



Aviation Program

Special Letter to Aviation Students and Parents

From Jessica Francischetti, Financial Aid Director

Greetings from the Rocky Mountain College Financial Aid Office. You are about to make a significant investment in your education in the RMC aviation program. I want to use this letter to help you understand not only the traditional costs of an undergraduate education, but also the additional costs associated with the aviation program.

The questions and answers below address the “cost of attendance” for an aviation student. When developing a financial aid award, financial aid professionals work with a student budget, or “cost of attendance.” It is critical that aviation majors and their parents thoroughly understand how the cost of attendance affects their financial aid and ability to fund the extra expenses of the program. Read on to learn more.

Q: What is the cost of attendance for the first year?

A: The cost of attendance for the first year is broken out in detail below for the 2024-25 academic year.

Tuition	\$34,544
Fees	1,038
Room & Board	10,152
Personal Living Allowance	4,120
Books & Supplies	1,400
Loan Fees	68
Aviation Lab Fees	
AVS 153 Private Pilot Flight Lab	<u>19,800</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$71,122</u>

Q. How much do all required flight labs cost?

A. The lab fees below are an estimate of costs for an average student. Actual costs may be higher or lower, depending on the proficiency of the student. Flight lab estimated fees cover all aircraft fees, flight and ground instruction, simulator training, flight publications, FAA knowledge exams and end-of-course flight examinations. Books for ground schools, headsets, medical certificate, iPad mini, FAA written exams, and ForeFlight must be purchased separately. As a minimum, for the aeronautical science degree, a student needs to complete the following flight labs:

Course		credits	cost
AVS 153	Private Pilot Flight Lab	2	\$19,800
AVS 253	Instrument Pilot Flight Lab	2	\$14,700
AVS 272	Commercial Pilot Flight Lab I	1	\$7,500
AVS 273	Commercial Pilot Flight Lab II	1	\$7,500
AVS 274	Commercial Lab Flight Lab III	1	\$7,500
AVS 376	Multi-Engine Rating Lab	1	\$8,000

Total required lab fees: \$65,000. Please see RMC’s course catalog for a listing of all labs and fees including Flight Instructor labs.

Q. Why aren't flight fees covered in the cost of tuition?

A. Tuition is paid by all students in all programs. Flight lab fees pay for the extra cost of flight training and cover all aircraft fees, flight and ground instruction, simulator training, and end-of-course flight examinations. Headsets, medical certificate, iPad mini, FAA written exams and ForeFlight must be paid for separately.

Q. Are flight lab fees exact numbers?

A. Every student is charged the amounts listed, but actual costs may be higher or lower, depending on the actual number of hours flown in a lab. The lab fees listed above are an estimate of costs for most students. Some students may need extra training which will require additional funds. On average, our students graduate well below the national average of flight hours per syllabus which saves the student money. If a student completes a flight lab more quickly than our estimate those funds may be transferred to the next lab.

Q: How are the aviation lab fees calculated for the cost of attendance?

A: We adjust the amount budgeted for aviation lab fees each year, depending on the labs the student expects to take. We can also increase the lab fee allowance if the student completes more than we initially calculated.

Q. What if I have already completed private pilot flight training?

A. We welcome students who possess their private certifications, and will give full credit for private pilot training. Students won't be required to repeat the training, and therefore won't have to pay the fee for AVS 153. However, the cost of AVS 253, Instrument Flight Lab, might be a little higher because of needing to learn our aircraft and procedures during the first flights in the lab. Talk to the Director of Aviation about the details.

Q. At what pace should I complete flight training?

A. As a minimum, a student should complete one flight rating per year (private – freshman year; instrument – sophomore; commercial – junior; and multi-engine – senior year). We encourage students to move through training faster, including summer flying. We do expect each student to fly over one summer or parts of the summers. We just can't get all of the flying done during the school year and then have our planes and flight instructors sit idle all summer. A faster pace saves money because of improved flight proficiency and makes the student eligible to apply to be a paid flight instructor. Most of those students complete the required training in three years and instruct during their last year.

Q: Where do the figures for room and board come from?

A: The room and board figures are based on an average for all students, living on or off campus.

Q: What is the "personal living allowance," and is that something I will have to pay RMC?

A: The personal living allowance is built into a student's budget to account for other living expenses they may encounter while they are attending school (e.g., clothes, toiletries, gas, plane tickets). Therefore, this is not a bill that you will be expected to pay to RMC, and your personal living allowance may be more or less than the amount budgeted, depending on your lifestyle.

Q: Why do you include the lab fees in the cost of attendance?

A: First, we at Rocky Mountain College want you to have an accurate picture of the costs you will encounter in the aviation program.

Second, by including the lab fees in your cost of attendance, we are providing the information and the eligibility you will need to obtain financing for the lab fees. As you can imagine, most aviation families cannot afford to pay for the aviation labs with cash. Federal Direct Parent Loans (PLUS Loan), where the parent is the borrower, or alternative loans (obtained through private lenders), where the student is the borrower, are typically the resources used by families to finance the aviation program.

If you are interested in using the PLUS loan program or one of the alternative loan programs, you can calculate what you are eligible to borrow very easily. I've outlined it below.

Total Cost of Attendance – Total Financial Aid = PLUS/alternative loan eligibility

Q: How does my parent qualify and apply for a Direct PLUS Loan?

A: To qualify for a PLUS loan, your parent must be credit worthy, meaning your parent must have a history of paying their bills on time. There is no debt-to-income ratio check. If you believe your parent is credit worthy, your mother or father can start the loan application process by going to our website <https://www.rocky.edu/>. Click on *Admissions & Aid*, then *Financial Aid*, then *Student Loans*, and then scroll down to the section on Direct Parent PLUS Loans. Print out, complete, and send us the Parent PLUS Loan Request Authorization Form. Then click on the PLUS Master Promissory Note line and complete it as well. We will receive confirmation electronically when this is done. The PLUS loan has a 10-year repayment term, and the interest rate is fixed at 8.05%. Repayment begins once the loan is fully disbursed (paid out).

Q: I don't think my parent will qualify for a PLUS Loan. What does this mean for my family?

A: If your parent does not qualify for a PLUS loan, you will automatically qualify for an additional \$4,000 in Unsubsidized Direct Loan. We can add the additional loan after we have confirmed that your parent is not eligible for a PLUS Loan. We are notified electronically if you use the links described above.

However, this additional \$4,000 is usually not enough for aviation students to fund their labs. Alternative loans are your next resource. Alternative loan information is also available on our website. Look for under the *Admissions & Aid>FinancialAid>Student Loans* tab. Scroll down to the bottom of the page where you will find information about alternative loans.

Interest rates will vary for these loans, depending on the lender you choose and your credit history. Repayment usually begins six months after graduation; however, interest does accrue on the loan while the student is in school, and the student should make payments on that interest if possible.

Q. Aviation isn't an inexpensive investment, is it?

A. We are very sensitive to this fact. Do talk to the faculty in the aviation program about this. If a student is seriously interested in a successful career as a pilot, our program is about as economical as you will find anywhere. We are very focused on providing safe, efficient, and high quality flight training at the most reasonable cost. We have many ways we keep costs down, from the way our FAA-approved syllabi are written to the location of the airport, to the costs borne by the College that are not passed on to the student. We are also approved by the FAA for Examining Authority meaning our personnel conduct end-of-course evaluation flights, saving students money by not having to pay someone else for that important Flight. Careers for our graduates start quickly, and go very well.

We expect to work with aviation families very closely throughout the course of their student's education, and we look forward to helping you. If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to email the financial aid office at finaid@rocky.edu or call 406.657.1031 or 1.800.877.6259.

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