

The Honorary Graduand: Tom Williams CBE

The Orator: Wendy Phillips

Tom Williams is to be awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Business Administration

Tom Williams was appointed Chief Operating Officer (COO) in January 2015. He is responsible for the overall operations of Airbus including Engineering, Procurement and Supply Chain Management. Tom is a member of the Group Executive Committee of Airbus Group and the Airbus Executive Committee.

Previously Tom was Airbus Executive Vice President Programmes, a position he held from July 2005. His role covered all Airbus aircraft families and as such, he was in charge of ensuring the profitability of the civil programmes, of leading the product policy and the development of new products, as well as ensuring proper delivery to the customers. Before being appointed to this position, he had been Executive Vice President Procurement since February 2004.

After completing an apprenticeship with Rolls-Royce Aero Engines in 1972, Tom went on to carry out increasingly senior roles in a number of UK manufacturing companies.

In 1992 he was appointed Operations Manager for Cummins Engines, looking after all manufacturing at the company's 1,200-strong Scottish factory. At the start of 1995 he became Manufacturing and Business Group Director for the Sensors activity of Pilkington Optronics – a joint venture with Thomson CSF of France. Focusing initially on the introduction of 'lean manufacturing' techniques, he also became involved in integrating Thorn EMI Electro Optics into the business.

Tom joined British Aerospace (now merged with Marconi Electronic Systems to form BAE Systems) in 1997 as Site Director and General Manager at the Prestwick site of the company's Aerostructures division. Two years later he was appointed Operations Director – Internal Supply, within the company's Military Aircraft and Aerostructures Division, then Eurofighter Operations Director with responsibilities that included manufacturing and other business functions at the Warton and Salmesbury sites of BAE Systems.

In November 2000, Tom became Managing Director and General Manager of Airbus UK, a position he held until he became Airbus' Executive Vice President Procurement in 2004.

Tom was born in 1952 in Glasgow. During his apprenticeship he gained an HNC in Production Engineering and in 1988 an MBA from Glasgow University. Married with one daughter, Tom is a keen football supporter and occasional golfer.

Tom received a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in January 2011 and was awarded the rank of Knight in the Légion d'Honneur by the Republic of France in December 2015.

The Honorary Degree is awarded in recognition of Tom William's contribution to operations, manufacturing and business.