



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

External Evaluation and Review Report

Waikato Aero Club Incorporated
(trading as Waikato Aviation)

Date of report: 16 January 2024

About Waikato Aero Club Incorporated (trading as Waikato Aviation)

Waikato Aviation is a private training establishment which delivers the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Airline Preparation Strand) (Level 6) and other aviation certifications. Graduates gain employment as flight instructors or commercial pilots within various branches of aircraft operations and supporting roles. Waikato Aviation is part of a not-for-profit aero club where members of the public can gain private licences.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Steele Road, R D 2, Hamilton
Eligible to enrol intl students:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 12; eight male, three female and one gender diverse; seven European, one Filipino, one British, one Indian, one Māori, one Asian International: nil
Number of staff:	Nine full-time equivalent staff (seven full-time and seven part-time)
TEO profile:	See NZQA: Waikato Aero Club Recent significant changes include: a new management team, staff moving to employment with airlines, and programme approval for the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Airline Preparation Strand) (Level 6). Covid lockdowns meant practical flight training could not occur for much of 2020-22. Students were also unable to sit theory examinations at external provider locations. This meant course and qualification completions were severely delayed. Key stakeholders include airlines (international, domestic including regional), charter and aeromedical services,

agricultural services, flight examiners and related non-flying sectors including regulatory organisations, air traffic control and airport management. Other key stakeholders outside the aviation industry include schools (Gateway programmes) and the general public/wider community.

Last EER outcome:	Waikato Aero Club trading as Waikato Aviation) was found to be Highly Confident in both educational performance and capability in self-assessment at the last external evaluation and review (EER) in 2018.
Scope of evaluation:	New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Airline Preparation Strand) (Level 6) ID: 127725. This is the only programme with current enrolments.
MoE number:	7413
NZQA reference:	C56170
Dates of EER visit:	25 and 26 October 2023

Summary of results

Waikato Aviation graduates are highly valued in the aviation sector. A reconstituted governance committee and management team have fostered a culture that is collaborative, inclusive and responsive to all stakeholders, including students. Self-assessment processes are highly effective and used to make purposeful change and improvements that benefit all stakeholders.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- The ability to provide flight training depends on compliance with Civil Aviation Authority New Zealand (CAA NZ) rules and regulations. Waikato Aviation was found to be compliant with the CAA NZ Safety Management System in 2020 and the CAA NZ five-yearly recertification in 2023.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Graduates gain the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Airline Preparation Strand) (Level 6) and entry to the aviation industry. They also learn relevant life skills that can be applied to their roles as pilots and members of the community.
- Covid closed the aviation industry over 2020-22. During that time, Waikato Aviation supported its students well with instructors, online materials and resources. Most of the students who stayed in training over this period have now completed. Instructors are well equipped to meet the learning needs of individual students.
- The newly constituted governance committee and management team are high performing and committed to continuous improvement. Staff are highly valued and regularly consulted. They are actively supported, professionally and personally.
- Overall compliance with NZQA has improved by taking a proactive approach to engagement with the authority and the development of appropriate internal checks and balances.

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- Waikato Aviation has a clear strategy, appropriate resources, key personnel and well-developed systems to continue to meet its educational purpose and goals.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Student achievement and flight training were severely impacted by Covid lockdowns over 2019-22 and weather events in 2023. Waikato Aviation has worked to recover from both these events.</p> <p>Aviation is a highly regulated industry. CAA NZ publishes Flight Test Standards Guides which outline the standards required to pass a licence or a rating. Waikato Aviation has 12 domestic students completing the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation. There are currently no international student enrolments.</p> <p>Demand for pilots disappeared during Covid (see Table 1, Appendix 1, for student enrolment details 2018-23). Some students discontinued their training, looked for employment overseas, or gained employment within aviation in New Zealand, but not necessarily as pilots. Currently only seven students are behind in their training. Most students pass the flight test on their first attempt, an industry indicator of effective training.</p> <p>Intensive review by the new management team of all aspects of flight training has led to standardising the flight training programme and student progress being monitored more actively. This includes instructors and students accessing their flight log briefings to review past flights and look for areas to improve.</p> <p>Waikato Aviation uses unit standard/course completion, exam results, adherence to academic schedules, vocational outcomes and community engagement to gauge training delivery and student performance. Flight examiners noted that the calibre of Waikato Aviation students is very high.</p>

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

	Students must achieve 70 per cent to pass theoretical exams. Knowledge Deficiency Reports (KDRs) are generated to cover the additional learning needed to bring knowledge to 100 per cent. Once the additional learning is complete, the KDRs are signed off. Waikato Aviation has recently created an online assessment portal that uses various questioning methods to assess student knowledge. The assessment programme assesses knowledge deficiency areas for review and improvement.
Conclusion:	Students gain qualifications that meet external CAA requirements. Highly effective management of two major external events has ensured continuity of training for many students. However, student withdrawals were high over this period. This is reflected in the rating for educational performance for this key evaluation question.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Waikato Aviation has graduate data on diploma completions, highest licence or rating achieved and employment status following completion or departure. But they do not currently undertake graduate surveys. Graduates' employment status is noted post-graduation but not checked after this.</p> <p>Pilots trained by Waikato Aviation are often employed as flight instructors by the PTE. Of the current instructing staff of 13, 10 were trained at Waikato Aviation. Training through a CAA NZ Part 141 means that these instructors are more broadly trained than by other providers. This benefits the graduates, the aviation system in New Zealand and the quality of aviation overall. Becoming a flight instructor enables graduates to gain flight hours, increases their confidence and prepares them well for later employment options.</p> <p>Demand for pilots is high, therefore some students have withdrawn early to directly enter employment. Previously students may have needed more flight experience and/or qualifications to meet employer expectations. While it is a</p>

	<p>normal aviation industry pattern for graduates to progress from flight instructors to airline pilots, this has accelerated due to the heightened demand for pilots post-Covid. Staff turnover enables current students to become flight instructors once they graduate.</p> <p>Training alongside an aero club enables interactions between private pilots and Waikato Aviation students where they can share their knowledge and experience. Waikato Aviation hosts various aero club-based events that involve students. Examples include club competitions, flyaways, information evenings and external events such as the Women in Aviation rally. They also actively engage with several secondary schools and the wider community through careers expos, Women’s Lifestyle Expo, Gateway, Young Eagles, and the Hamilton Boys’ High School programme. Gateway and Young Eagles are conduits for prospective students.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Waikato Aviation graduates are in high demand. Graduates may be employed in aviation roles or as flight instructors. The organisation is embedded in its community and makes a significant contribution to raising community awareness of aviation as a career.</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
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Waikato Aviation trains suitably qualified pilots for employment in the aviation industry. They place high value on both the technical and non-technical skills that students learn. Non-technical skills include improved conversational skills, critical thinking, problem-solving, approachability and teamwork. Each theory and practical examination result has written or verbal feedback to allow students to understand what led to the result and outline areas for improvement. Staff access this feedback to enhance their teaching or academic material. Waikato Aviation has developed enhanced flight training digital briefings for each flight lesson. This enables students to</p>

	<p>understand the content and objectives of each lesson and uses the available technology.</p> <p>Academic standards and the integrity of the diploma programme are reviewed frequently, both internally and externally. External stakeholders conduct both theory and practical examinations through CAA NZ-approved agencies. There is external moderation for theory and practical examinations. These standards, combined with flight examining completed by external agencies, ensures assessments are valid, consistent and appropriate for the programme. Staff meet once a month to discuss any important issues with flight training and emerging best practice. These meetings contribute to consistency among instructor staff and highlight any changes needed.</p> <p>Flight instructors complete an instructional techniques course as a CAA NZ requirement. They also have a mandatory annual competency renewal with an A-Category flight instructor (highest level) to review their instructing capabilities and ensure they are meeting CAA NZ standards. This is also used as a training session where instructors can build their skills. Waikato Aviation also requires an annual instructional check, about halfway between yearly reviews, where the instructors fly with the chief flying instructor or their delegate.</p> <p>Waikato Aviation uses data from external industries to supplement internal information. This can include accident information from CAA NZ to enhance safety standards, and NIWA/Met Service weather data to provide context to flight training delays. ASPEQ NZ (CAA NZ-accredited examiners) releases data periodically regarding flight testing across the country. This data is used to compare Waikato Aviation's training delivery with others in the industry.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Programme design, delivery and assessment is targeted to meet the needs of key stakeholders. External compliance with CAA NZ is ongoing and rigorous. Internal quality assurance activities lead to changes and improvements.</p>

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The learning environment is inclusive to ensure the needs of each student are met. Students are on set academic schedules, although individual student ability means some students achieve their licences and ratings faster than others. Feedback is an important aspect of flight training. Each lesson is followed by a debrief (verbally) and a written debrief for the student which remains on their file. A student has access to their flight training record and can review feedback on all their flight training lessons. Staff can also access these records to help them prepare for flight lessons and target the lesson to the student's immediate needs.</p> <p>Feedback from staff, students, graduates and CAA indicated that the new resources developed by management are improvements. Interactive whiteboards, digital briefings and other technologies ensure learning is relevant and meets individual learning needs. This allows staff to work more effectively and students to be more involved in their learning.</p> <p>Waikato Aviation is a signatory to a peer-to-peer support network that gives student pilots access to mental health assistance, someone to talk to, and an avenue for advice. Waikato Aviation managers also operate an 'open-door' policy for both staff and students, which is well used. Waikato Aviation has trained the first pilot in New Zealand (with type 1 diabetes) to be granted a Class 1 medical, enabling them to gain the diploma qualification.</p> <p>Students develop non-technical skills, attitudes and behaviours that do not relate directly to aircraft control, systems control and standard operating procedures. Examples of non-technical skills are crew coordination and cooperation, communication, decision-making, conflict and error management, workload management, attention and confidence.</p>

	Waikato Aviation has been a signatory to the Code of Practice since 2018. Their Code attestation ratings for 2023 are well implemented and supported by this evaluation.
Conclusion:	Student support is highly effective. Responses to the wellbeing needs of students are appropriate. Systematic feedback provides opportunities for students to be involved and reflect on their learning. A focus on non-technical skills, attitudes and behaviours adds value to the graduate experience.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The new management team took an ‘all-of-organisation’ approach. They focussed on strategic direction, understanding core business needs, identifying areas of weakness, and improving operational delivery of flight training. The governance committee meets monthly to provide oversight of Waikato Aviation. At the end of 2021, following Covid vaccination mandates, the then general manager/chief flying instructor left the organisation. There was a period of transition before recruiting a new manager.</p> <p>Over the next six months, there were several key staff movements, including the then training manager and the finance administrator resigning. Staff and student morale has improved since the new leadership team was formed. Their management style is collaborative, and staff feel able to raise suggestions, work autonomously and influence flight training.</p> <p>The new management team reviewed staffing levels and employed a core team of full-time flight instructors, with the opportunity for casual flight instructors to be called in when needed. This has led to a coherent team who are highly valued.</p>

	<p>Waikato Aviation is an active member of Aviation New Zealand² and regularly engages with industry stakeholders through Aviation New Zealand forums. The organisation recognises Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a founding document in Aotearoa New Zealand. Students, staff and community members are expected to uphold the principles of Te Tiriti and to encourage inclusion of tikanga Māori values.</p> <p>Flight training is not fully student loan-funded. The cost of the diploma restricts the number of people undertaking flight training and disadvantages groups such as Māori and Pasifika. Ways to increase Māori participation in the aviation sector are important to Waikato Aviation. Addressing cost barriers for all students is an ongoing issue for the aviation industry in general.</p>
Conclusion:	Governance and management are values driven and highly effective at supporting educational achievement.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Waikato Aviation did not strictly follow its own documented procedures and policies during the transition to new management, and potentially before that. A 2018 Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) audit found discrepancies in administration training, processes and documentation. A TEC Audit Response Report was signed off on Waikato Aviation's corrective actions in July 2020.</p> <p>As an outcome of internal and external self-assessment around compliance, Waikato Aviation acted to improve overall accountability and compliance. These actions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking that students are following the syllabus and completing lessons in the specified times. If an issue is found, Waikato Aviation puts in place remedial training programmes.

² Aviation New Zealand is the industry body representing commercial aviation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing or amending new manuals and policies to better suit the direction of the organisation and flight training. (The Safe Operating Requirements (SOR) manual outlines expectations for students and members for safe and effective operation of 6 aircraft and to instil values that align with Waikato Aviation's.) • Improving briefing material to align content with aircraft type and flight manuals. (This work has enhanced flight training material. Previous iterations were broad and not aircraft-specific.) • An external annual audit of internal audit processes, as part of the safety management system. CAA NZ requires Waikato Aviation to be certified for safety management. This is a systematic approach to managing safety, including the necessary organisational structures, accountabilities, policies and procedures. Thirteen facets are covered including safety investigation, risk management, change management and audit. The safety management system is documented in a comprehensive manual to meet CAA NZ regulations. <p>CAA NZ accepted Waikato Aviation's Safety Management System (February 2020) and accepted the five-yearly recertification application (August 2023).</p> <p>In 2023, NZQA contacted Waikato Aviation with concerns that students were taking too long to complete the diploma programme. Waikato Aviation responded to NZQA with detailed information about all the students impacted. NZQA was satisfied with Waikato Aviation's response and closed the file on 19 September 2023. The mitigating factors behind delayed completions (already discussed in this report) provide the background context to this issue. These factors also impacted on timely reporting of credits to NZQA over 2020-22. Credit reporting for 2023 is much improved.</p> <p>Waikato Aviation has a subcontracting arrangement with Ardmore Flying School for Multi Crew Cooperation, which covers the knowledge and practical skills required to operate effectively within a multi-crew operating environment.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Waikato Aviation has some historical non-compliances that have now been resolved. The PTE has used these non-</p>

	compliances to build internal capability and guide improvements to their management of compliance.
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Focus areas

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

2.1 New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Airline Preparation Strand) (Level 6)

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation may 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 Waikato Aero Club Incorporated consider:

- analysing data already collected to determine its value for informing improvements to flight training.
- further development of te ao Māori initiatives to honour Te Tiriti commitments and attract more Māori students into training.
- the use of graduate surveys for longer-term tracking of graduate outcomes.

Requirements

There are no requirements arising from the external evaluation and review.

Appendix 1

Table 1. New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Airline Preparation Strand) (Level 6) ID: 127725, student enrolments, withdrawals, ethnicity, gender and residency status

Years	Enrolments	Withdrawals	Ethnicity	Gender	Residency
2018	13	5	8 NZ European 3 Māori 1 Indian 1 Chinese	9 male 3 female 1 gender diverse	11 NZ 1 China 1 India
2019	20	8	9 NZ European 1 South African 3 Indian 2 Chinese 1 Filipino 1 Other 2 unknown	18 male 2 female	14 NZ 2 China 2 Indian 2 unknown
2020	12	4	7 NZ European 1 Māori 1 British 1 Korean 2 unknown	12 male	10 NZ 2 unknown
2021	14	7	6 NZ European 1 Dutch 1 Other 1 Māori 1 British 1 Indian 1 Asian 2 unknown	12 male 2 female	10 NZ 1 Australia 1 Singapore 2 unknown
2022	7	3	4 NZ European 1 Māori 1 African 1 British	6 male 1 female	7 NZ
2023	12	1	7 NZ European 1 Filipino 1 British 1 Indian 1 Māori 1 Asian	8 male 3 female 1 gender diverse	12 NZ

Data provided by Waikato Aviation

Appendix 2

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>. 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. 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 fraud³*
- *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.*

³ NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) 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.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2022, which are made by NZQA under section 452(1)(t) of the Education and Training Act 2020 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister of Education.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for:

- *maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities, and*
- *maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs excluding universities, and*
- *maintaining micro-credential approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022, the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Rules 2022 and the Micro-credential Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2022 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes, micro-credentials and consents to assess and 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 Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2022. 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). All rules cited above are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>.

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