

10 Tips for Finding a Flight Training School

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There are approximately 1400 flight training schools in the United States so there's big selection to choose from. It goes without saying that the competition to earn your business is fierce. So how do you decide which school is right for you? You need to do your homework before you go to school. Here are ten useful tips for picking a good commercial flight school:

Location

Location is very important when you are looking for a [flight training school](#). What state the school is in and what the weather is like is a key factor for getting a commercial pilot license. Florida is a great place to earn your wings. The average median temperate in central Florida is 75 degrees and the skies are clear and sunny over 280 days out of the year. The mild climate makes flight training a pleasure. The good weather allows you to log more flying hours faster, get your degree quicker and be on your way sooner to an aviation career.

Some of Florida's flight training schools - however - are in major urban areas like Miami, Fort Lauderdale and Orlando. High density traffic on the ground means high density traffic in the air. Look for an aviation school in a town or small city that isn't congested. This will be easier when you are learning to fly.

Facilities

A first impression is a good impression. What does the facility look like? If it is cluttered, unattended to or run down, chances are your flight training will be the same. A clean and professional facility usually means a well-run organization.

Fleet Condition

Are the planes new? If not, how old are they? How many planes are in the fleet? Are they properly maintained and do you have access to the maintenance logs? A [training plane](#) should be serviced after every 100 hours of flight time. It doesn't have to be new when you are learning to fly but it does have to well-maintained.

Ground School

Flight simulators are an essential part of any flight school. Make sure you inspect the flight simulators if you visit the school or ask about them if you are unable to tour the facility. Various categories of flight simulators and flight training devices are used for pilot training. These vary from relatively simple Part-Task Trainers (PTTs) that cover one or more aircraft systems, Cockpit Procedures Trainers (CPT) for practicing drills and checks, to Full Flight Simulators (FFS). Every flight training school worth its' weight has one, all, or a combination of these flight simulators.

Professionalism

More than any other vocation, commercial aviation is a business of professionals. It is important that you keep a professional attitude at all times. So where does all this professionalism begin? It begins at flight training school. Tour the facility and meet the faculty. Do they treat you professionally and respectfully? If the flight school doesn't have a professional feeling and a business-like attitude then maybe that flight training school isn't right for you.

Student Housing Options

You are most likely going to be living away from home when you attend a flight training school and housing can get pretty expensive. Take a look at [housing facilities](#) – if they even offer it. Is the housing comfortable and clean? Is it quiet? Do they offer amenities like a fitness room and internet connection? Check the local market for real estate listings, prices and availability.

Cost of Living

Is the flight training school in a big metropolitan area full of traffic on the ground - and in the air? Is it an expensive city where you have to worry about prices instead of grades? Take a look at the cost of living index of the city the school is in. This is easy to do just by going to Google. A city with a low cost of living will be a better environment for learning.

Financing Options

Does the flight training school give you a choice of [payment plans](#) or do they want all their money up front? It is important to have payment plans and options. We are still in tough economic times and that makes it even tougher for a flight school student.

There are many government loans out there - Federal Stafford Loans, Federal Perkins Loans, Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants, Federal Academic Competitiveness Grant and Career Training Loans from Sallie Mae. If a flight training school can't help you navigate through the intricacies of a federal loan, maybe you should consider another flight school.

Veteran Benefits

If you are a veteran, make sure the flight training school is approved for the GI Post 9/11 Bill. The Post 9/11 Bill provides financial support for education and housing to individuals with at least 90 days of service on or after September 11, 2001, or individuals discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days. You must have received an honorable discharge to be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Reputation

Check the reputation of the flight training school you are considering. You can do this through the local FAA Flight Standards District Office, the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, National Air Transportation Association, the Better Business Bureau or Chamber of Commerce. They can give you information on a school's business practices and safety record. Look for a school with a good record of getting graduates work. Many flight academies have job connections with commuter and regional airlines. It is important for a flight school to help you get your first job.

These are the "Top Ten" things to look for when you are applying for a flight training school. Good luck with your new career!

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