

Kathy Abbott, PhD, FRAeS



Kathy Abbott, PhD, FRAeS has over 40 years of experience specializing in aviation human factors. She serves as the Chief Scientific and Technical Advisor for Flight Deck Human Factors to the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on human performance and human error, systems design and analysis, advanced automation, flight path management, flight crew training/qualification, and flight crew operations and procedures. She serves as FAA liaison to industry and other government and international agencies dealing with flight deck human factors.

Since 1996, Dr. Abbott has led the integration of human factors into development and application of FAA/international regulatory material and policies for flight guidance systems, avionics, all weather operations, Required Navigation Performance, crew qualification, data link, instrument procedure design criteria, electronic flight bags, electronic displays, and other areas.

She co-chaired the FAA Human Factors Study Team that was chartered to address safety issues associated with crew interfaces with modern “glass” flight decks, published in 1996. She also served as the FAA co-chair of the Flight Deck Automation Working Group under the Performance-based Operations Aviation Rulemaking Committee and the Commercial Aviation Safety Team, which published “Operational Use of Flight Path Management Systems” in 2013. Since then, she has been the FAA’s subject matter expert for the Flight Path Management Working Group under the Air Carrier Training Aviation Rulemaking Committee.

Before joining the FAA, she conducted research on flight deck design and operations at the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration. She is a certificated private pilot, with familiarization training in several large transport aircraft, including B747-400, B777, MD-11, and A320/330/340.

She is a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society, an Associate Fellow in the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, and a Liveryman in the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators (GAPAN). She has received industry and government awards, including: R&D 100 Award from R&D Magazine; NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal; Aerospace Laurel from Aviation Week and Space Technology; the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators Cumberbach Trophy for Outstanding Contributions to Aviation Safety; and the Royal Aeronautical Society Helen Muir Award.