



**EASA Safety Week**



# Pilot Flight Academy

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EASA Safety Week – 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021



# Colin Rydon

## CEO/COO

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# About Pilot Flight Academy

# Pilot Flight Academy

- Top modern International Flight Academy established in Sandefjord, Norway in 2007
- Providing a Competency based – “Airline-ready” pilot education programme
- Approximately 400 students from more than 15 countries
- 110 employees including 60 Flight Instructors
- One of the largest flight academies in Europe
- Focused on high quality pilot training
- Number of airline cadet programmes



# Pilot Flight Academy

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- 3 locations currently – 2 in Norway and 1 in Texas, USA
- New base being opened in Mainland Europe in 2021
- Predominantly offering Integrated ATPL courses with single engine flying completed in the USA
- Multi engine programme of I-ATPL has 106 hours on DA42
- Fleet of over 30 modern equipped aircraft and 6 simulators
- Own Part 145 and CAMO
- Modern student accommodation
- Approved for national student financing

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# COVID-19 Impact on Pilot Flight Academy

# Pandemic Impact

- Enforced closure of Norway training locations for a total of 5 months
- March-June 2020 and April 2021 campus was closed with no student flying
- ATPL groundschool virtual learning been in place for a year, with only now returning to 50/50 classroom/virtual
- No government support except furlough of employees
- Number of COVID cases but mostly swiftly isolated and outbreaks prevented
- Motivation of employees and students challenging over time



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# Top Safety Issues

# PFA Challenges on Return to Flying

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- Students progress halted – loss of learning retention and lack of continuity
- Full risk assessment completed prior to return to activities
- Working with public health in making environment as safe as practical – mask wearing?
- How to restrict numbers of students on site
- Border restrictions limiting students and employees returning
- Virtual Classroom activities
- Controlling student behaviour!

# Keeping COVID secure

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- Hand sanitizer and hand wash stations
- Mask wearing at all times indoors and in aircraft/simulators
- Temperature checking at certain locations
- Limited numbers per room including planning room
- Full cleaning of aircraft between flights
- Deep cleaning of aircraft overnight
- Non-essential staff remote working
- Virtual classroom for theoretical ground school
- COVID testing provided on site
- Working with Public Health authorities in case of any positive test
- NAA working remote oversight



# Skills and Knowledge Retention

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- Student continuity of training critical for skills and knowledge retention and improvement
- Gaps in Integrated ATPL programme not ideal for students and hard to mitigate against
- Difficulty in maintaining motivation through closed period to continue learning
- Individual refresher training required dependent on stage of training



# Mental Health and Wellbeing

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- 2 distinct groups – Instructors and Students
- More of an issue for students
  - Financial concerns due to delays in training
  - Concerns of employment prospects
  - Unable to fully engage in the joy of learning to fly (mask wearing, lack of social interaction, private study etc.)
  - Hard to self study in virtual learning environment
- More of motivational challenge for Instructors with either virtual learning or getting back to full training engagement in flying
- Peer Support Programme developed and introduced

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# Virtual Classroom Feedback

# Student Feedback

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How well prepared do you feel for CAA exams? Please rate the statements below true or false.

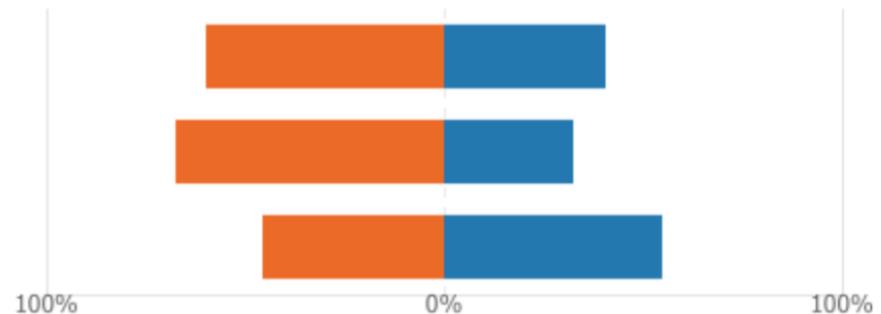
Number of responses: 77

True False

I feel well enough prepared based on the current training I receive.

I feel less prepared after doing partial training in virtual classroom than I would have had we done...

I feel I am more likely to fail my exams because of the current training given.



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# Lessons Learnt



- Maintain communication with all as regularly as possible
- Put in measures to support mental health challenges – Peer Support Programme
- Hold regular 1:1 discussions with students to check on their progress and motivation
- On shutdown of school consider MOC to review maintenance of the management of the ATO
- Having virtual learning approved for theoretical training by our Authority allows for future use if needed – with feedback some improvements can be made
- Importance of working closely with Authorities and maintaining regular dialogue

## Lessons Learnt?



**Pilot**

FLIGHT ACADEMY