



Virtual Flight Academy - Quick Start Guide

Ready to get started learning to fly or maintaining proficiency? EAA Virtual Flight Academy will help you build the confidence and competence to get it done! This guide explains the hardware and software requirements to get started.

Step 1: Hardware

1a. Computer

The EAA Virtual Flight Academy (VFA) requires a PC capable of running Microsoft Flight Simulator X Steam Edition (FSXSE). While most computers built in the last five years are capable of running the software, EAA encourages you to review the FSX Insider Guide to requirements and installation. [>> FSXSE Hardware & Installation Requirements](#)

1b. Flight Controls

You could fly VFA with a keyboard and mouse, but for a better user experience, EAA recommends the purchase of at least a compatible stick, or a yoke and rudder pedal system.

EAA has negotiated exclusive discounts for members with flight simulator control manufacturers. Follow this link to see our current discounts: [>> Flight Control Discounts](#)

Sporty's and Aircraft Spruce also offer several controller options: [>> Sporty's Simulator Flight Controls](#) [>> Aircraft Spruce Simulator Flight Controls](#)

Step 2: Software

2a. Steam

VFA runs on top of FSXSE, which is available for under \$25 from Steam (a platform for licensing simulator and gaming software). [>> Install Steam](#)

2b. Steam Account

You will need an account on Steam to begin purchasing software. [>> Create a Steam Account](#)

2c. Microsoft Flight Simulator X

To purchase FSXSE and add to your Steam account, add the software to your cart, log in, pay, and download the software. Open and run the software to make sure it installed correctly and then close it. [>> Purchase and Install FSX](#)

2d. TakeFlight Account

Create an account with TakeFlight Interactive, verify your email and EAA Membership.
[>> Create a TakeFlight Account](#)

2e. EAA Virtual Flight Academy Stage 1

EAA Members receive free access to Stage 1. [>> Download Stage 1](#)

2f. EAA Virtual Flight Academy Stage 2+

Additional stages of EAA Virtual Flight Academy are available at 10% off list for EAA Members. [>> Purchase Stage 2+](#)

Step 3: Launch EAA Virtual Flight Academy

Once you have the hardware and software, the next step is to launch EAA Virtual Flight Academy and get flying! Double click on the EAA Virtual Flight Academy desktop icon, log in with your TakeFlight account, select a maneuver, view the briefing, and click Fly Now!



Virtual Flight Academy - User Guide

Getting Started with EAA Virtual Flight Academy

What is EAA Virtual Flight Academy?

Imagine having a virtual flight instructor in your home or hangar that you could sit down and get quality flight instruction anytime. Well now you do! Powered by TakeFlight Interactive's virtual instructor technology, you will be guided through short and highly re-playable scenarios where you will learn the same flight maneuvers and techniques used in the real airplane. You will hear clear instruction on what to do, and get real-time feedback on how well you're doing. In addition, you'll be scored based on the Federal Aviation Administration's Airmen Certification Standards. All of your scores and progress is stored in the cloud so you can take it with you. Use it at home, the hangar, or the Young Eagles Rally!

Now you can climb in the cockpit with more confidence and have a lot more fun!



Software Limitations & Notice: Use of Microsoft Flight Simulator is limited entertainment purposes and not to be used as part of an approved curriculum. If interested in TakeFlight Interactive training solutions, contact TakeFlight Interactive at support@takeflightinteractive.com

System Requirements

Simulator Software

EAA Virtual Flight Academy requires Microsoft Flight Simulator: Steam Edition (FSXSE), which can be purchased online from the Steam Store: [-> https://store.steampowered.com/app/314160/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/314160/)

Note: Steam is a popular software digital distribution service and requires installation of the Steam client application before running FSXSE.

PC & Peripherals

The minimum system requirements to run Microsoft Flight Simulator X: Steam Edition are:

- OS: Windows® XP Service Pack 2 or later (not available for Mac/iOS)

- Processor: 2.0 Ghz or higher
- Memory: 2 GB RAM
- Graphics: DirectX®9 compliant video card or greater, 256 MB video RAM or higher, Shader Model 1.1 or higher (Laptop versions of these chipsets may work but are not supported. Updates to your video and sound card drivers may be required)
- DirectX: Version 9.0c
- Network: Broadband Internet connection
- Hard Drive: 30 GB available space
- Flight controllers such as a joystick or yoke and pedals are **highly recommended!**

Detailed Installation Instructions

1. Install and run Microsoft Flight Simulator Steam Edition (FSXSE).

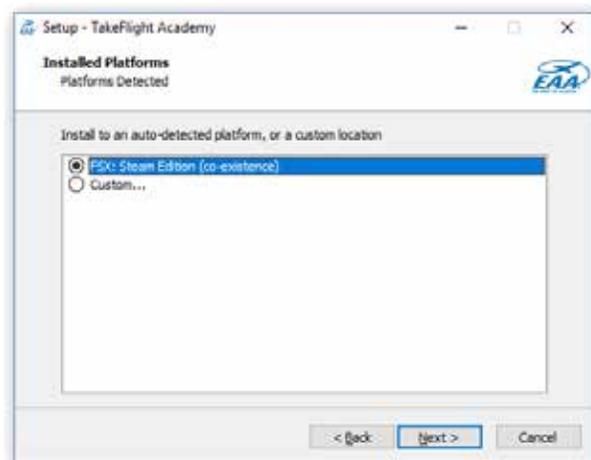
- Use Steam to purchase and install FSXSE (see Requirements above).
 - Install the Steam client application (if you do not already have it) from: [>> Store.SteamPowered.com/about/](https://store.steampowered.com/about/)
 - Purchase and install FSXSE: [>> Store.SteamPowered.com/app/314160/Microsoft_Flight_Simulator_X_Steam_Edition/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/314160/Microsoft_Flight_Simulator_X_Steam_Edition/)
- Launch FSXSE from the desktop icon or through the Steam Library to verify that you are able to run the simulator.

Note: It is important this is done **before installation of EAA Virtual Flight Academy.**
- Check that your flight controls are properly configured and that you are able to fly the aircraft including trim, throttle and all control surfaces (see the Flight Controls section below).
- This is a good time to adjust the graphics settings to suit your PC (see the Graphics & Performance section below).
- Once you are happy with the performance of FSXSE and peripherals on your system, continue to step 2.

2. Install EAA Virtual Flight Academy

- Run the EAA Virtual Flight Academy installer you downloaded by using the browser, or doubleclicking the file.
- Follow the prompts to install EAA Virtual Flight Academy into FSX: Steam Edition.

Note: The installer will let you know if you do not have the required components.



3. Launch EAA Virtual Flight Academy

- a) Double-click the EAA Virtual Flight Academy application from the desktop icon
- b) Log in with your TakeFlight account



- c) Select a maneuver and start flying!

Note: On first launch, FSXSE may take longer than normal to configure scenery at start

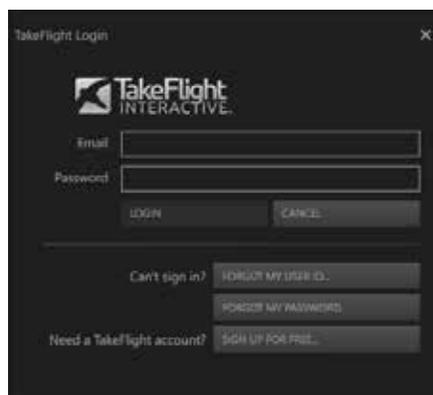
How to use EAA Virtual Flight Academy

1. Launch

After successful installation, launch EAA Virtual Flight Academy using the desktop icon.

2. Log-In

Log in using the same email and password you created at [>>> Academy.TakeFlight.com](https://Academy.TakeFlight.com). If you've forgotten or lost your password, you can reset it here: [>>> Academy.TakeFlightinteractive.com/account/forgotpassword](https://Academy.TakeFlightinteractive.com/account/forgotpassword)



3. Select a Maneuver

It is recommended that do the maneuvers in order. The virtual instructor expects you have the knowledge and skills presented in previous lessons.



4. Review the Briefing

Use the Next/Previous to move through the briefing pages and use the arrow on the left side of the briefing to go back, or select program title on the far left.



5. Fly!

- a) Select a scenario to launch by clicking on the scenario.
 - i) Training – Training scenarios offer full instruction, feedback and scoring.
 - ii) Evaluation – Evaluations are tests of the skills you learned in the Training scenario and are scored like the Training scenario, but without the instructions and feedback.

Note: You should only attempt Evaluation scenarios when very familiar with the format of the Training scenario. The virtual instructor will not prompt you for expected actions.



b) Select the scenario start point.

i) Using your mouse or number keys, select the phase of the mission from which you'd like to start. If you've flown Normal Takeoff several times, you've likely heard and understand the Introduction dialog and would rather get to the flying.



c) Scoring Screen

i) Select Try Again to reload the scenario, or Exit to quit. Always try again!

ii) **Note:** To quickly restart a scenario, press the [Ctrl] + [;] keys simultaneously.



Getting the Most out of EAA Virtual Flight Academy in FSXS

Accessing Simulator Settings

To access the various settings mentioned below, use the menu bar across the top screen when in-flight. If you do not see this menu, press and hold the [Alt] key to unhide it.



Flight Controllers

Good flight controller peripherals are critical getting the most out of your sim. Familiarity with your controls is a large part of this. If new to simulation, be patient.

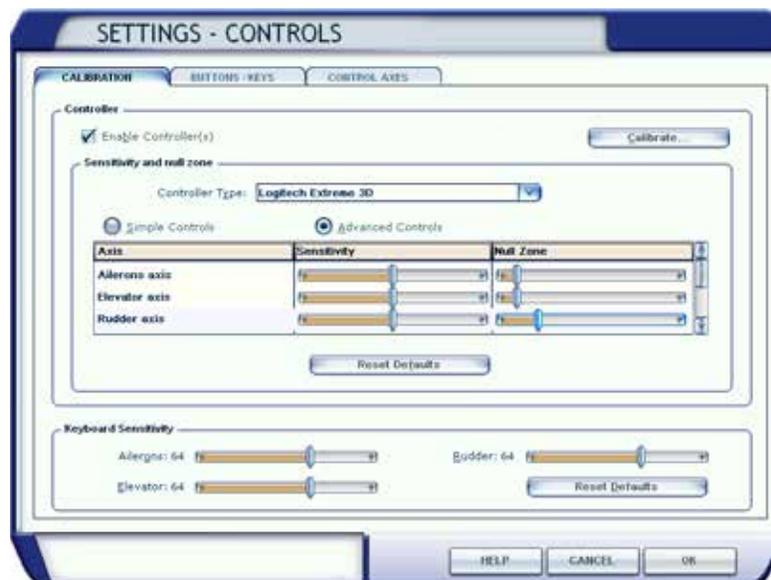
Choosing a Controller

We at TakeFlight Interactive believe there are advantages in using a joystick versus inexpensive yokes. The lack of control pressure on consumer yokes can lead to poor transfer to the aircraft. The joystick allows you to focus on the learning maneuver, without learning incorrect muscle-memory on a yoke that does not exhibit realistic control pressures. That said, many prefer to fly with a yoke on their sim.

See a few of our recommended flight controllers below.

Controllers Settings - Sensitivity

Control sensitivity has a huge impact on how the virtual aircraft "feels". Unfortunately, the preferred sensitivity setting for each controller can vary. Access the control settings through the FSX Menu > Options > Settings > Controls. Here's a good starting point for control sensitivities:



If the aircraft banks, pitches or yaws too quickly when you manipulate the controls, then lower the sensitivity settings for that control surface. If it feels too sluggish, increase the sensitivity.

Controllers Settings - Calibration

A properly calibrated controller resets to center with hands off. If your well-trimmed aircraft will not fly straight, or the brakes will not disengage. It's likely time to calibrate your joystick. Access calibration settings through the FSX Menu > Options > Settings > Controls.



Controllers Settings - Default Controller Mappings for Common Controllers

Logitech Extreme 3D Pro



Thrustmaster T.16000M

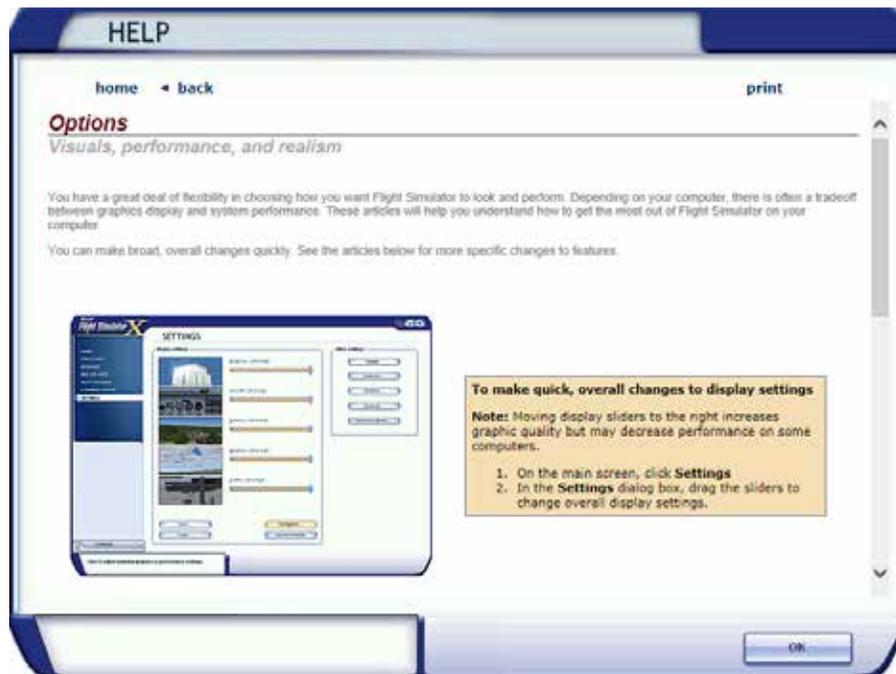


CH Yoke



Flight Simulator X Learning Center

The Learning Center inside FSXSE can be accessed from the simulation menu Help > Resource Center and contains much information on configuring and getting the most out of your simulator.



Simulation Performance Tips

There is always a balance between the best graphics, and higher performance. By performance, we mean how fast the simulation refreshes the screen, also called frame-rate. If you turn the graphics up too high for the computer you're using, you will can get slow frame-rates, which makes a simulator stutter, harder to fly, and feel terrible. It's always better to back-down on the graphics settings to get a sufficiently high-frame rate and fluid flight experience. 30+ frames per second (FPS) should provide a smooth flight experience.

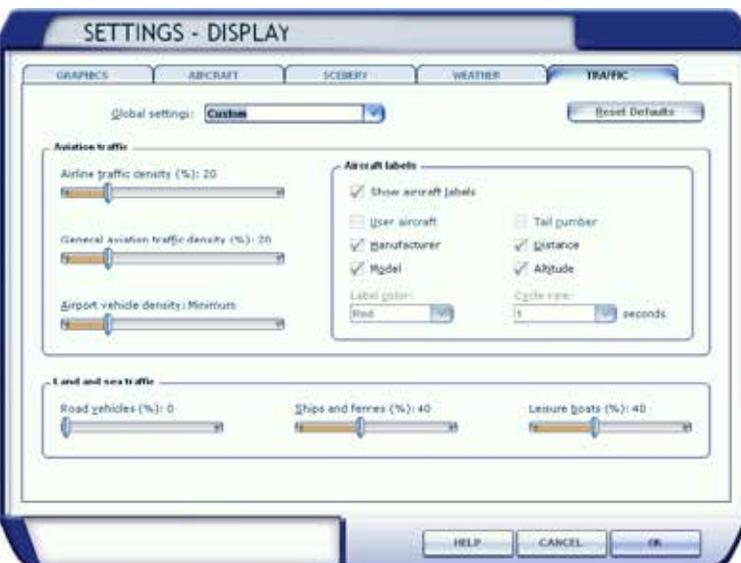
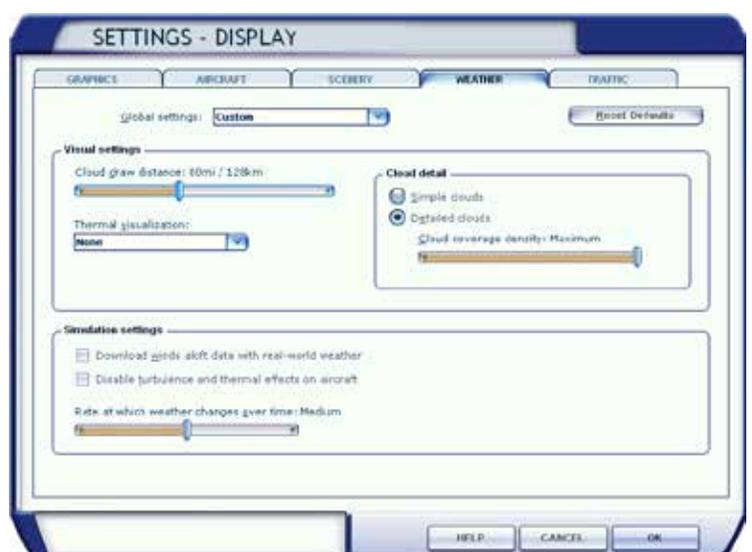
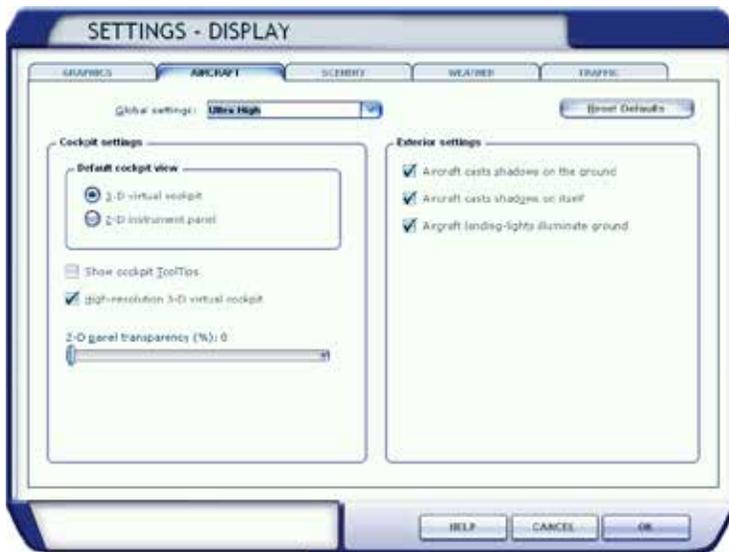
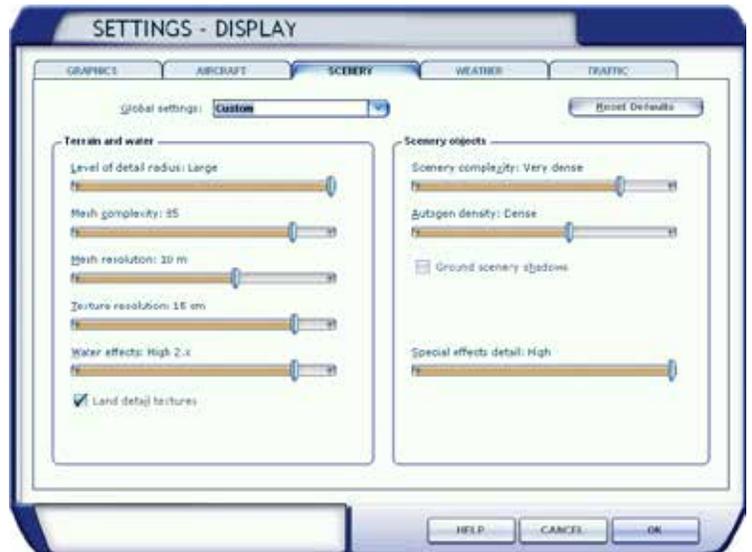
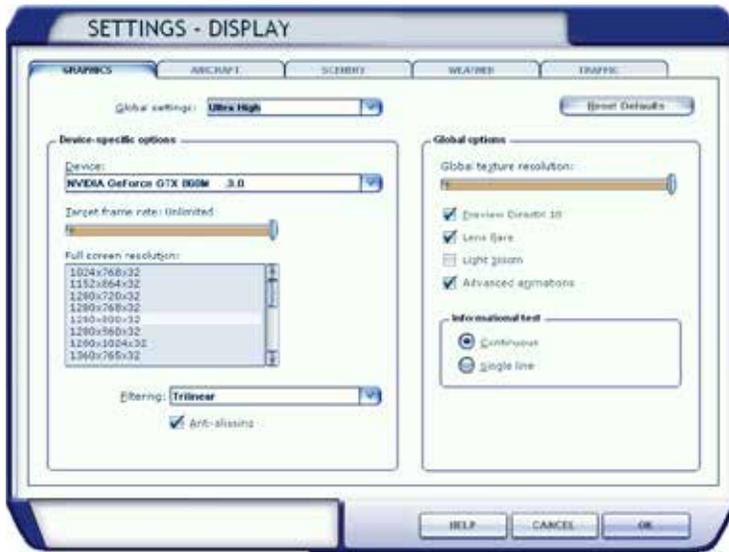
To display your current frame-rate on-screen, while the sim is running, press [Shift] + [Z] simultaneously two times.

Display and Graphics Settings

Much has been made about the multitude of configuration settings for Microsoft Flight Simulator X. We'll spare you the details by providing our recommended settings to get you going. The following settings are configured for an older laptop, so should work well for any modern PC.

To Access the Display settings through the FSX menu > Options > Settings > Display

There are several tabs within the Display settings:

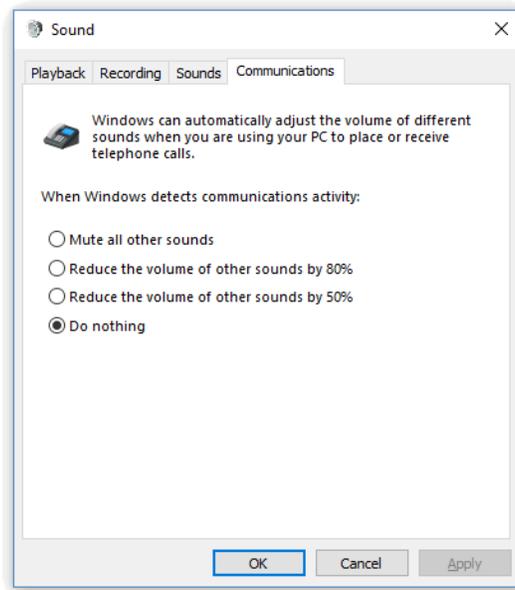


Remember. If your simulator is not running smoothly, turn down the graphics settings!

Frequently Asked Questions

Why does the instructor voice mute or quiet sounds on my PC?

This is a Windows Sound setting. To fix, go to the Sound Control Panel in Windows, select the Communications tab, then select Do Nothing.



Do I need an internet connection for TakeFlight Academy?

For initial download of the software, a broadband internet connection is ideal. However, this can be done from a different computer and transferred to the simulator using a USB drive.

You will need an internet connection for logging in to TakeFlight as well. This does not require much bandwidth, and many customers use a mobile hotspot on their phone to do so if the simulator is not connected to the internet.

I heard "An error has occurred, please restart and try again" - what should I do?

With the simulator still running, press [Ctrl] + [;] (Control and semicolon keys simultaneously) to restart the scenario.

If restarting the scenario doesn't correct the issue, exit the sim, close EAA Virtual Flight Academy and restart the application.

What do I do if the EAA Virtual Flight Academy application appears to be frozen?

Press [Ctrl] + [Alt] + [Del], find TakeFlight Academy, right-click and select End Task. If none of these resolves your issue, see the links below to get help.

How do I uninstall EAA Virtual Flight Academy?

If you're looking to uninstall EAA Virtual Flight Academy, it will be listed under "TakeFlight Academy" in Windows > Add or Remove Programs.

Support

If you need help, please visit the forum before contacting Support.

1. Visit the EAA VFA Forum at [>> EAAForums.org](https://EAAForums.org) to see if the community has an answer to your question.
2. If you still need assistance, contact EAA Member Services at: [>> EAA.org/Contact](https://EAA.org/Contact)
Be sure to have as much information on hand as possible. TakeFlight Academy creates a log file containing detailed information. When you see an error, it's best to save and send the log file right away. Here's how:
 - a) Open a file explorer window (Win+R, type Explorer, then hit Enter)
 - b) Paste this path into the navigation bar:
`%LocalAppData%\TakeFlight Interactive\TakeFlightAcademy\Logs\`
 - c) Copy the Log.txt to an alternate location (so it's not overwritten on your next flight). Please include Log.txt in your email, thank you!