

# **Student Pilot Bill of Rights<sup>(c)</sup>** by Gary Palmer CPL-SEL, CFI, IFR, AGI, IGI

**Purpose:** Flight training students are entitled to certain rights and expectations from their instructors and flight schools. The relationship between student, instructor and flight school should be equal and fair. This bill of rights is intended to help the student understand their rights and responsibilities in that relationship.

## **1 Access to Student Training Status**

At any time in training the student can obtain an assessment of progress. At the very least this should indicate status in the **pre-solo, solo, maneuver, and cross country** phases of instruction. Student should be able to ascertain status and progress to support realistic expectations of their status and progress.

The status would include of hours already spent in a phase, typical hours spent in each phase and note about instructors subjective assessment of student proficiency. The typical hours should be reasonable and based on actual experience and not ideal case or conditions. The student log includes most of this.

## **2 Access to Student Planning**

The student should be provided sufficient materials to allow a motivated student to prepare advance reading and simulator work. This provides student with the most efficient way to prepare for and benefit from a lesson. This could be the whole course of study or a simple lesson plan homework so the student knows what will be expected at the next lesson.

## **3 Access to Instructor**

When the student has questions or problems, additional support is needed. The instructor should be available by either telephone, email, text or other agreed upon communication method. The instructor should make attempts to respond reasonably and the student should be aware that this utilization of instructor time might have a cost. Boundaries should be discussed and agreed upon if necessary.

## **4 Scheduling of Instructor and Training Aircraft**

**Constant rescheduling is not in anyone's best interest.** Students should have reasonable expectations of instructor and training aircraft availability at scheduled times. Reserving aircraft and/or instructor for use, canceled at the last moment, impacts livelihood of instructor and flight school. Student, instructor and aircraft are all necessary for a successful lessons but any of the three might have a problem. It is reasonable for instructors and schools to have lesson cancellation policies. That policy should also cover the student.

## **5 Ability to Respond to Instructor Changes**

**The student is entitled to consistency in flight training.** If the flight school replaces the instructor not at request of the student, the student should not be expected to pay full (or possibly any) price of a "review flight" for the new instructor's benefit. For student requested instructor changes, it should be discussed with the school to determine the reason and a mutually beneficial next step.

## **6 Right to Materials if Leaving the School**

Should the student decide to leave the flight school, the student should be allowed to take possession of all their status and completion information. This should include completed lessons and at least the status in the flight phases (e.g.: listed in #1 above). This assists the student if transitioning to a new school.

## **7 Awareness of Costs**

Flight training gets expensive. A student should understand costs and cost savings alternatives available. This includes school costs and trade-offs between airplane ownership, partnership or rental.