

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Waikato Aero Club Incorporated

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 15 August 2014

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MoE Number: 7413
NZQA Reference: C14471
Dates of EER visit: 15 and 16 April 2014

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 (WAC)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Steele Road, RD2, Hamilton Airport, Hamilton
Delivery sites:	Head Office and delivery site as above
First registered:	25 May 2001
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane and Helicopter) (Level 5)• New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane and Helicopter) (Flight Instruction) (Level 6)• Included in the above qualifications are a Private Pilot Licence, Commercial Pilot Licence and an Instrument Flight Rating.
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 16 ¹ (14 New Zealand European; one Māori; one Pasifika) International: nil
Number of staff:	Five full-time, three part-time
Scope of active accreditation:	WAC has consent to assess in a range of domains relating to the aviation industry up to level 6.

¹ In addition to the 16 full-time students, WAC also provides occasional Private Pilot Licence training to aero club members.

Distinctive characteristics:	WAC is an incorporated society owned and governed by its members. The club has been providing flight training and aerial services to the Waikato since 1933. Flight training is delivered to both career pilots and leisure aviators.
Recent significant changes:	For several years, WAC offered the NMIT Diploma in Aviation Science (Level 6) under a partnership arrangement with Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT). This partnership ceased at the end of 2012, at which time WAC became directly funded by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). The change from one qualification and funding source to another has led to a number of anomalies in completions data.
Previous quality assurance history:	This is WAC's second scheduled external evaluation and review (EER). The first EER was conducted in April 2010, at which time NZQA was Highly Confident in WAC's educational performance and Highly Confident in its capability in self-assessment. NZQA has not noted any risk issues since the EER.
Other	<p>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). CAA has a regular schedule of audit and inspection of all training providers.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>In August 2013, CAA renewed WAC's certification under Parts 141 (Aviation Training) and 119 (General Aviation Operations) for a period of five years.</p>

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope for the EER consisted of 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 delivered by WAC

The above focus area encapsulates all of the teaching and programme delivery activities of WAC. The NZ 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, students are split into two streams:

- Airline preparation stream – including the Airline Transport Pilot Licence (ATPL) theory examinations and a component in the Multi Crew environment
- Instructor stream – including the qualification required to become a C-Category Flight Instructor

As students from the two streams 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 external evaluation and review (EER) was conducted in mid-April 2014. Prior to the EER, the lead evaluator discussed the visit by telephone and email with the chief executive. A one and a half-day visit was made to the WAC site at Hamilton airport, where the evaluation team, consisting of two evaluators, reviewed a range of documentation and met with the WAC club president, chief executive, deputy chief flying instructor/course director, two groups of instructors and three groups of students. An employer of several graduates was also interviewed along with other industry representatives by telephone.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Waikato Aero Club Incorporated**.

Key reasons for this include:

- Students at WAC are achieving good results (refer Findings 1.1 for detailed figures). WAC's own records show course completion in 2013 to be 87 per cent.
- Ninety-five per cent of those students who have successfully completed and graduated from WAC's full-time programmes are now working in the aviation industry (refer Findings 1.2). WAC is in regular contact with its graduates and the results indicate that the organisation is preparing students well for employment in the aviation industry.
- WAC and its staff engage with their industry and are valued for the positive contribution they make. A more systematic engagement approach would lead to more constructive feedback.
- The EER team found consistent evidence of good teaching throughout the organisation (refer Findings 1.4). Feedback from students indicates that they like the way WAC programmes are structured and delivered.
- WAC has student support structures that are appropriate to the needs of the students and minimise barriers to achieving (refer findings 1.5).
- The organisation is well managed and has a clear philosophy and purpose. The training is well resourced and WAC uses its resources effectively.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Waikato Aero Club Incorporated**.

Key reasons for this include:

- Records indicate that self-assessment is embedded and has been practised within WAC for many years. WAC has systems to gather and collate feedback from students. Generally, the quality and validity of the information collected is sound and the information is used to inform improvements to teaching practice and course structure.
- Although WAC has wide and positive engagement with the aviation industry, a more systematic approach to gathering feedback from industry and graduates

and using the information to bring about useful improvements is required to demonstrate excellence in self-assessment.

- While processes to critically analyse contributing factors to student achievement and other quality improvements are largely informal and intuitive, there is evidence that self-assessment is taking place across the organisation. Staff at WAC demonstrated a good intuitive understanding of the factors that lead to student achievement. They regularly informally discuss and assess ideas for improving achievement and making the courses more useful and enjoyable for students. As the organisation grows, it will be need to adopt a more formal process for analysis, discussion and engagement, involving all staff (both teaching and management).
- The evaluation team believes that as more refined self-assessment processes continue to be implemented at WAC, significant and meaningful ongoing improvements will result.

Findings²

1.1 How well do learners 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 **Good**.

The students who have studied at WAC have achieved good results. WAC has benchmarked course completion rates against other, similar providers, and although it is scoring above the average for the sector, the PTE still aspires to continuously improve student achievement.

As a result of anomalies created by the move from the NMIT Diploma in Aviation Science to the NZ Diploma in Aviation, there is no TEC educational performance data available for 2012. The draft data for 2013 (which reports qualification completion at 100 per cent and course completion at 69 per cent) is not, at this stage, a reliable reflection of actual student achievement at WAC.³

WAC regards its own calculation of the 2013 course completion rate of 87 per cent as a more accurate reflection and measure of student achievement.⁴ This compares favourably with the aviation sector educational performance indicator for average course completion of 84 per cent.⁵

The organisation has a strong focus on, and commitment to, student achievement. Students reported that they received timely, accurate and supportive feedback on their progress from WAC staff. Students are debriefed by their instructor after every flight to identify what the student did well, what he/she did less well, and where improvements could be made, either in the student's performance or WAC's instruction.

² The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

³ The statistics were skewed by the fact that several students moved to the NZ Diploma in Aviation from the NMIT Diploma in Aviation Science, which led to a one-off overstatement of qualification completion in the TEC educational performance indicator data. The course completion recorded was lower than actual because the programme structure listed each diploma as a 120-credit course. Therefore, mid-year intake students, although they were still actively studying, appeared as non-course completions. The large courses have been disaggregated for 2014, which will lead to TEC educational performance indicator data better reflecting actual achievement.

⁴ In brief, 16 students were enrolled in 2013, two students dropped out, and the remaining 14 continued their study and either completed their qualification in 2013 or are expected to complete their respective diplomas in 2014 or 2015.

⁵ It should be noted that, because at least 12 aviation providers are experiencing similar challenges reconciling achievement data, the sector average may also be unreliable.

In addition to their logbook, every student has a record book, which includes achievements and running records. The record book gives students a detailed record of how they are progressing and provides handover notes in case of a change in flight instructor.

Staff at WAC demonstrated a good understanding of the factors that lead to student achievement, and being a small team they informally analyse and discuss ideas for improving achievement. The current staff members have a very collegial approach and all share the same office space, so they communicate and share information informally on a daily basis. However, as they do not have the opportunity to meet formally to communicate ideas for improving course delivery and learner achievement, the organisation is not maximising the benefits it could receive from the insights that staff have gained.

WAC is monitoring participation and achievement rates for Māori and Pasifika students, with a view to increasing performance in relation to these sectors through a number of initiatives. However, these initiatives are currently in their early stages. To date, although achievement of Māori and Pasifika students has been roughly equivalent to the student cohort as a whole, the very low number, particularly of Pasifika enrolments, means that no reliable trend data is available.

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 **Good**.

Forty-five of the 48 WAC graduates from 2009 to 2013 are now in aviation-related employment.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Number of graduates	13	8	4	13	10	48
Number in aviation-related employment	13	7	4	12	9	45
Percentage	100%	88%	100%	92%	90%	94%

This high level of graduate employment is due to the focus that WAC has put on preparing graduates for the aviation workforce. WAC considers that the merit of its programme lies not only in the long-term professional outcomes for students, but also in attributes such as the professionalism, confidence and positive attitudes acquired. The aphorism, 'look and act like the pilot you want to be' is firmly embedded in the student and staff culture at WAC. Students, graduates and employers commented positively on the professionalism and work-readiness of WAC graduates.

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WAC staff conduct exit meetings with every graduating student and then follow up with a conversation with all graduates three to six months after graduation to ascertain their destination, and also to gain feedback from graduates and their employers about how well the programme prepared them for work or further education. The organisation also keeps in touch with graduates through a variety of informal networks and communications. Information gained from this engagement is gathered, analysed and discussed. Although employment outcomes for graduates are impressive, WAC could also gain useful information if it followed up with students who have not successfully graduated. This may help WAC to develop strategies to improve outcomes for students who do not graduate.

WAC also adds value in its community by, for instance, supporting the Royal New Zealand Aero Club (RNZAC) 'Young Eagles' programme for school students interested in aviation, and running flying club activities for two local secondary schools.

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**.

Evidence from stakeholders, including students, indicates that staff at all levels of WAC engage well with the aviation sector and are valued for the contribution they make. WAC management and staff have ongoing interaction with stakeholders, including ongoing contact with graduates, CAA and the aero club network. WAC purposefully seeks feedback from stakeholders. However, WAC should now adopt a more formal process for analysing, discussing and summarising this valuable feedback so that it can be systematically used to make improvements. For instance, one operator who has employed a number of WAC graduates commented on their low number of night flying hours. When asked if he had ever given feedback about the issue to WAC or been asked how they could improve, he reported that he would probably have 'mentioned it in passing', but had never been formally asked how WAC could improve the suitability of graduates.

WAC has a number of instructors available and generally seeks to ensure that instructors are matched to the learning styles of individual students. Efforts by the teaching staff to meet the individual, personal and academic goals of every student are a strong feature of the organisation. This activity tends to rely on the relationships that tutors have with their students rather than on a more systematic approach across the organisation.

The overall structure of the Diploma in Aviation programme at WAC is designed to have students complete the theory component of the qualification before starting practical flying. WAC has adopted this structure because with the previous mixed

approach, the students, particularly young men, focused on their flying and neglected the theory components. WAC reports that theory completion has improved as a result, although it should be noted that another aviation provider with higher achievements rates advocates strongly that the theory and practice of flying are best taught in an integrated manner.

Student evaluations are conducted to a regular schedule and gather students' feedback on their experiences of different aspects of the programmes, including programme content and delivery, facilities and staff effectiveness. However, several staff reported that they had not personally seen the results of student evaluations. This comment was later disproved by the course director, but indicates that whatever discussion took place was not regarded by the staff member as memorable. A more systematic approach to recording, analysing and discussing this information with staff may help identify trends and lead to further enhancements to programme delivery.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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 **Good**.

There was clear evidence of good teaching practice at WAC. All staff are enthusiastic and passionate about their curriculum and teaching and are well supported by management. Every staff member at WAC has a role in student learning, and they take a collegial, whole-of-organisation approach to ensuring that all students achieve.

Instructors and students relate well to each other. The strong rapport between students and staff was evident from discussions and evaluation survey outcomes. Students liked the open, friendly style and find their learning activities interesting and challenging. Students have good access to staff outside of formal classes and can make suggestions about improvements. Students noted that staff were responsive to concerns or issues raised.

Staff are well qualified, with Category A, Category B and Category C instructors on permanent staff. Although they have extensive industry and professional experience, and an obvious passion and ability to engage the students, only one of the current instruction staff holds an adult teaching qualification. WAC has identified this as an area for professional development. The evaluation team believes that stronger policy and practice in this area (for instance, sending instructors to various short courses on adult teaching⁶) would better demonstrate good practice.

⁶ Courses and workshops are offered in Hamilton by Ako Aotearoa.

The organisation has robust selection and induction processes for new instructors which include observations, peer teaching and a 'buddy' support system. All WAC instructors were funded by the organisation to attend the 2013 RNZAC annual conference in Auckland.

Given that all summative assessment is through external examination, WAC does not require a moderation system. The course director does, however, closely monitor examination results and matches them with the various instructors to identify trends, positive or negative, which may indicate good practice or areas for improvement.

WAC has a management and peer observation programme for its instructors. The performance of the teaching staff is formally reviewed on an annual basis, but this does not preclude regular and ongoing feedback of a formative nature. Teaching staff spoke about how they share ideas, experiences and knowledge through their daily interaction. However, regular formalised staff meetings centred on teaching practice would be useful and lead to improved practice.

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 **Excellent**.

WAC has robust and client-friendly systems for the pastoral care of its students. The organisation is providing a safe and supportive learning environment and is in close contact outside of the normal hours of tuition. The small number of students means that they are given individual support. An excellent example of the support structure in practice was late in 2013 when a student on his first solo flight crash-landed, resulting in minor injuries to himself and severe damage to the aircraft. The organisation immediately supported the student concerned both personally and professionally. All students and staff met with an external counsellor, and staff debriefed the situation and re-enacted it with every instructor to ensure maximum learning. Above all, the student concerned was soon back behind the controls in a safe and positive manner. This student continues his study at WAC, is flying confidently, and continues to study towards completion of his diploma. A less supportive and organised response could have led to a very negative outcome for the student and his classmates.

Students have access to WAC staff outside of class hours either in person, by telephone, or by email. Students reported that they feel comfortable contacting staff and always get a helpful response.

Students reported that they received good pre-enrolment guidance and that they completed a 'trial flight' before enrolling at WAC. 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.

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WAC has detailed and robust procedures for resolving complaints. Feedback from students was that any complaint or feedback was addressed 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**.

WAC has a sound understanding of its business. Its purpose and direction are clear and articulated throughout the organisation. Management is forward thinking in their approach and the PTE's vision permeates the organisation, providing a very positive environment for students and staff to work and study in. 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.

WAC has employed and retained well-qualified and experienced staff and is investing in their ongoing development. Performance management systems are in place and staff are provided with regular feedback on their performance.

The small campus is ideally located and amply supplied with aircraft and learning resources for the number of students that it currently has. Effective resourcing is planned and WAC has no immediate plans to substantially increase the number of students.

Recent self-assessment documentation consisted mainly of a template report, completed to satisfy the requirements of the partnership with NMIT. This report format is not ideal for WAC's needs and recent attempts to complete it appear somewhat perfunctory. Less prescriptive documentation, but which succinctly captures analyses of information from a variety of sources and identifies subsequent action to bring about improvement, would be preferable and is likely to be more suited to WAC's needs.

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 meet the needs of students and other stakeholders. WAC makes an effort to understand and continuously improve the educational performance of its students. The next challenge for WAC is to focus its efforts towards increasing its understanding of educational performance to sustain and increase current levels of achievement by embedding systematic, whole-of-organisation analysis and ensuing action from self-assessment activities.

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 **Good**.

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Waikato Aero Club Incorporated:

- Hold monthly or bimonthly structured staff meetings to ensure engagement with all staff is undertaken and self-assessment improvements are formally documented throughout the organisation's operations and teaching curriculum.
- Ensure that self-assessment processes are formalised through regular and systemic engagement with internal and external stakeholders, and improvements are documented.
- Increase the value gained from excellent industry networks by a more systematic approach to stakeholder engagement, for example by the establishment of an industry advisory group that formally meets at least annually. Improvements and suggestions from this structured approach to industry engagement should be documented in the organisation's operations and teaching curriculum.
- Continue to work to improve Māori and Pasifika participation and achievement through engagement with schools and wānanga networks.
- Provide more identification and direction around student support services in course handbooks to further support learner needs outside of course requirements.
- Explore and take up opportunities for professional networking with other training providers to help WAC staff gain a more in-depth understanding of self-assessment in practice.

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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