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Report of External Evaluation and Review

Waikato Aero Club Incorporated
trading as Waikato Aviation

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 14 February 2018

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Final Report

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by Government to inform investors, the public, students, prospective students, communities, employers, and other interested parties. It is also intended to be used by the TEO itself for quality improvement purposes.

Introduction

1. TEO in context

Name of TEO:	Waikato Aero Club Incorporated trading as Waikato Aviation
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	25 May 2001
Location:	Steele Road, RD2, Hamilton (Hamilton Airport)
Delivery sites:	As above
Courses currently delivered:	New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane) (Airline Preparation and Flight Instruction strands) (Level 6)
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 23 International: nil
Number of staff:	Four full-time and four part-time instructors; three administration/management
Scope of active accreditation:	Programmes and training schemes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane) (Flight Instruction) (Level 6)• New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Airline Preparation) (Level 6) Unit standard domains: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aviation Core (to level 6)

- Aviation Operation (to level 6)
- A range of domain and unit standards in core generics (to level 3)

Recent significant changes: In 2015 Waikato Aviation restructured its senior management team to place greater emphasis on leading education outcomes.

The rebranding of the organisation to Waikato Aviation has emphasised the focus as a wider training organisation and providing more than club flying.

In 2016 Waikato Aviation introduced the Airline Preparation Strand to the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation, with a view to further focusing the organisation on training for specific education outcomes.

Previous quality assurance history: Waikato Aviation's previous external evaluation and review (EER) was held in April 2014. It resulted in judgements of Highly Confident in educational performance and Confident in capability in self-assessment.

Other: The certification and operation of organisations conducting aviation training and assessments in New Zealand is prescribed under Part 141 of Civil Aviation Rules. These rules are governed by the Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand (CAA). All theory and practical (flight test) assessments are conducted independently by Aviation Services Ltd, which operates under licence to CAA.¹ All pilot licences are issued by CAA.

Waikato Aviation's authorisation under Part 141 was renewed by CAA in September 2013. This renewal lasts for five years.

Waikato Aviation is applying to become a signatory to the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice, but the application is still in progress, with the initial application declined.

¹ Given that all summative assessment is through external examination, providers do not require a moderation system.

The organisation has also had an application for a training scheme for international pilots put on hold as it had passed the due timeframe.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope for the EER covered:

- New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane) (Level 6), encompassing strands in Airline Preparation and Flight Instruction, which includes the Private Pilot Licence and Commercial Pilot Licence. This focus area encapsulates all of the teaching and programme delivery activities of Waikato Aviation.

3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the web document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

The EER was conducted in mid-December 2017. Before the EER site visit, the lead evaluator had telephone and email discussions with the training manager of Waikato Aviation to discuss the visit and agree the scope of the EER.

An evaluation team of two made a one and a half day EER visit to the Waikato Aviation site at Hamilton airfield. There, the evaluation team reviewed a range of documentation and met with:

- Chief executive and chief flying officer
- Training manager
- Office and administration staff
- Waikato Aero Club Board president and vice-president
- Two groups of instructors
- Students
- Three external stakeholders/employers.

The evaluation team also had phone and email communication with four external stakeholders.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:

- *Identify organisational fraud²*
- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

² NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Summary of Results

Statements of confidence on educational performance and capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance and **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Waikato Aero Club Incorporated t/a Waikato Aviation**.

The EER team's interviews with students, governance, management and staff and a selection of key stakeholders demonstrated the success, extent and benefits of the educational performance of Waikato Aviation. The reasons for NZQA's high level of confidence can be summarised as follows:

- Study at Waikato Aviation has resulted in excellent outcomes for the students. For instance, qualification completion rates have ranged between 90 and 100 per cent since 2013, and 82 per cent of graduates from the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation are currently employed in flying roles in the aviation industry.
- The organisation has tracked every graduate since 2008, which provides evidence that not only are graduates gaining employment as airline pilots, they are also being retained in the industry and progressing in their careers. The results of this contact/monitoring indicate that the organisation is preparing students well for employment in the aviation industry.
- Training is appropriately contextualised for industry and student needs. The high employment placement rate confirms that Waikato Aviation pilots are well prepared for employment.
- Processes to ensure that student and stakeholder needs are understood and met are effective and appropriate standards are maintained.
- Instruction is delivered by experienced ground and flight instructors who are well trained and managed to ensure the training is relevant and effective.
- There is excellent student guidance and support provided on an individual and collective basis.
- Waikato Aviation has a clear philosophy and purpose that is well operationalised. The instruction is well resourced with both aircraft and facilities and the organisation uses its resources effectively.
- The organisation is soundly and sustainably managed. It has a strong emphasis on being compliant and has a broad range of systems for proactively monitoring its obligations to ensure that important compliance accountabilities are understood and well managed.

In summary, NZQA is highly confident in both the educational performance and self-assessment capability of Waikato Aviation. There is clear and comprehensive evidence that Waikato Aviation is providing quality education and training that leads to positive outcomes for the majority of its students.

Findings³

1.1 How well do students achieve?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The students who have studied at Waikato Aviation have achieved sound results in the completion of courses and examinations. The average score of Waikato Aviation students in Commercial Pilot Licence examinations is 76.8 per cent against the national average of 77 per cent. This is still comfortably above the required pass mark of 70 per cent. Completion rates for Māori (13 per cent of students) and Pasifika (10 per cent) are 100 per cent.

Retention of students in study is high. Because students are able to re-sit examinations, those who are retained successfully complete the qualification. In the rare cases where students demonstrate that they do not have the capability to pass examinations and/or become safe and competent pilots, they are counselled out of the programme early so that they are not committing considerable time and cost to no avail. This situation is fortunately rare as Waikato Aviation has thorough entry and selection processes to ensure that students have the capability to complete.

Students are acquiring new and useful skills and knowledge as a result of their flying training with Waikato Aviation. Knowledge gained is not only from the courses and unit standards completed, but also from the extensive, up-to-date sector knowledge and expert opinion that the staff share with learners to contextualise their learning.

Staff at Waikato Aviation demonstrated a good understanding of the factors that lead to student achievement, and formally and informally analyse and discuss ideas for improving achievement. The instructors have a very collegial approach and communicate and share information informally on a daily basis. Waikato Aviation has a compulsory training management meeting every month where the progress and achievement of students is the main agenda item.

³ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

Waikato Aviation has a strong focus on providing value to stakeholders, and feedback evidence indicates that they are achieving this. The immediate outputs from this training – in addition to the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation – are licences and ratings as awarded by CAA. All students are undertaking this training in preparation for a career in commercial aviation. Waikato Aviation ensures that the study period is as efficient as possible to enable students to complete in the minimum time while still ensuring that they meet all necessary requirements.

Waikato Aviation management knows the immediate employment or further study destinations of all graduates, and communicates with them regularly through a variety of media, both formal and informal. The information that Waikato Aviation gains from this engagement is gathered and discussed and, when applicable, leads to improvements in practice. The exit interview process is comprehensive.

As previously noted, Waikato Aviation graduates are realising excellent outcomes. Waikato Aviation has put significant effort into tracking graduates and provided evidence that 32 of the 39 graduates since 2013 are now in aviation-related employment in New Zealand and overseas.

Waikato Aviation has established an internship programme, both in-house and with L3 Training (New Zealand's largest aviation trainer, also located in Hamilton). In this programme, graduates of the flight instruction strand can apply to be appointed as intern instructors. They are then given responsibility to instruct between one and three first-year students, under the supervision of a staff instructor. The advantages of this arrangement include improved performance, motivation and confidence for the interns and a greater level of individual tuition for first-year students – both of which lead to better outcomes for students. Of particular value to graduates is the high number of flying hours they are able to accumulate through the internship programme. Many Waikato Aviation students graduate with between 400 and 500 logged flying hours, including over 100 hours of instruction, which qualifies them to instruct without direct supervision. This is a real advantage when they are applying for employment, as graduates from most flying schools graduate with about 250-300 hours.

1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

Evidence from stakeholders, including students, indicates that Waikato Aviation engages well with its sector and is valued for the contribution that it makes. Waikato Aviation management and staff have ongoing interaction with stakeholders, including regular contact with graduates, CAA and the aviation network. This means that the needs and expectations of stakeholders are understood. Enhancements to stakeholder engagement since the last EER include: memorandums of understanding with L3 Training and Aviair; collaboration with Hamilton Boys High School; expansion of the Young Eagles programme; membership of Aviation New Zealand and Flying New Zealand; the launch of a commercial café to develop an 'aviation hub' on the northern precincts of the airfield; establishment of the Waikato Aviation internship programme; and recent discussions with the University of Waikato about higher-level aviation study opportunities.

A rigorous but very customer-focussed selection process not only establishes student suitability for pilot training, but also ensures that the goals and aspirations of each student are individually identified at enrolment and an individual programme tailored to suit. As they progress, students are assisted to identify their particular interest or direction in the industry, and the teaching is tailored to suit. Students said the organisation works actively to meet their different learning styles, and allows flexibility around weather and work/life requirements to complete the practical instruction and attend theory classes. This makes them feel valued as students and supports their learning.

The organisation has worked hard over time to ensure that the teaching is closely related to the needs of the students. Waikato Aviation seeks feedback from students through a variety of mechanisms such as formal feedback forms which are completed by students at least once per month. These are then analysed by the training manager and improvements made as appropriate. For instance, the recent introduction of the Airline Preparation strand is a direct response to student (and stakeholder) feedback. Staff members, starting with the chief flying officer, have an open-door policy and students approach them with any problems and issues.

Staff are well qualified with A-Category (A-CAT), B-CAT and C-CAT instructors on permanent staff. Waikato Aviation is fortunate to have a chief flying officer on staff who also has adult educational experience outside of aviation and who uses his experience to coach and mentor instructors in their teaching practice. Although they have extensive industry and professional experience, and an obvious natural passion and ability to engage students, none of the current instruction staff, apart

from the chief flying officer, holds an adult teaching qualification, apart from the 'instructional techniques' component of the C-CAT course. All instructors have a professional development plan, but these in the main relate to furthering their aviation qualifications and experience. The evaluation team believes that stronger policy and practice in the area of formal professional development as tertiary teachers – for instance, sending instructors to courses on adult teaching⁴ – would better demonstrate excellent practice. Likewise, having the instructors engage with other adult educators outside of the aviation sector would add to their understanding of adult teaching.

Given that all summative assessment is through external examination, Waikato Aviation does not require a moderation system. The training manager does, however, closely monitor examination results to identify trends, positive or negative, which may indicate good practice and/or areas for improvement.

1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

Waikato Aviation's commitment to first-rate training ensures that a high level of guidance and support is provided to students, from the recruitment and selection process, to ground and flight training, through to entry into the job market. The consistently high levels of student achievement and positive feedback from students confirms the effectiveness of the guidance and support strategies provided by Waikato Aviation and its staff.

The high level of pre-enrolment counselling and enrolment ensures that the right students are enrolled at the right time in the right programme, thereby minimising barriers to student success. The pre-enrolment information is comprehensive and designed to ensure that students make an informed decision before committing to a significant personal and financial investment. All students receive a comprehensive orientation/induction programme in their first week of study. The introduction of the ADAPT⁵ aptitude test for intending students has enabled Waikato Aviation to identify any areas where the students will require additional or specialist support.

⁴ For instance, courses and workshops offered by Ako Aotearoa or adult teaching courses offered in the region by Wintec or the University of Waikato.

⁵ The ADAPT computerised pilot aptitude test is currently used internationally to assess the key core skills required to complete pilot training successfully and/or operate an aircraft competently. The ADAPT test assesses skills such as multi-tasking, spatial awareness, memory capacity, hand-to-eye coordination and mental arithmetic.

Students reported that they received timely, accurate and supportive feedback on their progress from Waikato Aviation staff. Students are also debriefed by their instructor after every flight to identify what the student did well, what he/she did not do so well, and where improvements could be made, either in the student's performance or Waikato Aviation's instruction. This information is recorded online so that other instructors have instant access to it before each training session commences.

Waikato Aviation has robust procedures for resolving complaints. Feedback from students was that any complaint or feedback was addressed promptly and appropriately.

1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

Waikato Aviation has set clear goals and objectives. The organisation has developed and embedded effective systems for monitoring student achievement and supporting staff to improve educational performance. Quality, in relation to both aircraft operations and pilot training, is well embedded in the organisation.

Waikato Aviation's management recognises that the key to success of their business lies in the success of their students and the value they gain from their training. Waikato Aviation actively supports strategies to increase student achievement and to support students to meet their employment goals. The leadership team is a strong influence on organisational culture, fostering professionalism, safety and customer service.

Waikato Aviation has employed qualified and experienced staff which it manages effectively and actively develops. The value that Waikato Aviation management put on the educational experience and know-how of their training team is clearly apparent and makes a positive difference to educational quality. The organisation is well equipped with physical and learning resources for the number of students it currently has. There are systems in place to monitor resourcing to ensure there are always sufficient resources, mainly aircraft and instructors, to meet the needs of the students. Waikato Aviation has an Elite AT21 Flight Simulator which is approved by CAA and provides a lower-cost alternative for some aspects of training. The balance between the training and commercial operations of the organisation is well managed.

The 2014 EER report for Waikato Aero Club contained several recommendations pertaining to improving stakeholder engagement, communication with staff and Māori and Pasifika achievement. Waikato Aviation has addressed and acted on

most of these recommendations. The 2014 recommendation regarding developing networks with other training providers is a work in progress.

Waikato Aviation's board has agreed a strategy to recruit and train small numbers of international students to supplement income and to provide wider diversity in their student cohort. The strategy is clear: to begin slowly with students from a range of nationalities, as the PTE sees this as adding value to their students' Kiwi experience. A recent application to NZQA to become a signatory to the Code of Practice was, however, declined due to some omissions and administrative errors by Waikato Aviation. A training scheme application (specifically for international students) running alongside it was subsequently put on hold. Waikato Aviation was candid and reflective about this recent experience, and as a result has contracted external assistance to help them gain a better appreciation of international students and Code requirements.

Monitoring of performance within the organisation is regular, transparent and robust, and the organisation encourages opportunities for reflection on its role and how to continue to make ongoing and continuous improvements to meeting the needs of students and other stakeholders. Self-assessment is being well led by management and is comprehensively understood and adopted throughout the organisation. The organisation enthusiastically encourages opportunities for reflection on its role and how to better meet stakeholder needs. This has led to an embedded and authentic, highly reflective environment and culture throughout.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

As a small business in New Zealand, Waikato Aviation has compliance accountabilities to several agencies and regulatory bodies. The organisation proactively manages compliance requirements and has an organisational culture with a strong emphasis on being compliant. Consequently, there was no indication that accountabilities are not being met.

NZQA attestations and returns have been met within required timeframes. The evidence provided to the evaluators indicates courses are being delivered consistent with NZQA programme requirements. The unsuccessful training scheme and Code applications indicate that a better understanding of requirements is needed. As previously discussed, moderation is not required. Attendance expectations as they pertain to programme success and Tertiary Education Commission requirements are actively managed. Warnings and sanctions are fairly applied when student attendance falters.

CAA has routinely audited Waikato Aviation. Audit reports were sighted and no significant findings were apparent.

Final Report

In essence, Waikato Aviation has a clear understanding of its compliance accountabilities and manages effectively and proactively to ensure obligations are met.

Focus Areas

This section reports significant findings in each focus area, not already covered in Part 1.

2.1 Focus area: New Zealand Diploma of Aviation (Airline Preparation and Flight Instruction strands) (Level 6)

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Excellent**.

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Waikato Aviation

- Continue to investigate and make available opportunities for instructors to further develop their teaching qualifications and practice.
- Develop networks with other tertiary education providers, both within and outside of the aviation sector.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013, which are made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

Self-assessment and participation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013, which are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review, in accordance with the External Evaluation and Review Rules (EER) 2013, as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes and/or registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013.

The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz).

The External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013 are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Our-role/Rules/EER-Rules.pdf>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.

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