



## April 2022 – BALPA Position on Flight Training

It has been 18 months since we issued a statement on our position and recommendations with regards to entering initial flight training and since then a lot has happened. We therefore feel it is important and fair to **update our position** so that you can continue to make informed choices about your career.

In November 2020, we issued both a statement and recorded video recommending that anyone wishing to enter professional flight training or, anyone already in-flight training, delay their intended start date, slow down their training or pause their training. This unprecedented step was taken in response to the developing Covid-19 situation and with the best interests of our members at heart.

Our position at that time was based on several facts, such as pilot unemployment numbers, pilot redundancies and ongoing industrial negotiations. As a result, we made several predictions including:

1. That no “meaningful recruitment” would be seen for 2 years,
2. When airlines did need to increase their pilot numbers again, jobs would be offered first to those who had previously worked for that airline before any external recruitment took place,

**As we approach the 2-year point both of those predictions have become reality.** Although we are seeing small batches of external recruitment, they are largely for experienced pilots, with the majority of airlines to re-employ the pilots they previously made redundant.



## Our updated position:

Airlines are still hurting financially from the effects of Covid-19 and as such, they are largely seeking to recoup those losses with the resources they currently have, rather than recruit external candidates.

**As such our position is now one of caution.** We are now advising that anyone wishing to enter initial flight training, do so only after considering the following point.

In its current format the MPL (Multi-crew Pilot Licence) training, does not afford the trainee any financial nor licencing protection in the event that the tagged airline removes the conditional offer of employment, prior to issue of the trainee's licence. **Until such time as the MPL training structure is reformed to better protect the trainee, we do not recommend any aspiring pilots pursue this training route.**

As the experience of the last 24 months has proved, aviation is an incredibly volatile and hard to predict industry. **Remaining flexible to changes in the pilot supply needs is key to ensuring that your investment in your flight training is not in wasted.** We therefore recommend that trainees choose a training route that allows them to adapt their training timeline to the recruitment needs of the industry and allows the trainee as much financial flexibility as possible, by avoiding paying large lump sums of money upfront.



Flight training organisations have not been immune to the financial pressures caused by Covid-19, not to mention the rising costs of energy. As such, we recommend that trainees conduct their own research into the financial position of the flight school, prior to paying for any training in advance. We have seen occasions in the past whereby a flight school has gone bust whilst in possession of large sums of trainee's money.

If enrolling in an airline "tagged", "sponsored" or otherwise "affiliated" course, we recommend that pilots seek independent legal advice from a contract lawyer prior to committing to the training course or parting with any money. Particular attention should be paid to any "conditions of employment" section, with regards to the airline's hiring needs upon completion of your training.

Finally, we want to reiterate that **BALPA is here to support its members at every stage of their career.** We act only with the best interests of our members at heart to ensure they are protected at every stage of their journey.

**PASS IT ON** 

**Please share this on your social media  
and with any aspiring pilots.**