Choosing a Flight School & Instructor

A practical checklist for your first training conversations

Bring these questions along as you compare options. ClearedToLand does not verify, rank, or endorse any school, instructor, or provider. This guide is for your own research and conversations.

Before you visit

[ ] What certificate or skill am I working toward first?

[ ] How far can I reasonably travel to the airport each week?

[ ] What schedule, learning pace, and budget range feel realistic for me?

[ ] What questions matter most to me before I commit?

Instructor fit

[ ] How does this instructor explain a lesson and adapt to different learning styles?

[ ] What experience and current credentials do they have for my training goal?

[ ] How are lesson goals, progress, and areas to practice discussed?

[ ] What is their usual availability, cancellation approach, and backup plan?

[ ] Can I take an introductory lesson or conversation before deciding?

Training environment

[ ] Does the airport and school environment feel organized, welcoming, and professional?

[ ] What ground-school, briefing, and study support is available between flights?

[ ] How does the team communicate about weather, cancellations, and schedule changes?

[ ] Who can I contact if my primary instructor is unavailable?

Tip: Ask for plain-language explanations and take time to compare more than one option.

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Aircraft and scheduling

[ ] Which aircraft are typically used for my training, and why are they a fit for this stage?

[ ] How are aircraft scheduled, and how far ahead should I book?

[ ] What happens when an aircraft needs maintenance or is not available?

[ ] Can I see how aircraft records, dispatch, and preflight expectations are handled?

Safety culture

[ ] How does the school encourage students to speak up about questions or concerns?

[ ] What are the expectations for personal minimums, weather decisions, and go/no-go calls?

[ ] How are maintenance concerns and operational issues reported and communicated?

[ ] What does a thorough lesson debrief look like here?

Costs to ask about

[ ] What are the current aircraft, instructor, ground, and simulator rates?

[ ] Are there membership, fuel, insurance, materials, headset, or booking fees?

[ ] Which costs are estimated separately: tests, examiner fees, charts, or study tools?

[ ] How are price changes, deposits, refunds, and missed lessons explained in writing?

[ ] Can I receive a written estimate based on a typical lesson cadence?

A good conversation leaves you with clear information, not pressure to decide on the spot.

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My notes

School or instructor: _____

Airport / location: _____

What stood out: _____

_____

Questions to follow up on: _____

_____

Schedule or availability notes: _____

_____

Cost questions: _____

_____

How I felt after the conversation: _____

_____

Next action: _____

_____