



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS •

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### Flight Training and Professional Pilot Career Options and Information

The following FAQ is provided to support and assist individuals considering various flight training options. Although we focus upon Helicopters here, we are fully capable of supporting any student interests (extending to all levels of certification, both Airplane and Helicopter), and it is this ability and commitment to you and our unique approach to training that sets DWTA apart. Our recommendations and information will focus solely upon fact, real expectations, and the achievement of your success based upon 30years of Professional Aviation Experience in Airplanes, Helicopters and Maintenance. At DWTA, we stand ready to support you and as a CFR135 Air Carrier, are able to and do offer you more.

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#### **Q: How much does it cost. ..**

##### **1. To become Pilot?**

**A:** Obviously a crucial question, and one which will depend almost entirely upon the new pilots goals and resources. Please contact us to schedule a time to work together in determining course options which support you.

##### **2. Add an Additional Rating?**

**A:** As with the first question, this will depend largely upon your goals and expectations. Again, please contact us to schedule a time to work together to in determining course options which support you.

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#### **Q: Will I save money by training in airplanes first?**

**A:** In a word, No.

You will actually spend more when all is said and done. Of course, there are many variations to this theme, which we would be very happy to explore with the student in order to determine the best course for their goals.

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#### **Q: Why should I train in a larger, more expensive helicopter vs. a small 2-seat helicopter?**

**A:** Performance, Future Certificate Use and Overall Cost

Most flight schools utilize small 2 passenger helicopters for Flight Training. The very simple fact is that these machines are utilized due to their reduced cost of acquisition and deployment - but, in the case of the Robinson R22, I think that the creator of the machine says it all in that he is very unhappy that it is used for flight training as that was never its purpose. An additional concept is that these 2-place machines are used in order to reduce the Pilot Certification cost. Unfortunately, this cost savings which is real in some respects, has other implications which do not become apparent until after the pilot has completed their certifications. If the new pilot only wishes to fly / rent a small 2-place helicopter and no more, then they should most certainly learn in it (of course there are weight and fuel load restrictions for this smaller aircraft which may preclude this anyway). BUT, first you must find a location which rents helicopters, then meet their insurance requirements - both challenges. But, if the pilot wishes to utilize their certificate for more possibilities (carrying 3 other people, longer range trips, greater performance, becoming a professional pilot etc.), then if they learn in the small 2-place aircraft, they will have to accomplish a minimum of 10 or more flight hours in the larger aircraft to be even minimally qualified to rent / utilize one. (NOTE: For them to be a flight instructor in one, they need 25 flight hours in it)



The financial result is diagrammed below; *(Private Pilot Training ONLY is Assumed)*

	<u>Small 2-Place Helicopter</u>	<u>Full Size 4-Place Helicopter</u>
<b>Factor:</b>		
• Average Cost to complete flight training	\$ 12,500	\$18,500
• Additional Cost to Qualify in Larger Helicopter	\$ 5,500	\$ n/a
• End Result Totals	\$ 18,000	\$18,500

As can easily be seen, the money that was initially saved is subsequently lost once the new pilot moves into the larger aircraft. Another important note is that the minimum 10 flight hours to transition into the larger aircraft is only an FAA basic requirement. In order to actually rent the larger helicopter, insurance minimums may require up to 50 hours of flight time in that aircraft or more. So, if you learn in a small helicopter, even only for personal use, it will be expensive to move into the larger aircraft.

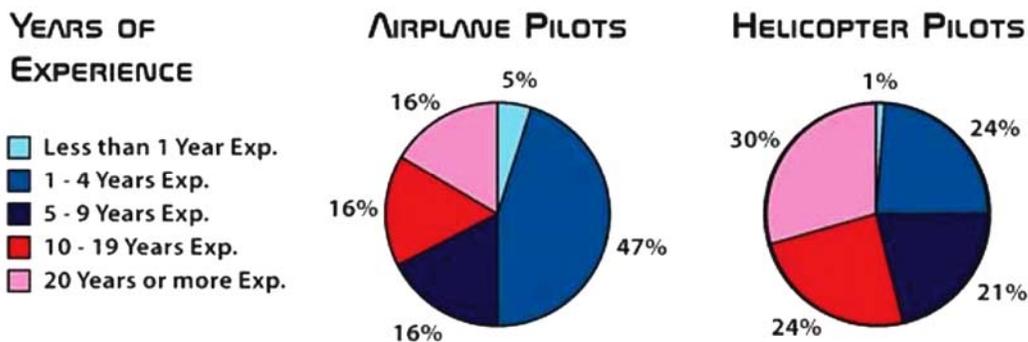
**Q: Should I Become a Professional Helicopter Pilot or Airplane Pilot?**

**A:** Which one do you want to have a career in?

There exist many opinions on which career path is best, but the most important factor is what YOU want. Of course, an understanding of what your preferred choice will hold for you is important so below are some career choice results.

<b>Factor:</b>	<u>Airplane Pilot</u>	<u>Helicopter Pilot</u>
• Average Cost to Complete Flight Training	\$ 75,000	\$ 90,000
• Full Time Course Time to Complete	1.5 Yrs - [Part time]	1.5 Yrs - [Part time]
• First (2) Years Salary (Flight Instructor)	\$ 36,000/yr	\$ 36,000/yr
• First Commercial Job Salary	\$ 25,000/yr	\$ 60,000/yr
• First Commercial Job Work Schedule [2yrs]	Work 24/Days-Month	Work 16-20/Days-Month
• Subsequent Commercial Job Salary	\$ 45,000/yr	\$ 85,000/yr
• Subsequent Commercial Job Schedule [5yrs]	Work 24/Days-Month	Work 14/Days-Month
• Top End Pay (10+ years experience)	\$ 45 - \$ 95,000/yr	\$ 65 - \$ 140,000/yr
• Job Schedule (10+ years experience)	Work 22/Days-Month	Work 14/Days-Month

**Job Market Current Experience Volume Percentages**



**Key Notes:**

1. Much smaller number of long-term career Airplane Pilots - Very hard to persevere over an entire career
2. 54% of commercial helicopter pilots in US are OVER 60 years old (excellent future job market)



## **Q: What are My Job Prospects as a Professional Helicopter Pilot?**

**A:** There currently exists a Global Helicopter Pilot shortage.

Unlike within a flooded Airplane Pilot job market, a vast majority of Commercial Helicopter Pilots are nearing or have already passed retirement age (*previous page data*) and there are too few being trained. The following is an excerpt from an interview with Helicopter Association International President Matt Zuccaro:

*"The pilot shortage is here ... a number of operators are having difficulty filling their cockpits. Pilots are becoming difficult to find. Not only is the helicopter industry growing rapidly but the retirement of Vietnam-era pilots is causing a shortage of qualified personnel. The industry needs to redouble its efforts to attract people."*

Both the countries of India and Australia have launched Aviation training packages specifically to respond to this shortage.

### **Several Helicopter Job Options Follow - Diversity and Opportunity**

- Charters & Tours
- Air Taxi Service
- Corporate VIP Transport
- Aerial Photography
- Surveillance
- External Load
- Heavy Lifting
- Logging Operations
- Border Patrol
- Flight Instruction
- Law Enforcement / Drug Interdiction
- Land Survey / Aerial Mapping
- Search and Rescue
- Air Ambulance/EMS
- Offshore Oil Rig Support
- Electronic News Gathering
- Aerial Fire Fighting
- Movie / Video Shooting
- Agricultural Work
- Pipeline/Power-Line Patrol

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## **Q: How Much does a Typical Professional Helicopter Pilot Work?**

**A:** Only 6 MONTHS per year!

People often miss this vital statistic. Unlike professional airplane pilots who typically work 22+ days per month for over 14 hours a day for their salaries (not including their travel time to and from work), the typical helicopter pilot schedule is 14 12-hour days per month. In other words, a professional helicopter pilot works only 6 MONTHS per year! Quality of life is clearly represented here.

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## **Q: How Much Money does a Professional Helicopter Pilot Earn?**

**A:** Up to over \$100,000/year

(NOTE - See page 3 detail financial information) A helicopter pilot instructor can expect to make between \$35,000 and \$45,000 in the first two years of employment. From there the salaries go up to \$50,000 and \$60,000 for mid-level jobs and upwards to well over \$100,000 for twin engine and high skill jobs - remember, all while working only 6 months per year.



**Q: Is Financial Aid Available?**

**A:** Yes, but challenging

There are several options available. One includes access to a College Degree Program. A key note here - the primary factor that STOPS people from pursuing their dreams of becoming a Helicopter Pilot is finance. In short, although not an easy hurdle, it is truly up to the individual. DWTA will do everything in our power to support and assist every pilot trainee. Please contact us directly for more information.

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**Q: What is the training program like?**

**A:** Enjoyable, Instructive and a Blast!

There are two components in flight training: Ground Instruction and Flight Instruction.

**Ground Instruction** • Necessary to gain knowledge of the aircraft and the flight environment. DWTA produces highly qualified professional pilots as a result of both our one-on-one ground training AND our 12-week Professional Pilot sessions. These options ensure full flexibility with scheduling around your obligations.

**Flight instruction** • Certainly the most enjoyable part of training. Your flight instructor will teach you all the maneuvers and related knowledge necessary to exceed the training standards required by the FAA.

On a typical lesson, you will be at the school from 1.5 to 2 hours. You will complete either a ground OR flight lesson. Each will be preceded by a comprehensive pre and post briefing and critique of your progress and the knowledge and maneuvers being covered.

At DWTA, we stand ready to advise and support ANY level of student in helping them achieve their goals and aspirations seeking Helicopter and or Airplane Certification. This document provides some general data, so we strongly encourage the seriously interested to contact us directly to set-up a time to sit down and we will work to answer all of your questions and provide you the necessary data to make an informed decision. We look forward to flying with you!

**The DWTA Flight Team**

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