Report for Elias Kontanis at KHEF

Region: Eastern

Below is a summary of scores and feedback from all the usable evaluations which were submitted for you during the 2026 Flight Training Experience Award application period. Many flight training providers receive exceptionally high scores so we also share with you the distribution of the overall aggregate scores for comparison.

1. Eligibility

To be eligible for an award, you needed to receive at least 5 unique evaluations, each at least 80% complete

A survey response was considered 'usable' if the respondent answered at least 80% of the questions required for scoring.
A CFI was considered 'eligible' for an award if they received at least 5 unique, usable responses.
Average scores were based on all usable responses received and have been rounded where necessary.
Your percentile rank was calculated by comparing your score to scores of all other (nominated/eligible) CFIs. Percentile ranks were calculated at both national and regional levels and may have been rounded.
Your performance (percentile rank) compared to all other eligible CFIs in your region was one of many factors that informed award decisions.

You received 21 evaluations.

2. Free Responses

At the end of each evaluation, we ask the following open-ended question:

Why should or shouldn't your CFI win a Flight Training Experience Award?

3. Individual Overall Scores & Responses

Total Score	Student Review
90.00	Elias is a fantastic instructor. He is always on time and he cares greatly about the success of his students. Every time I fly with him he has a smile on his face and he shows me something new. His experience really shines and he is a very effective teacher and mentor. After flying with Elias I felt more confident in my skills and abilities and I felt he made me a safer and more competent pilot.

86.00	There are three main reasons why I strongly believe Elias is the best candidate for the Flight Training Experience Award: 1) Safety, proficiency and risk management is the priority: On absolutely every lesson, being ground or flight, Elias incorporates into the learning environment how to manage risks for a continuous safe flying environment. There are key teaching moments in every aspect of his training and this comes from his many years of experience in the field. I have had several instructors during my 17 years as a pilot and on one brings risk management and safety issues to training like Elias. 2) Currency of knowledge that builds on years of experience: He is able o connect the essentials of aviation knowledge with the most current trends and issues affecting aviation. Throughout my Instrument Rating training he bring backs basic aviation concepts and connects them to the most current issues (regulations, safety, skills, technology) that can have both positive and negative effects on piloting skills. I value a lot that Elia is also at the forefront of how to use technology in a practical and safe way. Nonetheless, he always goes back to the basics of aviation training for each particular topic. 3) Integrity and excellence: Elias, above all, is a wonderful person, respectful and extremely professional. During my training he has been able to get to know me as a person and pilot - and I know I can always reach out with questions outside the classroom environment. He upholds values that I relate with such as respect for others and service to the broader aviation community. In sum, training with Elias has been the best experience I have had throughout my years as a pilot.
90.00	Easiest recommendation ever! Elias is as close as you can get to being the perfect instructor. He is incredibly understanding, patient, easy-going, safety conscious, and professional. I come away from every lesson feeling like my time and money were well spent, and I find myself using the aviation insights learned from flying with him with my own students. His experience and passion makes learning to fly multi very fun, and the lesson planning/flight plans provide a ton of bang for the buck. On a recent flight we did all the maneuvers, extended leaning beyond the minimum requirements, and logged xc time all while being super accommodating to my schedule. Fly with Elias! You will learn a lot!
90.00	Elias is outstanding. His instruction and communication skills are top notch. He was flexible in helping me complete my Civilian instrument rating prior to my military PCS.
90.00	Great friendly instructor and very professional
90.00	Elias Kontanis should be presented with this honor because he is the most competent and professional flight instructor that all of us here in Manassas, VA have ever seen and/or had the privilege to fly with. Unlike most CFI's, Elias does not educate and instruct for the purposes of building time or creating his primary source of income. Elias is fully vested in every single aspect of flight safety because of his passion for flying and aviation safety overall. Elias seamlessly transitions his expertise in aviation safety across new pilots, existing pilots and classroom/educational forums. The impact this approach has on his students, his flight school and the general public at large will be realized for decades into the future. There are other instructors who short their students and leave some aspects of safe flying uncovered or poorly understood. Elias is not one of those people. Elias is able to put students through their paces with an unwavering positive attitude that builds their confidence and flying abilities. Elias is comfortable giving students the ability to complete flights that positively push their personal development while remaining 100% safe under his watchful eye. The benefits of having received instruction from Elias shine brightest on cloudy IMC days. Days where pilot competency is put to the test in challenging and unforgiving environments. Elias trains pilots on the actual air work and avionics competency. But most importantly, have the understanding and discipline to only attempt flights that match their currency and abilities on that particular day. Those same pilots are also confident making no-go decisions as well adjusted professionals because of the philosophies Elias instills in them. I have participated in and benefited from Elias's thoroughness and dedication to every type of instruction for over 6 years. Whether in ground school, simulator or actual flight, Elias exposes his students to critical concepts and application of aviation safety in everything he says and does. Every lesson is customized to his pilots individual abilities as they develop. Elias does not shy away from teaching pilots the complete envelope of safe flying. Pilots who have had the fortune of flying with Elias come away with both practical skills and the theoretical understanding of aviation safety. Instructional flights with Elias are investments that pay immense benefits for the pilots who receive them. And, the passengers those same pilots take in their own planes when the lessons are complete. I for one, adjust my personal and professional schedules as needed to take advantage of opportunities to fly with Elias anytime they become available. Ed Graves President Quality Services Moving Lorton, VA ed@qsmoving.com 703-906-0118
85.00	Elias Kontanis is a very kind, talented, and professional flight instructor. He makes every lesson and stage check a valuable learning experience while keeping a very positive and welcoming atmosphere. He is incredibly passionate about safety and makes a very strong effort to dive into the many ways pilots can sharpen their skills to make aviation a safer industry for everyone.

90.00	Elias is one of the best examples of someone with a passion for safe aviation. With Elias day job at the NSTB he has a strong desire to make sure all his students are the safest, best prepared pilots they can be. He truly operates as an advocate for proficiency and safety. Elias always makes the time to be available whether it’s 6am flight training, or a quick call to discuss concerns about weather and flight planning. He is a would class flight instructor and the reason I continue to train.
90.00	Elias is one of the most knowledgeable and experienced instructors I have worked with. When I need a second perspective on maneuvers or knowledge checks, Elias is my go-to. He has a positive and professional attitude and is very calm when dealing with students at all levels. He is deserving of recognition as among the best.
86.00	Elias Kontanis should win a Flight Training Experience Award because of his determination to create and guide professional pilots. I have no doubt that any student who flies with Elias will come away with improved skills and attitude towards flying. Elias has proved his advanced aviation knowledge and continues to learn new things every day. His prioritization of safety and professionalism while adjusting the lesson intensity to the individual student makes for a great learning environment. He has prepared me for unusual circumstances and trained emergency situations to a point of high proficiency. These are just a few of the great traits I have noticed in Elias over the past 2 years.
88.00	In more than 24 years of flying and as an instructor myself, I have flown with many instructors. The unfortunate reality is that some instructors are more knowledgeable than others, and some are also better teachers than others. To that end, Elias is both a very knowledge instructor, as well as a very good teacher. The flying that I have done with him over the past year or so has generally focused instrument proficiency, with a specific emphasis on expanding my knowledge of using the G1000 in the en route environment. Each time that I have flown with Elias, I have walked away feeling that I am both a better instrument pilot and a better instrument instructor. He combines his in-depth knowledge of instrument operations and the G1000 with an approach to teaching that is focused on helping the student or pilot accomplish their goals. With all of that said, I would very much recommend that a pilot at any level of certification or experience fly with Elias. He is clearly a very knowledgeable instructor who is able to teach complex subject matter to students/pilots in the airplane, which obviously isn't always the best classroom for such teaching. Specific to the flying that I have done with him, he has also been very supportive of my goal of being a better and more knowledgeable instrument pilot and instructor. It is clear to me that he sees the value of continued education for pilots at all levels of certification and experience. It is for those reasons and many others I believe that Elias should win a Flight Training Experience Award.
90.00	Elias is an outstanding instructor who is always on time, prepared, organized, and motivated for every training session. Elias is a highly skilled and experienced instructor who makes sure his students know the purpose, conditions, and standard of each lesson while also making sure each lesson is fun and safe.
90.00	Elias should get the award due to his love of flight instruction. Many flight instructors view the occupation as a stepping stone to something else. Not Elias. Becoming a flight instructor was his goal and I shows in his enthusiasm for the job. I flew with Elias a few times this year, with one of them being my final stage check for CMEL. Elias provided quality instruction every time and I walked away a better pilot. So much so that I sought him out as my instructor for Multi Engine Instructor. Totally deserving of the award.
86.00	Elias has been instructing for a long time, and unlike many other instructors, is not time building or trying to achieve some arbitrary goal in aviation. He is instructing because he loves what he is doing and it shows in his instruction. Elias is a methodical and safety-minded instructor with a wealth of knowledge that he passes on to his students.
79.00	This was the examiner for my CPL FSC. Elias was always very cordial and professional throughout the ride. His oral exam questions were structured to ensure that the student is capable of thinking on their toes and have a practical understanding of the material that they can apply to meet the needs of different situations, as opposed to ensuring the student has memorized pedantic knowledge. Furthermore, the oral felt much more conversational than other examiners I have flown with. Because of this, he was able to deliver a comprehensive and efficient oral exam where I learned practical advice. During the flight portion, Elias delivered a comprehensive flight portion that was challenging and enlightening the same way the oral was. Overall, as an examiner, this instructor provides a challenging and comprehensive exam, while also ensuring that the student continues learning and improving whenever possible.

90.00	It is my genuine pleasure to recommend Elias Kontanis for the flight training experience award. I had the pleasure of training under him for my Instrument Rating at Aviation Adventures, and I can confidently say that he was instrumental to my success. What sets Elias apart is his genuine passion for teaching, he gets real enjoyment out of seeing students succeed. He has a knack for explaining complex concepts, such as IFR procedures and instrument approaches, in a way that makes them easy to understand. When I struggled with a particular concept, he had the patience to stick with it, offering different explanations or techniques until it clicked for me. Elias has a true professional's mindset. He instilled in me the importance of staying ahead of the aircraft and sound aeronautical decision making skills. He was always prepared for every lesson, and our sessions were always productive and well-organized. I honestly believe that Elias's guidance prepared me to be a safe, competent, and confident instrument pilot.
90.00	It is my privilege to recommend Elias for this AOPA award. I have the opportunity to train under Elias for my CFI-Instrument certification, and his professionalism, teaching skill, and commitment to excellence left a lasting impression. From the first lesson, it was evident that Elias holds himself to the highest instructional standards. He approaches each flight with meticulous preparation, never glossing over pre- or post-flight briefings. Every discussion is comprehensive and purposeful, reinforcing key learning points while identifying specific areas for improvement. Elias has an exceptional ability to break complex material into clear, manageable segments. He builds upon each concept in a logical, progressive manner that helps my understanding and long-term retention. His instructional style promotes both technical proficiency and critical thinking. Equally important, Elias is flexible and easy to work with when coordinating training schedules, demonstrating his genuine investment in my success. In every respect, Elias embodies the qualities of an outstanding flight instructor: professionalism, patience, precision, and passion for aviation education. He represents the very best in the flight training community and is highly deserving of this recognition.
90.00	It is my honor to recommend Elias for the AOPA Instructor of the Year Award. I am currently training with him for my Certified Flight Instructor rating, and I can say with confidence that he exemplifies the highest standards of aviation education, professionalism, and safety. Elias has played a pivotal role in shaping my development not only as a pilot, but as an instructor. His methodical approach to training has strengthened my understanding of risk management, aerodynamics, and the fundamentals of teaching—three pillars that are essential to producing safe, confident aviators. He consistently emphasizes sound aeronautical decision-making and safety-first principles, and he models those values in every flight and ground session. What sets Elias apart is his diligence and respect for the process of learning. He brings patience, professionalism, and genuine enthusiasm to every lesson, ensuring complex concepts are broken down into clear, digestible elements. His mentorship has instilled in me a deeper awareness of the responsibility and risk associated with aviation instruction, and has prepared me to carry forward a culture of safety in my future students. Elias is not simply teaching me to teach—he is shaping me into a safer, more competent aviator and a thoughtful instructor. His commitment to excellence and to the next generation of pilots is undeniable. For these reasons and more, I wholeheartedly support his nomination for AOPA Instructor of the Year.
90.00	Elias is one of the best instructors there is, he is great at explaining things and is very knowledgeable. You will learn a lot from him so I would recommend him.
86.00	Mr. Kontanis has been one of the best instructors thus far in my two years of flight training. He demonstrates a very high level of knowledge and proficiency in all aspects of aviation. He explains concepts very clearly and is able to elaborate on any topic to give you a deeper understanding. One characteristic that has really stood out to me is his passion for helping myself and other students succeed. When you work with him, it is evident that he wants to help you achieve your goals. He surely has a passion for teaching and has tremendous patience. What may be the most important aspect about Mr. Kontanis is his emphasis on aviation safety. Safety is always his number one priority and he teaches students to have the same mindset. Mr. Kontanis is a phenomenal instructor and I would recommend him to any other student! I strongly believe that he meets all criteria to win this award!
90.00	Elias is an outstanding instructor. He is knowledgable, patient, approachable, thoughtful and on top of all of that a wonderful person. I appreciate his dedication to flight instruction and the integrity with which he approaches each lesson - he comes prepared, he invests time in his students, and he ensures that we explore both the topics we must cover and the topics that present throughout the lesson thoroughly. He has inspired me to become and instructor and to be the best pilot I can be. He absolutely deserves recognition as on of AOPA's Flight Instructors of the Year!

4. Aggregate Overall Score (Range: 0 to 100)

This is the overall score you received from your customers in the 2026 Flight Training Experience Award application period:

Your Score: 88

4.1 Compared to All Nominees (those with at least 1 evaluation)

National Average: 86
Your national percentile ranking: 77%

Regional Average: 86
Your regional percentile ranking: 79%

4.2 Compared to All Eligible Nominees (those with at least 10 evaluations)

National Average: 87
Your national percentile ranking: 86%

Regional Average: 87
Your regional percentile ranking: 91%

5. SubScore Summary for at KHEF

Region: Eastern

The remaining sections summarize your individual subscores (range: 0 to 100) as they apply to each of the four areas from our Flight Training Experience Research: Educational Quality, Customer Focus, Community, and Information Sharing. You will also find national and regional averages, for benchmarking.

Subscore Summary:

	Your Score	National Avg
Educational Quality	99	98
Customer Focus	98	97
Community	96	92
Information Sharing	100	94
NetPromoter Score	100	95
Overall Total	99	95

6. Educational Quality Scale (Range: 0 to 100)

This is the score you received from your customers, derived solely from the questions related to Educational Quality; offering effective training from professional instructors who are dedicated to students' success

Your Score: 99

6.1 Compared to All Nominees (those with at least 1 evaluation)

National Average: 98
Your national percentile ranking: 25%

Regional Average: 98
Your regional percentile ranking: 25%

6.2 Compared to All Eligible Nominees (those with at least 10 evaluations)

National Average: 99
Your national percentile ranking: 22%

Regional Average: 99
Your regional percentile ranking: 22%

6.3 Responses per Question

My CFI consistently used a training syllabus that I could consult.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	20	95.24%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	4.76%

My CFI tailored their lessons plans to accommodate my personal strengths and weaknesses.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	20	95.24%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	4.76%

I felt safe flying with my CFI.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	21	100%

My CFI helped me feel prepared for unexpected situations in flight.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	20	95.24%
Somewhat Agree	1	4.76%

7. Customer Focus Scale (Range: 0 to 100)

This is the score you received from your customers, derived solely from the questions related to Customer Focus; adding value by demonstrating professionalism and engagement with students

Your Score: 98

7.1 Compared to All Nominees (those with at least 1 evaluation)

National Average: 97
Your national percentile ranking: 29%

Regional Average: 97
Your regional percentile ranking: 28%

7.2 Compared to All Eligible Nominees (those with at least 10 evaluations)

National Average: 98
Your national percentile ranking: 31%

Regional Average: 98
Your regional percentile ranking: 33%

7.3 Responses per Question

My CFI patiently helped me understand difficult concepts.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	20	95.24%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	4.76%

I feel like my CFI made efficient use of my time.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	21	100%

My CFI was not invested in my success.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	1	4.76%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	4.76%
Strongly Disagree	19	90.48%

My CFI was reliable and on-time for scheduled lessons

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	20	95.24%
Somewhat Agree	1	4.76%

8. Community Focus Scale (Range: 0 to 100)

This is the score you received from your customers, derived solely from the questions related to Community; emphasizing social connections and accomplishments.

Your Score: 96

8.1 Compared to All Nominees (those with at least 1 evaluation)

National Average: 92
Your national percentile ranking: 69%

Regional Average: 92
Your regional percentile ranking: 65%

8.2 Compared to All Eligible Nominees (those with at least 10 evaluations)

National Average: 94
Your national percentile ranking: 74%

Regional Average: 94
Your regional percentile ranking: 71%

8.3 Responses per Question

After training with my CFI,I feel like amember of the general aviation community.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	20	95.24%
Somewhat Agree	1	4.76%

My instructor expressed that people like me should not fly.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Neither agree nor disagree	3	14.29%
Strongly Disagree	18	85.71%

My CFI introduced me to students, new pilots, and members of the local aviation community.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	16	76.19%
Somewhat Agree	3	14.29%
Neither agree nor disagree	2	9.52%

My CFI shared relevant information to help me continue flying after training (e.g. how to find flying clubs, purchase an aircraft, or start an aviation career)

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	17	80.95%
Somewhat Agree	4	19.05%

9. Information Sharing Scale (Range: 0 to 100)

This is the score you received from your customers, derived solely from the questions related to Information Sharing; educating and empowering students to make informed decisions about flight training investments.

Your Score: 100

9.1 Compared to All Nominees (those with at least 1 evaluation)

National Average: 94
Your national percentile ranking: 92%

Regional Average: 94
Your regional percentile ranking: 89%

9.2 Compared to All Eligible Nominees (those with at least 10 evaluations)

National Average: 95

Your national percentile ranking: 98%

Regional Average: 95
Your regional percentile ranking: 96%

9.3 Responses per Question

I always understood the steps required to reach my flight training goals with my CFI.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	21	100%

My flight training with my CFI has required more time and/or money than I expected.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Somewhat Disagree	1	4.76%
Strongly Disagree	20	95.24%

Sometimes I did not know what my flight lessons would cover.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Disagree	21	100%

My CFI introduced me to online resources (like flight planning tools or weather sources) and showed how they can be used to aid my decision making.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	20	95.24%
Somewhat Agree	1	4.76%

10.Net Promoter Score

10.1 Questionaire Responses

The Net Promoter Score is generated by asking customers how likely they would be to recommend a given product or service - in this case, your services as a flight instructor to another potential customer, on an 11 point scale.

How likely are you to recommend your CFI to someone interested in flight training?

Response Choice	Frequency	%
10	21	100%

10.2 NPS Grouping

Responses to this question are then used to sort customers into one of three groups:

Detractor: Less likely to use your services again and may not speak highly of your services to others.

Passive: Generally somewhat satisfied, passive respondents likely won't help or hurt your business in talking to other people.

Promoters: Ideally, all of your customers would be promoters. Promoters would fly with you again in the future and would tell others how great they think you are.

Response Choice	Frequency	%
Promoter	21	100%

10.3 Standardized Score Calculation

The overall Net Promoter Score is calculated by subtracting the percentage of your customers who are 'detractors' from the percentage of your customers you are 'promoters.' Thus, the overall Net Promoter Score can range from - 100 to 100.

For more information on the Net Promoter Score and how to interpret it, check out: https://www.medallia.com/net-promoter-score

Your Score: 100

10.3.1 Compared to All Nominees (those with at least 1 evaluation)

National Average: 95
Your national percentile ranking: 60%

Regional Average: 96
Your regional percentile ranking: 56%

10.3.2 Compared to All Eligible Nominees (those with at least 10 evaluations)

National Average: 97
Your national percentile ranking: 62%

Regional Average: 98
Your regional percentile ranking: 58%