

There are two types of flight training schools, Part 61 and Part 141, which refers to the Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR's) under which they operate. The most common and least important distinction between them is the minimum flight time required for the private certificate - 40 hours under Part 61 and 35 hours under Part 141. Considering that the national average for earning a private certificate is 60 to 75 hours (how long you'll take will depend on your ability and flying frequency), this difference is minimal. It does, however; make a big difference to commercial pilot applicants: Part 61 requires 250 hours and Part 141 requires 190.

What differentiates the two is structure and accountability. Part 141 schools, which are periodically audited by the FAA, must have detailed, FAA-approved course outlines and meet student performance rates. They must also meet and maintain other operational requirements. These include a qualified chief flight instructor who's subject to FAA review, FAA-approved stage check pilots, a qualified aircraft dispatcher, detailed ground training with approved testing procedures, appropriate training facilities, records, equipment, and maintenance services.

Part 141 schools follow their curricula to the letter, teach certain skills in a given order, use senior instructors to check progress at specific intervals and keep detailed records of each students progress. This has its benefits for both full and part time students. The training quality is known, and if you seek additional training, or return from a break in training, these records will allow you to pick up where you left off with minimal delay.

Part 61 schools, which are not subject to the same FAA scrutiny given to Part 141 schools, have the flexibility to rearrange lesson content and sequence, which may not be of benefit to the student. When you're looking for a flight training facility, Part 141 schools are your best choice. And even though it's an approved school, that doesn't mean it can't also train students under Part 61. Many do, thus letting them enjoy the approved structure and accountability of the school under the more flexible regulation.

FAA Approved Part 141 vs Part 61 Flight Training

