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External Evaluation and Review Report

Nelson Aviation College Limited

Date of report: 19 January 2021

About Nelson Aviation College

Nelson Aviation College trains domestic and international students, enabling them to gain NZQA Diplomas in Aviation and a range of internationally recognised pilot licences, and to work in the aviation industry.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Motueka Aerodrome, Queen Victoria Street, Motueka; Airport House, Trent Drive, Nelson
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 110 (72 equivalent full-time students in 2019) Māori 6 per cent, Pasifika 3 per cent International 18 (10 equivalent full-time students in 2019)
Number of staff:	19 full-time equivalents
TEO profile:	See: Nelson Aviation College The Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand (CAA) certifies New Zealand organisations offering aviation training, issues pilot licences, and oversees theory and flight test examinations. Nelson Aviation College is an Air New Zealand Preferred Flight Training Organisation.
Last EER outcome:	NZQA was Highly Confident in the educational performance and Highly Confident in the capability in self-assessment of Nelson Aviation College at the last EER conducted in April 2016.
Scope of this evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane Airline Preparation) (Level 6)• International students: support and wellbeing
MoE number:	8595
NZQA reference:	C38519
Dates of EER visit:	4-6 November 2020

Summary of results

Nelson Aviation College is a values-based, evidence-informed organisation which has consistently met all the important needs of its students, industry and other stakeholders. It has made key improvements since the last EER.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Nelson Aviation College produces professional, work-ready graduates, who often are 'beyond the [industry] standard'. Most gain employment in industry-related roles. Student achievement is among the highest in the aviation training sector.
- The design and delivery of training and applicant selection have ensured the key needs of students, industry and regulators are well matched. A capable group of senior instructors mentor newer and able instructors; as a team they offer students a high quality training tuition.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- The college leadership has embedded a values-based, evidence-informed culture which has contributed to a consistently high performance and important improvements since the last EER. The college has a clear and systematic focus on people, with pastoral care and safety at the core of the organisation. Nearly all students complete and often excel in their studies.
- The college has invested significantly in new roles, professional development, new equipment and enhanced systems to support high quality performance.
- The college has a proactive and systematic approach to managing its regulatory responsibilities.
- The quality of self-assessment information is typically high and informs robust decision-making. The few gaps in the achievement data have no significant impacts.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The college primarily trains students to gain commercial pilot licences and the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Level 6). The first attempt pass rates and their marks² for the CAA theory papers and flight tests have been consistently high and nearly always above the national averages.³ A CAA examiner stated that these results placed the college in the top two New Zealand aviation schools. Students acquire robust aviation skills and knowledge, interpersonal skills and the attitudes needed to be a successful commercial pilot or instructor.</p> <p>The average course completion rate was high (92 per cent), as was the qualification completion rate for the Diplomas in Aviation (90 per cent). Māori students complete courses (100 per cent) and qualifications (96 per cent) very well. International students (86 and 65 per cent) and a very small number of domestic Pasifika students (72 and 68 per cent respectively) achieve at a somewhat lower rate.</p> <p>With its new database, the college more effectively monitors individual student academic progress. It has a detailed understanding of pass rates and pass marks, benchmarked against national averages. The analysis of course and qualification completions and the performance of subgroups was sound, although not complete. The impact of this gap was not significant.</p>
Conclusion:	Student achievement is consistently at an exemplary level. The understanding and use of achievement data was mostly high, although there were a few gaps that had some moderate impact.

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

² Marks are awarded out of 100 for each paper.

³ See Appendix 1 for further details.

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 mission of Nelson Aviation College is to provide aviation training and graduates that are 'beyond the [industry] standard'. As noted, the achievement of its graduates is among the top two aviation schools. The graduates have additional and valued capabilities of being trained in a CAA-certified 'safety management systems' environment and highly valued soft skills that make them team players and work-ready.</p> <p>The school has an established and well-earned reputation for producing graduates who consistently demonstrate the foundation-level aviation skills and professional attitudes that enable them to undertake airline training or other work in the industry. One employer said they would employ any Nelson Aviation College graduate as all had met their expectations.</p> <p>There is detailed evidence that over 80 per cent of graduates each year since 2016 have gained work domestically or internationally as pilots or instructors. The college employs some of the most capable graduates as instructors. The 2017 NZQA Consistency Reviews found that the graduates of the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation level 5 and level 6 had sufficiently demonstrated the graduate profile outcomes. The college is one of four Air New Zealand Preferred Flight Training Organisations.</p> <p>The college is embedded in the aviation training industry. It stays current and responds to emerging trends through its strong CAA linkages. The early CAA approval of its 'safety management systems' illustrates its proactive approach. It also contributes to the local community by offering a course to anxious flyers using a flight simulator to build confidence.</p>
Conclusion:	Nelson Aviation College has a well-evidenced reputation of consistently producing professional, work-ready graduates, who often are 'beyond the [industry] standard'. It has a rich understanding of and is highly responsive to the evolving needs of industry.

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>Nelson Aviation College has a robust process for selecting applicants (which now aligns with the guidance provided by Air New Zealand) where nearly all applicants complete their studies. The training packages are highly effective in developing professional pilots and/or instructors. There is a strong mix of theory and hands-on learning using industry-standard aircraft and simulators. Students are taught the industry-required knowledge, skills and attributes and why they are important. They receive detailed and constructive feedback after flight instructions and formative theory tests which thoroughly prepare them for theory and flight tests (all externally assessed).⁴</p> <p>The college continues to make significant improvements to ensure its training remains current and fit for purpose. It gained NZQA programme approval for the new industry-revised Diplomas in Aviation shortly after they were listed. Student feedback has led to learning materials being revised; students appreciated the review questions. There is an increased focus on developing 'soft skills', an essential professional competency.</p> <p>The school invested in industry-standard aircraft and a new flight simulator, enabling learning that was previously subcontracted to Air New Zealand in Auckland to now occur on the Nelson campus. The safety management system has brought an increased focus on situational awareness. The college has brought in outside education expertise to improve its teaching of theory. Student feedback has been digitised which provides more timely information to management. The student feedback on the training was positive, although feedback was not collected on a few areas.</p>
Conclusion:	The college programmes and training schemes match well the important needs of industry, students and regulators. The design and delivery of the training have been significantly improved.

⁴ CAA mandates the training curriculum, contracts ASPEQ to externally assess the theory papers, and its examiner conducts all flight tests except the Private Pilot Licences.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Nelson Aviation College offers an authentic duty of care to its students; they go 'beyond the standard'. Students noted the friendliness of this small, family-like college. The college provides student accommodation options on campus which meet well the wellbeing needs of the many teenage learners as they first arrive from around New Zealand and overseas. Under the close oversight of pastoral staff, students are effectively supported to adjust to a new living and learning environment. The college takes a systematic approach to international and domestic pastoral code responsibilities.⁵</p> <p>The college has retained a well-qualified and experienced group of senior instructors who provide effective oversight of the newer instructors who they have themselves trained. The college selects the most capable of its graduates to fill these roles. Effective instructors need to have a passion for the role and be able to personally engage with the students. The instructors closely monitor the academic progress of individual students. This model has delivered a high standard of instruction over time, as validated by positive student feedback, academic success and the reputation of its graduate.</p>
Conclusion:	Nelson Aviation College students are well cared for and supported to stay engaged and complete their studies. The college systematically reviews its pastoral and academic support.

⁵ See 1.6 for further details.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The college owner-operators have a clear vocation for the college: 'going beyond the standard' and exhibiting its values⁶ in all its activities. One owner has undertaken postgraduate studies in management and is active in the wider aviation industry. This contributed to the college effectively responding to change and making ongoing improvement. They have retained a capable group of mostly A category senior instructors who mentor newer instructors to realise their vision. Instructors are supported to improve their ratings. They have substantially invested in the college through establishing a training and development and learning role, revamping learning materials, and purchasing equipment and engaging an independent auditor to systematically challenge and improve their performance.</p> <p>The organisation has a robust and pragmatic culture of ongoing quality improvement, reflectively using data to analyse its performance across all key activities. The quality of the self-assessment information referred to in this report is typically high. Any gaps are addressed as they emerge; the few noted gaps have had limited impact.</p>
Conclusion:	The college leadership has demonstrated a values-based, evidence-informed approach which has produced consistently high performance and key improvements since the last EER. The few gaps have had no significant impact.

⁶ The values are: '*Students are people, not numbers, Near enough is not good enough, Passion for teaching, Zest for aviation and Have fun*'.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The college leadership has developed an audit culture where ‘near enough is not good enough’, enabling the college to meet or exceed regulatory standards. The operational manuals, procedures and practices all strongly influence its people to act within these expected parameters. This robust system is illustrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAA renewing Rule Part141 standard to operate as an aviation trainer, including being an early adopter of a CAA-approved ‘safety management system’. The regulatory examiner rated their performance highly. • engaging an independent aviation auditor, who reviews the PTE’s systems and makes recommendations for improvements, which seem to be implemented. • reviewing the international code⁷, leading to revised operational practices and/or documentation. It was not clear that performance and the impact of the changes made had been explicitly evaluated. • developing a matrix to align practices with both the international and domestic⁸ Codes. • involving multiple staff in managing compliance, which is robust practice that mitigates risks. • EER sampling of international student files found they met the programme entry requirements. A random sample indicated the approved programme hours had been delivered. • The college disclosed a significant case; procedures were followed in an ethical and legal fashion. No significant compliance issues emerged during this enquiry.
Conclusion:	The college takes a strong, proactive and systematic approach

⁷ <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/international>

⁸ <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/domestic>

	that effectively manages its regulatory responsibilities. There have been multiple and significant improvements made since the last EER.
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Focus areas

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

2.1 Focus area: New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Aeroplane Airline Preparation) (Level 6)

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

2.2 Focus area: International student support and wellbeing

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

NZQA recommends that Nelson Aviation College Limited:

- Strengthen analysis of student achievement, including the monitoring of achievement by sub-groups.
- Evaluate more robustly to what extent the college's practices had contributed to the international and domestic Code outcomes.
- Evaluate whether changes made to Code-related operating procedures or documentation had improved pastoral outcomes for students.

Requirements

Requirements relate to the TEO's statutory obligations under legislation that governs their operation. These 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. Course completion rates and qualification completion rates 2016-2019

Students	Course completion rate	Qualification completion rate
Funded ⁹	95	99
Funded - Māori	100	96
Funded - Pasifika	72	68
Non-funded - domestic	90	88
International	86	65 ¹⁰
All students	92	83

Source: Nelson Aviation College data

Table 2. New Zealand Diplomas in Aviation – cohort qualification completion rates 2016-2019

Years	2016	2017	2018	2019	Average
All students	96	79	95	88	90

Source: Nelson Aviation College data

Table 3. ASPEQ theory papers first attempt pass rates and national averages 2016-2019

Paper pass rates	2016	2017	2018	2019
Average first attempt pass rate (national average)	75 (80)	88 (82)	89 (79)	93 (89)
Average overall pass mark (national average)	NA (78)	82 (79)	82 (79)	84 (NA)

Source: ASPEQ¹¹ data

⁹ Tertiary Education Commission-funded students

¹⁰ Some international students enrol in training schemes, and the student management system does not award them a qualification.

¹¹ The Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand delegates ASPEQ to conduct its theory assessments and flight tests.

Table 4. Flight tests – first attempt pass rates 2016-2019

CAA Licence	2016	2017	2018	2019
Private Pilot Licence	83	79	80	76
Commercial Pilot Licence	88	87	75	88
Instrument Rating	88	96	93	91
C Category Instructor Rating	89	83	90	100

Source: ASPEQ data

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 fraud¹²*
- *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.*

¹² 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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