

Air traffic controller



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Description

This work is divided into three sections: area controllers, approach controllers and aerodrome controllers. Area controllers are responsible for a part of an airway, which is a corridor of airspace in which aircraft travel, and use radar screens to monitor the aircraft within this area and to keep them all at a safe distance apart both vertically and horizontally. Approach controllers have responsibility over the take-off and landing of all aircraft by using radar and radio contact with the pilots. Aerodrome controllers are responsible for the ground space, insuring that the runways are free for landing aircraft. They also then guide the landed aircraft to its parking position.

Requirements

Extremely good powers of concentration, unflappability, good communication skills together with a clear speaking voice, highly developed sense of responsibility, technical aptitude, intelligence and common sense combined with a good judgment of distances in three dimensions are all necessary for this job.

Education

Most work is for National Air traffic Services Ltd, which may shortly be privatised. Employment is at Area Control Centres and airports, both commercial and private. Promotion is possible to management level, and also into training.

Opportunities

Applicants need at least five GCSEs/S levels including English and mathematics plus two or three H grades or similar qualifications. Applicants must undergo a two-stage selection process. Applicants should have good sight and hearing and be physically fit, though the wearing of spectacles or contact lenses may be allowed. Training courses are run by the NATS (National Air Traffic Services Ltd.) student air-traffic control scheme that includes training with simulators and also private flying lessons plus on-the-job training at air-traffic control units. In conclusion they have further instruction to qualify them in a particular specialisation, the successful completion of which gives them a Certificate of Competency.

Contact addresses - Cumbria

For further information, see your local career guidance centre and your career advisor.