



Australian Government
Civil Aviation Safety Authority

PILOT CAREER GUIDE



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LAUNCH YOUR FLYING CAREER

Are you looking for an exciting, challenging and rewarding career? Do you dream of taking to the skies where you can see things from an entirely new perspective? Would you like to get behind the controls of amazing machines – big and small? If so, flying could be for you.

While most people think of pilots flying passengers around the world on commercial airlines, there are many more diverse career paths in aviation. Some of these are:

- › instructing people to become pilots or learn new skills
- › charter flying to carry people for business or tourism
- › agricultural flying
- › aerial photography and survey work
- › helicopter mustering
- › military flying in some of the world's most expensive and advanced aircraft.

Aviation is also critical in medical evacuations, firefighting and other emergency operations to help save people's lives, livelihoods, and homes.

Professional pilots must be able to physically control an aircraft, as well as make accurate decisions in complex, time-critical situations.

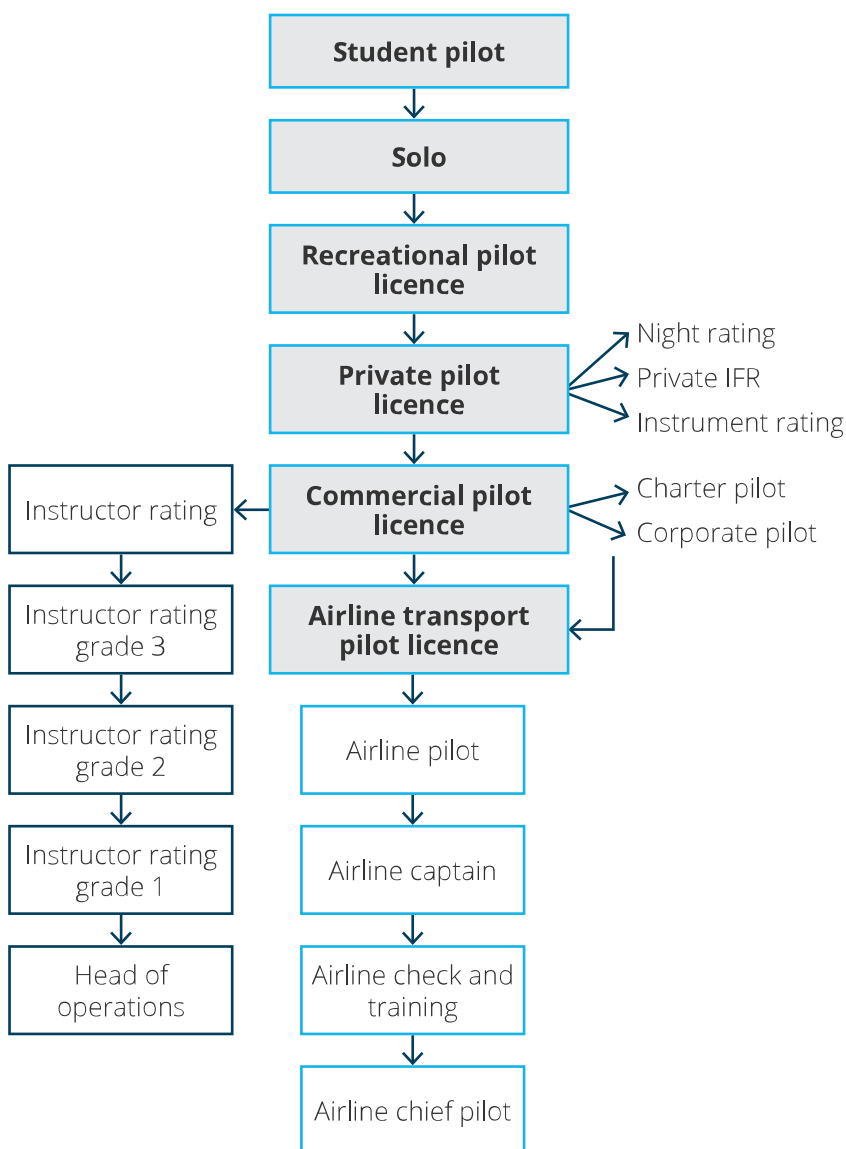
You will need to be in good health, have good eyesight and hearing, and typically have an education in English to become a commercial pilot. Most people who succeed in aviation have above-average initiative, self-discipline, common sense, patience and perseverance.

This guide will help you decide if flying is a good career for you. You should also do as much research as possible. Contact or visit flight training organisations and talk to people in the industry.

The amount of training required can seem daunting at first, but with drive and dedication, you can turn your love of flying into a highly satisfying career.

BECOMING A PILOT

From student to airline captain



More information about licence and pilot types, and how to get each type of licence, is on page 11.

You must be over 15 years old to fly solo and at least 16 to get your first licence. You must also meet a number of educational, language, medical, security and time requirements. These are explained more in the following sections.

Educational requirements

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) does not require you to have any formal educational qualifications to train for an Australian pilot licence.

You can pass CASA's private pilot licence examination with a standard education and ability to speak, read, write and understand the English language.

For commercial or higher licence levels, a good background in maths and physics is useful, but not essential. If you don't have this background, you could consider theory training with a reputable theory training centre or theory provider.

It is also a good idea to contact employers in your area of aviation interest to check their requirements. Many airlines generally require passes at high school certificate level in physics and maths, although this may vary between companies. Some may suggest you investigate aviation diplomas or degrees offered by some universities.



image: Civil Aviation Safety Authority



image: Civil Aviation Safety Authority

English language requirements

People who use aeronautical radios need to be able to communicate effectively in voice only (for radio), as well as in face-to-face situations like pre-flight briefings, training and interacting with other crew members. In Australia and many other countries, this communication must be in English.

Aviation English Language Proficiency (ELP) measures someone's ability to communicate in English using an aviation-relevant assessment process. Pilots must meet the ELP standard to be issued with an operational licence.

To determine your ELP level, an approved examiner will assess you on these 6 elements:

- › pronunciation
- › structure
- › vocabulary
- › fluency
- › comprehension
- › interactions.

You will be scored for each element between 1 and 6. Your overall rating is the lowest of these individual scores. A minimum of ELP level 4 is required for any operational licence. Level 6 is rated as an expert speaker.



CAREER PROFILE – BENJAMIN DUNK

RECREATIONAL PILOT LICENCE HOLDER

I've had my sights set on becoming a pilot since I was very young.

If I'm honest I can't really pick the moment that I believe led me down the path I'm on today. The more I found myself interested in flying, and the more experiences I got, the more confident I was in realising this was the career I wanted to pursue.

I might have been drawn to the novelty of doing something that humans have only been able to do for a little over 100 years.

When I first showed some interest in flying, my parents organised a flight in a small plane to see if I'd enjoy it. While I don't remember that much, I remember watching my instructor and being fascinated by what she was doing. All the tasks she was able to perform, and the specialised skill set really appealed to my 10-year-old self. That same instructor would go on to send me solo 9 years later at Parafield Airport in Adelaide.

On the recommendation of the same instructor I joined the Air Force Cadets at 13 to learn more about aviation in a well-supported and structured organisation.

The cadets would go on to support me through a gliding scholarship to achieve my first solo at 15, then my certificate and instructor rating in the years following.

I was surrounded by people my own age with the same general interest in aviation. This would go on to be fantastic support for me in my last few years of high school.

It's the type of activity that encourages you to always be striving to do your best.

In the last 6 months, saving up through my part time job, I have completed my recreational pilot licence with the Parafield Flying Centre and I am now considering where to take my aviation career.

It's really important to set yourself goals in your training and work towards them. Something like a commercial licence can be daunting at first. I decided to do things in steps – recreational licence, then private, then commercial which will give me more flexibility in how I choose to study and pay for my flying.

I really encourage anyone considering a flying career to do science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects in high school. Having a background in physics means once you're sitting in front of an aviation theory textbook, the concepts being presented are much easier to understand.

I would say that to be a successful pilot requires you to have good self-discipline, and a humble attitude that allows you to reflect on your flying, particularly when you're off solo, and need to recognise on your own where you need to improve.

Self-improvement is the core of being a good pilot. We're not going to be great pilots right off the bat. It is important that you can recognise where you need improvement, speak to your instructors and fellow pilots and then set yourself a goal to improve that aspect of your flying.

I am keeping my options open. I am in the process of applying for some airline cadetships, while also speaking with people about gaining my commercial pilot licence. I know that I would love a career with the Royal Flying Doctors Service, however I know that such an amazing organisation needs pilots with high levels of experience and see this as something to aim for in the longer term.

Flying is incredibly exciting and so rewarding when it's done right. It's the type of activity that encourages you to always be striving to do your best. I think you will find no other career to match it.



image: Brian Jackson | stock.adobe.com

Medical requirements

You need to pass a medical examination before you can fly solo, and you must hold a current medical certificate to exercise the privileges of your licence once you have one.

There are various levels of medical certificates required for flying, known as classes. For commercial operations that do not carry passengers, you need a minimum Class 2 certificate. This involves a relatively simple general medical examination.

For passenger-carrying commercial operations or for an air transport pilot licence, you need a Class 1 medical certificate. The medical examination for this may include an electrocardiogram (ECG), an audiogram, a blood lipids test, and a specialist eye examination, in addition to the general medical examination, depending on your age. Medical examinations become more rigorous as you grow older.

CASA-approved doctors, known as Designated Aviation Medical Examiners, or DAMEs, do these examinations.

If you have any relevant medical conditions or history, or concerns about whether you would satisfy CASA's medical requirements, you should discuss this with a DAME and your flight training organisation before starting to fly, especially if you intend to become a professional pilot.

A list of all DAMEs is on the CASA website, or you can call the CASA medical section on 131 757. Flight training organisations can also help you find a DAME in your area.

Aviation security requirements

You will need to have an aviation security status check when you apply for a pilot licence. These checks confirm you have a valid background and are not a threat to aviation security.

To get one of these checks, you must apply for an Aviation Security Identification Card (ASIC) through one of the issuing organisations listed on the Department of Home Affairs website.



image: Civil Aviation Safety Authority

Time requirements

Most flight training organisations can help you estimate how much time your flight training will take. It depends on factors such as weather, aircraft availability, how often you can fly, and your financial situation.

As a guide, if you train for one hour a week, it will take you around 12 months to get a private pilot licence. If you fly less than one hour each week, you will need revision at the start of each lesson so your progress may be slower.

Think about starting your training when you can make time and afford to fly at least weekly.

CHOOSING A FLIGHT TRAINING ORGANISATION

You must train for your licence, ratings and most endorsements through a flight training organisation that is authorised under Part 141 or 142 of the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations. An organisation can be authorised under both.

When CASA issues an approval to allow an organisation to train pilots, it inspects the facilities and equipment to make sure they can deliver flight training safely.

There are more than 280 CASA-licensed organisations that conduct flight training Australia-wide, along with some technical institutes and TAFEs. Several universities offer degrees in aviation.

A number of flight training courses are full-time. Some organisations have live-in facilities and can arrange finance to help with costs. Others specialise in training for people who can only fly occasionally.

Choose a flight training organisation based on what you want to achieve.

If you want to fly for recreation, choose an organisation that concentrates on the private pilot licence, rather than a larger one that focuses on training for professional licences and ratings. Organisations that cater mainly for private pilots often use basic and economical aircraft for training, which will help reduce your costs.

If you want a career in aviation, you need training beyond the private pilot level to commercial level and may prefer to complete all training with one organisation. You should choose an organisation that delivers commercial flight training.

Contact a number of flight training organisations to compare costs and quality. Consider the following factors, so you get the skills and theoretical knowledge you need to fly safely and confidently:

- › licence type you want
- › cost, including whether you need to pay an extra fee for doing your test
- › quality of training, including infrastructure and tools used to teach you to fly
- › quality of flight instructors
- › course structure that suits your timetable and budget.

Once you have selected a flight training organisation, organise a trial instruction flight. This is normally a 30-minute flight with a flight instructor who will show you the basic features of an aircraft and allow you to take control.

You should have some idea of whether you wish to continue flying after this. It will also help you assess the flight training organisation and flight instructor you flew with.

LICENCE TYPES

The following licence types are available:

- › **recreational pilot licence (RPL)** – allows you to carry passengers and be pilot-in-command within 25 nautical miles (nm) of your departure point
- › **private pilot licence (PPL)** – allows you to be pilot-in-command of private operations
- › **commercial pilot licence (CPL)** – allows you to be pilot-in-command of some commercial operations
- › **airline transport pilot licence (ATPL)** – allows you to be pilot-in-command in any operation, including on passenger jets.



CAREER PROFILE – PETER HOLSTEIN

CHIEF PILOT, AEROWASP/TOUCHDOWN HELICOPTERS

I joined the Royal Australian Navy at 15 – leaving school without completing Year 9.

I was categorised in the aviation category and posted to VC724 Squadron at HMAS Albatross and then twice to the aircraft carrier, HMAS Melbourne.

It was my continual involvement with all things aviation that inspired me to take up flying lessons and later to consider a career as a pilot.

I originally started flying gliders with the Albatross Gliding Club but soon became disenchanted because not only did I want to fly, but also wanted to go places. I had my first fixed wing lesson in 1974 at the South Coast Aero Club at Albion Park, NSW and from that day I was hooked.

Fortunately, I had sufficient down time while onboard HMAS Melbourne, so I had plenty of time to study. However, with my relatively limited education, I found the theoretical aspect quite difficult.

To anyone considering a career as a pilot, my only advice is to never give up.

I almost did but with the help of a few pilots aboard the ship I managed to stay on track.

After leaving the Navy – with both aeroplane commercial pilot's licence (CPL) and helicopter CPL licences with instructor ratings in both disciplines, I started my own company, AEROWASP Pty Ltd.

I initially started it as a charter company then I added a helicopter flying school to the air operator's certificate (AOC). It wasn't a difficult thing to do but it did take persistence and a fair amount of hard work.

A personal highlight was becoming an approved testing officer and later a flight examiner.

While I still instruct, I spend a large proportion of my time by flight testing. For me, the most challenging thing has been the transition from CAR5 to Part 61 for both the school and a charter/aerial work company.

Personally, to be a successful pilot you need to be professional, knowledgeable and accountable. It is incumbent upon us all to stay well-informed of change and if possible, embrace it.

To others thinking of entering the industry I say: don't be afraid! It can be a bugger of an industry but at the end of the day, it can be extremely rewarding and challenging.

I'm gradually approaching the end of my flying career and I feel it is my duty to pass the gauntlet on to the next generation of pilots.

I absolutely recommend a career as a pilot and for the most part, you'll get to see some incredible scenery, meet some amazing people and fly some brilliant pieces of engineering.



image: Heinrich Stofberg

PILOT DESCRIPTIONS

Recreational pilots

Recreational pilots can fly light, single-engine aircraft as the pilot-in-command, independently of a flight training organisation, without supervision. You must be 16 years old to get a recreational pilot licence (RPL).

RPL holders can:

- › fly up to 25 nm from the aerodrome where the flight began, the designated training area, or a direct route between the two
- › fly private operations with day visual flight rules (VFR) in a single engine aircraft with a maximum take-off weight (MTOW) of 1500 kg.

Private pilots

Once you have passed your RPL test, you can go for your private pilot licence (PPL). You must be at least 17 years old to get your PPL.

Private pilots can fly anywhere in Australia, fly many types of aircraft, and gain similar operational ratings to a commercial pilot. You can also legally share aircraft hiring costs with your passengers.

You cannot fly for hire or reward.

You must also hold the appropriate aircraft category rating on your PPL – aeroplane, helicopter, gyroplane, airship or powered-lift aircraft – and the class or type rating for the aircraft you want to fly. You can apply for another category rating on your licence once you get your initial licence and category rating (see ‘Endorsements and ratings’ on page 26).

Commercial pilots

Commercial pilots can conduct private and commercial flight operations. You must be at least 18 years old to get your commercial pilot licence (CPL).

With a CPL, you can co-pilot any operation and be pilot-in-command of any operation except the following:

- › multi-crew aircraft in air transport operations
- › an aeroplane certified for single-pilot operations with a maximum take-off weight (MTOW) of more than 5700 kg in air transport operations
- › turbojet aeroplanes with a MTOW of more than 3500 kg in air transport operations.

You must hold the appropriate aircraft category on your CPL and the class or type rating for the aircraft you want to fly.



image: Jon Flobrant | unsplash.com

Air transport pilots

Air transport pilots can conduct private and commercial operations. You must be at least 21 years old to get your air transport pilot licence (ATPL).

With an ATPL, you have private and commercial licence privileges, and you can co-pilot and be pilot-in-command of any operation. An ATPL is required to command large airline-type aircraft.

You must hold the appropriate aircraft category rating on your ATPL and the class or type rating for the aircraft you want to fly. The ATPL with the aeroplane category rating (ATPL(A)) includes the privileges of an instrument rating.

GETTING YOUR PILOT LICENCE

For each licence type, you must:

- › complete a general English language assessment (only required at the RPL stage)
- › hold a current medical certificate
- › pass a theory exam
- › complete the relevant flight training
- › complete the minimum number of hours flying time
- › pass a flight test.

Recreational pilot licence

To get an RPL, you need to get an aviation reference number (ARN) from CASA and a logbook, which you can buy through your flight training organisation or from local pilot shops.

You will record any flying you do and your achievements for each phase of training in the logbook. Your flight instructor signs the logbook as your flight training progresses. Your flight training organisation will also keep its own record of your progress. This record is transferable if you change flight training organisations for any reason.

During the initial stages of training, you will always be with a flight instructor. You will learn flight basics and become familiar with the local training area to prepare for your first solo flight.

You will generally be ready to do this after around 10–15 hours of instruction.

The next stages of training will involve more advanced flying, such as flying by reference to your instruments, advanced turning techniques, advanced stalls and recovery, advanced circuits, practice in forced landings and in-flight emergencies.

Once you have completed all basic flying sequences and can fly the aircraft safely, you must pass an RPL theory exam, which can be conducted by your flight training organisation. You must then pass a flight test to be issued with your RPL.



image: Civil Aviation Safety Authority

Private pilot licence

You need to do the following for the aircraft category rating you want to get with your PPL:

- › learn the theory by studying it yourself or attending classes at a flight training organisation
- › pass a PPL theory exam
- › complete flight training at a Part 141 or Part 142 flight training organisation
- › meet the minimum aeronautical experience requirements (see the CASA website for full details about these requirements):
 - » 40 hours for non-integrated course for aeroplanes and helicopters
 - » 35 hours for integrated courses for aeroplanes and helicopters (information about these types of courses is below)
- › pass a PPL flight test for the licence and category rating.

There are two types of PPL flight training courses – non-integrated and integrated courses.

A non-integrated course lets you complete your flight training over any time frame. Part 141 flight training organisations conduct non-integrated courses.



image: Civil Aviation Safety Authority

An integrated training course is a structured, intensive program that combines ground theory with practical flight training. It is designed to be completed in a condensed period of time. Part 142 flight training organisations conduct integrated courses.

The theory for the PPL includes subjects such as flight rules and air law, aerodynamics, meteorology, navigation, flight planning, power plants and aircraft systems.

PPL flight training includes navigational exercises, which are designed to hone your map reading and planning skills in a variety of operational environments, as well as general and instrument flying.

The first navigational exercise will normally involve a flight outside controlled airspace to a remote aerodrome. From there, your flight instructor will gradually increase your exposure to different operational environments, types of airspace and weather conditions. You will also be required to do some instrument flying using navigational aids.

Flight training organisations can recognise previous flight training. Your flight training organisation will assess that training, and your current knowledge and skills to determine what further training you need before recommending you for your flight test.



CAREER PROFILE – LANI SMALES

FLYING INSTRUCTOR, CANBERRA AVIATION

I grew up with my grandfather's stories about his exploits with the Royal Air Force in Lancaster bombers during WWII and his subsequent post-war travels with the service to various 'exotic' places like India and Egypt, which fuelled my desire to travel and associated flying with fun. Although I grew up in the UK, we had family in Canada and during my childhood I was lucky enough to go on plenty of long-haul commercial flights. However, learning to fly seemed awfully expensive. The Royal Air Force (United Kingdom) wasn't really an option at the time for me, and many of my career advisors counselled against going that route – for a start, I wasn't particularly good at maths or physics!

Instead, I explored the world by studying languages and my dream of flying seemed just that until I moved to Australia.

Needing money after moving hemispheres, I combined my aviation passion with an office job and worked in the recreational sector, where I discovered that flying was not quite as expensive as I'd thought it was. I self-studied and obtained my recreational pilot licence (RPL) on weekends. Moving jobs to a different admin position with slightly better pay, I still thought frequently about becoming a pilot for 'real' and converted to a private pilot licence (PPL) – mostly on my own time. Admin was never where I intended to spend my working life, I still wanted to be a pilot, and I realised I would never manage it piecemeal – so I quit my job, signed up for a full-time CPL course and spent 18 months commuting between home and Sydney while I got various qualifications, including my flight instructor rating.

You need to be willing to work hard, compromise and make some sacrifices to your greater goal.

I consider myself a relatively 'junior' member of the aviation industry, having only had 2 jobs! I'm also truly fortunate in that I have not yet stopped flying since I earned my CPL. My first job was undertaking mostly scenic and occasional charter flights around outback South Australia. Getting the job required quite a bit of persistence, and eventually I flew myself to the base and had the craziest interview of my life mid-air in the back of a Cessna 172.

Piloting while being a tour-guide has its fun moments (showing tourists the 'gasp-a-minute' scenery) and some terrifying ones (the lady who screamed loudly at 300' on short final approach to land – because she'd spotted a kangaroo in the paddock below!) It has rewarding moments too: flying a stranded person back to re-join their tour-group after they were left behind earlier on the trip.

In my current role as a flight instructor, I like to draw on my previous experience, which have given me some preparation for the moment the student accidentally switches off the mixture instead of the carburettor heat, briefly kills the engine on short final, but nothing prepares you for the look on the student's face when they complete their first solo!

There's no such thing as a 'normal day' in my experience. One of the biggest variables in instructing is the weather: What's the forecast? How does it affect the bookings? Can we conduct the flights or if not, what are the alternatives? Plans may change if the real time weather isn't as forecast, or if a student is suddenly stuck in a work meeting or similar and can't make their booking, or we discover the aircraft has some unscheduled maintenance requirement. One seeming constant in aviation is that you need to have prepared plans A, B, C and then be ready to create further variations 'on the fly' (pun intended!).



image: Civil Aviation Safety Authority

Pilots in the small-scale GA world often work long hours compared with office workers and it can be harder to get a break – plus this is not just a job, it's a vocation which means pilots think about flying A LOT. In previous roles, working and living away from home for months at a time was definitely challenging as is explaining to non-pilots why we can't go flying today!

You need to be willing to work hard, compromise and make some sacrifices to your greater goal. Being able to work self-sufficiently and knowing how to work in a team – and recognising that sometimes the team is small and clear-cut such as in a multi-crew environment, but other times is more diverse like the pilot and air traffic control, or the pilot and the maintenance engineers.

Although it's one of the last bastions of male dominated careers, it is slowly changing. Both my jobs have been supportive of female pilots (my current chief flight instructor is also female) – partly why I selected the companies. Play to your unique strengths whether they are gender-related or not and try not to get caught up in the 'us and them' mentality.

There are a still number of stones to lay in my 'crazy paving', but longer term I'd like to arrive in an aeromedical pilot role, which has an even more direct link to the communities they serve and a genuinely life-saving impact.

In the current climate however, I may need to enjoy the scenery and experiences en-route for a little longer!

Commercial pilot licence

You need to do the following for the aircraft category rating you want to get with your CPL:

- › learn the theory by studying it yourself or attending classes at a flight training organisation
- › pass the CPL theory exams
- › complete flight training at a Part 141 or 142 flight training organisation
- › meet the minimum aeronautical experience requirements (see the CASA website for full details about these requirements):
 - » 150 hours for non-integrated courses for helicopters
 - » 200 hours for non-integrated courses for aeroplanes
 - » 100 hours for integrated courses for helicopters
 - » 150 hours for integrated courses for aeroplanes
- › pass a CPL flight test for the licence and category rating.

As with the PPL, you can do a non-integrated or an integrated course. The theory for the CPL includes subjects such as flight rules and air law, aerodynamics, meteorology, navigation, human factors, operation, performance and planning, power plants and aircraft systems.

CPL flight training includes basic general flying, as well as cross-country and instrument flying.

The flying experience you need to get a CPL varies depending on whether you want to fly aeroplanes, helicopters, or gyroplanes, and whether you complete an integrated or non-integrated course. See the CASA website for more information.



image: petrovalexey | stock.adobe.com

Air transport pilot licence

You need to do the following for the aircraft category rating you want to get with your ATPL:

- › hold either a commercial pilot licence or multi-crew pilot licence with the same aircraft category rating
- › learn the theory by studying it yourself or attending classes at a flight training organisation
- › pass the ATPL theory exams
- › complete the flight training
- › complete an approved course of multi-crew cooperation training
- › meet the minimum aeronautical experience requirements (see the CASA website for full details about these requirements):
 - » 1500 hours for aeroplanes
 - » 1000 hours for helicopters
- › pass an ATPL flight test.

The theory for the ATPL includes subjects such as air law, human factors, meteorology, navigation, flight planning, performance and aircraft loading, aerodynamics, aircraft systems and, for the aeroplane licence, instrument rating theory.

ATPL flight training focuses on the competencies of the pilot-in-command in a multi-crew aircraft operation. It also covers instrument-rating competencies, multi-crew operations, multi-engine aircraft competencies, and other generic piloting competencies.



CAREER PROFILE – OWEN WEAVER

QANTAS MANAGER FLEET OPERATIONS,
B747 AND BOEING STANDARDISATION

My family travelled to Europe when I was a child. I was too young to remember anything, but this left me with a desire to go out and see the world myself. I was always excited by planes passing low over my house as they arrived into Adelaide – so when the 'normal' career options did not feel right, I decided to go flying. I went for a trial flight and was instantly hooked! I qualified for my restricted private pilot's licence before I started Year 12.

I studied engineering at university as my family were concerned about the employment prospects for flying at the time. As a result, I completed an integrated flying course (cadetship) and instructor rating at what is now known as the Flight Training College Adelaide.

The most challenging aspect was also the most valuable – it was learning how to fail gracefully. A flying career includes a lot of small training steps, and they sometimes feel insurmountable. This can be confronting but the aviation industry is blessed with amazing mentors and trainers who will inspire you to overcome these professional and personal obstacles.

However, this resulted in my most enjoyable training experience of going solo. The experience of flying in the circuit pattern and looking across at the empty seat next to me was an unforgettable and an amazing achievement.

The aviation industry goes in cycles and when I had completed my qualifications the airlines stopped recruiting for 3 years due to an industrial dispute. It was confronting at the time but resulted in me learning a lot by instructing other pilots and gaining more experience.

You need to enjoy a challenge, which aviation is, and always strive to improve yourself.

Airlines often use a seniority system which allows progression from a junior role through to a 'window seat' in first officer and captain roles. I've been lucky to have flown domestically and internationally on Boeing B737, B767 and B747 aircraft as well as for the Airbus team on the A330. I've enjoyed doing special charter flights, technical work for maintenance operations and fleet planning and safety roles.

There are lots of memorable moments as flying is a lifestyle career with time in many ports around Australia and the world. We conducted fantastic charters for charity which included taking children with a disability and their families for joy flights for a day or taking passengers paying for charity to locations such as Norfolk Island. Our flights over Antarctica are the most spectacular exposure to this continent and a lot warmer than taking a posting on the ground!

The most memorable however has been my association with the Boeing B747 'Jumbo' team – which were retired from Qantas fleet operations in 2020.

I am currently involved in a fleet management role which looks after safety and policy management for the Qantas Mainline Air Operators Certificate under our Chief Pilot. I still have a flying role but spend a lot of time on the ground assuring the safety of our policy and operations in the Qantas base in Mascot Sydney. I will start retraining onto a new aircraft type which may include something as special as our Qantas sunrise aircraft that allows non-stop travel to anywhere in the world.

You need to enjoy a challenge, which aviation is, and always strive to improve yourself. To manage issues analytically and very importantly have strong people skills. But most of all just really like aviation.

ENDORSEMENTS AND RATINGS

Once you have your licence, you can add endorsements and ratings to it.

Class or type rating

Aircraft class and type ratings relate to the complexity, performance and operating characteristics of different kinds of aircraft. These ratings must be attached to your licence.

You will have at least one aircraft rating when you get your flight crew licence – for example, single engine aeroplane class rating. You may wish to do further training and add a multi-engine aeroplane class rating, or a type rating for a more complex aircraft. More information is on the CASA website. Flight training organisations can also provide further advice.

Operational ratings and associated endorsements

Operational ratings extend the privileges of your licence, such as flying at night, using instruments, teaching others to fly, or agricultural work. There are corresponding endorsements.

To be issued with an operational rating, and be granted at least one of the relevant endorsements, you must complete training and assessment requirements for that rating.

Flight activity and aircraft design feature endorsements

There is also a range of flight activity and design feature endorsements available.

Endorsements such as aerobatics and the retractable undercarriage design feature require training and certification from an authorised flight instructor.

Design feature endorsements can also be issued after a successful flight test for an aircraft class or type rating with design features.

More detailed information about ratings and endorsements is on the CASA website.



CAREER PROFILE – TRACY LAMB

FORMER VIRGIN 737 CAPTAIN/
COMMERCIAL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS PILOT

I could have never dreamed that I would have been an international airline pilot (Boeing 737), certified flight instructor (CFI), experienced corporate jet and charter pilot in my 27 years of commercial aviation experience with over 7000 flight hours. In addition to this I became a certified commercial UAS (Unmanned Aircraft Systems) pilot (FAA Part 107 and CASA Part 101).

My love of safety has allowed me to gain extensive field experience as lead aviation safety auditor on helicopter operators, airlines, charter companies, and unmanned aircraft operators. Some of the highlights include being appointed the global manager for unmanned safety and certification for SGS Aerospace, based in London, UK, and New York, USA. Through this position, I created and led the Unmanned Inspection Capabilities in the Netherlands, France, UK, South Africa, Spain, Canada South America, and the USA.

I never considered a flying career until a friend took me on a scenic flight and I was hooked! Within 6 months, I earned my private pilot licence. The only reason I started training for my commercial pilot's licence (CPL) was to be a better private pilot. By the time I completed my CPL, I knew I had to turn this passion into a career. Within 3 years, I was working as a flight instructor for the flight training organisation where I took my first flight, and 11 years later, I was flying for Virgin Australia.

After a few months of working as a flight instructor, I was hungry to learn more about advanced aviation topics to help my flight students. After hearing about Griffith University's aviation program, I signed up for their Bachelor of Aviation degree. This excellent university has some great professors who inspired me to go straight into their Master of Aviation Business Management, graduating with two academic awards in 2011. This set me up to become an advanced instructor and helped me further my career as an aviation safety professional. I am currently finishing my PhD in Aviation at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

Choosing to be a pilot is an investment in a career that can have far-reaching possibilities. Not only can you choose to be a pilot in a variety of these industries – for example, aeromedical, firefighting, the defence force, freight, charter, utility inspections, environmental research, the airline transport industry. You can also teach others to fly by being a flight instructor or running a flight training organisation. With so many possibilities, it is essential to spend some time asking yourself reflective questions about the direction you want to take your career if you want to be a pilot, what lifestyle you want, and what type of environment you want to work in.

It's crucial to understand that your journey towards your ultimate goal may be lengthy and challenging, taking years, possibly more than you had first realised. So be prepared to enjoy the process and embrace unexpected opportunities.

Being nominated by the UK CAA, was a tremendous honour to participate as a member of the ICAO RPAS Panel and the UAS Advisory Group from 2015–2020 and I've served as chair of 2 working groups for CASA in 2014–15. As well, I've represented the industry through AUVSI on the FAA Unmanned Aircraft Safety Team (UAST), the Aviation Rule Making Committee for airspace integration, and the JARUS sub-committee.



image courtesy: Tracy Lamb

The aircraft does not know what gender you identify with, so if you're a female interested in career as a pilot, I say go for it! The only person who can limit your career is you. Don't be afraid to reach out to other female role models in the industry for support. The Australian Women's Pilots Association, Women in Aviation International, and Aviation Aerospace Australia all have great mentoring programs.

In my experience, I would recommend a career as a pilot to those who have a keen interest and passion for learning more about being a pilot. Becoming a pilot requires discipline and hard work, and the knowledge you will be accountable for your passengers and/or cargo. It is a highly challenging and rewarding career, one of the few professions that becomes a part of your self-identity.

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