

Instrument Rating (IFR) — Syllabus Guide

FAA · EASA · CAAC | Hong Kong Macau General Aviation — Flight Training | October 2026

The Instrument Rating adds IFR privileges to a PPL or CPL. All three authorities require a theory exam, substantial instrument flight instruction, a qualifying instrument cross-country and a practical test. The FAA and CAAC requirements closely mirror each other; EASA structures the rating differently with FSTD credits and modular alternatives.

1. Rating overview — side-by-side

Item	FAA IR (Airplane)	EASA IR(A)	CAAC ■■■■
Regulation basis	14 CFR 61.65	Part-FCL Subpart G (FCL.600–625) + Appendix 6	CCAR-61 ■61.83■
Prerequisite	Hold PPL (or apply concurrently)	Hold PPL(A)/CPL(A); ≥ 50 h XC as PIC (≥ 10 h in aeroplanes)	Hold PPL; ≥ 50 h PIC cross-country (≥ 10 h in airplanes)
Instrument time	40 h actual/simulated (15 h with CFII)	50 h instruction (single-engine) / 55 h (multi-engine, ≥ 15 h in ME aeroplanes); up to 35 h may be in FFS/FNPT II	40 h actual/simulated (max 20 h simulator with instructor; 15 h dual)
Instrument XC	1 flight ≥ 250 NM along airways/ATC routing, approach at each airport, 3 different approach types	Skill test includes en-route IFR flight with approaches	1 flight ≥ 470 km with approaches at each airport incl. VOR, ADF and ILS
Theory exam	Instrument Rating Airplane (IRA) — 10 knowledge areas	7 subjects at IR level; ≥ 75% per paper; 150 h instruction min.	CAAC instrument rating theory exam
Practical test	Checkride per Instrument Rating ACS (8 areas of operation)	Skill test per Appendix 7 to Part-FCL	■■■■ per CAAC practical test standards
Validity / recency	Rating does not expire; 6 instrument approaches + intercepting/tracking within 6 months to act as PIC (61.57)	12 months (FCL.625); revalidate by proficiency check within 3 months of expiry	Per CCAR-61 recency rules
Alternatives	—	CB-IR (40 h, competency-based), EIR/BIR (en-route IFR)	—



2. FAA — Instrument rating, airplane (61.65)

Element	Requirement
Eligibility	Hold at least a private pilot certificate (or apply concurrently); English language; logbook endorsements for the knowledge and practical tests (61.65(a))
PIC cross-country	50 h cross-country as PIC, of which ≥ 10 h in airplanes (61.65(d)(1))
Instrument time	40 h actual or simulated instrument time incl. ≥ 15 h dual instrument training from an authorized instructor (CFII); 3 h test prep within 2 calendar months (61.65(d)(2))
Instrument XC	One IFR cross-country with a CFII and ATC flight plan: ≥ 250 NM along airways or ATC routing, an instrument approach at each airport, and 3 different kinds of approaches (61.65(d)(2)(ii))
Simulator credit	FFS/FTD: up to 30 h (Part 142) or 20 h otherwise; ATD: up to 10 h (BATD) or 20 h (AATD), total ATD credit ≤ 20 h (61.65(h)-(i))
Tests	IRA knowledge test; practical test per the Instrument Rating — Airplane ACS

3. EASA — IR(A) (Part-FCL Subpart G)

Element	Requirement
Experience entry	≥ 50 h cross-country flight time as PIC in aeroplanes/TMGs/helicopters/airships, ≥ 10 h in aeroplanes (FCL.610(b))
Flight instruction	Single-engine: 50 h instrument time under instruction, up to 20 h in FNPT I or 35 h in FFS/FNPT II. Multi-engine: 55 h, up to 25 h FNPT I or 40 h FFS/FNPT II, incl. ≥ 15 h in multi-engine aeroplanes (Appendix 6 A.7-A.8)
Credits	CPL(A) or Basic Instrument Flight Module: –10 h (to 40 h SE / 45 h ME) (Appendix 6 A.10)
Theory	7 subjects: Air law, Instrumentation, Flight planning & monitoring, Human performance, Meteorology, Radio navigation, IFR communications; $\geq 75\%$ per paper; ≥ 150 h instruction; exam valid 36 months for issue (FCL.615, FCL.025)
Skill test / validity	Skill test per Appendix 7; rating valid 12 months, revalidated by proficiency check (Appendix 9) within 3 months of expiry (FCL.620/625)
Privileges	Flight under IFR with PBN, decision height not below 200 ft (60 m) — Cat I (FCL.605)
Alternatives	CB-IR: min 40 h instrument instruction (SE), 10 h at an ATO, 80 h theory. EIR replaced by the Basic IR (BIR, FCL.835) for en-route IFR

4. CAAC — ■■■■ (CCAR-61 ■61.83■)

Element	Requirement
Eligibility	Hold a current PPL; instructor endorsements; pass the CAAC theoretical and practical examinations
PIC cross-country	≥ 50 h as PIC (≥ 10 h in airplanes)
Instrument time	≥ 40 h actual or simulated instrument time (max 20 h simulator credit with an instructor), incl. ≥ 15 h dual instrument instruction and 3 h test prep within 60 days before the test
Instrument XC	One instrument cross-country ≥ 470 km in an airplane, with instrument approaches at each airport, completing at least VOR, ADF and ILS approaches
Tests	CAAC instrument rating theory examination + ■■■■ per the practical test standards

Figures verified from the official texts (eCFR 14 CFR 61.65; UK-retained Reg. 1178/2011 Part-FCL Subpart G and Appendix 6/7/9; CAAC CCAR-61 ■61.83■ and Flight Standards Training Center material) as of October 2026. Applicants should confirm current requirements with the relevant authority before enrolment. Enquiries: info@general-aviation.asia