



Easy Step by Step Guide to Becoming an Airline Pilot

There is a lot of confusing information out there for those new to aviation and thinking of becoming an Airline Pilot.

This guide is deliberately simple and brief to advise you of the key points and steps to be taken on your path to an Airline Career.



Step 1

Am I eligible to train as a Pilot?

You will need:

To have a good standard of English

A formal English test may be required (ask your chosen flying school for further details)

To be able to pass an Aviation Medical

This is NOT difficult for most people with good general health and for most people wearing glasses or having eye laser surgery does not cause any problem.

To have the finance to pay for the course and your living expenses.

To be 17 or 18 years of age by the time you commence training (varies between countries)

To be a genuine student

You plan to study and then go home to seek employment

A reasonable academic background

Normally equivalent to at least Year 11

To be able to pass an Aviation Security Clearance



Step 2. Choose your school

You now need to select a flying school that has the course that you are looking for, the facilities and the ability to help you enroll as an International Student.

To become an Airline Pilot you must at least have a Commercial Pilot License and in most cases a Multi Engine Endorsement and Instrument Rating.



Step 3. Submit your application to your chosen Flying School



- On receipt of your application your school will send you a formal offer letter and sometimes your enrolment agreement.
- If you accept the offer, pay your course deposit/ application fee.
- The school will then issue the documents you need for your student visa application
- Once you have your student visa you can travel to the school and start your course

Step 4. Start Training

Phase 1 Private Pilot License

Each phase comprises both practical and theoretical

- Theory

You will need to pass the PPL theory exam which comprises several subject areas including Aircraft General Knowledge, Navigation, Human Factors in Flight, Aerodynamics, Meteorology, Air Law and Performance



The first phase of the PPL will teach you how to fly the aircraft and include lessons such as Effect of Controls, Straight & Level Flight, Climbing and Descending, Medium Turns, Circuits etc

Once you have demonstrated that you can fly the aircraft competently, you will then move to part 2 of the PPL, the navigation training.

The navigation training will teach you how to fly by VFR (Visual Flight Rules) using visual references on the ground to navigate by.

Once you pass the PPL flight test and PPL exam you will have a recreational license. You can take passengers but cannot be paid.



Phase 2. Hours building

After you receive your PPL you will need to build your experience as pilot in command (solo)



Phase 3

Commercial Pilot License

You will spend more dual flight time with your instructor so as to improve your skills to the level required by a professional pilot and prepare for the CPL flight test.

Note: in some countries you will follow this path whilst in others you will do your Instrument Rating first and then your CPL flight test.

Theory

You will need to pass a CPL exam or several CPL exams, depending on which country you are training in.

Once you pass the CPL exam/s and flight test you then have a Commercial Pilot License and can be paid to fly under VFR conditions (or IFR if you trained in a country where the IR was done first)



Phase 4. After CPL most students continue to undertake their Multi Engine Endorsement so that they can fly aircraft with 2 engines



Phase 5. Instrument Rating

You will learn to use the aircraft instruments to fly & navigate, under IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) using the same techniques as Airlines do.





Step 5. Apply to Airlines

Once you have the Commercial Pilot License, Multi Engine Endorsement and Instrument Rating, you have the minimum qualifications required to apply to an airline.

In some countries, you may be eligible for direct airline entry, whereas in others you may need to build some further flight experience as a Charter Pilot, Instructor or something similar, before being considered for Airline entry.

This will vary not only between countries but also as economic circumstances change within a market. The laws of supply and demand for pilots will determine the entry requirements set by airlines. When demand for pilots is high, entry requirements are made easier whereas when demand is lower, the airlines set higher entry requirements



Airline Transport Pilot License (ATPL)

In order to get an ATPL or Airline Transport Pilot License you need to do 2 things:

1. Pass ATPL theory exam/s
2. Build 1500 hours of flying experience.

Some people do the theory whilst they still have low flight time, pass the ATPL exams and get what is known as a “Frozen ATPL” - it then becomes unfrozen once they have the 1500 hours flying experience.

Generally you don't need an ATPL to get a job in an airline as a First Officer (which is where everyone starts their career). It takes time to gain Captaincy.

Paying for 1500 hours flying experience is too expensive, so your aim is to get a job and build this experience.

A couple of final things to keep in mind.

- Choosing a School

- There are many flying schools offering their services and it can get confusing analysing the various programs offered
- You are making a big investment and making the right decision can have a huge impact on the future success of your career

- Keep these points in mind:

- Make sure you choose a school in a country whose license has a good reputation worldwide. If you have any doubts ask someone in the industry or at your local Civil Aviation Authority.
- In many cases choosing a course that “appears” to be cheap, can end up costing you more in the future. If the standard of training is not high you might need re-training. If the course offered is not a realistic program in terms of the flying hours you need, you might need extra flying at additional costs.

Choosing a school continued

- When comparing courses make sure you check “what is” and “what is not” included in course fees including flying hours, aircraft types used, single engine flying time versus twin engine, theory, exams, flight tests, books, maps/charts, navigation equipment, landing fees etc
- Testimonials from previous students will give you a good idea of what past students think of the school.
- Ensure the school has sufficient aircraft and instructors to provide the level of service you expect



Can I succeed in this career?

- Nobody can provide you with a guaranteed job. You need to get the qualifications and prove yourself first.
- The world will always need pilots and the forecast demand is strong (500,000 new pilots needed worldwide over the next 20 years)
- Our experience is that 100% of graduates that are passionate, patient and persistent eventually succeed



OPPORTUNITY

**You'll Always Miss 100% Of The
Shots You Don't Take.
~ Wayne Gretzky ~**

Good luck in your future Airline Pilot Career.

