

# General Aviation Pilot Licensing & Training Review Phase 2: Detailed Proposals

## Balloons

A consultation

CAP 2974B



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Please reply to this consultation via our website: <https://consultations.caa.co.uk> by **22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024**.

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# Contents

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<b>Contents</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>5</b>
Proposed reforms	5
<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Introduction, scope, and background</b>	<b>7</b>
Scope	8
Responding to the consultation	9
About you	10
Background	11
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Next steps and embedding the reforms</b>	<b>14</b>
Embedding the reforms	14
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Licensing for private ballooning</b>	<b>17</b>
Regulatory context	17
Topics covered	17
A. BPL instruction arrangements	18
B. BPL training organisation requirements	20
C. Simplifying the licensing structure for hot-air tethered flight	22
D. Recency requirements: experience component	24
E. Recency requirements for additional classes of balloons/airships	27
F. Non-Part 21 balloons	29
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Commercial balloon licensing</b>	<b>33</b>
Regulatory context	33
A. Qualifying experience to attain a commercial rating with CPB privileges	34
B. Training for a commercial rating (including with CPB privileges)	38
C. Maintaining CPB privileges	45

D. Introducing a separate CPB rating	49
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Instructor and examiner requirements</b>	<b>54</b>
Regulatory context	54
Topics discussed	54
A. Commercial operation instructor training	55
B. 'Assistant Instructors' for BPL candidates	58
C. Instructors extending privileges to additional balloon classes	60
D. Examiner requirements for commercial operations	61
E. Examiners extending privileges to additional balloon classes	66
F. Senior examiner requirements	68
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Theoretical knowledge changes</b>	<b>72</b>
Exam procedures	72
Validity periods	73
<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Balloon working group community members</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Proposed commercial pilot journeys</b>	<b>77</b>

# Summary

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1. The CAA is now continuing with the project to simplify General Aviation (GA) flight crew licensing and training, and this paper consults on detailed proposals for balloons and airships. Similar consultations are being undertaken for aeroplanes, sailplanes, and helicopters and gyroplanes.
2. The consultation closes on **22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024**. Please submit responses via our website: <https://consultations.caa.co.uk>.

## Proposed reforms

### Private ballooning

- Reducing the minimum number of dual hours with a Balloon Flight Instructor [FI(B)] to gain a base Balloon Pilot Licence (BPL), and introducing a lighter-touch Assistant Instructor authorisation to supervise the remaining dual hours.
- Removing the requirement for training for a base BPL to be undertaken by an Approved Training Organisation or Declared Training Organisation.
- Deleting the existing tethering rating and embedding tethering training into the base BPL.
- Removing the experience element from the base BPL recency requirements, so that holders only require a training flight with an FI(B) every 24 months.
- Making the recency requirements for additional classes of balloons more flexible by allowing 3 flights or 3 hours of flight time, and exploring reducing the frequency from 24 months to 48 months.
- Allowing the PPL(BA) to continue for solely Non-Part-21 ballooning, and ceasing to issue new PPL(BA) licences from September 2025.

### Commercial rating

- Introducing a minimum 100-hour PIC experience gateway for Commercial Passenger Ballooning (CPB). Introducing a stepped minimum number of PIC hours of CPB flying experience in the previous hot-air group size before progressing to the next group, in addition to the current general experience requirements.
- Introducing a mandatory training course by an ATO or DTO to the commercial operation skill test, comprising ground school course and an appropriate number of training flights with an FI(B).

- Making mandatory for CPB pilots the 24-month proficiency check with a Balloon Flight Examiner [FE(B)] to verify competence in CPB operations.
- Making mandatory for CPB pilots a ground refresher course every 5 years.
- Consulting on whether to introduce a separate Commercial Passenger Ballooning rating for holders wishing to conduct all types of commercial operations including CPB to go alongside a Commercial Non-Passenger rating just for 'aerial work'.

### **Instructors and examiners**

- Introducing the lighter-touch Assistant Instructor authorisation described above, and setting out its requirements namely a small training course.
- Introducing for instructors for the commercial operation rating a requirement to undergo specific training with an ATO or DTO, along the lines of what is already required for tether and night ratings. Imposing a minimum qualifying experience for instructors undertaking CPB instructing of 50 hours of PIC flying in CPB operations.
- Adjusting the requirements for an instructor wishing to extend their privileges to instruct in additional classes, by changing the minimum requirements to be at least 15 flights and 30 hours of flight time (instead of 15 hours).
- Tightening the requirements for CPB and commercial rating examiners: increasing the minimum experience as PIC in balloons from 250 hours to 500 hours (slightly less than the ANO CPL(B) currently requires, to apply to all examiners); introduce a minimum 200 hours experience as PIC of CPB operations (when examining for the commercial rating including CPB proficiency checks); and a minimum 100 hours experience as PIC of CPB operations in the hot-air balloon group size being examined (when examining for commercial rating including the CPB proficiency checks).
- Senior Examiners, in addition to an inspector from the CAA, are the only individuals who conduct FE(B) assessments of competence, both for initial issue and revalidation/renewal of examiner certificates; and introducing a requirement to have a minimum experience requirement of 1,000 hours of PIC flight time.

### **Next steps**

- We will be using the responses to this consultation to inform our final recommendations to the Department for Transport for amending the Balloon Flight Crew Licensing part of the Balloon Operations and Flight Crew Licensing UK Regulation (EU) 2018/395.
- We would be developing transitional arrangements for a year after enactment before the community are expected to comply with the regulations.

## Chapter 1

# Introduction, scope, and background

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- 1.1 The CAA is now continuing with the project to simplify General Aviation (GA) flight crew licensing and training, and this paper consults on detailed proposals for balloons and airships. Similar consultations are being undertaken for aeroplanes, sailplanes, helicopters and gyroplanes.
- 1.2 This work follows an earlier consultation, [CAP2335](#), in Autumn 2022. The 1,246 GA community responses<sup>1</sup> (summarised in [CAP 2532](#)) showed strong support in several key areas for updating our current legislation with regards to licensing and training.
- 1.3 This consultation explores these key areas in more detail, to ensure that we are working towards the goals of the community whilst maintaining legislative compliance within these areas. It reflects work we undertook since May 2023 collaboratively with a working group of GA community balloon experts to develop more detailed proposals.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.4 The Balloons working group was tasked to consider a list of topics and make recommendations on the details. The group met seven times between June and November 2023, and were asked to consider a list of topics in work strands where they discussed proposals set out in various member written submissions. Then a series of ‘consolidation papers’ were developed summarising the considered recommendations across each of the work strands, and formed the basis of this consultation.
- 1.5 This licensing project has focused on reviewing the requirements for the Balloon Pilot Licence (BPL) as well as ratings and certificates issued under UK Part-BFCL (the Balloon Flight Crew licensing part of the assimilated UK Balloon Operations and Flight Crew Licensing Regulation (EU) No 2018/395<sup>3</sup>), including for private ballooning, commercial including Commercial Passenger Ballooning (CPB), and the associated instructors and examiners to exercise privileges across those first two groups. The aim is threefold:

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<sup>1</sup> See Consultation Response Document [CAP 2532](#) which set out its detailed findings. For more information on this project, see our dedicated project microsite on the CAA website: <https://www.caa.co.uk/general-aviation/pilot-licences/licensing-training-simplification/>

<sup>2</sup> Please see Appendix B for a list of working group community members.

<sup>3</sup> Hereafter in this consultation, that regulation will be referred to as ‘the Balloon Regulation’. All UK regulations can be found on the CAA website: <https://www.caa.co.uk/uk-regulations/>



- a) to improve practices and regulatory certainty for pilots, operators and the public;
- b) to simplify the licensing structure where possible into a single licence issuing regime; and
- c) to take this opportunity to embed into UK Part-BFCL some of the best aspects of the licences issued under the Air Navigation Order 2016 (ANO).

## Scope

- 1.6 The scope of this consultation encompasses the requirements to gain and maintain flight crew licences, ratings and certificates involved in the following operations:
  - a) private ballooning;
  - b) commercial operations including non-passenger ballooning (previously known as 'aerial work') and CPB; and
  - c) instructors and examiners involved in the above activities.
- 1.7 This project focuses on personnel licensing and certification. We will from time to time mention Declared Balloon Operators (DBOs) described in under the Balloon Regulation, and Approved Training Organisations (ATOs) and Declared Training Organisations (DTOs) as described in Annexes VII and VIII respectively of assimilated UK Regulation (EU) 1178/2011 ('the Aircrew Regulation'). However, the approach of regulating those entities, how they comply with our regulations, and the merits of their overall regulatory structure are all beyond the scope of this project.
- 1.8 The consultation encompasses licensing for both Part-21 and Non-Part-21 balloons. Most of the balloons in the UK balloon fleet are Part-21 balloons in that they are within the scope of the assimilated UK Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 ('the Basic Regulation'), and as such they hold an airworthiness certificate issued in accordance with Annex I (Part-21) of the assimilated UK Regulation (EU) 748/2012 ('the Initial Airworthiness regulation').
- 1.9 However a small number of balloons in the UK fleet (about 70) fit a description that removes them from the scope of the Basic Regulation. These do not hold a Part-21 airworthiness certificate and are classed as 'Non-Part-21 Balloons'. Of this small group:
  - several of these are 'orphaned' balloons: former Part-21 balloons where the type certificate is no longer supported;
  - a few hold a Certificate of Airworthiness issued in accordance with the ANO; and



- the majority are amateur-built and unregulated (ie exempt under ANO article 33(2)(b) from the requirement to hold any airworthiness certificate). There is currently no Permit-to-Fly system for balloons as in other categories of GA aircraft.

## Responding to the consultation

- 1.10 This consultation closes on **22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024**. Please use the on-line response tool provided: <https://consultations.caa.co.uk>
- 1.11 Most questions in this consultation provide a list of possible answers, and many (but not all) will also provide space to comment. Regarding the possible answers, the format often used is 'yes', 'no', 'undecided' and 'no view/don't know'.
- 1.12 In relation to the latter two options, the 'undecided' option is for respondents who are familiar with the subject matter presented but have not firmly settled in support or otherwise. Meanwhile the 'no view/don't know' option is for respondents who are unfamiliar with the subject or have no view on the issue.
- 1.13 For each topic we outline the current situation and issues arising, proposals and associated rationale. For some proposals, we set out example amendments to the applicable regulations. However, these are indicative and final legal text may differ.
- 1.14 Where indicative legal text is provided, deletions are indicated by ~~strikeout~~ and additions by red underline.

## About you

In accordance with our public law obligations, we welcome and will equally weight all submissions to this consultation. However to help us analyse the results of any technical questions, we would like to know if you participate in aviation and in what capacity (select all that apply to you):

- Balloon flight crew licence holder or student
- Other GA aircraft flight crew licence holder or student eg PPL(A), PPL(H), NPPL(A) etc
- Other aviation flight crew licence holder including eg CPL(A), ATPL, military
- Other aviation licence holder, eg other aircrew, air traffic controller, aircraft maintenance etc
- Aircraft operator or training organisation management
- GA-related industry, eg insurance, manufacturer, distributor. Please specify:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Position within a government, regulatory or related body
- Position within an aviation representative or professional body
- Frequent passenger in a GA aircraft
- None of the above, but I consider myself affected by GA licensing; eg local resident, etc
- None of the above: I do not participate in this part of aviation, but have an interest in these issues

If you selected 'Balloon flight crew licence holder or student' in your answer to the previous question, please tell us which of these is your most advanced level attained (whether valid or not):

- Balloon student pilot
- Private balloon licence holder, eg PPL(BA) or BPL
- Commercial balloon licence/rating holder: CPL(B) or BPL commercial rating
- Balloon instructor (private or commercial)
- Balloon examiner (private or commercial)
- Prefer not to answer

Is your response a formal submission on behalf of an organisation?

- No
- Yes: organisation: \_\_\_\_\_ [maximum 100 characters]

Please note that we would expect one formal submission to be made per organisation.

## Background

### Balloon Regulation implementation

- 1.15 This project coordinates with our separate work to implement the Balloon Regulation, the licensing part of which was enacted into UK law in March 2020 before the UK departed from the European Union, and before this licensing project began. It culminates in the final in-force deadline which is in statute in article 3b(3) of that Regulation which reads as follows:
- “Holders of national licences for balloons shall be allowed to continue to exercise the privileges of their licences until 30 September 2025. By that date, the CAA shall convert those licences into Part-BFCL licences and associated ratings, privileges and certificates in accordance with the elements laid down in a conversion report that complies with the requirements of Article 4(4) and (5) of Regulation (EU) No 1178/2011 [the Aircrew Regulation].”
- 1.16 This deadline was previously set for 2021 but has since been moved back to September 2025 to give the community and the CAA time to implement. The BPL was always intended not as a licence available just to allow holders to exercise privileges across the EU, but as the main licence for operating Part-21 balloons including in the UK, hence the requirement in article 3b(3) to convert.
- 1.17 It is important to emphasise that effective on that deadline, only licences issued under Part-BFCL, namely the BPL with appropriate ratings and certificates where applicable, will be valid to exercise privileges as pilot-in-command of Part-21 balloons.
- 1.18 Licences issued under the ANO, namely the Private Pilot Licence (Balloons & Airships) [PPL(BA)] and the Commercial Pilot Licence (Balloons) [CPL(B)] will no longer be valid on Part 21 balloons, and holders of these licences wishing to continue to exercise privileges in Part 21 balloons must convert their licences to their equivalent in Part-BFCL by that deadline. We will separately discuss in Chapter 3, Section F below our approach for PPL(BA) holders wishing to only exercise privileges in Non-Part-21 balloons.
- 1.19 Please note that we are not now consulting on whether to continue implementing the Balloon Regulation or to repeal any part of it. This was undertaken by an EASA Rulemaking Task before we departed the EU, was implemented in March 2020 in accordance with EU law when the UK was part of the EU (which was

before the beginning of this licensing project), and is going ahead regardless of this project. Instead this project has focused on amending the content within Part-BFCL to better reflect the needs of UK ballooning, in some cases even replicating aspects of the former ANO system that it replaces.

- 1.20 A licence conversion process has been under way since the Regulation was enacted in 2020. By September 2025, ANO licence holders will have had 5 years since enactment of Part-BFCL into UK law to operate Part-21 balloons with their licences. We think this has given the community ample time to convert their licences.
- 1.21 We strongly advise that PPL(BA) and CPL(B) holders wishing to continue exercising privileges as described above to proceed with conversion as soon as possible and well ahead of the September 2025 deadline. This mitigates pressures such as those related to flying duties during that time of year, and avoids any processing or administrative delays. As the deadline draws nearer particularly in 2025, we will not be able to guarantee processing applications in time for the deadline, and we will not take responsibility for any gaps in privileges caused by any processing delays.

#### Question

Do you have any comments about our approach described above?

#### **‘Deeming valid’**

- 1.22 A few members of the working group did request that we explore recommending to the Department for Transport to create a provision in the Balloon Regulation that would ‘deem valid’ ANO licences as their equivalent licences/ratings in Part-BFCL to exercise privileges as pilot-in-command of Part-21 balloons.
- 1.23 We have explored this matter carefully and concluded that we will not take this forward:
- a) ‘deeming valid’ these licences would require us to maintain and significantly amend the ANO licensing regime to align with Part-BFCL, including training requirements, instructors and examiners, etc. This approach, or any other mechanism to achieve the same outcome, would be disproportionate against the benefit to a relatively small group of licence-holders, and would be contrary to the overall aims of this project of creating a single balloon license issuing regime going forward.
  - b) Moreover, such a provision or anything similar would be unfair on the significant proportion of licence holders, including about half of the PPL(BA)s who have already gone through the time and cost of converting.

**Question**

Do you have any comments specifically about our conclusion regarding deeming valid ANO licences as their equivalent in Part-BFCL?

## Chapter 2

# Next steps and embedding the reforms

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- 2.1 We will analyse the results of the consultation and use them to embark on four broad work strands:
- 2.2 First, we will be preparing and publishing a Comment Response Document (CRD) that sets out the results of this consultation and our decisions arising from them. We aim to do this later in 2024.
- 2.3 Second, we will be preparing legislative instructions to Department for Transport (DfT) to amend the rules in Part-BFCL of the Balloon Regulation and the ANO. To amend that secondary legislation, DfT have arranged a laying date for a Statutory Instrument (SI) currently scheduled for Spring 2025. So to meet this, we intend to submit our instructions to DfT around Q3-2024. Please note however that while this SI laying date is currently allocated to us and we are doing our best to meet it; we cannot guarantee the legislation will actually be laid at that time given other factors beyond our control.
- 2.4 Third, we will be taking forward the Regulation's Acceptable Means of Compliance (AMC) and Guidance Material (GM). This can be amended by the CAA rather than through legislation. We would envisage reconvening the working group to develop the details for the AMC/GM we propose to change, possibly running a short consultation in autumn 2024 with a view to enacting these provisions through a CAA Official Record Series 9 Decision that would be published when the legislative changes are enacted.
- 2.5 Finally, we will be working within the CAA and the community to implement all the changes in time for the legislation/AMC/GM enactment and any transition period that follows before it comes into force. Below we describe this embedding process in more detail, and how it differs from the process already under way to implement the transition to the Balloon Regulation.

## Embedding the reforms

- 2.6 Once the legislation is passed and the AMC/GM is enacted, we will need a process to give the community time to comply with the new requirements. We would not intend them to come into force immediately on enactment, as this would not allow time for those affected to comply with the new requirements, such as training courses that need to be developed, licence holders needing to undergo those courses or refresher training, plus any grandfathering provisions for experienced holders who might need to be exempted from the requirements.

- 2.7 The working group has discussed an appropriate transitional process to allow this, and an ‘in force date’ allowing sufficient time between the changes being enacted and then coming into force would need to be determined and set out in the legislation.
- 2.8 Taken together, the reforms proposed in this consultation will aim to amend the existing regulations (termed ‘Existing BFCL’), in so doing creating what could be termed ‘BFCL 2025’.
- 2.9 It is also very important to understand that holders currently converting from ANO licences to BPL requirements as in Existing BFCL would not be expected to convert a second time so they comply with BFCL 2025. Those conversions would continue as they are currently. Figure 2.1 below illustrates how this conversion process would work for these two related work strands, though please note the dates are not currently confirmed, given what we said in paragraph 2.3 above.
- 2.10 While we will mention differences between the existing BFCL requirements and those of the ANO balloon licence system, it is not meant to describe the transition process from ANO licences to their equivalents in BFCL 2025. The conversion process described above is already being managed by the CAA.

**Figure 2.1: ‘Existing BFCL’ and ‘BFCL 2025’ embedding/implementation**

	<b>Now to Winter 2024</b>	<b>Spring 2025</b>	<b>Spring to Sep 2025</b>	<b>Sep 2025</b>	<b>Date TBD (in 2026)</b>
Implementing Part-BFCL	Conversion of ANO licences to Existing BFCL (well in advance of 2025)	Last few applications for conversion to Existing BFCL	Last few applications for conversion to Existing BFCL	Deadline to convert to BPL under Existing BFCL	
This consultation: GA Pilot Licensing Project	Policy reforms to Part-BFCL resulting from this consultation: changes to legislation and AMC/GM	Reforms to Part-BFCL enacted: BFCL 2025 created	Embedding time for holders of BPL/ratings/certificates under Existing BFCL to comply with new requirements set out in BFCL 2025	Embedding time for holders of BPL/ratings/certificates under Existing BFCL to comply with new requirements set out in BFCL 2025	BFCL 2025 in force: holders must comply with new requirements



- 2.11 The following chapters in this consultation describe these reforms and will include a section on ‘embedding considerations’ or steps that Existing BFCL holders would need to consider to comply with the changes proposed to BFCL 2025. We expect all pilots operating Part-21 balloons will hold the Existing BFCL by September 2025, and then move (as a single group) to BFCL 2025 by a date set in 2026.

**Question**

Do you have any comments on anything described in this chapter?

## Chapter 3

# Licensing for private ballooning

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- 3.1 The consultation response document committed us in Phase 2 to review the requirements for the base Balloon Pilot Licence (BPL) as set out in Part-BFCL. Of particular focus is ensuring that the requirements reflect best practices for the UK when this is implemented as the single balloon licence for Part-21 balloons.

## Regulatory context

- 3.2 Requirements for the BPL are set out in Part-BFCL, Subparts GEN and BPL, while ANO licences are covered under ANO Schedule 8. There are approximately 400 balloon pilots in the UK, with a flow of about 50-80 students producing 20-30 new qualified balloon pilots per year.
- 3.3 However, while we do mention differences between the existing BFCL requirements and those of the ANO balloon licence system for illustration, it is *not* meant to describe the transition process from ANO licences to their equivalents in Part-BFCL which is already being managed by the CAA under an existing conversion process.

## Topics covered

- 3.4 This chapter covers the following issues where recommendations have been made. All except (d) were raised within the working group:
- a) BPL instruction arrangements: reduction in the required number of dual training flights with a Flight Instructor (Balloons) [FI(B)] and the creation of an Assistant Instructor (Balloons) (AI(B)) authorisation.
  - b) BPL training requirements: reviewing the Approved Training Organisation (ATO) and Declared Training Organisation (DTO) requirements for BPL training, either removing them outright or alleviating them for private ballooning.
  - c) Simplifying the licensing structure concerning hot air balloon tethered flights.
  - d) Simplifying the BPL recency requirements by removing the experience element. Note this item was not discussed within the working group and only added by the CAA at a late stage to align with consultation proposals for other GA aircraft categories.
  - e) Recency requirements for additional classes of balloons (gas balloon, hot-air airship).
  - f) Licensing for Non-Part-21 balloon operations

## A. BPL instruction arrangements

- 3.5 Currently candidates seeking the BPL must have obtained at least 12 hours of dual flight instruction with an FI(B), as set out in BFCL.130.
- 3.6 This is different from the ANO PPL(BA) system it replaces, where only four flights were required with an instructor. This is also an increased burden on the limited number of FI(B)s. The British Balloon and Airship Club (BBAC), a DTO that has delivered balloon training in the UK, notes that the sparse nature of FI(B) coverage in some geographic areas creates difficulties for candidates to obtain the required training, resulting in longer periods between training flights, which affects candidate performance.

### Proposals and rationale

- 3.7 To relax the burden on FI(B)s while still ensuring that base BPL candidates receive the requisite hours of dual instruction, it was proposed to:
- reduce the number of hours of dual instruction that must be undertaken with a FI(B) and
  - create an authorisation, tentively referred to here as an ‘Assistant Instructor’, that would be able to undertake the remaining dual instruction.
- 3.8 The overall 12 hours under dual instruction pursuant to BFCL.130(b) would not change, the minimum number of FI(B) instruction would reduce from 12 hours to 4 hours and 4 flights. It would be the responsibility of the supervising FI(B) to spread the FI(B) flights throughout the course.
- 3.9 The ‘Assistant Instructor’ authorisation would be created in Part-BFCL. Details for doing this are set out in Chapter 6 on Instructor and Examiner requirements.
- 3.10 Such ‘Assistant Instructors’ would not be confused with FI(B)s:
- they would have nowhere near the training and ongoing recency requirements of an FI(B). They would not have to undergo even training or meet the recency requirements of an instructor, and would not possess a rating on their licence; whereas
  - they would simply be valid BPL holders who have also completed a short course in basic training skills for standardisation, have a light-touch revalidation requirement and possess an authorisation issued by the DTO.
- 3.11 Such an ‘Assistant Instructor’ could remove the burden from FI(B)s by conducting significant parts of the dual flight training for BPL candidates, while providing at least a minimal degree of training standardisation compared to simply allowing these flights to be supervised by any existing licence holder (as was the case under the ANO system).

## Issues and discussion

- 3.12 Some questioned the need for such an authorisation in the first place, arguing that the current cadre of FI(B)s is sufficient to support the needs of the balloon community and therefore take-up of both candidates seeking this authorisation as well as BPL candidates seeking training by anyone other than FI(B)s would be quite limited. The counterargument was that assistant instructors could nevertheless provide a light-touch approach allowing candidates to undertake some flights under the supervision of individuals who at least have undergone some training to ensure an element of standardisation, rather than just any BPL holder who has not undergone some training.
- 3.13 Another argument followed that creating a new level of instructor could create confusion among BPL candidates. They argued that there should only be one category of instructors, with training delivered by them only, and any additional categories could dilute the public's perceptions of the standard of instruction. The counterargument was that the limitations of the 'Assistant Instructor' authorisation should address any confusion, and training would still be under the supervision of an FI(B).

## Recommendation

- 3.14 The majority of the working group supported the recommendation to introduce the 'Assistant Instructor' authorisation which could be achieved through a combination of changes to Part-BFCL Subpart FI (discussed in Chapter 5) on instructor/examiner requirements and the following changes to BFCL.130:

### **BFCL.130 BPL and experience requirements**

Applicants for a BPL shall complete a training course at an ATO or a DTO. The course shall be tailored to the privileges sought and shall include:

- (a) theoretical knowledge as specified in point BFCL.135(a);
- (b) at least 16 hours of flight instruction in either hot-air balloons that represent group A of that class, or gas balloons, including at least:
  - (1) 12 hours of dual flight instruction, of which at least 4 hours and 4 flights with a FI(B), the remainder to be undertaken with an Assistant Instructor;
  - (2) 10 inflations and 20 take-offs and landings; and
  - (3) One supervised solo flight with a flight time of at least 30 minutes

- 3.15 It is necessary in sub-paragraph (b)(1) to stipulate 'with the remainder undertaken with an Assistant Instructor', if that was created, to avoid creating a loophole through which any qualified pilot could supervise the remainder of the instruction. We may need to include further detail in an AMC over the division of responsibilities between an Assistant Instructor and a FI(B). It is not proposed to relax the requirement that solo flying must be supervised by a FI(B). See our reference to this in chapter 5 on instructors and examiners.

### Impact and transitional considerations

- 3.16 This change in the base BPL training requirement is dependent on the creation and embedding of the 'Assistant Instructor' authorisation by ATO/DTOs to be available for BPL candidates to utilise this alleviation.
- 3.17 This would only impact the training of new BPLs when the 'Assistant Instructor' authorisation is created and embedded.
- 3.18 There would be no transitional arrangements required. The introduction of this revised alleviation could be introduced, even if there are no Assistant Instructors yet available for the alleviation to be utilised.

#### Question

Do you support our suggestion of introducing an authorisation tentatively termed 'Assistant Instructor', and changing the minimum required number of dual instruction flights and hours to be undertaken with a FI(B) to at least 4 hours and 4 flights (instead of 12 hours)?

Yes

No

Undecided

No view/don't know

Do you have any comments?

## B. BPL training organisation requirements

- 3.19 Currently under BFCL.130, applicants for a BPL must complete a training course at an ATO or a DTO.

### Issues and discussion

- 3.20 There was considerable discussion over whether to retain the ATO/DTO regime in Part-BFCL for private ballooning training. Some working group members argued that it provides a light-touch training organisation requirement; whereas others were strongly opposed to this, arguing that we should review this and possibly revert to a less formal structure akin to the former ANO system. The arguments can be summarised as follows:
- a) **Accountability:** those in favour argued that the ATO/DTO regime requires organisations to have clear accountability lines with a recognised structure, accountability system, and records management requirements which facilitates oversight and also increases student and public confidence. Those against argued that FI(B)s could fulfil all of these through their status and regulatory requirements.
  - b) **Cost/proportionality:** those against the ATO/DTO system argued that the costs on organisations and students are disproportionate against the possible risks.

- c) **Relevance:** there are also concerns about how relevant the ATO/DTO structure to the practicalities that are unique to private balloon instruction.

### Recommendation

- 3.21 There was no consensus within the working group either way, however we are open to reviewing the ATO/DTO requirement for training towards the base BPL.
- 3.22 As a regulator our experience leads us to conclude that DTOs in other parts of GA have worked well in delivering our regulatory requirements. Moreover reviewing the effectiveness of the DTO regime overall as described in Annex VIII (Part-DTO) of the Aircrew Regulation is beyond the scope of this project. However we do intend within the next few years to conduct a review of the DTO regime which could include considerations on how it pertains to the unique aspects of balloon training. This would be a separate project to this licensing work, and would take 1-2 years as it would involve legislation to amend rules in the Aircrew Regulation.
- 3.23 However we do acknowledge the concerns summarised above in relation to private ballooning particularly around proportionality and relevance, and agree that responsibility of BPL training delivery could be left entirely to FI(B)s.
- 3.24 Therefore we would like to explore in this consultation removing the ATO/DTO requirement from the base BPL training requirements. This would entail striking off references to this in BFCL.130 as well as its AMC and replacing them with references to an FI(B). We would need to then introduce AMC for FI(B)s to conduct training. For example, BFCL.130 could look as follows:

#### **BFCL.130 BPL and experience requirements**

Applicants for a BPL shall complete a training course ~~at an ATO or a DTO supervised by an FI(B)~~. The course shall be tailored to the privileges sought and shall include:

- (a) theoretical knowledge as specified in point BFCL.135(a);
- (b) at least 16 hours of flight instruction in either hot-air balloons that represent group A of that class, or gas balloons, including at least:
  - (1) 12 hours of dual flight instruction, of which at least 4 hours and 4 flights with a FI(B), the remainder to be undertaken with an Assistant Instructor;
  - (2) 10 inflations and 20 take-offs and landings; and
  - (3) One supervised solo flight with a flight time of at least 30 minutes

- 3.25 This measure would simplify training requirements and align them more closely with those of the PPL(BA) that the BPL would replace for Part-21 ballooning, and create a simpler transition. However this would significantly reduce the role of ballooning DTOs, as they would still be responsible for delivering training for gaining and maintaining commercial operations ratings (Chapter 4, Section B

below explains our rationale for this), 'Assistant Instructor' training and authorisation, and FI(B)s.

- 3.26 Alternatively, we could leave unchanged the BPL ATO/DTO requirement, but then explore considering this in the near-future review of the DTO system described above. We are considering doing this anyway for commercial balloon training.

#### Question

Do you support our suggestion of removing the ATO/DTO requirement for training for a base BPL?

- Yes: Remove the ATO/DTO requirements from base BPL training
- No: Leave the ATO/DTO requirement unchanged, but explore alleviations for ballooning in the future DTO review
- No: leave the regulations unchanged
- Undecided
- No view/don't know

Do you have any comments?

### C. Simplifying the licensing structure for hot-air tethered flight

- 3.27 Currently, Part-BFCL allows the practice of tethered flights in hot-air balloons only if the pilot has added a tethered hot-air balloon flight rating to their licence under BFCL.200. This requires the pilot to have conducted two tethered hot-air balloon instruction flights for first issue of the rating. To maintain the rating, the pilot must undertake either:
- one tethered flight every 48 months as Pilot-in-Command (PIC); or
  - a tethered flight dual or under solo supervision of a FI(B).

#### Proposals and rationale

- 3.28 The working group argued that the existence of a separate rating for tethering was not necessary, and better simplicity and workability could be achieved by deleting this tethered rating and embedding these requirements into the base BPL licence and training syllabus.
- 3.29 This would simplify the regulations and make it easier for a pilot to undertake tethering and maintain privileges as part of the licence.



## Issues and discussion

- 3.30 The one issue is whether the addition of tethering to the standard BPL syllabus will add an unnecessary burden to pilots who might never practice tethering in their flying career. (This burden has existed for the ANO PPL(BA) licence and all currently issued BPLs include the tether rating.)

## Recommendation

- 3.31 To summarise, the working group recommends:
- Deleting the existing tethering rating;
  - Embedding the tethering requirements into the base BPL licence.
- 3.32 This would be achieved by the following amendments:

### **BFCL.200 Tethered hot-air balloon flight rating**

[Delete this section]

[GM1 BFCL.200 and AMC1 BFCL.200(b)(2) would be incorporated into AMC2 BFCL.130(c) and GM1 BFCL.130(c) accordingly.]

### **BFCL.130 BPL – Training course and experience**

Applicants for a BPL shall complete a training course at an ATO or a DTO. The course shall be tailored to the privileges sought and shall include:

- (a) theoretical knowledge as specified in point BFCL.135(a);
- (b) at least 16 hours of flight instruction in either hot-air balloons that represent group A of that class, or gas balloons, including at least:
  - (1) 12 hours of dual flight instruction;
  - (2) 10 inflations and 20 take-offs and landings; and
  - (3) One supervised solo flight with a flight time of at least 30 minutes.
- (c) in the case of hot-air balloons, at least two tethered flights under instruction, with the final tethered flight supervised by a FI(B) and signed off as satisfactory.

- 3.33 There would be an additional consequential amendment to BFCL.315 to remove reference to the tethered flight rating:

### **BFCL.315 FI(B) certificate – Privileges and conditions**

- (a) Subject to compliance of applicants with point BFCL.320 and with the following conditions, an FI(B) certificate shall be issued with privileges to conduct flight instruction for:
  - (1) a BPL;
  - (2) the extension of privileges to further classes and groups of balloons provided that the applicant has completed at least 15 hours of flight time as PIC in each relevant class;

(3) a night rating ~~or a tethered flight rating~~ or a commercial operation rating, provided that the applicant has received specific training in providing instruction for the relevant rating at an ATO or at a DTO; and (...)

3.34 No members of the working group opposed the suggested recommendation.

### Impact and transitional considerations

3.35 Any BPLs that have been issued as a consequence of conversion will have undertaken tether training as a part of the ANO PPL(BA) training, so will not be affected by this change.

3.36 A BPL issued having undertaken the BPL training route might be issued without a tether rating if the candidate does not wish to be trained for the tethered rating.

3.37 Transitional arrangements would be required for any BPL issued where the tethered hot-air balloon flight rating is not on the licence. The transitional arrangement could be to ensure that the licence holder undertakes tether training with a FI(B) as per the current rating requirements. Also, it might be necessary for all Existing BPL licences which show the tether rating to be deemed to be “BPL 2025” licences where tether is no longer a rating. This deeming would continue until the next administrative reissue of the licence.

#### Question

Do you agree with our approach of deleting the existing tethering rating from the licensing regulations and instead embedding tethering into the base BPL licence requirements?

Yes

No

Undecided

No view/don't know

## D. Recency requirements: experience component

3.38 Currently, the recency requirements for the base BPL as set out in BFCL.160(a) contain both experience and FI/FE surveillance components: holders must in the relevant class of balloon complete either:

(1) Experience/FI(B) Refresher training:

- i. Experience: within the last 24 months before flight: 6 hours flight time as PIC including 10 take-offs and landings as PIC or flying dual/solo under FI(B) supervision; and
- ii. Training flight with FI(B): within the last 48 months before flight: at least one training flight with an FI(B); OR

(2) Proficiency check with FE(B): within the last 24 months before flight.

3.39 Holders who are out of recency must pass a proficiency check with an FE(B) to re-establish their privileges in accordance with BFCL.160(c).

- 3.40 Although this was not raised within the working group, we have noted that the aeroplanes working group within the GA Pilot Licensing project has discussed removing altogether the experience component of the recency requirements, and simply requiring a training flight with an instructor. For the purposes of consistency, we think this should at least be raised in the context of balloons.

### Proposal and rationale

- 3.41 This topic was not raised or discussed by the balloon working group members, but we are nevertheless raising it in this consultation. It was only discussed in the aeroplanes working group relatively late in the process and agreed with ourselves to take the proposal forward in the aeroplanes consultation. In the light of that late-stage agreement, we are also extending this to balloons.
- 3.42 We would propose for the base BPL to:
- a) remove the experience element of the recency requirement in BFCL.160(a)(1)(i) so that the holder would only require a training flight with an FI(B);
  - b) increase the frequency of the training flight with an FI(B) in BFCL.160(a)(1)(ii) from 48 months to 24 months; and
  - c) remove the option of requiring a proficiency check every 24 months. We would still retain the requirement in BFCL.160(c) for holders who are out of recency to pass a proficiency check with an FE(B).
- 3.43 The changes could appear in the regulations as follows:

#### **BFCL.160 BPL – Recency requirements**

(a) A BPL holder shall only exercise the privileges of his or her licence if he or she has completed in the relevant balloon class:

~~(1) either:~~

~~(i) within the last 24 months before the planned flight, at least six hours of flight time as PIC, including 10 take-offs and landings, as PIC or flying dual or solo under the supervision of an FI(B); and~~

~~(ii) within the last 48~~24~~ months before the planned flight, at least one training flight with an FI(B); or~~

~~(2) within the last 24 months before the planned flight, a proficiency check in accordance with point (c).~~

(b) In addition to the requirements in paragraph (a), in the case of a pilot who is qualified to fly more than one class of balloons, in order to exercise his or her privileges in the other balloon class or the other balloon classes, he or she shall have completed at least three hours of flight time, as PIC or flying dual or solo

under the supervision of an FI(B), on each additional balloon class within the last 24 months.

(c) A BPL holder who does not comply with the requirements in paragraph (a)(1) and, if applicable, (b), before resuming the exercise of his or her privileges, shall pass a proficiency check with an FE(B) in a balloon that represents the relevant class.

## Issues

- 3.44 These simplification proposals stem entirely from what is being included in the aeroplanes consultation in respect of the single-engine non-turbine (currently single-engine piston) aeroplanes rating.
- 3.45 The aeroplanes working group broadly concluded that for private operations there are no strong arguments against simplifying the revalidation requirements, consistent with practices in other jurisdictions while remaining compliant with international standards and recommended practices. This is especially the case if we intend to strengthen AMC on what should be covered in the refresher training. We concluded that for helicopters and gyroplanes however, the licensing structure and safety characteristics of those aircraft categories are different enough that the above arguments do not apply.
- 3.46 Nevertheless we are satisfied that the conclusions in the aeroplanes working group are also relevant to private ballooning and non-CPB commercial operations. However we would not apply these changes to the Commercial Rating for the exercise of CPB which has its own recency requirements in BFCL.215(d).
- 3.47 This gives rise to a concern over the 48-month frequency of the FI(B) training that would remain after removing the experience element. Other aircraft categories require this refresher training every 24 months. We believe this would be a reasonable amount of time between instructor surveillance of private balloon pilots.
- 3.48 Obviously there are concerns about removing the experience requirement from recency requirements. For example, the risk of balloon pilots going for long periods only ever flying with an instructor every 2 years, however we question the extent to which this would be a problem. Another issue is the fact that instructors cannot 'fail' a training flight if they observe clearly sub-standard performance, however we know that instructors can always refuse to sign off the training flight and recommend the pilot to undergo a proficiency check.
- 3.49 We would like to gauge views of the community in this consultation towards this proposal, as we have done for aeroplanes, and will act accordingly depending on the responses and other considerations. We would be prepared to take this

forward for one aircraft category, even if we decide to leave the requirements for the other unchanged.

#### Question

Do you agree with our proposal to remove the experience element of the recency requirements for the base BPL, so that the holder only need undergo a training flight with an FI(B)?

Yes                      No                      Undecided                      No view/don't know

You will be invited to add comments in a subsequent question.

#### Question

Do you agree with our view that if we removed the experience element from the base BPL recency requirements, we would have to increase the frequency of the FI(B) training flight from 48 months to 24 months?

Yes                      No                      Undecided                      No view/don't know

Do you have any comments on this proposal to remove the experience component and/or this consequential change to the training flight frequency?

## E. Recency requirements for additional classes of balloons/airships

- 3.50            Currently, if a pilot is qualified to fly more than one class of balloon, Part-BFCL requires the pilot to have completed at least three hours of flight time on each additional balloon class within the last 24 months (in order to exercise privileges in that additional class).

### Proposals and rationale

- 3.51            The working group discussed this in relation to gas balloon and hot-air airship classes. It was suggested that this could be achieved by adjusting the requirement to be three hours of flight time *or three flights* in the additional class. There was agreement within the group for this proposal.
- 3.52            A secondary suggestion was to adjust the period of time in which the flights must be done, extending this from 24 months to 48 months. The group did not reach a decision regarding this point.
- 3.53            This change would provide routes to maintenance of recency appropriate for disparate classes, where flights may be of short duration (hot-air airship) or long duration (gas balloon).

### Issues and discussion

- 3.54 The group had received information that for hot-air airships, three hours of flight time in 24 months may be difficult to achieve. Some in the group that hold a gas balloon rating felt that for gas balloons, the three hours would normally be achievable, although adjusting this to allow for three flights or three hours would give additional flexibility, while maintaining a recency requirement for additional classes.
- 3.55 The group discussed the suggestion of extending the period of time in which the flights must be done from 24 months to 48 months. It was noted that the period for the hours / flight based recency for the primary class (hot air) recency (BFCL.160(a)(1)(i)) is 24 months, so retaining 24 months for additional classes is consistent.
- 3.56 The group also discussed the possibility of removing the requirement altogether, but it was felt that some form of requirement is required due to the differences in aircraft in each class.

### Recommendation

- 3.57 To summarise, the working group recommends adjusting the requirement in BFCL.160(b) to be three flights or three hours of flight time. This would be achieved by the following amendments:

#### BFCL.160 BPL – Recency requirements

(b) In addition to the requirements in paragraph (a), in the case of a pilot who is qualified to fly more than one class of balloons, in order to exercise his or her privileges in the other balloon class or the other balloon classes, he or she shall have completed at least three flights or three hours of flight time, as PIC or flying dual or solo under the supervision of an FI(B), on each additional balloon class within the last 24 months.

- 3.58 One working group member was uncertain how practical 'within the last 24 months' would be in relation to hot air airships and would suggest 48 months.

### Embedding/transitional considerations

- 3.59 There would be no impact as a consequence of this change as it encompasses the current requirement, and no transitional arrangements would be necessary.

**Question**

Do you agree with our approach of adjusting the existing recency requirements for additional classes in the base BPL licence requirements?

Yes                      No                      Undecided                      No view/don't know

You will be invited to add comments in a subsequent question

**Question**

Do you think the period of time in which the flights must be done should be extended from 24 months to 48 months?

Yes                      No                      Undecided                      No view/don't know

Do you have any comments?

**F. Non-Part 21 balloons**

- 3.60 Non-Part-21 balloons can be flown by Part-BFCL and ANO licence holders. Part-BFCL licence holders can exercise their privileges in Non-Part-21 balloons under ANO article 150(1)(c). However there is ambiguity in the wording of this article as it deems valid licences issued under the Aircrew Regulation, which formerly contained regulations for balloon licences before that ruleset was moved to its own Balloon Regulation (EU) 2018/395. Article 3b(1) of the UK Balloon Regulation does clarify this, but we intend to address this ambiguity by revising ANO article 150(1)(c) so that it refers directly to Part-BFCL.
- 3.61 ANO licence holders can currently exercise private privileges in these aircraft. However ANO Instructors and Examiners are unable to exercise their privileges in the majority of the Annex I fleet because they are unregulated, as instructing and examining are considered commercial operations under the ANO. This means that they (and other CPL(B) holders) can currently only exercise commercial privileges in Part-21 balloons. However as described in the preceding chapter, they will have to convert to the BPL with appropriate ratings to continue to be able to instruct or examine post-September 2025. PPL(BA) holders wishing to act as Pilot-in-Command of Part-21 balloons will also have to convert their licence to a BPL by that date, also as described above.
- 3.62 That leaves PPL(BA) holders for Non-Part-21 balloons. These pilots would be unaffected by the Part-BFCL implementation as Non-Part-21 balloons are out of scope of that regulation. However an issue does arise over the maintenance of their privileges.
- 3.63 The PPL(BA) holder is required under ANO Schedule 8, Part 3, Chapter 1 to undertake a minimum of least 5 ascents of at least 5 minutes duration every 13



months. Alternatively they can either undergo refresher training lasting the balance of the required ascents with FI(B), or pass a proficiency check with an FE(B).

- 3.64 Flight training including refresher training or proficiency checks for those licences would not be able to be conducted in most Non-Part-21 balloons. This is because training of any sort is considered under the ANO to be a commercial operation, and therefore such activity cannot take place in an unregulated balloon.
- 3.65 However PPL(BA) holders *would* be able to undergo flight training in Part-21 balloons, even after September 2025, provided they do this under the supervision of a Part-BFCL FI(B) or FE(B). This is because the PPL(BA) holder would be acting as Pilot-under-Supervision or Pilot-under-Training in those balloons under the supervision of a Part-BFCL FI(B) or FE(B), and there is nothing in the regulation that prevents this. However PPL(BA) holders would *not* be able to exercise privileges as Pilot-in-Command in those balloons unless they also possess a Part-BFCL licence and appropriate ratings and the applicable medical certificate or declaration: Article 3a(1) of the Balloon Regulation combined with compliance of BFCL.115 stipulate this.
- 3.66 So issued PPL(BA) holders will continue to be able to act as Pilot-in-Command of Non-Part 21 balloons, as long as they are maintained in accordance with the ANO requirements. To assist this, we could amend BFCL.315(a)(1) and BFCL.415(a) so that the privileges of the FI(B) and FE(B) respectively are extended to include the ANO PPL(BA).
- 3.67 Allowing instructors and examiners who hold a Part-BFCL certificate to conduct training and testing in compliance with the ANO does create legal complications, but we would accept this for refresher training and proficiency checks. These complications become more significant for ab initio training, for example having to recreate a training syllabus especially for this when a not dissimilar syllabus already exists in Part-BFCL. For this reason, we will not be able to allow ab initio training for a PPL(BA). As a result, with effect from September 2025, we will cease issuing new PPL(BA) licences.
- 3.68 We are also concerned about PPL(BA) holders not having to undergo the periodic surveillance of at least refresher training with an instructor. These pilots would be able to continue flying unsupervised indefinitely without any flights with an instructor, which raises concerns over safety assurance. Virtually every other part of aviation requires some form of periodic monitoring of a pilot's maintenance of competence by a professional, either instructor or examiner.
- 3.69 As we are intending to maintain the PPL(BA)s that have been issued, we would amend ANO Schedule 8, Part 3, Chapter 1 to make mandatory refresher training to align with the BPL system. As stated above, Part-BFCL FI(B)s would be able

to supervise this refresher training in Part-21 balloons. There is currently no syllabus for a PPL(BA) refresher training and we would not be minded to add one, given the small number of licence holders involved. We would also remove the experience element of the PPL(BA) recency requirements as set out in ANO Schedule 8 to align with our proposals for the base BPL described in Section D above.

- 3.70 As regards PPL(BA) licence renewals (ie their validity has lapsed), holders would also be able to undergo a proficiency check in accordance with the requirements in Schedule 8. Similarly Part-BFCL FE(B)s would be able to conduct these proficiency checks in Part-21 balloons. Similarly we are not minded to create a syllabus for this ANO proficiency check, so the PPL(BA) holder would have to comply with the BPL proficiency check syllabus in AMC1 BFCL.160(a)(2) which refers to the skills test syllabus in AMC1 BFCL.145.

### Question

What are your views towards our approach of maintaining indefinitely PPL(BA)s already issued for flying Non-Part-21 balloons?

- Fully support this approach
- Against: all licences should convert to BPL by the deadline
- Undecided
- Not familiar enough with issue to comment or have a view

You will be invited to add comments in a subsequent question

### Question

What are your views towards us making mandatory the requirement for PPL(BA)-holders to undertake refresher training?

- Agree with this approach
- Against: PPL(BA) holders should not require refresher training
- Against: all licences should convert to BPL by the deadline
- Undecided
- No view/don't know

You will be invited to add comments after the next question

### Question

What are your views towards us ceasing to issue new PPL(BA)s with effect from September 2025 given the complications described above?

- Agree with this approach.
- Disagree.
- Neither, I think all licences should convert to BPL by the deadline
- Undecided
- No view/don't know

Do you have any comments about PPL(BA)s for Non-Part-21 balloons?

## Chapter 4

# Commercial balloon licensing

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- 4.1 The consultation response document committed us in Phase 2 to review the requirements for the Commercial Operation Rating for the Balloon Pilot Licence (BPL) as set out in UK Part-BFCL.215. Of particular focus is ensuring that the UK's unique needs of commercial ballooning especially Commercial Passenger Ballooning (CPB) are adequately reflected. This project aims to ensure that these UK Part-BFCL regulations encapsulate the best aspects of the existing Commercial Pilot Licence (Balloons) [CPL(B)] that it will replace by September 2025.
- 4.2 The objective of this part of this licensing project is to, where necessary, propose amendments to UK Part-BFCL, where possible taking inspiration from the ANO system and where necessary upgrade this regime, so that it best serves UK commercial ballooning while delivering an appropriate level of safety assurance, especially to the fare-paying public.

## Regulatory context

- 4.3 Licensing and training for commercial ballooning in the UK is one of the most important aspects of this balloon licensing project. The UK enjoys a well-developed commercial ballooning sector comprising CPB and non-passenger elements.

### Commercial non-passenger ballooning

- 4.4 This comprises commercial work not involving the carriage of fare-paying passengers, predominantly aerial advertising but also some other activities. The CAA do not hold data on the scale of commercial non-fare paying passenger flying operations.
- 4.5 The risk characteristics of this flying is different to both private and passenger-carrying ballooning. The probability of fatal or serious injury accidents (FOSIA) is very low, as there have been no such accidents in the last 10 years. The severity is also low, with the pilot occupant, occasional non-fare paying passengers, and uninvolved third-party risk seen as low enough to be tolerable.

### Commercial passenger ballooning (CPB)

- 4.6 This comprises flights typically carrying 2-16 fare-paying passengers. In the UK, 22 Declared Balloon Operators (DBOs) operate approximately 75 balloons flown

by 65 pilots holding a licence with commercial privileges, flying approximately 2,500 flights and 30,000 passengers per year.<sup>4</sup>

- 4.7 The risk characteristics of CPB operations are significantly different compared to commercial non-passenger ballooning. Although the *probability* of FOSIAs is very low (there have been no such accidents in the last 10 years), the *severity* is medium-high in terms of not just fatalities or serious injuries but also the effect this would have on public confidence in the sector as a whole.
- 4.8 While other regulations exist covering the airworthiness and operations of balloons, including the conduct of DBOs, this consultation focuses on licences and ratings for commercial balloon pilots.

### Topics discussed

- 4.9 The working group discussed and recommended proposals for changes to the Part-BFCL regulations across the following topics:
- a) Qualifying experience to attain a commercial rating with CPB privileges
  - b) Training for a commercial rating (including with CPB privileges)
  - c) Maintaining CPB privileges
  - d) Introducing a separate CPB rating
- 4.10 The working group also asked us to consider reviewing BFCL.065 regarding the curtailment of CPB privileges on age grounds. We have concluded not to proceed with any discussions or proposals on this topic as part of this project. This is because there is work ongoing, including at the international level, on this topic in relation to broader flight crew licensing. Moreover, any review of BFCL.065 would need to be done in conjunction with reviewing the pilot medical certification requirements in Part-MED of the Aircrew Regulation which we consider to be beyond the scope of this project.
- 4.11 Throughout this chapter, we set out in tables the implications of the recommended reforms on the journeys pilots take towards the BPL and associated ratings. A full commercial operations pilot journey summary, encompassing all the recommendations in this chapter can be found in Appendix C at the end of this paper.

## A. Qualifying experience to attain a commercial rating with CPB privileges

- 4.12 Under BFCL.215(b)(2), the current qualifying experience requirement for a pilot wishing to obtain privileges for any commercial operation is 50 hours PIC, which

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<sup>4</sup> Data from CAA records and Operator returns for 2022.

is broadly similar to the requirement for 60 hours PIC to obtain an unrestricted CPL(B).

- 4.13 There was a strong view among the commercial ballooning experts within the working group that these experience requirements, while appropriate for non-passenger commercial operations, do not provide a sufficient level of safety assurance for CPB. Most CPB operators require 100 hours PIC. Specifically, they were concerned that:
- There is no specific experience prerequisite for CPB flying beyond the 50 hours required for general commercial operations. The experience needed for CPB operations should reflect its distinctive risk profile (see regulatory context section above), demanding greater pilot competence compared to non-passenger commercial activity.
  - The requirements for experience in progressive hot-air balloon group sizes are not adequately covered in a CPB context. Under current regulations, a pilot could qualify in larger balloons in accordance with BFCL.150(b), but have limited demonstrable experience carrying passengers in those larger sizes.
- 4.14 There was also a concern that under current licensing regulations it is possible (albeit unlikely) that a pilot could gain all their CPB experience in a small hot-air group size, prior to progressing to a larger hot-air group size (moving from just a few passengers to 16+ with limited graduated experience or training).

### **Proposal and rationale**

- 4.15 To address these problems in turn, the working group proposed:
- Introducing a minimum 100-hour PIC experience gateway for CPB. This is consistent with what is already required by most CPB operators.
  - Introducing a stepped minimum number of PIC hours of CPB flying experience in the previous hot-air group size before progressing to the next group, in addition to the current general experience requirements under BFCL.150(b).
- 4.16 The implications of the pilot journey compared to the existing BFCL and the legacy ANO system are presented in a table below. However broadly, our proposal is as follows. A pilot intending to undertake CPB operations in hot-air Group B would have to:
- a) Undertake at least 100 hours of private or Non-CPB flying in a Group A balloon.
  - b) Gain their commercial rating including CPB privilege in Group A.
  - c) Log 10 hours of CPB flying in Group A balloons (in addition to the 100 hours of general Group A flying described in sub-paragraph (a)).

d) They would also have to gain the Group B rating (minimum of two flights with a suitably qualified FI(B)) and pass a commercial operation rating proficiency check in a group B balloon (with a suitably qualified FE(B)).

4.17 To progress to Group C, the pilot would have to record at least 200 hours general experience in Groups A and B combined of which at least 20 hours of CPB flying in Groups A and B (with at least 10 in Group B). To progress to Group D, similar applies, record at least 300 hours general experience in Groups A, B and C combined of which at least 30 hours of CPB flying in Groups A, B and C (with at least 10 in Group C). (The larger groups are added in the same manner as described for group B in sub-paragraph (d) above.)

4.18 This would be achieved by the following amendment to BFCL.215(d):

“(d) A pilot who holds a commercial operation rating shall exercise the privileges of that rating in commercial passenger ballooning only if he or she has completed:

(1)

(i) for commercial passenger ballooning in a hot air balloon group A or gas balloon or mixed balloon or hot air airship: 100 hours as PIC in balloons.

(ii) for commercial passenger ballooning in a hot air balloon group B: 110 hours as PIC in balloons of which at least 10 hours commercial passenger ballooning flights in hot air balloons in group A.

(iii) for commercial passenger ballooning in a hot air balloon group C: 200 hours as PIC in balloons of which at least 20 hours commercial passenger ballooning flights in hot air balloons in groups A and B combined, of which at least 10 hours in group B.

(iv) for commercial passenger ballooning in a hot air balloon group D: 300 hours as PIC in balloons of which at least 30 hours commercial passenger ballooning flights in hot air balloons in groups A, B and C combined, of which at least 10 hours in group C.

(42) within the 180 days preceding the planned flight...”

4.19 Guidance Material (GM) could be added for examiners to confirm the minima have been met prior to undertaking a proficiency check.

4.20 This 100-hour minimum could be met by operators through the Operations Manual requirements, thereby removing the need to use regulation to deliver this standard. However, to assure consistency and regulatory certainty across all operators regardless of size, this requirement would be best included as regulation. The implications of this could be summarised as follows:

**Table 4.1: Group progression for pilots: existing and proposed**

Stage	Existing BFCL	Existing ANO	Proposed BFCL
Group progression	<p>[Addition of group not linked to commercial operation rating: may do this before/after issue of commercial rating]</p> <p>PIC hour-building to gate of 100hr in Group A for Group B (with or without passengers)</p> <p>Subsequently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ gate of 200hr in Groups A/B for Group C; and</li> <li>▪ gate of 300hr in Groups A/B/C for Group D</li> </ul> <p>2x training flights with FI(B) for each Group progression</p> <p>Licence reissue with additional group privilege</p> <p><b>Pilot can now exercise private privileges in additional Group</b></p> <p>Operator training and Licence and Operator Proficiency Check (with an examiner) before release by operator to line flying in that Group</p> <p><b>Pilot can now exercise CPB privileges in additional Group</b></p>	<p>PIC hour-building but no specific gates or training.</p> <p>Commercial General Flight Test with Examiner for each Group progressed</p> <p>CPL(B) re-issue Group B and subsequently Group C</p> <p>Operator training and Operator Proficiency Check (with examiner) before release by operator to line flying in that Group</p>	<p>[Addition of group not linked to commercial operation rating: may do this before/after issue of commercial rating]</p> <p>New: PIC hour-building to gate of 110hr total/10hr CPB flying in Group A for Group B</p> <p>Subsequently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ gate of 200hr total/20hr CPB in Groups A/B (of which at least 10hr in B) for Group C; and</li> <li>▪ gate of 300hr total/30hr CPB in Groups A/B/C (of which at least 10hr in C) for Group D.</li> </ul> <p>2x training flights with FI(B) for each Group progression</p> <p>Licence reissue with additional group privilege</p> <p><b>Pilot can now exercise private privileges in additional Group</b></p> <p>Operator training and Licence and Operator Proficiency Check (with an examiner) before release by operator to line flying in that Group</p> <p><b>Pilot can now exercise CPB privileges in additional Group</b></p>

**Issues and discussion**

- 4.21 While many operators do stipulate additional experience requirements on pilots, the argument was that by introducing this into the licensing regulation, a specific and unambiguous minimum requirement for all CPB regardless of the type of operator would produce a balanced approach to assuring passenger safety.
- 4.22 There was concern about the low number of CPB hours suggested to move up to a larger hot-air group, recommending that the skill required on larger balloons is significantly higher, and that a full UK season (year) as an active CPB pilot on one hot-air group should be required prior to moving up to a larger group.

**Recommendation**

- 4.23 We are consulting on introducing 100-hour minimum experience, plus the minimum experience as PIC of CPB operations, using the drafting suggestion above.

**Impact and transitional considerations**

- 4.24 A transitional process of about a year would be needed for those who have converted to Existing BPL from CPL(B). While most will have amassed the required experience, holders who have recently qualified to carry passengers



under the ANO system before they converted may not. The experience should be achieved by actual flying practice, or if not the higher group will be inactive until the experience required is gained in the lower group or groups.

#### Question

Do you agree with our approach of introducing into the licensing regulation a 100-hour PIC experience requirement as a prerequisite for CPB privileges?

Yes    No – leave BFCL unchanged at 50hr    Undecided    No view/don't know

You will be invited to add comments in a subsequent question

#### Question

Do you agree with our proposal to introduce a stepped minimum number of PIC hours of CPB flying experience in the previous hot-air balloon size group before conducting CPB flights in the next group, in addition to the requirements for progression to the group under BFCL.150(b)?

Yes    No – leave BFCL unchanged    Undecided    No view/don't know

Do you have any comments?

## B. Training for a commercial rating (including with CPB privileges)

- 4.25 Pilots currently wishing to attain a commercial operation rating (whether with CPB privileges or otherwise) are required under BFCL.215(b)(4) to pass a skill test with a balloon flight examiner [FE(B)] to demonstrate the competence required for commercial operations.
- 4.26 Under BFCL, the commercial operation rating is valid for both CPB and commercial non-CPB. Although a syllabus for 'refresher training' exists covering care of passengers (which is tested in operator proficiency checks), there is no prescribed syllabus for training for the BPL commercial operation rating, and there are no formal theoretical knowledge exams.
- 4.27 The commercial operation rating skill test provided under BFCL.215(b)(4), with a syllabus set out in AMC1 BFCL.215(b)(4), is based on a 'more precise flying' version of the base licence skill test. Matters related to passenger handling are only covered on a subsequent operator proficiency check before any line flying can start. This is similarly the case for commercial non-CPB: specific activities such as tethering are left to the operator to improve pilot competence.

- 4.28 Under the ANO licensing system, the situation is broadly similar, however the requirements are not clearly documented. While there is a general flight test with an examiner, there is no structure of initial training provision. Moreover, the lack of documented requirements could lead to regulatory uncertainty. Operators may have additional stipulations, however these are not for licensing, rather to meet operational requirements.

### **Proposal and rationale**

- 4.29 The commercial ballooning experts in the working group, in consultation with their wider communities, held the strong view towards strengthening these requirements. Their main concerns were that:
- In both the BFCL and the ANO regimes, there is no formal training for the issue of a commercial rating/licence prior to the skill test.
  - Too much emphasis is placed on the operator to conduct training or verify specific aspects of commercial flying, both passenger and non-passenger. This may be appropriate for larger operators, but for smaller ones this might be less than optimal, especially in the case of a single-pilot operator.
  - The number of flights under training or assessment prior to CPB flying is seen as low.
- 4.30 The group discussed introducing an appropriate structure for initial practical training and instructor/examiner intervention at the appropriate stages, set out as follows:
- a) Introducing a mandatory training course at an ATO/DTO prior to the commercial operation skill test. This could comprise a ground school course of two modules: a core element that all candidates seeking a commercial rating would take, covering all non-CPB commercial activities but also an introduction to CPB operations; and a CPB-specific module only for candidates seeking a CPB qualification (or the CPB Rating as proposed in Section A of this document was implemented) providing in-depth content on CPB operations.
  - b) The ATO/DTO mandatory training course should include an appropriate number of training flights with an FI(B) who holds a commercial operation rating and who has received instructor training to deliver such training flights in a CPB context;
  - c) This new ATO/DTO mandatory training course would be designed to cover both CPB and commercial non-passenger ballooning, to provide an introduction to those topics and adequately prepare the pilot for the skill test with the FE(B) that follows. A syllabus would be created later using a new AMC, but it would draw upon some material from the existing skill test syllabus currently provided under AMC1 BFCL.215(b)(4), elements from the

existing CPB refresher training course syllabus set out in AMC1 BFCL.215(d)(2)(ii)(a), and add new learning objectives covering non-passenger ballooning.

- 4.31 There was considerable discussion on the appropriate number of required FI(B) training flights. Also, the figure would be a minimum number of required flights with a FI(B) prior to a commercial operation rating skill test flight with a FE(B) (an ATO/DTO, FI(B) or FE(B) may decide that a candidate requires more than this minimum).
- 4.32 Between these amendments and those described earlier in this paper, the journey of a pilot new to CPB compared to the existing systems is loosely depicted in Table 4.2 below:

**Table 4.2: CPB new pilot journey: existing and proposed**

Stage	Existing BFCL	Existing ANO	Proposed BFCL
Private flying	<b>Pilot issued base BPL for private operations in hot-air Group A</b>	<b>Pilot issued PPL(BA) in hot-air balloons</b>	No change: <b>pilot issued base BPL for private operations in hot-air Group A</b>
Experience-building Training for commercial operations	PIC hour-building to 50hr gate Training at own initiative or with operator	PIC hour-building to 20hr gate for restricted CPL(B) 60hr gate for full CPL(B) Training at own initiative or with operator	PIC hour-building to 50hr gate New: Pilot undertakes ATO/DTO commercial operations training course which includes 2x training flights with FI(B)
Evaluation for commercial operations	Commercial operation rating skill test with FE(B) <b>Re-issue of BPL with Commercial Operation Rating at hot-air Group A (no CPB flights if licence &amp; operator proficiency check not passed)</b>	CPL(B) Group A General Flight Test with Examiner and TK exams CPL(B) issue with Group A rating (restricted or full based on experience)	Commercial operation rating skill test with FE(B) (TK assessed in ATO/DTO course) <b>Re-issue of BPL with Commercial Operation Rating at Group A (no CPB flights if less than 100 hours PIC and no licence / operator proficiency check)</b>
Experience-building for CPB	No specific hour-building or gateway specified in licensing regulations.	No specific hour-building or gateway specified in licensing regulations.	New: PIC hour-building to 100hr gate in hot-air group A (this could include commercial non-passenger ballooning flights).
Evaluation for CPB	<i>Either</i> proficiency check with FE(B) <i>or</i> refresher course ATO/DTO followed by 1x flight with FI(B) <b>Pilot can now exercise CPB privileges in hot-air Group A</b>	Operator training and Operator Proficiency Check with Examiner before release to passenger line flying	New: Proficiency check required with FE(B) prior to clearance to line flying (no longer optional and no refresher course/FI(B) flight as alternative). <b>Pilot can now exercise CPB privileges in hot-air Group A</b>

## Issues and discussion

- 4.33 The working group considered the proportionality and appropriateness of requiring candidates for all commercial flying to undertake training that included CPB content. Taking into account the pilot journey described above, this is a

single course at the ATO/DTO, with two or more FI(B) flights and the ground training course followed by a skill test with a FE(B), and if they wish to maintain privileges in CPB, a 2-yearly proficiency check and 5-yearly refresher course.

- 4.34 There was also considerable discussion over whether to continue applying the ATO/DTO regime to commercial ballooning instruction and training. A minority of the working group were strongly opposed to this, arguing that we should review this and possibly remove the requirement.
- 4.35 We are consulting in Chapter 3, Section B above on removing the ATO/DTO requirement for private ballooning. However for the training for commercial operations as well as instructors, our considered view is that we will retain this requirement:
- a) Allowing a DTO to be used for training for commercial including commercial passenger-carrying operations already constitutes an alleviation from our regulatory approach in relation to other aircraft categories where an ATO is required.
  - b) The DTO system for balloons provides a light-touch training organisation with a recognised structure, accountability system, record management, regulatory certainty and the integrity of their internal systems and controls; consistent with what we require for other areas such as airworthiness. Whereas for private ballooning with a much lower risk profile, we are satisfied this could be delivered by FI(B)s; we think the complexity of commercial activities especially CPB operations and instructing demands the more formal training organisation status and oversight.
  - c) In relation to the organisations, it provides this structure that effectively formalises and extends what has been previously done by the BBAC.
  - d) This system also promotes equality of accessibility. Although the BBAC is currently the only DTO for ballooning, any other organisation could apply for this status. Similarly, it also provides existing DTOs with an organisational platform from which to apply to us for Qualified Entity status under Annex VI of the Basic Regulation if they wish to do so.
- 4.36 We therefore see insufficient justification for relaxing the applicability of the ATO/DTO regime for commercial activities in the same way we are consulting on doing for private ballooning.
- 4.37 However that all said, while we do not want to remove the ATO/DTO regime altogether from this area of ballooning; we do understand the sentiments behind the working group opposition, and acknowledge that there may be issues about how the DTO regime practically works in the ballooning context. Reviewing the DTO regime itself as described in Annex VIII (Part-DTO) of the Aircrew Regulation and the manner or effectiveness by which it delivers our regulations

is beyond the scope of this project. Nevertheless, as described above, we do intend to review the DTO regime across GA as a separate project in the near future, and as part of that we could explore solutions on how the DTO requirements could better reflect the unique aspects of balloon training.

- 4.38 In terms of impact to pilots themselves of the ground school training, the additional cost of this would be minimal considering in many cases it formalises activity that is already being undertaken, while providing a more efficient imparting of knowledge for balloon operations, better preparation for the skill test, and safety benefits to commercial operators and the public.
- 4.39 The group explored adopting the ANO CPL(B) requirement of written theoretical knowledge (TK) exams. Several members questioned whether formal TK is the most appropriate method of delivering the policy objective of ensuring candidate understanding of the ground school training content. However, others argued that some form of formal verification was necessary for the proposed ground school training, and TK exams are the most appropriate way of delivering this. There are two options for addressing this issue:
- Option 1: formal TK exams delivered against the training syllabus provided in AMC. It would not be possible to simply adopt the existing CPL(B) TK exams as these cover a different range of learning objectives than would be considered necessary for the ground school training proposed above. We would have to create additional AMC setting out the requirement for TK, requiring an appropriate number of questions against each of the learning objectives in the syllabus. Then we would have to create these as e-exams, and the associated administrative and invigilation guidance.
  - Option 2: would effectively delegate candidate verification of training to the ATO/DTO. We would draft a provision into the AMC training syllabus requiring the ATO/DTO to undertake testing to verify the candidate's understanding of the training course, and to hold administrative records of the candidate's successful completion of this test (through for example a course completion certificate).
- 4.40 While Option 1 would be broadly similar to what CPL(B) pilots already undergo, it would require considerable steps to implement which would result in transitional issues for pilots currently undertaking training. Option 2 provides a more tailored and proportionate verification mechanism for the course content and would be easier to implement.

### **Recommendation**

- 4.41 The majority of the group recommends following Option 2 described above, which in their totality could be drafted as follows:

### **BFCL.215 Commercial operation rating**

- (a) A BPL holder shall exercise the privileges of his or her licence during commercial operations with balloons only if he or she holds a commercial operation rating in accordance with this point.
- (b) An applicant for a commercial operation rating shall:
- (1) have attained the age of 18 years;
  - (2) have completed 50 hours of flight time and 50 take-offs and landings as PIC on balloons;
  - (3) have the privileges for the class of balloon in which the privileges of the commercial operation rating will be exercised; ~~and~~
  - (4) have completed a commercial operation rating training course at an ATO or DTO, which shall include at least two flights with a FI(B) who holds the commercial operation rating and a ground course which shall include at least the content of the refresher course of BFCL.215(d)(2)(ii); and
  - (5) have passed a skill test on the relevant class of balloon during which he or she shall demonstrate to an FE(B) the competence required for commercial balloon operations.
- (c) The privileges of the commercial operation rating shall be limited to the class of balloon in which the skill test in accordance with paragraph (b)(~~3~~ 4) has been completed. The privileges shall be extended upon application to another class of balloon if, in that other class, the applicant complies with paragraph (b)(3) and (b)(~~4~~ 5).
- (d) A pilot who holds a commercial operation rating shall exercise the privileges of that rating in commercial passenger ballooning only if he or she has completed:
- (1)
    - (i) for commercial passenger ballooning in a hot air balloon group A or gas balloon or mixed balloon or hot air airship: 100 hours as PIC in balloons.
    - (ii) for commercial passenger ballooning in a hot air balloon group B: 110 hours as PIC in balloons of which at least 10 hours commercial passenger ballooning flights in hot air balloons in group A.
    - (iii) for commercial passenger ballooning in a hot air balloon group C: 200 hours as PIC in balloons of which at least 20 hours commercial passenger ballooning flights in hot air balloons in groups A and B combined, of which at least 10 hours in group B.
    - (iv) for commercial passenger ballooning in a hot air balloon group D: 300 hours as PIC in balloons of which at least 30 hours commercial passenger

ballooning flights in hot air balloons in groups A, B and C combined, of which at least 10 hours in group C.

[Remaining sub-paragraphs to be covered in Section D below]

- 4.42 The ATO/DTO training course referred to in BFCL.215(b)(4) would be created later using a new AMC, but it would draw upon some material from the existing skill test syllabus currently provided under AMC1 BFCL.215(b)(4), elements from the existing CPB refresher training course syllabus set out in AMC1 BFCL.215(d)(2)(ii)(a), and add new learning objectives covering non-passenger commercial ballooning.
- 4.43 Some of the group continued to maintain that formal TK should be required following this ground school training, whilst most favoured a more informal testing approach via the ATO/DTO. The latter would require candidate understanding of course content and could be verified through a more informal requirement under the AMC for the ATO/DTO to undertake its own testing and successful completion recording/administration.
- 4.44 The members argued that CPB pilots must have the necessary skills, experience and competence to be entrusted to carry passengers in commercial fare-paying operations. Ostensibly what is being proposed takes the best elements of the existing ANO and BFCL systems, and addresses drawbacks in both to create an appropriate accountability regime that assures continued public confidence in passenger ballooning as well as legal and regulatory certainty for pilots and operators alike.

#### **Impact and transitional considerations**

- 4.45 Existing CPL(B) holders converting their licence to Existing BPL with the Commercial Rating will have already undertaken CPL(B) TK exams, however there is no required associated ground school.
- 4.46 Existing BPL holders with a commercial rating who have not converted from a CPL(B) will not have undergone any ground school.
- 4.47 For such holders complying with BFCL 2025, there was a debate within the working group about how this previous TK and experience should be treated:
- Some argued that the CPL(B) TK exam material is sufficiently similar to the proposed ground school content and combined with their amassed experience should be regarded as having met the knowledge and competence to conduct commercial operations, so there should be an unlimited grandfathering provision exempting the ground school/TK for all existing commercial rating holders. However others argued that any grandfathering provision for all existing commercial rating holders might not capture the intent of the ground school training.



- We think a compromise could be to only make the ground school/TK a requirement for new commercial rating trainees, while all BPL/commercial rating holders could be required to undergo their first refresher training two years (rather than five years) after the rules are enacted by way of a transitional process. This would have the effect of transitioning not just the former CPL(B) holders but also those who would have converted from the BPL/commercial rating.

**Question**

Do you agree with our proposal to introduce mandatory commercial operations ground school training covering elements of both CPB and non-passenger commercial ballooning, ahead of the skill test?

Yes      No – leave BFCL unchanged      Undecided      No view/don't know

You will be invited to add comments in a subsequent question

**Question**

Do you agree with our proposal to retain the stepped minimum number of hours for each hot-air balloon group size, and introduce an additional minimum number of hours in CPB operations stepped for subsequent groups, as described above?

Yes      No – leave BFCL unchanged      Undecided      No view/don't know

Do you have any comments?

**C. Maintaining CPB privileges**

- 4.48      Currently under BFCL.215(d), pilots wishing to maintain a commercial operation rating with CPB privileges must have completed:
- Every 6 months: either at least three flights as PIC in balloons, of which one is in the relevant class; or a single flight under the supervision of a balloon flight instructor [FI(B)]; and
  - Every 2 years: either a proficiency check with an FE(B) or a refresher course at an ATO/DTO tailored to commercial ballooning, comprising at least six hours of TK instruction and one training flight with an FI(B).
- 4.49      Under the ANO system, the situation is broadly similar, including a proficiency check with an examiner, but there is no structure of training provision.



## Proposal and rationale

- 4.50 The commercial ballooning experts in the working group, in consultation with their wider communities, held the strong view towards strengthening these requirements. Their main concerns were that:
- Too much emphasis is placed on the operator to conduct training or verify specific aspects of commercial flying, both passenger and non-passenger. This may be appropriate to larger operators, but for smaller ones this might be less than optimal, especially in the case of a single pilot operator.
  - Pilots conducting CPB are able to use the training flights with an instructor to bypass examiner scrutiny. This ignores the fundamental limitations of an instructor's role which is to provide training not conduct assessment. While optional proficiency checks versus refresher training may be appropriate for private operations, this should not be the case for CPB.
- 4.51 The most workable solution to this would be to remove the optional nature of the 24-month requirement for a proficiency check with an FE(B) to verify competence in CPB operations, thus making this mandatory for all CPB pilots.
- 4.52 New CPB pilots commencing CPB line flying, having passed their commercial rating skill test within the previous 24 months, would have this FE(B) proficiency check within 13 months of that commencement. This would introduce an additional check for those with low CPB experience, and ensure surveillance of the correct application of skills.
- 4.53 We also propose removing the optional nature of the ATO/DTO ground refresher course, and making this mandatory for all CPB pilots every five years. This would be based on the existing CPB refresher training provided under AMC1 BFCL.215(d)(2)(ii)(a), and broadly similar to the initial training that we proposed in Section B above that would be required before first issue of the commercial rating, only with greater CPB content that might add the following topics:
- Passenger-handling with large numbers
  - Commercial and operator influences on pilot decision-making
  - Human performance factors with particular emphasis on emotional distractions and fatigue.
- 4.54 These requirements would ensure that the pilot underwent a check with an examiner rather than an FI(B) to confirm competence to undertake CPB, with the 24-month limit to prevent any skill fade.

## Recommendation

- 4.55 The group recommends the changes as set out above, which could be drafted as follows:

### BFCL.215 Commercial operation rating

(d) A pilot who holds a commercial operation rating shall exercise the privileges of that rating in commercial passenger ballooning only if he or she has completed:

[sub-paragraph (1) as described in Section B above]

(2) within the 180 days preceding the planned flight:

(i) at least three flights as PIC in balloons, of which at least one shall be in a balloon of the relevant class; or

(ii) one flight as PIC in a balloon of the relevant class under the supervision of an FI(B) who is qualified in accordance with this point; and

(3 2)

(i) for pilots who passed the BFCL.215(b)(5) commercial operation skill test within 24 months before the planned flight: within 13 months preceding the planned flight, a proficiency check, in a balloon of the relevant class, during which he or she shall demonstrate to an FE(B) the competence required for commercial passenger ballooning; and

(ii) for pilots who passed the BFCL.215(b)(5) commercial operation skill test more than 24 months before the planned flight: within the 24 months preceding the planned flight: a proficiency check, in a balloon of the relevant class, during which he or she shall demonstrate to an FE(B) the competence required for commercial passenger ballooning; ~~or~~ and

(4) within the 60 months preceding the planned flight: a refresher course at an ATO or a DTO, tailored to the competence required for commercial balloon operations, including at least six hours of theoretical knowledge instruction ~~and one training flight in a balloon of the relevant class with an FI(B) who is qualified for commercial balloon operations in accordance with this point.~~

(e) To maintain the privileges of the commercial operation rating for all balloon classes, a pilot who holds a commercial operation rating with privileges extended to more than one class of balloons shall comply with the requirements in paragraph (d)(3 2) in at least one class of balloons.

(f) A pilot who complies with paragraph (d) and holds a commercial operation rating for the hot-air balloon class shall exercise the privileges of that rating in the hot-air balloon class only on balloons that represent:

(i) the same group of the hot-air balloon in which the proficiency check as specified in paragraph (d)(3)(2)(i) or the training flight as specified in paragraph (d)(2)(ii), have been completed; or

(ii) a hot-air balloon group with a smaller envelope size.

(g) The completion of the flight under supervision as specified in paragraph (d)(2 4)(ii), the proficiency check as specified in paragraph (d)(3 2)(ii) and the refresher training course as specified in paragraph (d)(4 2)(ii) shall be entered in the logbook of the pilot and shall be signed by the head of training of the ATO or the DTO, or the FI(B) or the FE(B) that is responsible for the training course, the supervision or the proficiency check, as applicable.

(h) A pilot who has completed an operator proficiency check in accordance with point BOP.ADD.315 of Annex II (Part- BOP) to this Regulation shall be deemed to comply with paragraph (d)(3 2)(i).

4.56 Between these amendments, the currency requirements for a pilot wishing to maintain their CPB privileges is loosely depicted in Table 4.3 below:

**Table 4.3: CPB pilot privilege maintenance: existing and proposed**

Stage	Existing BFCL	Existing ANO	Proposed BFCL
Maintaining privileges	6 months prior to flight: <i>Either</i> 3x flights in balloons <i>or</i> 1x flight under supervision of FI(B). 2 years prior to flight: <i>Either</i> proficiency check with FE(B) <i>or</i> refresher course ATO/DTO followed by 1x flight with FI(B)	3 months prior to flight: 3x flights in balloons. 13 months prior to flight: Licence and Operator Proficiency Checks with Examiner before release to passenger line flying	6 months prior to flight: <i>Either</i> 3x flights in balloons <i>or</i> 1x flight under supervision of FI(B). 2 years prior to flight: Proficiency check with FE(B) prior to clearance to line flying (13 months prior to flight if commercial operation rating skill test passed within previous 24 months). 5 years prior to flight: CPB ground refresher training with ATO/DTO.

**Impact and transitional considerations**

4.57 For ANO licence holders, the proficiency check is already a requirement, so pilots already comply.

4.58 As described in the previous section, the refresher training could be required for all commercial rating holders two years after the rules are enacted, and thereafter every five years. This would allow ATOs/DTOs to develop this refresher training, and eliminate the need for existing commercial rating holders to undergo the ground school/TK as described in the previous section. There could also be a memorandum of understanding with those entities to ensure that ‘refresher courses’ cannot be given during the transition period to prevent holders from circumventing the FE(B) proficiency check.

**Question**

Do you agree with our proposal to remove for CPB pilots the optional nature of a proficiency check with an FE(B) every 2 years (the proficiency check becomes mandatory)?

Yes      No – leave BFCL unchanged      Undecided      No view/don't know

You will be invited to add comments after the next question

**Question**

Do you agree with our proposal to introduce a requirement for CPB pilots to undertake ground refresher training every 5 years?

Yes      No – leave BFCL unchanged      Undecided      No view/don't know

Do you have any comments?

**D. Introducing a separate CPB rating**

- 4.59 The Phase 1 consultation outcome committed us to exploring the merits of creating a separate rating within Part-BFCL dedicated to CPB, as distinct from the existing Commercial Operation Rating.
- 4.60 Part-BFCL Sub-part ADD section BFCL.215 provides a single rating for commercial operations, with some specific provisions setting out requirements for rating holders conducting CPB which we are looking to reform as part of this project.
- 4.61 A view expressed within the working group is that it is currently not clear whether the holder is legally able to undertake CPB flights. The only way of knowing this is through evidence of logbook endorsement by instructors and examiners indicating that the prerequisite training has been completed, experience developed, and the demonstration of maintenance of competence through refresher training and proficiency checks.

**Proposals**

- 4.62 There was significant disagreement on this particular topic within the working group, with effectively an equal split around two viewpoints, and for this reason we will reflect those viewpoints as the following options, and pose those in the consultation questions later:
- Option 1: Maintain the existing commercial operation rating.
  - Option 2: Introduce a separate CPB rating.

### Option 1: Maintain the existing commercial operation rating:

- 4.63 In this option there would be no change to the Part-BFCL Commercial Operation Rating (other than proposed changes described in the previous sections of this chapter) and the existing format within Part-BFCL Subpart ADD, thereby including CPB requirements within the existing Commercial Operation Rating to adequately meet the needs of the community without the need for duplication or granularity.

### Option 2: Introduce a separate CPB rating:

- 4.64 It was argued that given the unique risk characteristics of passenger carrying compared to other types of commercial operations that a separate rating for CPB should be created, entitled a 'Commercial Passenger Ballooning (CPB) Rating' [or something similar]. This would be distinct from the existing commercial rating, which would be re-titled as a 'Commercial Non-Passenger Rating' [or something similar] and be specifically for non-CPB operations such as aerial advertising:
- CPB Rating: holders would be deemed qualified to conduct all types of commercial balloon operations including CPB operations, subject to fulfilling recency requirements.
  - Commercial Non-Passenger Rating: holders would be deemed qualified to conduct any commercial balloon operations except those involving CPB, subject to fulfilling recency requirements.
- 4.65 This would entail introducing a new rating in Part-BFCL Sub-Part ADD, whose content would be based on the existing commercial rating content in BFCL.215, but only including the relevant requirements for CPB operations. The existing Commercial Operation Rating in BFCL.215 would be amended in name and revised to remove all requirements related to CPB such as sub-paragraph (d).

### Issues and discussion

- 4.66 There was significant disagreement within the working group over whether to split the commercial rating in this way.

### Clarity and regulatory certainty for aviation practitioners:

- 4.67 Those in favour of the CPB Rating argued that it would be consistent with this project objective of improving simplicity of balloon pilot licensing for pilots, operators and instructors/examiners.
- A separate CPB Rating would provide a clear and definitive location for the CPB requirements for holders, which could also be referred to more easily by instructors and examiners involved in CPB privileges. It would also ease the introduction of more tailored requirements specific to CPB operations, such as specific training and experience, while removing these from the Commercial Non-Passenger Rating that does not require them.

- It would provide more clarity in the licence of the holder's specific line pilot privileges, reducing the risk of misinterpretation. Although users would still need to refer to logbook endorsements to assess their continued validity, having a clear indication of privileges attained would also benefit the operator.
- Those against the creation of this distinction argued that there is already sufficient clarity in the regulations around CPB requirements for those who need to understand them, namely pilots and operators.

#### Clarity for public/passengers:

4.68 Those supporting the CPB rating argued that this would provide additional clarity for the public and passengers. However it is important to highlight that this is regarded as less relevant because under aviation public transport regulation, the public should not need to rely on their own knowledge/understanding of pilot competence to assure passenger safety. Instead, their safety is assured for them by the CAA through the compliance/oversight of the operators themselves, which includes provisions to ensure pilots are sufficiently competent (both initially and on an ongoing basis) to undertake CPB operations.

#### Cost and administrative burden:

- 4.69 It was argued that introducing a separate CPB rating would impose additional steps that do not exist in the single combined commercial rating:
- Currently, holders seeking CPB qualification only need to obtain and pay the CAA fee for the commercial rating and then can use commercial non-passenger ballooning operations to help recover the cost of amassing the required qualifying experience for CPB. Then they undertake the necessary training and obtain examiner endorsement before being cleared to act as Pilot in Command of CPB operations.
  - With a new CPB Rating, unless a pilot proceeded straight to this from the base BPL, a separate rating would impose a delay and cost in their journey to CPB.
  - On the other hand, the clarity and regulatory certainty benefits of the CPB Rating outlined above would outweigh these drawbacks. Moreover, the additional cost of obtaining the CPB Rating would be recovered from undertaking commercial operations.

#### Transitional considerations:

4.70 Introducing a separate rating would require existing commercial rating holders to transition to the new rating architecture.

- Existing holders would have to be distinguished between CPB and Non-CPB, and issued a new licence with the appropriate new rating added. It would also impose an additional administrative processing burden on the CAA which would have to be recovered through an administration fee.
- Those in favour of a separate CPB Rating argued that this could be covered through a process similar to what is already being done for the CPL(B) to BPL/Commercial Rating conversion report, whereby those holders demonstrating the appropriate logbook evidence could be deemed valid for a period of time.

4.71 It would be possible for existing rating holders with commercial ratings to be 'deemed valid' as the relevant new rating until one of the following events happen:

- a) wish to voluntarily convert their licence to reflect the new ratings;
- b) change their licence due to some other administrative reason (eg address change or the addition of a new rating); or
- c) convert their licence as a result of a deadline the CAA may set in the future.

4.72 The process for this could be as follows:

- All existing Commercial Rating holders with evidence of the Examiner Proficiency check for CPB operations in the previous 2 years would be deemed valid as a CPB Rating until one of the 3 events described above take place. They would immediately comply with the requirements set out for that rating.
- All existing Commercial Rating holders who do not possess evidence of the Examiner Proficiency Check for CPB operations in the previous 2 years would be deemed valid as a Commercial Non-Passenger Rating until one of the 3 events described above take place.

4.73 For new rating issues, this would begin automatically when applying for a new rating. Applicants meeting the requirements would apply to the CAA and pay the administrative fee to get the rating added.

### **Recommendation**

4.74 On balance, given the split in views in the working group, it was difficult to draw a final recommendation on the preferred course of action. No member offered a different view beyond the two viewpoints described above.



### Question

The CPL(B) as a licence will cease to exist on full transition to Part-BFCL and commercial activities will be covered by a rating on the BPL. As regards the future of the Commercial Rating that could be added to the BPL, which is your preferred option? Please choose one of the following options:

- A single Commercial Rating in Part-BFCL as is currently in place. All commercial operations can be undertaken with that one rating and there remain appropriate requirements for CPB privileges within the rating.
- Two separate commercial ratings as follows:
  - Commercial Passenger Ballooning (CPB) rating; the holders of which would be able to conduct CPB and any other commercial operations; and
  - Commercial non-passenger operation rating; the holders of which would be able to conduct commercial operations except those involving CPB.
- Familiar with the issues but am undecided
- No view/don't know

Do you have any comments?



## Chapter 5

# Instructor and examiner requirements

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- 5.1 This chapter focuses on instructor and examiner requirements, specifically those for Flight Instructor (Balloons) [FI(B)] and Flight Examiner (Balloons) [FE(B)] instructing and examining pilots obtaining the base BPL, the commercial operation rating and, where applicable, CPB privileges.

## Regulatory context

- 5.2 Requirements for instructors and examiners supporting balloon pilot licensing are set out in UK Part-BFCL Subparts FI and FE, while ANO licences are covered under ANO Schedule 8, with details for Examiners set out in Standards Document 40: Authorisation of Balloon & Airship Examiners.
- 5.3 There are 84 Balloon Instructors in the UK supporting approximately 400 balloon pilots, and a flow of about 50-80 students producing 20-30 newly qualified balloon pilots per year.
- 5.4 The Balloon Examiner cadre has 18 examiners who fulfil the requirements of Standards Document 40 and Part-BFCL Subpart FE. Of these, 12 examiners are qualified to examine candidates for the CPL(B), and 9 are qualified to examine candidates for the BPL Commercial Operation Rating.
- 5.5 The average age of the Balloon Examiners is 67 years, so succession planning to maintain the sector is clearly a consideration. There might already be an issue with the shortage of qualified balloon examiners in the UK, with anecdotal evidence of individuals finding it difficult to obtain the services of an examiner to meet revalidation requirements.

## Topics discussed

- 5.6 The working group discussed and recommended proposals for changes relating to the instructor and examiner requirements across the following topics:
- a) Instructor training requirements for instructing pilots seeking the commercial operation rating.
  - b) Proposal for 'Assistant Instructors' for instructing student pilots seeking the Balloon Pilot Licence.
  - c) Instructor requirements for the extension of privileges to additional classes of balloons.
  - d) Examiner requirements for examining pilots seeking/maintaining the commercial operation rating (including CPB privileges).
-

- e) Examiner requirements for the extension of privileges to additional classes of balloons.
- f) Senior examiner requirements.

## **A. Commercial operation instructor training**

- 5.7 Currently BPL holders wishing to become FI(B)s must comply with BFCL.300, which stipulates that pilots must hold a BPL including privileges, ratings and certificates for which the instruction is to be provided; be entitled to act as PIC in the balloons on which flight instruction is undertaken; and hold a valid FI(B) certificate. BFCL.315 sets out privileges and conditions for conducting flight instruction, and BFCL.320 stipulates prerequisites and requirements.
- 5.8 Under the ANO system, PPL(BA)s wishing to conduct instruction in balloons had to undertake the BBAC Instructor Training Course which has been evolved to comply with Part-BFCL.
- 5.9 The working group took the view that the general instructor requirements as currently set out in Part-BFCL are appropriate and do not require any change.
- 5.10 However, there was agreement that the requirement in Part-BFCL for training for instructing/examining in commercial operations needs to be enhanced, and that the experience requirements for instructors instructing pilots aspiring to give instruction for CPB operations should be significantly upgraded.
- 5.11 For commercial operations, participants argued that there is no specific training requirement or course for instructing for the commercial operation rating.
- 5.12 For instructing taking place in a CPB environment (not when training candidates towards the initial granting of the commercial operation rating), the general experience prerequisites were considered to be inadequate given the unique demands and risks associated with CPB.

### **Proposals and rationale**

- 5.13 The working group suggested introducing a requirement for commercial operations instructors to undertake the training course along the lines of what is currently required under BFCL.315(a)(3) for night rating or tethered flight rating. The group felt that there should be content mirroring this specifically for the Commercial Operation rating.
- 5.14 Commercial ballooning experts within the working group argued that instructors training within a CPB environment should have minimum experience both as PIC in CPB line flying, and as PIC in the classes and hot-air group sizes in which instruction is taking place.
- 5.15 There is already an ATO/DTO training course that FI(B) applicants must complete in accordance with BFCL.330(b), to which they must first pass a pre-

entry assessment under BFCL.330(a) to assess their ability to take the course. The syllabus for this training is provided under AMC1 BFCL.330(b), and such new material in the training syllabus covering commercial operations would need to be created, but this could mirror existing material in the syllabus at Exercises 18 and 19 for tethered flight and night flying respectively. This material could be developed using the framework of those exercises as a starting point, but adding any additional material based on what we develop for the CPB refresher course for commercial pilots.

- 5.16 As regards the prerequisite experience for instructing in the CPB environment, there was considerable discussion over how this should be captured in the regulations. Some argued that other provisions in the regulations already achieve this; while others asserted that a clear minimum number of hours of CPB PIC time should be entrenched in the regulations.

### **Issues and discussion**

- 5.17 There was some opposition to the proposed instructor training requirements for commercial operations.
- 5.18 There was considerable discussion about an appropriate minimum qualifying experience for instructors providing training within the CPB environment. The hot-air balloon group size progression is already covered in the general commercial rating requirements, where commercial balloon pilots will have to demonstrate minimum PIC hours in CPB for each successive progression (if wishing to undertake CPB in the additional group).
- 5.19 There was a view that there should be a minimum level of commercial experience in each hot-air group size prior to instruction in that group. This protects against someone immediately instructing on a new (to them) group size without gaining any prior CPB experience in that group. The suggestions were:
- Number of hours in CPB operations: 100 hours has been suggested, while others suggested as many as 400,
  - Number of hours in the hot-air balloon size group: 50 hours has been suggested, while others have suggested 75 hours.

### **Recommendation**

- 5.20 The majority of the working group supported the proposed additions requiring FI(B) candidates seeking to instruct for commercial ratings to undergo a specific training course delivered by an ATO/DTO. We will develop the syllabus details as part of AMC. Our recommendation is to revise Subpart FI as follows:

### **BFCL.315 FI(B) certificate – Privileges and conditions**

(a) Subject to compliance of applicants with point BFCL.320 and with the following conditions, an FI(B) certificate shall be issued with privileges to conduct flight instruction for:

(1) a BPL;

(2) the extension of privileges to further classes and groups of balloons provided that the applicant has completed at least 15 hours of flight time as PIC in each relevant class;

(3) a night rating or a tethered flight rating or a commercial operation rating, provided that the applicant has received specific training in providing instruction for the relevant rating at an ATO or at a DTO; and

(4) an FI(B) certificate, provided that the applicant has:

(i) completed at least 50 hours of flight instruction on balloons; and

(ii) in accordance with the procedures established for that purpose by the competent authority, conducted at least one hour of flight instruction for the FI(B) certificate under the supervision and to the satisfaction of an FI(B) who is qualified in accordance with this subparagraph and nominated by the head of training of the ATO or the DTO.

5.21 The hot air balloon group size that an FI(B) can instruct in is already controlled by the ratings, groups and experience that the individual holds. For instructors of commercial operation rating candidates, either first issue or those undergoing refresher training, we believe that there should be a minimum number of hours of PIC flying in CPB operations. There is currently a debate about how many hours this should be:

- Some members of the working group suggested this should be 50 hours overall;
- Others suggest this should be at least 200 hours overall including 50 hours per hot-air balloon group.
- On balance, the CAA thinks that 50 hours provides an appropriate level of safety assurance when considering a candidate must still pass a skill test or proficiency check with an appropriately qualified FE(B).

5.22 In terms of this approach, an amendment to BFCL.315 as follows could achieve this:

### **BFCL.315 FI(B) certificate – Privileges and conditions**

(a) Subject to compliance of applicants with point BFCL.320 and with the following conditions, an FI(B) certificate shall be issued with privileges to conduct flight instruction for:

(1) a BPL;

(2) the extension of privileges to further classes and groups of balloons provided that the applicant has completed at least 15 hours of flight time as PIC in each relevant class. For the extension of privileges to Commercial Operations, a minimum of 50 hours as PIC of commercial passenger flights;

- 5.23 There remained disagreement regarding the minimum qualifying experience:
- Number of hours in CPB operations: 400 hours
  - At least 200 hours overall including 50 hours per hot-air balloon group.

### Impact and transitional considerations

- 5.24 Although there is no equivalent provision within the ANO requirements for the CPL(B), it is very likely that CPL(B) holders will already have met the minimum number of hours of CPB operations experience requirement.
- 5.25 However, the existing CPL(B) TK does not cover the mandatory CPB instructing training proposed here. An appropriate transitional arrangement would be needed to ensure that instructors comply before this proposed amendment comes into force.

#### Question

Do you agree with our approach of requiring instructors intending to instruct on commercial ratings to undergo specific training at an ATO/DTO, along the lines of what is already required for tether and night ratings?

Yes      No – leave BFCL unchanged      Undecided      No view/don't know

Do you have any specific views on what should be covered in the training syllabus?

#### Question

Do you agree with the view that instructors for the commercial operation rating should have a minimum number of 50 hours of PIC flying in CPB operations?

Yes      No – leave BFCL unchanged      Undecided      No view/don't know

## B. 'Assistant Instructors' for BPL candidates

- 5.26 We suggested in Chapter 3, Section A above, introducing an 'Assistant Instructor' authorisation for supervising most of the BPL candidates' dual flight training.

### Proposals and rationale

- 5.27 To relax the burden on FI(B)s while still ensuring that BPL candidates receive a sufficient number of hours of good quality, standardised dual instruction, there

was a proposal in the working group to create a new authorisation tentatively termed 'Assistant Instructor'. These would be used for initial training for the BPL only, that would be able to undertake all but at least a minimum number of hours/flights of instruction that would need to be conducted by FI(B)s.

- 5.28 The 'Assistant Instructor' authorisation would be created in Part-BFCL and have relaxed prerequisites, training, issue and revalidation:
- a) Prerequisite experience: they would require 50 hours of PIC balloon flying.
  - b) Training: the 'Assistant Instructor' training course at an ATO or DTO (syllabus would be developed as AMC). This would be light touch in nature that could be delivered in a short time (e.g. one day).
  - c) Privileges: provide training for the issue of a BPL excluding areas where an FI(B) qualification is specifically required. The proposal mandates a minimum of 4 hours and 4 dual flights with an FI(B), with the balance of hours required being with either an FI(B) or an Assistant Instructor.
  - d) Issuing process: an 'Assistant Instructor' authorisation would be issued by an ATO or DTO, for conducting training to BPL candidates registered with that ATO/DTO.
  - e) Revalidation: a light-touch requirement, possibly by the ATO/DTO that issued the authorisation using criteria that would be developed under new AMC.
- 5.29 Such an 'Assistant Instructor' would conduct most of the dual flight training for BPL candidates. BFCL.130(b) setting out the BPL training instruction would be amended so that of the 12 hours of dual flight instruction required, only at least 4 hours and 4 flights would need to be undertaken with an FI(B).
- 5.30 This 'Assistant Instructor' authorisation could have the added benefit of creating an experience pathway for progression to becoming an FI(B).

### Issues and discussion

- 5.31 There was some objection in the working group to this proposal. The arguments and counterarguments related to its merits as a solution for BPL training are described in Chapter 3, Section A above.
- 5.32 In relation to the workings of this authorisation itself, there was also a view that the 'Assistant Instructor' training course would be too burdensome. It is important to reemphasise here that the proposal is not intended to be similar to restricted flight instructor privileges used elsewhere in GA. The syllabus proposed would be as accessible and as light touch as possible, aimed at assuring some degree standardisation for balloon private operations dual training, and delivered through a short ground school course.

- 5.33 There was also a point raised about the ‘Assistant Instructor’ revalidation and recency requirements. Again, the aim was to make this as light touch as possible, and that a 24-month period was considered most appropriate. It was also suggested that a recency of at least one training flight should be conducted in a 12-month period in order to maintain the ‘Assistant Instructor’ authorisation.

### Recommendation

- 5.34 Despite these objections, the majority of the working group recommended that this proposal be taken forward to consultation. Regulatory amendments to create such a category would be relatively straightforward:
- A new BFCL.350 would be created setting out the ‘Assistant Instructor’ authorisation, its privileges, prerequisites and training that should be provided, and revalidation requirements. AMCs to this section would set out the syllabus for such training, and the revalidation process.
  - BFCL.300(a)(1)(ii) on flight instructor certificates would be amended to add the ‘Assistant Instructor’ authorisation.
  - Several consequential amendments would be necessary in BFCL.050 on recording of flight time, allowing ‘Assistant Instructors’ to log flight time during which they act as a supervisor of dual BPL flight training.

#### Question

Do you agree with our approach of introducing an ‘Assistant Instructor’ authorisation (or another title to be determined), and changing the minimum required number of dual training flights and hours to be undertaken with a FI(B) to at least 4 hours and 4 flights (instead of 12 hours)?

Yes

No – leave BFCL unchanged

Undecided

No view/don’t know

Do you have any comments on this proposal?

## C. Instructors extending privileges to additional balloon classes

- 5.35 It was suggested that the 15 hours of flight time in an additional class prior to extension of privileges for instructing by an FI(B) in that class, as set out in BFCL.315(a)(2), is not sufficient.

### Proposals and rationale

- 5.36 To ensure that an FI(B) has sufficient experience prior to instructing on additional classes, it is proposed that the minimum hours required is increased to either 20 or 30 hours on the additional class and a minimum number of 15 flights on the additional class is added.



- 5.37 This adjustment to the current requirement would help to ensure that the FI(B) has experience of the additional class, prior to instructing. While this is important for all additional classes, it is pertinent to gas balloons where it is possible to do 15 (or 30) hours of flight time in one flight, but that would not give the instructor significant experience in various aspects of the aircraft (for example, set up, take off and landing).

### Issues and discussion

- 5.38 There was consent within the group that this requirement should be adjusted due to the differences between the classes of balloons.

### Recommendation

- 5.39 The group recommend adjusting the requirements to include a minimum of at least 10 flights, and the minimum hours to be either 20 or 30 hours. Following further discussion, we favour setting this at 15 flights and 30 hours.
- 5.40 In terms of this approach, an amendment to BFCL.315 along the following lines could achieve this (note that there is a proposed addition to sub-paragraph (2) in Section A above, this recommendation is separate from that and does not change it):

#### **BFCL.315 FI(B) certificate – Privileges and conditions**

(a) Subject to compliance of applicants with point BFCL.320 and with the following conditions, an FI(B) certificate shall be issued with privileges to conduct flight instruction for:

(1) a BPL;

(2) the extension of privileges to further classes and groups of balloons provided that the applicant has completed at least 15 flights and 30 hours of flight time as PIC in each relevant class.

- 5.41 No member of the working group offered any alternative to this recommendation.

#### Question

Do you agree with our proposal to adjust the requirements for an instructor wishing to extend their privileges to instruct in additional classes, by changing the minimum requirements to be at least 15 flights and 30 hours of flight time (instead of 15 hours)?

Yes

No – leave BFCL unchanged

Undecided

No view/don't know

Do you have any comments?

## **D. Examiner requirements for commercial operations**

- 5.42 The working group looked at the current requirements for balloon examiners, including those examining candidates for the attaining and maintenance of commercial privileges, and considered possible changes.



5.43 Examiners under Part-BFCL are covered in Subpart FE, while the ANO system relies on CAA Standards Document 40 which sets out detailed requirements for examiners as well as Type Rating Examiners (TREs).

5.44 The differences between the two regimes are quite significant, as summarised in Table 5.1 below.

**Table 5.1: Comparison of examiner requirements for commercial privileges for ANO and Part-BFCL systems**

	<b>ANO Commercial Examiner</b>	<b>ANO TRE</b>	<b>Part-BFCL FE(B)</b>
Hours required	600	300	250
Hours required on CPB flights	300	200	Not specified
Experience for Assessment of Competence for issue of instructor certificate	(Privilege granted at PPL(BA) examiner level)		350
Other experience required	1 year as PPL(BA) examiner		Current base licence FE(B) specific standardisation course module for commercial operations
Other requirements	Commercial Assessment of Competence Interview Board with Appointments Committee Induction training with an examiner Attendance at Panel of Examiners meetings	Commercial Assessment of Competence Interview Board with Appointments Committee Induction training with an examiner	Specific Assessment of Competence for Commercial Operations Skill Test/Proficiency Check

### Proposals and rationale

5.45 The group took the view that there is scope to increase the Part-BFCL requirements within reason to bring it more into line with some aspects of the ANO system. While most of the requirements for Part-BFCL seem appropriate, the experience requirements in BFCL.415 were observed as being excessively low for commercial operations, especially CPB, compared to the ANO system. While 600 hours under the ANO system was thought to be excessive, 500 hours was considered an appropriate compromise between the two regimes.

5.46 Moreover, the regulations have limited additional requirements for examiners conducting skill tests and proficiency checks for attaining/maintaining CPB privileges. This too was felt to be insufficient considering the unique risk characteristics of CPB and the importance of examiner contact in ensuring an appropriate application of standards. The working group supported:

- a minimum CPB experience of 200 hours as PIC on CPB operations;
- a minimum of at least 50 to 100 hours as PIC on CPB operations on the hot-air balloon group concerned, or on the group concerned and on larger groups combined; and
- this should be in addition to the specific training on an examiner standardisation course.

### Issues and discussion

- 5.47 There was little opposition to the proposal of increasing the minimum prerequisite experience to something more in line with the ANO system. While there have been concerns about creating too much of a barrier for new examiners in the midst of an examiner shortage, the overwhelming view in the working group was that examiners should be required to have sufficient experience, and to not dilute standards in addressing workforce shortages.
- 5.48 However, the question of CPB experience both generally and at hot-air group level remains, with the number of hours in each group level being a matter of contention. It was agreed that a commercial examiner with minimal CPB experience in larger balloons lacks the breadth of experience. Following further discussion, introducing a 100 hour minimum on the group that they examine on was considered an appropriate compromise.
- 5.49 There was also a question as to whether examiners should also possess prerequisite experience as an instructor, as is the case presently under the ANO system. In Standards Document 40, for example a PPL(BA) examiner must have completed not less than 10 hours flying instruction experience and have successfully trained 1 PPL(BA) candidate within 2 years preceding the date of application. Also in that document, what is termed a 'Professional Pilot Licence (Balloons) Examiner' [a CPL(B) examiner] must have held the duties of a PPL(BA) examiner for at least a year, which has those instructing prerequisites.
- 5.50 There was considerable debate around what this prerequisite is aiming to achieve.
- If the aim is developing skills as an examiner, examining and instructing are two entirely different activities requiring different skills, therefore imposing an instructing prerequisite for examining will not be the most efficient approach. Having a good understanding of the instructional process can assist an examiner in their ability to assess a candidate, as well as this understanding enabling the examiner to advise the candidate in the case of an unsuccessful examination, in order to promote a future positive outcome.
  - If the aim is developing the appropriate amount of competence from practical experience, then this could be achieved by minimum PIC time as a commercial or CPB pilot both generally and in the relevant hot-air group sizes.

## Recommendation

- 5.51 It is recommended that all commercial rating examiners (particularly those examining in the CPB environment) possess:
- a) Minimum 500 hours experience as PIC in balloons (for all examiners);
  - b) Minimum 200 hours experience as PIC of CPB operations (when examining for the commercial operation rating and for CPB proficiency checks);
  - c) Minimum 100 hours experience as PIC of CPB operations in the group size being examined (when examining for the commercial operation rating and for CPB proficiency checks).
- 5.52 This would be achieved by the following amendments to BFCL.415:

### **BFCL.415 FE(B) certificate – Privileges and conditions**

Subject to compliance of the applicant with point BFCL.420 and with the following conditions, an FE(B) certificate shall be issued upon application with privileges to conduct:

- (a) skill tests and proficiency checks for the BPL and skill tests for the extension of the privileges to another balloon class, provided that the applicant has completed ~~250~~ 500 hours of flight time as pilot on balloons, including 50 hours of flight instruction covering the full syllabus of a BPL training course;
- (b) skill tests and proficiency checks for the commercial operation rating as specified in point BFCL.215, provided that the applicant ~~complies with the experience requirements set out in paragraph (a)~~ has completed 500 hours of flight time as pilot on balloons, including at least 200 hours on Commercial Passenger Ballooning operations, and has received specific training during an examiner standardisation course in accordance with point BFCL.430. Validity per hot air balloon group is subject to having completed at least 100 hours Commercial Passenger Ballooning operations on the group concerned (or on the group concerned and on larger groups combined).
- (c) assessments of competence for the issue of an FI(B) certificate, provided that the applicant has:
  - (1) completed ~~350~~ 500 hours of flight time as pilot on balloons, including 5 hours of instruction to an applicant for the FI(B) certificate;
  - (2) received specific training during an examiner standardisation course in accordance with point BFCL.430.

- 5.53 No member of the working group offered any alternative to this recommendation.

### **Impact and transitional considerations**

- 5.54 As the requirements for ANO CPL(B) FEs are similar, examiners who hold ANO CPL(B) FE ratings already comply. However examiners trained under the FE(B) system may not be able to comply.
  
- 5.55 CPL(B) examiners would be able to comply with the enhanced requirements without any transitional measures. The numbers of Part-BFCL FE(B)s are likely to be very small, so these could be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

**Question**

Do you agree with our proposals to increase the requirements in Part-BFCL for examiners undertaking examining of pilots seeking Commercial Passenger Ballooning privileges to bring them more into line with the ANO requirements they will replace?

Namely:

- 1) Increase the minimum experience as PIC in balloons from 250 hours to 500 hours (slightly less than the ANO CPL(B) currently requires, to apply to all examiners);

Yes

No – leave BFCL unchanged

Undecided

No view/don't know

**Question**

Do you agree with our proposals to increase the requirements in Part-BFCL for examiners undertaking examining of pilots seeking Commercial Passenger Ballooning privileges to bring them more into line with the ANO requirements they will replace?

Namely:

- 2) Introduce a minimum 200 hours experience as PIC of CPB operations (when examining for the commercial operation rating and for commercial passenger ballooning proficiency checks);

Yes

No – leave BFCL unchanged

Undecided

No view/don't know

**Question**

Do you agree with our proposals to increase the requirements in Part-BFCL for examiners undertaking examining of pilots seeking Commercial Passenger Ballooning privileges to bring them more into line with the ANO requirements they will replace?

Namely:

- 3) Introduce a minimum 100 hours experience as PIC of CPB operations in the hot-air balloon group size being examined (when examining for the commercial operation rating and for commercial passenger ballooning proficiency checks).

Yes

No – leave BFCL unchanged

Undecided

No view/don't know

Do you have any comments?

## **E. Examiners extending privileges to additional balloon classes**

- 5.56 Following the discussion about instructor requirements for additional classes detailed in Section D, the working group discussed the requirements for balloon examiners wishing to extend their privileges to undertake skill tests for the extension of privileges to another balloon class.

- 5.57 Part-BFCL.415(a) has overall requirements that have to be met in order to undertake skill tests for the extension of privileges to another balloon class, but does not have any requirements that are specific to any additional classes. The ANO system, in addition to a requirement of 500 hours in hot air balloons, requires 100 hours in the specific class of balloons (gas, hot-air airship or combination).

### Proposals and rationale

- 5.58 The group took the view that there is scope to increase the Part-BFCL requirements in this area, but no specific proposals were made by the group. The CAA have considered this further, and following further discussion, propose that a minimum of 25 flights and 50 hours of flight time in the additional class should be required, prior to the examiner gaining the privilege to undertake skill tests in the additional class.

### Issues and discussion

- 5.59 There was concern that if this was not reviewed, there could be a requirement at the instructor level for instruction on additional classes, but no requirement at the examiner level. This could give rise to a situation where an examiner who holds the additional BPL class rating but has minimal experience on that class is able to examine in the additional class.

### Recommendation

- 5.60 The CAA recommend that a requirement of a minimum of 25 flights and 50 hours of flight time on the additional class prior to extension of privileges is added.
- 5.61 This would be achieved by the following amendment to BFCL.415 (noting that there are proposed changes in the sub-paragraphs which are detailed in Section D above, and which are included in the regulation extract below):

#### **BFCL.415 FE(B) certificate – Privileges and conditions**

Subject to compliance of the applicant with point BFCL.420 and with the following conditions, an FE(B) certificate shall be issued upon application with privileges to conduct:

- (a) skill tests and proficiency checks for the BPL and skill tests for the extension of the privileges to another balloon class, provided that the applicant has completed ~~250~~ 500 hours of flight time as pilot on balloons, including 50 hours of flight instruction covering the full syllabus of a BPL training course, and for the extension of privileges to another class, has completed 25 flights and 50 hours of flight time as pilot on that class of balloon;

[No changes relating to this recommendation in the remaining paragraphs.]

- 5.62 No member of the working group offered any alternative to this recommendation.

**Question**

Do you agree with our proposal to increase the requirements in Part-BFCL for examiners undertaking examining in an additional balloon class by requiring a minimum of 25 flights and 50 hours of flight time as pilot on that additional class?

Yes

No – leave BFCL unchanged

Undecided

No view/don't know

Do you have any comments?

**F. Senior examiner requirements**

- 5.63 The assessment of competence of examiners themselves is undertaken by Senior Examiners, an authorisation issued by us at our decision. This is currently provided by BFCL.445 and their validity, revalidation and renewal requirements in BFCL.460. The regulations include AMC setting out an assessment of competence syllabus including briefing, conduct of skill test, and/or proficiency check required to record and issue the appropriate certificate.
- 5.64 However, there is currently some inconsistency over who oversees these activities. BFCL.445 describes the role of a Senior Examiner 'specifically authorised by the CAA' (or a CAA inspector) to conduct assessments of competence. The requirements for this qualification of Senior Examiner are embodied in AMC1 BFCL.445; BFCL.460. However BFCL.460 for revalidation/renewal does not mention this, instead referring to 'an examiner specifically authorised to do so by the CAA' (not the Senior Examiner from BFCL.445) for conducting the 24-month skill test, proficiency check or assessment of competence, and 'an ATO or a DTO approved by the CAA' for providing an examiner refresher course.
- 5.65 Moreover, although the final decision on extending this Senior Examiner privilege rests with us, the AMC providing the Senior Examiner requirements lack clarity or regulatory certainty on what constitutes an acceptable level of experience that a senior examiner should reasonably be expected to possess. The AMC states 'a level acceptable to the CAA' and this should be reworked to something clearer.

**Proposal and rationale**

- 5.66 An argument has been made within the working group that the 'Senior Examiner' role should be used for both initial issue and revalidation/renewal of examiner certificates.
- 5.67 In relation to the experience requirements for Senior Examiners, the following were considered appropriate by the working group:
- 1,000 hours of PIC flight time, of which

- [for examiners seeking privileges to examine CPB candidates] , 200 hours minimum flight time in CPB operations. There was considerable debate within the working group, with a suggestion that this should be as high as 500.

5.68 Beyond experience, there was a view that progression to Senior Examiner authorisation should not be based automatically on experience, but should remain a decision by us.

### Issues and discussion

- 5.69 Minimum requirements for Senior Examiners seeking privileges to examine commercial non-CPB candidates: given that someone initially wishing to attain the commercial operation rating would be assessed to be capable of undertaking CPB flying (even if they have less than 100 hours PIC at the time), an examiner with BFCL.415(b) able to assess skill tests and proficiency checks for the commercial operation rating is required. There is no need to differentiate for CPB vs non-CPB for a FE(B), and therefore no need for a SE(B) to have this differentiation.
- 5.70 There is also a question as to whether the Senior Examiner requirements should be set out in its own heading in the regulations, rather than as part of the Examiner assessment of competence and validity, revalidation and renewal sections. This would provide greater clarity of the role of Senior Examiners.

### Recommendation

- 5.71 The working group recommended rewording the regulations so that:
- a) Senior Examiners (and our inspectors) are the only individuals who conduct FE(B) assessments of competence, both for initial issue and revalidation/renewal of examiner certificates; and
  - b) Senior Examiners have a minimum experience requirement as proposed above; and
  - c) Senior Examiners are appointed by us as we require.
- 5.72 These changes could be achieved with the following amendment to BFCL.460 and a new BFCL.470 setting out possible wording for rules and guidance material in relation to Senior Examiners:

#### **BFCL.460 FE(B) certificate – Validity, revalidation and renewal**

- (a) An FE(B) certificate shall be valid for five years.
- (b) An FE(B) certificate shall be revalidated if its holder has:
  - (1) during the validity period of the FE(B) certificate, completed an examiner refresher course which is provided either by the CAA or by an ATO or a DTO and approved by the CAA, during which the holder shall receive theoretical



knowledge instruction for refreshing and updating the knowledge relevant for balloon examiners; and

(2) within the last 24 months preceding the end of the validity period of the certificate, conducted one skill test, proficiency check or assessment of competence under the supervision and to the satisfaction of an inspector from the CAA or a senior examiner specifically authorised to do so by the CAA.

**BFCL.470 SE(B) certificate**

The CAA shall appoint, where required, Senior Examiners that are specifically authorised for assessments of competence of FE(B)s and oversee their validity, revalidation and renewal.

**AMC1 ~~BFCL.445; BFCL.460 FE(B)~~ BFCL.470 SE(B) certificate**

[Text as current AMC1 BFCL.445; BFCL.460]

**GM1 BFCL.470 SE(B) certificate**

An applicant for the SE(B) certificate should have completed 1000 hours of flight time as pilot on balloons, including, when assessing for the purpose of the issue or revalidation of examining privileges for the commercial operations rating, at least 500 hours on Commercial Passenger Ballooning operations.

**Question**

Do you agree with our approach to reword the regulations on the assessment of competence for examiners so that:

- 1) Senior Examiners, in addition to our inspectors, are the only individuals who conduct FE(B) assessments of competence, both for initial issue and revalidation/renewal of examiner certificates;

Yes      No – leave BFCL unchanged      Undecided      No view/don't know

**Question**

Do you agree with our approach to reword the regulations on the assessment of competence for examiners so that:

- 2) In addition to specific authorisation by us, Senior Examiners must have a minimum experience requirement of 1,000 hours of PIC flight time, of which [for senior examiners seeking privileges to examine commercial operations candidates] at least 500 hours PIC flight time in CPB operations,

Yes      No – leave BFCL unchanged      Undecided      No view/don't know

Do you have any comments?

5.73 No member of the working group offered any alternative recommendation.

## Chapter 6

## Theoretical knowledge changes

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- 6.1 The aeroplanes and sailplanes working groups have discussed changes to some aspects of the theoretical knowledge requirements for their respective areas, and we consider these sufficiently relevant to balloons as to propose them here.
- 6.2 At this stage, we are looking at rules dealing with TK namely exam procedures and validity periods, which are set out in regulation. Syllabus material is detailed in Acceptable Means of Compliance and, as we described in Chapter 2 above, we will be reviewing any AMC material later in 2024.

### Exam procedures

- 6.3 We carefully considered the regulations associated with the TK examinations, to try to make it easier for training organisations to integrate with the flight training and to make the examinations less of a disincentive to complete the course.
- 6.4 Currently BFCL.215 lists 9 examination subjects for the BPL, including 5 'common subjects' such as Air Law and Navigation, and four 'aircraft category subjects' such as Principles of Flight and Operational Procedures. The AMC covers details about the learning objectives covered in each subject.
- 6.5 We are considering reducing the number of examinations within the existing system by combining some of these subjects. There are some subjects that could be brought together which would not significantly increase the scope of that syllabus for example Air Law and Operational Procedures. There are some subjects if brought together could result in a disproportionately large scope for the candidate to learn prior to attempting the examination.

#### Question

Do you agree with reducing the number of examinations by combining those subjects that can be brought together? Eg say Air Law and Communications.

Yes

No – leave it unchanged

Undecided

No view/don't know

- 6.6 We considered following suggestions in other working groups in this project bringing together all of the common and aircraft specific examinations into two separate large examinations. However we have concerns over the integration of theoretical knowledge and flight training and the size of the syllabus for two such examinations, and the significant effect it would have on our examination system.
- 6.7 BFCL.135 is drafted in such a way as to allow us to set out in AMC the way these subjects are covered in examination papers, including the number of

papers, the number of questions per paper and their duration. We will be exploring this in more detail when we develop AMC later in 2024.

- 6.8 We are considering removing the requirement in BFCL.135(b)(2) for the Head of Training at a training organisation to recommend the candidate for examinations towards the BPL. We believe we can remove this requirement, because a training organisation will only book an examination for a candidate on the system when they are ready.

#### Question

Do you agree with removing the requirement for the Head of Training at a training organisation to recommend the candidate for examinations?

Yes

No – leave it unchanged

Undecided

No view/don't know

Do you have any comments on this?

### Validity periods

- 6.9 We are proposing to extend certain validity periods in BFCL.135. We have had to balance this with concerns about skill and knowledge fade, for example if we were to remove the validity periods completely.
- 6.10 We are considering changing the 18-month period in BFCL.135(c)(2) which all examinations must be passed within for the issue of the licence, to a rolling validity period. This means if an examination goes outside of the 18-month period, the candidate does not have to retake all of the examinations again only the one that has fallen outside of the 18-month period.

#### Question

Do you agree with amending the validity period of the examinations to change the 18-month period in which all examinations must be passed within to a rolling validity period?

Yes

No – leave it unchanged

Undecided

No view/don't know

- 6.11 With the data we are now collecting in the eExam system, we have seen a slight increase in the number of candidates who have failed to pass an examination within four attempts.
- 6.12 If an examination candidate fails to pass an examination within four attempts, they forfeit any examination passes they have already and must start again, after a period of theoretical knowledge training.
- 6.13 Many of these student pilots have not continued with their training towards a licence. We would like to better understand why these student pilots are ceasing

their training and if the requirement to retake all the examinations again was a factor.

- 6.14 We would like to explore alternative options to requiring all the examinations to be retaken.

#### Question

In the event that a student fails any one exam four times, is the requirement to retake all of the examinations again a factor in a student pilot stopping their course?

Yes                      No                      Undecided                      No view/don't know

Do you have any comments?

#### Question

Do you have any ideas how we could replace the requirement to retake all the examinations, where a candidate has failed to pass an examination within four attempts?

- 6.15 Moreover, we are considering amending the validity period of the examinations in BFCL.135(d) to change the 24-month period that the theoretical knowledge examinations remain valid for, following their successful completion, to 36 months.

#### Question

Do you agree with amending the validity period of the theoretical knowledge examinations (the period of time that the theoretical knowledge examinations remain valid for licence issue, following their successful completion) from 24 months to 36 months?

Yes                      No – leave BFCL unchanged                      Undecided                      No view/don't know

Do you have any comments about anything to do with the exam proposals?

## APPENDIX A

# Abbreviations

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AMC	Acceptable Means of Compliance
ANO	Air Navigation Order 2016
ATO	Approved Training Organisation
BBAC	British Balloon & Airship Club
BPL	Balloon Pilot Licence
BFCL	Balloon Flight Crew Licensing
CPB	Commercial Passenger Ballooning
CPL(B)	Commercial Pilot Licence (Balloons)
DBO	Declared Balloon Operator
DTO	Declared Training Organisation
EASA	European Aviation Safety Agency
FE(B)	Flight Examiner (Balloons)
FI(B)	Flight Instructor (Balloons)
FOSIA	Fatal or Serious Injury Accident
GA	General Aviation
GM	Guidance Material
PIC	Pilot-in-Command
PPL(BA)	Private Pilot Licence (Balloons & Airships)
SE(B)	Senior Examiner (Balloons)
TK	Theoretical Knowledge
TRE	Type Rating Examiner

## APPENDIX B

## Balloon working group community members

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The Balloons working group comprised the following individuals from the GA community invited to act as subject matter experts (as opposed to representatives of associations or bodies):

- Colin Butter
- Ian Chadwick
- Cary Crawley
- Philip Howarth
- Ann Rich
- Steve Richards
- Paul Spellward
- Mark Stelling

Note that members holding roles within GA associations were invited to share for technical feedback working group discussion papers and proposals within their respective technical panels. This was on the condition that such circulations would include a disclaimer that those papers are for discussion purposes only and did not reflect final CAA views or policy.

## APPENDIX C

## Proposed commercial pilot journeys

Stage	Existing BFCL	Existing ANO	Proposed BFCL Single Commercial Rating with CPB/Non-CPB elements	Proposed BFCL Separate CPB and Commercial Non-Passenger Ratings
Private flying	<b>Pilot issued base BPL for private operations in hot-air Group A</b>	<b>Pilot issued PPL(BA) in hot-air balloons</b>	[No change] <b>Pilot issued BPL for private operations in hot-air Group A</b>	[No change] <b>Pilot issued BPL for private operations in hot-air Group A</b>
Experience-building Training for commercial operations	PIC hour-building to 50hr gate Training at own initiative or with operator	PIC hour-building to 20hr gate for restricted CPL(B) 60hr gate for full CPL(B) Training at own initiative or with operator	PIC hour-building to 50hr gate [New:] Pilot undertakes ATO/DTO training in commercial operations and 2x training flights with FI(B).	PIC hour-building to 50hr gate [New:] Pilot undertakes ATO/DTO commercial operations training course of least the basic module (CPB module optional) and 2x training flights with FI(B).
Evaluation for commercial operations	Commercial operation rating skill test with FE(B) <b>Re-issue of BPL with Commercial Operation Rating at hot-air Group A (no CPB flights if licence &amp; operator proficiency check not passed)</b>	CPL(B) Group A General Flight Test with Examiner and TK exams CPL(B) issue with Group A rating (restricted or full based on experience)	Commercial operation rating skill test with FE(B) (no TK) <b>Re-issue of BPL with Commercial Operation Rating at Group A (no CPB flights if less than 100 hours PIC and no licence / operator proficiency check)</b>	Commercial Non-CPB Rating skill test with FE(B) (TK assessed in ATO/DTO course) <b>Re-issue of BPL with Commercial Non-CPB Rating at Group A (no CPB flights)</b>
Experience-building to conduct CPB operations	No specific hour-building or gateway specified in licensing regulations.	No specific hour-building or gateway specified in licensing regulations.	Commercial Non-CPB pilot: not applicable [New:] PIC hour-building to 100hr gate in hot-air group A	[New:] PIC hour-building to 100hr gate in hot-air group A



Stage	Existing BFCL	Existing ANO	Proposed BFCL Single Commercial Rating with CPB/Non-CPB elements	Proposed BFCL Separate CPB and Commercial Non-Passenger Ratings
Evaluation for CPB	<p><i>Either</i> proficiency check with FE(B) <i>or</i> refresher course ATO/DTO followed by 1x flight with FI(B)</p> <p><b>Pilot can now exercise CPB privileges in hot-air Group A</b></p>	<p>Operator training <i>and</i> Operator Proficiency Check with Examiner before release to passenger line flying</p> <p><b>Pilot can now exercise CPB privileges in hot-air Group A</b></p>	<p>Commercial Non-CPB pilot: not applicable</p> <p>[New:] Prospective CPB candidate: (if not already done) undertake ATO/DTO CPB training module, which includes 2x training flights with FI(B). Proficiency check required with FE(B) [no longer optional and no refresher course/FI(B) flight as alternative].</p> <p><b>Pilot now qualified to undertake CPB operations in hot-air Group A – cleared to line flying by operator</b></p>	<p>[New:] (If not already done) undertakes ATO/DTO CPB training module, which includes 2x training flights with FI(B). Proficiency check required with FE(B) prior to issue of CPB Rating [no longer optional and no refresher course/FI(B) flight as alternative].</p> <p><b>Re-issue of BPL with CPB Rating privileges in hot-air Group A</b></p> <p>Clearance to line flying by operator.</p>

Stage	Existing BFCL	Existing ANO	Proposed BFCL Single Commercial Rating with CPB/Non-CPB elements	Proposed BFCL Separate CPB and Commercial Non-Passenger Ratings
Group progression	<p>[Addition of group not linked to commercial operation rating: may do this before/after issue of commercial rating]</p> <p>PIC hour-building to gate of 100hr in Group A for Group B (with or without passengers)</p> <p>Subsequently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ gate of 200hr in Groups A/B for Group C; and</li> <li>▪ gate of 300hr in Groups A/B/C for Group D]</li> </ul> <p>2x training flights with FI(B) for each Group progression</p>	<p>PIC hour-building but no specific gates or training.</p> <p>Commercial General Flight Test with Examiner for each Group progressed</p> <p>CPL(B) re-issue Group B and subsequently Group C</p> <p>Operator training and Operator Proficiency Check (with examiner) before release by operator to line flying in that Group</p> <p><b>Pilot can now exercise CPB privileges in each additional hot-air Group</b></p>	<p>[Addition of group not linked to commercial operation ratings: may do this before/after issue of commercial rating]</p> <p>New: PIC hour-building to gate of 110hr total/10hr CPB flying in Group A for Group B</p> <p>Subsequently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ gate of 200hr total/20hr CPB in Groups A/B (of which at least 10hr in B) for Group C; and</li> <li>▪ gate of 300hr total/30hr CPB in Groups A/B/C (of which at least 10hr in C) for Group D].</li> </ul>	<p>[Addition of group not linked to commercial operation ratings: may do this before/after issue of commercial rating]</p> <p>New: PIC hour-building to gate of 110hr total/10hr CPB flying in Group A for Group B</p> <p>Subsequently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ gate of 200hr total/20hr CPB in Groups A/B (of which at least 10hr in B) for Group C; and</li> <li>▪ gate of 300hr total/30hr CPB in Groups A/B/C (of which at least 10hr in C) for Group D].</li> </ul>

Stage	Existing BFCL	Existing ANO	Proposed BFCL Single Commercial Rating with CPB/Non-CPB elements	Proposed BFCL Separate CPB and Commercial Non-Passenger Ratings
	<p>Licence reissue with additional group privilege</p> <p><b>Pilot can now exercise private privileges in additional Group</b></p> <p>Operator training and Licence and Operator Proficiency Check (with an examiner) before release by operator to line flying in that Group</p> <p><b>Pilot can now exercise CPB privileges in additional Group</b></p>		<p>2x training flights with FI(B) for each Group progression</p> <p>Licence reissue with additional group privilege</p> <p><b>Pilot now qualified to undertake private operations in additional Group</b></p> <p>Operator training and Licence and Operator Proficiency Check (with an examiner) before release by operator to line flying in that Group</p> <p><b>Pilot now qualified to undertake CPB operations in additional Group</b></p>	<p>2x training flights with FI(B) for each Group progression</p> <p>Licence reissue with additional group privilege</p> <p><b>Pilot now qualified to exercise private privileges in additional Group</b></p> <p>Operator training and Licence and Operator Proficiency Check (with an examiner) before release by operator to line flying in that Group</p> <p><b>Pilot now qualified to undertake CPB operations in additional Group</b></p>
Maintaining privileges to conduct non-CPB operations	<p>24 months prior to flight, at least 6 hours of flight time including 10 take-offs and landings and</p> <p>Within the last 48 months prior to flight, at least 1x training flight with FI(B)</p>	<p>Either:</p> <p>13 months prior to flight: Licence Proficiency Check with Examiner; or</p> <p>While rating is still valid, examiner endorsement of logbook evidence of 3 hours and 5x flights and 1x tethered flight in balloons in previous 13 months.</p>	<p>[No change]</p> <p>24 months prior to flight, at least 6 hours of flight time including 10 take-offs and landings and</p> <p>Within the last 48 months prior to flight, at least 1x training flight with FI(B)</p>	<p>[No change]</p> <p>24 months prior to flight, at least 6 hours of flight time including 10 take-offs and landings and</p> <p>Within the last 48 months prior to flight, at least 1x training flight with FI(B)</p>
Maintaining privileges to conduct CPB operations	<p>6 months prior to flight: <i>Either</i> 3x flights in balloons or 1x flight under supervision of FI(B).</p> <p>2 years prior to flight: <i>Either</i> proficiency check with FE(B) or refresher course ATO/DTO followed by 1x flight with FI(B)</p>	<p>3 months prior to flight: 3x flights in balloons.</p> <p>13 months prior to flight: Licence and Operator Proficiency Checks with Examiner before release to passenger line flying</p>	<p>6 months prior to flight: <i>Either</i> 3x flights in balloons or 1x flight under supervision of FI(B).</p> <p>2 years prior to flight: Proficiency check with FE(B) prior to clearance to line flying (13 months prior to flight if commercial operation rating skill test passed within previous 24 months).</p> <p>5 years prior to flight: CPB ground refresher training with ATO/DTO.</p>	<p>6 months prior to flight: <i>Either</i> 3x flights in balloons or 1x flight under supervision of FI(B).</p> <p>2 years prior to flight: Proficiency check with FE(B) prior to clearance to line flying (13 months prior to flight if CPB Rating skill test passed within previous 24 months).</p> <p>5 years prior to flight: CPB ground refresher training with ATO/DTO.</p>