be responsible for arranging lease agreements with airlines who want to utilise available aircraft as part of their fleet.

Air Traffic Controller

Air traffic controllers are the eyes and ears on the ground for pilots, providing them with information and advice to help them take off and land safely on time.

There are three types of air traffic controller: area controller, approach controller and aerodrome controller. Area controllers track and guide aircraft at different altitudes in various sectors and regions. Approach controllers manage aircraft as they approach and take-off from an airport. Aerodrome controllers work in tower control, giving clearance to land and take off as well as guiding pilots to the correct taxi positions on stands and runways.

Excellent concentration, judgement, problem-solving and decision-making skills are all essential for this role. Jobs can be obtained via an apprenticeship or trainee scheme.

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