



'Fly-as-you-learn' Navy scheme

The Royal Navy has joined with the Open University to promote flight training opportunities through a military aviation academy where students earn a foundation degree while learning to fly fast jets and helicopters.

The Fleet Air Arm Military Aviation Academy, based at RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall and RNAS Yeovilton in Somerset, offers a degree in Military Aviation Studies and is recruiting high-calibre A-level students for guaranteed careers in the Royal Navy as pilots or observers.

Competition for what the Fleet Air Arm calls 'flying start' places is keen, especially as there will be no tuition fees and students will be able to earn up to £25,000 a year while studying. On gaining their aircrew 'Wings' and a foundation degree, graduates will be appointed to frontline squadrons. They may then elect to continue their studies for a BSc.

The Academy was opened by the Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Adrian Johns CBE ADC, and Dr Kate Clarke of the OU Validation Service. Students will first undergo officer training at the Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth.

The programme manager, Commander Ivor Milne, says: "This innovative and unique academy has launched Naval aircrew training into the 21st century in style. It unequivocally meets the government strategy of education in the workplace and beyond."

**Top: with two new aircraft carriers on order, careers in naval aviation look promising
Right: welcome aboard - careers are available for helicopter and fast jet pilots and observers**

"I have no doubt the academy will compete successfully with any university in recruiting high calibre A-level students, and will give graduates the best chance of progression to a high rank in an amazingly exciting flying career. And for them it will be free of education related debt."

One graduate, trainee Lynx Observer Robin Kenchington, says: "When I left school, I had applied to university to study civil engineering. However, I decided that it would be more

beneficial – not to mention more fun – to do something different. The Military Aviation Academy offered me that; the hard work of training, balanced by the thrill of flying."

With a new generation of aircraft carriers in the making, careers in the Fleet Air Arm have rarely looked more promising. The FAA comprises more than ten percent of the Royal Navy's entire strength and numbers some 6,200 people, who operate about 200 combat aircraft and over 50 support aircraft. ■

