

Airports Training

New Student Pilot Notes

Welcome to Airports Training. We want your experience of learning to fly to be rewarding, exciting, fun and above all else, safe.

The purpose of these notes is to acquaint you with the structure, organisation, and working practices of the flying school. Please take time to read them carefully as this will help you to find your feet easily and save time during lessons. We can then spend more time having fun flying !

Obtaining the NPPL(M)

To fly a Microlight aeroplane in the UK, you need a license issued by the UK Civil Aviation Authority (The CAA). The License is called the National Private Pilot's License (Microlight) or NPPL(M).

Before applying for the license you must;

- Fly a minimum of 25 hours instruction, including 10 as Pilot In Command (PIC)
- Fly two Solo Cross-Country flights of at least 40nm distance, with an out-landing at another airfield at least 15nm away from the home base.
- Pass Written examinations in ; Air Law, Aeroplanes Technical, Meteorology, Navigation and Human Performance Limitations.
- Pass a General Skills Test and Ground Oral Examination with an Examiner.
- Have a current Medical Certificate.

Note;

The 25 hours is a minimum. The license is rarely obtained in the minimum hours. It's not a race and the more time you spend with an instructor, the better the pilot you will be. Younger people learn faster and there is a "rule of thumb" that for each year of your age over 25, add an hour to the 25 minimum. In other words, if you are 50 years old, be prepared to spend 50 hours training.

The 10 hours PIC means just that. You will be flying solo. Yes, on your own in the plane. Unlike a driving license, where the first time you drive on your own in the car is after you pass your driving test. You'll see how this works in the Progress of the Flying Course section.

The Written Examinations

The Written Examinations sound scary but do not be afraid of them. Nobody has ever failed to get a license due to exams.

All the exams have "multiple choice" questions where you are always given the correct answer, plus two wrong ones. You just have to tick the right box! Your Instructors are there to help. See also the Groundschool section. There are three papers available for each subject, so if you fail the first you can have two more goes! There are practice exam papers available for free on the internet.

The NPPL(M) Syllabus

Your training is carried out in accordance with this Syllabus which is approved by the CAA. You should have your own personal copy of this booklet. It can be purchased from us. It sets out the structure of the flying course showing the various stages involved. Boxes are provided so that you can tick off your progress.

The lessons are numbered and the content of each one is listed. When you complete a lesson, your instructor should tell you which lesson you are going to be doing next. You can then “pre-read” the next lesson in the Syllabus and look up the technical bits in your Cosgrove textbook, in preparation for next time. You should never walk into a lesson “cold” not knowing what is coming.

Structure of a flying lesson

A lesson slot is usually two hours. During this period, you will pre-flight check the aircraft and fuel it up. Your instructor will show you how to do this. You will then have your lesson. Each flying lesson (Exercise) in the Syllabus is numbered and consists of three parts;

- A Pre-flight Briefing where the instructor will explain the aim of the lesson, check you understand the technical side and explain how the controls of the aircraft are used to achieve the manoeuvre. Also any Airmanship issues or new checklists that are needed. This takes about 20 mins.
- The Flight. This also normally has three parts. A demonstration by the instructor with the student following through on the controls. This allows the student to feel how the controls are co-ordinated and the associated movements and pressures. Second, a period of “assisted practice” where the student takes control and repeats the manoeuvre with verbal guidance from the instructor. Finally a longer period of “student practice” where the student practices until confident on his own with only guidance on errors from the instructor. The flight part is usually around an hour.
- A post-flight debrief where the instructor and student will discuss “how it went” over a cup of tea. The instructor will give critique on the exercise flown and guidance for what will happen on the next flight. About 10 mins for this bit.

The progress of the Flying Course

Exercises 1-5

We begin by learning about the important component parts and systems on the aircraft. You don't need to be an engineer but you do need to know how things work and how to operate the systems safely. We learn how to safely start the engine and taxi the aircraft to the take-off point.

Exercises 6-9

In the air, we start by learning to fly in a straight line (not so easy as it sounds when it's windy!) then how to climb and descend and turn onto new headings.

Exercise 10

When you've grasped the basics of pointing the aircraft around the sky, we show you how to make sure you never inadvertently “stall” the aircraft. (Fly too slowly)

Exercises 12&13

Then it's on to taking off and landing, sometimes called “Circuits and bumps”!

This stage of the training involves many facets and can take a while to fully grasp. It's at this stage that students will often feel their progress seems to slow or get bogged down, especially if there are breaks caused by bad weather or personal circumstances.

Instructors are trained to recognise this and help you with it.

Exercise 14-16

These exercises are more advanced manoeuvres which will be threaded in between circuit sessions to give you a break from routine.

Exercise 17a

Suddenly one day you will find yourself sitting on your own in the aircraft at the end of the runway. It's your first solo flight!! You will never forget this moment, it's the most exciting thing you will ever do. It's also compulsory to take your instructors to the pub afterwards!

Exercise 17b

Next comes the "solo consolidation" phase. Here, you will be flying the aircraft solo and practice all the manoeuvres you have previously learnt dual. You need to be very competent and confident at handling the aircraft before we add on the additional workload of navigating. About 7 hours total time is normal here. Dual checks will be required from time to time.

Exercise 18

The final stage is Navigation. Here you will learn pre-flight planning including plotting a route, checking weather forecasts, calculating headings and times, fuel reserves and diversions. In the air you will fly initially with your instructor. You will learn to recognise features and topography to fly the aircraft safely along the planned route. You will land at another airfield, hopefully with a cafe, have a well earned cup of tea and fly back again. You will learn what to do if you get lost or the weather turns bad so you can't continue. (Happens often!)

Once your instructor is happy that you can competently navigate, you will be set off on your two Qualifying Cross Country flights. The first will normally be over the same route as you flew dual, but the second one will be a route you have not seen before. To fly solo to another airfield, land and fly back again is a hugely rewarding and satisfying thing to do. You are using all the skills you have learned and all the hard work comes to fruition.

Exercise 17c and GST

Then it's the last hurdle! There will now be a thorough dual check flight to make sure you have all the requisite skills to pass your flight test. The GST will last about an hour after which you will feel a huge relief pass over you. This is the second time you have to take your instructor to the pub!

The paperwork normally takes about four weeks at the CAA before your shiny new pilot's license hits the doormat. During this time you are still a student pilot!

Booking flying lessons

You can book lessons by telephone or more usually when at the airfield.

How often should you book lessons? In short - as often as possible!

It is more efficient and cost effective to fly regularly. Consolidation is the key. The very best way would be two lessons a day until completed but not many people have the available time for that! If you can book two lessons on one day a week, that is more than twice as efficient as only one a day.

Many people can only fly on weekends. This is the norm but try to fly at least once a week, as cancellations due to weather will cause a fortnights gap. Bear in mind that weekends book up first and in winter lack of daylight means there is only really time for three lessons in a day.

Paying for flying lessons

You can pay for lessons as you go, or if you pay for 10 lessons in advance, you get a 10% discount. You can pay by bank transfer (BACS) or cash. We don't have card facilities and prefer not to take cheques.

Cancelling flying lessons

By us.

Sometimes it may be necessary to cancel your lesson due to weather or aircraft unavailability. You should always check with your instructor before setting off.

By you.

If you need to cancel please let us know as soon as possible so that we may offer your slot to someone else.

If you are unwell two days ahead of a lesson it is better to cancel straight away rather than wait until the day before, hoping you will be better.

Please bear in mind we are professionals and earn our living by flying. If we don't fly, we don't earn. So if you cancel late and we can't fill a flyable slot we will lose revenue. For that reason we have a cancellation clause. Please see the price list on the website.

Groundschool

Evening Classes on the groundschool subjects are arranged during the winter months to help you or you can have 1:1 groundschool with your instructor in lieu of a weather-cancelled lesson if you wish.

Stuff you need to buy

We can provide everything you need to obtain your license including Lessons, Examinations, Flight Test, Books, Charts and other Pilot Accessories including flying suits, helmets and intercoms for flexwing flying. (You can use the school equipment to start with)

The absolute basics you need to start are the Cosgrove textbook, the NPPL(M) Syllabus and a personal Flying Log Book. (total £35.00) In addition, you can get a 10% discount on the first 10 hours.

We have aircraft syndicate share schemes which provide a very economical route to flying after you have qualified.

Please don't buy things off the internet without asking advice from your instructor first!

Personal Flying Logbook

Your personal flying logbook is an important document, look after it! Each time you fly, you should fill in the relevant details and get your instructor to sign it off. You must produce this logbook as evidence of your training at the end of your course.

Once qualified, you must continue to record all your flights. Your Pilot Rating needs to be revalidated every two years and your log book contains the evidence of the necessary hours.

Student Pilot Record

We have to keep a record of your training. In it we will record details of each flight, and comments on your progress. These comments will be a summary of your post flight debrief with your instructor. This record is available for you to see, but will not be shown

to anyone else. If you should transfer to another school, we will forward it to them at your request.

Medical Certificate

Whilst training dual, your Instructor is Pilot in Command and so the flight is under his medical .

To fly solo, you must hold a current Medical Certificate. This is obtained from the CAA and is done in the form of an on-line self declaration by you. There is no longer any need to get a counter-signature from either your doctor or a CAA AME.

It is best to get this done at an early stage to make sure there are no problems that could cause disappointment later.

Fitness to fly

Just because you have a current medical certificate doesn't mean you are fit to fly. Flying well and safely uses huge amounts of concentration. You will feel drained at the end of your lesson so it's obvious you must be fit enough at the beginning.

Read your Human Performance Limitations at an early stage and run yourself through the IMSAFE acronym before your lesson. (Illness, Medication, Stress, Alcohol, Fatigue, Eating)

Realistic Expectations

Learning to fly should be exciting, richly rewarding and fun.

If you set yourself realistic expectations, you will enjoy your flying training. If they are unrealistic, you will end up unnecessarily disappointed, for example if you set yourself the target of obtaining your license in three weeks in winter.

Gaps in training are inevitable and may be caused by weather or personal circumstances. Sometimes life just gets in the way. But for whatever reason, when you fly again you will find you have forgotten things and it takes time to regain your previous position, so you must be patient.

Getting on with your instructors

It's really important that you get on well with your instructor. You will be spending a lot of time together and it's not as if you can just get out of the aeroplane at altitude if you, well - fall out!

Your instructor should always be helpful, supportive and positive. Instructors are trained to take things at your pace, so you should never feel under pressure to achieve.

If at any time you are not happy with anything, such as your progress, you should discuss it first with your instructor. If you can't resolve the issue, approach the CFI.

Organisation of the Airfield

Rufforth East airfield and buildings are owned by local farmer Tony Beckett, who also runs the hangarage business. Tel 07802940440 Or Steven Beckett (his son) 07802435158

The Airfield Operator is York Microlight Centre. YMC are responsible to Mr Beckett for Air Safety and operations. The director of YMC is John Teesdale. Tel 07595219309

The Microlight flying school is called Airsports Training and the Chief Flying Instructor is John Teesdale. Tel 07595219309 email info@airsportstraining.co.uk Website www.airsportstraining.co.uk

There is also a gyrocopter flying school called the Gyrocopter Experience run by Phil Harwood. Tel 07801631431 email phil.harwood@GyrocopterExperience.co.uk Website www.gyrocopterexperience.com

The York Flying Club is a social club of both student and qualified pilots. The club arranges social events, fly-ins and fly-outs.

Fly-outs and other information on events are published on the YFC e-group and Facebook page. You can join the e-group as soon as you are a member. There are often spare seats available on fly-outs where you be a passenger with a qualified pilot and help with navigation. The senior qualified pilots will always try to mentor the less experienced. There is a monthly club meeting (first Thursday of the month) held in the Tankard pub in Rufforth at 7.30 pm. Sandwiches and chips are provided. It's a great time to meet other club members and fellow student pilots. Feel free to ask any questions. Website www.yorkflyingclub.co.uk

The on-site Engineer and BMAA inspector is Steve Cooper, tel 07951019971. Steve can service your aircraft if you choose not to do it yourself. He can also do repairs and annual inspections.

Safety

Safety is paramount at Airsports Training. We aim to carry out your training in a safe environment. Good airmanship is the best way to ensure a safe flight. If you see anything that you think may be unsafe, report it immediately to an instructor. Be aware of the position of fire extinguishers and first aid kits. They are useless unless you know where they are and can use them.

The Airfield Standing Orders

The airfield standing Orders are a set of rules that are designed to ensure that the airfield operates safely. They are published on the York Flying Club website and on posters around the airfield. There is also an A4 folder copy in the flying school. You will be required to read and sign these rules.

The BMAA

The British Microlight Aircraft Association is approved by the CAA to handle the administration of microlight airworthiness and licensing in the UK. You only *have* to be a member if you are an aircraft owner, but membership brings you the monthly Microlight Flying magazine. We recommend all student pilots be a member of the BMAA.

Ok that's enough for now. Go and book some lessons - let's go flying!

Have a great time and fly safely,

John Teesdale,

Chief Flying Instructor.