



CENTER FOR AVIATION

# Frequently Asked Questions

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- **What is the history of the EKU Aviation program?**

The genesis of EKU's Aviation Program dates back to 1982, when former EKU Vice President Joe Schwendeman chaired a feasibility study that determined the Commonwealth needed a university-level aviation program to keep top candidates from leaving the state to pursue degrees in a rapidly growing field.

The program's professional flight option is the only FAA-approved university flight program in Kentucky. Students who earn their degree in professional flight attain FAA certification as a private pilot, commercial pilot, an instrument rating, certified flight instructor-instrument and multi-engine ratings. Before graduation, they will log 250-300 flight hours via the fixed-base operator at Central Kentucky Regional Airport, now managed by EKU.

The aerospace management option, designed for students who want to work in aviation but not as a pilot, includes courses designed to prepare students for employment in a wide variety of aerospace businesses.

The program, housed in the School of Aviation in EKU's College of Justice, Safety, and Military Science (CJSMS), has graduated hundreds of students since its inception. Graduates have pursued careers as military and corporate pilots, flight instructors, airline captains, airport and airline managers, airline dispatchers, air traffic controllers and other positions in and outside of the aviation industry. Some work for major airlines, including American, Delta and Continental, and for package delivery services, including UPS and DHL. Others work in the U.S. military, at regional airports, for the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and in law enforcement. Some have gone on to earn advanced degrees in aeronautical science and engineering, aerospace management, business, law and medicine.

In 2009, EKU's aviation program received the 2009 Aviation Achievement Award, presented by the Kentucky Aviation Hall of Fame. President Doug Whitlock and several other representatives of the program and University were on hand for the enshrinement ceremonies at the Aviation Museum of Kentucky, located at Blue Grass Airport in Lexington. The Aviation Achievement Award recognizes institutions and organizations for their contribution to aviation. Previous honorees include airlines, general aviation associations, and training programs. [History - Aviation \(eku.edu\)](https://www.eku.edu/aviation/history)

- **Is the EKU Aviation program accredited?**

Yes. EKU is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award associate, baccalaureate, master, educational specialist, and doctorate degrees. The Professional Pilot concentration is certified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as a Part 141 Flight program.

It is also recognized by the FAA as an approved institution for certifying graduates for the R-ATP: [https://www.faa.gov/pilots/training/atp/media/institutional\\_authority\\_list.pdf](https://www.faa.gov/pilots/training/atp/media/institutional_authority_list.pdf)

- **How many students are in the Professional Pilot Program?**

As of August 2023, there were approximately 400 students in the BS Aviation programs. Of the 400, approximately 340 were enrolled in the Professional Pilot program. Students in the program are from 23 states and several different countries. Approximately 14% of our Aviation students are female, approximately 20% are minority, and approximately 15% are Veterans.

- **What ratings/certificates will I have when I complete the program?**

Graduates must complete the following FAA certificates/ratings by completing check rides once they have completed each listed course:

- **Private Pilot Rating** – AVN 161, AVN 161A and AVN 162A (may be earned prior to coming to EKU)
- **Instrument Rating** – AVN 220, AVN 221A and AVN 222A (must be completed at EKU under FAA FAR Part 141 to earn the Restricted Airline Transport Pilot Certificate after graduation)
- **Commercial Rating** – AVN 300, AVN 301A, AVN 302A, AVN 303A and AVN 304A (must be completed at EKU under FAA FAR Part 141 to earn the Restricted Airline Transport Pilot Certificate after graduation)
- **Multi-Engine Rating** – AVN 305, AVN 305A (must be completed at EKU)
- **Certified Flight Instructor** – AVN 415, AVN 415A (completed as part of the degree program)

- **What types of aircraft are used in flight training?**

EKU Aviation maintains a fleet of 32 aircraft which includes: 29 Cessna 172 Skyhawk single-engine aircraft and three twin-engine Piper PA-44 Seminoles. Details can be found on the EKU Aviation website: <https://www.eku.edu/aviation/aircraft-and-simulators/>.

Cessna 172s are the primary aircraft for Private Pilot Rating, Instrument Pilot Rating, Commercial Pilot Rating, CFI Certificate, and CFII Certificate. The Piper PA44 Seminole aircraft are the aircraft used for the multi-engine rating and MEI Certificate.

- **How much does the flight program cost?**

The cost of attendance at EKU can be found on the following link:

<https://www.eku.edu/admissions/cost/>

[EKU Aviation flight fees](#) are in addition to EKU tuition and fees. The cost of each flight course may vary based on time to completion, student ability, and self-motivation. The flight training costs listed are based on the average time required to complete each certificate.

- **Where are academic courses and flight training held?**

Academic classes are held in the [Stratton Building](#)

Flight operations are conducted at the [Central Kentucky Regional Airport](#).

- **Is transportation provided from EKU to the airport?**

No. Flight training is based at the Central Kentucky Regional Airport (KRGA) located approximately 15 minutes from campus. It is recommended that Professional Pilot students have a car or identify other means of transportation. EKU students are permitted to have a car on campus.

- **Can I fly during my first semester?**

While every effort is made to start students flying in their first semester, many factors affect a student's ability to start flying such as timely completion of necessary documents, medical clearance, meeting minimum standardized test scores and academic standards, and adherence to established EKU Aviation policies found in the [Flight Lab Policy and Guidance](#) manual.

The program is constantly reviewing resource requirements to meet the increased enrollment trends that have developed over the past few years. Acquisition of additional resources is

ongoing, and the program remains confident that students will be able to complete the required flight training in a timely manner and within the established four-year training track.

- **How often do Professional Pilot students fly?**

Students should expect to be scheduled for a flight training activity 2-3 times per week. Flight training activities include simulator training, ground training, or flight training. Flight training activities occur seven days a week and are coordinated between ECU Flight Operations staff, assigned instructor, and student. Additional opportunities to fly are available on a case-by-case basis with your assigned instructor.

- **After graduation, how much total flight time will I have?**

The total flight time a student will have at graduation will be approximately 250-300 hours. These hours are acquired through the Private Pilot rating, Instrument rating, Commercial rating, Multi-engine rating, and Certified Flight Instructor rating.

- **Where do ECU professional pilot students go after graduating?**

The majority of graduates from the ECU Aviation Professional Flight program are initially employed by regional airline carriers. After building time and experience, they are able to move to major carriers. In addition to the passenger opportunities, others choose to pursue corporate aviation, cargo or military.

- **What are the admissions requirements for the University and Professional Pilot Program?**

[Eastern Kentucky University Admissions](#) apply to all incoming ECU students. The School of Aviation does not have additional screening or testing requirements to declare the BS in Aviation or to declare the Professional Pilot concentration. However, students pursuing the Professional Flight concentration must score a 22 or better on the math portion of the ACT or pass college algebra with a grade of C or better to start flight training. Additional information on specific requirements needed to fly can be found in the [Aviation Flight Lab Policy and Guidance](#).

- **What are the medical requirements?**

A medical certificate verifies that a student pilot has met all health standards required to operate an aircraft. Students can obtain a medical certificate by contacting a Designated Aviation Medical Examiner (AME) in their local area. A list of AME's can be found by searching the FAA AME website (<https://www.faa.gov/pilots/amelocator>).

A first-class medical is strongly recommended since it is required for both airline employment and to fly in the military. Commercial pilots must hold at least a second-class FAA medical certificate to exercise their commercial pilot certificate. However, a third-class medical is the minimum requirement to start flight training.

- **What equipment should I have before starting the program?**

Professional Pilot students must acquire certain pilot equipment for flight labs that include a headset, logbook, checklists, aeronautical charts, and more. A comprehensive list can be found in the [Flight Lab Policy and Guidance](#) under – **Required Flight Lab Materials List**.

- **Are there scholarships available?**

In addition to [scholarships offered by EKU](#), Aviation has several [scholarships](#) specifically related to the program. We highly recommend that Professional Pilot students pursue additional external scholarship/grant opportunities not listed on these sites.

- **Does the Aviation program have student organizations?**

Yes, there are several different [Aviation Student Organizations](#) that are open to all students.

- **Is on-campus housing required for freshmen Aviation students?**

Yes. The Aviation program has a [living and learning community \(LLC\)](#) known as the “Flight Deck” located on three floors of [Clay Hall](#). Students have opportunities to connect with professionals and faculty members in the School of Aviation, participate in field trips and behind the scenes tours of various airports, meet with a variety of aviation experts and other community building events and tutoring services with a focus on required courses for Aviation students.

- **How do I register for classes and flight labs?**

All new first-time freshman and transfer students will attend new student orientations during the summer. The orientation session will have program representatives and advisors who will provide detailed information about the Aviation program and the process used to register for classes.

AVN 161 - Professional Pilot: Ground requires a minimum ACT Math score of 22, successful score on a math placement test, or completion of college algebra. Registration for ground and flight labs can be found in the [Flight Lab Policy and Guidance](#) manual.

- **Can I get my private pilot rating before coming to EKU?**

Yes. Incoming students that have earned their Private Pilot Certificate will receive academic credit for this achievement. The university will award six (6) credits to the student that will count towards the completion of the BS in Aviation. You will receive academic credit for AVN 161 - Private Ground (4) and both Private Pilot Flight Labs, 161A (1) and 162A(1). Additionally, the aviation program will start the student in the Instrument Flight training syllabus their first semester in the program.

- **Can I get an Instrument Rating prior to attending EKU?**

No. Only the private pilot certificate earned outside of a FAA Part 141 university setting may count toward a Professional Pilot degree. Any additional flight hours/training will be evaluated on a case-by case basis and in accordance with applicable FAA FAR guidelines.

- **I am a Transfer Student. How do I know which credits will transfer?**

The Professional Flight [curriculum guide](#) shows the courses required to complete the program. Use the [Transfer Course Equivalency site](#) to see which of your previous courses will transfer to EKU. While most courses from a regionally accredited university transfer, we cannot guarantee all courses will apply to the BS in Aviation. To get the most accurate assessment of how courses will apply at EKU, send all prior transcripts to the EKU Registrar.

- **I already have a Bachelor’s degree. How do I know which credits will transfer?**

Equivalent courses from the previous degree can be used to satisfy program requirements. Please refer to the Professional Flight [curriculum guide](#) for courses that can be used to satisfy program requirements. A program advisor can provide an assessment of required courses.

- **I attended another institution that was authorized to issue the R-ATP at 1000 hours. Will my credits transfer?**

Students who have attended an approved FAA 141 program are eligible to transfer previous credits to ECU. The amount of credits is determined on a case-by-case basis and involves a formal review of the transcript to ensure all transfer credits are equivalent to ECU courses identified in the LOA. Students wishing to transfer credits should meet with the Chair of the School of Aviation to start the review process.

- **I am eligible to use Veteran's Administration funding. How does that work?**

ECU has been ranked as either #1 or #2 Best for Vets: College in the nation by Military Times for 4 of the past 5 years and a top Military Friendly® university by GI Jobs® Magazine six times. The ECU Aviation Professional Pilot concentration is approved by the Veteran's Administration (VA) to accept educational benefits for flight training. To see if your GI Bill covers flight training costs, please contact the ECU Office of Military and Veterans Services at <https://www.ecu.edu/va/>

- **I am an international student. What do I need to do to get started?**

International students (non-U.S. citizens) must have Transportation Security Administration (TSA) approval before they are eligible to register for and begin flight training in the private, instrument, and multi-engine ground courses and flight labs.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, the process to receive approval from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) can take up to several months. It is recommended that students apply for Alien Flight Student Program (AFSP) approval at least six weeks prior to the start of the requested lab semester. Candidates must complete all steps outlined on the TSA's website: <https://www.fts.tsa.dhs.gov/home>.

Please review the [ECU Aviation Flight Lab Policy and Guidance manual](#) for additional information.

### **Current Students**

- **What are the policies and procedures for flight training?**

There are two documents that outline the requirements, procedures, and policies for flight training at ECU. These documents are updated often, and students should refer to them frequently for any questions they have about flight training at ECU.

- [Flight Operations – Standard Operating Procedures](#)
- [Flight Lab Policy and Guidance](#)

- **How often are flight labs offered?**

Flight labs are offered during the fall, spring, and summer semesters. Registration for flight labs is continuous and students can register for the next lab anytime during the semester.

- **How long does it take to complete a flight lab?**

The flight training curriculum is designed to be completed during the four years typically associated with earning a college degree. This includes completion of Private, Instrument, Commercial, Multi-Engine and Certified Flight Instructor (CFI) certificates. Additional certificates (Certified Flight Instructor – Instrument and Multi-Engine Instructor) are also available. Students who follow the recommended flight training schedule should plan complete all their flight training prior to graduation.

Individual completion times are dependent on many factors, most importantly student willingness to consistently fly. However, weather, maintenance, illness, check ride availability, and other factors can cause delays in flight training. If a student does not complete a flight lab in the semester in which they started it, they are allowed additional time. The [Flight Lab Policy and Guidance](#) manual provides more details on this situation.

- **Once I complete a flight lab, can I start the next flight lab during the same semester?**  
Students enroll in flight labs on a rolling basis which means, once a student completes a flight lab, the student may enroll in the next flight lab if the student meets all of the requirements outlined in the [Flight Lab Policy and Guidance](#) manual.
- **If I am not in a flight lab, can I fly ECU airplanes?**  
No, due to insurance restrictions, aircraft demand, and instructor availability, only students enrolled in a flight lab are authorized to fly ECU aircraft. They cannot be rented for private use.
- **I am not a Professional Pilot student; can I fly ECU airplanes?**  
No, due to insurance restrictions, aircraft demand, and instructor availability, only students enrolled in a flight lab are authorized to fly ECU aircraft. They cannot be rented for private use.
- **As an Aviation Professional Flight student, can I fly at other flight schools or in my own airplane?**  
Incoming students may earn a Private Pilot license at any flight school. However, to qualify for the 1000-hour RAMP, students must complete instrument, commercial and multi-engine training at ECU.

All flight training conducted at ECU must be completed in ECU aircraft.

- **How can I build flight time?**  
The most common way students build flight time is to become a flight instructor after earning their Commercial certificate and Certified Flight Instructor certificate. ECU Flight Instructor position are competitive, and a significant number of students are hired as needed. Many of our flight instructors are undergraduate students still taking classes towards their bachelor's degree.
- **Can I work as a flight instructor once I earn my CFI?**  
Students are eligible to apply for a flight instructor position once the Certified Flight Instructor certificate is completed. ECU Flight Instructor positions are competitive, and a significant number of students are hired as needed.
- **I am an Aviation student but have declared a different concentration. Can I switch my concentration?**  
Yes, ECU offers additional concentration in Aerospace Management, for students interested in managing airlines, airports, and corporate aviation departments and Unmanned Aircraft Systems for students who are interested in drones and other unmanned aircraft technology.
- **How do I schedule a visit/tour to learn more about the Aviation program?**  
Yes! [Schedule a visit](#) with ECU Aviation by visiting our website and clicking on "[Visit Us](#)." Dates are available throughout the semester both in person and online. Tours of ECU can also be scheduled through Admissions at [Campus Visit](#).