

Flight School Association of North America
**Flight School Accreditation
Guide**

2014 Edition

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SPECIAL NOTE

This 2014 edition of the “Guide to Flight School Accreditation” is to be used for submission of applications and supporting documentation for deadlines in 2014. The 2015 edition will be available in December 2014.

Contents

<i>Section 1</i>	Flight School Accreditation Commission	3
<i>Section 2</i>	Definitions	7
<i>Section 3</i>	Criteria for Eligibility	9
<i>Section 4</i>	The Accreditation Process	10
<i>Section 5</i>	Self-Evaluation and On-Site Inspection	12
<i>Section 6</i>	Renewal Process	13
<i>Section 7</i>	Complaint and Process	13
<i>Section 8</i>	Accreditation Fees.....	14
<i>Section 9</i>	Notification and Information Sharing	14
<i>Section 10</i>	General Policies	15

Section 1

Flight School Accreditation Commission

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Flight School Association of North America—herein referred to as FSANA—and the Flight School Accreditation Commission—herein referred to as the Commission—is **to create, increase and uphold the standards of flight training schools through a series of processes including self-evaluation, on-site inspections and peer review.**

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. The Flight School Accreditation Standards are designed to be fluid and dynamic which enables them to be modified based on annual reviews of the flight training industry.
2. The Commission, in co-operation with the Flight School Association of North America (FSANA), establishes standards and criteria for flight school accreditation for flight schools of all size. The accreditation program is intended to be an ongoing process that leads to continuous improvement in the flight training industry.
3. Regulatory agencies, governing bodies and the general public can trust and have the confidence in the accreditation process and standards which all accredited flight schools must meet.
4. Accredited flight schools are the leaders in the flight training field. They will always strive to develop enhanced facilities and professional staffing that supports continuous improvement.
5. The Commission and the accreditation program are designed to assist flight schools who are interested in attaining accreditation status.
6. Accredited flight schools will be assisted with various business relationships in their local communities.
7. The Commission will develop a set of standards that the public can view and trust when they seek flight training.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Flight School Association of North America is a professional industry trade association that represents flight training schools and those interested in the advancement of flight training. One of the main objectives of FSANA is to raise the professional standards and create a positive focus which will help flight schools to achieve best practices in the flight training industry.

HISTORY

Since Wilbur and Orville Wright made their first flight at Kitty Hawk on December 17, 1903, people have been attracted to the aviation industry and many have elected to learn to fly. Flight training started out with the basic barnstormer who taught people to fly.

Charles Clarence Robert Orville Cummings, (named in part for his godfather, Orville Wright) received the first official certified flight instructor license in 1938. Cummings instructed pilots for the military during World War II. He was an accomplished actor, starring in both film and television.

Throughout aviation history, people have acted on their vision of flying an airplane. Over the years, thousands of flight schools have opened, all with the mission of teaching people to fly.

Since the beginning of flight training, flight schools have been governed primarily by individual business owners who have followed a wide variety of business practices. FSANA believes that flight schools should follow a set of industry standards and recognize a set of commonly shared goals, objectives and practices that will increase the student pilot population, increase the conversion of student pilots to fully certificated pilots and improve the business of flight training.

FSANA FOUNDERS

The flight school industry never had a dedicated trade association until a group of people were called together to explore the formation of an association dedicated to flight schools. It was from that initial meeting held at Atlantic Aviation at the Philadelphia International Airport on April 17, 2009, that the Flight School Association of North America was created. The founders of FSANA are:

Lou Beemer	CXY Aviation
Greg Hayes	North Coast Flight School
Paul Liepe	MyFBO
Vern Moyer	Moyer Aviation
John Painter	Air Orlando
Robert Rockmaker	Flight School Association of North America
Tony Rohloff	Premier Flight Academy
Rick Witt	Leading Edge Aviation

It was at the first meeting of the group that it was suggested that the flight training industry would benefit greatly from an accreditation program. The group discussed the possibility and the planning, and execution was started. FSANA developed a variety of working committees including an Accreditation Committee. Each one of the Accreditation Committee members offered to meet via phone for as long as it took to develop the first set of flight school accreditation standards and related materials to launch the program.

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

FSANA appreciates the time and energy that was expended by the members of the Flight School Accreditation Committee. Each of these individuals went far above the call of duty—all in the name of improving the business of flight training. The flight training industry appreciates their tireless efforts to bring the accreditation program forward for all flight schools.

John Amundsen	Tailwheels Etc. Inc.
Vincent Billissi	Airborne Systems Inc.
Greg Hayes	North Coast Flight School
Jim Jacobson	MN Aviation
Timothy McAdams	Sky Helicopters
Vern Moyer	Moyer Aviation
John Painter	Air Orlando
Evanthe Papastathis	Skybound Aviation
Bobby Pinto	Gulfstream Airlines and Training Academy
Connie Pyatt	Sky Helicopters
Robert Rockmaker	Flight School Association of North America
Tony Rohloff	Premier Flight Academy
Michele Rosa	Premier Flight Academy
Hal Shevers	Sporty's Academy
Ben Smulyan	3 Degrees of Aviation
Debbie Sparks	Palm Beach Helicopters
Frank Taheny	Simulator Systems International
Doug Tibbs	Nationair Insurance
Jim White	Double Eagle Aviation

DEFINITION OF ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is an ongoing process in which an organization—in this case a flight school—is reviewed for competency, authority and credibility. Accreditation has been around for more than 100 years. Accreditation provides a platform with four primary goals:

- Improve the quality of education delivery
- Maintain the highest levels of academic value
- Provide a barrier between education and the political arena
- Enhance the public's ability to trust, learn and evaluate

The three fundamentals found in all accreditation programs are:

1. Self-study
2. Peer review
3. Judgement about accredited status based on a set of standards established by an accrediting organization.

The Flight School Accreditation Standards are mostly *performance*-based. This allows for a range of reasonable achievement considered acceptable to attain a performance standard.

The alternative to this are *engineering* standards that call for precisely-calculated processes that allow for little to no variation with respect to attaining a standard.

BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION

The most important aspect of accreditation is to provide assurance to the general public that an organization or person meets or exceeds the standards as established by the industry segment.

Accreditation has many positive results including but not limited to the following:

- Develop public confidence through a systemic evaluation process that confirms whether an organization meets or exceeds the professional standards as established by the accrediting organization.
- Provides answers to government and private agencies that seek professional opinions on a wide assortment of topics related to the industry segment.
- Helps attract and retain a quality professional staff.
- Increases the opportunity to attract financial-aid organizations who seek to assist flight students in the attainment of their personal goals and objectives.
- Provides the risk management industry with the ability to provide competitive rate-making for accredited organizations.
- Provides a friendly environment for organizations to work and develop together in the name of flight training.
- Promotes public recognition of flight schools that have attained accreditation status.
- Promulgates an ongoing self-evaluation within the accredited flight school for the betterment of the school and their students.
- Increases the opportunity for flight schools to establish long-term and stable relationships with financial institutions that provide loan and lease programs for the flight school market.

THE FLIGHT SCHOOL ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

The Commission will meet and conduct accreditation hearings twice each year for the purpose of reviewing and approving flight schools to be approved for accreditation. The Commission members shall examine the application, the supporting documents submitted by the flight school, the inspector's report, and any information and comments received from outside organizations and individuals.

The Commission will make a determination to approve, deny or table accreditation applicants.

The flight school's owner or senior manager must attend the Commission's hearing to answer questions. The Commission decides whether or not to grant accreditation. It does not matter if a flight school is new or was previously accredited. The standards are high and flight schools are not automatically guaranteed to receive accreditation. The cost to attend the hearing is the responsibility of the applicant.

The Commission shall be comprised of three to five members. Terms of each member shall be three years and are staggered. The chairman, vice chairman and president & CEO of the Flight School Association of North America are responsible for appointing Commission members.

The day-to-day operations of the Commission are handled by the staff of FSANA. Staff members do not have a vote and are in place to help support the accreditation program and related processes.

NON-DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE

FSANA is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of ancestry, race, color, gender, age, sexual orientation or sexual preference, national origin, religion, marital status, type of military discharge, handicap or other legally protected categories as set forth in the applicable state, federal or local laws.

Section 2 Definitions

- 2.1** The *Flight School Association of North America* is herein referred to as FSANA.
- 2.2** The *Flight School Accreditation Commission* is a division of the Flight School Association of North America. The Flight School Accreditation Commission is herein referred to as the Commission.
- 2.3** A *flight school* is a business which provides flight training and owns, operates or leases aircraft, flight simulators and/or flight training devices. A flight school is a business which owns or leases office space at an airport, heliport, glider port or seaport. A simulator-based flight school is not required to be located at one of the

aforementioned locations. Wherever the term *flight school* is used, it refers to the legal entity in which the flight school business name has been created.

- 2.4** A *multi-location flight school* is similar as defined in Section 2.3 above with two or more geographical locations from which business is conducted. Flight schools that fall under Section 2.4 must qualify and meet the accreditation standards for each geographical location that conducts flight training. One accreditation will be used for the same company with on-site inspections for each additional location as required.
- 2.5** An *accredited flight school* is a flight school which has met all of the accreditation standards described within and adopted by the Flight School Association of North America and approved by the Flight School Accreditation Commission.
- 2.6** The highest-ranking person at the flight school with both authority and responsibility shall be called the *president* for the purposes of these standards. There may be other titles with similar meaning (for accreditation purposes), such as chairman, CEO, director, manager or others who meet the definition.
- 2.7** A *flight training simulator* is herein referred to as an FTS.
- 2.8** A *flight training device* is herein referred to as an FTD.
- 2.9** A *flight instructor mentoring program* is herein referred to as FIMP.
- 2.10** A *flight instructor mentor* is herein referred to as a FIM.
- 2.11** *Non-flight continuing education units* are herein referred to as NFCEU.
- 2.12** The *Transportation Security Administration* is herein referred to as TSA.
- 2.13** The *Federal Aviation Administration* is herein referred to as FAA.
- 2.14** *Records retention* is defined to include both paper and/or electronic processes.
- 2.15** A Federal Aviation Administration *Certificated Flight Instructor* is herein referred to as a CFI.
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Section 3 Criteria for Eligibility

- 3.1** At the time of application, the school must have been training students continuously for the preceding two consecutive years and demonstrate that it will operate continuously thereafter.
 - 3.2** Flight schools that seek to become accredited must adhere to the “FSANA Code of Ethics” and operate with full intent of following business practices that are in the best interest of the public, the employees and the school.
 - 3.3** Flight schools shall meet all standards as established by the Commission.
 - 3.4** Flight schools shall meet the flight school definition.
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Section 4 The Accreditation Process

THE APPLICATION

Flight schools that seek accreditation shall submit a complete application as part of the accreditation process. Incomplete applications will not be accepted. Applications must be received by **October 1** for the Winter/Spring FSAC meeting and **March 1** for the Summer/Fall FSAC meeting.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

All applications must be submitted in electronic format on either a compact disc or USB flash drive. Applicants shall provide three sets of materials at the time of submission. All submissions shall be identified with the name of the school. One printed hard copy of the application must also be submitted.

Application materials should be sent as follows:

FSANA
Accreditation Program Office
3111 Arcadia Avenue
Allentown, PA 18103

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information submitted to the Accreditation Commission as part of the accreditation application will be held in strict confidence. The following individuals will have access to the application and supporting data:

- Accreditation Commission members
- Accreditation mentors

- Accreditation inspectors
- Accreditation staff

SELF-EVALUATION

The process of self-evaluation is a required element of the accreditation process and is expected to be a significant and ongoing experience. After initial accreditation, self-evaluation process is to be incorporated as a permanent part of business operations.

The self-evaluation process provides the flight school owner the opportunity to assess their operation and should involve the entire school, i.e., employees, students, leaseback owners, etc. Self-evaluation provides the school an opportunity to examine itself and to draft findings and recommendations for its own action. Improvements within the school should be due primarily to its internal efforts rather than an on-site evaluation by an outside inspector.

A self-evaluation report must be submitted to the Commission 30 days prior to any initial, renewal or re-evaluation site visit. The Commission may also require the submission of a self-evaluation report at any time as deemed necessary.

ON-SITE INSPECTION

The on-site inspections of flight schools shall be conducted by volunteer inspectors who are approved in accordance with FSANA inspector guidelines. Flight school owners, managers and other individuals who are deemed qualified in accordance with FSANA inspector criteria shall act as inspectors to assist with the accreditation process. It is an honor to be approved as a FSANA on-site inspector.

The on-site inspection process provides for the inspector and the flight school operator to exchange and learn for the betterment of the flight school and the flight training industry.

Inspectors may not accept any gifts offered by the applicant.

INSPECTION PROCESS

Inspectors are selected from a volunteer pool of qualified individuals who have been or are currently involved in the business of flight school operation.

Inspection schedules will be planned a minimum of 90 days in advance of the inspection. As required, inspectors shall be reimbursed for the cost of travel, lodging and food during the site visit. Site visits shall be completed in one working day.

Inspections shall not be scheduled until all of the applicant's information has been submitted and accepted as complete by the Commission. The approval notice for this shall be provided in writing by the Commission.

ACCREDITATION HEARING

The flight school's owner or senior manager must attend the Commission hearing to answer questions. The Commission decides whether or not to grant accreditation. It does not matter if a flight school is new or was previously accredited. The standards are high and flight schools are not automatically guaranteed to receive accreditation. The cost to attend the hearing is the responsibility of the school.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the Commission will make a determination on each applicant as follows:

- Accreditation approved,
- Accreditation denied, or
- Accreditation tabled.

ACCREDITATION PROCESSING STEPS

1. Applicant requests an accreditation mentor
2. Application is submitted
3. Site inspector selection and assignment
4. Primary reviewer from Commission is assigned
5. All submission materials are reviewed
6. Inspection is scheduled
7. Inspection is completed
8. Inspection report is filed
9. A list of non-conforming standards is identified
10. Applicants file a progress report on how they have addressed the list of non-conforming standards at least four weeks before a hearing date is scheduled
11. The Commission performs first review
12. Hearing date is scheduled
13. Hearing take place and a decision is made
14. A final inspection report is provided which discusses the outcome and identifies future work scope if required.
15. Accredited schools receive recognition for successful completion of the accreditation process.

THE ACCREDITATION HEARING

The Commission will meet privately to briefly discuss and review the application. Applicants will then be invited to join the hearing for the purpose of answering questions

and updating the Commission on the adjustments that have been made since the site inspection. This will include a review of the non-conforming standards. The hearing will last approximately 30 minutes. Hearings are open to the following parties in the process:

- Flight school applicants and support staff
- Accreditation commission members
- Accreditation inspectors
- Accreditation staff
- FSANA board members

THE APPEAL PROCESS

If a denial is issued by the Commission, the applicant shall have 30 days to file a written appeal with the FSANA Executive Committee. The Executive Committee must decide within 45 days if an appeal hearing will be granted. If an appeal is granted, a hearing will be conducted at the next FSANA board of directors regularly-scheduled meeting. The FSANA board will decide if the applicant's denial will be overturned. The decision by the FSANA board will be final and a letter of explanation will be sent to the applicant.

Accreditation appeals must be mailed to:

FSANA
Accreditation Appeals Process
Attention: Executive Committee
3111 Arcadia Avenue
Allentown, PA 18103

Section 5

Self-Evaluation and On-site Inspection

The on-site inspections of flight schools shall be conducted by volunteer inspectors who are approved in accordance with the FSANA flight school inspector guidelines. Flight school owners, managers and other individuals who are deemed qualified in accordance with the FSANA inspector criteria shall act as inspectors to assist with the accreditation process. It is an honor to be approved as a FSANA on-site inspector.

The on-site inspection process provides for the inspector and the flight school operator to exchange and learn, to the betterment of the flight school and the flight training industry.

Section 6 Renewal Process

It is incumbent on each flight school to keep track of where they are with respect to their accreditation time line. Schools shall begin the renewal process six months prior to the end of their existing accreditation period.

The flight training industry is constantly evolving and standards are often reviewed and/or raised. Each flight school must keep up with these changes to remain accredited. In order to maintain accreditation, flight schools must go through the full accreditation process every three years. We believe that nothing is more important than assuring the highest standards for both the flight school customers and co-workers who are providing the business of flight training.

Section 7 Complaint Process

Flight schools, like every business or organization, are subject to complaints. Complaints are generated both internally and externally from any one of the following:

- Customers
- The general public
- The flight school staff
- Professional peers from other accredited flight schools

If a complaint is received by the Commission on an accredited FSANA flight school, the Commission will follow through with a review of the complaint. All complaints must be in writing and filed using the “FSANA-Accredited Flight School Complaint Form.” There shall be no deviation in respect to the process. The Commission is responsible for reviewing complaints only for FSANA-accredited flight schools.

When a complaint is received on a FSANA-accredited flight school, the Commission will conduct a review as required. The complaint process is an internal procedure and the findings will not be communicated with persons who file complaints.

Flight schools that have had a complaint filed with the Commission will be notified of the complaint. The Commission will review and investigate the complaint by telephone. The Commission will make a determination of the complaint which will cause one of the following to occur:

- The flight school will receive recommendations to cure the complaint.
- The flight school may be subject to further investigation which may lead to a site inspection. If a site inspection is required, the flight school will be required to cover the reasonable cost of the inspection.

- The flight school will be placed on probation. Schools will have 90 days to cure the complaint. Schools that do not resolve the complaint may lose their accreditation.
 - The Commission will make a determination of “No Complaint” and the school is returned to full accreditation standing.
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Section 8 Accreditation Fees

COST OF ACCREDITATION

Applicant shall remit at time of application the minimum fee of \$2,000 (\$2,500 non-members) which is nonrefundable. Upon notification by the Commission that the applicant has successfully completed the application and questionnaire, the applicant can then request the flight school site inspection. At that time, the applicant shall remit the balance.

APPLICATION FOR INITIAL ACCREDITATION

FSANA members	\$4,000.00
Non-members	\$5,000.00
Re-inspection after failure	\$750.00

Accreditation hearing travel expenses to be paid by the applicant

Applicants who select to pay the initial accreditation fee in full at the time of application will receive a 5% discount.

USE OF ACCREDITATION FEES

The fees paid by participating flight schools are utilized in support of the accreditation process, including processing, support, reviews and site inspections. Flight schools are provided guidance and support by FSANA as they advance towards their accreditation hearing.

Section 9 Notification and Information Sharing

- 10.1 Confidentiality of records:** Information pertaining to the Commission’s actions, and confidential and proprietary information obtained from a flight school in the accreditation process and in the possession of the Commission, is confidential and is not shared with third parties, other FSANA flight school members, the press or the public, except as otherwise provided under Section 10.3 below.

10.2 The Commission will provide 30-day written notice to a school of any decision or actions such as initial approval of accreditation, renewal of accreditation, and non-adverse or adverse decisions, such as probation or denial or withdrawal of accreditation rulings.

10.3 As a general rule, the Commission has no authority or duty to refuse to disclose information about a school when requested to make such disclosure pursuant to appropriate legal process, when authorized or required to make such disclosure by applicable law, or when ordered to make such disclosure by a court with jurisdiction.

It will be within the sole discretion of the Commission whether to require that all of the formalities of the legal process be properly and completely observed. The Commission will be under no obligation to inform a school that such a request has been made or complied with. Such notice may be provided at the Commission's sole discretion if the provision of such notice is determined to not violate applicable law.

10.4 If a school wishes specific accreditation information that is otherwise to be treated as confidential to be released to a third party, the owner of such school shall provide a written release to the Commission stating the precise information to be released and the party to whom the information is to be released.

Section 10 General Policies

ACCREDITATION PROBATION

Schools placed on probation are still considered accredited. During the probation period, schools are permitted to continue to use the accreditation logo and related marketing materials.

During the probation period, schools shall take the necessary actions to cure the complaint. If a school does not cure the complaint, the Commission may rescind the schools accreditation status.

CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP

A change in ownership refers to the sale or transfer of a flight school's assets. When an accredited flight school has a change in ownership, the flight school must reapply for accreditation status within 12 months from the date that a change in ownership took place.

The new owner shall submit a letter to the Commission within 30 days indicating that the school will abide by all accreditation standards and the "FSANA Code of Ethics." The

letter shall include a statement that the new owner intends to submit the reapplication for accreditation within the 12-month time period.

APPLICANT MENTOR PROGRAM

The Commission recognizes that ongoing flight school education and support is a key component to the advancement of the business models for flight schools. To assist non-accredited flight schools, FSANA can assign an industry mentor who will be available by phone to assist accreditation applicants.

Mentors will travel to the flight school's location to assist as required. All related expenses for a site visit by a mentor shall be paid by the applicant. It is recommended that applicants contact FSANA to request a mentor at least six months before submission of the accreditation application.

Flight school mentors can provide guidance in respect to—but not limited to—all aspects of the accreditation process along with flight school best practices and the accreditation standards.

FLIGHT SCHOOL ACCREDITATION INSPECTION TEAM

The flight school accreditation inspection team is comprised of qualified individuals who contribute their time and expertise to further advancement of the flight training industry.

Criteria for becoming a flight school accreditation inspector include:

- Membership in the Flight School Association of North America (FSANA) is encouraged but not required
- Good understanding of the flight training industry
- A minimum of five years experience in the flight training business including ownership and/or managerial responsibilities
- Good written and verbal communications skills
- Ability to mentor, share knowledge and the desire to help people
- A pilot certificate is beneficial but not required
- Inspectors must maintain full impartiality at all times
- Inspectors must be willing to travel for site inspections
- Inspectors must include a resume with their inspector application
- Inspectors shall have no present or past employment with a school being inspected
- Inspectors shall maintain complete confidentiality
- Inspectors shall not accept any type of gift, money or food from an accreditation applicant before, during or after an inspection.

MULTIPLE SCHOOL FACILITIES

Schools which own and operate multiple locations are eligible to apply for accreditation under one application. The applicant shall check off multiple locations and all locations must be listed.

The Commission reserves the right to inspect multiple locations as required. If it is determined that a multi-site inspection is required, the applicant shall provide a multi-site inspection fee as determined by the Commission.

RESCINDING ACCREDITATION

Accreditation may be rescinded at any time if the Commission determines that the accreditation standards are not be consistently met and maintained. A school that has had their accreditation rescinded must wait 12 months before reapplying for accreditation status.

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