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# External Evaluation and Review Report

Ardmore Flying School Ltd

Date of report: 6 September 2022

# About Ardmore Flying School Ltd

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*Ardmore Flying School (AFS) is one of New Zealand's oldest and largest flight-training organisations. Students gain practical experience within unique topography and conditions as they work towards gaining private and commercial pilot licences.*

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Type of organisation:	Private training establishment
Location:	2 Harvard Lane, Ardmore Aerodrome, Ardmore, Auckland
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 39 students (51.87 EFTS <sup>1</sup> )  One Māori student (0.64 of an EFTS), nine Pasifika students (10.26 EFTS)  International: eight students (6.4 EFTS)
Number of staff:	16 full-time staff, five part-time staff
TEO profile:	Ardmore Flying School can be found <a href="#">here</a> on the NZQA website.
Last EER outcome:	The 2018 external evaluation and review found Ardmore Flying School to be Confident for both educational performance and capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• International Students: Support and Wellbeing</li><li>• New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (General Aviation Strand) (Aeroplane) (Level 5) Programme ID: 117069 – 2, leading to the award of the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (General Aviation) (Level 5) (Aeroplane strands) [Ref: 3688]</li><li>• Governance and Management</li></ul>
MoE number:	8638
NZQA reference:	C48158
Dates of EER visit:	12-14 April 2022

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<sup>1</sup> Equivalent full-time students

# Summary of Results

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*A prescribed syllabus provides a platform where the value of outcomes for all stakeholders has remained clear and embedded within the training. A recent restructure with new governance and management has started a restoration of the organisation's direction towards meeting the educational and business requirements of running a private training establishment (PTE). The resulting self-assessment is beginning to be integrated into the organisation.*

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## **Confident in educational performance**

- Course and qualification completion rates are currently reliably measured through the completion of Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) examinations. These show that AFS students achieve at the national average. Alternative achievement measurement processes have been and are being developed, the effectiveness of which is still to be determined.

## **Confident in capability in self-assessment**

- The value of outcomes for the students and other stakeholders is understood and achieved. Collation, analysis and use of feedback received from all stakeholders needs further development.
- Integration and communication with local Māori and Pasifika communities to understand and meet these students' cultural and learning needs has recently been considered. Related professional development for staff could assist in this, embedding in appropriate processes and practices.
- Frequent interaction with industry ensures programmes and delivery remain current and relevant. The use of regular assessment of learning also ensures a prompt response to emerging student learning needs. AFS has used these sources to inform current resourcing and changes in delivery, with initially positive results.
- Strong, responsive student support addresses emerging needs and minimises barriers.
- The new governance and management have established a turn-around strategy that has

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addressed and is still addressing a number of areas of concern. Initially, most changes instituted have had positive results, but the long-term effect on performance and self-assessment capability is still to be determined.

- AFS staff are highly trained and committed to ensuring students gain comprehensive skills, knowledge and success. Staff and students attest positively to their recent inclusion in newly established review processes.
- AFS meets the high level of compliance expected by CAA rules, but the management and monitoring of accountabilities that meet some NZQA rules, requirements and documentation is unclear.

# Key evaluation question findings<sup>2</sup>

## 1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>AFS students achieve a qualification and flight hours towards their private and commercial pilot licences, commercial-level instrument rating and a C-Class flight instructor's rating. Additional to this they complete New Zealand aviation diplomas at levels 5 and 6. There are very few withdrawals from the programmes, and the reasons for these are understood. Recent rigorous application of the entry requirements has resulted in a reduction in non-completions.</p> <p>The current student management system<sup>3</sup> identified an enrolment anomaly<sup>4</sup> that has affected the accuracy of submitted achievement data prior to 2021, so it is unclear what the achievement rate for each programme is since the last EER. Also, due to the inability to complete flight practice and examinations during the Covid lockdowns, qualification completions have been delayed significantly. The issues affecting and delaying achievement are being addressed. New measures to track achievement are in place. However, as the organisation recognises, it is still too early to use the available data effectively in self-assessment.</p> <p>Achievement of the pilot licences and ratings is measured through the successful completion of CAA examinations. Benchmarking shows that AFS students achieve at the national median (77 per cent) for the first-time passing of the set examinations. The AFS tutorial team has used feedback from</p>

<sup>2</sup> The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

<sup>3</sup> To increase the accuracy of tracking completion information, a spreadsheet workbook tracks each student through course and qualification completions. The future introduction of an off-the-shelf student management system will supersede this current method of managing student achievement.

<sup>4</sup> Up to 2020, students enrolling at AFS were being enrolled under the level 6 National diploma (ND1707), with internal adjustments made so they achieved the qualification originally applied for. However, this affected the qualification rate for the level 6 National diploma.

	<p>these results to develop an alternative method of theory delivery. Though it is still too early to determine the long-term effectiveness of this new delivery on achievement, initial results are positive.</p> <p>The number of Māori and Pasifika students attending AFS is small. As a reflection of these numbers, the parity of achievement for these students has not been regularly analysed. With the projected growth in these numbers, a strategy for increasing participation and achievement has been discussed but still needs to be instituted.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>A number of measures for student achievement have been used to gain an understanding of how well AFS students achieve. Management has recognised the issues AFS has faced, and now has a tool in place to address and track achievement, although they accept that the amount of data available is still too small to use effectively in self-assessment.</p>

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

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Marginal</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>As the syllabus is informed by the regulations and requirements set by the CAA, the value of the outcomes to students and other stakeholders is not only understood but also embedded into the development and delivery of the programmes AFS offers. Additional skills such a self-confidence, organisational skills and effective time management are also developed organically as students meet their training schedule commitments.</p> <p>As students complete both pilot licences and instructor ratings, once they have enough flying hours there are multiple employment and further study avenues available. Employers and industry attest to gaining highly trained pilots and instructors who are work-ready and sought after. The pandemic has influenced employment opportunities for graduates, with currently a third still looking for employment. However, with the current opening of borders it is thought employment opportunities will increase rapidly.</p> <p>Surveys for students and graduates are distributed, but the information collected and the use of that information has not</p>

	<p>been effectively managed. Recent self-assessment informed AFS's move to use online surveys, which is proving more successful. It is planned that this richer data source will inform the monthly academic reports and programme reviews. Expansion of the graduate survey to ask separate questions aligned to the New Zealand qualifications' graduate profile outcomes will strengthen this plan and inform compliance accountabilities.</p> <p>Employer and industry feedback is attained through anecdotal mechanisms. Documentation of this and expansion to provide information on the use of learnt skills and attributes will further strengthen the self-assessment planned to occur.</p> <p>Interaction with local Māori iwi and Pasifika communities has not occurred to date. Contact with relevant community groups and schools is starting, so that the value for and needs within these groups can be ascertained and used to develop greater participation and support.</p>
Conclusion:	A highly regulated environment ensures an understanding of the valued outcomes and drives the development and delivery of training. Increased documentation and analysis of feedback requested and received, and increased interaction with Māori and Pasifika communities will strengthen self-assessment of programme review and compliance accountabilities.

### 1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	The aviation industry is highly prescribed and regulated. Regular interaction between AFS and the CAA, as well as with the local aviation industry, enables AFS to deliver training that is responsive to change, relevant and meets the emerging needs of the stakeholders. The purchased training resources are not being updated regularly, and as a result AFS tutorial staff have begun providing access to further references to ensure up-to-date delivery. AFS is also looking at creating its own training materials, but this will require some time, separate from the teaching commitments.

	<p>End-of-course evaluations and the results of the external exams are informing paper/component and assessment review. A review of performance as it relates to theory has resulted in additional material and different teaching strategies. Students and tutors have positively attested to the initial efficacy of the changes.</p> <p>A programme-level review is still to occur. AFS plans to wait until the first cohort for each of the new programmes complete their qualification before reviewing. Covid-related and weather delays to training and the need to repeat examinations have resulted in extensions of each programme beyond the approved programme duration.<sup>5</sup> The need to extend is notified to and agreed to by each student as delays and resits indicate that further time is required. The effect of these changes on what is approved within the programme needs to be explored in case of deviation.</p> <p>As both theory and practical assessments are managed by the CAA through a contracted provider (ASPEQ), moderation activity is not required of AFS. However, daily knowledge checks and mock examinations are used to gauge the preparedness of the students for assessment. This enables tutors and students to recognise areas of need to focus further preparation. The ongoing effect of this on external examination results is still to be seen but initial results are positive.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Regular interaction with the industry ensures the programmes delivered remain current and relevant. AFS has made changes to delivery and training to improve achievement following reviews and delays are caused by external factors. AFS needs to be aware of the effects of the extensions to the approved programme length in case of a deviation from what is approved.</p>

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<sup>5</sup> Students are notified during the enrolment process and within the training agreement of extensions and the additional costs this may incur.



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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>All students complete induction on commencement of their training. During this time, each student's goals and needs are identified. These individual learning plans are monitored regularly and emerging needs are addressed promptly through one-to-one meetings or inclusion in remedial classes. This is further supported through regular testing of knowledge, allowing for timely feedback on progress. Understanding the effect of delayed progress on student wellbeing could strengthen the comprehensive activity undertaken already.</p> <p>End-of-course evaluations, an open-door policy held by all tutors, and newly instituted student representatives promote an active student voice that has prompted change. Regular whole-school activities that celebrated achievement and milestones occurred prior to the Covid restrictions and are planned to recommence. These activities, alongside social media groups within each class, means academic and social networking is actively promoted and enjoyed.</p> <p>Pastoral support is provided where appropriate by the tutors, with students feeling supported sufficiently to approach these persons as needed. For those students in accommodation, a live-in tutor and the accommodation manager are also available. For health issues requiring a greater level of care, external support services can be contacted.</p> <p>AFS is working towards providing an inclusive learning environment that acknowledges ethnic and individual needs. There is no specific tailored support for Māori and Pasifika students' cultural and learning needs as yet. Training in development and inclusion of a learning environment – and teaching and learning approaches that accommodate this – is planned and could address this area for growth.</p>
Conclusion:	AFS provides an inclusive learning environment to meet individual needs, with plans to extend teaching and learning practices to support the cultural and learning needs of Māori and Pasifika. Goals and needs are identified early, monitored regularly, and emerging needs addressed promptly. Support and

	available networks are extensive. Evaluations and feedback from students and staff inform change.
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### 1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Since March 2020, AFS has faced educational concerns from the loss of half of the student body, border closures and Covid-related delays. These, alongside financial issues, meant the future of AFS needed urgent consideration. Self-assessment highlighting dysfunction within the prior and existing education processes resulted in significant change<sup>6</sup> and supported a business re-start late 2021. The purpose of the organisation has remained clear throughout, and a strong but new leadership, who have an understanding of the educational and business requirements of a PTE, is working on restoring the organisation's direction. Initial results appear positive, but the long-term effectiveness is still to be seen.</p> <p>Data sources are available for analysis and use, but how effectively information has been used prior to 2021 is unclear. The re-establishment and/or purchase of systems to monitor and track activity within the organisation has commenced and is producing information that is used to promote reviews but, as recognised by the organisation, the data sets are currently of insufficient size to enable effective self-assessment. Plans are in place for how this information will be used by the organisation.</p> <p>Resources are being effectively allocated to address the organisation's current needs. To ensure quality provision, the organisation quickly recognised what was needed and prioritised this effectively.</p> <p>Staff are valued and feel valued. All staff have the appropriate industry qualifications (including those for flight instruction) and experience with annual recertification, ensuring industry currency. An annual appraisal and observations twice a year guide the professional development and support made available. Extra professional development about Te Tiriti, and engagement</p>

<sup>6</sup> Towards the end of 2021, AFS undertook a restructure which resulted in a reduction in staff. The PTE gained new owners, a new board and a new chief executive.

	with Māori and Pasifika students would assist staff as they prepare to meet the organisation's new expectations.
Conclusion:	Significant change occurring in late 2021 is working towards the restoration of the organisation's policies, processes, development and self-assessment capability.

## 1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Marginal</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>As the aviation industry is highly regulated and prescribed, AFS has to operate in a manner that is highly compliant with CAA requirements. Policies, processes and experienced personnel ensure compliances are met and managed. AFS is understandably very health and safety focussed, supported by certification measures needing to be met. Staff training in health and safety measures is completed regularly.</p> <p>AFS now proactively ensures compliance accountabilities are understood through self-declaration to and correspondence with NZQA. In comparison, prior to 2021 AFS did not meet all NZQA-related compliance accountabilities, and how these accountabilities were being monitored and managed was unclear. Of particular concern are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the high percentage of unit standard credits reported after the 90 days following the last date of assessment.</li> <li>• the delivery of additional training material within an approved programme that meant delivery could have extended beyond the time and length approved.</li> <li>• the enrolment of all students in the level 6 National diploma resulting in inaccurate information to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).</li> </ul> <p>The new management team recognised these areas of concern and instituted new policies and processes to rectify. Weekly and monthly management checks alongside a calendar are currently used to maintain timely meeting of the required compliance activities.</p>

	<p>An agreement with an external agency provides AFS with an annual audit of their international Code of Practice processes. The findings of the recent audit have been/are being used to update policies, procedures and practices for both international and domestic support. Likewise, other audits from the TEC and CAA are being actioned in a proactive manner.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>In a highly regulated environment, strong management of aviation-related compliance ensures students are safe while training. Continued focus on education-related compliances will ensure lapses as seen since the last EER will reduce in occurrence.</p>

# Focus Areas

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

## 2.1 Focus area: International Students: Support and Wellbeing

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>AFS gains international students through agents (appropriately vetted) or an agreement with Vietnam Airlines. Irrespective, a comprehensive process for selection is followed to increase the likelihood of successful completion.</p> <p>Support for the international students is also comprehensive. All students are aware of the emergency support contact; for those in AFS accommodation, in-house tutorial staff provide an extra layer of learning and pastoral support.</p> <p>Most international students studying at the commencement of New Zealand's Covid-19 lockdowns have remained. The frequency of lockdowns has resulted in a large number of extensions to the international students' study, which in turn required insurance and visa continuations. AFS arranged these generally without fault – a process that has been improved due to comprehensive monitoring completed by the newly appointed enrolment manager.</p> <p>Attendance issues related to international students have occurred as the requirement to attend campus has returned. These have been addressed in line with the relevant procedure. More recently, students have been granted extended periods of leave to return to their home countries. Students are made aware of conditions for travel and return before they leave. All students have returned and are progressing with their training.</p>

## 2.2 Focus area: New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (General Aviation) (Aeroplane) (Level 5)

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Marginal</b>

## 2.3 Focus area: Governance and Management

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>

# 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 Ardmore Flying School Ltd:

- Seek advice to understand any need for programme or study contract change, in relation to the continued extension of training time beyond that approved.
- Increase analysis of Māori and Pasifika student achievement, attendance and feedback information to support an understanding of the learning and cultural needs of these priority learners.
- Increase engagement with Māori and Pasifika community groups to support parity of achievement and an understanding of the learning and cultural needs of these priority learner groups.
- Institute reporting and the expansion of the evaluation information received from all stakeholders to inform reporting, programme review and compliance accountabilities.
- Continue the re-establishment or purchase of systems to monitor and track activity within the organisation in order to have data sources that are available for analysis and use.

# Requirements

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

NZQA requires Ardmore Flying School to:

- report to NZQA any credits students achieve within three months of them completing the assessment (i.e. the unit standards used in the PTE's programmes of study), as outlined in 'Requirements to be met to maintain consent to assess' ([Consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011 \(v3-2018\) – Part 2 – Maintaining consent and approval, 10.1 \(b\)](#))

# Appendix

## 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 fraud<sup>7</sup>*
- 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.*

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<sup>7</sup> 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 2021, 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 including TITOs 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 2021, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2021 and the Training Scheme Rules 2021 respectively.*

*In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2021 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, 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 2021. 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)). 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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