



PILOT CERTIFICATES AT A GLANCE

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For more details, use the links at the bottom of the page to e-mail the staff

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Pilot certificates are earned by fulfilling certain hour requirements in flight and certain areas in ground training. They entail passing a federal knowledge exam, and / or taking a practical test in an aircraft with an examiner.

FOR ITEMS MARKED WITH A * A FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION WRITTEN KNOWLEDGE TEST IS REQUIRED

Private Pilot*

This certificate is the first building block in aviation. It enables you to carry passengers during the day or night in an aircraft in which you are rated in visual flying conditions. The federal minimum time to attain this is 35 to 40 hours of flight time. The national average is 65 hours. The cost of obtaining this certificate is approximately \$9000 at Mercer.

Instrument Rating*

This enables a pilot to fly in weather in which there is no outside visibility. This rating is necessary for a career in aviation. Many private pilots do not obtain this rating and are restricted to flying in visual flying conditions. Others choose to obtain it and utilize it in their private flying. A total accrued time of 125 hours flight time is necessary, and instrument training in an aircraft, a ground training device or a simulator is required to obtain this rating.

Commercial Pilot*

This certificate, obtainable after one has a private pilot certificate, is very similar to a commercial driver's license. It is needed if you wish to work for hire. Depending on the type of program you take, 200 or 250 hours is the minimum required to earn this certificate. It is a basic requirement to progress in the field beyond personal pleasure flying.

The above, commercial pilot certificate, airplane single engine land, with an instrument rating, is the level obtained when one graduates from Mercer County Community College's aviation flight technology program. The approximate cost of the flight training is \$40,000.

Flight Instructor Certificate*

Many students earn this certificate to enable them to train other pilots. A commercial pilot certificate and an instrument rating are necessary to take this training. Mercer makes extensive use of its graduates to train pilots.

Multi Engine Rating

This is usually obtained after one has a commercial pilot certificate and an instrument rating. It is required in most commercial work. A multi rating can also be added to a private certificate.

Airline Transport Pilot*

This advanced certificate requires 1500 hours of flight, and is the requirement for many passenger-carrying operations. Mercer graduates are able to begin acquiring this with 1250 hours due to recent FAA changes.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. If pilot certificates are obtained outside the MCCC College they good for college credit?

A. By arrangement with the coordinator of the aviation program, college credit may be given for the Private Pilot certificate. Active military and professional pilots may be given credit for certificates earned elsewhere.

Q. How is the cost of flight training calculated?

A. Flight time is charged by the hour, shown by a meter in the aircraft, which records time when the engine is running. This is the same time that will be put in the student's logbook.

Q. Why is it so important to log flight time in a pilot logbook?

A. It serves as a document showing that the requirements for certification have been met.

Q. Is it possible to calculate the cost of getting a certificate or rating?

A. There are minimum times needed for certificates, but the actual time a person takes to accomplish the tasks depends on many things such as the frequency of flights, the person's aptitude, etc. A close estimate, however, can often be made. It is also best, when planning to learn to fly, to commit a set amount of time and effort to it each week.

Q. What should a person look for in a flight training operation?

A. Be a smart shopper. Look at the operation. Is it clean and neat? Are the people courteous? Do they answer your questions clearly? Look at the airplanes. Are they clean and neat? Do they look well maintained? Also, ask what the policy is regarding keeping appointments when you have lessons scheduled. You may also ask how many students they have trained in the last six months, and how many have passed their certification rides. Find out also if you would be able to rent aircraft from them after you are certified.

Q. What sort of medical exam must I take and how extensive is it. ?

A. The exam is a screening exam, and is not that extensive. The FAA must approve the doctor who gives this exam. A note from your family doctor will not suffice. The average price for this exam should be about \$80 or \$90 dollars. If you go to a doctor of your choice, make sure that

you get a student pilot medical. If you do not have a condition that requires you to take strong drugs, or that would incapacitate you periodically, you should pass. Sometimes vision problems occur, but most of these can be taken care of with a waiver.

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