

Private Pilot Licence (PPL) — Syllabus Guide

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

About the PPL

The Private Pilot Licence is the worldwide standard for non-commercial flying. This guide compares the aeroplane (single-engine) PPL under the three major authorities: the **FAA PPL** (USA, 14 CFR Part 61 Subpart E), the **EASA PPL(A)** (Europe, Part-FCL, Regulation (EU) No 1178/2011) and the **CAAC PPL** (China, CCAR-61 Chapter E). Holders may act as pilot-in-command of the applicable aircraft category in non-commercial operations and carry passengers; paid flying requires a commercial licence.

1. Licence overview — side-by-side

Item	FAA PPL	EASA PPL(A)	CAAC PPL
Regulation basis	14 CFR Part 61, Subpart E (§61.103–61.123)	Reg. (EU) No 1178/2011 Annex I, Part-FCL, Subpart C	CCAR-61 Chapter E (§61.123–61.139)
Minimum age	17 (16 glider/balloon)	17	17
Medical	FAA 3rd-class medical (or driver's licence for sport privileges)	Part-MED Class 2 medical	CAAC Class II medical certificate
Language	Read / speak / write / understand English (61.103)	Operational language of radio use (FCL.055)	Correct reading/listening/speaking/writing of Chinese for radiotelephony
Ground training	Ground training or home study on the 61.105 knowledge areas	Theoretical knowledge course at an ATO or DTO (typically ~100 h)	Theory course (~35 lessons) covering the 61.125 knowledge areas
Written exam	FAA knowledge test (computer)	9 subjects, 75% pass per subject, all within 18 months	CAAC private pilot theory exam (computer, 80 questions, 80/100 to pass)
Practical exam	Practical test (checkride) on the 61.107 areas	Skill test with an examiner (FCL.235)	Practical test with a CAAC examiner (per AC-61-10 practical test standards)
Min. flight hours	40 h total (20 dual + 10 solo)	45 h flight instruction (up to 5 h in a simulator); 25 dual + 10 supervised solo	40 h total (20 dual + 10 solo)
Cross-country solo	150 NM with full-stop landings at 3 points, one leg > 50 NM	270 km (150 NM) with full-stop landings at 2 aerodromes different from departure	270 km with full-stop landings at 3 points, one leg ≥ 90 km
Night / instrument	3 h night (XC > 100 NM, 10 takeoffs/landings) + 3 h basic instrument — required (waivable under 61.110)	Night rating is a separate module after the PPL(A); basic instrument manoeuvres included in training	3 h night (XC 180 km, 10 takeoffs/landings) + 3 h instrument — required
Privileges	PIC, non-commercial, day & night (with required training); passenger carriage for hire prohibited	PIC or co-pilot in non-commercial aeroplanes/TMGs; also exercises all LAPL(A) privileges	PIC or co-pilot in non-commercial operations; no paid flying (61.139)



2. FAA PPL — syllabus (14 CFR 61.105 / 61.107 / 61.109)

2a. Aeronautical knowledge areas (61.105(b)):

Knowledge areas (numbered per the rule)	
(1) Applicable Federal Aviation Regulations on private pilot privileges, limitations and flight operations	(2) NTSB accident reporting requirements
(3) Use of the Aeronautical Information Manual and FAA advisory circulars	(4) Aeronautical charts for VFR navigation — pilotage, dead reckoning, navigation systems
(5) Radio communication procedures	(6) Critical weather recognition, windshear avoidance, weather reports and forecasts
(7) Safe and efficient operation — collision avoidance, wake turbulence recognition and avoidance	(8) Effects of density altitude on takeoff and climb performance
(9) Weight and balance computations	(10) Principles of aerodynamics, powerplants and aircraft systems
(11) Stall awareness, spin entry, spins and spin recovery (airplane/glider)	(12) Aeronautical decision making and judgment
(13) Preflight action — runway lengths, takeoff/landing data, weather, fuel requirements, alternate planning	

2b. Flight proficiency — areas of operation (61.107(b)(1), airplane single-engine):

Areas of operation	
(i) Preflight preparation	(vii) Navigation
(ii) Preflight procedures	(viii) Slow flight and stalls
(iii) Airport and seaplane base operations	(ix) Basic instrument maneuvers
(iv) Takeoffs, landings and go-arounds	(x) Emergency operations
(v) Performance maneuvers	(xi) Night operations (waivable under 61.110)
(vi) Ground reference maneuvers	(xii) Postflight procedures

2c. Minimum aeronautical experience (61.109(a), airplane single-engine):

Requirement	Detail
Total flight time	40 h, incl. 20 h dual instruction + 10 h solo flight training
Dual cross-country	3 h cross-country flight training
Night (dual)	3 h night flight training, incl. one cross-country > 100 NM and 10 takeoffs/landings to a full stop
Instrument (dual)	3 h controlling the airplane solely by reference to instruments (attitudes, radio comm, nav systems, radar services)
Test prep	3 h dual within 2 calendar months before the practical test
Solo cross-country	10 h solo incl. 5 h solo cross-country; one solo XC of 150 NM total with full-stop landings at 3 points, one leg > 50 NM
Controlled airport	3 takeoffs and 3 full-stop landings at an airport with an operating control tower
Simulator credit	Up to 2.5 h (up to 5 h at a Part 142 training center; 35 h total experience for approved courses)



3. EASA PPL(A) — syllabus (Part-FCL, Subpart C)

3a. Theoretical knowledge examination (FCL.215) — 9 subjects, 75% pass per subject:

Block	Subjects
Common subjects	Air law · Human performance · Meteorology · Communications · Navigation
Aeroplane-specific subjects	Principles of flight · Operational procedures · Flight performance and planning · Aircraft general knowledge
Validity	All subjects to be passed within 18 months; successful completion valid 24 months

3b. Flight training and experience (FCL.210.A):

Element	Requirement
Total flight instruction	≥ 45 h in aeroplanes or TMGs, of which up to 5 h may be in an FSTD (simulator)
Dual instruction	≥ 25 h dual flight instruction
Supervised solo	≥ 10 h supervised solo, incl. ≥ 5 h solo cross-country
Qualifying cross-country	One solo cross-country flight of at least 270 km (150 NM) with full-stop landings at 2 aerodromes different from the departure aerodrome
Crediting (FCL.210.A(d))	Holders of other licences (except balloons): 10% of PIC time, max 10 h
LAPL(A) holders	15 h after LAPL issue (incl. 10 h instruction + 4 h supervised solo with one 270 km XC)
SPL holders (TMG)	24 h on TMGs + 15 h instruction in aeroplanes
Skill test (FCL.235)	Demonstrate as PIC the procedures and manoeuvres with competency appropriate to PPL privileges; sections per flight phase, fail one section = repeat that section only
Night rating (separate)	Additional module after the PPL(A) for night privileges

4. CAAC PPL ■■■■■■ — syllabus (CCAR-61 Chapter E)

4a. Eligibility (§61.123):

Item	Requirement
Age / record / education	≥ 17; good moral character; no criminal record within 5 years; junior-high education or above (high school for professional path)
Language	Correct reading/listening/speaking/writing of Chinese for radiotelephony (or licence limitation applied)
Medical	CAAC Class II medical certificate (Class I also acceptable)
Exams	Theory exam (computer-based, 80 questions, 80/100 pass) + practical test ■■■■ conducted by a CAAC examiner

4b. Ground theory syllabus (§61.125):

Subject	Content
■■■■ Aviation regulations	CCAR-61 privileges/limits, airspace, general operating rules, accident notification
■■■■■■■■■■ Aviation overview & airframe	Aircraft structure, flight principles, aerodynamics, flight controls and systems
■■■■ Aeronautical decision making	Judgment, risk management, single-pilot resource management



Subject	Content
■■■■ Aviation meteorology	Weather theory, reports, forecasts, hazardous weather recognition
■■■■■■■■ Radio communication procedures	Standard phraseology, ATC procedures
■■■■■■■■ Performance & planning	Performance charts, weight and balance, cross-country planning, loading
■■ Navigation	Chart reading, dead reckoning, radio navigation, diversion procedures
■■■■■■■■ Aircraft general knowledge	Engine, systems, instruments for the class flown
■■■■ Principles of flight	Aerodynamics, stall and spin awareness



4c. Flight training and experience (§61.127 / §61.129, airplane single-engine ■■■■):

Element	Requirement
Total experience	≥ 40 h pilot flight time in aircraft
Dual instruction ■■	≥ 20 h dual, incl.: 3 h cross-country ■■■■; 3 h instrument ■■; 3 h night ■■ (10 takeoffs and landings + night cross-country of 180 km total); 3 h test preparation ■■■■ (within 60 days before the practical test)
Simulator credit	Up to 2.5 h in an approved flight simulator or training device
Solo ■■	≥ 10 h solo, incl. 5 h cross-country ■■■■
Solo cross-country	One solo cross-country of 270 km total distance with full-stop landings at 3 points, one leg ≥ 90 km
Controlled airport	3 takeoffs and 3 full-stop landings at an airport with an operating control tower
Privileges (§61.139)	PIC or co-pilot in non-commercial operations without remuneration; licence valid 6 years, revalidated by training currency
Progression	Step-up path: PPL → CPL (250 h) → ATPL; ICAO-member recognition for private flying where bilateral arrangements apply

Figures current as of October 2026 from the official texts — 14 CFR Part 61 Subpart E (eCFR), Regulation (EU) No 1178/2011 Annex I Part-FCL as amended, and CCAR-61 with CAAC examination guidance. Applicants should confirm current requirements with the relevant aviation authority before enrolment. Enquiries: info@general-aviation.asia