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External Evaluation and Review Report



Wanaka Helicopters Limited

Date of report: 23 January 2020

About Wanaka Helicopters Limited

Wanaka Helicopters Limited is a family-owned and operated aviation training establishment¹ which also manages a wide variety of commercial flight operations.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	6 Lloyd Dunn Avenue, Wanaka Airport, Wanaka
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes (since 2008)
Number of trainees:	Domestic diploma trainees: 12 International: nil
Number of staff:	13 full-time and three part-time
TEO profile:	See Wanaka Helicopters Limited on the NZQA website
Last EER outcome:	In February 2016, NZQA was highly confident in Wanaka Helicopters' educational performance and capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	Diploma in Aviation (Helicopter) (General Aviation) (Level 5), an NZQA-approved programme leading to the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane and Helicopter) (Level 5) with strands in Agriculture and General Aviation [Ref: 1706]
MoE number:	7826
NZQA reference:	C37069
Dates of EER visit:	19 and 20 November 2019

¹ The certification and operation of organisations conducting aviation training and assessments in New Zealand is prescribed under Part 141 of Civil Aviation Rules governed by the Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand (CAA). All theory and practical (flight test) assessments are conducted independently by ASPEQ, which operates under licence to CAA. All pilot licences are issued by CAA.

Wanaka Helicopters' Part 141 (Flight Training Operations) approval was renewed by CAA in April 2018 for five years, which is the longest renewal period that CAA approves.

Summary of Results

Wanaka Helicopters is a self-reflecting organisation with very good systems in place to support educational performance and effectively manage compliance responsibilities.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Programme completions are high and consistently outperform the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) sector median. Trainees obtain not only the necessary technical competencies but also twenty-first century skills², making them work-ready. Most graduates gain relevant employment within 12 months after graduation.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- The programme structure, with integrated theory and practical learning, is effective in keeping the trainees engaged in their learning. Systems are in place to ensure consistency of teaching and learning, and adherence to education best practices.
- Succession of key management roles was recently completed, and was well-planned. Wanaka Helicopters' status and reputation in the industry is closely interwoven with that of its founding member, who is a well-respected industry leader in helicopter operations. The effective succession planning thoroughly prepares the new governing members, who in their own rights are well-experienced in running the organisation. The mission of Wanaka Helicopters, which is to teach trainees beyond the bare minimum training requirements, continues with the new regime.
- Self-assessment is embedded at all levels of the organisation and ensures that all compliance responsibilities are met.

² Among others: communication, creativity, communication, information technology, media literacy.

Key evaluation question findings³

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Wanaka Helicopters has high course completion and consistently outperforms the TEC sector median.⁴ The organisation's first-time pass rate, which is higher than the national pool, is another indicator of how well trainees achieve.⁵ Wanaka Helicopters' average first-time pass rate is 98 per cent, compared with the national sector average of 58-62 per cent. The first-time pass rate is viewed in the aviation industry as an important indicator of training effectiveness.</p> <p>Trainees obtain their Private Pilot Licence (PPL) and Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL) as part of the diploma programme. All trainees who completed the courses in preparation for the CPL have passed and obtained the licence. In addition, the diploma provides the trainees with skills and competencies necessary in employment, such as communication and presentation skills, media and information technology, customer service skills, and teamwork.</p> <p>Māori participation is not high (six in the last three years), but achievement has been impressive at 100 per cent.</p> <p>There is evidence of comprehensive monitoring and analysis of trainee progress and achievement, and reasons for withdrawal are well-noted and appropriately addressed.⁶</p> <p>There is evidence that the organisation endeavours to increase the participation of Māori and Pasifika through target marketing</p>

³ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

⁴ See Appendix 1.

⁵ ASPEQ sample quarterly report data (Wanaka Helicopters' Self-Assessment Summary Report, Appendix 8).

⁶ In 2019, two of the three withdrawals from the diploma programme continued private training with Wanaka Helicopters towards their licences.

	and scholarship offers. However, this is currently challenged by financial constraints and the organisation's location at the bottom of the South Island.
Conclusion:	Achievement is high and consistently outperforms the sector median. Regular monitoring and analysis of trainee progress and achievement data results in strong achievement for the organisation.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The PPL, CPL and other licences and ratings obtained by the trainees are concrete evidence of valued outcomes. Wanaka Helicopters' graduates have a more than 90 per cent employment rate in a helicopter/flight support role within six months of graduation, and 98 per cent within 12 months.</p> <p>Because of Wanaka Helicopters' history and good reputation in New Zealand and internationally, its graduates are highly regarded in the profession as safe and professional pilots.</p> <p>Graduates confirmed that their training was good value for money and that Wanaka Helicopters prepared them well for employment by involving them in various commercial operations of the company. These include assisting in scenic flights, air transport operations, commercial lifting and surveys, fire fighting, agricultural flights, and aerial hunting and filming. These practical industry experiences are valued by potential employers.</p>
Conclusion:	Trainees gain technical and commercial flying skills, as well as employment skills necessary in a commercial aviation company. Most graduates gain relevant employment within six to 12 months following graduation.

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>The diploma programme includes learning and preparation towards PPL and CPL licensure, as well as additional knowledge and competence in other facets of aviation such as specialist flying skills, aviation safety, regulatory compliance, and relevant employment skills. The diploma is seen by stakeholders as a good preparation for a career in the helicopter aviation industry. Ground theory and practical flight lessons are closely integrated, and the exposure to real-life scenarios and experiences provided by Wanaka Helicopters' commercial operations is an integral part of the learning for the trainees. The newly upgraded hangar provides a venue for trainees to be familiar with pre-flight requirements in a real environment.</p> <p>The small size of the organisation and the effective use of Moodle online learning allow flight instructors to collaborate, ensuring consistency in teaching and learning materials. Trainees find Moodle a good learning platform which facilitates an efficient way of obtaining materials and submitting assessment tasks and other course requirements.</p> <p>Internal moderation processes are sound, and the relevant industry training organisation is confident that Wanaka Helicopters' assessments meet CAA requirements.</p> <p>Courses are reviewed annually to ensure relevance as well as compliance with CAA. Various methods are used in obtaining trainee feedback. Trainees can provide feedback through Moodle, in addition to the two-monthly meetings of the training and management team, which includes a student representative from each cohort. Trainees can also give their feedback directly to the flight instructors.</p> <p>Any concerns from trainees are discussed in the monthly instructors meeting and addressed promptly.</p>
"Conclusion:	<p>The needs of trainees, the industry and other stakeholders are considered in the design and delivery of the programme.</p> <p>Continuous self-assessment is effective in ensuring programme</p>

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The trainees are fully supported in their learning. Flight instructors are mindful of the various individual learning needs of trainees, and endeavour to adjust their teaching methods to address those needs. Aside from the individual briefing before and after practical flight training, one-on-one support is always available to trainees.</p> <p>Moodle is a platform with many functionalities. It allows trainees to access all study materials, submit requirements such as assessments and papers, and provide their feedback on each course. This resource assists greatly in keeping trainees engaged in their learning.</p> <p>Each cohort elects a student representative, who serves as their voice in the regular training and management team meeting attended by the academic coordinator and a flight instructor. These meetings are opportunities for the relevant staff members to hear any concerns from trainees. These concerns are addressed in a timely manner and are documented. Once or twice a year, a general assembly attended by all trainees is held. Peer mentorship has also been introduced so that trainees can support each other.</p> <p>External guest speakers, such as CAA representatives, have been invited to present on special topics, for example safety management system implementation and gap analysis. This is one example of an opportunity provided to trainees to engage with the industry.</p> <p>Self-funded private trainees who are not enrolled in the diploma programme are provided with similar support to meet their training objectives, and positive feedback is received from them.</p>
Conclusion:	Trainees are kept engaged in their learning through the strong support provided to them. Trainees are given opportunities to provide input into their learning and learning environment, and any concerns are promptly addressed.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The founding directors established Wanaka Helicopters with the teaching philosophy of equipping trainees with more than what the curriculum requires in order to produce safe, professional and employable pilots. The company has shown that it lives by this mission.</p> <p>This family-run organisation has recently completed its handover of governance and management roles. The newly appointed chief executive and training manager are sons of the founding directors and have been involved in running the business for many years. CAA approves and has full confidence in the new leadership of Wanaka Helicopters.</p> <p>Alongside this change, a new permanent role of academic coordinator was established. This is a key and valuable role in the daily operations and quality assurance of training. A full-time in-house aircraft engineer was employed, ensuring that the hangar, helicopters and other equipment are properly maintained. The organisation, which has grown in size in terms of staffing and resources, sought expert advice from the business advisory board to ensure the growth is well-considered and sustainable.</p> <p>Flight instructors are highly qualified and there is low turnover of staff, which is a good indication of their satisfaction at work. Instructors are fully supported in their job and in furthering their professional development.</p> <p>Wanaka Helicopters is governed by a board which meets regularly, looking at various aspects of the business including training. The management team meets monthly but operates closely on a daily basis, and any concerns are dealt with promptly.</p> <p>The heliWiki, a comprehensive process database introduced in 2017, provides an effective system to ensure business continuity and shared understanding of each aspect of the organisation's operations by key staff members.</p>

Conclusion:	The governance and management team has effective systems in place, aided by reflective self-assessment practices, to support educational achievement.
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1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>As an aviation training provider, Wanaka Helicopters is subject to a number of compliance responsibilities from different regulatory agencies and follows an effective system to meet their obligations. Compliance management is aided by heliWiki, which monitors compliance tasks and due dates for each relevant staff member. Compliance management is shared, with one or two key staff members responsible for each area.</p> <p>The organisation's effective compliance management includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly self-audit is conducted as per CAA requirements. • No significant issues were identified during the 2017 TEC audit. • An Assessment Intention Plan was submitted in 2018 to ServiceIQ as requested. ServiceIQ is confident that the assessment conducted by Wanaka Helicopters meets CAA requirements. • There is good management of trainees' funds, which are drawn down in an appropriate manner and are transparent and accessible to trainees. • The programme is delivered as per NZQA approval, including learning hours, delivery and assessment methods. • NZQA annual attestations are submitted on time. • Responsibilities as a Code of Practice signatory are executed, i.e. insurance and visa monitoring, pastoral care of students, availability of 24/7 emergency contact person. Annual Code of Practice self-review is comprehensive, and the academic coordinator works closely with Immigration New Zealand to ensure proper visas for international

	<p>trainees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting of credits to NZQA is carried out within 90 days. However, Wanaka Helicopters slipped on this requirement for a period of time, and this task was urgently addressed by the academic coordinator upon his appointment. <p>There is good self-assessment practice in place to manage compliance. The monthly management meetings discuss the organisation's compliance responsibilities, and a status board is maintained to monitor these, along with heliWiki.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Wanaka Helicopters has effective systems in place to ensure that compliance accountabilities are managed well. There was an identified lapse for a certain period in terms of credit reporting to NZQA, which has since been addressed.</p>

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Diploma in Aviation (Helicopter) (General Aviation) (Level 5)

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.

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

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.

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

Appendix 1

Table 1. Enrolment and achievement data, Diploma in Aviation (Level 5)

Cohort >	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Programme enrolment	150	130	162	189	290
Programme achieved	150	112	109	176	-
Diploma enrolment	6	5	6	7	6
Diploma achieved	-	7	7	6	8 (forecast)
Withdrawals	1	2	1	1	3

Source: Wanaka Helicopters' Self-Assessment Summary Report (p11)

Table 2. Programme completion data

Year	Wanaka Helicopters	TEC sector median
2016	93%	84%
2017	94%	77%
2018	94%	80%

Source: <https://www.tec.govt.nz/funding/funding-and-performance/performance/teo/epi-reports/>

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 fraud⁷*
- *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.*

⁷ 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 2016, which are made by NZQA under section 253(1)(pa) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister authorised as responsible for Part 20 of the Education Act.

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 including ITOs but excluding universities, and*
- *maintaining training scheme approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2011 and the Training Scheme Rules 2012 respectively. These rules were also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Rules 2018 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2018 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, training schemes 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 2016. 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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