



ANALYSIS: EMIRATES CAE FLIGHT TRAINING SET TO DOUBLE UP AT NEW DUBAI TRAINING CENTRE

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Just two years after opening its second training centre in Dubai, Emirates **CAE Flight Training** is doubling the size of the operation with five more simulator bays. The expansion – work on which will begin by the end of the year – will allow ECFT to cater for the burgeoning demand for new first officers and ongoing pilot training from anchor tenant Flydubai as well as other airlines from the Middle East and India, including IndiGo, Jet Airways and Oman Air.

The joint venture between the airline and the Canadian simulator manufacturer and training provider was established in 2002 mainly to provide simulator hours to the region's business aviation and helicopter operators – a 14-bay site on one of **Emirates'** training campuses, at Garhoud, near **Dubai** International, opened four years later with the unit operating separately from the airline's own pilot training facilities.

But the establishment of Flydubai in 2009 and the low-cost carrier's rapid expansion to a current

fleet of 50 Boeing 737-800s prompted ECFT to invest in a second operation at the city's Silicon Oasis equipped with three 737 and two A320 simulators. "We saw that there would be a need for local pilots," says ECFT managing director Walter Visser. "It has been a huge success. In one year, we filled all the bays."

CAE has still to confirm what additional simulators it will offer at Silicon Oasis, but there will be at least one 737 and a 777. "The rest we are working on," says Visser. Flydubai's demands are likely to be a big influence. At the last Dubai air show, the carrier ordered up to 100 737 Max aircraft with deliveries from 2017, and its fleet should reach treble figures by 2020. "We are keeping pace with their growth," says Visser.

Twelve of the bays at Garhoud are devoted to general aviation (Emirates uses the other two). Types include a Bombardier Challenger 604/605 and Global 5000/6000, a Gulfstream GIV, GV/550 and Dassault Falcon 900/2000 and 7X, as well as a Hawker 800 and Bell 412. A Gulfstream G650 will arrive next year. CAE also won the deal to provide training for Dassault's new 5X. "We have yet to announce locations for the 5X," says CAE group president, civil aviation training solutions Nick Lontides. "But I expect Dubai to be one of them."

Lontides says both segments of ECFT's business are performing strongly, "thanks to the growth we are seeing in the region". On the business aviation side, the simulators attract custom from Europe and Africa as well as the region itself, he says. Although the big three Gulf carriers – Emirates, Etihad and Qatar Airways – operate their own simulator centres, they are customers for CAE's equipment. "We anticipate further prospects with them as they continue to make orders," he adds.

On the ab initio side, CAE has worked with Emirates on its cadet programme since 2013 and this year 55 trainee first officers – the vast majority Emirati citizens and double the 2014 intake – will take their first steps into their career with CAE Oxford Aviation Academy, completing the flying portion of their course at CAE's facility in Spain. Emirates is building its own dedicated flight training centre at the new Dubai World Central airport.

Meanwhile, CAE's main competitor in the simulator training provision, FlightSafety International, is developing an eight-bay facility in partnership with helicopter operator Abu Dhabi Aviation. The deal, signed at last year's MEBA business aviation show in Dubai, was for phase one of the centre to open in September this year, followed by a phase two, which would see the centre more than double in size to 17 bays. However, the status of the project is currently unclear.

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