



# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Nelson Aviation College

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 18 July 2012

# Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction .....	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review .....	6
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	6
Summary of Results .....	7
Findings .....	10
Recommendations .....	22
Further Actions.....	20
Appendix 1 .....	23

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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

Location:	Motueka Aerodrome, Queen Victoria Street, Motueka
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	December 1990
Number of students:	Domestic: 65 International: ten
Number of staff:	24 staff, including instructors-in-training
Scope of active accreditation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane and Helicopter) (with strands in Airline Preparation and Flight Instruction) (Level 6)</li><li>• Diploma in Aviation Science (Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) qualification); this is the old diploma qualification, with 50 students finishing in 2012</li><li>• Private Pilot Licence/Commercial Pilot Licence, and Senior Commercial Pilot Licence/Instrument Rating; these licences are delivered as a programme for international students</li></ul>

Sites:	Two sites: Motueka Aerodrome, Queen Victoria Street, Motueka; Nelson Airport (for Instrument Rating courses)
Distinctive characteristics:	<p>Nelson Aviation College has specialised in fixed-wing and helicopter training since 1978, with registration as a PTE in 1990. During recent years, the college has trained pilots for overseas airlines and internationally recognised helicopter companies, as well as many individually enrolled students. Graduates from previous courses are employed by a number of aviation companies and airlines both within New Zealand and overseas. In 2011, Nelson Aviation College was selected as a partner for the Air New Zealand Aviation Institute, being accepted as having a suitable standard for the training of future pilots for Air New Zealand. Graduates of the college frequently work for smaller regional airlines before being selected for the Air New Zealand Aviation Institute.</p> <p>Nelson Aviation College offers separate private and commercial pilot training for international students, many of whom wish to obtain licences only before returning to their own countries for employment, including further airline pilot training. The college has developed a relationship with the airline industry in Papua New Guinea, with several graduates from that country, several of whom now have successful careers as airline pilots. International student numbers are relatively low, with all students well integrated into programmes at the college.</p> <p>Nelson Aviation College delivers pilot training for NMIT, which is funded by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) Student Achievement Component funding for this programme. There is a memorandum of understanding between the college and NMIT for programme delivery. The courses for international students delivered by Nelson Aviation College are not included in the collaborative partnership with NMIT.</p>
Recent significant changes:	<p>The New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane and Helicopter) was approved by NZQA in early 2012, in time for 2012 delivery of the programme. It replaced the NMIT programme: Diploma in Aviation Science (Aeroplane and Helicopter). The programmes are both of two years, thus the year-two students within the older programme will graduate in 2012.</p> <p>The entry level for the diploma programme has been raised within the past year, with the major changes being higher literacy and numeracy requirements for all students. This has also been reflected in a lifting of the International English</p>

Language Testing System (IELTS) requirement from 5.5 to 6.0 in all areas. There is now a higher qualification completion rate, an apparent reflection of the more stringent entry requirement.

A recent significant change has been the loss of the majority of the TEC funding for the NMIT programme. In December 2011, the TEC initially allocated funding for 32 equivalent full-time students (EFTS) to NMIT for pilot training, and subsequently withdrew all but 7.8 EFTS, which are shared between the three flight training providers that deliver programmes in partnership with NMIT. Nelson Aviation College was allocated three of these EFTS. As a direct result of this, student numbers within the New Zealand Diploma of Aviation are very low for 2012, with only five domestic students in year one of the programme. There are 50 domestic students in the older NMIT diploma programme, all due to complete during 2012. This dramatic drop in student numbers, coupled with a falling-off in numbers of international students (a national trend) will provide a significant challenge for the college from late 2012.

Nelson Aviation College has a collaborative partnership with NMIT for delivery of the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation until the end of 2012. During 2012 the college will be applying to the TEC for funding to continue delivering the programme from 2013.

Previous quality assurance history:

At its last NZQA quality review, in March 2008, Nelson Aviation College met all the requirements of the NZQA quality standard in force at the time. The last Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) audit in May 2011 found no adverse or negative findings, and an extension was given to the period before the next CAA audit.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The agreed scope of the external evaluation and review (EER) of Nelson Aviation College included the following mandatory focus areas:

- Governance, management, and strategy
- International student support.

The following two focus areas were selected because they are key courses delivered by Nelson Aviation College:

- New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Level 6) – this programme is delivered on site to NMIT students through a collaborative partnership with that organisation
- Private Pilot Licence/Commercial Pilot Licence/Senior Commercial Pilot Licence/Instrument Rating – these licence and ratings-only courses are delivered for international students who are studying at the college. The focus area of international support was evaluated conjointly with this focus area.

### 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 document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/docs/eer-policy-conduct.pdf>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.*

The EER team of two evaluators spent two days on site conducting the EER at the organisation's main training site at Motueka Aerodrome, Motueka. During the visit, the evaluation team met with the chief executive, quality assurance manager, chief flying instructor, as well as with ten flight instructors (including three instructors-in-training), and nine students. Eight international students were also interviewed. Telephone conversations were held with the pilot training programme coordinator at NMIT, and representatives of Air Nelson (manager flight operations), Helicopters New Zealand (manager utility operations), Air New Zealand Aviation Institute (manager, institute partner relations). Subsequent to the EER visit, a telephone conversation was held with a representative of CAA (aviation examiner). The evaluators were shown files with relevant feedback from external stakeholders, and were provided with copies as requested.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Nelson Aviation College**.

Nelson Aviation College delivers flight training (fixed wing and helicopter) through a collaborative partnership with NMIT, and independently to international students. The domestic students, who are all enrolled through NMIT, are enrolled in the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (with strands in Aeroplane and Helicopter), or the older NMIT Diploma in Aviation (year two only for 2012).

Nelson Aviation College has been rigorous in its collection of data on course and programme completions. As noted below (under section 1.1 of this report), Nelson Aviation College is a top-performing aviation trainer, with a pass rate of over 80 per cent for Commercial Pilot Licence theory, and a pass rate of between 75 per cent and 80 per cent for flight tests. ASPEQ, the assessment company contracted by Aviation Services Limited (ASL), states that the overall (national) average for theory exams is around 75 per cent, and for flight tests it is 63 per cent for first-time passes. Benchmarking with other flight training schools has shown that Nelson Aviation College has the highest overall pass rates of six flight training schools for both Commercial Pilot Licence theory and flight tests.

Although Nelson Aviation College delivers training in aviation to TEC-funded students under its partnership with NMIT, no TEC report on course-specific data is available for this one programme. Nelson Aviation College has not routinely received course completion data from NMIT for the business courses within the older NMIT Diploma in Aviation Science until the end of each academic year (it is noted that these courses are not within the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation). NMIT confirms, however, that course and qualification completion rates are high.

In 2011, the entry requirements for literacy and numeracy were lifted for all students, following an Air New Zealand initiative to standardise entry requirements with all of its training partners. Since then, theory pass rates for Nelson Aviation College have improved on first sittings to over 80 per cent, as noted above. Prior to that, the college had raised its own IELTS entry requirements in 2010, from 5.0 to 5.5 in all categories, and was able to demonstrate, through its own analysis, a marked increase in student retention resulting from that change.

The Air Nelson representative with whom the evaluation team spoke confirmed that its records show a very high success rate in both training courses and career progression by graduates of Nelson Aviation College. In August 2011, Air Nelson employed 200 pilots, about 30 per cent of whom had received professional training at the college. Air New Zealand Aviation Institute has similarly provided feedback, both in written form to Nelson Aviation College and verbally, confirming that the

college is a top-performing aviation training provider: 'right at the top of the five partners'.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Nelson Aviation College**.

The successful outcome for Nelson Aviation College of the May 2011 CAA audit has been referred to above. Nelson Aviation College communicates regularly with the CAA aviation examiner, and, in response to CAA requirements, the college actively seeks to improve its systems in place for safety across all its activities as well as for the testing of flight instructors. The four-monthly internal flight instructor performance review is an example of this.

The relationship between Nelson Aviation College and Air New Zealand Aviation Institute is the result of the college's successful application to the institute for selection as one of a partnership of five flight training organisations. The selection process included a one-day site visit with detailed examination of all assessment, flight instructor training, evaluation, and feedback.

The success of Nelson Aviation College in this application has led to further systems being put in place for self-assessment to ensure and confirm that the high performance of the college is being maintained. For example, a new standardised entry interview system has been instigated as a result of consultation between Air New Zealand and its training partners.

The feedback received so far from Air New Zealand Aviation Institute is that Nelson Aviation College's standards for programme delivery have resulted in the selection of pilot trainees who are more likely to complete their qualification and to meet the personal quality requirements of Air New Zealand for its own pilot training. Self-assessment concerning this important stakeholder relationship is informed by frequent teleconferences and meetings between Air New Zealand Aviation Institute and its five flight training organisations.

Nelson Aviation College has surveyed its graduates over the past ten years to discover their current employment status, the positions they now hold in the aviation industry, and whether they are currently working in New Zealand. This was a full survey, with a response rate of about 50 per cent, and which showed that, of the 106 respondents, 76 per cent are currently working in the aviation industry and a majority (66 per cent) are working in New Zealand.

The self-assessment activities of Nelson Aviation College range from those that result from and are directly focussed on external regulatory or partnership requirements (for example Air New Zealand, NMIT), the graduate survey noted above, and regular student and tutor evaluations, to informal self-assessment on a daily basis. For example, the chief executive visits all parts of the site twice each day, and receives informal feedback on issues as they arise, from students, instructors, and maintenance teams. Self-assessment has informed improvements



made by the college, particularly since early 2011, when the current owners (who are also the senior managers) took over the business. For example, when there were several Omani students on campus, a prayer room was arranged on site. Students confirmed that the college is highly responsive to their feedback, given either formally or informally.

Students regularly evaluate their courses and tutors. The evaluators saw records of these evaluations and their analysis on a course-by-course basis.

# Findings<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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**.

Nelson Aviation College has received information about its assessment results from ASPEQ, a specialist assessment company which is privately owned by the Aviation Industry Association of New Zealand and the New Zealand Aviation Federation, and which undertakes assessments on behalf of ASL. In a comparison of the Commercial Pilot Licence exams and flight tests over six aviation training providers in New Zealand, ASPEQ has identified Nelson Aviation College as the top-performing school of the six (over 80 per cent for Commercial Pilot Licence theory, and between 75 per cent and 80 per cent for flight tests). ASPEQ states that the overall national average for theory exams is around 75 per cent, and for flight tests it is 63 per cent for first-time passes.

Air Nelson has confirmed the high performance of Nelson Aviation College, both in writing (this record is kept on file by the college) and verbally to the evaluators. Of 200 pilots employed by Air Nelson in August 2011, about 30 per cent had received professional training by Nelson Aviation College. Similarly, Air New Zealand Aviation Institute has confirmed that the college is a top-performing aviation-training provider – ‘right at the top of the five partners’.

Nelson Aviation College’s records on theory passes for all courses show an 86 per cent pass rate in 2010, and for 2011 a 91 per cent pass rate. The college considers that this improvement has occurred partly as result of the raising of entry criteria, especially for English literacy, and reflected also in a raising of the IELTS entry requirement for international students to 6.0 in all bands. The differences for flight test results between 2010 and 2011 are not consistent across all courses, but are generally showing a 5 per cent improvement. Analysis of the differences show that very small classes in some instances account for the differences between courses. The records for international students are included within the overall statistics for achievement.

It was evident during the evaluation that performance data is being routinely collected and filed, and that the college management knows of its importance. The evaluators saw evidence of a range of self-assessment activities relating to the achievement of students. For example, the reasons for improved performance can

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<sup>1</sup> The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation’s activities.

be sourced to improved management techniques, such as the improvement and standardisation across flight training organisations of student entry procedures and English literacy requirements for entry. Another example is the analysis of increased retention when matched with the raising of IELTS requirements in 2010. This lifting of IELTS levels was instigated by Nelson Aviation College. A third example is the analysis of student evaluation data leading to improved facilities, including study facilities for students on site. Students have commented very favourably about the support that the study facilities give them towards their successes, leading to the high level of confidence that students have about their future employment as pilots. The graduate survey undertaken in 2011 supports this confidence expressed by current students.

## 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**.

The examples of feedback received from stakeholders, and kept on record by Nelson Aviation College, are entirely positive. This feedback was reinforced by interviews held with stakeholders by telephone during the visit, and by a subsequent telephone conversation with the CAA aviation examiner.

Without exception, all stakeholders who were interviewed spoke of the high value that Nelson Aviation College provides for them. These interviews confirmed the opinions given in documents that the college keeps on file. Additionally, recorded feedback by two more employers was provided to the evaluators. They were a national helicopter company and a small commuter airline company. Both employers stated that graduates of Nelson Aviation College have been valued employees. The Air New Zealand Aviation Institute representative stated, for example, that the willingness of Nelson Aviation College to meet the requirements of the Air New Zealand Aviation Institute and the quality of its training puts it 'right at the top' of Air New Zealand Aviation Institute's five partners.

Nelson Aviation College has surveyed its graduates, going back more than ten years, to find out about their current employment status, the positions they now hold in the aviation industry, and whether they are currently working in New Zealand. The college's analysis of this full survey, which had a response rate of about 50 per cent, has shown that, of the 106 respondents, 76 per cent are currently working in the aviation industry, and a majority (66 per cent) are working in New Zealand. The biggest area of employment by far of graduates is as pilot, airline pilot, or instructor (over 80 per cent of respondents). Outcomes for graduates are positive, with 45 per cent employed immediately upon graduation and another 23 per cent being employed between six and 12 months after graduation.

The evaluators considered that the graduate survey undertaken, with results graphed, was an example of good self-assessment practice. The longitudinal data found in the survey has encouraged the college to continue and extend the practice of graduate surveys. Information gained on the employment status of past graduates will assist in informing the college's planning for future programme delivery. An example of this was provided by the college's plan to deliver more training for the Airline Transport Pilot Licence, responding to the stated needs of its current instructors and supported by the range of aviation-related employment found in its graduate survey.

Students who were interviewed expressed confidence in their training as providing them with a qualification and a standard that will give them a very good opportunity for employment. All students had high hopes of being employed as pilots, some intending to work towards employment by major airlines. Students regularly evaluate their courses and tutors; the evaluators saw records of these evaluations and their analysis on a course-by-course basis.

International students enrol at Nelson Aviation College generally as a result of word-of-mouth recommendations from past international students. This has resulted in several students coming from Papua New Guinea and Oman, based on the good performance of earlier students from those countries who are now working as senior pilots for local airlines.

Nelson Aviation College has its own Facebook page, which has become an excellent resource for self-assessment. Past and current students place their success stories there, and the site enables the college to engage with its students in an immediate way. Similarly, the student noticeboard, with messages and photographs from past graduates, provides an immediate source of self-assessment data.

The evaluators considered that, while there are excellent sources of self-evaluation data available, the college could improve its self-assessment capability by a more formal analysis of stakeholder data, including student evaluations. Although the college has a strong understanding of self-assessment, and of the positive regard of stakeholders, there could be improvements made in the analysis of this data.

### 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**.

The evaluators found that the needs of students, tutors, and external stakeholders are being matched to a high level. Students' expectations are high for employment, and they reported that they are well supported in their training. The graduate survey showed that 45 per cent of graduates had been employed immediately upon

graduation, and another 23 per cent were employed between six and 12 months after graduation.

The training provided by Nelson Aviation College is relevant and technically sound. Evidence for this was seen by the evaluators in records kept by the college and confirmed in telephone conversations with external stakeholders. For example, there were no adverse or negative findings in the most recent CAA audit, and the period before the next audit of Nelson Aviation College has been extended. The selection of the college as a partner of Air New Zealand Aviation Institute is also evidence of the consideration by that organisation that Nelson Aviation College can match its needs for well-prepared pilots. Similarly, the quality of the training provided by the college matches Air Nelson's needs for well-trained pilots. The manager of flight operations at that organisation said that the Commercial Pilot Licence and Instrument Rating training delivered by Nelson Aviation College is 'very very sound'.

Students and instructors both reported that there are very positive relationships between them, leading to students' learning needs being well matched.

NMIT's needs as outlined in the collaboration agreement with Nelson Aviation College are being matched. The NMIT pilot training coordinator, who was interviewed by the evaluation team, confirmed that the institute has a very collaborative relationship with Nelson Aviation College, and that the college goes 'over and above' NMIT's requirements.

The Motueka Aerodrome is close to two national parks, Kahurangi and Abel Tasman. Nelson Aviation College is cognisant of the need for 'natural peace and quiet', an important principle embodied within the National Parks Act. The college works closely with the Department of Conservation (DOC), and the college has led a ban on all flights from Motueka Aerodrome flying lower than 1,000ft over the Motueka Sandspit, an important resting place for godwits as they arrive from their long flight from Alaska.

The college closes for two weeks over Christmas, to ensure that staff and students are able to have time with their families. The college also has no flights on Sundays, and only between 10.00am and 2.00pm on Saturdays, to give the town of Motueka some quiet from flights near to the town. Additionally, an instructor has been placed on an AIRCARE<sup>2</sup> course, to further work towards meeting DOC's need for environmentally responsible flight operators over conservation lands. The maintenance of good community relationships through managing flights and engaging with the community is an important part of the college's activities.

All feedback recorded and filed by the college, including an archive of news items and student feedback, indicates that the needs of the learners and other

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<sup>2</sup> AIRCARE is an integrated accreditation programme for all of an aviation business. It brings flight safety and environmental safety together in one safety assurance programme. See: [www.aia.org.nz/AIRCARE.html](http://www.aia.org.nz/AIRCARE.html)

stakeholders are well met. The archive of news stories and successes of past graduates is kept on the college website and regularly updated. All interviews conducted as part of the EER confirmed this finding. Nelson Aviation College is committed to seeking its external stakeholders' views and feedback concerning the extent to which the college is matching their needs, and keeps full records of this feedback. For example, the college takes a key part in the regular meetings and teleconferences of the Air New Zealand Aviation Institute flight training partners, for example in developing the selection interview procedures (2011), which have already contributed to a higher achievement rate for learners.

A small gap that was identified, but of no impact in terms of performance, and of very minor impact in terms of self-assessment, is that a difficulty in surveying graduate international students has been identified. These people can be difficult to contact as employment or addresses change. However, there are well-developed and well-used pathways for informal feedback from all graduates. International students frequently contact the college directly with news of their successes or employment in their own countries, or place feedback on the college Facebook page.

#### 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 **Good**.

Each flight instructor at Nelson Aviation College is responsible for a maximum of four students. In addition, instructors-in-training work alongside flight instructors for a probationary term of six months, which includes 100 hours' flying time, before being allocated their own students. There are regular peer observations of teaching and four-monthly management-directed flight testing of all instructors to ensure currency of knowledge. These four-monthly tests are part of the regular performance review of all instructors.

Flight instructors who were interviewed commented that the four-monthly flight tests required by the college and assessed by the chief flying instructor for the college, are of great value to them. They regard these tests as an important part of verifying that they remain current in their knowledge and skills. Similarly, the three instructors-in-training, as well as other staff who were interviewed, stated that the six-month probationary period provides them with a very sound preparation as flight instructors. Their preparation as flight instructors is also verified by CAA audit; the successful audit result from 2011 has already been referred to.

Professional development opportunities for staff are provided by the college. For example, in the winter of 2012 an Air Transport Pilot Licence course is scheduled to be provided by the college for instructors, at no cost to them. Nelson Aviation College is one of only three Air Transport Pilot Licence training organisations in New Zealand. The course will also be offered to other members of the Air New Zealand Aviation Institute partnership. The career development of flight instructors

is fostered by Nelson Aviation College. For example, an instructor was supported recently in his application to Air New Zealand for employment there. Most of the college's instructors are past graduates of the college. Positive industry feedback about the quality of teaching at Nelson Aviation College has previously been referred to in this report.

Nelson Aviation College holds full records of each instructor's service, professional development, and all student evaluations and course summaries, and pays attention to each instructor's needs for career development through regular flight tests, frequent interviews with the chief flying instructor, and informal feedback. Instructors are encouraged to progress through the instructor categories while employed at the college.

Learner feedback is very positive about the quality of teaching at the college. This is verifiable through student evaluation summaries, the graduate survey, and informally, such as through Facebook postings and the student noticeboard. Students are provided with details of exactly what they are covering in their courses. Each flight is debriefed and students regularly fly with a senior flight instructor in addition to their own regular instructor. In addition, students are given regular (at least weekly) checksheets for them to identify where their learning needs further attention. Students who were interviewed were positive about this self-assessment practice as a reinforcement of their learning.

The same instructors teach both international and domestic students, although if necessary, additional management support is provided for staff who are instructing international students. The course results for international students are included within the overall statistics, and although completion rates for international students are slightly lower than for domestic students, at 75 per cent they are still at least at the national average, as stated by ASPEQ. International students who were interviewed stated that their instruction is excellent, and that they feel that they 'belong' to the college.

There is a structured environment provided for learning, with intranet for all records and resources, most of which are also kept in hard copy for student and staff use. Students have access to free wi-fi on site to assist with their studies, and because many students also live on site, for their private use as well. An independent classroom has been wired for 17 computers and can be used by other aviation organisations on an organised basis, for example by Aviation Services Limited for assessment purposes. It will also be made available to community groups as part of the college's commitment to community service.

## 1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The evaluators found clear evidence of a high quality of support for students, who are guided and supported at every stage of the processes of entry, orientation, and progress through training. There are mechanisms in place for students to seek support as needed. Staff are also very responsive to perceived needs, for example in a recent case of an instructor checking on the progress of a student who had been injured in a road accident, to ensure that the college could give all help possible to help the student return to his studies.

All students are interviewed prior to acceptance into the programme or courses, including international students who are interviewed by Skype or by telephone. As noted above, a standardised interview format is now used, and this has contributed to the college's higher success rate, with fewer enrolments now of students who are unable to manage the learning requirements of the courses. As part of the entry procedure, students also undertake an aptitude test (with a requirement of a 70 per cent pass), and must have a Class 1 medical certificate. Nelson Aviation College is responsible for the selection of students into the NMIT programme as part of its contract with NMIT. The NMIT pilot training coordinator, who was interviewed by the evaluation team, confirmed that the college goes 'over and above' NMIT's requirements.

Students who were interviewed stated that the environment at Nelson Aviation College is very supportive of their learning. Most students live on campus in well-appointed student accommodation which has been renovated and modernised within the past two years. Meals are provided at reasonable cost during the week, with students cooking for themselves at weekends. Transport is provided to Nelson whenever necessary, such as for instrument rating training at Nelson Airport. Female students are accommodated in Motueka in motel accommodation at no additional boarding cost, and are able to eat their meals at the college.

All students are made aware of community and recreational facilities in the Motueka area. Several play in local rugby teams or form college teams for particular events, such as a recent Top Town competition in the local community. In some events, students and staff form combined teams, which further reinforces the excellent relationships that students have with instructors at the college.

The management of Nelson Aviation College is well aware of student needs for guidance and support, through daily contact with all the students and through regular staff meetings at which issues relating to guidance and support are discussed. Self-assessment has informed improvements made by the college, particularly since early 2011 when the current owners (who are also the senior managers) took over the business. For example, when there were several Omani students on campus, a prayer room was arranged on site. Students confirmed that the college is highly responsive to their feedback, given either formally or informally.



Analysis of all student evaluations is undertaken. The student evaluation forms refer primarily to course instruction, but also include provision for students to comment on the extent of support they have received from the college's administrative staff, which includes hostel and kitchen staff. All staff know all students by name.

International students, who all live on campus, are met at Nelson Airport as they arrive and are provided with a full welcome and orientation to the college. Newly arrived students are shown around Motueka, given all relevant information about living in New Zealand, and are given a presentation by several local personnel, including a local police representative, a lawyer, and an immigration specialist, to provide an overview of what international students can or cannot do in this country.

International students who were interviewed confirmed that they feel welcome and that they feel 'part of the family' while living and studying at Nelson Aviation College. Now that the IELTS level for entry is higher than in the past, there is no longer any particular need for additional English language tuition in order for students to manage their learning.

## 1.6 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Nelson Aviation College is a private limited company with two owner-directors. It has a flat management structure, with management staff very aware of all events and issues as they arise at the college. An open-door policy is apparent, with all students and staff known to each other on a first-name basis.

Full records or summaries are kept of all events that the college takes part in, including students' successes such as that of graduate international students in their own countries, community involvement, all external audits and reviews, and maintenance records for all equipment owned or leased by the college. The website of Nelson Aviation College is well maintained, with current information and relevant news items. The website also documents the community involvement of the college.

Nelson Aviation College has engaged with the local community in community sporting events, as noted above, and also with sponsorship of youth and community programmes. For example, the college sponsors the CACTUS youth programme locally (a community initiative to develop and support youth to achieve goals and cooperate with others using physical activity as a vehicle to achieve these goals). The college also hosts a student to work and study on site as part of

the TEC Gateway programme.<sup>3</sup> This student was seen during the EER. Within the community, Nelson Aviation College sponsors the local under-7s rugby team, and has facilitated local fire training on site. The college provides instructors free of charge to the local aero club, as well as reduced-cost aeroplanes for aero club use.

CAA regularly audits Nelson Aviation College to ensure that all safety and instruction requirements meet regulatory requirements. As stated above, the audit record is sound, and with no negative or adverse findings in the last audit the period before the next CAA audit has been extended. Equipment is maintained, with a programme of restoration of older training aircraft currently underway. The Nelson Airport site has additional equipment, including a flight simulator for a twin-engine aeroplane.

Governance and management are committed to the international student market for flight training. A Nelson Aviation College representative has taken part in New Zealand Trade and Enterprise visits to China, and has visited a trade fair in Rarotonga, with further plans for these activities. International students from the Pacific region have regularly attended the college.

The management of Nelson Aviation College considers itself to be a good employer. All evidence seen and heard about by the evaluators supports this view. For example, the college closes down for two weeks over Christmas to protect community and family values. The tutors spoke of the support given to them in their professional and career development. The instructors-in-training, with a full six months of probation, are supported in their instructor training to meet college and CAA requirements.

All students are supported in their achievements, with celebration of good results, such as on the college website and Facebook page. An example of this occurred during the two days of the evaluation, with an Omani student who had gained his pilot licence the previous week being presented with his wings at the fortnightly student meeting.

In 2011 the college management undertook a successful survey of graduates of the past ten years. Management is currently looking at finding improved ways of staying in touch with graduates. Options for this are being further explored, including Facebook, the website, and further graduate surveys. While self-assessment capability is already well developed, there is an acknowledged willingness and commitment to find ways to further strengthen this aspect of governance and management.

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<sup>3</sup> The Gateway programme strengthens pathways for students from school to further education and training or employment. Senior secondary students (Year 11 to Year 13+) in the Gateway programme undertake structured workplace learning across a range of industries and businesses around New Zealand, while continuing to study at school.

# Focus Areas

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

## 2.1 Focus area: Governance, management, and strategy

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

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

Nelson Aviation College is a small TEO. The owners of the private limited company are also the chief executive and the quality assurance manager. The third senior manager is the chief flying instructor. Therefore it has not been possible at times to separate the roles of governance and management. The feedback that has been recorded and which was confirmed in all interviews conducted as part of the EER has been consistently positive about the excellent performance of the college with respect to its management. This excellent performance is reflected in the high achievement rate of the students, the value ascribed by all stakeholders to the outcomes achieved, and the satisfaction recorded by all students about the support and guidance provided to them.

Refer to section 1.6 of this report for details of the extent to which governance and management has driven and supported the educational performance of the TEO. With respect to self-assessment, the evaluators conclude that there are sound processes in place for self-assessment, and that all self-assessment processes have been well documented. It was also noted that there is some room for improvement in self-assessment capability, particularly with respect to the further analysis of information regarding graduate and other stakeholder perspectives.

## 2.2 Focus area: Course: International student support

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

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

At the time of the EER, there were ten international students at Nelson Aviation College. The number fluctuates because students enrol to complete their private and commercial pilot licences and instrument ratings. As noted above, the excellent statistics for student achievement include international students, although when separated out, international student achievement is 75 per cent for 2011, slightly lower than the college achievement for theory of over 80 per cent. The 75 per cent achievement rate for international students is still at or above the national average (ASPEQ data).

Students who were interviewed confirmed that they feel 'part of the family' at Nelson Aviation College. They live in the hostel on campus while studying at the

college, and are fully supported to be part of the whole student community. They are also encouraged to take part in community activities, as are all students. Section 1.5 of this report provides further details.

As noted above, there are good systems in place for gathering feedback, although to date most of these are informal. The student noticeboard, for example, is a rich source of evidence of feedback from international students. There is an acknowledged difficulty in contacting many international graduates after they have returned home, as part of a more formal graduate survey.

### 2.3 Focus area: Course: New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane and Helicopter) with strands in Airline Preparation and Flight Instruction (Level 6)

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

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

The delivery of the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation by Nelson Aviation College demonstrates clear evidence of high achievement by learners, and of the high esteem in which this programme is held by external stakeholders. The teaching is highly effective and is well supported by excellent provision for the support and guidance of all students. The evaluators commend the college for the graduate survey undertaken in 2011, and for the analysis of this. A further strength of the programme is that it is designed for domestic students, and that the college, as a partner of Air New Zealand Aviation Institute, provides a sound grounding for students for future employment by New Zealand airlines, and Air New Zealand in particular. It was noted that 66 per cent of graduates over the past ten years are employed in New Zealand.

The evaluators found clear evidence of the value to external stakeholders of the programme as delivered by Nelson Aviation College. The site is also well regarded in the context of the programme delivery. It meets all regulatory requirements for facilities and flight instruction, and has been positively commented about by external stakeholders. Students also value the site and hostel facilities.

There is good capability for self-assessment, which is continually being improved with respect to the diploma programme. Nelson Aviation College contributes data to NMIT for its own internal programme annual report, and receives data from NMIT about student achievement within the diploma programme. The college also participates in regular flight training organisation meetings of the partners of the Air New Zealand Aviation Institute, and records and archives all data from those meetings. All other external stakeholders have regular contact with the college, with recording of all correspondence.

## 2.4 Focus area: Course: Private Pilot Licence/Commercial Pilot Licence, and Senior Commercial Pilot Licence/Instrument Rating

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

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

The licences listed above are delivered as a programme for international students. These courses were considered as a focus area in the context of support for international students.

As stated above, there have so far been ten international students in 2012. The numbers will change from time to time, but for the past few years have showed a downward trend, consistent with current international student numbers within New Zealand.

The courses are put together as a 15-month programme, with the last three months being delivered at Nelson Airport where the instrument ratings part of the programme is taught. International students achieve well within this programme, with a 75 per cent pass rate recorded for 2011. International students have been recorded as achieving good employment outcomes on return to their own countries. An example is a past graduate from Papua New Guinea, who is now a senior pilot with that country's airline, and who has encouraged others from that country to enrol in the college for their licences. All international students undertake their airline preparation training when back in their own countries.

The comments under section 2.3 above with respect to guidance and support, the on-site facilities, and the value of the programme to students, also apply to this programme.

The capability for self-assessment with respect to international students is very good. There is daily contact by management and flight instructors with all international students, all of whom are on a first-name basis within the college. Past international students frequently contact the college with news of their employment or other aviation success. The student noticeboard, for example, is a rich source of evidence of feedback from international students, with further ways of making use of this evidence for self-assessment under consideration. There is an acknowledged difficulty in contacting many international graduates after they have returned home, as part of a more formal graduate survey.

# Recommendations

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review, other than those implied or expressed within the report.

# Appendix

## Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

*Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of programme approval and accreditation (under sections 249 and 250 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the Criteria for Approval and Accreditation of Programmes established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act and published in the Gazette of 28 July 2011 at page 3207. These policies and criteria are deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under the new section 253.*

*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 programmes they own or provide. These criteria and policies are also deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under section 253. Section 233B(1) of the Act requires registered PTEs to comply with these rules.*

*NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes and/or registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.*

*This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the EER process 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](http://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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