

PATHWAY TO A U.S. ATP

A Regulatory Guide for International Pilots

From ICAO License to FAA Airline Transport Pilot Certificate • 14 CFR §61.156 / §61.159 / §61.160

For pilots licensed outside the United States, the path to a U.S. Airline Transport Pilot certificate runs through one mandatory training gate: the **Airline Transport Pilot Certification Training Program (ATP-CTP)**, required by 14 CFR §61.156 since August 2014. This guide answers the questions international pilots most frequently ask before booking the course — and clarifies the regulatory boundaries that often cause delays or refused entries when handled incorrectly.

The Full Pathway at a Glance

STEP 1 ICAO License <i>Commercial ME + IR</i>	STEP 2 ATP-CTP <i>5 days — no TSA STA</i>	STEP 3 ATM Test <i>PSI Testing Center</i>	STEP 4 Type Rating <i>FTSP STA required</i>	STEP 5 ATP Certificate <i>§61.157 practical</i>
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Wenmar advises international clients across all five steps — including the TSA / FTSP transitions that catch most candidates off guard.

Frequently Asked Questions

The questions below are drawn from active Wenmar client engagements with international ATPL holders preparing for U.S. airline operations.

Q1. I hold a foreign ATPL or commercial license. Can I attend ATP-CTP without FAA certificates?

Yes. The ATP-CTP itself is open to pilots holding either FAA certificates or an ICAO-equivalent foreign license with multi-engine and instrument privileges. The regulatory text of §61.156 does not enumerate license-jurisdiction prerequisites; approved providers accept ICAO licenses uniformly under AC 61-138 guidance.

What you must show: Valid ICAO commercial or ATP license with multi-engine and instrument-airplane ratings, current foreign medical, passport, and English-language proficiency consistent with §61.35(a)(2).

Q2. Do I need TSA clearance (FTSP / AFSP) to attend ATP-CTP?

No. Under the Flight Training Security Program (FTSP) final rule effective 30 July 2024 — which replaced the former Alien Flight Student Program — ATP-CTP is not a covered training event. International candidates may enroll and complete the course without filing a TSA security threat assessment (STA).

Critical distinction: TSA / FTSP vetting does apply to subsequent type-rating training. Candidates who proceed from ATP-CTP into A320 (or other transport-category) type-rating training must complete TSA processing before that downstream event begins. Wenmar handles the FTSP enrollment sequence to avoid post-CTP delays.

Q3. How long does ATP-CTP take, and what's actually included?

Five training days. The regulation requires 30 hours of academic instruction and 10 hours of simulator training (4 hours FTD + 6 hours Level C or higher FFS in a multi-engine turbine simulator). Courses are typically delivered on Airbus A320 or Boeing 737 platforms by FAA-approved providers, with academic modules interleaved before their corresponding simulator events, per AC 61-138 ¶14.

On Day 5, the student receives the §61.156(h) graduation certificate. This certificate does not expire and is the regulatory key to the ATM knowledge test.

Q4. What does the ATP-CTP graduation certificate let me do — and not do?

It lets you take the ATM knowledge test (Airline Transport Pilot Multi-Engine Airplane) administered by PSI Testing Services. The §61.156(h) certificate is presented at the testing center in lieu of an instructor endorsement.

It does not, by itself, give you a U.S. ATP certificate. The certificate is a knowledge-test prerequisite only. The ATP itself requires separate satisfaction of §61.159 (or §61.160 R-ATP) flight-time, age, and practical-test requirements.

Q5. When do I actually get my FAA ATP certificate?

After (a) passing the ATM knowledge test, (b) meeting §61.159 aeronautical experience (1,500 hours total time, including 500 cross-country, 100 night, 250 PIC, 75 instrument), (c) reaching age 23, and (d) passing the §61.157 practical test.

Most international candidates accomplish the §61.157 practical concurrently with an aircraft type-rating check — a single qualifying ride issues both the type rating and the ATP certificate. This is the standard ATP type-ride pathway and the most cost-efficient route for working international pilots.

Q6. Is my foreign license converted to an FAA license through this process?

No — ATP-CTP and the ATP type-ride pathway issue a U.S. certificate independently. If a candidate also wishes to hold an FAA commercial or private certificate based on the foreign license, that's a separate §61.75 verification process (foreign-license-based U.S. certificate) handled through the FAA's Airmen Certification Branch. Wenmar manages §61.75 verifications for clients in parallel with ATP-CTP enrollment when both are desired.

Q7. What's the typical timeline and total cost for an international candidate?

Timeline: ATP-CTP itself is 5 days. FTSP processing for the downstream type rating typically adds 4–8 weeks. A320 initial type-rating training (where applicable) adds 3–4 weeks. Total from arrival to ATP issuance: typically 10–16 weeks depending on FTSP turnaround and sim availability.

Cost: Course tuition and type-rating fees are quoted directly by the training providers and vary by market. Wenmar's role is regulatory navigation and documentation — not training delivery — and is engaged separately on an advisory basis.

Q8. What does Wenmar Aviation actually do for me?

Wenmar is an FAA regulatory consulting firm — not a flight school. We serve as the regulatory navigator for international aviation professionals entering the FAA system. For ATP-CTP candidates and ATP-track clients, that typically includes:

- **ICAO-license eligibility review** and documentation packaging before enrollment
- **FTSP enrollment management** (timing, document submission, fingerprint coordination) for downstream type-rating training
- **§61.75 foreign-license verification** where a parallel FAA commercial certificate is desired
- **Provider selection support** across approved ATP-CTP and Part 142 type-rating training centers
- **Agent for Service representation** for certificate holders without U.S. addresses (Wenmar's core service across 73 countries)
- **Post-issuance regulatory support** including currency, medical, and recurrent-training compliance

Three Pitfalls That Delay International ATP Candidates

- 1. Booking type-rating training before initiating FTSP.** Type-rating courses cannot begin until TSA issues a Determination of Eligibility. Candidates who arrive in the U.S. and apply for FTSP after completing ATP-CTP frequently lose 4–8 weeks of training calendar.
- 2. Assuming an ICAO ATPL substitutes for the FAA ATP.** It does not. ATP-CTP and the §61.157 practical test are still required regardless of foreign ATPL status.
- 3. Treating §61.75 foreign-license-based certificates as equivalent to an FAA-issued certificate for ATP purposes.** §61.75 issues a private certificate based on the foreign license; it does not convey instrument privileges automatically and is not a substitute for the ATP pathway.

Wenmar's Training Provider Network

Vendor-neutral by design. Wenmar maintains active referral agreements with multiple FAA-approved ATP-CTP providers and Part 142 type-rating training centers across the United States. This network position allows Wenmar to match each client to the provider best suited to their schedule, aircraft platform preference, budget, and language requirements — rather than steering candidates into a single training pipeline.

The network spans: ATP-CTP providers operating Airbus A320, Boeing 737, and other transport-category simulator fleets; Part 142 training centers offering initial type ratings with concurrent §61.157 ATP practical-test integration; and recurrent / difference-training providers for downstream certificate maintenance.

What this means for you. Clients receive an independent recommendation grounded in regulatory fit and operational requirements — not a captive referral. Wenmar's compensation structure is engagement-based with the client, preserving advisory independence across the provider network.

Why International Pilots Engage Wenmar

Regulatory specificity. Wenmar's principals work daily inside 14 CFR Parts 61, 120, 141, 142 and Part 60 FSTD regulations. The firm authors compliance documentation for U.S. Part 142 training centers and represents foreign certificate holders before FAA Flight Standards.

Single point of contact across the full pathway. ICAO license verification, FTSP enrollment, training provider coordination, and post-issuance compliance — handled through one engagement rather than four vendors.

Multilingual client service across Spanish, English, and Portuguese, with experience working alongside Latin American, European, and Asia-Pacific civil aviation authorities.

Engage Wenmar Aviation

Wenmar conducts complimentary 30-minute eligibility consultations for international pilots evaluating the FAA ATP pathway. We will review your ICAO licensing position, project the realistic timeline to U.S. ATP issuance, and identify the regulatory checkpoints specific to your country of certification.

WENMAR AVIATION LLC

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