

Report of External Evaluation and Review

North Shore Aero Club

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 4 December 2014

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	5
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	5
Summary of Results	7
Findings	9
Recommendations	17
Appendix	18

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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:	North Shore Aero Club (NSAC)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	North Shore Aerodrome, 300 Postman Road, Dairy Flat, Auckland
Delivery sites:	Head office, hangar and training centre as above. No other training sites.
First registered:	21 November 2012
Courses currently delivered:	New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane) (General Aviation) (Level 5) New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane) (Flight Instruction) (Level 6) Although NSAC is approved to offer the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation, to date the PTE has only had two diploma graduates, both of whom were former students who gained the qualification by recognition of current competency. All other students enrol at NSAC with the intention of completing their Private Pilot Licence, Commercial Pilot Licence or Specialist Ratings.
Code of Practice signatory?	Not a signatory
Number of students:	Domestic: 127 (all part-time and self-funded) International: nil NSAC students are entirely self-funded, therefore there is a limited number of potential students who

have sufficient resources to undertake the training. For this reason, NSAC, like most other aviation providers, has found it challenging if not impossible to enrol a student cohort that accurately reflects the New Zealand demographic.

Number of staff:	One full-time chief flying instructor; one full time and one part-time administrator; five full-time instructors; eight part-time instructors
Scope of active accreditation:	Domains and unit standards in Aviation up to, and including, level 6
Distinctive characteristics:	<p>NSAC is one of New Zealand's biggest aero clubs and has been incorporated for 51 years. The club is unique in that it owns the North Shore Aerodrome and a significant parcel of land and associated buildings around it. All regular users of the airfield are members of the club.</p> <p>NSAC is physically located next door to North Shore Helicopter Training at the North Shore Aerodrome. The two organisations work collaboratively by sharing some training facilities, using the same student management system, occasional sharing of some staff, and generally working together. The two organisations underwent external evaluation and review (EER) in the same week – the same EER team reviewed each organisation separately on consecutive days.</p>
Recent significant changes:	N/A
Previous quality assurance history:	<p>NSAC was first registered as a PTE in 2012. This is their first EER.</p> <p>NZQA has not noted any risk issues since the organisation was registered.</p>
Other:	The certification and operation of organisations conducting aviation training and assessments in New Zealand is prescribed under Part 141 of Civil Aviation Rules 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. All pilot licences are issued by CAA.

NSAC was last audited against Part 141 (Flight Training Operations) by CAA in May 2014. There were no findings raised during this audit, and Part 141 approval has been renewed for five years, which is the longest renewal period CAA will approve.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope for the EER included the mandatory focus area:

- Governance, management and strategy

In addition, the following focus area was selected:

- New Zealand Diploma in Aviation including all levels and strands approved for delivery by NSAC

The above focus area encapsulates all of the teaching and programme delivery activities of NSAC. The New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Level 6) provides flight training up to a Commercial Pilot Licence with an Instrument Rating. In the second year of their training, NSAC students have three options:

- General aviation – including GPS (global positioning system navigation), dangerous goods, and air operations
- Instructor – including the qualification required to become a C-Category Flight Instructor

As all students are taught through individual learning plans within a single cohort, it was considered appropriate to include all activities in the scope.

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 early October 2014. Prior to this EER, the lead evaluator discussed the visit by telephone and email with the chief flying instructor. The EER visit took place over one and a half days, when the evaluation team, consisting of two evaluators, reviewed a range of documentation and met with the

Final Report

chief flying instructor, the quality manager, NSAC chairperson and board members, two groups of instructors, two groups of students and several individual students, the airfield safety officer, and external stakeholders. Phone conversations were held with a number of graduates and external stakeholders.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **North Shore Aero Club**.

- Students at NSAC are achieving excellent results (refer Findings 1.1 for detailed results). In the past four years, 267 students have trained with NSAC, of whom 88 per cent have completed a Private Pilot Licence, Commercial Pilot Licence and/or more advanced aviation qualification.
- Although the majority of learners at NSAC are training for recreational reasons, for those students who are embarking on an aviation career, the organisation has a strong employment focus and provides good guidance and preparation for employment in the aviation industry. Eighty-nine per cent of graduates from the last four years of NSAC's Commercial Pilot Licence training are now either working in the aviation industry or continuing their study (refer Findings 1.2). The regular contact that NSAC staff have with their graduates indicates that the courses are doing an exceptionally good job of preparing students for employment in the aviation industry.
- NSAC staff engage well with the aviation industry and profession at all levels and are valued for the positive contribution they make. The organisation's ownership of the airfield and pivotal role in the North Shore aviation industry ensures its ongoing relevance and engagement.
- The EER team found consistent evidence of excellent teaching throughout the organisation, brought about by a systematic and deliberate strategy (refer Findings 1.4). Feedback from students indicates that they value the way in which NSAC structures and delivers the programmes, and staff are responsive to student feedback for changes within the programmes.
- NSAC has excellent student support structures that are appropriate to the needs of the students and contribute to the high and sustained level of achievement (refer Findings 1.5).
- The organisation is well managed and has a clear philosophy and purpose that is well operationalised. The training is well resourced and NSAC uses its resources effectively. The NSAC board and management are a professional and cohesive team which displays a clear understanding of their roles and their respective responsibilities both to the aviation industry and to their students.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **North Shore Aero Club**.

- NSAC has established a highly reflective organisation and a culture that encourages students, staff and external stakeholders to discuss their performance and put forward ideas for improvement. This information is then systematically used to make organisational improvements as well as to inform course structure, content and delivery. These improvements ultimately result in improved outcomes for students. Staff and management are closely attuned to the needs of the students and the aviation profession.
- Records indicate that self-assessment, although relatively new to the organisation in its current structure, is embedded and is being practised consistently. The organisation provided examples of opportunities for improvement identified in their self-assessment activities.
- NSAC has comprehensive systems to gather and collate feedback from learners and industry organisations. The quality and validity of the information collected is sound and is being used to inform improvements to course design and delivery.
- NSAC has designed and developed a useful student record system from which is produced a quarterly summary 'dashboard'. This becomes one of the tools that informs staff members' regular discussions and assessment of ideas for improving achievement and making the courses more useful and valuable for students. The effectiveness of this tool is shown in the consistently high pass rates. NSAC has shared the system with North Shore Helicopter Training.
- The evaluation team saw authentic and transparent self-assessment being practised at NSAC and new self-assessment processes that will, over time, give more in-depth insights to understand trends and overall performance. The evaluation team is confident that as these processes continue to be implemented and embedded, together with the organisation's further engagement with the key evaluation questions, significant and meaningful improvements will continue.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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**.

The students who have studied at NSAC have achieved excellent results in the completion of courses and examinations. In the period 2010 to 2014, NSAC enrolled 267 students, 88 per cent of whom have successfully completed a Private Pilot Licence, Commercial Pilot Licence and/or more advanced aviation qualification.

NSAC, and many other aviation providers, see an important measure of the success of their training in the number or percentage of 'first attempt passes'² which they then actively benchmark against national averages of first-time pass rates of all New Zealand aviation providers.³ The NSAC first-time pass rate for both private and commercial pilot licence tests is consistently above the national average – in fact 100 per cent of NSAC students attempting Commercial Pilot Licence theory tests in the past four years have passed on the first attempt.

	Private Pilot Licence	Commercial Pilot Licence	Instrument Flight Rules
NSAC – theory exams first-time pass rate	96%	100%	88%
National average first-time pass rate 2013/14	77%	78%	77%
NSAC student theory exam average grade	85%	84%	82%
NSAC Flight tests first-time pass rate	98%	73%	85%

The organisation has a strong focus on, and commitment to, student achievement. To supplement manual and less formal systems of monitoring achievement, during

¹ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

² This measure refers to the number or percentage of students who pass external theory or flight test examinations on the first attempt.

³ Aviation Services Ltd has recently made national average information available to all providers on a quarterly basis.

2013 NSAC developed and implemented systems to provide management, board members and staff with accurate data of pass rates for both theory and flight tests to enable staff to fine-tune strategies for sustaining and improving achievement. A dedicated staff member has developed the system and early indications are that the increased level of awareness of progress among students, instructors and management will assist NSAC to maintain the current high level of student achievement.

Students are pre-flight briefed and then 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 NSAC's instruction. The chief flying instructor regularly conducts interviews with students to review progress and gain feedback on the course. These interviews are also a forum for the chief flying instructor to discuss career aspirations/goals with students and offer advice on further training and study.

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

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**.

Valued outcomes are achieved by NSAC's students. The immediate outputs from this training are licences and ratings as awarded by the CAA. NSAC knows the destination of all of its graduates, both commercial and recreational. Indications are that commercial pilots move into work in the aviation industry and private pilot graduates become safe, long-term recreational flyers.

Of the 62 Commercial Pilot Licence holders NSAC has trained over the past six years, 11 are currently undertaking further aviation training, and 44 are currently employed within the aviation industry. Many of these pilots also continue to fly recreationally at NSAC.

This good level of graduate employment is due to the focus that NSAC has put on preparing graduates for the aviation workforce. The quality of the training provided at NSAC is affirmed by a range of stakeholders who describe the commercial graduates as work-ready, well presented and with well-developed skills and knowledge. NSAC understands that the merit of the training lies not only in the long-term professional outcomes for students but also in attributes such as the professionalism, confidence and positive attitudes they acquire on the courses. As discussed in Findings 1.3 below, NSAC monitors this through strong links with graduates and the aviation sector.

Of the 60 Private Pilot Licence students NSAC has trained over the past four years, every one of them is still active in aviation and many continue to fly with NSAC. Approximately half of the people who learn to fly with NSAC do so because of
Final Report

word-of-mouth recommendations from current or former students. This is a strong attestation that students are happy with their training, as they have recommended NSAC to close family and friends – there is evidence of this from student records consisting of several members of the same family over periods of time.

NSAC also adds value to its community by, for instance, supporting the Royal New Zealand Aero Club's 'Young Eagles' programme for 15 to 17-year-olds interested in aviation. Through Young Eagles, students at NSAC get the opportunity to experience a number of different aviation-related activities free of charge. For instance, the Young Eagles get four trial flights, a trip to an engineering workshop, and a visit to the Auckland control tower. This year NSAC also took 12 Young Eagles to visit the New Zealand Warbirds Association at Ardmore Airport.

1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

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**.

A strong feature of the training at NSAC is the way in which individual programmes of study are constructed for every student. Students interviewed valued the fact that their first involvement with NSAC entailed an in-depth discussion with the chief flying instructor or a senior instructor about their aspirations and their experience to date, so that an individual programme could be tailored to their needs. 'My course is *my* course' said one of the students emphatically. The result has been that the students are better motivated and their training is more efficient, ultimately costing them less. Students gave numerous strong and clear examples of how programmes and teaching were meeting their needs. Because all students are self-funded, mostly on a 'pay-as-you-go basis', NSAC is very conscious about providing the students with the most efficient and cost-effective training path possible. No flying time is wasted. For instance, students confirmed that if weather conditions change and the planned exercise cannot be completed on a scheduled flight, the instructor will bring the lesson to a close and return to base, rather than completing the full booked time simply because 'the plane has been booked'.

NSAC engages well with relevant sectors of the aviation industry and is valued for the contribution that it makes. NSAC management and staff are variously involved, both professionally and informally, in the aviation sector and are well respected for the part they play, often in leadership roles.

For instance, the NSAC chief flying instructor is a member of the Royal New Zealand Aero Club (Flying NZ) Instructor Council, which is made up of senior experienced instructors from throughout New Zealand. The council meets regularly to discuss matters concerning the aviation community and is often required to provide advice on behalf of aviation organisations on important matters to

government. The information that the chief flying instructor then shares with NSAC's instructors and students is important in keeping them informed about current issues and trends in the sector.

NSAC management and senior instructors are in regular communication with a variety of stakeholders. Until NSAC began formalising its self-assessment practices, these discussions had not been documented. The PTE has now put in place a system to document and keep track of communication between the club and stakeholders so that trends can be identified and shared with staff or other stakeholders. Such discussions include, for instance, those about the proposed Unitary Plan with Auckland City Council, discussions of safety concerns on the airfield, discussions with CAA about Avkiwi seminars⁴, discussions with Air New Zealand about pilot training requirements, and discussions on many topics with operators on the airfield.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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**.

The EER team found consistent evidence of excellent teaching taking place throughout the organisation. Instructors are enthusiastic and passionate about their teaching and they are well supported by management. Every staff member at NSAC has a role in ensuring that all students achieve. There was evidence of the whole organisation purposefully engaging in meaningful discussion about teaching practice and student progress, both informally and at the weekly 'toolbox' meetings for instructors. The strong rapport between students and staff was confirmed from discussions and student survey results. Students have access to staff outside of formal classes and can make suggestions about improvements. Students noted that the staff were responsive to any concerns or issues raised. For instance, the recent changes to the scheduling of night classes was a result of feedback from students.

There is a well-established process for briefing prior to, and debriefing after, practical flights. Students and staff interviewed at this evaluation commented on the fact that instructors build trusting relationships with students which facilitate the giving and receiving of frank feedback, confirming the value of this process and its contribution to the overall learning environment.

⁴ AvKiwi Safety Seminars are offered throughout New Zealand by the safety promotion team at CAA to promote good safety attitudes. An AvKiwi subject could be anything from fuel management to situational awareness. Often an accident or incident is profiled in an effort to learn lessons from the experience of others.

NSAC has appointed highly qualified flight instructors, including those with ratings for multi-engine flying, night flying, instrument flying, and aerobatics. The current ratio of students to instructors is low and this allows for a high level of one-to-one attention and ready access to aircraft to build up flying hours.

The staff are well qualified with A-Category, B-Category and C-Category instructors on permanent staff. Instructors have extensive aviation and professional experience, and with an obvious natural passion and ability to engage students. Additionally, NSAC has developed its own CAA-approved instructional techniques course which builds on the compulsory instructional techniques in the C-Category qualification. Monthly instructors' meetings also have a compulsory agenda item where a senior instructor will present a new teaching technique and lead discussion with the staff. This is an excellent example of good practice and NSAC's commitment to educational performance.

NSAC has a peer observation procedure in which all the instructional staff participate. In fact, many staff members informally engage in peer observation on an ongoing basis. Teaching staff commented on the value of the peer observation process and several of the teaching staff interviewed were able to cite examples of how they had improved teaching delivery as a result. All staff members are performance reviewed formally on an annual basis, but this does not preclude regular and ongoing feedback of a formative nature. The evaluation team saw lots of evidence of regular feedback being gathered from students and the information being used effectively to bring about improvements to content and delivery and ultimately to student outcomes. For instance, the significant upgrade of the technology in teaching and briefing rooms was a direct response to student and staff feedback.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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**.

NSAC does not face the same support requirements as providers of full-time courses, but what support services it does provide are appropriate to the courses delivered. NSAC staff and management are highly student centred and committed to the success and well-being of their students. Discussion with students and staff demonstrates that the organisation is providing a safe and supportive learning environment for its students and is in contact outside of the normal hours of tuition if required. The small numbers of students means that they are given individual support. The consistently positive feedback from students confirms the effectiveness of guidance and support systems.

Pre-enrolment information is comprehensive and designed to ensure that students make informed decisions before committing to a significant personal and financial

investment. The biggest single barrier to success is the financial resources needed, so NSAC provides good guidance and support to students if required to help them manage this aspect. As training at NSAC is completely self-funded, some students choose to complete their Private Pilot Licence and then transfer to a provider funded by the Tertiary Education Commission so that they can fund their Commercial Pilot Licence with a student loan. NSAC is aware that this is a necessity for some students and supports them to do so.

Students are provided with a comprehensive student handbook which provides information on courses, examinations, assessments, rules, regulations and policies, facilities, and services. It also includes grievance and complaint forms and a useful study contract. NSAC has detailed and robust procedures for resolving complaints. Feedback from students was that any complaint or feedback was addressed reasonably promptly and appropriately.

1.6 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 **Good**.

NSAC is a registered incorporated society which owns and operates a PTE as a core component of its overall operation. The organisation has developed and is embedding effective systems for monitoring student achievement and supporting staff to improve educational achievement.

Students have good access to ample teaching and learning resources, including a small fleet of aircraft: both high and low wing single engine aircraft and at least one⁵ twin engine aircraft available at all times. The organisation has developed appropriate financial planning and budgeting to allow for the expansion of resources as required, and for appropriate ongoing repairs and maintenance. Students have access to excellent teaching and social amenities.

Management monitors organisational and individual performance at all levels of the organisation in a regular, transparent and open manner. The evaluation team observed coherence across all staff in their focus on giving students the best experience possible, to equip them to perform and achieve. The organisation encourages opportunities for reflection on its role and how to continue to make ongoing and continuous improvements to how it meets the needs of students and other stakeholders.

NSAC is governed by an established and experienced board that directs the organisation to ensure it is meeting member, industry and learners' needs. Meeting

⁵ NSAC has arrangements to lease or hire additional twin engine aircraft as demand dictates.

minutes and discussion with individual members indicate that the NSAC board is meeting regularly, is functioning well, receiving good information from the organisation, engaging with external stakeholders, and guiding the organisation with sound operational and strategic advice.

Monitoring of performance within the organisation is regular, systemised, transparent and robust. The organisation is highly motivated to identify and improve on areas where deficiencies have been identified. To quote a senior instructor: 'If you own up to it, you won't get blamed!'

Although formalised self-assessment is still in its early stages at NSAC, the evaluation team saw authentic and transparent self-assessment being practised and is confident that as these processes continue to be implemented and the organisation further engages with the key evaluation questions, significant and meaningful ongoing improvements will continue.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Governance, management and strategy

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

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

2.2 Focus area: New Zealand Diploma in Aviation

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 North Shore Aero Club:

- Continue to investigate and effect ongoing 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.
- Invite the NZQA relationship manager to visit in 12 months' time, to provide feedback on progress with self-assessment processes, improvements and results.

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/>.

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz