

Air navigation services employees awarded new professional college degree

Geneva, 25.05.2012. The Swiss Federal Office of Professional Education and Technology (OPET) has officially recognised skyguide's training programme for air navigation services employees as a professional college degree course. Skyguide's in-house training centre is the only facility in Switzerland that trains air navigation services personnel. The federally recognised college degree was awarded for the first time on 4 May 2012 and will offer air navigation services personnel greater scope and flexibility in their continuing professional development. The training programme for air traffic controllers was officially recognised as a professional college degree course by OPET in late 2009.

Attractive training

The official recognition by OPET means that the training programme for air navigation services personnel meets the standards of a professional college degree. The federally approved degree will allow graduates to access a broader range of professional development courses. Thanks to greater flexibility in the training system, this course has now become more attractive to students. The first degrees for air navigation personnel were awarded on 4 May 2012.

Air navigation service employees can be divided into two groups. The first group supports the work of air traffic controllers at the company's Geneva and Dübendorf control centres, managing traffic flows and volumes in close collaboration with Eurocontrol's Central Flow Management Unit in Brussels. They also ensure that air traffic controllers' workloads remain manageable at all times. The second group works at skyguide's Aeronautical Information Management Unit, processing aviation-related data and serving as a central source of information and advice for pilots.

42 degrees awarded

This year's degree ceremony for air traffic controllers and air traffic personnel took place at the Hotel Bellevue Palace in Bern. 42 degrees were awarded in total. "An important day for our new colleagues and for skyguide", COO Alex Bristol emphasised in his speech. "This year, skyguide will be controlling 1.2 million flight movements. We will issue 740,000 take-off and landing clearances and monitor 80,000 military movements. At skyguide our mission is to ensure that this traffic is guided safely."

This responsibility will now lie partly in the hands of the skyguide graduates. Their jobs chiefly revolve around the key issue of safety, with each individual in the team being given a high degree of responsibility. As well as being given a solid theoretical foundation in the basics of aviation on the degree course, everyday work situations are practised and tested one to one in simulators. After successfully passing the basic training course, future air navigation services employees work under the supervision of coaches on the job. The two year course ends with a theoretical and practical examination.

CEO Daniel Weder spoke of the future in which the graduates will work. Skyguide is planning the virtual merger of the Geneva and Dübendorf centres. "One Centre for Two

Locations will make it possible to link the entire airspace and allow you to control it flexibly from either or both locations, depending on the volume of air traffic". This new type of system architecture in Switzerland could also be developed at European level. Skyguide is actively contributing to the close collaboration of European air navigation organisations, instead of each organisation being confined to national borders. Daniel Weder ended his speech by wishing the graduates every success for the future and asking them to always keep the most important thing in our business uppermost in their minds – people.

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Skyguide is responsible for providing air navigation services in Switzerland and some of the adjacent airspace of neighbouring countries. Skyguide guides some 3,270 civil and military flights a day (around 1.2 million flights a year) through the busiest and most complex airspace in Europe. It is a non-profit public limited company under Swiss law with its headquarters in Geneva. The Swiss Confederation is the majority shareholder. In 2011, Skyguide generated a turnover of over CHF 427 million and employs 1,400 staff at 14 locations in Switzerland. Together with air navigation organisations in Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, skyguide is a member of the FABEC initiative to create a common functional airspace block that aims to increase the efficiency of air navigation systems in Central Europe.
