

DELTA COLLEGE
COUNSELING/ADVISING & CAREER SERVICES

AIRCRAFT PILOT

Salary range: \$28,450-\$145,600 and higher annually
Personal Interests: Working with your hands and tools
Work Environment: Typically in an aircraft

Description

Pilots are highly trained professionals who fly airplanes and helicopters to carry out a wide variety of tasks. Although most pilots transport passengers and cargo, others are involved in things such as dusting crops, spreading seed for reforestation, testing aircraft, directing fire fighting efforts, tracking criminals, monitoring traffic, and rescuing and evacuating injured persons.

Pilots plan their flights carefully, before departure. They thoroughly check their aircraft to make sure that the engines, controls, instruments, and other systems are functioning properly. They also make sure that the cargo is loaded properly. They confer with flight dispatchers and aviation weather forecasters to find out about weather conditions enroute and at their destination.

In contrast, helicopters are used for short trips at relatively low altitude, so pilots must be constantly on the lookout for trees, bridges, power lines, transmission towers, and other dangerous obstacles. Regardless of the type of aircraft, all pilots must monitor warning devices designed to help detect sudden shifts in wind conditions that can cause crashes.

Working Conditions

Aircraft pilots generally work under confined but comfortable, well-ventilated, and well-lighted conditions.

When flying, the pilot usually sits in the cockpit to the left of the co-pilot, surrounded by instruments, levers, and switches. Although flying does not involve much physical effort, pilots are subjected to mental stress from flying hazards. However, the chances of these hazards occurring are slight because of improved equipment and security measures at airports.

Work schedules of pilots are usually irregular. Those who are employed by commercial airlines are prohibited under federal rules from flying more than 100 hours a month or 1,000 hours a year. Pilots' schedules usually average 16 days a month away from home and provide for consecutive days off.

Pilots not employed by airlines cannot fly more than 100 hours per month, according to FAA rules. However, their schedules are often irregular and some may fly as few as 30 hours or as many as 90 hours a month. These pilots are responsible for various ground duties, such as scheduling flights, and therefore may not have as many off-days a month as major airline pilots.

Training, Other Qualifications

Programs in flight training prepare individuals to fly air vehicles. They prepare individuals to take and pass the pilot's license examination administered by the Federal Aviation Administration. Programs include instruction in the principles of aircraft design and performance; radio communications and

navigation procedures and systems; airway safety and traffic regulations; and government rules and regulations pertaining to piloting. A Certificate, Associate, or a Bachelor's Degree may qualify a person, at least 18 years or older, for this occupation.

Graduates of Delta's Aviation Flight Technology will obtain the knowledge, skill and a portion of the aeronautical experience necessary to meet the requirements for a Commercial Pilot Certificate and Instrument Rating. You will be prepared to transfer to a baccalaureate institution with degree programs for professional pilots.

JOB OUTLOOK

Employment of aircraft pilots is expected to increase about as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2014. Job opportunities are expected to continue to be better with the regional airlines and low-fare carriers, which are growing faster than the more well-known major airlines.

JOB OUTLOOK

State	Number Employed	Percent growth	Projected yearly job openings
Michigan	4,200	18.6%	161

Earnings

Earnings of Pilots vary according to size of the employing airline or company; number of hours and miles flown; size and gross weight of the airplane; the length of services as a Pilot; and type of flight, such as international or domestic, main line or local, and day or night.

Airline pilots, copilots, and flight engineers earned a national annual

average of \$135,040 in May 2005. Veteran airline pilots with major international carriers can earn in excess of \$200,00 per year. Commercial pilots earn a national average of \$65,560 with a range of \$28,420 to \$114,040. In Michigan in May 2006, commercial pilots earned an average of \$60,640 with a range of \$27,790 to \$98,430.

Many factors influence earnings, including the size of the company, geographic location, the extent of unionization, the state of the economy, nationally and locally, and the level of education and job experience of the employee, including professional license requirements.

Related Occupations

The occupational specialties for this field are Commercial Airplane Pilot, Airplane-patrol Pilot, Test Pilots, Agricultural Aircraft Pilots, Corporate Pilots, Helicopter Pilots, and Flight Instructors.

Aircraft pilot.doc 11/03 TK updated 9/07
Sources: Occupational Outlook Handbook, MI Occupational Information System, and the Delta College Catalog '99-'00.

Career Center, D 132
Bay City/Saginaw: (989) 686-9072
Midland/Auburn: (989) 495-4000, Ext. 9072
Frankenmuth, Birch Run, Reese & Vassar: (989) 758-3400, Ext. 9072
<http://www.delta.edu/careercenter>

These materials were developed under a grant awarded by the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth. (Project 7021-4)

It is the policy of Delta College not to discriminate in employment, education, public accommodation or public service on the basis of religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, height, weight, arrest record, veteran status, disability, or other classifications as required by applicable U.S. federal, state or local law. Direct inquiries to the Equity/Compliance Officer, Delta College, 1961 Delta Road, Office J101, University Center, MI 48710, telephone 989-686-9122, or email: equityoffice@delta.edu

