



# FAQs

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**1. What is the history of the flight program at MTSU?**

MTSU has conducted pilot training since World War II and has developed into a comprehensive, accredited aviation program that prepares students for careers in industry. Each undergraduate degree program is accredited by the [Aviation Accreditation Board, International \(AABI\)](#).

In the 2022-2023 academic year, the Aerospace Department had approximately 1,200 students across its six undergraduate concentrations.

**2. Is your program accredited?**

Yes. MTSU as a university is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The Professional Pilot concentration has specialized program accreditation by the Aviation Accreditation Board International (AABI): <http://www.aabi.aero/accreditation/accredited-programs/>.

The Professional Pilot concentration is also recognized by the Federal Aviation Administration (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)

**3. How many students are enrolled in the Professional Pilot Program and what are the demographics of those students?**

As of January 2023, there were approximately 900 Professional Pilot students enrolled. Our Aerospace student population includes students from all over the world, as well as in-state Tennessee and surrounding states. Many of our students are first-generation college students. Approximately 13% of our Professional Pilot students are female, and approximately 15% are Veterans themselves or Veteran-dependent.

**4. What airplanes do you fly at MTSU?**

MTSU operates approximately 40 Diamond DA40 airplanes for flight training. We operate one Diamond DA20 for CFI spin training, and offer conventional landing gear labs in our Piper Cub. For Multi-Engine training, we have five Piper PA44 Seminoles. Details can be found on the web site: <http://www.mtsu.edu/aerospace/airplanes.php>.

**5. What airplanes are used for each course?**

The Diamond DA40 is the primary aircraft for the following flight labs: Private Pilot, Instrument Rating, Commercial Rating, CFI Certificate and CFII Certificate. The Piper PA44 Seminole aircraft are the aircraft used for the multi-engine rating.

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

[MTSU Admission Standards](#) apply to all incoming MTSU students. The Department of Aerospace does not have additional screening or testing requirements to declare the Aerospace Major or to declare the Professional Pilot concentration.

Once admitted, Professional Pilot students must earn a grade of “C” or better in all Aerospace and supporting coursework. Specific flight lab application requirements can be found in the MTSU Undergraduate Catalog [Pro Pilot Requirements](#) website, near the bottom of the page.

**7. Is there a deadline to apply?**

MTSU has [restrictions and deadlines for applicants](#), which the Pro Pilot concentration follows. Our Flight Lab application deadlines can be found on the [Aerospace Department](#) website, in the box on the right hand side of the screen.

**8. How do I apply?**

Once a student is accepted to MTSU, that student will then be able to declare Aerospace as their major, and “Professional Pilot” as their concentration. After participating in the appropriate freshman or transfer student orientation session (known as CUSTOMS at MTSU) the student can register for Aerospace and other required courses.

Professional pilot students must complete a sequence of flight labs to earn the FAA certificates/ratings necessary to complete their degree. The application process for flight labs occurs for every semester in which a student wishes to fly, and is in addition to traditional coursework registration. Enrollment in flight labs is competitive and selection is made from eligible candidates who are best qualified based on cumulative GPA. Please see the [Flight Lab Guide](#) for more specific application information.

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

Check our [Academic Map](#), and use the [MTSU Transfer Equivalency](#) site to see which of your previous courses will transfer. We cannot guarantee transfer credits; students must supply the university with prior transcripts. Once that is complete, the academic advisors and Concentration Coordinators (faculty) determine whether or not prior credits will transfer. It is recommended to contact your academic advisor.

**10. I am a Transfer Student. How long will it take to complete your degree program?**

As a general rule, if you transfer with one year of credit from a previous institution, and have completed transferable general education credits, it will take an additional three years to complete the program. If two years of credit from a previous institution is transferred in, it will likely still take three years to complete the Pro Pilot degree requirements due to the course sequencing requirements of flight training.

**11. I hold a previous Bachelor’s degree. How do I know which credits will transfer?**

Check our [Academic Map](#), and use the [MTSU Transfer Equivalency](#) site to see which courses will transfer. We cannot guarantee transfer credits; students must supply the university with prior transcripts. Once that is complete, the Academic Advisors and Concentration Coordinators (faculty) determine whether or not prior credits will transfer. It is recommended to contact your future academic advisor.

**12. I hold a previous Bachelor's degree. How long will it take to complete your degree program?**

If an incoming student already holds a Bachelor's degree, it usually takes that person three years to complete our program. They must complete 60 credit hours of FAA-recognized coursework and labs, in addition to any other required supporting classes or general education course requirements. In addition, the required flight training sequence must be completed.

**13. Can Dual Enrollment/AP credits transfer into your program?**

Yes. We recommend you pursue general education credits like English, History, or Math classes. See our [Academic Map](#) for a list of courses in our degree, and you can then use the [MTSU catalog search](#) to see descriptions of those courses.

**14. I am an international student. What do I need to do to start?**

We recommend you first review our [International Students Admissions page](#). In addition, there are additional TSA requirements for international students to receive flight training in the U.S. This information can be found in the [Flight Lab Guide](#).

**15. How will I register for the classes and labs?**

Incoming freshmen and transfer students will attend new student orientation, called CUSTOMS. During that orientation, the department's academic advisors will walk students through the class registration process. Below are special registration processes for the Professional Pilot course/lab sequence:

The AERO 2230 Professional Pilot I ground school class does not require any prerequisites or pilot certificates/ratings to register. Students may take this course prior to the Professional Pilot I Flight Lab, although simultaneous completion is recommended. For all other flight lab/course combinations, the flight lab and corresponding ground school class must be taken in the same semester. For example, the Professional Pilot Flight Lab II (2 credit hours) corresponds to the Professional Pilot II course (3 credit hours) and these must be taken simultaneously. The sequence for Professional Pilot II, III, IV, and V require completion of previous labs and classes as pre-requisites prior to continuing to the next course/lab in sequence.

Flight labs require permission to register for the lab by the MTSU Flight School. After applying for and being awarded a flight lab and meeting all pre-requisite requirements for that lab, a student will receive permission to register for the associated class and flight lab. If a flight lab is not awarded, a student will not have permission to register for either the lab or the corresponding class.

**16. Who is my Academic Advisor?**

MTSU employs academic advisors specific to your department and concentration (Aerospace – Professional Pilot). These advisors assist incoming students during orientation, advise students from semester to semester about which courses they should take, and perform many other duties for the college and department. Students are assigned to an advisor alphabetically by last

name. A current list of Aerospace Academic Advisors is located at <https://www.mtsu.edu/cbas-advising/advisors.php>.

**17. How much does the program cost?**

The MTSU estimated cost of attendance rates vary based upon whether students are classified as in-state or out-of-state. For specific information on total estimated cost of attendance per year, please see the [MTSU Cost of Attendance web site](#). For tuition-only costs, please see the [MTSU Tuition Costs](#) web site.

There are programs available to reduce tuition rates for out-of-state students. The [Academic Common Market](#) allows students to attend universities in states other than their own at the in-state tuition rate, provided that their home state does not have an equivalent program. To see if your state participates in the MTSU Professional Pilot program, please see the [MTSU Academic Common Market Programs](#) website. Please note, each state determines their participation in this program, not MTSU.

If your state does not participate in the Academic Common Market program but you live within 250 miles of MTSU, or within one of the 8 contiguous states to TN, you may qualify for reduced tuition rates if you meet certain academic criteria. Please see the [MTSU Regional Scholars Program](#) website for more details. Flight training costs are in addition to tuition, fees, and room and board. Generally speaking, the full flight lab sequence of required courses costs about \$60,000, spread over 5 semesters of flight training. Some students spend more or less depending upon many variables, including student performance, weather delays, and scheduling of check rides. For more information on flight lab costs, see the [Flight Lab Guide](#)

**18. What scholarships are available?**

There are both [University Scholarships](#) and [Aerospace Department scholarships](#) available. We highly recommend that Pro Pilot students pursue additional external scholarship/grant opportunities not listed at these sites.

**19. I plan to use Veteran's Administration funding for the Professional Pilot degree program. How does that work?**

The MTSU Pro Pilot concentration is approved by the Veteran's Administration to accept educational benefits for flight training. We are proud that our degree program has the highest concentration of veteran students on campus at MTSU. There are many different versions of Veteran's Administration educational funding programs, so please contact the [MTSU Veteran's Center](#) for more details.

**20. Can I fly during my first semester?**

To be eligible for award of a Flight Lab, students must have completed at least 12 hours of academic credits after high school graduation at a college or university. Transfer students with 12 or more credit hours earned after high school graduation may qualify for a flight lab during their first semester.

Our curriculum is designed for incoming students with no aviation background. During their first semester, these students establish a foundation of aviation knowledge and familiarity with the Department. The first semester provides the student time to adjust to a collegiate academic workload and establish a strong GPA. All Aerospace students take AERO 1020 Theory of Flight, usually in their first semester. A limited amount of flight time in the Department aircraft is required for this course. This means that incoming students, while not enrolled in a flight lab during their first semester, are provided the opportunity to fly our equipment during that semester, if they are registered for AERO 1020.

**21. What is the Flight Lab Guide?**

This document outlines all requirements, procedures, and policies for flight training at MTSU. It is updated often, and students should refer to it frequently for any questions they have about flight training at MTSU. It can be accessed at: [Flight Lab Guide](#).

**22. How are flight lab slots awarded?**

See the [Flight Lab Guide](#) for detailed information about the flight lab award process.

**23. How often are flight labs offered?**

Flight labs are offered during the fall, spring, and summer semesters. Application deadlines can be found at [www.mtsu.edu/aerospace](http://www.mtsu.edu/aerospace).

**24. How often do Professional Pilot students fly?**

During the fall and spring semesters, MTSU Flight Lab students are required to meet with a flight instructor at least four times per week for a ground or flight lesson. During the summer session, this is increased to five times per week.

**25. I am a current Aerospace student at MTSU. Can I fly at other flight schools or in my own airplane?**

Incoming students may earn their Private Pilot license at any flight school, but are cautioned to wait for instrument training until they begin flying in our program (see the Instrument Rating FAQ below). Training for the instrument rating, commercial certificate, and multi-engine rating must be conducted by our flight school. Outside of these requirements, there are no restrictions on flying outside of our flight labs. However, training, ratings, certificates, endorsements, and other pilot training performed outside of the MTSU flight school will not result in academic credit toward a Pro Pilot degree.

If an incoming freshman has already earned a Private Pilot license, there are several local businesses that offer airplane rental. This creates an opportunity for students to fly elsewhere during their first semester if they wish to stay current.

**26. If I complete a flight lab quickly, can I begin the next lab in sequence during the same semester?**

Due to the university's academic schedule, pre and co-requisite requirements for flight lab courses, and the flight lab assignment process, in most cases we are unable to allow students to begin training toward the next flight lab during a semester in which they have completed the previous flight lab. For example, the Private (Pro I), Instrument (Pro II) and Commercial (Pro III) labs may only begin at the start of a semester. However, some advanced courses do not have co-requisites and these may on occasion be awarded after the start of the semester.

Specific training contingencies can be found in the [Flight Lab Guide](#).

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

Many students are able to complete a certificate or rating during the semester in which they enroll in that course. The frequency of required meetings during flight labs are designed to allow for this, which allows students to make good progress in completing the required certificates and ratings. However, weather, maintenance, illness, check ride availability, and other factors can cause delays in flight training; the FAA requirements for a particular course do not always fit within the confines of an academic semester. If a student does not complete their lab in the semester in which they started it, they are provided with an additional semester to do so, during which their Flight Lab grade will be "Incomplete." Should a student fail to complete the certificate/rating during the additional semester, the flight lab grade will be changed to "F". [The Flight Lab Guide](#) provides more details on this situation.

**28. If I am not in a flight lab, can I fly MTSU airplanes?**

No, due to insurance requirements, aircraft demand, and instructor availability, only students enrolled in a flight lab are authorized to fly in our aircraft.

**29. I am not an Aerospace Professional Pilot student. Can I fly MTSU airplanes?**

Based upon insurance, enrollment and capacity, we do not offer flight training to students that are not enrolled in the Pro Pilot concentration. An exception is if you are an MTSU Aerospace Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) student and intend to complete the Professional Pilot I (Private Pilot Flight Lab) as part of your UAS degree requirements.

**30. Upon graduation, how much total flight time will I have?**

The total flight time a student will have at graduation varies. Most students completing only the required flight labs will have between 180-200 hours of total time. However, most students choose to engage in additional elective labs, resulting in more flight time. In addition, those that obtain their Certified Flight Instructor certificate and above are eligible to apply for flight instructor positions at the MTSU Flight School while they are still a student. While competitive, the MTSU Flight School hires a number of students that complete their CFI certificate and are in good standing in the Department. Many of our flight instructors are undergraduate students and still taking classes toward their Bachelor's degree. The MTSU Flight School prefers flight instructor applicants who have completed their CFI at MTSU. If hired, they will be able to

continue building their flight time while completing their undergraduate coursework. While not common, some students have been able to reach 1,000 hours total time prior to or shortly after graduation.

**31. 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. While competitive, the MTSU Flight School hires a number of students that complete their CFI certificate and are in good standing in the Department. Many of our flight instructors are undergraduate students still taking classes towards their Bachelor's degree. The MTSU Flight School prefers flight instructor applicants who have completed their CFI at MTSU. Another popular way to build flight time is to do banner towing. Several companies offer employment to commercial rated pilots specifically on coast lines and beaches.

**32. Can I get my private rating before coming to MTSU?**

Approximately 30% of our students enter our Professional Pilot program with a FAA Private Pilot Certificate. In that case, the student is still required to take the AERO 2230 Professional Pilot I (Private ground school) course, but is not required to take the AERO 2201 Professional Pilot I Flight Lab (Private lab). This will leave a two-hour Aerospace academic credit gap for the student, which can be resolved by taking 2 credit hours of optional flight labs, or additional FAA-approved courses. These students are required to take the AERO 2230 course for two purposes: (1) the student needs the 3 credit hours for graduation and Restricted ATP purposes, and (2) the department must ensure that all applicants for the instrument flight lab meet our standards for private pilot knowledge and skills.

Normally, the flight lab courses are sequenced as prerequisites. For example, to register for the AERO 3210 Professional Pilot II (Instrument ground) course, a student must have previously completed the AERO 2230 Professional Pilot I (Private ground) course. However, when a student enters the program holding a Private Pilot certificate, that student will be allowed to take the Professional Pilot I and II courses simultaneously in their first semester if they are also beginning flight training in the AERO 3203 Pro Pilot II (Instrument) flight lab.

**33. Will I get academic credit for earning my Private Pilot license prior to attending MTSU?**

No, you will not receive academic credit for a private rating received outside MTSU. However, your first MTSU flight lab will be the instrument flight lab.

**34. Why shouldn't I get an Instrument Rating prior to attending this program?**

Generally speaking, we want the graduates of our Pro Pilot program to have done most of their flight training at MTSU. Also, earning an instrument rating prior to joining our program impacts airline job placement upon graduation. In 2014, Congress mandated the creation of a rule that requires entry-level airline pilots to have 1,500 hours total flight time to qualify for an Airline Transport Pilot rating (ATP) and thus an airline position.



University programs like ours have received authorization from the FAA to reduce the ATP time requirement, as long as students complete an FAA-approved Bachelor's degree program with at least 60 credit hours of specific courses. The rule also states that such students must earn their instrument and commercial rating/certificate at the flight school associated with the University which grants their degree, in addition to completing the degree. Thus, our graduates can qualify for a "Restricted" ATP with 1,000 hours – this means they can get an entry level airline position with 500 hours less experience than graduates of unapproved programs. Our graduates do not all seek airline jobs, but the majority do.

The link to the specific regulation referenced can be seen below:

[https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=6b3027826ceefe69956cb38e72276e33&mc=true&node=se14.2.61\\_1160&rgn=div8](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=6b3027826ceefe69956cb38e72276e33&mc=true&node=se14.2.61_1160&rgn=div8)

However, we do allow students to enter our Professional Pilot degree program with an instrument rating. These students must then complete the Commercial certificate, Multi-Engine rating, and CFI certificate at the MTSU Flight School to be eligible to graduate. However, these students are not eligible to receive a Restricted ATP upon graduation, so are not qualified for the 500 hour reduction in flight time described above.

**35. What are the medical requirements?**

Commercial pilots must hold at least a second-class FAA medical certificate to exercise their commercial pilot certificate. Thus, we require our students to show evidence of at least a second-class medical for flight lab applications. A first-class medical is suggested, as this is the standard medical for most professional pilots. Students are required to maintain a valid first or second-class medical throughout the program. More information on MTSU and medical requirements can be found on the Flight Lab Guide.

You can find an Aviation Medical Examiner by using the [FAA's AME Locator site](#).

MTSU Student Health Services houses several AMEs. You can find more information about obtaining your FAA medical certificate at MTSU [here](#).

**36. Why isn't a Third-Class Medical sufficient for your program?**

The reason that a third-class medical isn't sufficient for our program is that commercial pilots must hold at least a second-class FAA medical certificate to exercise the privileges of their pilot certificate. It would be quite a surprise for a Professional Pilot student to learn they are not medically qualified to be a commercial pilot after completing this degree program, so we incorporate that requirement into the program. It is permissible however for a Professional Pilot student to hold a second-class FAA medical certificate with third-class privileges and continue flight labs.

**37. If I complete your program, what ratings/certificates will I have?**

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

- A. AERO 2201 Pro Pilot I Lab - Private Pilot (may be earned prior to joining program)
- B. AERO 3203 Pro Pilot II Lab - Instrument Rating (must be completed at the MTSU flight school to earn the Restricted Airline Transport Pilot Certificate after graduation)
- C. AERO 3204 Pro Pilot III Lab - Commercial Certificate (SEL) (must be completed at the MTSU flight school to earn the Restricted Airline Transport Pilot Certificate after graduation)
- D. AERO 3261 Pro Pilot IV Lab - Multi-Engine Rating (added to Commercial SEL, and must be completed at the MTSU flight school for graduation purposes)

While not specifically leading to a certificate or rating, AERO 3240 Pro Pilot IV and AERO 4250 Pro Pilot V are the capstone courses for the Pro Pilot concentration. In these two courses, students transition into the Department's CRJ-700 flight training device, where they learn skills such as crew resource management, advanced turbine systems, and high altitude/high airspeed operations.

Additional optional flight labs such as the Certified Flight Instructor, Instrument Flight Instructor, Multi-engine Flight Instructor, and Conventional Landing Gear (Tailwheel) Lab are also offered. These result in obtaining specific pilot endorsements and certificates. More details regarding costs can be seen in the [Flight Lab Guide](#).

**38. I previously attended another institution that was authorized by the FAA to issue a Restricted ATP at 1,000 hours. Will my credits transfer?**

Your course credits may transfer. We will request a copy of the FAA Letter of Authorization from your previous institution. Your prior flight training will not count for academic credit, but applicable coursework may, pending a review of the LOA and how well the credits align with our degree requirements. You must earn the instrument rating at the MTSU flight school to qualify for the Restricted ATP after graduation.

**39. I graduated from the MTSU Professional Pilot degree program prior to 2014. Can I get a Restricted ATP?**

Yes. Your degree did not include 60 credit hours of FAA-recognized coursework, but did include more than 30. This means you qualify for a RATP at 1,250 hours total time.

**40. Which industry partnerships does the Department participate in?**

Delta Propel: Delta Air Lines visited with many university programs to evaluate these programs prior to selecting schools for the [Delta Propel Program](#). Our Department was proud to be chosen as one of the original eight programs to participate. This program offers students the chance to receive a Qualified Job Offer from Delta Air Lines, and then a fast-track to a pilot slot at Delta Air Lines after graduation. Delta Air Lines evaluates student applicants throughout their time in our program. The application and evaluation process require many steps, and students must be at least a junior in the program and have completed at least one flight lab in residence to qualify for application.

Southwest Destination 225: In 2023 Southwest added MTSU to its list of partner institutions. Students who are selected to participate in [Destination 225](#) are offered the opportunity to fly for Southwest Airlines on an accelerated pathway. Applicants are tracked during their time in the Pro Pilot program and must be a sophomore by credit hours before they can apply.

**41. I am an Aerospace student, but have declared a different concentration. Can I switch my concentration?**

Yes. This process requires that you meet with your academic advisor prior to changing degree programs. Fortunately, many of the general education requirements are common among the Department's six undergraduate degrees. In addition, all Aerospace students take the five core Aerospace classes, so some previous aerospace credits should apply to the Professional Pilot degree program.

**42. Is there a shuttle for transportation from the MTSU campus to the airport?**

There is no shuttle system to transport students from the main campus to the airport. The Murfreesboro airport is less than five miles from campus, and it typically takes about 15 minutes to drive there from campus, although 30 minutes should be allowed to accommodate parking and walking to/from academic buildings on campus. It is recommended that Professional Pilot students have a car for transportation. First year freshmen are permitted to have cars on campus.

**43. Is there on-campus housing for Freshmen Aerospace students?**

MTSU offers a specific dormitory opportunity for first semester aerospace freshmen students. These students can choose to live in the [Aerospace Learning Community](#). In this on-campus dormitory, men and women live on separate floors.

**44. Where do your professional pilot students go after graduating?**

MTSU Aerospace graduates fly for every U.S. major airline. Many of our graduates are first employed by regional airline carriers, and then later move to major carriers after building experience. We also have graduates that fly for the military or fly as charter pilots.

**45. Do you have Aerospace student organizations?**

Yes. [MTSU Aerospace Student Organizations](#) travel to national conferences, visit large airports like Memphis and Atlanta, tour ATC facilities, and more.

**46. How do I schedule a tour?**

Tours of the Department of Aerospace are conducted by select Aerospace Ambassador Students. You can [schedule an Aerospace tour here](#). Tours of the University can be scheduled through admissions at [tour MTSU](#).

**47. What equipment should I purchase prior to starting the program?**

Professional Pilot students must acquire certain pilot equipment for flight labs to include a headset, logbook, kneeboard, checklists, aeronautical charts, and more. A comprehensive list can be found on the [Flight Lab Guide](#).

Many students purchase laptops for coursework and tablets for flight training. An iPad Mini with Apple Pencil and cellular capabilities is recommended for flight training.

Once beginning the Professional Pilot II class and lab, MTSU students commonly use [ForeFlight Mobile](#), an electronic flight bag software available on Apple iPad/iPhone devices. MTSU has established an Educational Licensing Program with ForeFlight Mobile, which allows student a small discount for the software, and allows students to view MTSU Flight School documents, checklists, and other materials while using the application. Students must be admitted to the program and taking coursework to qualify for the ELP version of ForeFlight Mobile.