

Guidance for those nominated as an AOC Accountable Manager

The Accountable Manager

The Accountable Manager is a senior manager within an AOC company who is accountable to the CAA for maintaining safety standards required by regulation and additional standards specified by the AOC holder or applicant. He or she must have corporate authority for ensuring that all operations and maintenance system activities can be financed and carried out to the standard required. The Accountable Manager is required by EU-OPS and JAR-OPS 3 to be acceptable to the CAA.

In the regulation of safety the Accountable Manager is a key figure given that their influence on the standards of an AOC is significant. Therefore the working relationship between the CAA and the Accountable Manager plays an important part in the regulatory oversight of an AOC. As part of the routine regulatory oversight programme, the CAA's Flight Operations Inspectorate will normally arrange an annual meeting with the Accountable Manager in order to discuss any issues associated with the safety management of the operation.

This guidance aims to help the nominee prepare for the CAA process of determining acceptability by providing an indication of the level of knowledge and understanding expected. The guidance also aims to describe the type of attitudes to regulation and safety management that the CAA wishes to encourage at Accountable Manager level.

The CAA Acceptance Process

The CAA normally invites the nominee for the position of Accountable Manager to a meeting at a Regional Office to allow the assigned Flight Operations Inspector and Airworthiness Surveyor to make a decision on his or her acceptability for the role. CAA acceptance will be based on demonstrated knowledge of the applicable Regulations, an understanding of the role of the Accountable Manager and the standards required by the CAA of a UK AOC holder.

The meeting will aim to confirm that the nominee has

- appropriate seniority in the organisation;
- adequate input into the determination of operating budgets;
- autonomy in financing operations to the required standards;
- appropriate knowledge and understanding of the documents that prescribe safety standards;
- appropriate knowledge and understanding of the requirements for competence of management personnel;
- appropriate knowledge and understanding of Quality Systems, related principles and practices, and the role of the Accountable Manager in Quality Systems; and
- appropriate knowledge and understanding of Safety Management Systems or Accident Prevention and Flight Safety Programmes, related principles and practices, and the role of the Accountable Manager in such systems.

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The nominee should bring their current CV to the acceptance meeting.

In smaller organisations the Accountable Manager may also be a nominated post holder and the meeting may cover both sets of requirements if the nominee so wishes. A completed Form 4 will be required for the nominated post holder element, but is not required for Accountable Manager acceptance.

It is in the interests of both the applicant and the CAA that the nominee for the position of Accountable Manager is well prepared for the meeting so that it becomes a formal confirmation that the required knowledge, understanding and orientation on safety management is in place. If the Accountable Manager is well prepared, future dealings with the CAA will be on the basis of assured mutual understanding of common aims, and will enable both organisations to avoid misunderstandings and wasted time and effort.

Seniority

One would expect that the Accountable Manager would be at a level in the organisation no lower than that which accepts direct reports from the four nominated post holders for Flight Operations, Ground Operations, Training and the Maintenance System. Though the nominee will often be the Chief Executive, CEO, President, Managing Director, General Manager or similar title, it is not necessary for him/her to be the 'controlling mind' of the organisation. It is perfectly possible for an Accountable Manager to be answerable to and directed by another person or persons, and still retain the appropriate level of authority to ensure that activities are financed adequately and carried out to an acceptable standard. The nominee need not be the person who sets overall company policy or objectives.

The proposed organisation diagram, terms of reference and letter of appointment (if applicable) can be used to demonstrate seniority. Evidence of directorship would also be helpful if held.

The nominee should expect to discuss how the organisation will make decisions that significantly affect the operation, and his or her role in those decisions.

Budget

The nominee should be able to satisfy the Inspector that he/she has an operating budget or financial control limit, and that he/she had a meaningful input into determining the size of the budget. The exact financial details need not be disclosed, but the CAA will need to be satisfied that governance exists, and is demonstrably appropriate to the scope of the operation. The nominee should be able to explain to the Inspector why he/she believes that the budget is adequate to the circumstances, and show evidence that he/she has the funds at their disposal without reference to a higher authority. If necessary, a written statement to that effect from such higher authority may suffice.

Standards

The nominee will be requested to show he/she has a basic understanding of the standards required by:

- The Air Navigation Order (ANO);

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- EU-OPS or JAR-OPS 3; and
- EASA Part-M.

This understanding is essentially high level, with particular reference to the nominee's own role in ensuring that standards are maintained. The sections of the ANO that relate to AOCs (ANO 2009 Article 12, etc.) should be understood, and the nominee should have a sound knowledge of the requirements of EU-OPS or JAR-OPS 3 that relate to the Accountable Manager and his/her function. [OPS 1.035 or JAR-OPS 3.035; OPS 1.175 or JAR-OPS 3.175.]

The nominee should also be able to demonstrate knowledge of the requirements related to the appointment of those persons within the organisation with designated responsibilities for standards under the relevant regulatory material.

For an AOC holder, such persons are:

- The nominated post holders required by OPS 1.175(i) or JAR-OPS 3.175(i); and
- Those persons required by Part M M.A.706(c) and (d).

The CAA will need to be satisfied that the nominee understands what the regulations require him/her to be responsible for, and can explain how the post holders have been selected and how their continuing competence will be monitored. The nominee should be prepared to explain the proposed policies on initial assessment and periodic review of managerial competence, and provision of training where a need is identified. Significant changes in operating environment or operational scope should be considered as possible review triggers.

Quality System

The Quality System is a primary management tool for assisting the Accountable Manager to measure compliance with requirements, and to make timely and effective changes, which may both improve safety and save money.

The nominee should be able to demonstrate a sound knowledge of quality system principles and practices and how these are applied within his/her own organisation including, in particular, knowledge of his/her own role.

The CAA will need to be satisfied that the nominee:

- is committed to Quality as a means for establishing and maintaining the required standards;
- understands his/her role in the organisation's Quality System(s) and the related requirements of EU-OPS/JAR-OPS 3 and EASA Part-M;
- has established, published and practically endorses a Quality Policy; and
- understands the purpose of the Quality Evaluation meeting and his/her role in it, and carries out (or intends to carry out) effective Evaluation Meetings. The Evaluation Meeting is the Accountable Manager's opportunity to check that the tool is doing the job he or she wants it to do, and is adapted to current conditions.

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The Flight Operations Inspector will seek confirmation that the nominee's attitude to Quality is positive and not merely a matter of compliance with EU-OPS/JAR-OPS 3 and EASA Part-M requirements. It is essential that he/she understands the relative roles of the Accountable Manager and the Quality Manager(s) in the System(s). If an experienced Quality Manager is not available within the organisation to brief a nominee unfamiliar with EU-OPS/JAR-OPS 3 and/or EASA Part-M Quality Systems, the nominee should seek guidance in these matters from an external source.

Safety Management System/Accident Prevention and Flight Safety Programme.

The nominee should be able to demonstrate a commitment to the management of safety and a sound knowledge of safety management system principles and practices where such a system operates within the organisation for which he/she is responsible including, in particular, knowledge of his/her own role. Where a formal Safety Management System does not operate, the nominee should understand his/her role in achieving compliance with OPS 1.037/JAR-OPS 3.037.

The Flight Operations Inspector will need to be satisfied that the nominee understands the relationship between the Quality System and the Safety Management System or Accident Prevention and Flight Safety Programme. The nominee should be able to clearly describe the relationship between his/her roles in each system.

The nominee should be aware of the requirements of OPS 1.037/JAR-OPS 3.037 and the relevance of Safety Management System principles to the Accident Prevention and Flight Safety Programme. He or she should consult the person responsible for the programme to gain an understanding of its operation and the role of the nominee in it. www.caa.co.uk/sms is a useful source of information on these principles. Finally, the nominee should be prepared to answer questions on Risk Management within the operation.

General

Once the assessment meeting has been arranged, the nominee should feel free to contact the Flight Operations Inspector and/or Airworthiness Surveyor to clarify any queries that they have concerning the process and the subjects to be covered. The CAA will do its best to ensure that the nominee comes to the meeting ready to demonstrate the required knowledge and understanding.