

Aerospace Engineer

Design the things that fly. Four years of hard math, then aircraft, rockets, satellites or missiles.

TYPICAL PAY

\$134,960

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$87k to \$206k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 8 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Aircraft makers, defense contractors, space agencies, win...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 Calculus, physics and chemistry. Strong math grades are what get you into an engineering program.
- 2 Bachelor's degree in aerospace or mechanical engineering** 4 years
 Four years, accredited by ABET (the body that accredits engineering degrees in the United States). Embry-Riddle's aerospace degree runs 129 credits with tracks in aeronautics, astronautics, jet propulsion and rocket propulsion.
- 3 Internships or co-op** Summers, or a six month term
 A paid placement at a manufacturer, a research lab or a government center. This is how most graduates get hired.
- 4 First engineering job** Year 1
 You work under experienced engineers on one small part of a huge system. Expect two years before you own anything.
- 5 Optional license or master's** 4 or more years
 The Fundamentals of Engineering exam, four years of experience and the Principles and Practice of Engineering exam gets you a Professional Engineer license. Most aerospace engineers never need it.

Pros and cons

- + Among the highest paid four year degrees in the country
- + You work on things that genuinely did not exist before
- + Bright outlook with rapid projected growth
- The degree is hard and the dropout rate is high
- Jobs cluster in a handful of states
- Most defense work needs citizenship and a clearance

Good to know

Accreditation is a global system

ABET (the accrediting body for engineering degrees in the United States) has accredited 4,863 programs at 950 institutions across 42 countries, and more than 200,000 students graduate from them every year.

68 boards, one exam system

There is no national engineering license. The National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying coordinates 68 separate state and territory licensing boards, which is why the exams are national.

Optional boosts

Propulsion. Aerodynamics. Structures and materials. Guidance, navigation and control.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Aerospace Engineers (17-2011.00)

NCEES: engineering licensure

ABET: accreditation

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University: Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Engineering

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/aerospace-engineer>



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