

SAA considers pilot programme to develop future pilots

National carrier South African Airways (SAA) is investigating the possibility of using the in-flight relief pilot programme as a meaningful way of developing future pilots.



SAA may start in-flight training for cadet pilots on some of its routes. Image: SAA

"We have decided to investigate the possibility of putting together a programme that will assist entrants to the airline's cadet pilot training programme who have successfully completed the initial training. This will enable them to receive more training in-house and acquire much needed experience in their journey towards becoming fully fledged airline pilots," said acting chief pilot Captain Sandy Bayne.

This move, said the airline, on Monday (3 March), is in line with the airline's long-term strategy Gaining Altitude, which requires SAA to contribute towards skills development.

"Suggestions that the introduction of this programme means lowering of standards are both reckless and spurious," said the airline.

"Nothing about the minimum requirements to become a First Officer with SAA changes," said Bayne.

SAA culture

SAA says this move will familiarise cadet pilots with the SAA culture from an early stage. Once enrolled in this programme, cadet pilots will serve as in-flight relief pilots or second officers on long-haul flights.

SAA said the introduction of this programme neither replaces nor alters the requisite standards and proficiency levels to become a pilot with the airline.

"SAA pilots are recognised world-wide for their stringent training. They are subjected to annual and ad-hoc audits by the

local Civil Aviation Authority as well as audits by its codeshare partners. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) runs a full operations safety audit on SAA every two years," the airline said.

It will take cadet pilots about three years to be eligible to train as first officers on the airline's narrow bodied aircraft.

"The much talked about 250 flying hours will form part of the requirements to join as Second Officers in line with international best practice which many airlines across the globe follow," added Bayne.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>