



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

External Evaluation and Review Report

Air Hawke's Bay Limited

Date of report: 12 June 2024

About Air Hawke's Bay Limited

Air Hawke's Bay Ltd is a professional pilot training organisation. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of the neighbouring Hawke's Bay and East Coast Aero Club Inc. Air Hawke's Bay provides training to both New Zealand domestic students funded by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), and to fee paying international students. The training is towards achieving internationally recognised Civil Aviation Authority licences.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	1591 Maraekakaho Road, Hastings Aerodrome, Hastings
Eligible to enrol intl. students:	Yes
Number of students (at the time of the EER visit):	Domestic: 24 equivalent full-time students International: 15 equivalent full-time students, all from India; no under-18 students are enrolled
Number of staff:	13 full-time and one part-time equivalent
TEO profile:	See Air Hawke's Bay Limited on the NZQA website. The ability to provide flight training depends on compliance with the rules and regulations of Civil Aviation Authority New Zealand (CAA NZ). Air Hawke's Bay is compliant with these requirements.
Last EER outcome:	In May 2020, NZQA was Confident in Air Hawke's Bay's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• International Students: Support and Wellbeing• New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Level 5) ID.125294; and New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Level 6) ID.125298
MoE number:	8026
NZQA reference:	C55658
Dates of EER enquiry:	13 and 14 February 2024

Summary of results

Air Hawke's Bay has recognised strengths and credibility within the aviation industry. Most students achieve some level of pilot's licence. Numerous graduates have moved into aviation-related employment since the last EER. Students are well cared for and supported. The quality and effectiveness of self-assessment varies. Management of NZQA-related compliance has been marginal. Other areas of compliance (CAA, TEC, WDC¹) are effectively managed.

Confident in educational performance

- Air Hawke's Bay has strengths in theory instruction and practical flying training. It effectively uses aircraft, equipment and other resources to coach and guide students along a stringent syllabus in a timely way.
- The PTE maintains a professional environment; expectations are set high but are achievable. Students are treated as individuals with unique learning abilities and attributes. This links to timely achievement by most students.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Students describe the campus environment as welcoming and respectful. There is a positive and professional dynamic among staff and students.
- PTE governance and management have been effective in responding to various challenges.²
- There are areas of robust self-assessment, particularly around currency of knowledge and ensuring information taught is current and matching the needs of CAA. This all serves students well in preparing for tests and developing competence.
- There are some limitations in the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of self-assessment. This has been potentially amplified by changes

¹ Workforce development council

² The PTE has faced a number of notable challenges: Covid disrupted training and interrupted student inflow; post-Covid there are challenges retaining instructors in the face of strong recruitment by the aviation industry. In 2023, Cyclone Gabrielle was both disruptive to normal operations and stressful for staff and students.

to role holders and the other contextual challenges noted above. This finding leads to a number of recommendations and a requirement.

Key evaluation question findings³

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Course pass rates and mandatory ASPEQ⁴ exam pass rates – by type of licence, and by both theory and practical exams – are collated year-on-year. First time exam pass rates compare favourably with the national average first time pass rate, which is a standard point of comparison in the aviation training sector.⁵</p> <p>The PTE’s self-assessment summary accurately describes how data is used to monitor and improve student success. NZQA found that there is plausible monitoring and discussion of achievement at staff meetings; informally, progress is a daily/weekly concern to staff and management. Students said PTE staff provide ongoing information and advice on their progress. However, beyond monitoring, and individual progress information discussed at staff meetings, there is limited evidence of systematic aggregation and analysis of achievement data. As a result, for example, there is no particular identification of trends in Māori or Pasifika students’ achievement.</p> <p>To illustrate the disruptive impacts of the pandemic, first time flight test data has compared favourably with the aviation training sector as a whole. But first time test pass rates for the Commercial Pilot Licence decreased, from 77 per cent in 2021 to 44 per cent in 2022, recovering strongly to 90 per cent in 2023.</p>
Conclusion:	Students are achieving well – see Appendix for data. Overall data management, presentation and use is sound,

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 ASPEQ is contracted as a testing centre for the CAA.

⁵ Exams taken include Commercial Pilot Licence tests, Private Pilot Licence tests, Instrument Rating exams, etc. See also Appendix.

	but there is some variability in how well focused this is. There is limited routine monitoring of the achievement patterns of priority group students, as required by NZQA.
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1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Air Hawke’s Bay’s value proposition is to ‘[produce] industry ready pilots’. There is reasonably strong but not comprehensive and current evidence as to how many graduates have achieved that outcome since the last EER.</p> <p>That said, many graduates have progressed to flying careers; notably, some as instructors at Air Hawke’s Bay initially. There is high demand for graduates – particularly those with instructor ratings and significant flying hours – and airlines have been heavily recruiting these individuals. The PTE also states that employment pathways have been disrupted by the pandemic.</p> <p>Graduate records maintained by the PTE track the graduates’ employment status and point to career progression to senior roles in the aviation industry, including chief pilot roles with Air New Zealand. NZQA gained further supporting evidence from recent graduates and industry stakeholders. There is confidence in the skill level and all-round capabilities of the graduates.</p> <p>The PTE makes an important contribution to air ambulance and hospital transfer services locally. There is evidence of continued alignment with industry wants and needs and maintaining connectedness with stakeholders. These include the local aero club (owners of the PTE) and regional high schools through STAR/Gateway programmes and through open days. These activities usefully present the pathway into the training and into the industry.</p> <p>There is no clear memorandum of understanding with the India-based agent, which might include gathering data on graduate outcomes. This has led to a gap in accurate, recent graduate information for that cohort. Evidence around timeframes for progress into employment for all groups of graduates was unavailable.</p>

Conclusion:	There is reportedly strong visibility of Air Hawke's Bay graduates in the aviation sector, including in leadership roles. The graduate progress information (especially for international students) was not current and not comprehensive. This weakens the PTE's evidence for a higher rating under this key evaluation question.
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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>There is overall a very good match between the needs of stakeholders and students and the delivery of training. This is most convincing in respect to CAA/ASPEQ, but somewhat less so in relation to the NZQA-approved programmes and training schemes. The training materials, quality of instruction, preparedness for ASPEQ exams and other tests all appear to be strong, intentional and well resourced.</p> <p>Domestic students completing the New Zealand Diplomas in Aviation will hold various CAA-approved and internationally recognised pilot's licences, as well as a number of ratings, depending on the strand (career path) selected. International students complete a training scheme which converts to meet the requirements of CAA.</p> <p>Formative assessments are varied in scope and involve suitably qualified instructors. The instructors use various modes of delivery: lectures, quizzes, field trips and in-cockpit observations. Review is ongoing; recent feedback from students is sought to refresh and update tests. Questions that students found difficult are often a focus. Summative exams are run by ASPEQ, and practical tests are conducted by CAA-certified examiners, of whom Air Hawke's Bay employs two.⁶ Air Hawke's Bay's voluntary,</p>

⁶ No external moderation evidence was available relating to the unit standards being assessed and awarded within the programme. The unit standards are assessed through a CAA-approved arrangement with ASPEQ and are not currently subject to external moderation by Ringa Hora WDC.

	<p>internal internship programme offers extra skills consolidation and flying hours to students who excel.</p> <p>Resources meet student needs and have improved since the last EER. Students and staff have access to various digital technologies which assist in reviewing and monitoring students' progress. Students have commented in surveys on some aircraft maintenance issues which crop up from time to time. They have also suggested that the booking system needs improving. Graduates, some of whom have worked at Air Hawke's Bay, attested to investment in improved resources, upgrades to aircraft and the like. They were satisfied with their training.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>The programme integrates aviation theory and practical flying experience. It provides a solid grounding in all technical and regulatory aspects of flying an aircraft. Resources largely meet student needs and have improved since the last EER. A range of monitoring and review processes are used well by Air Hawke's Bay to safeguard the students.</p>

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Preliminary guidance, enrolment and onboarding of new students is mostly sound. Air Hawke's Bay has several student intakes annually and manages cohorts who are at different points of progress in their training. Since the last EER, all applicants are interviewed. An extensive range of requirements must be met before enrolment is accepted. Records of this were well maintained.</p> <p>Air Hawke's Bay's website provides a range of useful guidance. Students are provided with a prospectus, programme handbook and a detailed list of fees. A well-structured orientation process provides further information-sharing, including individual guidance. Student needs assessment occurs early in the training and is ongoing. Some students enrol with prior flight experience and have the opportunity for recognition of this learning. Each student has an individual training programme based</p>

	<p>on their needs and rate of progress. This all sets up the students well to succeed.</p> <p>All international students stay in a private student accommodation facility. Daily transport to the campus is offered to these students. There is an opportunity to involve the accommodation provider more directly in the PTE’s review of the Code of Practice (for pastoral care).</p> <p>A range of processes are used to exchange important information and allow students to offer feedback to the PTE. These range from informal approaches, social media, online surveys, through to more formal channels such as student representatives and knowledge deficiency reports.⁷ Student survey ratings are positive overall. Some comments point to a few issues around aircraft and scheduling being raised by students. The results of this feedback are not comprehensively presented or reported in a way that can easily link to evidence of PTE responsiveness and improvement actions.</p> <p>The arrangements with the key agent in India are sound, although areas for improvement have been identified by the PTE. NZQA recommends that a more formal memorandum be developed. This would help ensure that pre-arrival information is always relevant, current and useful. An improvement since the last EER is the purchase of suitable insurance by Air Hawke’s Bay on behalf of each student before they depart India.</p> <p>Air Hawke’s Bay’s Code of Practice review process was somewhat cursory in 2023 and needs to be strengthened and expanded on in 2024. That said, the requirements of the Code are being met. Staff are accessible and supportive according to those students and graduates interviewed. Social activities and amenities at the campus are valued and contribute to a healthy group dynamic which supports learning, retention and completion.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Air Hawke’s Bay students are well supported. They are actively involved in their learning, highly motivated, and empowered to raise any suggestions or concerns. As</p>

⁷ ‘Any gaps in the student’s knowledge is covered off through the Knowledge Deficiency Reports process (KDRs). KDRs provide feedback to students and lecturers on which areas they failed in their exams. KDRs must be reviewed with the student and signed off by an instructor before the student does their flight test.’ - Air HB

	indicated, the PTE has various opportunities to strengthen their self-assessment.
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1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Educational achievement and outcomes into employment are positive. This is within a context of some uncertainty due to the pandemic-related disruptions to international student recruitment and challenges retaining instructors in the face of active recruiting of pilots by airlines. There has also been consideration of a sale of the PTE during this period, and a need to focus some attention on that.</p> <p>That noted, the new chief executive⁸, the business manager and chief flying officer are knowledgeable, capable and collaborative in their day-to-day work. This was attested to by stakeholders, instructors, students and graduates. As a team they have ensured viable continuous operation under the circumstances; students say that delivery has been uninterrupted over the past year despite some uncertainty. Communication within the organisation is constructive and ongoing, and the role of interns, student representatives and internal monthly newsletters are notable here.</p> <p>Records relating to current job descriptions, minuted meetings and staff professional development were sound. Instructor licence aspects have been a particularly high priority and need as some instructors left for aviation jobs, and so other instructors needed to become further qualified. Other forms of important, relevant professional development were noticeably lacking: Code workshops; assessment training; first aid refreshers; tertiary education-facing workshops and so on.</p> <p>Absence of a transition plan and a well-managed handover of institutional and NZQA-facing knowledge during the management change has hampered the PTE's ability to demonstrate a full knowledge of NZQA and TEC</p>

⁸ The previous, long-serving chief executive left the PTE in 2023. The chief executive is also one of the two directors appointed to the PTE by the owners.

	requirements being well managed. Traceable evidence that self-assessment is used effectively to maintain quality and improve performance was limited in a few areas.
Conclusion:	PTE governance and management have been effective in responding to numerous challenges. There are various improvements needed in self-assessment overall – see Recommendations.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Air Hawke’s Bay actively engages with stakeholders and compliance holders. For instance, they met with ASPEQ, Ringa Hora WDC and Immigration NZ at a hui in Ohakea during February 2024. All necessary CAA approvals are current. These are crucial to the purpose, programmes and day-to-day operation of the PTE.</p> <p>TEC funding approval for 2024 is also in place. The TEC last audited Air Hawke’s Bay in October 2020, finding that ‘overall systems, policies and procedures are effective and meet legislative and investment plan requirements’.</p> <p>NZQA’s audit of international student files was largely positive. However, one student had lapsed insurance cover for the final few days of their training. Additional insurance for that student was immediately arranged by Air Hawke’s Bay. Subsequent checks of all other files by Air Hawke’s Bay found they were current. There is accurate record-keeping, and all other aspects such as visas, entry criteria and English language proficiency tests were met and readily accessible.</p> <p>Air Hawke’s Bay mostly matches NZQA registration requirements. For example: a programme change was approved in 2021, as were sub-contracting arrangements pertaining to dangerous goods and aviation security awareness; and fit and proper person applications for the two new directors were lodged in January 2024.</p> <p>Attestations and other required documentation to NZQA since the last EER have mostly been timely, with a few late</p>

	<p>in 2020. Given the pandemic and the crisis it created for aviation schools, this is not unexpected.</p> <p>A significant gap detected is that student results are mostly reported to NZQA well outside the 30-day requirement. A comparison of qualification and training scheme completion rates with the results reports sent to NZQA shows that not all of the unit standard credits achieved by the students have been reported.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Although most important compliance accountabilities are being met, persistent late reporting of results to NZQA indicates weaknesses in systems and processes. See Recommendations and Requirement below.</p>

Focus areas

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

2.1 New Zealand Diploma in Aviation Level 5 (ID.125294) and Level 6 (ID. 125298)

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
	See Recommendations and Requirement below.

2.2 International Students: Support and Wellbeing

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Marginal
	See Recommendations below.

Recommendations

Recommendations are not mandatory, 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 Air Hawke's Bay Limited:

- Revise policies and procedures to ensure that key areas of administration such as results handling, formal internal approval, and reporting to NZQA can be followed by all staff involved in a timely fashion.
- Consider revising self-assessment systems, particularly the existing key processes for monitoring and review, so they are more effective and yield evidence of ongoing improvements as well as capture the graduate outcomes achieved, which are then verifiable at EER.
- Develop clear memoranda of understanding (or equivalent agreements) with the international student agent and any other partner such as the student accommodation provider. These should then be monitored for performance and refined over time.
- Develop a clearer strategy for obtaining and effectively using student feedback to yield evidence of both ongoing responsiveness to student feedback and for making improvements which are then verifiable at EER.

Requirement

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

NZQA requires Air Hawke's Bay Limited to: Ensure all credits for students are reported to NZQA within three months following assessment, as per Section 10(1)(b) of the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2021. Policies and procedures on credit reporting must be developed or amended, and relevant staff must be advised, to comply with said Rules.

Appendix 1

Table 1. Air Hawke's Bay summary of achievement since the last EER

	New Zealand domestic students				International students		
	Enrolments	Course completion	Qualification completion	Withdrawn	Enrolments	Course completion	Withdrawn
2020	9	100%	100%	0	9	100%	0
2021	18	88%	88%	3	nil	n/a	n/a
2022	9	77%	77%	1	13	84%	3
2023	15	80%	80%	2	18	In progress	1

Table 2. Domestic achievement – qualifications awarded

3688 New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Level 5) ID.125294				
Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
No. students completed	14	14	11	14
3689 New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Level 6) ID.125298				
No. students completed	12	12	18	12

Table 3. International achievement – training scheme completions⁹

Integrated Private Pilot Licence and Commercial Pilot Licence and Instrument Rating (Training Scheme) version 1 – 227 credits, ID.119590				
Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
No. students completed	21	0	10	13

Source: Air Hawke's Bay

⁹ There are no enrolments or completions for: Instrument Rating - Aeroplane (Training Scheme) version 1 – 46 credits, ID. 119591; Private Pilot Licence - Aeroplane version 2 – 48 credits, ID. 118570; Commercial Pilot Licence (Training Scheme) – 133 credits, ID. 119589

Table 4. Summary of performance in ASPEQ exams and tests

First time exam pass rates - 2020-22	ASPEQ national average	Air HB (No. tests)	
PPL Exams	71%	85% (51)	
CPL Exams	75%	81% (45)	
IR Exams	75%	80% (39)	
ATPL Exams	80%	79% (30)	
First time flight test pass rates - 2021	ASPEQ national average	Air HB domestic	Air HB international
CPL Flight Test	46%	77%	86%
IR Flight Test	63%	75%	n/a
C Cat Instructor	82%	89%	n/a
B Cat Instructor	Data unavailable	nil	nil
First time flight test pass rates - 2022	ASPEQ national average	Air HB domestic	Air HB international
CPL Flight Test	54%	44%	n/a
IR Flight Test	63%	72%	%
C Cat Instructor	85%	81%	n/a
B Cat Instructor	71%	100%	n/a
A Cat Flight Test	Data unavailable	100%	n/a
First time flight test pass rates - 2023	ASPEQ national average	Air HB domestic	Air HB international
CPL Flight Test	Data unavailable	90%	79%
IR Flight Test		83%	n/a
C Cat Instructor		80%	n/a
B Cat Instructor		50%	n/a

Source: Air Hawke's Bay

KEY: CPL - Commercial Pilot Licence; PPL - Private Pilot Licence; IR - Instrument Rating; ATPL – Airline Transport Pilot Licence; B Cat and C Cat – B Category and C Category Instructor Ratings

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 fraud¹⁰*
- *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.*

¹⁰ 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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