

Class Rating Instructor

A little known 'anomaly' exists with the JAA Flight Crew Licensing structure in the form of the CRI (Class Rating Instructor). It's unusual in the fact that unlike the restriction placed on other instructor ratings by the CAA, it does not require the candidate to have attained a pass in the Commercial Pilot exams, only to be able to demonstrate a commercial level knowledge - a subtle difference, as you are still required to demonstrate knowledge way above the level of the average PPL, but still distinct enough to make it available to the those interested in putting something back into general aviation without the desire to pursue it commercially.

So what can a CRI actually do and how do you go about getting the rating? To quote LASORS, the holder of a CRI (SPA) rating can instruct licence holders for the issue of a type or class rating for single-pilot aeroplanes. The holder may instruct on a single pilot single-engine or multi-engine aeroplanes, subject to being appropriately qualified, as per JAR-FCL 1.310(a).

An applicant for the issue of a CRI (SPA) rating for single-engine aeroplanes shall have:

- a. A valid SEP (Land), SET (Land), TMG Class Rating or a Single-Pilot Single Engine Type Rating.
- b. Completed at least 300 hours flight time as pilot of aeroplanes.
- c. Completed at least 30 hours as PIC on the applicable type or class of aeroplane prior to commencing the course.
- d. Completed an approved course at an approved FTO or TRTO of at least three hours flight instruction on the aeroplane or a flight simulator given by an instructor approved for this purpose.
- e. Passed the relevant elements of a FI Skill Test in a single pilot, single engine aeroplanes with a suitably qualified FIE (A).

What a CRI can do is available in full detail in LASORS, but what all this means in real terms is that a CRI can provide all training beyond initial licence training, such as differences training for tail wheel ratings, complex ratings such as turbochargers, retractable gear and constant speed propeller.

A CRI may carry out training for the issue of class rating including the multi-engine rating after doing the CRI (ME) rating, with the addition of an IR instructor rating the IMCR and IR may be taught. A CRI may also carry out the two-year flight and sign the logbook accordingly and where appropriately sponsored a CRI may also become a SEP Revalidation Examiner. It is also worth remembering this is a JAA rating and as such is valid across Europe.

A CRI may also teach the AOPA Radio Navigation certificate which also may give up to a five-hour credit towards the UK IMC rating. What does this mean you will be doing in reality? Because a CRI is involved in the training of those who hold or have held a licence, the majority of it can be done away from licensed or government airfields. This is often in the form of the two-year licence renewal flights, and

differences training. Club checkouts are also a common role, as are acting as a type conversion instructor for syndicates.

So how do you go about becoming a Class Rating Instructor? There are a number of instructor training schools around the UK all offering the rating with one of the better known being On-Track Aviation at Wellesbourne Mountford. This school is a training facility staffed by airline pilots and even the odd member of CAA staff dedicated to instructor training only.

Remember, you are required to demonstrate CPL level knowledge, even though you don't require the exam pass, so hitting the books prior to starting the ground school is a very good idea. The first thing you get on enrolling in the course is a list of required subject areas to brush up on and the sources available to you to do this. The usual subject areas are covered such as Human Performance, Navigation, Meteorology, Flight Planning and Aircraft General Knowledge.

Each candidate is required to make a number of presentations from the standard FI course in both the classroom and the air the choice of subject is normally left up to the candidate. This is where your preparation in advance of the course will stand out. When you're presenting to very experienced pilots and instructors, the presentations have to be of a very high standard and cover all of the learning objectives in the prescribed manner. No prisoners are taken!

There is a minimum requirement of 25 hours of classroom and three hours of flight but the way the courses are structured and the thorough approach of schools like On-Track means the classroom ends up being a little longer and a policy of 'buddying' candidates up for in air teaching means that you get significant ground and air time. Small numbers ensure a very personal learning experience. Very thorough briefings and debriefings are required from the candidate for each of the in-air teaching presentations, and your instructor trainer in turn evaluates these. This will also be the first time for many that they have flown as commander from the right-hand seat and it often takes a little time to become accustomed to it.

At the end of all of this a skills test, conducted by an independent examiner. A pass results in the appropriate paperwork being sent to the CAA, and you are the proud holder of a JAA CRI.

The rating is revalidated every three years through attendance at a flight instructor seminar such as those run by AOPA, and a flight test. For those wishing to go on further and do the full FI course credit is given for the classroom and airborne training gained during the CRI course.

It is also worth noting that a CRI rating can be gained with a standard Class 2 medical.

An interesting and useful addition to your new skills as an instructor is the AOPA Ground Instructor course. This allows you to give ground instruction towards the PPL, and to become a CAA authorised Ground Examiner, a position that can be remunerated without a CPL. Holding an AOPA Ground Instructor certificate also

gives you credit towards the academic requirements for ratings such as the CRI, FI and IRI.

I am a great advocate of the CRI rating as it allows experienced pilots to put something back into aviation on a flexible basis passing on the experience gained in the real world. So while a CRI who does not hold a CPL can't be paid for teaching, they can gain the benefit of flying different types and exposing themselves to wider elements of aviation. For those following the path of the AOPA Wings Scheme it will also count towards the experience requirements. Steve Copeland ■



Steve Copeland learned to fly gliders as a teenager at RAF Syerston before gaining basic flight training with the RAF in the 80's. In 2000 he was bought a Microlight lesson by his wife and went on to complete the rating. He moved across to SEP aircraft in 2002, then went on to MEP he has flown around 40 types - he regularly flies his own Cessna 172 Hawk XP and a Seneca, and often flies a variety of old tail wheel types including his favourite, the DHC Chipmunk. He has a JAA licence with IR and instructor ratings, night qualification, IMCR, MEP etc. He also has FAA and Canadian licenses and is qualified as a CAA Revalidation Examiner. He has just over 2,300 hrs of command time with around 800 hrs of instrument flight time. He flies around 300 to 400 hrs a year for a mixture of business, pleasure and flight instruction and in a combination of VFR and IFR airways flying.