

*Graduate Profile, Aeronautical Engineering, University of Limerick, Ireland*  
**DAVID O'DOWD**

**MR. DAVID O'DOWD**

**FIRST OFFICER, AIRBUS A320  
AER LINGUS  
DUBLIN, IRELAND**

[www.aerlingus.com](http://www.aerlingus.com)



*David at the controls of the  
Airbus A321*

**Education and Training**

- EASA Frozen ATPL(A), Flight Training Europe, Jerez, Spain, 2013
- B. Eng. (Hons) Aeronautical Eng, University of Limerick, Ireland, 2007

**Current Position**

Title	Dates	Employer
First Officer, Airbus A319/320/321	Jun 13 - Present	Aer Lingus PLC, Dublin, Ireland.

**Previous Positions**

Title	Dates	Employer
Technical Engineer (Aerothermal)	Oct 2007 - Feb 2012	Bombardier Aerospace Shorts, Belfast, Northern Ireland

**"Home" Town(s)/County(s)**

Limerick

**Please describe your current job**

I work as a First Officer (or Co-Pilot) on the Aer Lingus fleet of Airbus short-haul aircraft, operating flights to and from any one of the company's European destinations.

Having been successfully awarded a partially funded flight training cadetship in Feb 2012, I travelled to Spain to complete my frozen European Airline Transport Pilots Licence (ATPL), returning to Dublin in May 2013 to complete my A320 jet conversion training.

In years to come I hope to have the opportunity to operate as First Officer on the company's A330 and A350 transatlantic routes, and to ultimately obtain the

rank of Captain. I also have a keen interest in flight training / instruction and I hope to utilise my Aero Eng. degree and industrial experience to contribute to various technical working groups within the company.

**Please describe your career path since graduating with your B.Eng. Aeronautical Eng.**

Having graduated from UL in May 2007, I secured a graduate technical engineering position as part of the aero-thermal group at Bombardier Aerospace Belfast, working on the C-Series commercial airliner project.

My job required me to simulate the internal airflow and heat transfer in critical sections of composite aero-structures such as engine nacelles and aircraft wings as the aircraft operated at different speeds and altitudes throughout its flight envelope. This typically involved the use of both first principles analysis and FEA-type software. Once the analysis was complete, I supported other engineers by writing reports that detailed the results.

I also assisted in conducting thermal testing of carbon fibre wing structures to develop a predictable means by which to model heat transfer through proprietary company manufactured composites structures.

I spent almost five years with Bombardier Aerospace, including a secondment to HQ in Montreal and thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of the work assigned to me.

**What made you decide to study Aeronautical Engineering at UL?**

Having visited many different universities around the country, the campus and facilities stood out in UL as probably the best in Ireland. When I thought about the links the university had with top aerospace companies around the world for research programs and testing etc. it was a simple decision.

**Are you glad you did?**

Definitely - it lived up to my expectations, and I got from the university what I put in.

**What did you most enjoy about studying at UL - academically, and also non-academically?**

The workload for the course was quite large because of the sheer volume of very specific material that your lecturers want to equip you with before going into employment. In that sense, every graduate of the course has a very well-rounded engineering knowledge coupled with a strong understanding of the highly specific skills that certain companies will expect you to rely heavily on. The practical aspects of some of these highly specific skills include flight testing and use of state-of-the-art simulation software.

**Where did you do your COOP?**

I completed my co-op with French aero-engine manufacturer Snecma, based south of Paris. I worked within the supplier quality department and was tasked with statistical analysis of non-quality occurrences encountered on various engine models. It was fantastic experience in that I gained a great understanding of the engine assembly and testing process (seeing these machines in the flesh) as well as a good grasp of the French language.

**What advice would you give school-goers considering choosing Aeronautical Engineering?**

This is an internationally recognised degree that will not only give you access to top jobs with aerospace employers, but it is also a great engineering degree that will be easily recognised by other engineering disciplines and their employers (like mechanical and manufacturing companies) within Ireland. The course is very rewarding, put in the hard work and you will graduate with a very reputable degree.

**What advice would you give future graduates of Aeronautical Engineering?**

Keep faith in your ability to obtain a job after graduating, and be prepared to travel for the best jobs in the industry.