



Hoosac
SCHOOL

Flight *Program*





Hoosac Flight Program

2025-2026

This program consists of 2 components:

1. A ground school component held at the Hoosac School.
 - This will be led by Aaron Ullman. He is an FAA licensed private pilot and certified ground instructor.
 - This is an elective class held 3 times per week and will be graded.
2. The flying lesson component will be provided by **First Step Aviation (FSA)**. For more information on First Step Aviation please visit <https://www.firststepaviation.com/>.
 - FSA is a private flight school independent of the Hoosac School. FSA is based out of Pittsfield, Massachusetts and will be flying to the Bennington airport near our campus to provide flying lessons at our students' convenience.
 - These flights take off from the airport in Bennington (the William H. Morse Municipal Airport is a 10 to 15 minute drive from the Hoosac Campus).
 - The training aircraft that students will initially be taking lessons in is the Piper Cherokee 180-D. For more information on this aircraft please go to First Step Aviation's website at <https://www.firststepaviation.com/>. In the future students may have the opportunity to learn on other types of aircraft as well.
 - The Hoosac School will be providing students with transportation to and from the airport in Bennington at no additional cost.
 - Students and families will pay and contract with First Step

Aviation directly for flying lessons.

- The first discovery flight provided by First Step Aviation is discounted at \$180. This flight allows the student to experience flight for the first time in the cockpit side-by-side with a certified flight instructor. If the student feels ready and the flight instructor deems it safe the student may be allowed to manipulate the flight controls during certain portions of this flight. After this flight, if the student is interested in continuing flying lessons the cost will be the normal rates listed below.

What are the goals of this flight program?

What are the benefits for students learning to fly?

The first step of this program is for students to earn their **Private Pilot License (PPL)** for single engine land-based aircraft. The legal minimum amount of flight time required to be eligible to take the written and flight exams for the PPL is 40 hours, but most students and flight instructors choose to take the test until at least 50-80 flight hours. In order to take this test students must be 17 years or older, **but there is no minimum age to begin flying lessons and logging flight time.**

- Students' personal goals vary greatly and this program seeks to accommodate this. Some students may be interested in a future career in aviation (airline pilot, cargo pilot, air traffic controller, flight instructor, etc.) and this program can be a very big first step in that direction.
- Other students may be interested in aviation as a personal hobby. They may relish the freedom to fly wherever and whenever they please. Many local airports offer airplane rental services to private pilots. Other people may wish to buy or build their own airplane. A certified private pilot has the freedom to buy or rent an aircraft and fly it where and when they choose. It can be great fun to fly yourself to a vacation destination, or simply fly around and sightsee for a few hours.
- Finally many students enjoy new challenges and are looking for a unique verifiable way to demonstrate intelligence, maturity, and technical ability on university applications. Learning to fly an airplane requires applying knowledge from a wide variety of fields (meteorology, physics, aerodynamics, engineering, navigation,

communication techniques, government regulations/ international standards, and more) to act safely and decisively. No other type of training program allows a young student to so effectively and conclusively demonstrate discipline, responsibility, decisiveness, professionalism, and intelligence, as flight training.

This first step in each of these journeys is to begin studying for the Private Pilot License (PPL).

What are the costs of this program?

Simple Rates

First Step Aviation (<https://www.firststepaviation.com/>), a private flight training school independent from the Hoosac School, is providing the flight instruction. Students or their families will pay First Step Aviation directly for these costs as they arise. The Hoosac School is not providing the services in this section (i.e. The Discovery Flight, flight instruction services, supervision of students in flight, aircraft rental, fuel, or any other flight-related service) nor is the Hoosac school accepting payment for these services. Furthermore, please remember that flight costs are closely connected to fuel prices, inflation, etc. and these costs may change in the future.

1 Discovery Flight: \$180

- This is the 1-time cost of the first lesson. During this fun flight lasting about 30-45 minutes long, the instructor may introduce some basic elements of aviation. More importantly this leisurely flight is designed to help the student decide if they would like to further pursue aviation. It usually begins with the instructor walking the student around the aircraft and demonstrating the preflight check. Then the flight instructor and student will board the aircraft, continue preflight checks, and take off. At altitude they may practice some simple gradual turns together. They may also fly over some local landmarks, and then return to the airport for landing. For this first flight, none of the other costs listed below apply.

Normal flight time with an instructor: \$235 per hour

- If the student decides to further pursue flying lessons, this is the hourly rate. This price includes the flight instructor, fuel, and airplane rental. Most lessons are about 1 hour, but depending on weather conditions, lesson agenda, and student fatigue, a normal

lesson can range from 45-90 minutes of flight time. Later in training, cross-country practice flights may last over 3 hours.

Instructor preflight & postflight rate: \$70 per hour

- This is the hourly rate for preflight and postflight briefing. Usually, this requires 10-30 minutes per lesson. The flight instructor uses this time to ensure the student has properly prepared for the flight and reviews the flights agenda with the student. Postflight the instructor signs the student's log book, reviews the student's performance and makes a plan with the student for the next lesson. As the student learns how to properly plan and prepare for flights the time required for properly briefing should significantly decrease.

Ferry costs: Usually \$35-\$70 per lesson

- The First Step Aviation flight school (<https://www.firststepaviation.com/>) is located in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, however flying lessons will be held 15 minutes from the Hoosac campus at the airport in Bennington. This means each time an instructor and aircraft travels to Bennington they will split the cost of that empty round trip between the students they have scheduled for the day. It will be split between usually 2, 3, or 4 students who are taking consecutive flight lessons. If the student chooses to take an extra lesson on a day where no other classmates are flying then the full cost of this is about \$140 per flight.

Hoosac Ground School & Flight Materials: \$1428.00

- This is a nonrefundable fee payable to the Hoosac School at the beginning of each school year (September 2025 through May 2026). This fee covers the cost of on-campus ground instruction, basic flight materials, aircraft manuals, textbooks, and ensures your student is kept up-to-date with all current FAA publications throughout the schoolyear. This fee is not included in the Hoosac's School's normal tuition.

Monthly Cost Breakdown

This monthly budget will be different for every student and vary greatly due to student availability and the weather. Student training flights will be scheduled about once per week, but this schedule will vary with weather conflicts (If the weather is poor or marginal, then flights will be canceled). **Realistically, students will likely fly twice per month, but this can increase or decrease depending on a student's studies, schedule, and budget.** If we experience a stretch of good weather, the student is passionate in their aviation studies, AND the student's budget allows, then we may try to hold 2 or possibly even 3 flights in a week. On the other hand, these conditions often swing the other way and a student

may go several weeks without flying.

\$720 per month - Average Cost

This is likely the average cost for a student in a month and roughly covers all costs for 2 normal flights.

\$1440 per month – better than average weather & student availability

This would pay for about 4 flights. Given our area's weather, and student schedules, this expenditure would be uncommon. However, if

- Our area is blessed with excellent weather
- **AND** the student has no scheduling conflicts,
- **AND** the student is studying hard to adequately prepare for each lesson
- **AND** the student is unrestrained by budget,

then this is likely the most families can expect to spend on this program in one month.

It is recommended that students maintain a balance of at least \$1000 in their flight accounts with First Step Aviation. This allows the student to take flight lessons when the opportunity arises and prevents the student from missing good weather flight opportunities due to potential logistical delays with money-transfers. Once again, please remember that flight costs are closely connected to fuel prices, inflation, etc. and these costs may change in the future.

What measurable accomplishments can I achieve in this program?

- **Students can earn their private pilot license (PPL)** after passing a written exam, oral exam, and practical flight exam. Unlike automobile drivers' licenses, this license never expires. In order to attempt these exams students are required to:
 - Be 17 years of age or older.
 - Have accumulated more than 40 hours of total flight time (including at least 10 hours of solo flight). To be clear, most pilots choose to wait until at least 60 hours, but every student learns differently.
 - Have a 3rd-class medical certification. This medical certification is valid for 5 years. The requirements are stringent, but

usually not difficult for young people: (https://www.faa.gov/ame_guide/standards) **Poor vision is fine as long as it can be corrected with lenses**, but red/green color blindness is a common disqualifier.

- Have the confident endorsement of their flight instructor. A flight instructor will not allow a student who is not ready to be a pilot to take the exams. This requires the student to consistently demonstrate a mastery of the skills, knowledge, judgement, and technical ability necessary to safely operate as a pilot. Furthermore, it is vitally important that the student demonstrates the ability to objectively and critically assess their own limitations.

- Have the consent of the student's parents.

- **All students will earn flight hours.** Each student will receive their own pilot log book. In this book their certified flight instructor from First Step Aviation will log the student's flight time, accomplishments, endorsements, certifications, and skills practiced from every lesson. This pilot log book will remain with the student forever. It is transferable between different flight schools, and this flight time will apply towards and future training. Any licenses, certifications, and ratings will also be recorded in this book. These hours do not expire. If a student chooses a career in aviation, then flight hours earned now will be applied to flight hour requirements for future jobs and careers.

- Upon completion of a pre-solo exam, students may solo fly an aircraft by themselves with instructor authorization. In order to be eligible for this, students must have completed thorough training in all applicable maneuvers, potential emergencies, and have demonstrated mastery of the aircraft. Students must also have parental consent, the endorsement of their flight instructor, and be at least 16 years of age. Furthermore, students must also complete and pass a 3rd-class medical certification (The requirements are stringent, but usually not difficult for young people (https://www.faa.gov/ame_guide/standards). **Poor vision is fine as long as it can be corrected with lenses**, but red/green color blindness is a common disqualifier.)

What materials must I purchase for this program?

Before the first Discovery Flight: nothing. First Step Aviation will provide all necessary materials for the first discovery flight. If the student chooses to continue taking flying lessons, then they will need to purchase the following items:

- An aviation headset \$120 to \$500

This headset should have a microphone protruding in front of the mouth and fully envelop both ears. An active noise canceling feature is helpful, but not necessary. A quality headset can be purchased for \$150. David Clark is a popular brand for higher quality headsets but it is more expensive.

- All other essential materials are included in the ground school fee.

When will I earn these achievements? How fast is the pace?

This is up to each student and family and thus varies greatly depending on a student's goals, schedule, and resources. Students are free to accumulate flight time at their own pace, however we advise that to maximize efficiency, students fly at least once every 2.5 to 3 weeks.

Longer periods without flight can increase overall costs unpracticed skills can fade over time and thus require more redundant review and practice in the long run. If students choose to continue lessons over their breaks this can be accommodated as well. Everyone has their own goals and pace for flight training.

The pace of this program is designed to allow the student to exceed the 40 flight-hour minimum necessary to take the private pilot written exam and flight test within a 3 school-year period (before June 2028).

If your student would like to earn enough flight hours to meet these Private Pilot License minimums within 1 or 2 school years (before June of 2026 or before June 2027), then there will be additional costs as well as increased demands upon the student's time. Please email Aaron Ullman (aullman@hoosac.org) for more information about an **accelerated flight program**.

Hoosac Flight Program Eligibility Requirements

Admittance to the Hoosac Flight Program is open to all students who:

- Have permission from their parent or guardian, AND
- Have studied at Hoosac for at least 1 complete trimester, AND
- Have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on their Hoosac transcript, AND
- Have continuously demonstrated a level of maturity, responsibility, and self-control commendable by the Hoosac School Student and Family Information Manual.

Maintaining Flight Privileges (Flight Status)

Learning to fly airplanes carries inherent risk of injury or death. To mitigate this and to allow flight training to be conducted as safely as possible, students enrolled in this program will be held to high standards of academic and personal performance. These sensible conditions for maintaining flight status will be discussed with students and presented to families upon a student's acceptance into the Hoosac Flight Program.

It is the goal of the Hoosac School and first Step Aviation to maximize the students' flight time opportunities, but only when this can be done in a safe and healthy manner.

International Students

After you complete your first Discovery Flight, if you choose to continue pursuing flight training all students who are not U.S. citizens must register with the TSA Flight Training Security Program (FTSP) at <https://www.fts.tsa.dhs.gov/home/candidateregistration>. International Students must use this portal to apply for a TSA security threat assessment (STA) and pay their fee. Upon successful completion of the STA, students will be issued a Determination of Eligibility, which will allow the student to participate in flight training. Make sure the student saves their registration and account information.

Completion of this is not necessary before the first Discovery Flight, however if you are certain that you would like to pursue studying aviation, then it is recommended the international student begins this process even before their discovery flight to minimize any potential delays.

I'm Interested! What do I do NOW?

Students interested in the Hoosac Flight Program should take these steps:

- Send an email to Aaron Ullman at aullman@hoosac.org and inform him that you are interested in this class. Please ask if you have any questions. If you are unsure if you meet the eligibility requirements described above, then please ask.
- When it is time to register for classes sign up for the "AVIATION" class.
- If you are an international student, be sure to begin registration for the TSA's FTSP program described above.

Cost Estimation Summary

This is a simple estimation summary of the costs described in the pages above.

The Discovery Flight is a chance for your student to test their own interest in aviation. Do they find flying fun? Exciting? Interesting? This shorter discounted flight is a 1-time opportunity for their own exploration. If the student is uninterested in continuing, then there are no further costs after this flight. This fee is paid directly to First Step Aviation (www.firststepaviation.com).

1 Discovery Flight
\$180

If the student decides to pursue aviation, then these are the up-front costs required to begin. Families should purchase their own aviation headset for their student according to their student's personal preference. All other required materials will be provided by Hoosac through the Hoosac Ground School & Flight Material Fee.

Aviation Headset
≈ \$150
Hoosac Ground School & Flight Material Fee
\$1,428.00

Flight costs are described above in more detail, but families can expect this to be close to the average cost of a flying lesson. While these lessons will be scheduled every week, weather and student schedules may limit student flights to about twice per month.

Estimated Cost Per Flight Lesson
\$350