



Becoming a Helicopter Engineer

Introduction

The world of rotary winged aviation is fast moving, technically demanding and highly professional. Although a downturn in the economy reduced the number of vacancies, there will always be a need for high calibre men and women to train as helicopter engineers. Although there is no formal nationally recognised Licensed Engineer Training Scheme, several companies engaged in helicopter maintenance run Apprenticeship Schemes to enable engineers to train and obtain the CAA qualifications, which are recognised throughout the British helicopter industry.

What do I need to join?

School leavers from the age of 16 are eligible for employment as apprentice or trainee engineers. Apart from being physically fit, minimum qualifications are one of the following:-

- 4 GCSE's (English, Maths, Physics plus one other subject)
- City & Guilds 205/259 Aeronautical Engineering
- The equivalent at company discretion

How do I apply?

The candidate should apply for employment with one of the helicopter maintenance companies listed below. If accepted he or she carries out an approved training programme. As the trainee passes each section of training it is signed off in a Log Book, which is an individual's personal record of training and standards achieved. On completion of this period of training (estimated at 3-3½ years), the apprentice qualifies as an aircraft fitter. At this point the company must decide whether the trainee has sufficient potential to achieve the qualification of Licensed Engineer (without type rating). If selected, he or she becomes a Licensed Engineer (Designate), and attends a course of training at a recognised aeronautical engineering training establishment to prepare for the CAA examinations. (NB Licensed Engineer status is only available to persons of 21 or more years of age) Those who are not selected as potential licensed engineers remain as fitters, but with further development and experience they could be selected to go forward at a later stage.



Is it just on-the-job training?

No. All apprentices will attend formal training, for example a City & Guilds Craft Course or BTECH Studies Course, at a local Technical College to ensure that background theoretical subjects are covered as well.

More about the Apprentice Training Log Book

The Log Book will be a complete record of all training carried out by each individual apprentice, including aviation theoretical studies carried out on day release courses. It will be based on the ATA Aeronautical Engineering Skills Certification Scheme, but will be modified to cover the specific needs of the helicopter industry.

If an apprentice decides to move to another company during training, the Log Book will be recognised by other companies in the scheme as a record of training carried out and results achieved.

What if I am already an experienced engineer?

The same principles apply to engineers for other walks of life, perhaps from the Armed Services or the automotive trade. Individual experience and qualifications will determine at what stage an engineer may join the scheme. For example, an ex-serviceman with dual trade qualifications and a proven record of experience may qualify as a fitter, and thus as a Licensed Engineer (Designate). In other cases it may be necessary to fill gaps in training, in which case he or she would be required to complete specific training modules before continuing on to Licensed Engineer training.

The Future

Sector Skills Councils are being developed by the Government and aeronautical engineering is allied to the Science Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies Association (SEMTA).

Where do I go from here?

If you meet the educational qualifications referred to at the beginning of this page, want to work with helicopters and find out more, contact the member helicopter

maintenance company nearest to you. Refer to the Information Handbook. Hopefully we have given you an idea of the prospects for training as a helicopter engineer. Specific questions on the subjects of eligibility or training should be addressed directly to the companies listed below.

List of Engineering Companies (Annex A)



Annex A. List of Engineering Companies

Company	Contact	Location
Gama Engineering Ltd	T. 01276 857888 www.gamaengineering.co.uk	Chobham
Harrods Aviation Ltd	T. 01279 665300 www.harrodsaviation.com	London Stansted
Heli Air Ltd	T. 01494 451111 www.heliair.co.uk	Wycombe and Wellesbourne
HQ Aviation Ltd	01895 833373 www.hgaviationltd.com	Denham
Multiflight Ltd	T. 0113 238 7100 www.multiflight.com	Leeds
PDG Helicopters	T. 0870 607 9000 www.pdghelicopters.com	Inverness
Sloane Helicopters Ltd	T. 01604 790595 www.sloanehelicopters.com	Sywell
Specialist Aviation Services	T. 01452 857999 www.specialist-aviation.com	Staverton