

WOLFGANG HELICOPTERS

Flight School Comparison Worksheet

Selecting a flight school for you helicopter flight training is not a task to be taken lightly. It is also not something that is necessarily easy. We have put together a list of common questions for you to compare helicopter flight schools and to make the best decision based on your individual needs. We believe that Wolfgang Helicopters is the best choice, but of course we do, we work hard here to make it the best. However, Wolfgang Helicopters may or may not be the right choice for you. We have already answered these questions for our school and hope that this list will be of assistance for you as you interview other flight schools as well.

- 1. Location.** Flight training usually takes about a year for a full time student to complete. You should choose a location based on its conveniences, cost of living, quality of flight training environment, and weather.

Wolfgang Helicopters is located in Mesa, AZ at Falcon field. With 3.5 million people in the Phoenix metro area, conveniences are plentiful. Cost of living is very reasonable to average. Falcon field is a Class D airspace located under the Class B Phoenix Sky Harbor airspace. The full spectrum of training experiences is available. Weather in Arizona is great. It's hot in the summer and beautiful in the winter, we enjoy 345 great flying weather days every year!

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2. Aircraft. There is a large debate about the type of aircraft used in flight training and which ones are the most desirable now and on your resume later. Robinson Helicopters are the number one selling helicopter in the world and the most popular training aircraft. They are safe, reliable, and cheap to operate. Many operators like to see that type of experience due to the fact that the R22 is more difficult to master. Schweizer Helicopters are another common training helicopter. They are only slightly more expensive than a Robinson R22 to train in but offer several extras. They are able to carry a heavier cabin weight which will help keep costs down for heavier students. Having either on your resume is great, having both is better!

Wolfgang Helicopters offers training in the Robinson R22 and soon the Schweizer 300 and Robinson R44

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- 3. Maintenance.** A helicopter is only as safe as its maintenance program. A well maintained helicopter is absolutely imperative to your flight training to ensure safety. A student should never experience a scheduling conflict based on expected maintenance.

At Wolfgang Helicopters our maintenance is meticulously performed by mechanics properly certified to work on that particular helicopter. Most of the time maintenance is done at night or on the weekends to avoid scheduling conflicts.

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- 4. Safety.** Safety is always the number 1 concern in flight. Flying helicopters comes with inherent risks. The only way to eliminate every risk is to fly simulators. A schools quality needs to be judged on their willingness to risk safety for profit. A school that teaches proper decision making will in turn be the safest.

Wolfgang Helicopters believes that making the right decision is the only way to remain safe. Every flight and every flight scenario is a “no go” unless we find reasons TO fly. By never putting yourself in a bad situation, there will always be less risk.

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5. Part 61 or Part 141 Flight Training? Part 61 is your standard flight training program. It has less regulations and a few more hour requirements. Part 141 is an FAA approved flight training course and syllabus. Hour requirements are slightly less, record keeping is higher, and there is usually more structure. In the end, students rarely meet any minimum hour requirements so there isn't a cost savings. Quality and consistency of training becomes the major point that Part 141 schools usually offer better than part 61 schools.

At Wolfgang helicopters, we are in process of getting our Part 141 certification. Every student will be using that 141 syllabus program regardless of if they are enrolled or graduating under part 61 or 141. This develops that consistency and quality of training that exceeds most flight training operations.

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6. College degree program? Financing? Some employers will require a two or four year degree but it is not necessary in order to have a successful career. However, a College / University degree program will provide more financing options for you as well as the opportunity to defer loans until training is completed, which can help you focus on training rather than money issues.

Wolfgang Helicopters is associated with Utah State University and Embry Riddle Aeronautical University which can provide an aviation degree program with online courses and better financing opportunities. We also have several other lending institutions available such as Sallie Mae, Pilot finance Inc., and Next Student.

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- 7. Reputation of schools in the industry.** You definitely want the best reputation possible. Employers will always hire a pilot from a reputable school sooner than a not so reputable school. There are even a few schools which certain employers have banned due to reputation of producing inadequate pilots. Chose wisely, the schools reputation may also become your reputation!

Wolfgang Helicopters is a young school but we have an excellent reputation thus far in the helicopter industry. Our pilots come from a variety of high quality training backgrounds. Our higher level of training has given us the opportunity to recognize faults in the helicopter training industry. These experiences are combined in making a program that is fresh and elevated above the rest.

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8. Contracts and up front fees? Like any contract in life, make sure you know what you are getting into before you commit. Flight instruction does not have to be a contracted operation. A school that requires you to put all of your monies on account with them before training can begin is a school that cannot be trusted. Keeping a positive account balance should be all that matters.

Wolfgang Helicopters does not require contracts to flight train. We will ask that you maintain a positive account balance in order to continue your helicopter flight training.

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9. **Money that is placed on account.** What happens to money that you do put on account with the flight school? This is still your money. You should be able to have access to it and it should not be spent on “other flight training center expenses”.

Wolfgang Helicopters knows that this is your money. If you need it, just ask for it. It WILL be available. Depending on the situation, it may take a day or two to clear the bank and be available to redistribute to you.

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10. Insured Aircraft? Does the school insure the aircraft that you fly in? Some schools hold the student or flight instructor responsible for anything that happens with the aircraft. These flight schools will usually be cheaper, but if anything were to happen, you should expect that they will take your money and possibly kick you out of the program. NEVER fly at a school that does not insure their training helicopters!

Wolfgang Helicopters will not allow an aircraft to even leave the hanger if it is not covered under insurance

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11. What is the primary business of the flight school? Is it training students or commercial operation. Some schools are a supplement to the business and not the focus. This could be a problem or it could be to your advantage. The advantage would be that you can see real world operations or be a part of them. The disadvantage is that the flight school might “bump” your flight for what they consider “more important” or larger profit flight. A larger operation can usually adequately meet both needs.

Wolfgang Helicopters is a FLIGHT TRAINING SCHOOL. The student will get the aircraft priority. Commercial operations are a supplement to our training but will not inhibit your needs as a student.

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12. High altitude flight training? What will this mean to you? High altitude flight training is much more complex. It requires a high level of skills to operate safely. Future employers like to see that kind of training in your history but the biggest advantage is that it could save your life someday!

Wolfgang Helicopters includes high density altitude flight training in our professional pilot program during commercial training. We feel that it is our duty as a flight school to give you EVERY tool that you will need to survive and succeed as a professional helicopter pilot.

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13. Turbine transition? Do you need turbine helicopter training to get a job? The answer is no. Having that extra experience is always good looking on the resume but in reality its advantage will not be worth the expense right now. Almost every employer out there will pay for this for you. Don't spend more than you have to.

Wolfgang Helicopters believes that flight training is already expensive enough. We know. We have all paid for it as well and will be paying off the loans for years to come. We do not offer a turbine transition course.

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14. How much does fuel cost? Just like filling up your car, it's constantly getting more expensive. Most piston driven helicopters are predictable when it comes to finding fuel burn rates. Be sure to select a flight school that doesn't mark up the fuel costs. Some will charge a flat rate and others will have you pay the actual going rate for the day. You should not be expected to fuel the aircraft with your own resources outside of your account at the school. This would create huge problems.

Wolfgang Helicopters charges a flat rate based on average fuel burn and the going cost of fuel. No fuel surcharge!

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15. Flight instructor and Helicopter to student ratios? Student's needs must be met. That is what you need to look for. If you are available to fly 5 days a week then a helicopter and/or flight instructor must be provided for your training. If they were only available for you once to twice a week then you would not stay proficient and your flight training will cost you significantly more and take much longer than it has to.

Wolfgang Helicopters employs plenty of EXPERIENCED helicopter flight instructors so that we will always meet your needs. No school can buy a helicopter for each student but we WILL make sure that we have every student's needs met by getting more helicopters as soon as the demand is present.

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16. Check ride Availability? Does the school have the ability to schedule check rides consistently? A check ride or practical exam is the final step of your training for every rating or certificate sought. If you finish your training and cannot schedule that practical exam but must wait for other resources then your training will become longer and more expensive as you work at staying current.

Wolfgang Helicopters is located in an area well populated with Designated Pilot Examiners. Check ride availability is never a problem.

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17. Prices for flight training. Flight training is expensive, very expensive. Saving money in even small amounts will add up. Make sure when you select a flight school that their prices are as good as their reputation. There is a large range of prices in flight training. Be cautious of a flight school that has a package price and guarantees your completion at a fixed price. There is usually a stipulation there. You can save a large amount of cash by your level of devotion to home study and preparation. You should only pay for the training that is required to complete your course.

Wolfgang Helicopters encourages home study programs but we will verify that you have actually achieved proper learning. We will not charge you for services that you do not need. A flight instructor's job is to teach and protect the student. This duty includes protecting you from frivolous expenses as well as physically in the aircraft. You as the student usually do not see the frivolous educational expenses until it is too late. Being that every one of our flight instructors has paid for their own training, they know very well how to counsel you in your expenditures.

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18. Ground instructors or certified flight instructors? Does the school employ ground instructors or just certified flight instructors? A designated ground instructor can be very useful, but what is their goal? Are they just doing that to get by while they continue flight training? Your ground instruction is the backbone of your flight training. Without proper knowledge you cannot have proper skill and decision making. An instructor who has “been there” in the air is able to teach from experience and not just theory. The more experience that the flight instructor has had, the broader knowledge range they have to pass on to you.

Wolfgang Helicopters only employs Certified Flight Instructors and we constantly have recurrent training and quality control checks.

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19. Does the flight school guarantee employment after training? Sounds great! But if they do, don't expect to work much! A school that hires every graduate cannot possibly provide enough students for you to be able to support yourself financially.

Wolfgang Helicopters will hire the best graduates as long as the student base can support them without taking away from the instructors that exist. Flight instructors that are busy and have less financial burdens are more available to give quality instruction because they don't have to work second jobs to make ends meet. This will provide for a healthier flight training environment.

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20. Help with finding a job after training? Does the flight school help with some sort of job placement? Is it just for the initial job after training or repetitive? Do they offer education on resume assembly and job hunting skills that are aviation specific? Or do they just cut you loose after you've spent so much money with them?

Wolfgang Helicopters will assist with resume building, contacts, and references now and in the future. If you come to us looking for professional helicopter training then it's our view that you should get every tool necessary for you to succeed in aviation.

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