

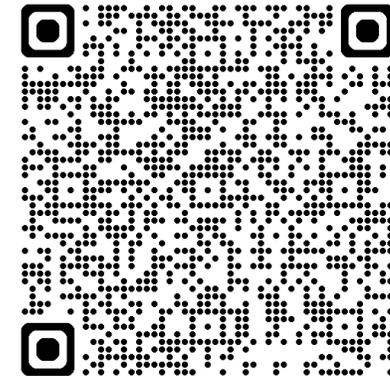
# Sailplane Pilot Licence (SPL)

A student pilot introduction

# Please note:

This presentation includes summaries from Part Sailplane Flight Crew Licensing (Part-SFCL).

For full details, please refer to [Part-SFCL here](#):



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# Why an SPL? What is it? What can I do with it?

UK aviation regulation includes a 'Sailplane Rulebook' which includes Part Sailplane Flight Crew Licensing (Part-SFCL).

SFCL requires that pilots of sailplanes hold an SPL\*

\*other than a non-Part 21 gliders, e.g. certain vintage gliders

An SPL is a lifetime licence issued by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)

SPL privileges are to act as pilot in command in sailplanes and to carry passengers\*

\*including powered sailplanes and Touring Motor Gliders, subject to required additional training

# Medical requirement

For dual training – nothing beyond that required by the club

For solo flight – minimum CAA Pilot Medical Declaration (based on DVLA requirements)

For SPL - minimum CAA Pilot Medical Declaration (based on DVLA requirements)

# The SPL course (non-TMG)

A course of training is required including:

Theoretical knowledge, and at least 15 hours of instruction in sailplanes (at least seven of which must exclude TMG flying) including:

- 10 hours of dual instruction (inc navigation & out-landing training)
- 2 hours of supervised solo flight time
- at least 45 launches

Holders of a *valid* FCL licence can credit 10% of their hours as PIC up to a maximum of 7 hours  
(with exclusions)

# Safety

A big part of your training is about safe operations and safe flying, including:

- Threat and Error Management (TEM), including collision avoidance
- how to operate with other airfield and airspace users
- how to safely land out

You'll be guided every step of the way through your training.

# The theoretical knowledge topics

Theoretical Knowledge (TK) syllabus covering several exam topics:

## Common topics

- Air law
- Human performance
- Meteorology
- Communications
- Navigation

## Specific topics

- Principles of flight
- Operational procedures
- Aircraft general knowledge

## **How achieve?**

Self study – useful resources available online / hard copy

Club lectures / lessons

Club delivered multi-choice exams

Mock online questions are imminent (BGA website)

Holders of a valid or expired FCL aeroplane licence can credit the common topics

# How is TK exam success recorded?

Each topic exam pass is recorded on the SPL application form and certified by the CFI

# The flying training exercises

- 1: Familiarisation with the sailplane
- 2: Emergency procedures
- 3: Preparation for flight
- 4: Initial air experience
- 5: Effects of controls
- 6: Coordinated rolling to and from moderate angles of bank
- 7: Straight flying
- 8: Turning
- 9a: Slow flight
- 9b: Stalling
- 10: Recognition and avoidance of spins and spiral dives
- 11: Launching (i.e. winch or aerotow, etc)
- 12: Circuit, approach and landing
- 13: **First solo flight**
- 14: Advanced turning
- 15: Soaring (i.e. thermal or wave or ridge)
- 16: Out-landings
17. Navigation

## **How achieve?**

Self study – useful resources  
available online / hard copy

Club flying lessons including  
briefings

# How is flight training progress recorded?

Many clubs use a hard copy training record card / booklet

Some clubs use an online training record

In both cases, the exercises are broken down into the required detail and signed.

This ensures that important detail is not overlooked, e.g:

*Exercise 6: Coordinated rolling to and from moderate angles of bank*

- *look-out procedures*
- *further effects of aileron (adverse yaw) and rudder (roll)*
- *coordination*
- *rolling to and from moderate angles of bank and return to straight flight*

# Do I need to complete the SPL course to fly solo?

No.

To fly solo, you need to complete the required flight training exercises (1-12), know enough about rules of the air to be safe, and meet the medical requirement

Solo flight prior to holding an SPL requires authorisation and supervision by an FI(S)

Expect to be taught flying in strong winds, crosswinds etc after flying solo – it's all part of the SPL journey

# SPL course completion

Meet the training requirement including exams passed

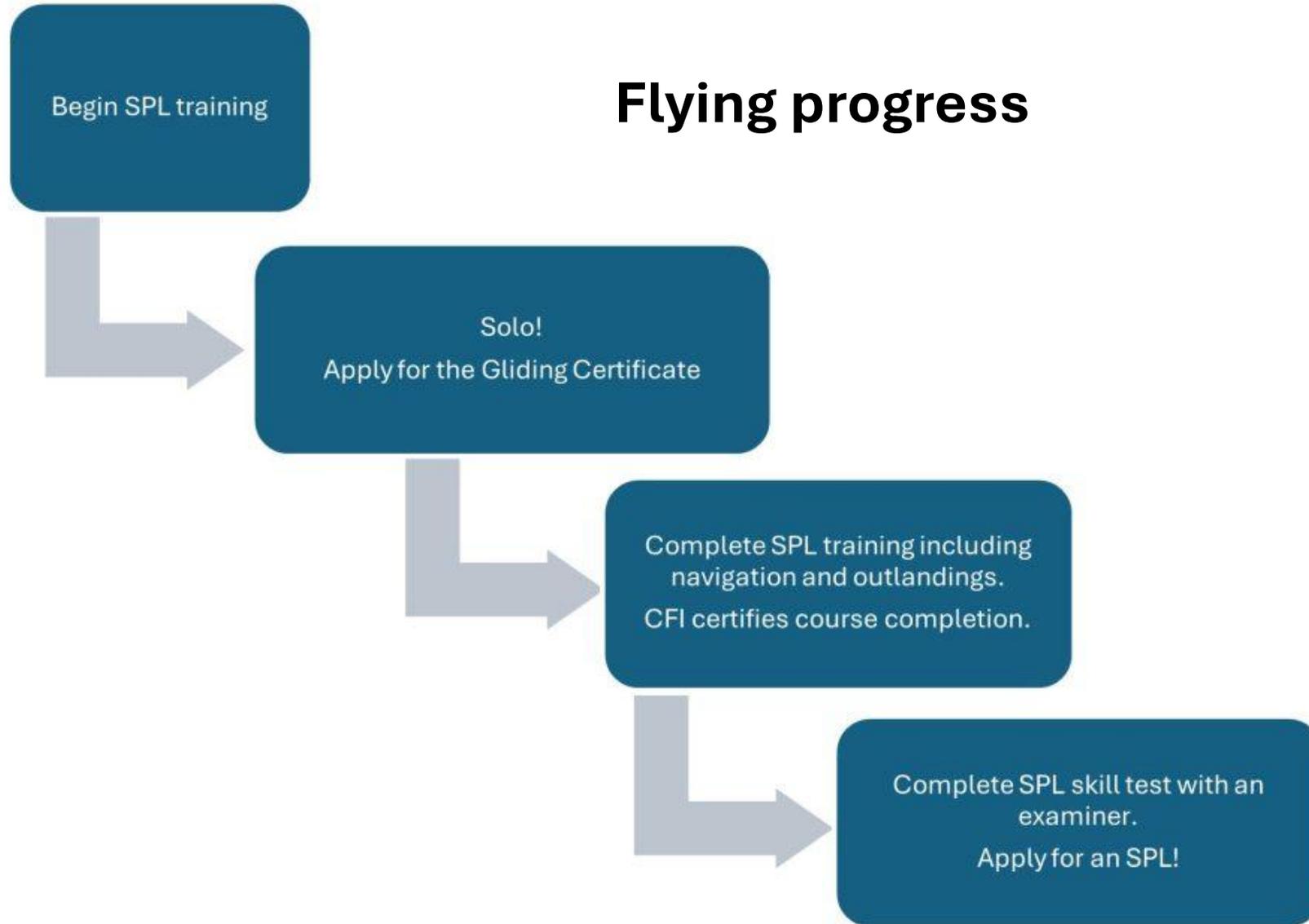
Chief Flying Instructor (CFI) checks the records and certifies a course completion certificate

Complete a skill test with a Flight Examiner (Sailplanes)

Don't worry – when you are put forward for the skill test by your CFI, you will be good enough to pass!

Finally, a completed SPL application (with fee...) is submitted.

## Flying progress



# Training top tips

Get the PMD in place as soon as you can

Support your own training – buy and use the BGA Student Pilot Manual

Study for the TK exams sooner rather than later - one topic at a time

Get used to using the radio – and although not mandatory, consider radio licence training

Try not to leave big gaps between training

Encourage your instructor(s) to update your training record every day you fly

And if you're concerned about your progress or any aspect of training, don't suffer in silence  
- please talk to your CFI or DCFI

# SPL – how keep it ‘valid’?

An SPL is a lifetime licence

SPL validity is based on ‘rolling recency’ (a legal requirement)

E.g. In the 24 months before flying as pilot in command, minimum 5 hours including 15 launches and 2 flights with an FI(S)

Not to be confused with ‘currency’ – usually a club requirement that is based on experience in the past weeks

# SPL complete. But now what?

Develop experience – have fun flying as much as possible

Improve your skills and experience with the occasional flight with an instructor who has great soaring skills – then practice alone

Qualify for soaring badges – Silver, Gold and Diamond!

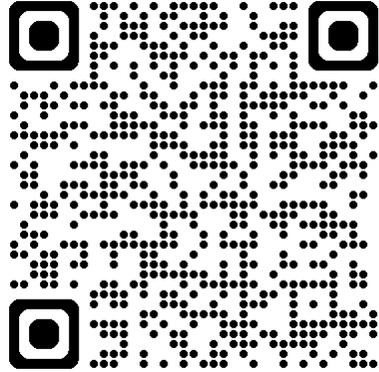
Consider additional privileges you might like to add, e.g:  
aerobatics, cloud flying, TMG extension, instructing

Go on club expeditions, try an advanced course, fly in a competition

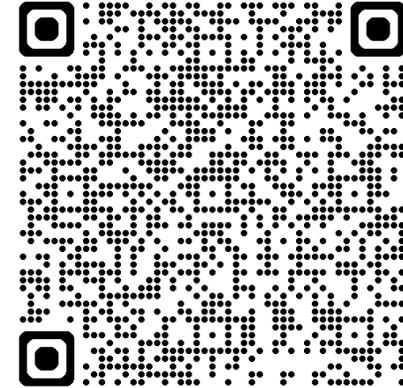
The possibilities are endless.

# Resources

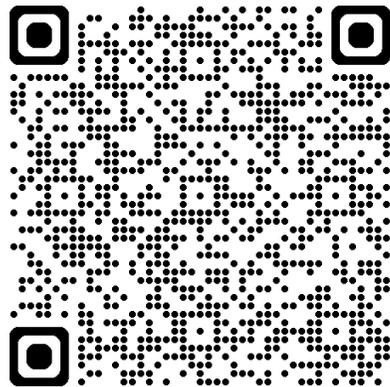
[SPL course](#)



[Part-SFCL](#)



[SPL TK exams](#)



[Student pilot manual](#)

