

Forward Facing - AIRWAYS AVIATION looks to the long-term

As the aviation industry gradually gets back on its feet after the impact of the pandemic and the global slowdown, the supporting training industry is also regrouping. Rationalising the resources and modernising equipment to meet the renewed demand for aviation professional requires both resolve and resource. Airways Aviation ESMA, based at Montpellier airport in the south of France, has both.

As Captain Mauro Calvano, President of Airways Aviation, recounts the then global spread of the company's interest needed to be consolidated and tailored to the new reality. Montpellier, historically the home of ESMA, a well-established aviation training facility with an excellent reputation, had all the assets to become the main base for Airways Aviation in Europe. Not only is the academy able to operate from an international airfield but, with a relatively low traffic density, the flight instruction has access to comparatively free airspace with an excellent weather factor. As Calvano declares - it is also a great bonus that the south of France is an attractive place in its own right. Students can get excellent down time in the local area to balance the inevitable intensity of the studies.



Long term thinking



The reorganisation was an opportunity to look hard at what both the industry and new generation aviation professionals would need as they start a new career. Increasingly the trend is for the instruction to include an aeronautical/management degree as part of the course when following the progress to a full Commercial Pilot Licence.

This is in line with Calvano's view that piloting skills alone are not enough to prepare for the role of Captain. Effective command of a commercial aircraft now requires additional critical competencies such as systems management, leadership and the decision-making involving understanding of the commercial impact of operational choices. Already steeped in aeronautical awareness, the nearby Montpellier Business School, which is delivering management courses to Air France and has specialists in aeronautical engineering, appeared as a perfect partner. The obvious symbiosis has led to close cooperation with the Ab Initio ATPL course, as, once the first 9 months Theory study has been completed, the student moves to a phase involving alternate weeks of flying and academic instruction, all of which is conducted in English, and is approved both by the French authority - the DGAC - and the French Department of Education. In fact this model of combined studies is up and running at the Airways Aviation training facility on the Gold Coast, Australia.

New Equipment



New ideas and courses require new thinking and equipment. The aircraft fleet has been rationalised to meet the new task and in Europe is exclusively operating the Diamond 40 and Diamond 42 which represent state-of-the-art instrumentation and operation. In support of that are FSTDs provided by Alsim. The experience from earlier operation of two Alsim 200 and one ALX devices has led to the additional order for an AL42 (replica of the DA42-VI aircraft). The clincher for this was the reliable after sales customer support from Alsim. According to Pierre Keller, Simulators Manager, the capacity and serviceability of the Alsim devices is impressive. In addition, the rapid response and solution of any issues with Alsim makes life much easier for the end user. As with most systems regular upgrades/software changes are needed and, once again, Alsim steps up to the mark.

prepared by Chris Long, freelance journalist