

THE FASTEST WAY TO THE MODERN AIRLINES' COCKPIT - MPL

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It's not a secret that every airline needs highly professional and well-trained pilots. The fastest way leading an aspiring future pilot to the airline's cockpit is the Multi-Crew Pilot Licence Program (MPL). The only question is why an increasing number of airlines is turning to MPL programs, and what the difference between the MPL program and traditional licensing programs is?

What is there in the market?

The truth is that since 2006 almost 40 MPL programs have been established across the globe with more than 3,600 graduates flying as operators since then. The number of flying schools, academies and centres, adopting MPL training program, is still growing. BAA Training, one of the TOP 3 biggest independent aviation training centres in Europe, has also added MPL training to its pilot education program and starts to conduct the training in August.

The MPL, adopted by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), requires a partnership between an airline and a flight school, and offers an attractive pathway for ab initio student pilots to develop the necessary competencies to act as a first officer in commercial air transportation on multi-crew airplanes.

MPL is about Competency and Quality

The main difference from traditional training pathways is that an MPL course requires methodology of competency-based training in all the phases of practical education. In order to make progress, a standardized set of competencies must be developed to a defined level of performance rather than just accumulating hours. The competencies are as follows: communication, application of knowledge, leadership and teamwork, application of procedures and management of information, problem solving and decision making, situation awareness and work load management.

Why are those competencies important? The airline industry has recognized that experience of pilots cannot be measured by the number of flight hours alone. The level of complexity of modern aircraft and the fast developing operational context require pilot training to reach beyond traditional flying skills. Threats, errors and failure possibilities during operation cannot always be foreseen and trained before they occur; therefore, flight crews must possess a range of competencies to be prepared for the unexpected.

The MPL program is designed to educate the graduates in all the 9 competencies to be safe, effective and efficient in performing their future duties.

Knowledge, skills and attitude, including a strong commitment to the job and the airline's mission are additional requirements for an MPL student. Moreover, high ethical standards are always placed at the top of the list. Undoubtedly, they should enable a pilot to work with the crew and passengers as well as represent the airline and even the aviation industry in the best possible manner.

Competencies are Developed inside the Aircraft and the Flight Simulator

In practical terms, competency-based training means developing the 9 competencies in every lesson; the instructor manages the training environment, continuously assesses the achieved level of performance and interacts with the trainee to facilitate learning.

A sufficient amount of time is spent in the training aircraft to develop self-confidence and resilience in the real environment under single-pilot conditions; this includes solo flying, night- and instrument flying, as well as dedicated upset prevention and recovery training. Thereafter, the training takes place in fixed-base and full-flight simulators of the future aircraft type, for example Boeing 737 or the Airbus A320. This module of MPL training is significantly bigger compared to traditional courses; it includes extensive type rating training and preparation for future line flying.

Focus on Airline Procedures

In the MPL program students will get acquainted with their future airline's standard operating procedures (SOPs) during all simulator lessons. They will manage their workload as a crew, use checklists, make decisions, consolidate professional situation awareness and communicate during various tasks and scenarios. This process ensures that MPL cadets get immersed in the airline environment, in which a pilot's work is later to be performed from day 1 of the training.

Fast Transfer of Training

According to Captain Hartmut Fabish, an expert on competency-based training and assessment, airlines have an urgent demand for pilots and MPL is probably the fastest way to get into the cockpit. MPL courses minimize the amount of time needed to become a First Officer, making the MPL an attractive proposition for airlines. Compared to traditional training, an MPL program may

take almost half year less time to arrive at the line training of an airline.

You might ask - how can this be done? The answer there, says Captain H. Fabish, is quite clear: MPL includes type-rating training, based training and parts of the airline's operator conversion course. With MPL course, it is possible for an aspiring future pilot to become ready for a First Officer's position in approximately 18 months' period.

So, What will MPL Deliver?

The key goal of an MPL program is to provide airlines with highly competent and safety-oriented pilots in the shortest possible time and without detours. It is a Win-Win situation for students and for airlines as it will ultimately increase training efficiency.

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