

Individual Consultation Meetings (ICMs): Unite Q&A (v1)

N.B. This document applies to Thomas Cook Airlines cabin crew only.

As a result of the volume of calls and emails your reps have been experiencing in relation to the forthcoming individual consultation process, we have prepared a list of the most commonly asked questions and answers. If there is anything that we haven't covered below, then please get in touch with your base representative.

Q. I have been invited to an ICM, am I entitled to take a Unite representative with me?

A. Yes, you are legally entitled to take a union representative or fellow employee in with you. However, Unite representation will only be available to current Unite members.

Q. I'm a C3 – I have not had an invite to a meeting. Why is this?

A. You are not involved in this process as your permanent job is not deemed at risk.

Q. I am not a Unite member – but want to join – can I still have a union rep present in my meeting?

A. We always welcome new members, and will be happy to support new members with any future issues that they have. Unfortunately, we are not able to offer personal representation in ICMs to members who have joined since the start of the consultation process.

Q. What shall I wear to my meeting?

A. Smart casual clothing is all that is required – the same attire you would wear on your SEPs or other training course.

Q. I heard there was going to be an exam or interview. Do I need to revise anything before my meeting?

A. There will be no exam or interview as part of the selection process for the new roles. Unite requested that only historical data (SEP results, live capability / disciplinary issues) be used for selection. This was as a result of overwhelming feedback from our members who felt that it was highly inappropriate to include an exam or interview in the selection process.

Q. What will be expected of me in my meeting?

A. You will have the chance to first speak with your union rep in private. Then in your meeting, you will be able to ask any questions that relate to your own situation to which you still require answers. You will also be asked to provide a list of positions you would be interested in – in order of preference. *For example*, a current permanent C1 who doesn't wish to take VS, would possibly say *:

Option 1: To take one of the available C1 (12 month) positions

Option 2: To take one of the dual role (7/5) C1 positions (C1 for seven months and C3 for 5 months)

Option 3: To take a C3 role within my current base

TCX would then try and accommodate your wishes in order of preference.

* The above is a possible typical response – but may differ between individuals, ranks and bases.

Q. I've heard we are now going to get some revised figures for VS, taking into account years served as a full time employee and our 2011 pay award. What do I do if I haven't had my personal illustration before my meeting?

A. You can only specify your wishes on the information you have available at the time. If you get your personal illustration and you then decide to take VS (subject to there still being a need for redundancies), you can request that you are removed from the process and start discussing the terms of your VS (leaving date etc).

Q. I'm an ACM – why has the union not fought harder for me to keep my position?

A. As you may be aware the negotiations have been lengthy and hard fought on both sides. Your union have negotiated a significantly better deal from the one originally put on the table by TCX. This includes protecting your current salary - for displaced C1s and C2s - for two years. We still oppose the removal of the role - but the reality of the situation is that the only thing left that could have prevented this would have been a full industrial action ballot and action. In the current climate, we felt this might be very damaging for an already fragile Thomas Cook – and the jobs of all our members.

Q. Can I do anything else to save jobs short of leaving / VS?

A. Yes, if you want to reduce your hours to 75% - or job share with another of the same rank, you can put forward such an idea via your ICM.

Q. I have my meeting on my roster for {X} December. How will I know if a union rep will be available on that day?

A. In the first instance – check with your RCCM. If they cannot guarantee a union rep will be available on the day of your meeting, you can ask that it is re-scheduled.

Q. They are asking if I can come in on my leave / PTDOs / DOs / GDOs. Do I have to do this?

A. No, definitely not – unless it suits you. If you do choose to come in on a day off or leave then ask for this to be 'paid back' on a day of your choice. If you don't want to come in, then your ICM can wait.

Q. I have been told that there are only engineer union reps available for my ICM. Do I have to accept this?

A. No you do not. The engineers are not part of our bargaining group covered by our recognition agreement with Thomas Cook. They are also not familiar with the details negotiated by your cabin crew rep team. If this happens – contact your base rep immediately.

Q. I've already taken VS and been accepted. Will I lose out now there is a much better deal on the table?

A. No – your VS will now be re-calculated and you will be written to with a revised illustration.

Q. Are we now going to be written to with a personal illustration?

A. Yes, Thomas Cook has offered to do this finally. All permanent full year employees of all ranks will get a personal VS illustration. This will hopefully encourage more people to take VS and thus prevent compulsory redundancies.

Q. If I end up getting demoted or made redundant and then more people at C1 or C3 level take VS – who will fill those positions?

A. Positions vacated by late applications for VS will be back-filled according to your individual score. It could possibly be the case that you get notified of compulsory redundancy – but due to late applications (in 2012) for VS, this is revoked.

Q. If I get demoted and promotions come up at a later point, then will I get priority for these?

A. Yes. Anyone displaced from their current role by this process will get priority for future cabin crew promotions.

Q. I disagree with the selection criteria. I don't think it's fair to use SEP results and disciplinarys etc. Why have you agreed this?

A. We will never please everyone unfortunately. The criteria published on Xplorer will be applied to all selections made to determine who gets which roles. Safety is our primary role when at work – so assessing this by way of irrefutable historic exam results from winter 2010/2011 was deemed the best course of action (along with other criteria). We hope these criteria will still not need to be applied in many cases – as if we achieve the required job losses through VS, they won't need to be used. By using these criteria, there is at least a level playing field for all.

Q. My friend is a union rep and I would like him / her specifically to represent me. Can this be arranged?

A. In short, yes and no. If your friend is on duty on the day in question, in your base, then of course. But due to the sheer number of meetings that need to be held and the relatively small number of union reps available, this may not be possible. However you WILL be allowed union representation by a Unite rep – as long as you are an *existing* member.

Q. I don't want any of the job roles on offer. What should I do?

A. You can either apply for VS using the advertised process – or 'deselect' from the whole process within your ICM. All you need to do is let an RCCM know as soon as possible and your redundancy package and leaving date can be arranged between you and your manager.

Q. How did you achieve the recently announced changes (see 'Unite Consultation Update' – 2nd Dec 2011) for the crew community?

A. By standing united throughout. You, our members, have told us what you want from this situation – and we went away and tried to get the best deal possible. Thomas Cook only gave us what we asked for, as we stood strongly together as a community. The alternative would have been a full industrial ballot and possible action. No-one ever wants to damage the business we all work for – we just wanted a fair deal for all and to minimise (or eliminate) the need for compulsory redundancies.