

## QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHEME, APPLICATION & ASSESSMENT

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

This is your decision. Courses will start in the first few months of 2025 and 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.

### **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.

### **Can any of the selection stages be done remotely?**

All the selection stages will be held in person at Heathrow.

### **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.

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

5'2" is the minimum height requirement. We will measure your height on your assessment day and if you are under 5'2" you will not be able to continue with the selection process.

### **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, you can apply.

### **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 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.

### **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.

### **Will functional skills maths level 2 but considered equivalent to GCSE?**

Please visit the ECCTIS website for equivalents to GCSE qualifications.

**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.

**How many years do you anticipate running the scheme?**

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

**Do BA and its subsidiary airlines 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.

**Is there a maximum age limit?**

The age range at the time of applying is 17-55 years old. You will need to be 18 on the 1st of January 2025 to apply.

**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.

**What is the target start date for the programme and how long do you anticipate the application process to take in total?**

This will be confirmed shortly, please register for job alerts to keep up to date.

**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.

**Do the 100 places mentioned include the Speedbird Self-Sponsored Pathway?**

The Speedbird Self-Sponsored Pathway is a different scheme.

**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.

**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 application criteria.

**What proportion of Pilot hires are expected to come from the Speedbird Pilot Academy compared to other ways of joining BA and its subsidiaries as a pilot?**

We are looking to recruit up to 100 trainee pilots per year from the Speedbird Pilot Academy. We will continue to recruit Direct Entry Pilots, Self-Sponsored and Military Managed Paths. The number we recruit will vary each year dependant on the business need.

**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 an application criterion, 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.

**What will the closing date be for applications?**

This will be confirmed once we announce the launch date along with all other assessment dates.

**Will the application form be on the website when it opens?**

Yes, all applications will be through our BA careers website.

**Could I join BA or one of its subsidiary airlines and leave for another airline once I had enough hours for longhaul?**

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 percentage of applicants pass training?**

This is the first time in many years that we have run a scheme like this. For those who are successful at the selection stages and are offered a place, we would expect them all to pass their training.

**IELTS Academic or IELTS UKIV Academic?**

We require IELTS 5.5 (Academic). This is not required to apply but would be required to start training.

**If you start training at 18 and have your ATPL at 20, do you have to wait another year to fly commercially?**

When you finish training, you will have an fATPL also known as a CPL. You can fly at the age of 20 with your fATPL. Once you have 1500 hours on a suitable aircraft type, which the Airbus A320 and

the Embraer 170/190 are, you can unfreeze your licence to obtain an ATPL. The minimum age to unfreeze your licence is 21.

**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.

**Does the English Literature GCSE need requirement at a grade 5 or above?**

We require that you have an English Language GCSE at grade C/5 or above. We do not require you to have a GCSE in English Literature.

## **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 OR ONE OF IT'S SUBSIDIARY AIRLINES**

**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 need at the time. You can be based at Heathrow, Gatwick, or London City, depending on whether you are offered a place with BA, EuroFlyer or CityFlyer.

**Is it realistic to move between the 3 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. BA CityFlyer also has an initial 6-year freeze and there is then a pathway to move between CityFlyer and BA or BA EuroFlyer.

**What is the starting salary and pay scales?**

The starting salary will be £34,000 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.

**What does career progression look like?**

Career progression varies for each person and will depend on what your preference is. Whether it's flying shorthaul or longhaul as a First Officer or Captain once you are senior enough, the choice is yours. Pilots can be involved in a variety of other roles away from the flight deck also.

## Former Cadet Insights

### What's the most enjoyable and most challenging part of being a Pilot?

**Amie Kirkham B777 SFO:** "I think the best thing about being a pilot is being able to explore new cities and countries. On work trips I've been lucky enough to visit Christmas markets in Germany, scuba dive in Barbados and abseil down Table Mountain in South Africa...all experiences I will never forget.

The most challenging thing about being a shorthaul pilot for me were the 4am alarms. You tend to have a run of early trips on the trot though, so you quickly get into a routine of early nights and early starts!

The most challenging thing about longhaul for me is the lack of sleep moving between different time zones or flying through the night. You learn what works for you, whether that's staying on UK time, power naps before flying or going to the gym to help you sleep."

**Alistair Thompson A350 SFO:** "I think the most enjoyable part of being a pilot is always working with different people, going to different places and seeing different things. There is a lot of variety so always something new to see, learn or do. The most challenging part is the busy schedule - airlines run 24/7, 365 days a year so you won't always get the weekend/birthday/Christmas you wanted to have off."

**Roger Goetze B777 SFO:** One of the best things about being a pilot, particularly on shorthaul, is the variety of routes and airports that you fly into. You could be flying a visual approach into the amazing Greek island of Santorini one day, and the next contending with the very short runway and quick flight to Jersey. The flying itself is very varied and each destination comes with its own unique challenges. I also particularly enjoy working with a wide range of people and exploring different cities and different cuisines in the destinations that BA night stop in. The staff travel benefits are great as they allow you to explore an even greater network of long and shorthaul routes when you're not at work! One of the biggest challenges for me are some of the early starts/late finishes and balancing these with life outside work. You soon get to know your own sleep routine quite well!

**Elliott Nicholson A350 Capt:** Taking hundreds of people from A to B safely gives you an enormous sense of satisfaction. You get to work with wonderful people on a daily basis and get paid to travel the world. Sometimes you get really long days, dealing with disruption and you have to learn to manage jet lag. It helps to keep fit. Missing out on important occasions due to the irregular work pattern of being a pilot sometimes can be challenging.

### How do you find the balance between flying and family commitments?

**Alistair Thompson A350 SFO:** "The job naturally comes with time away from home, but also comes with the equivalent time off too. It's important that your partner/family understand that this is a factor of the job and what to expect. If I've been away, then I tend to get 2 or 3 days off afterwards which allows me to get stuck right back into family life. It's also a job when as soon as you leave the airport when you've landed, you don't need to take "work" home with you."

**Roger Goetze 777 SFO:** Being a year-round operation during both day and night means that you inevitably will miss some important social occasions, so an understanding partner/family is important! Having said that, depending on seniority, the control you can get with your roster allows you create time off with your loved ones - for example if I do an early flight there and back, I can be home for lunch and a walk with my wife in the afternoon!

**Elliott Nicholson A350 Capt:** Being a pilot is a lifestyle job. You have to accept that you will not always be able to attend some important engagements, Christmas, birthdays, weddings etc over the years. The plus side is that you can have a lot of time off to be around for family, just not always at weekends and holidays. Leave allocation is done on a points system. It is not always possible to have the children's school holidays off. But the system makes it fair.

### **Personal experience in becoming a Pilot?**

**Amie Kirkham B777 SFO:** "I loved my 18 months of flight training and regularly tell people I would do it again in a heartbeat. Ground school was intense, but you go through it with new friends for life and it's fascinating learning new subjects. My six months flying out in Phoenix was exhilarating! Parts were stressful and you're tested the whole way through but learning a new skill and flying round the desert solo, with unbelievable views, makes it all worthwhile."

**Alistair Thompson A350 SFO:** "I had wanted to become a pilot since childhood, so I'd always tried to take every opportunity that came my way. I went to visit family in the USA who had a light aircraft and did a little flying there, had some practice lessons in the UK and applied for University Air Squadron. I wouldn't have been able to afford funding my own training, so I was lucky that the BA FPP was announced as I left university, so I applied, and the rest is history. I started training in 2014, joined BA in 2016 and have now been flying for nearly 8 years."

**Roger Goetze 777 SFO:** For as long as I can remember, I always wanted to be a pilot for BA. I was lucky enough to get a scholarship to complete my PPL and then very fortunate to gain a place on the Future Pilot Programme once I'd finished university in 2012. The training at Oxford Aviation Academy was at times very intense but made much easier by unwinding with a beer and a chat with my course mates! I joined BA in 2014 and have been enjoying life as a first officer on short haul since!

**Elliot Nicholson A350 Capt:** A friend on my Engineering course at university dropped out to join the old BA sponsored pilot scheme. That lit a fire under me. I didn't until that point realise that being a pilot was a potential career option for me. It was never mentioned at school and the costs would have been unachievable without the scheme. I was lucky enough to be accepted and have never looked back. It is the perfect job for me without doubt. I can't imagine doing anything else.