

# Restricted ATP vs. Unrestricted ATP

What is the difference, and which one applies to me?



ATP stands for Airline Transport Pilot and is the final certificate required to work for an airline. Before you can train for your ATP you must have already completed private, instrument and commercial training.

An Unrestricted ATP is the normal ATP certificate, you are allowed to act as PIC or SIC and under any conditions. Each airline has their own limitations and time requirements for each position, but as far as the FAA goes, you have no restrictions once you pass your practical test. The only downside to getting this certificate is you have to accumulate 1,500 total flight hours, which can take up to a year or more depending on what you are doing to accumulate flight time. This certificate also requires you to be at least 23 years of age. Those 1,500 flight hours also must include\*:

- 500 hours cross-country time
- 100 hours night time
- 75 hours instrument time (including actual or simulated)
- 250 hours PIC time including:
  - 25 hours night PIC time
  - 100 hours cross-country PIC time
- 50 hours multi-engine time (25 hours in a simulator can be credited towards this, which you will receive in your training with the airline)

A Restricted ATP (R-ATP) certificate allows you to start flying at an airline sooner because the total hour requirements are less, but you are not allowed to act as PIC until you reach 1,500 hours or specific hour marks you may be missing. The total time requirement can be reduced in three ways\*:

1. Those persons with a military pilot rating may apply for an R-ATP certificate with a total of at least 750 flight hours
2. Those persons who graduate with a Bachelor's degree in an aviation major from an institution of higher education issued a Letter of Authorization from the FAA may apply for an R-ATP certificate with a total of at least 1,000 flight hours
  - a. The student must complete at least their instrument and commercial certificate under part 141 through the institution of higher education
  - b. The student must complete at least 60 credit hours of aviation and aviation-related coursework
3. Those persons who graduate with a Associate's degree in an aviation major from an institution of higher education issued a Letter of

Authorization from the FAA may apply for an R-ATP certificate with a total of at least 1,250 flight hours

- a. The student must complete at least their instrument and commercial certificate under part 141 through the institution of higher education
  - b. The student must complete at least 30 credit hours of aviation and aviation-related coursework
4. A graduate of an institution of higher education who completes fewer than 60 semester credit hours but at least 30 credit hours and otherwise satisfies the requirements of this section may apply for an airline transport pilot certificate with a minimum of 1,250 hours of total time as a pilot

A person can also apply for an R-ATP certificate when reducing specific areas within the 1,500 hour requirement such as:

- A person who has performed at least 20 night takeoffs and landings to a full stop may substitute each additional night takeoff and landing to a full stop for 1 hour of night flight time; however, not more than 25 hours of night time may be credited in this manner (This means if you have logged at least 45 night landings, you can apply for a R-ATP certificate with only 75 night hours)
- The 500 hour cross-country requirement can be reduced to 200 hours cross-country time
- One other reduction you could receive is your age! Under R-ATP you can apply for an ATP certificate on or after your 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

Any of these reductions in time will result in an R-ATP certificate until the time requirements/21<sup>st</sup> birthday have been reached for an unrestricted ATP certificate.

In addition to the confusing time requirements, before you can apply for an ATP certificate you must also complete an Airline Transport Pilot Certification Training Program (ATP-CTP). This program does hardly anything to actually train you for your ATP knowledge exam or practical test. It's super fun, just enjoy it! If you can, have someone else pay for it though, like an airline! Normally airlines pay for ATP-CTP if you sign a contract, for example, to stay on with them for at least a year of active service, if you leave before that date then you have to pay them back for the training. Usually it costs about \$3,500-\$5,500.

Lastly, like every other certificate you have achieved, you have to take a knowledge exam (written test). Sometimes the airline you signed on with will pay for SheppardAir to help you study for it, but whether they pay for it or not, get SheppardAir. It's a guarantee pass with their study material, so it's worth the money.

\*For more information, see 14 CFR 61.159 and 61.160