

QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHEME, APPLICATION & ASSESSMENT

How many times can I apply for the British Airways Speedbird Pilot Academy?

You can only reach stage two (flight school stage) a maximum of three times. If you create more than one application for the Speedbird Pilot Academy 2026, we will identify and remove your application.

What proportion of Pilot hires are expected to come from the Speedbird Pilot Academy compared to other ways of joining BA.

We will continue to recruit Direct Entry Pilots, Self- Sponsored and Military Managed Paths. The number we recruit will vary each year dependent on the business need.

Is there a maximum age limit?

The age range at the time of applying is 17-58 years old. You will need to be 18 by the 1st of January 2027 to apply.

Will the selection criteria change in future years?

We do not anticipate the selection criteria changing for future applications, but we will review this on an annual basis, so these are subject to change.

How many years do you anticipate running the scheme?

Our intention is to run a cadet scheme each year, but this cannot be guaranteed.

I'm under 5'2", can I apply?

If you are under 5'2", you can still apply, however you will need to complete a functionality test.

Is there any preference given to younger candidates?

If you meet the selection criteria, you have an equal chance of being successful, regardless of your age.

I have higher education than GCSE, but don't meet the GCSE requirements, can I still apply?

You will need to meet the GCSE requirement as advertised to apply, regardless of any other qualification you may hold.

Can I apply if I live overseas?

You need the right to live and work in the UK without Sponsorship and have the ability to remain in the UK for more than 6 months.

I have a foreign passport with the right to live and work in the UK, can I apply?

As long as your passport allows you unrestricted worldwide travel and you can live and work in the UK without sponsorship, you can apply.

I'm part way through a college/university course, can I apply?

This is your decision. If you are successful and are offered a place, you will not be able to defer to a future date. If you wish to finish your college/university course, you will need to apply to a future scheme.

Can any of the selection stages be done remotely?

- Stage one- application and assessments are online.
- Stage two- online assessments, in person group exercise and online interview.
- Stage three- in person at Heathrow.

I studied abroad how do I get my equivalent qualifications?

Please visit the ECCTIS website for qualification equivalents. We have an account to check your equivalent qualifications. Please upload your relevant certificates and we will check that they meet the criteria.

Will preference be given to those with A Levels/Degrees?

You need to meet the GCSE requirements as detailed in the application criteria. Further or higher education are not part of the application criteria.

Do I need IELTS 5.5 to apply?

You don't need this to apply. If you are successful, you would need to obtain this before commencing your training.

Does the English Literature GCSE need requirement at a grade 4 or above?

We require that you have an English Language GCSE at grade C/4 or above. We do not require you to have a GCSE in English Literature.

Do I need previous flying experience?

Whilst previous flying experience is not required to apply, we would recommend at least one 30- minute trial flight, either in a glider or fixed wing aircraft. This is to ensure you enjoy the feeling of flying. There are many scholarships available in the UK, most of which are listed on the Flight Training News website.

I'm working towards my PPL will this help my application?

Any flying experience will help show your motivation to becoming a pilot, but this is not part of the requirement.

I've completed ATPL exams, and have over 100 hours can I apply?

If you have completed any ATPL exams either EASA or CAA, you won't be able to apply. One of our training requirements is that you pass your ground school in the first series. If you have started your hour building, there is currently no upper limit on hours for the scheme, but they will not be credited.

Do BA, have any medical requirements beyond holding a CAA Class 1 medical?

If you are offered a place on the scheme, you will be required to send us a copy of your Class 1 medical along with a GP form, and self-declaration form. These will need to be sent to our BA Health Service (BAHS) so you can be medically cleared to start your training. If you don't already have a Class 1 medical and are successful, we will pay for your initial Class 1.

Does BA offer internships for undergraduates?

Please visit the Emerging Talent pages on the BA careers website to find out more detail.

How much do you value volunteering in your local community?

While this isn't part of the application criteria, any volunteering is a great addition to your CV.

Will feedback be given to unsuccessful candidates?

Due to the number of applications, we are unable to give feedback at the initial stage of the process. Feedback will be given to those who reach the flight school and BA stages of assessment.

Could I join BA and leave for another airline?

We are looking for future pilots who are motivated and committed to a career at British Airways. We offer the opportunity to move to longhaul Airbus and Boeing fleets once you have completed your initial freeze.

I currently have a mortgage, is BA offering any additional support cover such costs whilst in training?

Whilst we are covering the cost of your training, you will be responsible for any ongoing expenses you currently have.

What traits would the ideal candidate possess to be successful?

Technical skills are important, but it's your behaviours which will really set you apart. British Airways is unique, and our pilots are very passionate and enthusiastic about 'connecting Britain with the world and the world with Britain'.

You'll need to demonstrate the passion and motivation to excel during the training programme. The ability to remain calm under pressure and a strong ability to solve problems, collaborating and demonstrating you are a team player will also be essential to create incredible experiences for our customers and colleagues on board.

I'm 16, what advice can you give me to best prepare to apply in the future?

Extracurricular activities which help you develop the skills necessary to be a pilot are great. The Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, Air Training Corps, or sports teams as examples. Any customer service experience you can get will also help you prepare. Any time in the air whether fixed wing or gliding too. There are lots of scholarships available most of which are listed on the Flight Training News website.

QUESTIONS ABOUT TIME IN TRAINING

Which flight schools will you be working with?

The 2 flight schools that you will train with are FTEJerez and Skyborne. We will ask you for your preference during the assessment process, but we cannot guarantee you will be offered a place at your preferred school.

Do I need to be available full time for training?

Yes, this is a 70-week integrated course and will require you to be at the flight school full time.

What are the training parameters?

Once you have started training, we will monitor your progress throughout. We would require that you get a first series pass at ground school with an 85% average with no more than 3 resits and a first series pass at your CPL & IR.

Is the cost of the type rating included if we successfully pass the training?

Yes. The cost of the type rating will be covered onto one of our shorthaul fleets.

Are accommodation costs covered during training?

Yes. Accommodation will be provided, and the cost covered by the airline while you are training with the flight schools.

Will I earn a salary while training?

While you are training at the flight school you will be given a food and subsistence allowance. Once you join as an employee post-flight school you will earn a pilot salary from this date.

Can I bring my pet to training?

Due to the nature of accommodation and the training footprint pets are not allowed.

QUESTIONS ABOUT POST TRAINING AND LIFE AT BA

Do I need to live close to an airport and when do I find out my who I will be working for?

When you are on standby you will need to be available to report for duty within a specified time. While you are initially training, we would recommend you live as close to the airline's base as possible. Your airline will be allocated at the point we make a job offer. This decision will be down to the business needs at the time. You can be based at Heathrow or Gatwick depending on whether you are offered a place with BA or EuroFlyer.

Is it realistic to move between the 2 airlines and if so, what would the time frame be?

For BA and EuroFlyer there is an initial 6-year freeze on the shorthaul fleet. You can bid to move between these 2 airlines within the freeze and if the business can accommodate the move they will.

What is the starting salary and pay scales?

The starting salary will be £37,081 p.a plus allowances. The full pay scale is still to be confirmed and may vary by airline.

Is accommodation provided while completing your type rating?

You will be an employee of the airline you join when you commence your type rating. You will be expected to make your own arrangements if your type rating course takes place at your airline's base airport.

How much annual leave will I get and how is it allocated?

You will get 6 weeks of leave per year. 3 weeks in the summer months and 3 in the winter months. Please note, you will not receive any annual leave allowance during the course. This may vary depending on when you start during the leave year.

What does a roster look like?

This will vary per airline and will be discussed if you are successful at the BA stage of assessment.