Industry briefing update:
Part 141 flight training organisations – overview of monitoring and inspection activity

Purpose of this document

This document highlights the results of the monitoring and inspection (M & I) activity of Part 141 flight training organisations undertaken by the CAA as part of the flight training safety strategy during 2021. The monitoring and inspection activity was designed to gather further information related to the flight training safety strategy key themes/focus areas. The information gathered will help the CAA with its next steps in the strategy and wider educational content supporting it.

Cross-country operations common themes identified

- **Limiting/prohibiting/adopting operating minima above rule requirements on high-risk cross-country routes**

  A number of organisations have suspended cross-country flights to high-occurrence areas due to the risk of conflict with other aircraft. A common control cited by these schools was placing limits on solo cross-country flights as to where and what routes students can fly. Several schools have identified prohibited areas that solo students are not to fly to due to the level of risk the organisation perceives as being not tolerable.

  Some schools have adopted operating minima over and above Part 91 rule requirements for cross-country flights. These are detailed in the cross-country flight procedures or sign-out sheets.

- **Airspace deviations during cross-country flights are cited as a common occurrence**

  Several schools acknowledged airspace deviations are an issue for solo cross-country students.

  Additional checks of students' airspace knowledge were highlighted as an effective control at one school, as part of the sign-out procedure. This ensured the student had sufficient knowledge of the airspace to be flown prior to flight.

- **English as a second language (ESL) is a contributing factor in occurrences during cross-country flights**

  ESL was identified as a contributing factor in occurrences in the cross-country domain. One school identified that cross-country occurrences were correlated with written exam failures, due to poor English

  Several schools have noted a benefit in engaging an English tutor to give additional English language lessons to those students who've demonstrated poor English comprehension and verbalisation during cross-country flights.

  These schools noted the importance, in addressing any shortcoming before solo cross-country flights, of detecting, early, those students struggling with the English language.

- **Loss of situational awareness is a contributing factor in occurrences during cross-country flights**

  Several schools discussed loss of situational awareness on cross-country flights as a common challenge for students. Some schools noted that solo students become so focused on just flying the aircraft that situational awareness is lost, leading to pressured decision-making. This results in occurrences such as infringing airspace and incorrectly joining at aerodromes.

- **What schools have implemented to assist with cross-country flights**

  During the visits, evidence was gathered of schools using technological aids to track and review cross-country flights: ADS-B and Spidertracks were two of the aids instructors used to examine a student's decision-making, in addition to the progress of the flight.

  Most schools discussed the procedures students must follow when conducting cross-country planning and when undertaking the flight. One school discussed the benefits of having a dedicated cross-country training manager, in addition to a dedicated B- CAT instructor monitoring all cross-country flights.

  One school highlighted that all initial navigation exercises are flown using a paper map. Only the instructors use iPads/tablets, and GPS is not used at all during cross-country training.

Instructor experience and training

Most schools noted there's little concern with instructor attrition at this time. This was mostly attributed to the changing environment due to COVID-19. One school highlighted instructor fatigue was more of a concern than attrition.

Several schools explained the best-performing students are often offered instructor roles.

Schools identified various ways feedback is provided to junior instructors. This included;

- Flying with the junior instructor's student every 5 to 10 hours to assess the student's knowledge

- Conduct student feedback surveys

- Using GoPro cameras to review and debrief instructional techniques

25 August 2021

- Completing phase checks/proficiency flights with the CFI.

Although some schools had well-documented records and processes for supervising instructors, several others had no documented procedures for supervision and recurrence training. This places a high degree of reliance on the performance of each individual instructor.

Standard overhead join (SOHJ)

Most schools highlighted the SOHJ challenges their students. Examples are poor radio calls, rushing descents, mixing up left and right, reading aerodrome plates backwards, disorientation, and joining in front of other aircraft in the downwind leg.

It was widely identified across most schools that lack of situational awareness, poor decision-making, and disorientation are contributing to poor application of the SOHJ and increasing near miss events in the circuit.

Common occurrences

These common occurrences were identified across the schools.

- Airspace incursions / infringements

- Near-misses requiring avoiding action in the SOHJ and circuit

- Not following ATC instructions due to confusion, not understanding requests, particularly in students for whom English is a second language

- Not following established circuit procedures at unfamiliar aerodromes

English as a second language

Most schools who train foreign students that have English as their second language identified shortcomings in their students understanding and command of the English language.

Schools have highlighted several strategies to improve English within student cohorts. These included:

- Students getting additional English tutoring

- Regularly checking various classes to gauge the students' understanding of English and assess the effectiveness of the language tutor

- Implementing an additional ESL course in airspace navigation procedures

- Using scenario training in their approved flight simulator to make sure the students properly understands English direction and acknowledges appropriately it in a cockpit setting.

One school also highlighted the reluctance students of some cultures have in voicing concerns or known issues.

Situational awareness (SA) and threat and error management (TEM)

It was noted that a number of schools don't include SA and TEM in their lesson plans and would benefit from doing this.

However, a few schools are incorporating SA and TEM into their lesson plans or do already have TEM identified in checklists.

Some schools also mentioned they would like additional guidance on how best to achieve this practically.

Lost students

There was a mixture of schools that had experienced lost students and those that hadn't. Most organisations have instructional flights/lesson plans dedicated to lost and disorientated pilot procedures.

Safety management systems

Although not part of the current safety strategy focus areas, the monitoring and inspection activity has highlighted that several schools aren't using their approved safety management systems effectively. The M & I activity identified that organisations are focusing on individual events instead of systemic trends and system-wide themes. There's evidence of repeating events in several schools that are not being addressed through the corrective and preventive actions.

Few schools had captured risks associated with cross-country training, circuit conflict or airspace occurrences in their risk registers, yet these are commonly identified risks for these schools. In addition, it was noted across a number of schools that identified risk controls are not being monitored or reviewed.

Cellphone use

Cellphone use in flight emerged throughout the visits as a potential risk for organisations to be aware of and manage. Several organisations have a basic cellphone policy in place. However, be mindful that certain policies could be negatively affecting operations with it being noted there is a potential correlation between cellphone use in the cockpit by students and airspace occurrences.