

Khalid Abdulghani The Duke Scholarship

Growing up as a kid, I was very clueless about the world around me, except one thing: I always knew I wanted to become a commercial pilot. Realising the tremendous cost that comes with pilot training, I knew it would have been a difficult career path to get to. That was until I came across this scholarship.



The objective of this scholarship is to give recipients the opportunity to learn to fly a glider and go solo by the end of the week, and also get a glimpse of what it is like living as a naval officer. I would typically wake up at around 06:30 with breakfast being served at the officers' mess at 07:00 with a formal dress code. We would then head over to the airfield, have our brief, inspect the aircraft and the first glider would launch at around 09:30.

We were placed into four syndicates, each syndicate containing 4 students and 2 instructors, allowing each of us to get 3-4 flights each day. In spite of missing a whole day of flying due to

the downpouring weather, we were instead given a presentation on how to successfully fly a circuit and use the stick and airbrakes to control our airspeed and rate of descent respectfully during final approach. This allowed us to benefit from every moment we had despite not being able to fly. Consequently, some of us had the opportunity to have a look at the AH-64 Apache and speak to the pilot and others were invited to take part in a 50-hour routine maintenance check of a Grob parked in the hanger under the supervision of a chartered engineer.

Furthermore, we also had formal dinners at the officers' mess and a guest speaker every day, including a AH-64 Apache pilot, Peter Benn (former Concorde pilot and a Past Master of HCAP), as well as the Chairman of PNGC and others. Overall, HCAP and PNGC have given us a week of joy, but memories to remember for a lifetime and despite not going solo by the end of the week, I have learnt many new lessons such as how to fly a circuit in a glider, the significance of teamwork in aviation (and generally) and the importance of discipline and effective time management.

Whether becoming a pilot has always been your childhood dream or you want to learn more about how planes fly, I highly recommend applying to this scholarship and even an unsuccessful application could be a lesson for next time. All the best!



