



Learning to fly - a Guernsey Flying Training guide

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Thinking of Learning To Fly?

Ask any private pilot and the chances are that he or she will tell you that flying must surely be the best recreational hobby of them all. A Private Pilot's Licence (PPL for short) is your ticket to a new world. What other hobby allows you to take your friends and family for lunch in Brittany or a weekend in France, England, Ireland or whatever takes your fancy? Your PPL may be a stepping stone to other forms of flying. You may want to go on to achieve a Commercial Licence and fly for a living or you may decide to take up Aerobatics. Whatever you decide to do, this is where it all starts.

Obtaining a Private Pilot's Licence is, of course, no mean achievement, and there is no denying the pride and prestige that automatically accompanies it.

You may be one of those people who have always believed that flying is a rich man's hobby, in which case we would like to welcome you to the club that sets out to put an end to that myth. Contrary to popular belief, flying clubs are not bulging at the seams with millionaires, far from it! Flying Club members come from all walks of life and yet all share a common love of flying. Over the last decade or so, many of the "old style" flying clubs have given way to "Aviation Centres" that offer flight training purely in the interest of making a profit rather than to promote flying and see it made more accessible to more and more people.

The Guernsey Aero Club (GAC) began life in January 1935 flying out of L'Eree aerodrome. It is an "old style" members club with the aim of fostering an interest in aviation. It does not undertake flying training but Guernsey Flying Training Limited ("GFT") operates two well equipped Piper Warrior aircraft out of the GAC building providing affordable flight training and aircraft hire on an essentially non-profit making basis.

GAC offers regular social events plus a bar open each evening and lunch times at weekends. Various fly aways are also arranged throughout the year. A quarterly newsletter is sent to all members. Whatever profits the Club makes go straight back into improving facilities and providing better value for money for its members.

Having explained a little of what the club is all about, what about the actual flying undertaken by GFT? In the following pages we have listed some of the typical questions asked by would-be pilots. We hope the answers provided will give you the information you require in helping you to decide whether you would like to obtain a Private Pilot's Licence. If after reading this, you still have some questions that need answering, please feel free to talk to one of the instructors or the Aero Club Manager, Jane Round, who will be only too glad to take the time to explain the course and give any other information you may require.

Learning To Fly

How do I qualify for my Private Pilot's Licence?

You will need to complete a course of flying training (minimum 40 hours) and theoretical study, with 9 written exams and culminating in a flying test divided into two parts; one involving General Flying Skills and the other a navigational sortie.

What is involved and how long will it take?

The 40 hour (minimum) of flight training can be spread over as long a period as you may wish but must include at least 25 hours dual instruction, including 2 hours stalls awareness and spin avoidance training, 10 hours supervised solo to include minimum of 5 hours solo cross country flying including a 150 nm solo cross country flight involving full stop landings at 2 intermediate aerodromes. Theoretical subjects are covered largely by self-study, consolidated by lectures to be given to students on those days when the weather rules out flight training.

The written ground exams are:-

1. Air Law
2. Operational Procedures
3. Flight Performance and Planning
4. Navigation and Radio Aids
5. Meteorology
6. Human Performance and Limitations
7. Aircraft General
8. Principles of Flight
9. Communications

Taken on a full-time basis the whole flying course could be completed in a matter of weeks, the controlling factor being the weather. The majority of students tend to spread their training over a much longer period, usually between four and six months. The thing to bear in mind is that if you spread your training over longer than six months you will probably need to do more flying in order to maintain your proficiency.

Do I need any prior knowledge or special qualifications?

The simple answer is "No". The course is essentially a practical one and therefore we are able to train you to the required standard even if you have no previous aviation background, provided you have undergone an average secondary education. If you already have some experience of gliding or flying with the Air Cadets then you will start off with an advantage over your fellow students as certain gliding qualifications will

entitle you to a reduction in the minimum number of hours that you will need to complete your PPL.

How long does a flying lesson last?

On average about 50 minutes airborne although Cross Country Navigational Flights will of course take longer. Additional instruction takes place on the ground in the form of pre-flight and post-flight briefings which is included in the cost of each flying hour.

Learning to Fly - Exploding the Myths

If you have ever seriously dreamed of learning to fly, you must read this pamphlet. There are some pleasant surprises in store for you, you will see many myths dispelled as we explain the truth behind some popular misconceptions about learning to fly, the costs of continuing to fly after you have obtained your licence, and the safety aspects of pursuing this most fulfilling, exciting, and enjoyable hobby or career!

We have adopted a question and answer approach that we believe will cover all of the most frequently asked questions from potential private pilots.

This pamphlet will show you that flying is not solely the preserve of playboy types, or the social elite, quite the contrary in fact most of the club membership comprises people from all walks of life on average incomes.

We have highlighted what we believe are the biggest surprises to most students new to flying. We hope we achieve our aim of showing you just how close your dream is to becoming a reality by proving that it is in the reach of the average person.

Q. How fit do I need to be?

A. People start to learn to fly at all ages and are required to take a basic medical with a doctor who has approval from the Civil Aviation Authority to carry out these types of medicals. The medical is akin to the type of school medical that most of us have been subject to at some time in our lives, although it is usual for people over 40 years of age to undergo an electrocardiogram (ECG) in addition to the basic medical.

Contrary to popular belief, a high percentage of people who fly wear glasses to correct their vision.

Q. Do I need any qualifications to learn to fly?

A. No, you need no qualifications whatsoever, just a very basic knowledge of maths and bags of enthusiasm which in our experience is never a problem!

Q. How safe is learning to fly?

A. Extremely safe, you will be in the hands of highly trained and fully qualified instructors. You probably drove today, either to work or to this flying club. You drove at approximately 35 mph and trusted the person coming towards you to pass you in the opposite direction and maintain a separation from you of 2-3 feet at a combined speed of 70 mph, so it is easy to believe the statistics that show you are many tens of times more likely to have a serious accident driving than you would flying in a light aircraft.

Q. Is there much to learn to gain my licence?

A. Most of the work is carried out in the cockpit with your instructor, although there is some home study involved through a recommended course of books available through GFT. At various stages you will have to pass examinations in key subjects, although these examinations are only in the form of multiple choice.

Q. How much will it cost me to learn to fly?

A. The cost of the 40 flying hours for the Private Pilot's Licence ("PPL") course at £280 per flying hour is some £11,200 to which a further £1,500 is required covering ground school, exams and skill tests, but remember, you could, for example, take two lessons a month at £280 per lesson, so you can learn at the rate that suits your pocket.

Remember, the licence is valid for life as long as you keep passing the medical, although pilots are required to fly regularly to keep their licence current. So compare the cost of learning to fly with the cost of a very small dinghy for example, a jetski, or golf club joining fee of £1,70 and annual fees of some £1,700, £15,000.00 would probably just buy a very modest caravan. With your licence you could for example fly up to four people on a day trip to France!

Q. Okay, so I've got my Private Pilot's Licence, how much will it cost me to hire aircraft to take family or friends for a flight?

A. You can hire four seat aircraft from as little as £230 per wet hour (that means including fuel).

Remember – you are only paying the hourly cost when the engine is running, you pay nothing when the aircraft is parked at your destination other than airfield parking charges. (The airport you are landing at usually charge in most cases a modest landing fee £30 - £50 in the UK or €15-€25 in France).

Remember – that you can also share the cost of your aircraft hire with your companions, so for example a flight to Dinard in France on average would take 40 minutes, a return trip of 1 hour 20 minutes at £230 per hour = a cost of some £76 per person for a round trip to France with 4 people in the aircraft, by arrangement with GFT you could stay for several days, or a long weekend for example, although there may be a minimum number of flying hours that would need to be allowed for.

People learn to fly for all sorts of reasons, to take trips abroad visiting other parts of the UK or simply just for the thrill of taking family or friends for local flights on a beautiful sunny day! Some people may decide to form a syndicate and buy their own aircraft! This is probably not as extravagant as you might imagine, a modest touring aircraft can be as little as £60,000 to purchase that would cost a syndicate of four people £15,000 per person, not exactly cheap, but a bit more exciting and cheaper than a caravan!

Most people that fly for a hobby will tell you that you never stop learning about flying and that is what makes us all keep coming back for more!

Of course not everybody coming to the club is flying just for a hobby, To many commercial pilots, this club was their first step into entering a career in aviation, whether they are professional pilots flying military fast jets, twin turbo prop, or jet passenger aircraft their initial training would have been conducted in light aircraft, similar to, or exactly the same as the training aircraft at GFT.

Whatever your reason for taking the plunge and taking that first step towards your dream, whether it be for career, or as for so many of us just purely for pleasure, you will find a friendly sociable crowd of people who are all very keen to welcome new members, you can guarantee that there will be other people who are at the same stage as yourself in your training, so there will never be a shortage of people to swap yarns or compare notes with in the relaxed atmosphere of the club bar.

Remember The instructors at GFT and staff and members of the club all want you to succeed in achieving your aims and retaining you as a member, but also the emphasis remains firmly on you having the most rewarding and fun experience of your life, so what are you waiting for? Come and have a friendly chat with one of GFT's instructors or invest £225 in a 45 minute trial lesson and see if you think this is for you, tell your instructor of your interest in learning to fly and who knows you might just end up having as much fun as the rest of us!

Happy Landings!