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Human Factors Programme
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Tell us a bit about your current role?

I work with our capability teams to encourage the industry to consider how to make it easy for people in aviation to do the right thing, difficult to do the wrong thing, and preferably impossible to do catastrophic things. Human Factors is a very diverse science!

What is the most rewarding aspect of your role?

Watching people adjust the system to make things safer both for the travelling public and people who work in Aviation.

How did you get into this role, can you tell us about your career history, training and qualifications?

I trained as an Occupational Psychologist in NZ, and worked in Selection before joining the Royal New Zealand Air Force as a Psychology Officer. This involved a diverse experience in a range of Psychological and Human Factors activities, and afforded some brilliant travel opportunities. When I moved to the UK I worked in human factors with NATS for three years before joining the CAA.

What advice would you give to someone looking to progress and develop in this area of aviation?

Study the things that interest you, and see where that can take you in your career. Learn about how research works and how to critically evaluate research, so you can understand how it will benefit the work you're doing in any field.

How can a young person get involved in a career in a STEM or aviation subject?

Get in touch with people you admire in the field, and ask them how they got there, what helped, and what challenges they had to overcome. Develop your skills to suit the sorts of jobs you think you'd like to do in that field; adaptability is really important in a career.



STEM

OPPORTUNITIES IN AVIATION

Full document details: UKCAA CAP1969 2021



Documents

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Francesca Layton-Smith
Business Administrator
Apprentice IG
Civil Aviation Authority



Tell us a bit about your current role?

My role requires me to coordinate CAA colleagues attendance at meetings with an international focus, providing engagement opportunities across the organisation. I am also involved in the consultation process of State Letter correspondence from ICAO, ensuring all internal and external stakeholders are informed of changes across the industry.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your role?

Being able to use my own career journey (which is still rather short) to get involved in STEM and being able to take advantage of the various learning opportunities the CAA offer to progress my career.

How did you get into this role, can you tell us about your career history, training and qualifications?

I found this apprenticeship after dropping out of university during my 1st year. I had no office or full time work experience, and thought it was a great opportunity to progress my learning. All I needed were standard GCSE's and a minimum of 2 A-Levels.

What advice would you give to someone looking to progress and develop in this area of aviation?

Definitely look in to various apprenticeship programmes, as they really support your learning when entering the industry and become more aware of the variety of roles available in aviation.

How can a young person get involved in a career in a STEM or aviation subject?

Take advantage of work experience opportunities to see how STEM subjects can be so flexible in terms of careers and look at STEM's website to find out information about events taking place virtually or near you.



STEM

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Kirsten Riencema

Head of Strategic Relationships
International Group

Civil Aviation Authority



Tell us a bit about your current role?

I form relationships with other countries, their regulators and aviation industries to explore how we can work together to improve flying (safety, environmentally, passenger rights).

What is the most rewarding aspect of your role?

I love collaborating with colleagues inside the CAA, the industry and internationally to improve aviation safety. On safety, everyone is willing to collaborate and share lessons learnt to help us all to improve, and it is very satisfying to see immediate operational safety improvements made as well as longer-term collaborative actions.

How did you get into this role, can you tell us about your career history, training and qualifications?

I studied math and physics, with the aim of becoming a professional pilot. Wanted to be a pilot, so went to an Aeronautical University in US. Although I got a private pilots licence I then switched to Aeronautical Studies (BSc).

While I was in Uni, I had an internship at Philadelphia International Airport, which led to a permanent job as an operations officer. While there, I was approached by two airlines (Northwest and British Airways). For a while I worked part time for both of them, before becoming a full-time BA ticketing and flight planning agent and then the station duty manager at Atlanta. I married an Englishman and came to work at Heathrow as a dispatcher calculating aircraft mass and balance and managing all aspects of departures.

From there I joined the CAA as an aerodromes policy expert and have been with the CAA in various roles for 15 years now. The highlight of my career so far was being posted to Montreal at the International Civil Aviation Organisation helping to oversee the technical annexes for global civil aviation safety.

What advice would you give to someone looking to progress and develop in this area of aviation?

Don't be afraid of failure. If an opportunity presents itself, always think 'why not?' instead of 'why'. Take a chance and see where it leads you. If you apply yourself with enthusiasm and curiosity, you will end up in a better place. My career was the result of me being curious, taking a few chances and applying myself.

How can a young person get involved in a career in a STEM or aviation subject?

Many organisations such as the CAA, the Royal Aeronautical Society and NASA have provide information that can give you a flavour of what careers in aviation are possible. There are also mentoring programmes, and your school or college can arrange career talks and STEM outreach. This will put you in touch with people who may be inspirational to you and who can give you more personal advice steps you take focussing on Science and Maths at school will position you nicely for the next step.

