



INSTRUMENT RATING (IR)

You are cleared for takeoff on a new career!

Here's your "flight by instruments" roadmap—no visual cues, just gauges, clouds, and pure stick-and-rudder fun. Let's dive into the FAA Part 61 Instrument Rating (IR) journey!

1. Meet the Prerequisites

- **Certificate & Language:** Hold at least a **Private Pilot Certificate** and be able to **read, speak, write, and understand English**.
- **Medical Certificate:** Maintain at least a **Third-Class Medical** (or higher) on file—your personal "all-systems-go" for IFR flight.

2. Ground School & Knowledge Test

- **Instrument Ground Training:** Sporty's Online Ground School prepares you for the knowledge you need and the written test. You'll explore:
 - IFR regulations & procedures
 - Advanced weather theory (think: cold fronts, icing, TAFs vs. METARs)
 - Instrument navigation (VOR, GPS, NDB, and the ever-lovely DME)
 - IFR flight planning and ATC communications
- **Written Exam:** Pass the **FAA Instrument Rating Knowledge Test** (60 questions, 70% to pass). No surprises—just straight-forward instrument smarts.

3. Flight Training Requirements

Under Part 61, you need a minimum of **50 hours** of cross-country PIC time (20 of which were as PIC in your PPL training) and **40 hours** of actual or simulated instrument time, including:

- **Dual Instrument Instruction (at least 15 hrs):**
 - In-flight or approved simulator, covering holds, intercepting courses, precision & non-precision approaches, unusual attitude recovery, and more.
- **Ground & Flight Planning:**



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- **One 2-hour cross-country flight** in IFR conditions (simulated counts if in a qualified simulator).
- **Actual Flight Time:**
 - At least **3 hours** of actual instrument flight time in the airplane.
- **Approaches & Holds:**
 - **10 approaches** using different navigation systems (e.g., ILS, VOR, GPS).
 - **Holding procedures** and **course intercepts**.

4. Cross-Country Requirement

- Complete **250 nautical miles** of cross-country flight along airways or by GPS, with:
 - **Three different kinds of approaches**
 - **Holding patterns** at each airport.

5. Logbook Endorsements

Your instructor will sign you off for:

- **Knowledge Test Completion**
- **Instrument Flight Proficiency** (holds, approaches, intercepts)
- **Cross-Country & Approach Requirements**

Think of each endorsement as a checkpoint on your IFR roadmap.

6. The Checkride (Practical Test)

- **Oral Portion:**
 - IFR regulations, weather decision-making, flight planning, weight & balance, and “what-if” emergencies (e.g., electrical failures in IMC—yikes!).
- **Flight Portion:**
 - Demonstrate holds, procedure turns, intercepting/ tracking VOR radials, executing precision & non-precision approaches, and safe recovery from unusual attitudes—all while chatting with ATC.



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Nail this, and you'll earn your Instrument Rating—the magic ticket to flying in the clouds, through the rain, and over the weather!

Tips for Success

- **Simulator Time is Your Friend:** Logging hood work in a qualified simulator can save you money and build confidence.
- **Weather Study:** Get comfortable reading TAFs, METARs, and PIREPs—knowledge is the best de-icing fluid.
- **Plan, Plan, Plan:** Thorough IFR flight plans (alternate airports, fuel reserves, minimum equipment lists) make you a calm, safe, and competent IFR pilot.
- **Practice Under Pressure:** Throw in a “lost comm” or “vacuum failure” drill to stay sharp—real emergencies rarely come with a heads-up.

Ready to trade those blue skies for gray ones? Strap in, tune that NAV receiver, and let the gauges be your guide.