



Report of External Evaluation and Review

Eagle Flight Training Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 31 May 2011

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	4
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	5
Summary of Results	6
Findings	7
Recommendations	13
Further actions	13
Appendix	14

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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

TEO Name	Eagle Flight Training Limited (Eagle Flight)
Location:	500 Corsair Lane, Ardmore Airport, Auckland
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	2004
Number of students:	Domestic: 12 (part-time, not SAC-funded) International: 14
Number of staff:	Eight
Scope of active accreditation:	Eagle Flight offers six NZQA-approved courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificate in Commercial Pilot Licence/Instrument Rating (Level 5)• Certificate in Commercial Pilot Training (Level 5)• Certificate in Basic Pilot Training (Level 3)• Certificate in Pilot Training (C Category Instructor) (Level 5)• Certificate in Advanced Visual Flight Rules Navigation (Level 4)• Certificate in Advanced Instrument Flight Rules Navigation (Level 4)• Multi Engine Flight Training (Level 5)
Sites:	Main campus as above.
Distinctive characteristics:	Eagle Flight is a provider of aviation training,

	principally targeted at international students.
Recent significant changes:	Ownership of Eagle Flight changed in early 2010 and the new owners have been realigning the organisation and developing and embedding new systems and processes.
Previous quality assurance history:	Eagle Flight previously underwent an EER in June 2010. The outcome was that NZQA was Confident in Eagle Flight's educational performance and Not Yet Confident in their capability in self-assessment. Eagle Flight is a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students (Code of Practice). Eagle Flight is currently compliant with mandatory student fee protection requirements.
Other:	Recent addition of aircraft to increase the number and variety of aircraft available to students for training.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the external evaluation and review consisted of the mandatory focus areas:

- Governance, management, and strategy
- Student support including international students.

In addition the following focus area was selected

- Flight Training.

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 EER team comprised an external lead evaluator, who led the evaluation, and an NZQA lead evaluator. Prior to the EER visit, the external lead evaluator spoke by telephone with the general manager of Eagle Flight to agree the EER scope.

A one-day EER visit was made to the Eagle Flight site in Auckland, where the evaluation team met with the director, general manager, chief flying officer, quality manager , executive officer, teaching staff, marketing and support staff, and students.

Eagle Flight Training Limited has had an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and submissions received were fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Eagle Flight**.

Students at Eagle Flight are achieving good results. Although there have been small student numbers to date, the processes and systems that the organisation has put in place are systematic and robust and are expected to continue to produce good outcomes.

Eagle Flight has begun the process of monitoring graduate outcomes, and the early results indicate that the organisation is preparing students well for employment in the aviation industry.

The organisation has a student support structure that is appropriate to the needs of its students and removes barriers to achieving their goals successfully.

Eagle Flight and its staff engage well with their industry and are valued for the positive contribution they make.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Eagle Flight**.

There has been significant movement towards improved self-assessment since the previous EER, and Eagle Flight has created a highly self-reflective environment. There was clear evidence that the organisation recognises the value of self-assessment and uses it as a tool to improve its educational performance. Processes to critically analyse contributing factors to student achievement and other quality improvements have been developed and implemented. These processes are leading to improved outcomes for students.

Staff also have plenty of opportunities for reflection on their roles, which benefits students through improved teaching techniques and comprehensive student support.

The evaluation team is satisfied that the changes that have been put in place will continue to result in significant and meaningful ongoing improvements. Because of the progress already made with self-assessment and the clear commitment to its continuation, NZQA is satisfied that Eagle Flight will at least maintain its current levels of performance.

Findings¹

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 **Excellent**.

Students at Eagle Flight are achieving good results. All students who attempt examinations or flight tests eventually pass, although some may require a re-sit to do so. Eagle Flight is currently focussing on increasing the percentage of passes on the first attempt.

The organisation has informally set benchmarks, for instance an expectation that students will fly solo at approximately 20 hours' flying time and achieve their private pilot licence at approximately 60 hours. Currently, students are averaging 22 hours to achieve solo, and private pilot licences are generally achieved within the 60-hour target.

Eagle Flight has recognised the positive correlation between student attendance and achievement and has developed processes to monitor student attendance. Students are required to be on site from 9 am to 4.30 pm every day and to report in if they are sick. Students who are not in attendance and have not made contact are immediately followed up by Eagle Flight staff. This has led to a noticeable increase in the attendance rates and subsequent achievement. Student retention so far for 2011 is 100 per cent.

Students reported that they received timely, accurate, and supportive feedback on their progress from Eagle Flight staff. Students are debriefed by their instructor after every flight. The chief flying instructor and instructors also hold a debrief after every student's flight test, whether successful or unsuccessful, to identify "what the student did well, what he/she didn't do so well, and where Eagle Flight could improve instruction".

In addition to manual and electronic filing of results, every student has a student 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 for flight instructors to ensure continuity of the training and to maximise learning opportunities.

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

1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including 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**.

Valued outcomes are achieved by Eagle Flight's students. Eagle Flight is beginning to track the destinations of its graduates, and early indications are that they move into work in the aviation industry.

The stated intention of the flight instructors is to teach the students holistically in order to prepare students to take leadership roles in their careers, rather than aiming for students to simply achieve their qualifications and ratings only. Students interviewed at this evaluation stated clearly their intention to gain employment as pilots in their home countries following graduation, and their confidence that they would be well prepared to do so.

The immediate outputs from this training are licences and ratings as awarded by the New Zealand Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), and these also meet the requirements of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Eagle Flight also prepares Indian students to sit the Indian Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) examinations. Students' achievement of these licenses and ratings equip them to apply for a range of roles within the aviation industry in their respective home countries.

Tracking of graduates is in the early stages although, informally, staff know the destination of every graduate. Exit interviews are conducted with most students and graduates are encouraged to keep in touch with the organisation via Facebook. As Eagle Flight's self-assessment systems mature, it is expected that engagement with graduates will inform programme improvements.

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 **Excellent**.

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

The organisation has recognised that Asia, particularly China and India, is the growth region for aviation and has tailored its programmes to match the needs of students who come from, and will eventually work in, those countries. The goals and aspirations of every student are individually identified and an individual programme tailored to suit.

Eagle Flight indicates to prospective students that they need an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) average score of 5.5 in order to be accepted at the school. Students are also required to pass the ICAO English language test prior to their Private Pilot flight test. Where students are deemed to not meet this requirement, Eagle Flight has put in place appropriate English language support.

Flight instructors meet with individual students monthly to review their progress. Staff and students interviewed at this evaluation confirmed that this feedback was valued and contributed well to their overall progress.

Eagle Flight is also regularly audited by CAA in order to meet its regulatory requirements, and no major issues have been identified.

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**.

There was clear evidence of good teaching practice taking place at Eagle Flight. Instructors are enthusiastic and passionate about their students and teaching and they are well supported by management.

The chief flying instructor checks student progress on a weekly basis and by doing so monitors instructor effectiveness. For instance, the chief flying instructor gave a recent example where it was evident that there was a trend with the students of a particular instructor having challenges with ascents and descents, so the chief flying instructor was immediately able to intervene and assist the instructor to rectify the situation.

Eagle Flight has appointed highly qualified flight instructors, including 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.

Staff meet weekly to discuss students' progress and their teaching, and 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 purposefully build trusting relationships with students which facilitated the giving and receiving of frank feedback, confirming the value of this process and its contribution to the overall learning environment.

Students have good access to ample teaching and learning resources including a flight simulator and a small fleet of aircraft including both high and low-wing, single-engined aircraft and at least one twin-engined plane. 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.

Although instructors study basic adult teaching as part of their instructor ratings, further and ongoing study in say, the National Certificate of Adult Education and Training, would improve teaching effectiveness.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

Eagle Flight has robust and client-friendly systems for the pastoral care of its students. The organisation is providing a safe and supportive learning environment for its international students on campus and is keeping in close contact outside of the normal hours of tuition, such as regular visits to their accommodation and the provision of a designated support staff member with 24-hour phone contact if needed.

The executive officer and administration/marketing officer have overall responsibility for student support and pastoral care and ensure that Code of Practice requirements are met. Instructors are encouraged to be the first line of support and normally give students their email and telephone contact details so that they are always contactable. Every student has a “primary instructor” whose role is to be the first point of contact and to keep a watchful eye on the progress and welfare of students in their charge.

Most students enrolled with Eagle Flight are international students and all are over 18 years of age. Students are currently recruited in their home country through agents contracted to Eagle Flight, and no major issues were identified in regard to this practice. Students and staff confirmed that the information and guidance provided to students at the time of enrolment is accurate and appropriate.

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 **Excellent**.

Eagle Flight is a privately owned and operated aviation training provider with a clear set of goals and objectives. The organisation has developed and embedded effective systems for monitoring student achievement and supporting staff to improve educational achievements.

Eagle Flight’s management recognises that the key to success of the business lies in the success of the students and the value they gain from their training. Eagle Flight actively supports strategies to increase student achievement and to support students to meet their employment goals.

Eagle Flight has employed very highly qualified and experienced staff and is well supplied with physical and learning resources for the number of students that it currently has. There are systems in place to constantly monitor resourcing to ensure that there are always sufficient resources, mainly aircraft and instructors, to meet the needs of the students. The organisation has moved away from the industry norm of employing instructors on an hourly basis (for flying hours only) and has employed all instructors on salary. Although this is more costly, Eagle Flight’s management consider that it ensures that staff are consistently available to support students with groundwork study and that it also creates a more collegial environment as instructors are not competing with each other for flying hours.

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 meeting the needs of students and other stakeholders.

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 **Excellent**.

2.2 Focus area: Student support including international students

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

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

The evaluation did not identify any significant areas of concern regarding Eagle Flight's compliance with the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students.

2.3 Focus area: Flight Training

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

There are no recommendations arising from this external evaluation and review.

Further actions

The next external evaluation and review will take place in accordance with NZQA's policy and is likely to occur within four years of the date of this report.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.

In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring all non-university TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses 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 policies and criteria approved by the NZQA Board.

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).

*Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication *Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review*, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>*

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