

Latest class of future air traffic controllers begin their skyguide training

Geneva, 13 September 2012. The last of three classes planned for 2012 commenced their two-and-a-half-year training to become skyguide air traffic controllers on Monday 10 September. Having successfully negotiated the selection process, the 16 students began their basic training at the skyguide training center in Wangen near Dübendorf.

As a rule, about ten per cent of the 500-odd hopefuls who apply to skyguide each year to become air traffic controllers will pass the three-step aptitude tests and be permitted to commence their controller training. This is conducted at the skyguide training center, which forms part of the company's air navigation services complex in Dübendorf.

Specific requirements

Prospective air traffic controllers must be between 18 and 30 years of age, and must hold a "Matura" (Swiss baccalaureate) or have completed basic vocational training culminating in an "EFZ" Swiss federal certificate of proficiency. Spatial awareness, the ability to work under pressure, pronounced multi-tasking skills, a logical thinking approach, teamwork and communication abilities and a good command of English are further requirements that are thoroughly tested in the course of the three-phase aptitude assessments.

Theory and practice

On the course itself, the trainees attend classes in subjects such as aerodynamics, aircraft technology, meteorology, radar technology, navigation, aeronautical information and technical English. The theoretical input is supplemented by practical simulator instruction and on-the-job training sessions. The "HF" (Höhere Fachschule, professional college) air traffic controller's diploma which is awarded to trainees who successfully complete the course is recognised throughout Europe's air navigation services sector.

A fascinating profession

Cédric from Reichenburg (SZ) started his training this week. He has been fascinated by aviation since he was a child and knows a lot about the profession from an air traffic controller of his acquaintance. What fascinates Cédric is the team work between controllers and pilots, as well as the way of working in anticipating things, which also requires a high degree of flexibility. After his training, Cédric is expected to work as a military air traffic controller.

Deployments throughout Switzerland

Skyguide's air traffic controllers work in airport control towers, managing and monitoring arriving and departing flights and coordinating landings, takeoffs and taxiing manoeuvres. For this they may be assigned to any of various Swiss airports including St. Gallen-Altenrhein, Zurich Kloten, Buochs, Lugano Agno, Bern Belp, Grenchen or Sion. Other controllers are assigned to skyguide's two area control centres in Geneva and Dübendorf. The controllers here are responsible for managing Switzerland's upper airspace. Skyguide's military air navigation services also provide controllers in the tower and approach control at the country's air force bases. Military air traffic control further has fighter controllers, based at its Dübendorf Air Defense and Direction Center,

who support the pilots of the Swiss Air Force on their air police patrols, tactical missions and military exercises.

For further details of the training and career opportunities available at skyguide, visit www.skyguide.ch/en/my-skyguide/career-seekers.

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Skyguide is responsible for providing air navigation services in Switzerland and in certain parts of neighbouring countries. With its 1,400 employees active at 14 locations in Switzerland, skyguide safely and efficiently guides some 3,270 civil and military flights a day – or 1.2 million a year – through the busiest and most complex airspace in Europe. Skyguide is firmly committed to continuous improvement, focused innovation and creative collaboration. Together with its partner organisations in Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, the company forms the FABEC alliance in charge of managing Central Europe's airspace. Skyguide is a non-profit limited company which has its head office in Geneva. The majority of its shares are held by the Swiss Confederation.
