

AIRCRAFT PILOT TRAINING

Frequently Asked Questions

Waco Campus, Texas State Technical College

General Program Questions

What is the difference between Part 141 and Part 61 flight training?

Part 61 and Part 141 offer two distinct flight training paths for aspiring pilots. Part 61 provides a flexible and less structured approach, while Part 141 offers a more structured training program.

TSTC in Waco offers Part 141 flight training for our Private Pilot, Instrument Rating, and Commercial Pilot courses. One notable advantage of our Part 141 program is the opportunity to earn a 250-hour reduction for pilots who graduate from an FAA-approved Part 141 pilot school, and have completed an associate's degree of approved aviation coursework. This enables pilots to attain a Restricted Airline Transport Pilot (R-ATP) certification with 1,250 flight hours instead of the standard requirement of 1,500 hours.

How many flight hours will I complete?

The average student will complete approximately 250 hours of flight time as they progress through Private Pilot, Instrument, Commercial, and Flight Instructor or Multi Engine training.

I already have my private pilot certificate; how soon will I graduate?

Students holding a private pilot certificate will receive credit for TSTC's private flight course and can progress through the program expeditiously. However, one notable disadvantage to having multiple certificates is that you may not meet the FAA eligibility requirements to earn a Restricted Airline Transport Pilot (R-ATP) certificate with 1,250 flight hours. The FAA requires pilots to graduate and earn their Instrument Rating and Commercial Certificate under a Part 141 approved course in order to be eligible for the hour reduction.

I have prior flight experience. How many of my flight hours can be credited towards this course?

If you trained at a Part 61 flight school, we can transfer up to 25% of the hours required for the desired flight course. For instance, the private pilot course has a minimum of 36.5 hours; therefore, we could transfer up to 9.125 hours if your skillset meets the necessary outcomes. If you previously trained at a Part 141 school, we can transfer up to 50% of the hours, which would amount to 18.25 hours in the private pilot course.

Financial Questions

How much will it cost for me to complete this program?

The program consists of five semesters and 60 semester credit hours. It takes the average student six semesters to complete, depending on their flight progress. Program costs for in-state tuition are about \$11,000 in total, and flight costs for the program are typically \$78,000 for the average student. This is not a “flat-rate” flight program, so individual flight fees will vary.

Will financial aid cover my flight costs?

Federal student aid will not cover the costs of flight training, but only those costs associated with tuition and housing. Many students utilize outside financing to cover the flight costs through the Texas College Access Loan (www.hhloans.com) or the Sallie Mae student loan program (www.salliemae.com).

Can I pay for my flight hours with VA benefits?

Currently, the VA will fund the program under the Post-9/11 GI Bill and in some instances vocational rehab. Students can use a family member’s benefit in some situations as well. Please note that there is a limit on how much the VA will pay for training per flight course, though many students complete each course before reaching the limit. Talk to your VA benefits coordinator for more information.

VA School Certifying Specialist - Ricci Stevens (rpstevens@tstc.edu)

How do I set up the mandatory flight account?

Flight accounts are set up through Student Accounting and are separate from tuition. It is required that a student entering the program has \$12,000 in their account to start and deposit funds as necessary to continue the program. You can pay in person at the cashier's office in the Student Service Center located at 3801 Campus Dr, Waco TX, 76705, or over the phone at 254-867-4842.

After Graduation

Am I guaranteed a job once I complete this program?

Fortunately, industry demand has been very positive and predictions show that the demand for pilots will remain high for the foreseeable future. TSTC routinely hires new instructors from our top graduates, which allows them to build the experience and flight time necessary to work for an airline. This takes approximately 18-24 months after graduation and CFIs can expect to earn \$35-\$46 per hour while instructing.

Does TSTC have a partnership with any airlines?

TSTC actively cultivates partnerships with airlines through formal agreements known as pipelines. These relationships facilitate pilot placement and ensure that our graduates are sought after by numerous airlines. We are in the process of updating these agreements and

exploring new opportunities, which will further enhance our students' career prospects. While these programs are beneficial, they are not strictly necessary, as the industry is in urgent need of new pilots.

What can I do to make my application stand out?

To be considered for the program, the application selection process considers four key elements: submission of all requested documents, GPA, a well-crafted essay, and any achievements, recognitions, honors, or awards, including military awards. When writing your essay, focus on explaining your motivation for becoming a pilot, your career aspirations in the aviation industry, and your plan for achieving these goals. Please don't hesitate to share any accomplishments you have, whether from your high school, military service, or previous jobs. Every achievement, regardless of its scale, can enhance the strength of your application.

Uncategorized Questions

Can I hold a full-time or part-time job while attending this program?

To ensure timely graduation, it is recommended that students minimize work commitments. Meeting the program's requirements entails a minimum of three flights per week. While scheduling three flights per week is mandatory, we strongly encourage students to schedule more as available. Unforeseen circumstances such as weather, maintenance, or illness may result in flight cancellations causing delays in progress. Therefore, students are expected to maintain availability and are strongly encouraged to fill in when instructors have last-minute flight openings.

What is the difference between Class I, II, and III FAA Medical Certificates?

Medical Certificates confer privileges to pilots based on the class they obtain. Class one medicals allow the privileges of an Airline Transport Pilot. Second class provides the privileges of a commercial pilot to fly for hire. Third class privileges are primarily for general aviation and do not allow many opportunities to earn compensation for flying.

To pursue a career in the aviation industry, it is essential to acquire First or Second class privileges. We are dedicated to ensuring that our students have a thorough understanding of the professional opportunities available to them before they enroll in the program. We aim to prevent students from investing in the program only to later realize that they cannot build a career from their training.