

FLIGHT STANDARDS
Aviation & Flight Training

Pilot Career Pathway

INFORMATION PACK

2027 Course Intake

28 October 2026

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1. Purpose

The Flight Standards Pilot Career Pathway prepares candidates for entry-level employment in general aviation & for the role in their conditional offer of employment with a participating final employer. It is consistent with the Flight Standards approach of training pilots to be ready for their first role in industry, rather than presenting the course as preparation for an airline career.

The pathway differs from commercial "cadetship" models, under which candidates typically pay a substantial fee for approximately six months as a first officer on a small multi-crew commuter aircraft. At the conclusion of such programs, candidates commonly hold limited transferable experience & have no assurance of continuing employment.

The key features of the pathway are as follows:

- **Developed with employers.** The pathway was designed in conjunction with operators that require pilots, including Southern Airlines, Northern Territory Air Services (NTAS), Kakadu Air & Marthakal Yolngu Airline. Further operators have expressed interest in participating. Participating employers seek pilots who have progressed through a system consistent with their requirements, & who understand industry practice, expectations & operational standards.
- **Employer-led selection.** Aptitude testing & interviews are conducted by the final employer, not by Flight Standards.
- **Paid employment**. All employment within the pathway is paid, full-time employment at full rates of pay. The pathway does not involve trainee wages, unpaid work experience or similar arrangements.
- **Operational experience**. Candidates complete a minimum of 6 months, & typically 9 to 12 months, as a line pilot before undertaking multi-engine & instrument training.
- **Defined objective.** Candidates who satisfy all pathway requirements may be offered employment with the final employer, operating the Beechcraft 1900, in accordance with their conditional offer of employment.
- **No guarantee of employment.** The Pilot Career Pathway is a training & assessment pathway that follows a conditional offer of employment. The offer is not a guarantee of employment. Employment with the final employer is subject to satisfaction of all pathway requirements, including completion of training to the required standards, satisfactory work placement outcomes, medical and licensing requirements, & ongoing suitability assessment. Successful completion of training does not of itself result in employment.



Training in the Top End

Candidates may commence at Darwin, Brisbane or Perth & complete the final 3 months of the course in Darwin, where initial employment is most likely

2. Pathway overview

The pathway comprises eight stages. Stages 2 to 5 constitute the full-time Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL) course, which must be completed within 12 months. The complete pathway is intended to take approximately 24 months, with a maximum of 30 months.

1. **Selection:** aptitude testing & interview with the final employer, followed by a conditional offer of employment for suitable candidates.
2. **Recreational Pilot Licence (RPL):** fundamentals of flight, standard operating procedures, airspace, operational decision making & aircraft management.
3. **Private Pilot Licence (PPL) & Night VFR Rating:** navigation, weather management & night flying.
4. **Command hour building:** pilot-in-command experience, accrued across a range of locations in Australia.
5. **Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL):** CPL flight training, including finishing training on the Cessna 210. A minimum of the final 3 months is completed in Darwin.
6. **Initial employment:** paid, full-time employment as a line pilot with a partner operator, commencing within 4 months of the end of the 12-month CPL training period, for a minimum of 6 months & typically 9 to 12 months.
7. I**nstrument Rating & Multi-Engine Class Rating:** full-time training following initial employment.
8. **Beechcraft 1900 type rating & final employment:** simulator training in Denver, United States, followed by employment with Southern Airlines, subject to satisfaction of all conditions of the offer.

2027 intake – key dates

- Interviews: early December 2026
- Course commencement: early January 2027



3. Stage descriptions

3.1 Selection

The pathway commences with aptitude testing & an interview conducted by the final employer. Where a candidate is assessed as suitable, the employer issues a conditional offer of employment. The offer is conditional on the candidate successfully completing the training schedule & the experience-building requirements specified in the offer before commencing in the role.

For the 2027 intake, aptitude testing & interviews will be conducted in early December 2026, with training commencing in early January 2027.

3.2 Recreational Pilot Licence

Training is conducted full-time, five days per week, unless otherwise agreed in advance by the final employer & Flight Standards. The RPL stage covers the fundamentals of flight, an introduction to standard operating procedures, exposure to airspace, operational decision making, & aircraft management, including maintenance.

3.3 Private Pilot Licence & Night VFR Rating

The PPL stage comprises navigation training & weather management. On completion of the PPL, candidates undertake the Night VFR Rating.

The Night VFR Rating is included because night experience is difficult to obtain once employed. Most entry-level operations in the Top End are conducted by day, & operators are generally reluctant to roster newly qualified pilots for night flying. The Air Transport Pilot Licence requires 100 hours of night flight time. Night hours flown during training count towards the CPL aeronautical experience requirements, & candidates who complete the CPL with 20 to 30 hours of night experience are better placed to be offered night flying by their employer.



3.4 Command hour building

Command hour building provides candidates with the opportunity to exercise command judgement in a challenging but controlled environment, with appropriate risk mitigations & safety boundaries in place.

Candidates are encouraged to travel widely during this stage to gain exposure to varied traffic, weather, airspace, terrain & local procedures. Where practicable, this may include a circuit of Australia via the Flight Standards bases in Perth & Brisbane & partner organisations in Melbourne, Alice Springs, Mount Isa & Cairns, before returning to Darwin. Candidates commencing at another base may complete the circuit from that location.

3.5 Commercial Pilot Licence

The CPL stage completes the licence. It includes finishing training on the Cessna 210, the aircraft most commonly operated in entry-level roles, delivered through the Flight Standards GA Ready Course with a minimum of 5 hours on type. On completion, candidates hold a CPL & are prepared to commence their first professional role.

3.6 Initial employment

Flight Standards works with its partner operators, including Kakadu Air, Marthakal Yolngu Airline & NTAS, to assist candidates to obtain initial employment, with the aim of placement within 4 months of the end of the 12-month CPL training period. Placement is subject to operator vacancies and to the candidate's application and suitability. Initial employment is a paid, full-time line pilot position at full rates of pay. Candidates remain in this role for a minimum of 6 months, & typically 9 to 12 months.



3.7 Instrument Rating & Multi-Engine Class Rating

On completion of initial employment, candidates return to full-time training to complete the Multi-Engine Class Rating & Multi-Engine Instrument Rating. These ratings are deliberately scheduled after initial employment. Entry-level roles rarely involve operations under the Instrument Flight Rules, & instrument proficiency is perishable, requiring an Instrument Proficiency Check within 12 months of the initial test. Candidates with operational experience typically acquire these skills more readily & to a higher standard.



Multi Engine & Instrument Rating Training
Undertaken after initial employment, when candidates bring operational experience to the multi-engine & instrument environment.

3.8 Beechcraft 1900 type rating & final employment

Candidates then undertake type training on the Beechcraft 1900, including attendance at a simulator centre for the flight training component (currently located in Denver, Colorado, United States). Before accepting the offer of employment, candidates must complete the Dangerous Goods by Air – Awareness course at their own expense. Candidates who have satisfied all conditions of their offer may then commence employment with Southern Airlines.

4. Conditions of the conditional offer of employment

The conditional offer of employment is subject to the candidate meeting the standards below throughout the pathway.

Employment is also subject to ongoing suitability assessment by the employer, including at or near completion of the Course. Specific conditions are set by the employer in each offer; the following are typical.

During training:

- One attempt only at each flight test.
- Completion of the CPL within 12 months, with total flight hours not exceeding the quoted totals by more than 5%.
- All theory examinations passed on the first attempt, except that up to three examinations may be attempted a second time across the RPL, PPL, CPL & Instrument Rating (IREX) examinations.
- A valid Class 1 aviation medical certificate held throughout the pathway.

During employment:

- A satisfactory check history, with no failed checks.
- No disciplinary action.

Candidates consent to Flight Standards & the participating employers sharing information & collaborating in relation to their progress.

Failure to meet a standard. Failure to meet a required standard does not preclude future employment opportunities. It may, however, result in the conditional offer of employment being withdrawn. Participating companies may continue to engage with the pilot or recommend alternative pathways towards the original objective. Withdrawal or lapse of a conditional offer does not create any entitlement to compensation, reimbursement of fees or costs, or employment.

Additional opportunities. Candidates may be offered additional pathways on the basis of demonstrated aptitude, attitude & engagement. Any such offer is made with the full visibility of each company participating in the pathway.

5. Entry requirements

Candidates must meet the following requirements:

- **Class 1 Aviation Medical Certificate,** held at course commencement. This requirement may be considered on a case-by-case basis; however, failure to hold the certificate by the first solo flight may result in the conditional offer being withdrawn. Initial issue typically takes 4 weeks to process. Candidates are solely responsible for obtaining & maintaining their medical certificate, & for any delay, additional training or cost arising from a medical matter.
- **English language proficiency** at Aviation English Language Proficiency (AELP) Level 6, or equivalent.
- **Aviation Security Identification Card (ASIC):** red, unrestricted for use Australia-wide. The background check typically takes 8 weeks to process.
- **Aviation Reference Number (ARN),** issued by CASA prior to the commencement of training.
- **Full-time availability** of five days per week, unless otherwise agreed in advance with the final employer & Flight Standards.
- **Eligibility to travel to the United States** for type rating training. Under United States requirements, flight training leading to a certificate or rating must be undertaken on a student visa (M-1 or F-1) & requires Transportation Security Administration (TSA) security approval. Flight Standards will confirm the specific requirements with the training provider prior to travel.
- **Compliance with the Flight Standards terms & conditions**, including the Safety Management System (SMS), Drug & Alcohol Management Plan (DAMP) & Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).



Northern Territory Air Services (NTAS)
NTAS operate a substantial fleet of piston & turbine powered aircraft across the continent with permanent bases in Alice Springs, Mount Isa & Cairns.

6. Training locations & theory

Commencement. Candidates may commence at any Flight Standards base: Brisbane (Archerfield), Darwin or Perth (Jandakot).

Completion in Darwin. All candidates complete a minimum of the final 3 months of the course in Darwin. This ensures candidates are familiar with the operating environment, weather, airspace & operators of the region in which initial employment is most likely.

Theory. Theory training is based on self-study, supported by the following included instructor tuition:

- RPL: 5 hours
- PPL: 5 hours
- CPL: 10 hours, in preparation for the CASA examinations
- Instrument Rating: 5 hours

Additional tuition is charged as incurred.



Marthakal Yolngu Airline, Galiwink'u
Owned & operated by the Marthakal Homelands Resource Centre, Marthakal Yolngu Airline provides essential air transport to residents of & visitors across Arnhemland, NT.

7. Fees & payment schedule

The estimated cost of the complete pathway for a 2027 intake is approximately $209,550. Of this amount, approximately $114,800 relates to the CPL course, completed within the first 12 months. The remaining $94,700 relates to the Instrument Rating, Multi-Engine Class Rating & type rating, which are undertaken after initial employment and can be funded from the candidate's earnings in that role.

Course fees are payable to Flight Standards and are not contingent on employment. Candidates should consider their financial position on the basis that employment is not guaranteed.

Fees are payable in instalments, in advance of each stage.

Instalment	Due	Inclusions	Amount (AUD)
1. RPL	Course commencement	RPL flight training, RPL equipment kit, uniform kit	$22,143.50
2. PPL	Commencement of PPL	PPL flight training, PPL equipment kit	$18,742.00
3. Night VFR & hour building (part 1)	Commencement of Night VFR	Night VFR training, $15,000 of hour building, NVFR & CPL equipment kits	$27,690.50
4. Hour building (part 2)	Prior to the second hour-building period	Remaining hour building	$21,420.00
5. CPL	Commencement of CPL flight training	CPL flight training, including the GA Ready Course & Cessna 210 training, & the CPL flight test	$24,820.50
CPL subtotal	Within 12 months		$114,816.50
6. Instrument Rating & Multi-Engine Class Rating	Commencement of rating training	Multi-Engine Class Rating & Multi-Engine Instrument Rating, including theory, landing & approach charges	$49,733.35
7. Beechcraft 1900 type rating	Prior to travel	Type rating course, airfares, accommodation, & transport to & from the simulator centre	approx. $45,000
Pathway total			**approx. $209,549.85**

Prices reflect 2027 intake rates & include the discount applicable to upfront payment of the RPL & PPL stages. Prices assume the required standard is attained within the allocated hours; additional training is charged at current rates. The type rating course price is to be confirmed.

Refunds. Once a course component has commenced, fees paid for that component are non-refundable. Where a candidate withdraws from the course, the amount paid will be held in credit for future training.

8. Costs not included

The following costs are the responsibility of the candidate:

- **Accommodation**, transport & meals for the duration of the course in Australia, including during hour building. Given the flexibility offered to candidates in selecting destinations, candidates arrange & fund their own accommodation during this stage.
- **Meals in the United States**. Airfares, accommodation & transport to & from the simulator centre are included; meals are not.
- **Entry & pre-employment requirements**, including the Class 1 medical & any further medical assessments or specialist reports required by CASA, the ASIC, English language proficiency assessment, any required United States visa, & the Dangerous Goods by Air – Awareness course (approximately $200).
- **Additional theory tuition** beyond the included hours.
- **Additional training & reassessment** beyond the allocated hours, at current rates.



Beech 1900 Type Rating
Flight training is completed at a simulator centre in Denver, Colorado, USA. Airfares, accommodation & transport are included.

9. Responsibilities

Flight Standards advertises the pathway & is responsible for the delivery of all associated training. Flight Standards is committed to engaging positively with each candidate & training them to the best of its ability.

The candidate is responsible for meeting the standards set by the employer in the conditional offer of employment, and for obtaining & maintaining their aviation medical certificate.

The employers issue the conditional offers of employment & determine whether they are confirmed or withdrawn. On completion of the pathway, & subject to the conditional offer, candidates who satisfy all conditions of their offer may commence employment with the final employer & are thereafter managed as members of its staff.

Candidates contract separately with Flight Standards for training. The final employer is not a party to that contract and is not responsible for training outcomes or course costs. Flight Standards makes no guarantee of any final outcome.



Southern Airlines
Candidates who satisfy all conditions of their offer commence employment operating the Beechcraft 1900.

10. How to apply

1. **Prerequisites**. Candidates should apply for an Aviation Reference Number, Class 1 medical & ASIC as early as possible, as these have the longest processing times.
2. **Expression of interest**. Candidates for the 2027 intake should register their interest by 30 November 2026 to be considered for interviews in early December 2026.
3. **Experience Flight**. Candidates without prior flying experience are encouraged to book an Experience Flight at any Flight Standards base.

Contact: 1800 435 946 | flightstandards.com.au/course/pilot-career-pathway.

Further information is available on the Flight Standards FAQs page.