

By *the* Book

SUSAN PARSON

What Are the Requirements for CFI?

If some of the articles in this issue have inspired you to consider becoming a flight instructor, 14 CFR 61.183 lists the regulatory requirements you'll need to meet. As always, read the rules for definitive guidance, but here are the basics:

You Need to Be ...

- At least 18 years of age
- Able to read, write, and speak the English language
- Holder of a commercial pilot certificate or ATP certificate with aircraft category and class rating appropriate to the flight instructor rating being sought
- Holder of an instrument rating (see 14 CFR 61.183(c)(2) for additional details)

You Need to Obtain ...

- Logbook endorsement on fundamentals of instruction listed in 14 CFR 61.185
- Logbook endorsement on areas of operation listed in 14 CFR 61.187(b)
- Logbook endorsement indicating competence and instructional proficiency in stall awareness, spin entry, spins, and spin recovery and, at the examiner's discretion, demonstrate such instructional proficiency on the practical test.
- At least 15 hours logged as PIC in category and class appropriate to the flight instructor rating sought.

You Need to Pass ...

- Knowledge test on fundamentals of instruction (see 14 CFR 61.183(e) for alternatives to this requirement)
- Knowledge test on aeronautical knowledge areas listed in 14 CFR 61.185(a)(2) and (a)(3) appropriate to the flight instructor rating sought
- Practical test appropriate to the flight instructor rating being sought

You Need to Know ...

A lot! No, you won't find those words in the regulations, but any and every instructor will attest to the truth of the sentiment. Remember that an aviation instructor is supposed to have more than mere knowledge of the required subject areas. As stated in the Flight Instructor PTS, the requirement is for



Photo by Susan Parson

instructional knowledge on everything from aerodynamics to zero-fuel weight. Applicants must show the ability to not only recognize and analyze errors, but also to demonstrate and explain the key elements of required tasks.

Please don't skim lightly over "little things" like, say, endorsements. Instructional knowledge of endorsements and other documentary requirements is an important part of the flight instructor's job. To make that point, one examiner I know hands every CFI applicant a blank copy of a student pilot certificate with the instruction to "make me legal for solo." You can

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(and you should) use appropriate references (e.g., AC 61-65E) for such a task, but you should be familiar with both the basics and the basic references. And if you are going to work as a flight instructor, please learn (and teach) the distinction between certificates and ratings, and make sure you can also explain how endorsements fit into the picture.

Certificated or Certified?

What does the "C" in CFI really stand for? The FAA has not published definitive guidance on this point, and the regulations often use the term "authorized" instructor. Since 14 CFR part 61 usually frames references in terms of entities or aircraft "certificated" by the FAA, the term "certificated" flight instructor is most accurate.