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This AC provides guidance and recommended practices to certificate holders operating under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) parts 121, 141, and 142 on the development and implementation of procedures and training for an Enhanced Qualification Program (EQP).

Note: This is a guidance document. Its content is not legally binding in its own right and will not be relied upon by the Department as a separate basis for enforcement action or other administrative penalty. Conformity with the guidance document is voluntary only. This document is intended only to provide clarity on how operators can voluntarily develop and implement an EQP.

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CONTENTS

Paragraph	Page
Chapter 1. General	1-1
1.1 Purpose of This Advisory Circular (AC).....	1-1
1.2 Audience	1-1
1.3 Where You Can Find This AC.....	1-1
1.4 Related Regulations	1-1
1.5 Background.....	1-1
1.6 What to Consider When Reading This AC.....	1-1
1.7 Terms and Definitions.....	1-1
1.8 AC Feedback Form.....	1-1
Chapter 2. Definitions.....	2-1
2.1 Eligible Pilot	2-1
2.2 Qualified Air Carrier.....	2-1
2.3 Qualified Evaluator.....	2-1
2.4 Qualified Instructor.....	2-1
Chapter 3. Enhanced Qualification Program (EQP).....	3-1
3.1 General.....	3-1
3.2 Curriculum.....	3-1
3.3 Part 141 or Part 142 Contract.....	3-1
Chapter 4. Enhanced Qualification Program (EQP) Requirements.....	4-1
4.1 Prerequisites.....	4-1
4.2 Instructors and Evaluators.....	4-1
4.3 Subject Matter Expert (SME) Instructors	4-1
4.4 Written Testing	4-1
Chapter 5. Application, Certification, and Inspection	5-1
5.1 Application and Certification.....	5-1
5.2 Certification	5-1
5.3 Regular Inspection	5-1

Chapter 6. Data Analysis Requirements	6-1
6.1 System for Data Analysis.....	6-1
6.2 Calibration.....	6-1
6.3 References.....	6-1
Chapter 7. Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) Part 141 And Part 142 Contracting Rules.....	7-1
7.1 Contracting with Part 142 Training Centers	7-1
7.2 Part 142 Training Centers Contracting with a Part 141 Pilot School	7-1
Chapter 8. Enhanced Qualification Program (EQP) Curriculum Requirements	8-1
8.1 Graduation Certificates	8-1
8.2 Phase I – Pilot Assessment	8-1
8.3 Phase II – Review/Introduction to Air Carrier Concepts.....	8-3
8.4 Phase III – Non-Air Carrier Specific Academic/Practical Training	8-3
8.5 Phase IV – Aircraft Specific Training	8-4
8.6 Phase V – Air Carrier Specific Training.....	8-5
Chapter 9. Transferability	9-1
9.1 Credit Transfer.....	9-1
9.2 Limitations	9-1

CHAPTER 1. GENERAL

1.1 Purpose of This Advisory Circular (AC). This AC provides guidance and recommended practices to certificate holders operating under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) parts 121, 141, and 142 on the development and implementation of procedures and training for an Enhanced Qualification Program (EQP).

1.1.1 Conformity with the guidance document is voluntary only. This document is intended only to provide clarity on how operators can voluntarily develop and implement an EQP. The content in this AC is based on the mandated framework for an EQP provided by Section 372 of the 2024 Reauthorization Act and the recommendations from the Air Carrier Training Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ACT ARC).

1.2 Audience. 14 CFR part 121, 141, and 142 certificate holders.

1.3 Where You Can Find This AC. You can find this AC on the Federal Aviation Administration’s (FAA) website at https://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/advisory_circulars and the Dynamic Regulatory System (DRS) at <https://drs.faa.gov>.

1.4 Related Regulations. Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) parts 121, 141, and 142. Each of the regulatory references contained in this AC can be found at <http://www.ecfr.gov>.

1.5 Background. On May 16, 2024, Congress passed the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act of 2024 (H.R. 3935). Section 372 states the Administrator must establish the requirements for a program to be known as the Enhanced Qualification Program under which, qualified part 121 air carriers are certified by the Administrator to provide enhanced training for eligible pilots seeking to obtain Restricted Airline Transport Pilot (R-ATP) certificates, either directly by the air carrier or by a certified part 141 or 142 training institution that is under contract with the qualified part 121 air carrier.

1.6 What to Consider When Reading This AC. Part 121 air carriers may choose to adopt the recommendations in this AC to implement policies, procedures, and training to support an effective EQP.

1.7 Terms and Definitions. Definitions and terms are provided in Chapter 2 of this AC.

1.8 AC Feedback Form. For your convenience, the AC Feedback Form is the last page of this AC. Note any deficiencies found, clarifications needed, or suggested improvements regarding the contents of this AC on the Feedback Form.

CHAPTER 2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Eligible Pilot.** The term “eligible pilot” means a pilot that has graduated from a United States Armed Forces undergraduate pilot training school; obtained a degree with an aviation major from an institution of higher education (as defined in 14 CFR § 61.1) that has been issued a Letter of Authorization (LOA) by the Administrator under 14 CFR § 61.169; or completed flight and ground training for a commercial pilot certificate in the airplane category and an airplane instrument rating at a certified training institution under 14 CFR part 141; and has a current commercial pilot certificate under 14 CFR § 61.123, with airplane category multi-engine and instrument ratings under 14 CFR § 61.129; and meets the pilot assessment requirements as defined in this document for an EQP.
- 2.2 Qualified Air Carrier.** The term “qualified air carrier” means an air carrier that has been issued a 14 CFR part 119 operating certificate for conducting operations under 14 CFR part 121.
- 2.3 Qualified Evaluator.** The term “qualified evaluator” means an individual who meets the requirements for a training center evaluator under 14 CFR § 142.55, or for a check pilot under 14 CFR § 121.411.
- 2.4 Qualified Instructor.** The term “qualified instructor” means an individual that is qualified in accordance with the minimum training requirements for an ATP CTP paragraphs (1) through (3) of 14 CFR § 121.410(b); if the instructor is a flight instructor, is qualified in accordance with § 121.410(b)(4); if the instructor is administering type rating practical tests, is qualified as an appropriate examiner for such rating; received training in threat and error management, facilitation, and risk mitigation determined appropriate by the Administrator; and meets any other requirement determined appropriate by the Administrator.

CHAPTER 3. ENHANCED QUALIFICATION PROGRAM (EQP)

- 3.1 General.** An EQP is designed to provide enhanced training for pilots seeking a Restricted Airline Transport Pilot (R-ATP) Certificate.
- 3.1.1 Elements.** An EQP includes substantial prerequisites, a rigorous pilot assessment process, and intensive integrated academic and flight training. An EQP is designed to accelerate the development of knowledge and skills necessary for effective performance in an air carrier line operations environment.
- 3.1.2 Completion and Limitations.** Once an eligible pilot completes an EQP, the pilot should then complete all parts of a part 121 air carrier's approved initial pilot qualification training program. The initial pilot qualification training may not be reduced or credited for eligible pilots based on completing an EQP, even where training tasks are identical.
- 3.1.3 Regulatory Variance.** Air carriers training under part 121, subpart Y may find additional benefits associated with an EQP. For example, an air carrier could request a regulatory variance from certification and rating criteria in parts 61, 63, or 65 under the provisions of §§ 121.903 and 121.919 (including a request for alternatives to the aeronautical experience requirements in § 61.159), based on elements of an approved EQP.
- Note:** For further guidance regarding regulatory variances and the provisions of § 121.903(b), refer to Advisory Circular (AC) 120-54, as amended.
- 3.2 Curriculum.** An EQP curriculum consists of five phases of training as described in Chapter 9 of this AC (EQP Curriculum Requirements). To adhere to the curriculum requirements identified in Section 372, all five phases must be completed in sequential order and each phase must be fully complete before the eligible pilot enters the subsequent phase of the program. In addition, the FAA requires that all training and testing be performed by only qualified instructors and all evaluations be performed by only qualified evaluators as described in Chapter 4 (EQP Requirements).
- 3.3 Part 141 or Part 142 Contract.** Air carriers are authorized to contract with part 141 pilot schools or part 142 training centers for the implementation of an EQP as described in Chapter 7 (Contracting Rules).

CHAPTER 4. ENHANCED QUALIFICATION PROGRAM (EQP) REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1 Prerequisites.** Only qualified air carriers may request and receive certification for an EQP. An EQP curriculum may be taught either directly by the qualified part 121 air carrier or by a training institution certificated under parts 141 or 142 that is under contract with the qualified air carrier. A certified EQP may only be administered to eligible pilots who meet the definition of “Eligible Pilot” as defined in Chapter 2 of this AC.
- 4.2 Instructors and Evaluators.**
- 4.2.1** Instructors and evaluators under the program must meet all qualification requirements, as defined in Chapter 2 of this AC. All training and testing under an approved EQP must be performed by qualified instructors and evaluators, respectively. Evaluators administering type rating practical tests must be appropriately qualified and approved by the administrator.
- 4.2.2** Instructors and evaluators must be trained and qualified in leadership and professional development, crew resource management (CRM), pilot monitoring, decision-making, safety management systems (SMS), facilitation, threat and error management (TEM), risk mitigation, and reliable data collection, and must be specifically trained and qualified to instruct in an EQP phase in which the instructor is authorized to instruct.
- 4.3 Subject Matter Expert (SME) Instructors.** The FAA recognizes the EQP contains academic subjects where an SME may be better suited than a qualified instructor to deliver the content. For example, for specialized subjects such as meteorology, human factors, or flight dispatch, the FAA recognizes the value of having an SME deliver this content. Since these subjects emphasize the application of knowledge within an air carrier environment, the FAA requires SMEs to deliver content in an EQP alongside a qualified instructor. This ensures that the material is both relevant and contextualized for air carrier operations.
- 4.4 Written Testing.** An eligible pilot should achieve a minimum score of 80% to successfully pass all written tests administered within an EQP. Air carriers with an approved EQP may establish higher standards if desired. Pilots who fail to meet the minimum score should receive additional training and retake the exam on any topics they did not pass. A review should be conducted correcting all tests to 100% to ensure each eligible pilot understands areas missed on the exam.

CHAPTER 5. APPLICATION, CERTIFICATION, AND INSPECTION

5.1 Application and Certification. Air carriers may elect to pursue and receive EQP certification. Air carriers seeking to obtain certification based on the means of compliance described in this AC must comply with all areas of this AC.

5.2 Certification. Certification, as defined in this AC, is conveyed via a letter issued by the Principal Operations Inspector (POI) to the air carrier showing that an Enhanced Qualification Program (EQP) submitted meets the full intent of all parts of this AC. While EQPs are not, in themselves, approved or accepted air carrier training programs, any training conducted within an EQP used to satisfy a regulatory requirement (e.g., Airline Transport Pilot Certification Training Program (ATP CTP), or type rating curriculum) would be approved or accepted under the respective Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulation (14 CFR) Part in which the training is conducted.

5.2.1 Working with an Assigned Inspector. Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) Part 121 air carriers seeking certification for an EQP should work with their Principal Operations Inspector (POI). The POI grants certification through a standard letter (Sample included in Appendix B) to the air carrier to retain for their record.

5.2.2 Submission Package. An air carrier seeking certification of an EQP should provide at least the following in the submission package:

1. Program entry prerequisites, including eligible pilot requirements.
2. Assessment methodology, including reassessment policy and standards.
3. EQP curriculum, including:
 - Planned hours by topic/module;
 - Phase IV and Phase V content (as defined in Chapter 8 of this AC) demonstrating all required topics/modules are incorporated (or combined Phase IV / Phase V content with all topics/modules incorporated if the air carrier elects this approach);
 - Whether Phase IV and/or Phase V will include an FAA Type Rating practical test;
 - When pilots in an EQP are to undergo the FAA ATP-Multiengine Airplane Knowledge Test; and
 - The air carrier’s policy regarding retesting after a failure of the ATP Knowledge Test, as well as any other tests/checks/evaluations, as appropriate.
4. Instructor/evaluator training curriculum that meets all the requirements in Chapter 4 along with other requirements detailed in applicable regulations for the part under which they will train under.
5. Data collection methodology and framework.

5.3 Regular Inspection. The assigned POI is responsible for certification of the submitted EQP program curriculums and EQP authorizations. The assigned inspector is responsible

for conducting all required certification, surveillance, and inspection functions associated with an EQP.

CHAPTER 6. DATA ANALYSIS REQUIREMENTS

- 6.1 System for Data Analysis.** Qualified part 121 air carriers with a certified EQP must have a system for analyzing data that will enable the air carrier and the Administrator to determine whether the training and evaluation activities are satisfactorily accomplishing the overall objectives of the EQP. The FAA considers an Advanced Qualification Program (AQP) under 14 CFR part 121 to meet this requirement. Air carriers that do not have an AQP may meet this requirement by implementing a Safety Management System (SMS) that complies with 14 CFR part 5.
- 6.2 Calibration.** Qualified part 121 air carriers with a certified EQP should have calibration training designed to assist instructors/evaluators in identifying their strengths and weaknesses in assessing an eligible pilot’s performance, and to reduce common rater errors. Calibration training is typically accomplished through group sessions in which instructors/evaluators observe video recordings of an eligible pilot’s performance segments and make independent ratings. Following such sessions, the instructors/evaluators discuss their ratings and the reasons for their differences of opinion to establish consensus and a common frame of reference. In addition, the different instructors/evaluators ratings are compared to identify variations from group norms or other standards established with respect to both the numerical ratings assigned to individual event sets, and the shifts in ratings provided when observing differing levels of performance. Personalized feedback based on such variations is provided to each instructor/evaluator.
- 6.3 References.** Qualified part 121 air carriers can reference Advisory circular (AC) 120-54 for methods to ensure a universal standard, which is already in place at almost all part 121 air carriers.

**CHAPTER 7. TITLE 14 OF THE CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS (14 CFR)
PART 141 AND PART 142 CONTRACTING RULES**

- 7.1 Contracting with Part 142 Training Centers.** An air carrier electing to contract portions of the EQP to a part 142 training center may do so. However, the air carrier remains responsible for its EQP certification, oversight, content, and currency.
- 7.2 Part 142 Training Centers Contracting with a Part 141 Pilot School.** A training center that elects to contract Phase II of an EQP to a part 141 pilot school must comply with § 142.33. The air carrier remains responsible for its EQP certification, oversight, content, and currency.

CHAPTER 8. ENHANCED QUALIFICATION PROGRAM (EQP) CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

8.1 Graduation Certificates. At the completion of each phase, a graduation certificate should be issued to the eligible pilot with the following information to be considered valid for transferability to another EQP program:

1. The full name, address, and FAA certificate number of the training provider authorized to conduct the course;
2. The full name, FAA pilot certificate number, and address of the graduate;
3. The following statement: “The eligible pilot named above has successfully completed [Applicable Phase Name] of [14 CFR part 121 Air Carrier’s Name] Enhanced Qualification Program and has met the prerequisites required by FAA Advisory Circular 120-XXX;”
4. The date of issuance;
5. The signature of the authorized instructor/evaluator who completed the academic or evaluation portion of the course; and
6. A sequential number on the certificate starting with the first four identifiers of the training provider’s certificate number.

8.2 Phase I – Pilot Assessment. Pilot assessment must include an evaluation of the pilot’s aptitude, ability, and readiness for operation of transport category aircraft.

Note: Phase I may not be contracted out.

8.2.1 Screening Process. The screening process must test each eligible pilot with respect to the following attributes: English language proficiency, Cognitive ability, Ability to learn, Coordination/spatial ability, and Judgment and interpersonal communication skills.

8.2.1.1 English Language Proficiency. The eligible pilot must be able to read, speak, write, and understand the English language. The language proficiency test should be sufficient to assess each of the components listed in Appendix 1 to AC 60-28, English Language Skill Standards Required by Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) Parts 61, 63, and 65, which are based on the Operational Level 4 of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Language Proficiency Rating Scale.

8.2.1.2 Cognitive Ability. The test must assess the eligible pilot’s ability to comprehend and respond to information provided aurally and visually. The test must include content intended to assess the eligible pilots on the following:

- Short term memory

- Performance of mental calculations
- Verbal and numerical reasoning

8.2.1.3 Ability to Learn. The test must establish the eligible pilot’s ability to quickly, and with minimal repetition, comprehend and apply concepts presented in training.

8.2.1.4 Coordination/Spatial Ability. The test must assess the eligible pilot’s hand-eye coordination and spatial awareness skills as sufficient to manually fly an aircraft to the Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) and Type Rating for Airplane Category Airman Certification Standards (ACS) or successor publication.

8.2.1.5 Judgment and Interpersonal Communication Skills. The test must assess the eligible pilot’s judgment and interpersonal communication and relationship skills, including the following:

- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Leadership
- Resource Management
- Communication
- Innovation
- Mentoring

8.2.2 Scoring. Assessment tests must use fixed criteria to determine whether performance is below or above standard. Target attributes must be universally standardized, independent of cultural and generational factors, and normalized against the air carrier’s pilot population. Each attribute must have a clearly defined acceptance range with independent cutoff criteria. Deficiencies in one test or subject matter cannot be offset by strong performance in another test (e.g., good spatial orientation does not compensate for poor memory).

8.2.3 Retesting. Each air carrier must set its own standards for reassessing eligible pilots deemed unsuitable. For this reference, the U.S. Air Force (USAF) permits only two attempts taking the Test of Basic Aviation Skills (TBAS), with a mandatory separation of 180 days between attempts. Similarly, the European Pilot Selection & Training (EPST) process allows retests with a minimal interval of 90 days.

Note 1: The FAA does not prohibit a pilot who does not advance to Phase II from applying to a different air carrier’s EQP. The pilot would be subject to the different air carrier’s eligibility and suitability requirements.

Note 2: The eligible pilot must complete Phase I before moving to Phase II.

- 8.3 Phase II – Review/Introduction to Air Carrier Concepts.** Phase II must be completed by the qualified air carrier or 141 / or 142 certificate holders with appropriate contracting agreements and Operations Specifications (OpSpec) /Training Specifications (TSpec) (as applicable).
- 8.3.1 Knowledge Review/Verification.** An EQP must include a module dedicated to ensuring the eligible pilot’s practical working knowledge at the Commercial Pilot Certificate, Instrument Rating and Multi-Engine Rating levels. The review should be conducted in a classroom setting with a qualified instructor. To assess the pilot’s understanding, a knowledge test covering topics outlined in the ACS for Commercial and Instrument pilot ratings must be administered.
- 8.3.2 Airline Transport Pilot Certification Training Program (ATP CTP).** An EQP must have an approved ATP CTP as part of the approved curriculum. The ATP CTP within an EQP must follow § 61.156. Advisory Circular 61-138, as amended, provides additional information.
- 8.3.3 ATP Knowledge Test Preparation Course.**
- 8.3.3.1** An EQP must include an ATP Knowledge Test Preparation course that should ensure the eligible pilot demonstrates understanding of the “Knowledge” areas within each “Task” outlined in the ATP ACS as listed in § 61.14. This course may be accomplished in a classroom setting with a qualified instructor or through Computer Based Training (CBT). If the test preparation course is delivered via CBT, an EQP should include an instructor-led session prior to the ATP knowledge exam to validate the eligible pilot’s comprehension of the material covered.
- 8.3.3.2** ATP Knowledge Exam: An EQP may allow an eligible pilot to apply credit for a previously passed ATP exam; however, the pilot would still be required to complete the knowledge preparation course under an EQP..
- Note 1:** Upon successful completion of Phase II of an EQP curriculum, the eligible pilot will have completed the requirements of § 61.156 and be eligible to take the FAA ATP-Multiengine Airplane Knowledge Exam.
- Note 2:** The eligible pilot must successfully complete the ATP Knowledge Test Preparation course and Knowledge Exam to move to Phase III.
- 8.4 Phase III – Non-Air Carrier Specific Academic/Practical Training.** (See Appendix A, EQP Sample Curriculum.) This section outlines topics that must be covered introducing the pilots to concepts associated with air carrier operations and ensure a practical working knowledge even if the topics have been introduced within the ATP CTP. The modules include:
- 8.4.1 Module 1:** Air carrier concepts, relationships, policies, procedures, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

- 8.4.2 Module 2: Non-technical skills required of a professional air carrier pilot.
- 8.4.3 Module 3: High performance and altitude aircraft and operations, hypoxia and its effects, fatigue and fatigue mitigation, weight and balance for air carrier operations, advanced meteorology for air carrier operations, icing/deicing procedures and processes, and extreme weather and flight regimes.
- 8.4.4 Module 4: Transport category aircraft automation and autoflight systems, including normal and non-normal operations.
- 8.4.5 Module 5 & 6: Turbine aircraft systems and operations in normal and non-normal environments.

8.5 Phase IV – Aircraft Specific Training. (See Appendix A: EQP Sample Curriculum.)

- 8.5.1 Ground and Flight Training. An EQP must include an Aircraft-Specific Training Program developed by the air carrier as part of the curriculum. This program must comply with Part 61 Subpart B and resemble a type rating training curriculum. It must include aircraft ground and flight training and culminate in a maneuver evaluation that incorporates elements of a type rating practical test.

Note: Phase IV of an EQP curriculum must be accomplished in the same type aircraft as used in Phase V.

- 8.5.2 Training Modules. At the air carrier’s discretion, an actual type rating practical test - resulting in the issuance of a type rating for the specific aircraft may replace the maneuvers evaluation. Regardless of whether the program contains a maneuvers evaluation or type rating practical test, the objective remains the same: to ensure the eligible pilot has a thorough understanding and working knowledge of transport category aircraft to include but not limited to automation and autoflight systems. The modules include:

- 8.5.2.1 **Module 1:** Transport category aircraft automation and autoflight systems, including normal and non-normal operations.
- 8.5.2.2 **Module 2:** Turbine aircraft systems and operations in normal and non-normal environments.
- 8.5.2.3 **Module 3:** Maneuvers evaluation. This training culminates with the eligible pilot successfully completing a maneuvers evaluation incorporating the elements of an FAA Type Rating practical test. At the option of the air carrier, the evaluation may include an actual FAA Type Rating practical test.

Note: The eligible pilot must successfully complete the Aircraft Specific Training curriculum to move to Phase V unless Phases IV and V are combined.

8.6 Phase V – Air Carrier Specific Training.

8.6.1 Air Carrier-Specific Procedures. An EQP must include an approved Air Carrier Specific Training Program as part of its curriculum. This program must incorporate air carrier-specific procedures aligned with objectives and learning standards outlined in the modules of this section. The training may only be delivered to eligible pilots who have completed phases I through IV and passed the ATP Multiengine Airplane Knowledge Test.

Note: Phase V of an EQP curriculum must be accomplished in the same type aircraft as used in Phase IV.

8.6.2 Training Modules. (See Appendix A: EQP Sample Curriculum.) The program must feature instruction on air carrier checklist usage and standard operating procedures. It must also include aircraft-specific training conducted in appropriate flight simulation training devices that represent the specific aircraft type. This training must integrate crew resource management and scenario-based training to ensure thorough preparation for air carrier operations. The Modules include:

8.6.2.1 **Module 1:** Specific air carrier’s operations, policies, procedures, SOPs and safety programs, including aircraft-specific operations.

8.6.2.2 **Module 2 & 3:** Module 2 completes the aircraft specific training, and the eligible pilot should be capable of successfully completing a practical test required of an ATP Type Rating while also meeting the specific air carrier’s requirements. At the option of the air carrier, Module 3 may include an actual FAA Type Rating practical test.

8.6.2.3 **Module 4:** Line Oriented Flight Training (LOFT) and Line Operational Simulations (LOS).

Note 1: The air carrier may elect to combine Phases IV and V of an EQP curriculum.

Note 2: At the completion of Phase V, the pilot may complete operational familiarization consisting of two flight segments conducted under domestic or flag operations at the part 121 air carrier if authorized under §121.547.

CHAPTER 9. TRANSFERABILITY

9.1 Credit Transfer.

9.1.1 Transfer of credit for previously completed EQP phases is at the discretion of the air carrier providing subsequent training. If a pilot is eligible to transfer credit for an EQP phase or phases previously completed at another air carrier; the administering air carrier may still choose to re-administer those phases. Additionally, the air carrier may conduct further testing or require the pilot to review the content before accepting the transfer of credit.

9.1.2 An EQP is designed to be a concentrated and immersive training program. Training delivered with minimal gaps fosters better learning and skill development. To ensure adequate retention of content, all required EQP phases must be completed within 24 months, regardless of whether the pilot completes EQP under a single air carrier’s program.

9.2 Limitations. Transferability of the EQP curriculum:

9.2.1 Phase I – (Assessment): Air carrier assessments of pilots are not transferable. Each air carrier must assess each pilot prior to entry into an EQP, regardless of prior assessments or participation in another air carrier’s EQP.

9.2.2 Phase II – (Introduction to Air Carrier Operations): An air carrier may accept transfer credit for Phase II if the eligible pilot has successfully completed it within the previous 12 months under another EQP. The transferability may be conditioned on a review or testing of Phase II content.

9.2.3 Phase III (Non-Air Carrier Specific Academic/Practical Training): An air carrier may accept transfer credit for Phase III if the eligible pilot successfully completed it within the previous 12 months under another EQP. The air carrier may require review or testing of Phase III content as a condition for acceptance.

9.2.4 Phase IV (Aircraft Specific Training): An air carrier may accept transfer credit for Phase IV if the eligible pilot completed it within the previous 12 months in a transport category aircraft used by a U.S. air carrier under another EQP. The aircraft type must be the same as the type used to complete Phase V of an EQP. The air carrier may require review or testing of Phase IV content as a condition for acceptance.

9.2.5 Phase V (Air Carrier Specific Training): Phase V is not transferable. Each air carrier must administer Phase V to eligible pilots regardless of previous completion under another EQP. If Phases IV and V are combined, the combined training is also non-transferable. The aircraft type must be the same as the type used to complete Phase IV of an EQP.

EQP Curriculum Phase/Component	Transferable	Not Transferable
Phase I: Assessment		X
Phase II: Review/Introduction to Air Carrier Concepts	X	
Phase III: Non-Air Carrier Academic/Practical Training	X	
Phase IV: Aircraft-Specific Training	X*	
Phase V: Air Carrier-Specific Training		X
FAA ATP – Multiengine Airplane Knowledge Test	X	
Type Rating (if included by air carrier)	X	

* Transferable if the air carrier does not combine Phase IV and Phase V.