

ETIHAD AIRWAYS TO ESTABLISH WORLD CLASS FLIGHT TRAINING COLLEGE

18 May, 2014



Etihad Airways announced today that it is establishing the Etihad Flight College, a world-class flight training facility in the United Arab Emirates for Emirati and international cadet pilots.

As a first step in establishing this college, Etihad Airways has acquired the fixed wing training division from Horizon International Flight Academy (Horizon), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Mubadala Development Company.

Based in Al Ain, Horizon has provided helicopter (rotary wing) training programs since 2003, and airplane (fixed wing) training since 2007. At Horizon, pilots can qualify for their Private Pilot's License (PPL), Commercial Pilot's License (CPL) or Airline Transport Pilot License (ATPL).

Horizon currently has 210 trainees enrolled and has been the selected training provider for Etihad Airways' ab-initio pilots (newly rated, non-type qualified) for the last seven years.

James Hogan, Etihad Airways' President and Chief Executive Officer, said: "The establishment of the Etihad Flight College is a natural part of our strategy to produce the best pilots to support our rapidly expanding fleet. It also helps underpin the growth and development of the aviation sector in Abu Dhabi.

Etihad Airways currently employs over 1,600 pilots and places great emphasis on recruiting the best pilots from around the world, including Emirati pilots.

"We are committed to developing a world-class facility which combines new and best practice training programs with high caliber instructors. The training facility will enhance the career opportunities in aviation, especially for UAE nationals."



Subject to regulatory approval, Horizon's fixed wing division will be acquired by Etihad Flight College, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Etihad Aviation Group. The remaining rotary wing division will be Horizon's key area of focus with plans to consolidate and grow the business.

Horizon CEO, Hareb Al Dhaheri commented: "We are proud to have grown the UAE's pilot training initiative into a successful company, where student numbers have increased four-fold in the past five years alone. This transaction brings benefit to both Abu Dhabi companies; Etihad Airways can focus on developing its new Multi-Crew Pilot License (MPL) Program, and Horizon's core business will be delivering high quality helicopter pilots for all of our Rotary Wing customers."

The assets to be acquired include 13 Cessna 172SP Skyhawk aircraft, six Diamond DA42NG aircraft, two flight training simulators and Horizons' maintenance and hangar facilities at Al Ain International Airport.

All fixed wing flight instructors and some support staff currently employed by Horizon will transfer to the Etihad Flight College ensuring there is no disruption to the ongoing cadet pilot training programs.

Etihad Flight College will also implement the innovative Multi-Crew Pilot License (MPL), a competency-based training program that is focused on developing ab-initio pilot candidates into high quality First Officers on completion of their training.

The MPL training program, the first airline-dedicated professional pilot license adopted by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the European Aviation Safety Authority (EASA), and the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), will be developed and delivered by Etihad Airways' Operations team. To date around 250 graduates have already registered for the MPL course, with the first course scheduled to commence later this year.

Etihad Flight College will be the first organization in the world to use multi-engine aircraft in the core phase of its MPL training program. Cadet pilots will benefit from the utilization of advanced aircraft and simulation training throughout the program in a multi-crew setting - where two pilots conduct operations that are focused on the safe and efficient operation of an aircraft, as opposed to the traditional single-pilot model that is prevalent in the industry today.

Mr Hogan welcomed the new staff to the Etihad Airways family. "Our continued success is driven by our people who are committed to working together as a team. The new maintenance teams, engineers and flight instructors have an important role to play in supporting the continued growth of the airline, ensuring that there is a consistent stream of well trained pilots coming into the organization."