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External Evaluation and Review Report

Southern Wings Ltd trading as
Southern Wings

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 20 August 2018

Southern Wings Ltd trading as Southern Wings

Southern Wings is one of four Air New Zealand-preferred flight training providers. It is based at Invercargill Airport, with a second base at Ardmore Airport in Auckland.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Invercargill Airport, Invercargill
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Courses:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane) (General Aviation) (Level 5)• Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane) (Flight Instruction) Level 6• Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane) (Airline Preparation) Level 6
Number of students:	31 – 20 in Auckland; 11 in Invercargill
Number of staff:	Seven
Scope of evaluation:	Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane) (Airline Preparation) (Level 6)
MoE number:	7256
NZQA reference:	C28903
Dates of EER visit:	23 and 24 May 2018

Summary of Results

Southern Wings is a professional flight school with a longstanding, experienced management team which ensures that students have a suitable learning environment by providing appropriate resources and skilled instructors.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Southern Wings provides quality flight training for students wanting to become airline pilots.
- Southern Wings is one of four Air New Zealand-preferred flight schools in New Zealand.
- Students have high completion rates and higher than average external exam pass rates.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

- The Diploma in Aviation programme is aligned to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) syllabus; Southern Wings has met all CAA compliance requirements.
- Southern Wings uses input from Air New Zealand to ensure the programme teaches students the desired professional skills and attributes for employment as an Air New Zealand pilot.
- The PTE monitors student achievement; in general, students' employment destinations meet the desired qualification outcomes.
- A gap in monitoring compliance with NZQA programme rules was evident with the lag in reporting unit standard credits. Students were not disadvantaged with this lapse, as the external exam pass is all that is required to meet CAA requirements to gain a pilot licence.

Key evaluation question findings

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Excellent**

Reasons for ratings:	<p>Students are highly successful at passing the externally administered theory exams required to achieve a pilot licence. The 2017 national exam figures released by Aspeq, the organisation that marks the ASL¹ pilot exams, showed that 89 per cent of Southern Wing's students passed all exams. The average pass mark was 84 per cent. This is slightly higher than the national average, and the 70 per cent pass rate set by ASL. Results from the previous two years are similar.</p> <p>There are few Māori students, with most being based at the Auckland site. These students have similar pass rates to other students.</p> <p>The high exam achievement shows that Southern Wings prepares students well. This is important because the regulatory body, CAA, only permits a limited number of attempts for each exam. Results for previous years show that all but one of the students completed their training within the required timeline.</p> <p>Students also show high achievement for the practical flying exams. Of 35 flight tests in 2017, 31 were passed on the first attempt. However, this figure shows results for different flight situations, so they include multiple exam results for one individual.</p>
Supporting evidence:	<p>The PTE gains an understanding of student achievement through close monitoring of flight records against expected hours, along with students' progress using internal tests and external exam results, including re-sits. This information is used to identify where additional support is required to help students to achieve.</p> <p>Southern Wings has only had one student withdraw or not complete in the past three years.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Students achieve above national average pass rates for both practical and theory exams.</p>

¹ ASL (Aviation Services Ltd) provides independent flight testing examinations for the aviation industry based on the CAA syllabus.

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

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Good**

<p>Reasons for ratings:</p>	<p>Students choose to study with Southern Wings, often via word of mouth, because it is one of Air New Zealand's four preferred training providers, and most want to fly for a New Zealand airline company. Most graduates are initially employed by smaller companies, such as Farmers Air or Kiwi air, which helps them to accumulate the flying hours required for employment by larger commercial airlines.</p> <p>Southern Wings has a good reputation with employers for producing quality pilots. This is shown by the many employers who contact Southern Wings to ask for graduates when they complete the ASL exams. Due to the shortage of professionally trained pilots internationally, airline companies are employing pilots with fewer flying hours than previously, meaning graduates can be flying soon after completion. This creates a need for Southern Wings graduates who have the desired skills.</p> <p>Graduate employment outcomes confirm that the training is developing the skills and attributes needed by Air New Zealand pilots. Air New Zealand seeks graduates who can demonstrate excellent teamwork and leadership and reflect the company's values, as well as having practical flying skills and knowledge. Many Air New Zealand pilots have completed their training with Southern Wings.</p>
<p>Supporting evidence:</p>	<p>Graduates' employment outcomes are noted using feedback from employers and social media contacts. Because of the small student cohorts, this is a convenient way of understanding how well the training is valued.</p> <p>There is no analysis of longer-term employment outcomes to determine whether graduates go on to become pilots for major airlines, although this information is known anecdotally through employer feedback. More formal analysis of skills developed, and employer satisfaction with graduates' skills will be necessary to show that graduates meet qualification outcomes.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Graduates achieve relevant skills to work for airlines and are in demand due to the quality of the training outcomes.</p>

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

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Excellent**

<p>Reasons for ratings:</p>	<p>The programme is aligned to the CAA syllabus. Air New Zealand also provides input so that students can meet its employment requirements.</p> <p>Instructors complete the CAA Flight Instructor Rating and gain the relevant subject endorsement before they deliver training. They develop lessons using the relevant textbook and exam feedback from ASL. Students complete internal assessments and previous exam papers to help them develop successful exam techniques.</p> <p>With the addition of the Ardmore site, Southern Wings introduced digital learning to give students the benefit of the instructors' specialist knowledge. Instructors use a range of activities – such as multi-media and electronic whiteboards – to cater to different learning styles. This is working well with the connecting class having a tutor or staff member present to assist.</p> <p>External exams ensure national consistency and validity of assessment. Students also achieve unit standards towards a Diploma in Aviation. Lesson plans and external exams meet the unit standard evidence criteria. Service IQ is responsible for external moderation of unit standard assessments, but because Southern Wings was not reporting the unit standards there has been no external moderation since 2015. Southern Wings has now reported credits for current and past students which will activate Service IQ moderation.</p>
<p>Supporting evidence:</p>	<p>Instructors review the programme using Knowledge Deficiency Requirements. They also use CAA updates to the syllabus, input from industry, and self-review of teaching to keep the programme current and to engage the students.</p> <p>Exam results improved with the shift to the digital classroom, indicating that students are engaged and learning the required knowledge to succeed in exams.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Southern Wings' pilot programme is closely aligned to CAA requirements and meets industry needs, particularly Air New Zealand's, for pilots who demonstrate the required skills and knowledge.</p>

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

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Good**

<p>Reasons for ratings:</p>	<p>Southern Wings is highly supportive of its students. The small class sizes create an effective teamwork environment where students can learn from each other. Students are given sufficient time to prepare between external exams. If students do not pass on their first attempt, they receive additional study material and one-to-one tutorials to help them before they re-sit.</p> <p>Students' progress towards practical requirements is monitored along with theory, attendance, re-sits and external exam results to identify opportunities for improvement. Any issues are raised at weekly instructor meetings with the chief flight instructor.</p> <p>Southern Wings accepts students who meet the qualification entry requirements and have achieved higher than 70 per cent on the online pre-screening test. Following initial selection, Southern Wings interviews each candidate to identify their fit with Air New Zealand company values. This is contributing to the success of the graduates.</p> <p>In 2017, Southern Wings introduced mentoring with Air New Zealand. Students are allocated an industry mentor for career advice and help to achieve their goals. The aim is to encourage self-reflection and understanding of workplace skills and experience. Southern Wings has not followed up on how useful this is to the students.</p> <p>The PTE's website and student handbook provide useful information about the programme and requirements to become a pilot. However, because students are only required to pass the CAA exam to gain a licence, the handbook has no information about the Diploma in Aviation and the assessment of unit standards towards this. This is required where students achieve unit standards.</p>
<p>Supporting evidence:</p>	<p>There is good evidence of high course satisfaction and students' understanding of course expectations. However, as mentioned, the student handbook does not contain the required information about the Diploma in Aviation.</p> <p>Formal feedback to demonstrate the effectiveness of the mentorship programme may identify improvements to help support students to meet their goals.</p>

Conclusion:	Support structures are comprehensive. There is good adherence to selection processes and ongoing review of student progress towards completion, contributing to the high achievement.
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1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Good**

Reasons for ratings:	<p>The long-serving (20 years plus) chief executive works with the board to provide effective financial advice and guidance for the training. This includes ensuring sufficient aircraft and classroom resources.</p> <p>Staff have an annual performance appraisal where they discuss teaching feedback and are provided with relevant support to achieve their career goals. Instructors undergo an assessment by a Category A Instructor each year to renew their instructor rating for each subject endorsement. New subject endorsements are assessed externally by a CAA-approved provider. This ensures that staff are capable and up to date. The PTE's recently employed flight instructors reported that they received a good level of induction and support to enable them to perform well in their roles, and felt valued by management.</p> <p>Management supports innovations as demonstrated by the introduction of a mentorship programme and digital delivery. This will be enhanced once Invercargill Airport is connected to fibre broadband.</p>
Supporting evidence:	<p>Regular board minutes show overall monitoring of student numbers, along with income and expenditure. Analysis of cohort results or graduate outcomes achievement is not included at this level but is reviewed operationally.</p> <p>Management reviews operational plans and updates policies and procedures as needed.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>The small size of the organisation enables effective communication and planning across the academic and management operations. Along with longstanding industry relationships and recruitment of suitable staff, this has enabled a sustainable quality programme, as demonstrated by the high exam pass rates.</p>

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance: **Good**

Self-assessment: **Good**

<p>Reasons for ratings:</p>	<p>Southern Wings met 2017 CAA external requirements.</p> <p>In May 2018 NZQA notified Southern Wings that credits were reported late for unit standards achieved by previous students. This was related to an issue raised by the funding body, the Tertiary Education Commission, at the 2017 audit. The auditor identified the lack of unit standard reporting and recommended documenting the process and the allocation of responsibilities. Southern Wings is updating its policies and procedures to reflect a quarterly reporting of unit standards and has reported unit standards for 2018 to date. As yet, no students have been disadvantaged as a result of this gap, because students only need to pass the CAA exam to gain a licence.</p> <p>Southern Wings is meeting the programme delivery approval for hours and mode of delivery. However, with the shift to digital classrooms it needs to ensure there continues to be a tutor present on the other side of the digital classroom or submit a change request to NZQA if this situation changes.</p> <p>The organisation is a signatory to the Code of Practice (for the pastoral care of international students) and has completed an annual review of practices, although it does not enrol international students currently.</p>
<p>Supporting evidence:</p>	<p>The PTE regularly reviews its quality management system. However, management needs more coherent oversight of NZQA rules to ensure compliance. Examples are comprehensive assessment and review of whether the qualification outcomes have been met, and ensuring that unit standard credits are reported in a timely manner.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>The gap in monitoring NZQA programme rules in relation to reporting unit standards has lowered the rating for this area. The PTE needs to undertake systematic checks of compliance with NZQA and other external bodies' rules to ensure it remains compliant.</p>

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation will improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

NZQA recommends that Southern Wings Ltd:

- Develop a compliance schedule or system to monitor its compliance with NZQA rules, Tertiary Education Commission rules, and CAA requirements.
- Formally review the effectiveness of the airline mentorship programme.

Requirements

Requirements relate to the TEO's statutory obligations under legislation that governs their operation. This include NZQA Rules and relevant regulations promulgated by other agencies.

NZQA requires Southern Wings Ltd to:

- revise the student handbook to include information about assessment of unit standards towards the Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane) (Airline Preparation) (Level 6).
- formalise self-review activities to demonstrate that the qualification's graduate profile outcomes are met.

Appendix

About Southern Wings Ltd

Distinctive characteristics:	Southern Wings is a flight school based at Invercargill Airport and Ardmore Airport, Auckland.
Recent significant changes:	The Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane) (Airline Preparation) (Level 6) training programme has been introduced since the previous EER.
Previous quality assurance history:	NZQA was highly Confident in the educational performance and Highly Confident in the capability in self-assessment of Southern Wings at the previous EER conducted in 2014.

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.*

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.*

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).

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.

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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