How to Obtain a Student Pilot Certificate

A Student Pilot Certificate is required before your first solo. You may obtain it any time. The application starts online but must be completed in person.

1. Go to https://iacra.faa.gov and click the "Register" link near the upper right corner of the page.
2. Create an account.
    a. Select "Applicant"
    b. Review the Terms of Service (TOS)
    c. Click the "Agree to TOS and Continue>>" button to move on.
3. Fill out your IACRA - User Profile Information as accurately as possible.
    a. Your name should closely match the name on your photo ID.
    b. Leave "Airman Certificate Number" and "Date of Issuance" fields blank.
    c. Social Security Number: Many pilots select "Do Not Use," but this is up to you.
4. **Remember your login credentials**: you will need them at various times throughout your pilot training.
5. After registering, login with your new credentials.
6. Click the "Start New Application" button.
    a. The Application Type will be "Pilot"
    b. Pilot Certification will be "Student Pilot"
    c. Click the Start Application button.
7. Fill in the personal Information section and click the Save & Continue button.
8. Submit the application.
    a. On the final page, IACRA will display an FTN (FAA Tracking Number). The FTN is a single, permanent number uniquely assigned to your records.
    b. **Write down the FTN**, as it is the only way for your CFI to find your record later. If you lose or forget it, it can be found under "User Information" after you log in to IACRA.
9. Collect proof of citizenship (*unexpired* passport or *original* birth certificate), a government photo ID (driver's license, military ID), and the FTN.
10. Meet with your instructor (CFI), designated examiner (DPE), or go to the local FAA district office (FSDO).
11. Your CFI will:
    a. Verify your documents
    b. Find and submit your application in IACRA
12. To meet the TSA's requirements under 49 CFR § 1552.3, your CFI must do one of the following:
    a. Keep a copy of the documents used to provide proof of citizenship for 5 years; or
    b. Make an endorsement in *both* the student's logbook and instructor's logbook, or other record used by the instructor to record flight student endorsements, with the following statement:
    c. "I certify that (First name, MI, Last name) has presented me a [insert type of document presented, such as a U.S. birth certificate or U.S. passport, and the relevant control or sequential number on the document, if any] establishing that [he or she] is a U.S. citizen or national in accordance with 49 CFR § 1552.3(h)."
    /s/ [date] J. J. Jones 987654321CFI Exp. 12-31-19

You will receive your Student Pilot Certificate (a plastic ID card) in the mail, with an expected timeline of three weeks, according to the FAA, though that will vary based on their workload. A few days after you submit the form you should be able to log back into IACRA and print a temporary certificate, with which you can solo. When solo as a student, you will be required to fly with this certificate, your medical, your logbook, and your photo ID.

Endorsements are written in your logbook (including the citizenship endorsement). You should consider obtaining a logbook if you do not already have one.

Student Pilot Certificates acquired under this process do not expire. Your medical must be obtained separately.

References: FAA.gov, Advisory Circular 61-65G Appendices A & B. Current as of 24 February 2018.