Becoming an Airline Pilot

Taken from the following article found here: http://www.wikihow.com/Become-an-Airline-Pilot

1) **Get a four-year college degree.** While a college degree is not required to fly for any of the regional airlines in the United States, a four year degree *is* required to fly for a major US airline. It's preferable to get a Bachelor of Science degree with an emphasis in aviation (but your degree doesn't necessarily have to be aviation related). Airline pilot training is intense and expensive. A college degree helps to demonstrate to the airline that you will be capable of completing their education program.
2) **Look around your local area for a good flight school and flight instructor to begin working on your private pilot certificate.** The FAA minimum flight time is 40 hours, but the average is around 60. Schools with FAA oversight can be more desirable if you want a highly regimented training program.
3) **Get a First Class medical certificate from a Federal Aviation Administration medical examiner.** It is better to apply for a first class medical the first time you apply for a medical certificate to be sure you will qualify for one before you have invested too much time and money into your new career choice.

After you earn your private pilot license, begin working on your instrument rating and commercial certificate. An instrument rating requires 50 hours of cross country Pilot-in-Command (PIC) and 40 hours of actual or simulated instrument conditions. For the commercial certificate, you will need 250 hours total time, 100 hours PIC, 50 hours cross country, and 10 hours of dual instruction in a complex aircraft.

- All pilots who are paid to transport passengers or cargo must get a commercial pilot's license with an instrument rating issued by the FAA. Helicopter pilots also must hold a commercial pilot's license with a helicopter rating.

Complete your certified flight instructor (CFI) rating and begin working at your flight school. Some flight schools offer you flight hours in exchange for instructing for them. This can be useful when you go on to your multi-engine rating.

- Pilots need flight experience to qualify for a license. Completing classes at a flight school approved by the FAA can reduce the amount of flight experience required for a pilot's license. In 2006, the FAA certified about 600 civilian flying schools, including some colleges and universities that offer degree credit for pilot training.
- Initial training for airline pilots typically includes a week of company indoctrination; three to six weeks of ground school and simulator training; and 25 hours of initial operating experience, including a check-ride with an FAA aviation safety inspector. Once trained, pilots are required to attend recurrent training and simulator checks once or twice a year throughout their career.
- To qualify for FAA licensure, applicants must be at least 18 years old and have at least 250 hours of flight experience.

Work on your *multi-engine, certified flight instructor instrument* (CFII), and *multi-engine instructor* (MEI) ratings.

With the proper ratings and 1500 hours of flight time, you could get hired by any number of regional airlines flying turboprop and regional-jet aircraft.

- To work for a major airline, you will typically need 3,000 hours total flight time including at least 1,500 hours multi-engine, and at least 1000 hours as pilot in command (PIC) of turbine (jet) powered aircraft, preferably in scheduled airline flying and in type of aircraft. These numbers are estimates and will vary depending on the airline. Also, while these may be the minimums required to apply for a job at a major airline, they may be far from the actual competitive numbers and the actual experience of successful applicants may be considerably higher than the minimums.
- Airline pilots must fulfill additional requirements. Both Captains and First Officers must have an airline transport pilot's license. Applicants for this license must be at least 23 years old and have a minimum of 1,500 hours of flying experience, including night and instrument flying, and must pass FAA written and flight examinations. Usually, they also have one or more advanced ratings depending on the requirements of their particular job.

Because pilots must be able to make quick decisions and accurate judgments under pressure, many airline companies reject applicants who do not pass required psychological and aptitude tests. All licenses are valid so long as a pilot can pass the periodic physical and eye examinations and tests of flying skills required by the FAA and company regulations.

- Companies other than airlines usually require less flying experience. However, a commercial pilot's license is a minimum requirement, and employers prefer applicants who have experience in the type of craft they will be flying. New employees usually start as first officers, or fly less sophisticated equipment.
- Depending on the type of aircraft, new airline pilots start as first officers or flight engineers. Although some airlines favor applicants who already have a flight engineer's license, they may provide flight engineer training for those who have only the commercial license. Many pilots begin with smaller regional or commuter airlines, where they obtain experience flying passengers on scheduled flights into busy airports in all weather conditions. These jobs often lead to higher paying jobs with bigger, national or major airlines.

Consider military flight training. The Air Force, Navy (includes Marine pilots), Army, and Coast Guard offer flight training. In the case of the Air Force Reserves and Air National Guard, after initial training (a little over a year) you can go back to civilian life and, once you have enough hours, qualify to fly with an airline. Remember that US companies must allow their reservists and guard members to do their active duty drills without repercussion.

- There are no schools in the US that guarantee a position as a pilot for any company, and especially not a major airline.

In the airlines, advancement is usually predetermined by seniority provisions stated in union contracts. Expect a timetable like this:

- After 1 -5 years, flight engineers advance according to seniority to first officer.
- After 5 -15 years, a first officer will advance to captain.
- Note: In non-airline jobs, a first officer may advance to captain and, in large companies, to chief pilot or director of aviation in charge of aircraft scheduling, maintenance, and flight procedures.

Gaining seniority will also help you acquire preferred flight assignments. Your time with the airline will determine when you fly, if you fly on weekends, or if you'll be in the air during Christmas or other holidays.

Occupation Outlook Handbook Summary (https://www.bls.gov/ooh/home.htm):

Overall employment of airline and commercial pilots is projected to grow 4 percent from 2016 to 2026, slower than the average for all occupations. Most job opportunities will arise from the need to replace pilots who leave the workforce. Over the next 10 years, many pilots are expected to retire as they reach the required retirement age of 65. The median annual wage for airline pilots, copilots, and flight engineers was $137,330 in May 2017. The median annual wage for commercial pilots was $78,740 in May 2017.

Airline pilots typically need a bachelor's degree in any subject, along with a commercial pilot's license and an ATP certificate from the FAA. Airline pilots typically start their careers flying as commercial pilots. Commercial pilots usually accrue thousands of hours of flight experience in order to get a job with regional or major airlines.

Degree Programs in the Midwest

1) **Southern Illinois University (http://www.aviation.siu.edu/flight/)** :

Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) in Aviation Flight can be completed in two academic years plus one summer semester at SIU or in combination with community college or other acceptable extra-instructional education experience. The 21 credit hours of flight courses must be taken at SIU. Credit may be granted for a Private Pilot certificate earned prior to enrollment at SIU. The AAS in Aviation Flight (AF) prepares students for careers as professional pilots. Students in the AF degree begin their flight training in their first semester and may begin working as Certified Flight Instructors (CFI) in the program by their senior year. Approximately 80% of students in the Associate of Applied Science degree program complete the Bachelor of Science degree in Aviation Management as a 2 + 2 arrangement - getting both the AAS and the BS degrees in a four year period.

2) **Southwestern Illinois College** (http://www.swic.edu/aviation-pilot-training/)

Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) in Pilot Training. The successful graduate holds a commercial pilot certificate with single engine, multi-engine and instrument ratings. An optional flight instructor certificate is also available. The successful graduate should qualify to enter Southern Illinois University (Capstone program) Bachelor's Degree program in Aviation Management.

3) **Purdue University** (https://tech.purdue.edu/degrees/professional-flight)

Bachelors in Professional Flight: More than a flight school, Purdue offers a bachelor's degree in professional flight that provides you with a larger perspective of the aviation industry. With classes that range from how an airplane is built to decision-making in the airline industry. You will learn by flying in our state-of-art fleet and matching simulators, and from aviation professionals with significant industry experience.

The Department of Aviation Technology encourages you to obtain the highest level of medical and student certificates possible during your time at Purdue.

4) **Lewis University** (http://www.lewisu.edu/academics/aviation/flight-management/index.htm) :

The Bachelor of Science in Aviation Flight Management prepares the student for a career as a professional pilot. Upon graduation, the successful student will have a minimum of 128 semester hours of coursework and will hold the following FAA certificates and ratings: Commercial Pilot Certificate—Airplane Single and Multi-engine Land with Instrument Airplane rating; Flight Instructor Certificate—Airplane Single-engine Land, with Instrument Airplane rating. Optional certificates and ratings include Flight Instructor Certificate—Multi-engine Land; and Ground Instructor Certificate—Advanced and Instrument.

5) **Parkland College** (http://parkland.edu/aviation/) :

Associate in Science (A.S.) in Aviation that allows you to earn a transfer degree in order to easily transfer into a bachelors degree program. **Feeder program for UIUC**. In September 2013, UIUC transferred ownership to Parkland College in Champaign for continued flight training. The Parkland College Institute of Aviation will allow students to earn a two-year associate's degree in aviation or take courses to earn an FAA-approved private pilot certification. Leasing the university's aircraft and facilities at Willard Airport in Savoy, Parkland's flight institute opened in Fall 2014.

6) **Saint Louis University, Parks College of Engineering, Aviation and Technology** (http://parks.slu.edu/departments/aviation-science/aviation-science-programs-of-study/bs-in-flight-science/)

Bachelor of Science in Flight Science curriculum is approved by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) under Part 141. Graduates of our aviation science degree program will earn the following FAA certificates and ratings: private pilot certificate, instrument rating, and commercial pilot certificate with single and multi-engine ratings. Additionally, students enrolled in the Flight Education minor, with courses offered under FAA Part 61, can earn the Certified Flight Instructor certificate and Certified Flight Instructor Instrument and Certified Flight Instructor Multi-Engine ratings.

7) **Western Michigan University** (https://wmich.edu/academics/undergraduate/aviation-flight)

Bachelor of Science in Aviation Flight Science: Western Michigan University's aviation flight science program emphasizes intellectual as well as technical competencies and is geared toward educating captains—not just training pilots. Because WMU's College of Aviation is more than a flight school, students will study general education subjects, the basic sciences, in addition to aircraft systems, crew resource management, advanced aerodynamics, professional flight, airline operations, management and administration, global navigation and international flight.

8) **University of Dubuque** (http://www.dbq.edu/Academics/OfficeofAcademicAffairs/AcademicDepartments/Aviation/)

The **Bachelor of Science in Flight Operations** is centered on a Pilot Training School certified under FAA 14 CFR Part 141, and prepares students for FAA certification (licensing) and ratings. A flight training program is available to majors and non-majors. The Flight Operations Program includes courses from primary flight through multi-engine, commercial pilot with instrument rating, and certified flight instructor ratings, each supported by the appropriate ground school.

9) **Indiana State University** (http://technology.indstate.edu/paft/)

The **Bachelor of Science in Professional Aviation Flight Technology** includes an FAA Flight Instructor Certification with an Instrument Rating and a Multi-Engine Land Class Rating.