

# Improving Dual-Flight Training Through Accountability

Following a spate of dual-flight training accidents, the CAA decided to look at what was going wrong. Bill MacGregor, CAA Principal Aviation Examiner, thought it was important to get the initial findings out there, although the final report is yet to be completed.

"We identified 27 areas of concern under the overarching theme of 'accountability,'" says Bill. "There were four major subsets to that: supervision, training model, record keeping, and type ratings."

## Supervision

"It's important that supervision by the organisation of the instructor, and by the instructor of the student, is both direct and indirect," says Bill. "It's not a case of box-ticking. It must be transparent, documented and meaningful."

Bill says that in a group of instructors, each instructor should have a small number of students they're responsible for – there should be only one instructor responsible for each student's training programme.

The instructor should follow their student's progress closely and document that supervision, including debriefs with flight examiners following flight exams.

"Candidates often hear only what they want to hear in a debrief," says Bill. "So it's essential that the supervisor attends examiner debriefs. That really helps focus on which areas need improvement."

Supervision also includes taking real responsibility for the student's progress. As an instructor, you're responsible and accountable for the standard your student achieves. You must take ownership of your student and be sure that when they've completed their training, and you assess that they are competent to sit the test, that they actually are.

## Training Model

For any flight training to succeed, the flight training organisation must use a good instructional technique.

"Our investigations have shown cases where bad habits were taught to instructors and are now being passed on to students," says Bill.

"Or sometimes, even the basics aren't right. It might be obvious, but your organisation must have a sound course

syllabus established, with all necessary course material, facilities, and equipment easily available. And of course, competent instructors."

Once a flight training programme is established, it should be reviewed regularly, and managed by the organisation.

"We encourage students to actively participate in their own progress. Students should be encouraged to take an active interest in 'where they are' against the syllabus. Therefore, the

course syllabus should be easy for all participants to view.

"That also makes it easier for instructors to actively manage student progress and intervene early when problems arise," says Bill.

The training model used must ensure that the syllabus is covered and that the results are correctly documented.

New instructors (C-Cats) should be given a dedicated student who they instruct through a complete course.

"This will help the instructor develop their instructing technique," says Bill. "They'll be able to focus on the student while seeing how course exercises tie together to build the end product. They'll also gain a greater understanding of the learning process in action.

"An important area to look at is students who are self-funding. Learning to fly is expensive and often students will take long breaks between lessons if they don't have enough money to regularly pay for lessons.

"When they come back after a long break, they may need some revision to get back to their pre-break level of competence," says Bill.

When a student is moving on to solo flights, they must be assigned specific objectives. Before the student is launched on solo navigation exercises, the instructor

must ensure that the student holds the flight navigation exam credit, and that the map reading exercise is complete.

## Record Keeping

Logbooks should be supervised and correctly completed – remember they are a legal document and should be neatly maintained.

"We recommend a training session on logbooks, as that would go some way to improving the standard of presentation," says Bill.

"Often the 'Details of Flight' column is too vague, referring to 'circuit practice' rather than going into proper detail such as 'circuits, X-wind, flapless'."

Signatures in logbooks show legal accountability, so should only be signed if they are true. Flight test fails should also be recorded in both the logbook and training records.

"Some people try to dress up test failures as 'mock' tests. However there's no shame in failing a test flight – it's a learning opportunity. Record the test for what it was, and record remedial flights too," says Bill.

Training records should be supported by logbook entries: organisation records should show ground and flight training details, and logbook details should reflect training conducted.

## Type Rating

Minimum standards are just that – the minimum prescribed time for type should not be considered the maximum.

"A minimum is not a target," adds Bill. "Competence is. Once type rated, a pilot is entitled to exercise the privileges of pilot-in-command and we must ensure the pilot is competent to exercise those privileges."

Bill says that competence should be the driver, not flying time or cost.

"Trainers are accountable for the level of competence attained by the pilot being type rated. Would you be happy for your family to fly as passengers with that pilot after completing the type rating training you've delivered?"

## Who is Accountable for What?

### Overall Accountability

Has the organisation done its best? Is the CEO prepared to stand in front of a coroner and state that the organisation has done its best?

### Supervisor Accountability

Has the primary supervisor done their best for the new C-Cat? Can the primary supervisor say they effectively supervised and mentored the C-Cat through their direct supervision period, or did they just tick boxes?

### Instructor Accountability

Has the instructor done their best for their student? Have they delivered all the training required that the student needs to sit the test?

### Examiner Accountability

Has the examiner checked that the candidate is fully prepared for the test, with all syllabus items covered and signed for? Can the examiner say they've examined all the paperwork presented for the flight test? If the requirements haven't been met, will they refuse to proceed?

### Accountability Is Everyone's Business

Everyone with an active role in the flight training system has some accountability for the performance of that system. Are you playing your part? ■

