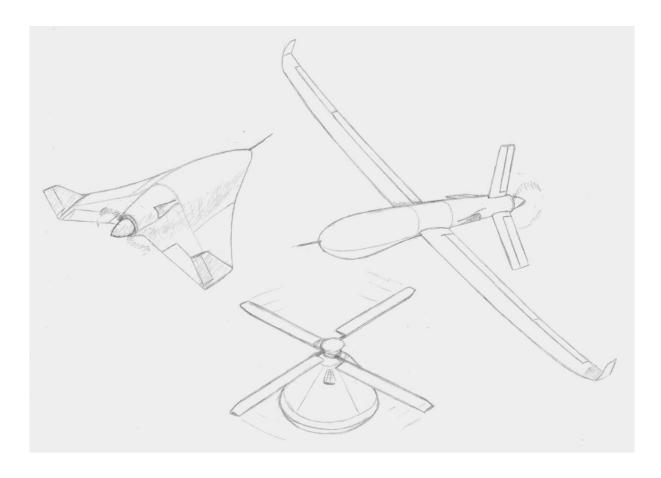




PROJETO DE AERONAVES AIRCRAFT DESIGN – 10403

2025/2026



Curricular Unit Description

and

Design Project Description

PART I THE CURRICULAR UNIT

1. OBJECTIVES

Students should acquire skills in the development of an aircraft subject to specific requirements and constraints, know how to apply aircraft design standards, develop integration, decision and compromise capabilities in a multidisciplinary team project and know how to communicate their results effectively.

With this curricular unit students should be able to:

- describe the traditional aircraft design process and adapt it to specific cases;
- develop simple programs for the analysis and conceptual/preliminary design of an aircraft;
- integrate knowledge from various areas of science and engineering in the development of a multidisciplinary design project;
- carry out the conceptual and preliminary design of an aircraft to meet specific requirements;
- analyse design results and identify the most relevant parameters for the optimization of a given aircraft;
- effectively communicate project results;
- work in a team.

2. SYLLABUS

I. Introduction

1. Introduction to the curricular unit. 2. The aircraft design process. 3. Airworthiness standards for aircraft design.

II. Conceptual Design

4. Sizing from a conceptual drawing. 5. Selection of the airfoil and geometry of the wings and tail. 6. Initial sizing. 7. Configuration and drawing. 8. Configuration considerations. 9. Cabin, passengers and payload. 10. Integration of the propulsive system and the power system. 11. Landing gear and other systems. 12. Case studies.

III. Sizing, Analysis and Optimization

13. Aerodynamics. 14. Propulsion. 15. Structures and loads. 16. Weight and balance. 17. Stability and control. 18. Performance. 19. Cost analysis. 20. Optimization.

IV. Design of a New Aircraft

21. Concept of operations. 22. Aircraft design. 23. Development of analysis and optimization tool. 24. Sizing and analysis. 25. Oral presentations. 26. Written report.

3. SYLLABUS/OBJECTIVES

The contents of this curricular unit are structured in four blocks, the first three consisting of oral exposition and discussion of topics and the fourth consisting in practical and application of the knowledge. Those were designed with the main objective to develop teamwork skills in a complex multidisciplinary project in which theoretical and practical,

technical and scientific knowledge of various areas is necessary, in which the critical thought and compromise is essential and, at the same time, to foster the spirit of innovation through research of new scientific and technological information (outside the syllabus of the course) so that the requirements of a given project can be met.

In essence, the syllabus is designed so that students can deepen, develop and integrate knowledge from different areas (aerodynamics, propulsion, structures, materials, flight performance, flight stability and dynamics, systems, etc.) to produce a viable and optimized aircraft design.

4. TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

This curricular unit is structured in two parts: one essentially theoretical and the other essentially practical. In the first part, the material is transmitted orally with multimedia slideshow support and additional information written on the blackboard. In the second part, methods for building a spreadsheet tool for analysis and optimization are taught and a new aircraft design is partially developed based on specific design requirements.

5. TEACHING METHODOLOGIES/OBJECTIVES

The methodologies adopted for this curricular unit follow the trends of similar curricular units in other universities and the experience acquired by the University of Beira Interior in the development of several unmanned aircraft and in various research and development work. This curricular unit has four weekly hours of theoretical-practical lectures and is structured in two parts: one part (2 hours) essentially theoretical and the other (2 hours) essentially practical.

In the first part, the materials (blocks I, II and III) are orally transmitted using multimedia slides and supplementary information written on the board. The slides are made available online to students in pdf format for their individual study and for reference, as they are built in the form of notes. In this part, examples of application are also presented. The discussion of the topics presented is fostered during the contact hours for better understanding by the students and for the development of their critical thought.

In the second part (block IV), methodologies are taught for the construction of an analysis and optimization spreadsheet tool. With this basis and with the knowledge of the theoretical part, students develop in teams (typically 5 students) the conceptual design and preliminary design of a new aircraft to meet the requirements provided by the teacher. During these classes, the exchange of ideas among teams is also encouraged and short oral presentations concerning the design progress are made throughout the semester. A large volume of this work must be performed outside the class period due to the considerable amount of required work. This project allows the student to develop analytical and synthesis skills, also using knowledge acquired in other curricular units, and to acquire critical decision and teamwork skills in the development of a complex system. At the end of the curricular unit the design is orally presented, and a written design report is submitted.

Although the professor monitors the developed students' work during the contact hours, both in the theoretical and practical lectures, a considerable amount of individual work outside the class is necessary by the students, regarding the study of the syllabus of the curricular unit, the study of other related subjects contained in the bibliographic references and the realization of the design work. This individual work promotes the autonomy and critical capacity of the student.

To support the teaching of this curricular unit, different but essential teaching/learning resources are used, namely:

- Video projector
- Books, articles, and other bibliography
- Notes
- Computer
- Internet
- Spreadsheets
- Analysis software for: airfoils, wings, propellers, flight stability, etc.
- CAD/CAE software
- Aircraft models developed previously at UBI and others

6. CALENDAR

Lectures are divided into two main parts: one to present and discuss the fundamental topics; and another to discuss and develop the proposed design project. In the table below the syllabus chapters are assigned to the corresponding weekly lectures.

| Week | Dates | Chapters | | | | | |
|------|------------|----------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1 | 11/09/2025 | 1 | | | | | |
| 1 | 13/09/2025 | 2 | | | | | |
| 2 | 18/09/2025 | 3, 4 | | | | | |
| 2 | 20/09/2025 | 21 | | | | | |
| 3 | 25/09/2025 | 5 | | | | | |
| 3 | 27/09/2025 | 5 | | | | | |
| 4 | 02/10/2025 | 25 | | | | | |
| 4 | 04/10/2025 | 6 | | | | | |
| 5 | 09/10/2025 | 7 | | | | | |
| 5 | 11/10/2025 | 8, 9 | | | | | |
| 6 | 16/10/2025 | 22 | | | | | |
| 6 | 18/10/2025 | 10 | | | | | |
| 7 | 23/10/2025 | 11 | | | | | |
| 7 | 25/10/2025 | 12 | | | | | |
| 8 | 30/10/2025 | 22 | | | | | |
| 8 | 01/11/2025 | holliday | | | | | |
| 9 | 06/11/2025 | 25 | | | | | |
| 9 | 08/11/2025 | 13 | | | | | |
| 10 | 13/11/2025 | 13, 14 | | | | | |
| 10 | 15/11/2025 | 14 | | | | | |
| 11 | 20/11/2025 | 23 | | | | | |
| 11 | 22/11/2025 | 15, 16 | | | | | |
| 12 | 27/11/2025 | 16, 17 | | | | | |
| 12 | 29/11/2025 | 17, 18 | | | | | |
| 13 | 04/12/2025 | 23 | | | | | |
| 13 | 06/12/2025 | 19, 20 | | | | | |
| 14 | 11/12/2025 | test | | | | | |
| 14 | 13/12/2025 | 24 | | | | | |

| 15 | 18/12/2025 | 25 | |
|----|------------|----|--|
| 15 | 20/12/2025 | 24 | |

The available time for questions is Thursday at 04:00-05:30 pm.

PART II THE DESIGN PROJECT

Long Range Cargo UAV

LRC-25

7. INTRODUCTION

The international aerospace sector has increasingly used in recent years unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV - Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) for missions of various types, such as: aerial photography, military reconnaissance, atmospheric research at high altitude, radio communication, surveillance, fire detection, technology development, etc. Despite the technology involved, UAVs have dimensions smaller than manned aircraft, making their operation more flexible and more economical. The increasing automation and communication capabilities and the evolution of available materials has allowed the operation of these aircraft at distances and altitudes greater than ever, increasing their potential by making them equal, or even superior, to other aircraft that need to carry on board systems for crew support. For short distance surveillance applications, the investment required for the development and operation of a UAV is comparatively lower than equivalent manned aircraft so that its use in these tasks results in a cost-benefit ratio much more attractive. The UAV sector is the only sector of the aerospace industry with significant growth in the last 30 years, with an average growth rate of over 14% per year.

The UAV sector is rapidly flourishing, and, in many cases, it is a source of concepts and technologies for manned aircraft. Currently, most UAVs in operation have military applications. The use of UAVs in civil applications is, however, growing rapidly with the appearance of new concepts of operation and the creation and maturation of appropriate legislation. Portugal needs to stay in this important aerospace area in order to be more autonomous in the development of technological means essential to the sustainability of its resources and its regional and national economic maturity, to employ its qualified manpower and to be a competitive exporter of technology.

Portugal also needs the use of UAVs in various areas of activity. Monitoring of forest areas which in recent years have succumbed to fires is an important example. The application of surveillance unmanned aerial vehicles allows a high degree of uptime and availability in the tasks of this nature and is a complementary means of ground surveillance and satellite monitoring already in use. The application of new UAV concepts to new civil scenarios that can be economically viable is also important.

The main objective of this subject is to show students what the conceptual design of an aircraft is and what steps are necessary to follow given mission and performance requirements, design constraints, design methods and the need for optimization. To achieve this, the knowledge gained will be applied to the design of a new aircraft subjected to specific requirements. The optimization of the project is of extreme importance in the development of a new aircraft.

This project description presents the requirements that the aircraft must respond to in terms of mission, configuration, performance, systems, materials, and design standards. It also describes the necessary tasks to be performed during the semester and the work plan to follow. This project requires dedication and continuous work to ensure that deadlines are met, and results lead to a good design.

8. REQUIREMENTS

The current requirements present a need for an autonomous UAV (also capable of being remotely piloted) with the capability to fly efficiently over long distances to deliver high priority cargo over a network of regional airfields/airports. The requirements for this aircraft are listed below and during the course of the project they must be respected. Possible changes in the requirements will be discussed and agreed upon by the teacher and all the elements involved in the project.

It is required to perform the conceptual and preliminary design of a UAV taking into account some specific design requirements. The aircraft must have good flying qualities to allow easy and precise flying. The vehicle's structure and aerodynamics must be carefully designed to achieve low power consumption levels. Simplicity, robustness, and ease of repair are essential to maintain high levels of operational readiness of the UAV.

8.1. Mission

The UAV must be designed for the following mission: it must take-off from an airfield, then climb to a cruise altitude of no less than 2500 m, cruise for at least 2500 km to the destination airfield, descend and land. The objective of the operation is to deliver high priority cargo to a single airfield or a series of airfields within a regional area of 1000 km in diameter in a timely and efficient manner. The cargo covered in this need comprises general goods, medicines, food, or luxury products, which at times may require special handling, with a mass up to 350 kg. The turnaround time should be as low as possible yet less than 30 minutes to allow for urgent cargo dispatching. The aircraft must be capable of operating from airfields with grass, unpaved or tarmac surfaces. Flight operations should be possible in rainy weather conditions and in wind speeds up to category 7 in the Beaufort Wind Scale (50-61 km/h), except for take-off and landing.

It is desirable, though not mandatory, to have a vehicle that can complete the journey through as many airfields as possible in the area given above during the daylight period in a Winter day in Central Europe (around 8 hours). There may be a centrally placed airfield from which the vehicle operates and to which it returns at the end of the journey.

8.2. Performance

The vehicle must show the following performance figures (ISA – *Internacional Standard Atmosphere* conditions):

Take-off from an airfield (less than 500 m)

Maximum stall speed in landing configuration

Cruise speed 200 km/h

Range 2500 km

Data link range at least 200 km (or satellite)

Service ceiling Landing

at least 6500 m on an airfield (less than 500 m)

8.3. Propulsion

Certified piston engines must be selected for this UAV. A single piston engine is suggested but not mandatory; multiple engines can be used. The propellers must be selected to match the engine performance according to the required UAV requirements. The aircraft should have tractor propellers unless otherwise justified by improved overall performance. In selecting the engine(s), careful attention must be given to its durability and reliability. Proper cooling of the engine(s) must be provided.

8.4. Wings

The aircraft shall have a fixed high wing configuration, with a maximum wingspan of 19 m. The wings must be well designed, both aerodynamically and structurally, so that the overall efficiency of the vehicle is high and to allow the required mission to be accomplished with low energy requirements. According to the mission, the wings can be designed for high lift-to-drag ratio. The structure should use high specific strength and high specific stiffness materials to allow for an empty weight as low as possible.

8.5. Fuselage

The fuselage should be slender and light yet possess the necessary internal space for cargo and systems. It should have high tolerance on payload weight and position. Equipment substitution and payload access should be quick and simple to perform. The payload compartment should be capable to hold the cargo in a proper manner without undesired movements. The payload compartment should have the reference dimensions $3 \times 1.25 \times 1.25$ m³ (length × width × height) and should be accessed very quickly to load and unload the cargo.

8.6. Tail

The aircraft should be of the conventional tail configuration. The tail must be small and effective. It should use in their structure the same materials selected for the wings.

8.7. Landing Gear

A rugged but simple landing gear must be used. It can be either fixed or retractable, based on performance and weight considerations. The aircraft shall have a minimum wheel size (all wheels) of 6.00×6 " and use at least 6.00×6 " 8-ply tyres in the main landing gear. The aircraft shall have either hydraulic disc brakes or electromechanical braking on each of the mainwheels.

8.8. Payload

The design must cater for the mass of cargo in the range of 0 to 350 kg. The payload must be well secured in the fuselage to avoid any movement during flight. For some types of cargo, such as medicines or food, a temperature- and humidity-controlled container can be

used. Appropriate electrical power must be provided to the container in these cases.

8.9. Weight and Balance

A Maximum Take-Off Mass (MTOM) of 750 kg is allowed. The CG travel must be such that no negative impact on the stability or on the normal operation of the aircraft is imposed for any payload weight transported on board. It is important that the maximum take-off mass of the aircraft is kept as low as possible. The vehicle should be capable of flying with partial load payloads (see 8.8).

8.10. Controls and Systems

The vehicle should be autonomous and remotely piloted. The control system will include autopilot boards (or at least physical space for those) which are not required to be selected. Control surfaces must be sized and must be actuated by servo mechanisms. All electronic and electric components and mission equipment must be placed within the fuselage according to their function and in such a way as to allow its quick preparation or replacement. The electric system should be powered by batteries which can be charged by an alternator driven by the engine.

8.11. Design Airworthiness Requirements

The aircraft must be designed broadly to CS-23 Amendment 6 or equivalent FAR. Stall and performance limitations, and acceptable means of compliance, may be taken from CS-23 Amendment 4. The aircraft's design manoeuvre limit load factors will be $\pm 3/-3$, but those should be checked with a V-n diagram. All work performed in the design should aim at achieving high levels of safety, reliability, and performance.

9. TASKS

There are several tasks in the design project that must be carried out according to the time plan below. All tasks depend on each other so that there must be a close interaction and updating between them. The design process is also iterative in nature, but perfection is not possible nor is necessary, but an effort must be put forward to achieve a good optimization level in the outcome.

The necessary calculations may be performed with the help of spread sheets and other analysis computer programs. All drawings should be developed in CATIA V5 or similar.

9.1. Concept of Operations

The exact mission profile and the way it is going to be operationally implemented must be defined and explained. The design of the vehicle will follow from the concept of operations (CONOPS) proposed to respond to the mission requirements. Topics such as definition of the mission profile (mission segments and distances/times/altitudes between destinations), operating scenario (type of terrain, atmospheric conditions - temperature, wind, rain, etc. - populated areas, etc.), take-off/launch and landing/recovery methods, necessary support equipment/infrastructure (runway, hangar, van, communications, fuel, etc.), and required human resources should be addressed.

9.2. Layout

The layout and functionalities of the vehicle must be selected so that the requirements are fully met. This task is very important because it integrates all needs of the other parts of the project into a viable configuration: aerodynamic/stability, propulsion/performance, structure/materials and systems/costs aspects should be addressed. A preliminary three-dimensional (3D) study of all major components must be performed, and these must be incorporated in the aircraft structure. 3D drawings must be produced in a CAD system for the complete UAV.

9.3. Aerodynamics and Stability

The aerodynamic study must cover the selection of the aerofoils, geometry and size of the lifting surfaces, nacelles, and the computation of the aerodynamic characteristics of the whole vehicle (C_L , C_D e C_M). It must be assured that all choices made in the overall design do not impair the aerodynamic performance. A study of the stability and control of the UAV must also be performed.

The aerodynamics work must concentrate on the wings design and tail sizing. These must be optimized having in mind the necessary compromises for different flight conditions.

9.4. Propulsion and Performance

The propulsive system (motor, propeller, power source) must be selected and sized according to the requirements. An estimate of the vehicle's main performance figures (range, endurance, rate of climb, ceiling, speeds) and mission performance (speeds, times, fuel/battery energy usage, etc.) must be carried out.

9.5. Structure and Materials

The type of structure and materials for the different components of the vehicle must be selected and defined adequately keeping in mind their configuration and function. Connections among components and assembling/disassembling requirements must be devised. Preliminary sizing of the wing must be performed. A database containing such data as suppliers, physical characteristics, mechanical characteristics, and price of all selected materials must be produced. A study on the manufacturing processes to be used must be carried out together with estimates of weight and balance.

9.6. Systems

A study of the landing gear system (if it exists), of the control system and of the electric system must be performed. These studies should include not only the selection of the main components and definition of its functionalities but also the positioning of components and cables routing inside the aircraft. Commercially available components are preferred to speed up both design and building processes. A database containing such data as suppliers, working characteristics, mass, power consumption and price of all components selected must be produced. An estimate of the total cost of the UAV needs to be developed.

9.7. Time plan

| Month | S | S | S | О | О | О | О | О | N | N | N | N | D | D | D | D | D | J | J | J | J |
|--|----|------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Task \ Week | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| Lectures | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Concept of operations | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Layout | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Aerodynamics/Stability | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Propulsion/Performance | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Structure/Materials | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Systems | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Test | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 11 | | | | | | | |
| Presentations | | | | 02 | | | | | 06 | | | | | | 18 | | | | | | |
| Report | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 20 | | | | | | |
| Exams | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Legend: Lectures Design work Weeks without | | ectu | res | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

The table below presents the time plan with the tasks required to complete de project.

9.8. Design Teams

Assessment

The design is carried out by groups of 5 students. All students should work hard for the project objectives to be fulfilled in time.

| | Student's Name | Nº | Team | E-mail | Task |
|----|----------------|----|------|--------|------------------------|
| 01 | | | | | Layout |
| 02 | | | | | Aerodynamics/Stability |
| 03 | | | | | Propulsion/Performance |
| 04 | | | | | Structures/Materials |
| 05 | | | | | Systems |
| 06 | | | | | Layout |
| 07 | | | | | Aerodynamics/Stability |
| 08 | | | | | Propulsion/Performance |
| 09 | | | | | Structures/Materials |
| 10 | | | | | Systems |

10. ASSESSMENT

The grade of this subject is given based on one written test (T), three oral presentations (P) and one report (R).

10.1. Test

The test covers all the topics discussed during classes up to the date of the test (11 December 2025 – week 14). The test is divided into two parts: the first is closed book and the second is open book.

10.2. Presentations

There will be 3 oral presentations: one for the concept of operations (2 October 2025 – week 4); one for the conceptual design (6 November 2025 – week 9); and one for the complete design (18 December 2025 – week 15). In the presentations, each design team (all elements of the team must participate in the presentations) must describe to the other teams its concepts, design philosophy, analyses, and results. The first and second presentations should take only 10 to 12 minutes each while the last presentation should take 20 to 24 minutes, depending on the number of teams. The presentation files in *pdf* format should be forwarded to the professor (pgamboa@ubi.pt) at the end of each presentation session.

All presentations will be assessed based on:

- Oral expression and quality of the information on the slides.
- Relevance and scope of the presented information.
- Objectivity and coherence of the discussed topics.
- Adequate understanding of the discussed matters and knowledge of the design.
- Technical content.
- Replies to audience questions.
- Usage of the available time.

10.3. Report

Each team must write up a design report that should contain all relevant steps taken in the aircraft design process. A typical structure of the report would include the following:

- Introduction: presentation of the requirements, objectives of the design, and the team members' tasks.
- Concept of operations: presentation of the concept of operations devised to perform the mission.
- Conceptual Design: short description of the state-of-the-art relevant to the design, initial sizing based on the state-of-the-art, description and justification of the main features and innovations in the design layout, aerodynamics, propulsion, structure and systems concepts (drawings should be used to illustrate these concepts).
- Preliminary Design: presentation of analyses and sizing aerodynamics and stability properties; propulsion and performance estimates, weight and balance calculations (mass breakdown of the aircraft, including reasonable estimates for each major component), cost analysis, optimization studies, manufacturing, operations – and three-view general arrangement drawing of the design with all major dimensions and aircraft characteristics.
- Conclusions: summary of design outcomes based on the objectives.
- References: list of literature sources used in the report.
- Appendices: presentation of complementary data, drawings, and analyses.

The number of pages is limited to around 30, using letter size 10-12, depending on letter type, single line spacing and 20 mm left and right margins. The report in *pdf* format should be forwarded to the professor (pgamboa@ubi.pt) at the date and time of the exams.

10.4. Exam

There will be no written exam. Students must hand in the report of their design project at the date and time of the exams, in weeks 19 and/or 21.

10.5. Grade

The mark of the semester is "Frequência" if the students do the test and participate in the presentations. The presentations and test are not repeated in the exam, only the design report is handed-in. The mark of this subject is given by F = 0.3T + 0.2P + 0.5R and approval is obtained if $F \ge 10$.

| 1. | | Frequência | | 100 |
|----|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----|
| | T | Test | 11-12-2025 | 30 |
| | P | Presentations | 02-10-2025; 06-11-2025; 18-12-2025 | 20 |
| 2. | | Exam $(E = 0.3T + 0.2P + 0.5 R)$ | | 100 |
| | R | Report (época normal) | ??-01-2026 (??h30) | 50 |
| | R | Report (época recurso) | ??-01-2026 (??h30) | 50 |
| 3. | | Exam $(E = 0.3T + 0.2P + 0.5 R)$ | | 100 |
| | R | Report (época especial) | ??-07-2026 (??h30) | 50 |

11. BIBLIOGRAPHY

The books listed below can be used for the design. The design reports of previous years may also be useful as general guideline and source of ideas. However, one must bear in mind that the information contained in them may be incorrect. A lot of information can also be found in the internet using appropriate search criteria.

11.1. Notes

00. Gamboa. P.V., Apontamentos de Projeto de Aeronaves, ~600 acetatos, UBI, 2024

11.2. Text Book

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11.3. Aircraft Design Books

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- 05. Jenkinson, Lloyd R., Marchman III, James F., Aircraft Design Projects for Engineering Students, Butterworth-Heinemann, 2003
- 06. Corke, T. C., Design of Aircraft, Pearson Education, Inc., 2003
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11.4. Other Books

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- 27. Certification Specifications for Very Light Aeroplanes (CS-VLA), Initial Airworthiness, EASA, 2003, and Amendments 1 to 5 (2009 to 2017)
- 28. Certification Specifications for Normal, Utility, Aerobatic and Commuter Aeroplanes (CS-23), Initial Airworthiness, EASA, 2003, and Amendments 1 to 5 (2009 to 2020)
- 29. Ladislao Pazmany, *Landing Gear Design for Light Aircraft* Volumes I & II, Pazmany Aircraft Corporation, 1986
- 30. John Cutler, Understanding Aircraft Structures, Blackwell Science, 1999
- 31. Martín Cuesta Alvarez, Vuelo con Motor Alternativo, Paraninfo, 1981
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- 33. Robert C. Nelson, Flight Stability and Automatic Control, McGraw-Hill, 1989
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- 36. Stelio Frati, *L'Aliante*, Editore Ulrico Hoepli, Milano, 1946
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