

A Comparative Analysis of Professional Pilot Jobs

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Problem?

- Many different career avenues for Professional Pilots
- Unreliable sources of information
- Lack of comprehensive pilot career document/resource

Professional Pilot Jobs

- Airline
 - Regional passenger, regional cargo, major passenger, major cargo
- On-demand Charter
 - Cargo and passenger
- Corporate
 - Private owner
 - Company flight department
- Flight Instruction
 - Part 61 and 141 instruction
 - Part 142 instruction

Areas Examined

- Schedule
- Compensation
- Location
- Typical flying day
- Destinations
- Equipment
- Requirements to be hired
- Opportunity for advancement

Airlines

- Scheduled passenger and cargo flights
- Regulated by 14 CFR part 121
- Highest level of Federal Oversight
- Major and Regional Airlines

On-demand Charter

- Cargo and passenger service
- Unscheduled flights for the general public
- General public “rents” entire aircraft for a flight
- Large companies
 - WheelsUp and FlexJet
- Small companies
 - Family run with one aircraft

Corporate

- Privately owned aircraft
 - Individuals or corporations
- Each aircraft has a mission
 - Business
 - Vacations
 - Combination
- Owner cannot charge passengers for flight

Flight Instruction

- Teaching the art of flying
- Part 61/141 Instruction
 - Typically in an aircraft
 - Work towards certification of pilots
- Part 142 Instruction
 - Simulator instruction
 - Work toward knowledge of a certain aircraft (type rating)

Analysis

Schedule

Airline

- Based on seniority
- At least 12 days off per month
- Bidding system to determine schedule

Corporate

- Scheduled weekly flights
- Crew rotations
- On-call

Charter

- Scheduled days off (10 day on, 5 days off)
- Always on-call with vacation days

Flight Instruction

- Weeknights and weekends
- Scheduled work week

Compensation

Airline

- Regional
 - First Officer..... \$36,000 - \$50,000
 - Captain.....\$60,000 - \$90,000
- Major
 - First Officer..... \$100,000 - \$190,000
 - Captain..... \$180,000 - \$270,000

Corporate

- First Officer.....\$101,000 average
- Captain.....\$161,000 average

Charter

- Light Jets
 - First Officer..... \$46,000 - \$58,000
 - Captain..... \$63,000 - \$92,000
- Midsize Jets
 - First Officer..... \$48,000 - \$81,000
 - Captain..... \$70,000 - \$128,000
- Large Jets
 - First Officer.....\$62,000 - \$105,000
 - Captain.....\$98,000 - \$163,000

Flight Instruction

- New hire..... \$39,000 average
- Can double with added responsibilities or Part 142

Locations

Airline

- Large domiciles across the United States
- Pilots are not required to live near domicile

Corporate

- Large and medium size airports across the United States
- Pilots typically required to live near base airport

Charter

- Large and medium size airports across the United States
- Pilots typically required to live near base airport

Flight Instruction

- Airports across the United States
- Many flight schools located in the southern states due to desirable flight training weather

Typical Flying Day

Airline

- Four to five domestic legs per day
- One international leg per day

Corporate

- Varies
- Can include extended periods of time at an airport waiting on passengers or cargo

Charter

- Varies
- Can include extended periods of time at an airport waiting on passengers or cargo

Flight Instruction

- Multiple flight lessons per day
- Lessons include:
 - Practice area flights
 - Takeoff and landing practice
 - Cross-country flight training

Destinations

Airlines

- Regional
 - Commercial airports in the same region
- Major
 - Commercial airport across the country
 - Large international destinations

Corporate

- Dependent on mission of aircraft
- Vacation destinations, business destinations, or a combination

Charter

- Variable
- If chartered for a vacation, destinations can be somewhere warm and exotic
- If chartered for business, destinations are typically large cities

Flight Instruction

- Airports within a 300 mile radius of the home airport
- Many flight consist of a trip to the practice area, where the flight begins and ends at the same airport

Equipment

Airlines

- Regional
 - Single aisle jets and turboprop aircraft
 - Bombardier and Embraer
- Major
 - Narrow-body and wide-body aircraft
 - Boeing and Airbus aircraft

Corporate

- Varies
- Light, medium, and large jet aircraft
- Gulfstream, Dassault, Beechcraft, and Cessna aircraft

Charter

- Varies
- Light, medium, and large jet aircraft
- Single- and multi-engine cargo aircraft
- Gulfstream, Dassault, Beechcraft, and Cessna aircraft

Flight Instruction

- Small, simple single- and multi-engine piston aircraft
- Full motion simulators for Part 142 training

Requirements to be hired

Airlines

- Regional
 - 1,500 hours
 - 1,000 hours if trained in conjunction with a bachelor's degree
- Major
 - Typically 2,000 hours
 - Unrestricted ATP certificate
 - 1,000 hours jet time

Corporate

- Commercial Pilot Certificate with Instrument Rating
- Departments seek individuals that will work well with existing team

Charter

- First Officer
 - 500 hours total time with Commercial Certificate and Instrument Rating
- Captain
 - 1,500 hours total time with an ATP Certificate and type rating (if applicable)
 - Departments seek individuals that will work well with existing team

Flight Instruction

- Commercial Pilot Certificate with Instrument Rating
- Certified Flight Instructor Certificate

Opportunity for advancement

Airlines

- First Officer
- Captain
- IOE Captain/Training Captain/Check Airmen
- Chief Pilot

Corporate

- First Officer
- Captain
- Training Captain/Safety Officer/International Captain
- Department Manager

Charter

- First Officer
- Captain
- Training Captain/Check Airmen
- Chief Pilot
- Director of Operations

Flight Instruction

- Single-engine
- Multi-engine
- Instrument
- Specialty Instruction
- Chief Flight Instructor

Recent Graduate Findings

Within a year of graduation-

- 50.3% of graduates were employed as flight instructors
- 9.6% of graduates were employed as airline pilots
- 8.2% of graduates were employed as corporate pilots
- 2.0% of graduates were employed as charter pilots
- 6.8% of graduates were employed in an aviation-related position that could lead to a pilot position

Interviews

Includes interview transcripts from:

- First Officer at Southwest Airlines
- First Officer at Endeavor Air
- Captain/Director of Training at Superior Aviation (now Martinaire)
- First Officer at Northern Jet Management
- Senior Captain at Steelcase Aviation
- Associate Director of Flight Operations and Assistant Chief Flight Instructor at Western Michigan University's College of Aviation

Also includes:

- "A Day in the Life of a Cargo Pilot"
- "A Day in the Life of a Mainline Pilot"
- "A Day in the Life of a Regional Pilot"

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