

Young Vietnamese Female Pilot of South Australia



During my first year in tertiary education at the University of South Australia (UniSA) in 2003, I studied the *Bachelor of Commerce*. However, although I was physically present during my economics and financial accounting classes, my mind and spirit always wandered beyond the realms of business studies in search for where my aspirations really were: 'To be soaring high in the clear blue sky, with the world at my feet and the freedom to enjoy nature's tranquillity at its best'.

At the time I was 17 years old. It wasn't until 2005 where I had the courage to tell my parents. It was quite a shock to them at the time, as most parents would never expect for their daughter to take up a career as a pilot. Through time, watching me work hard to support my own studies and flying hours, they managed to accept and support my decision.

Entering the course, I barely had much prior knowledge about being a pilot, nor knowing anything about aircrafts. I remember starting to watch Aircraft Investigations as well as reading the aviation sector in the Australian paper to keep with up to date with all the aviation news.

My career turning point came when I came across a group of UniSA aviation students (dressed smartly in uniform) and looking as though they were enjoying the university lifestyle that I had always dreamed of. In 2004, I transferred programs and commenced UniSA's Bachelor of Applied Science (Civil Aviation). About 3-years since the date of my transfer and

approximately AUD\$17,000pa out of pocket, I have successfully completed my formal qualification to become a pilot and am looking forward to my graduation ceremony in March 2008.

UniSA was the first University in Australia to offer a tertiary qualification for pilots and it continues to remain the only university in South Australia to offer civil aviation as a tertiary qualification as well as an integrated flight training program at its Aviation Academy. In summary, the program taught me all the broad theoretical and practical knowledge of the fundamentals of aerodynamics, aircraft systems, meteorology, navigation, and flight planning. These courses enabled me to have a clear understanding of what I should and need to know in order of becoming a pilot. I learnt how to flight plan my way from point A to B, with a correct fuel consumption, weight and balance of baggage and passengers on board and time of landing after departing. I also learnt about the whole side of safety, pilot physical and emotional behavior as well as the weather and atmospheric conditions.

In addition, I undertook extracurricular studies to learn Japanese to gain a multi-lingual competitive edge when I enter the workforce.



The most exciting part of my tertiary education so far has been my flying training to obtain my solo license and private pilot's license. Despite working full time as a manager at Caltex Rosewater Petrol Station as well as having other jobs on the side to keep up with the cost of the degree and flying training (approximately AUD\$45,000), I have thoroughly enjoyed my learning and practical experiences to become a pilot and am proud to be the 1st qualified Vietnamese female pilot in Australia.



done, I tracked back to the aerodrome and handed the controls back to my instructor to proceed with a safe landing. As the plane started to go down, ever thing outside window started getting bigger and bigger, at that moment my heart started beating rapidly. The back two tyres hit the runway smoothly, followed by the front tyre. A sign of relief came out of me, and from that moment I knew that my career choice was in becoming a pilot.

I hope to one day be in control and fly all around the world in a 747 Boeing as well as an A380.

*Khánh Kim Thi Tran
Pilot of South Australia*

Currently, I am training to obtain my commercial pilot license as well as my instrument rating. Instrument rating will enable me to become a qualified flight instructor. In the short-term, I will be working as an instructor and will apply to fly for private airlines (such as REX or Pel Air), whilst, my long-term vision is to become the chief pilot for Cathay Pacific or ANA Japan Airlines.

From my positive learning experiences to become the 1st qualified Vietnamese female pilot in Australia, together with the success and personal achievements I have gained, I am a strong ambassador for the aviation industry and will continue to encourage and promote this career path to all students (especially females) around the globe.

I remember my first flight as it was only yesterday. I was in a small G115B model Grob, named Julia Victor Tango. I went up for a performance and attitude lesson. This lesson helped me familiarize myself in knowing what picture to see outside the cockpit window when cursing, climbing, turing and descending. I was very nervous, but excited at the same time. I taxied the aircraft to the runway and followed through on the controls with my instructor for the take off. Once in the air I relaxed and took in the scenery. Everything underneath me was so small. Once the lesson was

