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Your date

Your reference:

Decision letter on exemption from the 18-month requirement in FCL.025(b)(2)

Recipients:

Former students of Pilot Flight Academy (PFA) who have commenced but not completed their theoretical knowledge examinations under Part-FCL.

1. Summary of the decision

After Pilot Flight Academy (PFA) ceased operations, many students were unable to complete their theoretical knowledge training and finish their exams within the standard 18-month limit set by FCL.025(b)(2). This group exemption is therefore issued to help ensure that affected students can complete their exams. The exemption applies only to students who had already begun their theoretical knowledge examinations before PFA closed and who have not yet completed all exam subjects. These students are granted up to an additional 6 months beyond their original 18-month deadline, provided they continue their training and exams at an ATO approved for ATPL integrated training.

All existing exam and training standards remain unchanged, and students who had not yet started their theoretical exams are not included. Eligible students are covered automatically and do not need to apply for any further actions or applications.

2. Description of the case

Civil Aviation Authority Norway (CAA-NO) has assessed the situation following the bankruptcy and abrupt cessation of operations of Pilot Flight Academy (PFA) on January 2, 2026. This event has resulted in an unforeseen and immediate interruption of pilot training activities for a significant number of students.

The affected students had already begun their theoretical knowledge examinations (TK exams) before the ATO closed and are now unable to complete the remaining exams within the 18-month time limit mandated by FCL.025(b)(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1178/2011.

This group exemption applies only to former PFA students who:

- a. started their theoretical knowledge examinations prior to PFA's closure, and
- b. have not completed all required examination papers.

2. Applicable regulations

This exemption is issued in accordance with Article 71(1) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1139, which allows the competent authority to grant exemptions from requirements in delegated and implementing acts due to urgent operational needs or unforeseen urgent operational circumstances, provided that the specified conditions are met.

The exemption is with respect to the requirements in FCL.025(b)(2) which states that:

"Unless otherwise determined in this Part, an applicant has successfully completed the required theoretical knowledge examination for the appropriate pilot licence or rating if he or she has passed all the required theoretical knowledge examination papers within a period of 18 months counted from the end of the calendar month when the applicant first attempted an examination."

CAA NO is the competent authority that is responsible for the oversight of pilot licensing and theoretical knowledge examinations and is therefore authorised to issue exemptions under this Article.

Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 is incorporated into Norwegian law through forskrift 27. juni 2024 nr. 1381 om felleseuropæiske sikkerhetsregler for sivil luftfart og om etablering av et europeisk flysikkerhetsbyrå (EASA-forskriften). Regulation (EU) 1178/2011 is incorporated into Norwegian law through forskrift om sertifisering av besetningsmedlemmer.

3. The Civil Aviation Authority's assessment

Assessment - Conditions of Article 71(1)

(a) The circumstances cannot be adequately addressed under existing rules

Pilot Flight Academy declared bankruptcy in January 2026, resulting in an immediate and unforeseen cessation of all training and student support. Students who had already begun their TK exams were left without access to an approved ATO, training and instructional resources, and administrative support for exam continuation.

The 18-month time limit in FCL.025(b)(2) continues to run regardless of circumstances thereby making compliance objectively impossible for the students through no fault of their own. There is no mechanism within Part-FCL allowing suspension or pausing of the 18-month period. Therefore, the situation cannot be adequately addressed under the existing rules.

(b) Safety, environmental protection, and compliance with essential requirements are ensured

The exemption concerns only the timeline requirements in FCL.025(b)(2) and does not alter any substantive safety, training, or examination standards. All students must still complete the full theoretical knowledge syllabus, pass all required exams with unchanged standards, resume training at an ATO approved for ATPL integrated training program, and comply with all applicable requirements of Part-FCL.

The extension is limited to a maximum of six months, to avoid undue delay and preserve continuation in training for the affected students. The level of safety and compliance with essential requirements remain fully ensured.

(c) Distortion of market conditions is mitigated as far as possible

There is no distortion in market conditions. This exemption benefits only students affected by the closure of the ATO - PFA. It allows students to choose any ATO approved for ATPL integrated training program to continue their training. This decision is freely available to any interested party as part of the provision of the Freedom of Information Act (Offentleglova).

(d) The exemption is strictly limited and non-discriminatory

The exemption applies only to former PFA students who had begun, but not completed, their theoretical knowledge examinations prior to the ATO's closure.

The extension is capped at six months beyond each student's original 18-month deadline, ensuring the exemption goes no further than necessary to resolve the disruption. All affected students who meet the objective criteria are treated identically. The exemption is strictly limited and applied in a non-discriminatory manner.

Based on the above assessment, the conditions in Article 71(1) are fulfilled. It is therefore our conclusion that PFA's cessation of operations in January 2026 constitutes an urgent unforeseeable circumstance outside the control of the affected students. Students who had already commenced their TK examinations are subject to an active 18-month examination timeline under FCL.025(b)(2). The sudden loss of training infrastructure means that these students require additional time to obtain relevant training documentation, enrol with a new ATO approved for ATPL integrated training program, and resume preparation for and complete remaining exam subjects. Granting a limited extension of time is justified and proportionate.

4. Decision

In accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 article 71(1), CAA Norway grants a group exemption from the 18-month requirement in Regulation (EU) 1178/2011 FCL.025(b)(2). This exemption applies exclusively to former Pilot Flight Academy students who began their theoretical knowledge examinations prior to PFA's cessation of operations; and who have not completed all theoretical knowledge examinations.

Conditions of the Exemption

This exemption is granted under Article 71(1) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 and is subject to the following conditions:

1. The extension of the 18-month period is limited to a maximum of 6 months beyond the student's original expiry date. This means that all remaining theoretical knowledge examinations must be completed no later than 6 months after the expiry of the original 18-month period.
2. Students must enrol with an ATO that is approved for ATPL integrated training program as soon as reasonably practicable.
3. The exemption applies solely to the time limit in FCL.025(b)(2). All other requirements in Regulation (EU) No 1178/2011 and Part-FCL remain fully applicable.
4. The new ATO taking on students is obligated to conduct a thorough evaluation of the student(s) to determine the extent of the need for refresher and/or further training before continuation of theoretical examinations.

5. Right to Appeal

This decision may be appealed in accordance with Chapter VI of the Norwegian Public Administration Act. An appeal can be sent via Digipost or e-mail to CAA-Norway within three weeks from the date of publication of this decision. You can read more about your right to appeal here:

<https://luftfartstilsynet.no/om-oss/saksbehandling/>

6. General remarks and guidance

CAA NO recognises the significant difficulties created by the sudden closure of Pilot Flight Academy. This exemption is intended to support affected students in completing their theoretical knowledge examinations without compromising regulatory standards. For further guidance or questions regarding this exemption, please contact CAA NO by e-mail postmottak@caa.no .

Yours sincerely

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Air Operations

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Audits

This document has been electronically validated, thus eliminating the need for a physical signature.