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External Evaluation and Review Report

Southern Wings Ltd

Date of report: 26 July 2022

About Southern Wings Ltd

Southern Wings provides theoretical and practical pilot and flight training in Invercargill and Auckland. It is one of four preferred flight training schools that Air New Zealand works with to guarantee the future supply of pilots.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment
Location:	76 Airport Avenue, Invercargill Airport, Invercargill 500 Corsair Lane, Ardmore Airport, Papakura
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 31 full-time students – 2021 (34 Efts) Māori, one; Pasifika, one International: two (enrolled 2020 – still completing due to Covid-19)
Number of staff:	Eight full-time equivalents; four part-time
TEO profile:	Southern Wings Limited (provider page on NZQA website)
Last EER outcome:	At the previous EER, conducted in May 2018, NZQA was Highly Confident in Southern Wing’s educational performance and Confident in their capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	Southern Wings Diploma in Aviation for Aeroplane Flight Instructors (Level 6) [ID 114035]; New Zealand Diploma in Aviation (Level 6) (Aeroplane Flight Instruction, Aeroplane Airline Preparation, Helicopter Flight Instruction, and Helicopter Airline Preparation) [Ref:3689-1]
MoE number:	7256
NZQA reference:	C48577
Dates of EER visit:	18 and 19 May 2022

Summary of results

Southern Wings Ltd provides professional flight training and comprehensively meets the needs of domestic and international students, the regulatory body and its industry. Self-assessment processes provide valuable insights into continuous improvement of programmes and maintaining alignment with future industry needs within the context of a highly regulated industry.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Highly success-focused and individualised guidance and support underpins strong student achievement; most students succeed in their studies and progress to employment.
- Southern Wings works closely with Air New Zealand, a key partner, and other industry stakeholders to be well informed of industry needs and changes, and is effective in meeting the demand for highly skilled and professional pilots.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Theory supported by practical application of skills and knowledge provides students with authentic and unique learning experiences, preparing them well to fly in varying and challenging conditions in the New Zealand aerospace.
- Highly qualified and experienced pilots ensure engaging training experiences, with strong academic support and appropriate pastoral care for wellbeing and safe flying.
- Academic leadership has clear oversight and understanding of individual and cohort outcomes. Student progress and evaluations are closely monitored, and the information used to inform improvements and wider organisational decisions.
- The management of compliance requirements is generally strong. A gap in reporting credits to NZQA is being addressed.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Mostly domestic and some international students enrol in Southern Wings pilot training programmes which are regulated by the Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand (CAA).</p> <p>There has been strong achievement demonstrated across Southern Wings programmes, with students consistently achieving above national average for the external examinations.² A consistent trend of high examination achievement is evident in Southern Wings' annual examination results since 2018. The students' achievement surpasses the national average, as shown by the 2021 first time pass rate of 92 per cent compared with the national average of 81 per cent (refer to Appendix 1); and the 2020 successful flight examination average of 75 per cent compared with the national average of 50 per cent. The Southern Wings' student average pass mark was 85 per cent.³</p> <p>These achievements demonstrate that the students are well prepared to meet CAA regulatory standards. Māori and Pasifika participation numbers are small, so their achievement rates are disproportionately affected by small differences in achievement; however, comparatively these groups are achieving.</p> <p>Prior to Covid-19, programme completions were strong (refer Appendix 1). During 2020-21, the airline industry was negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and this affected the Auckland campus, with planes being grounded during the lockdowns. Thirteen students could not complete their study, resulting in extensions. These programme extensions are being well managed, and students are due to</p>

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 Aspeq is the organisation appointed by the ASL (Aviation Service Ltd) to administer independent flight-testing examinations based on the CAA syllabus.

³ The required pass mark set by ASL is 70 per cent.

	<p>complete in June 2022.</p> <p>Student achievement is well understood, and data is analysed to make improvements. Benchmarked achievement rates are discussed regularly to enable effective monitoring and maintenance of strong achievement performance.</p>
Conclusion:	Achievement is consistently high across programmes. Regular monitoring and understanding of individual and cohort outcomes support the high standards of achievement.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Southern Wings' primary purpose is to produce high-calibre pilots. As an Air New Zealand preferred training provider, Southern Wings' graduates gain preference for employment at Air New Zealand.</p> <p>Students acquire authentic, real-world professional skills and knowledge for working in the aviation industry. Regular practical training throughout the programme enables students to build confidence to manage flights in varying weather and technically challenging conditions.</p> <p>Southern Wings' longstanding reputation for quality training and high standards affords graduates opportunities to gain work within the aviation industry. Seventy per cent of graduates from 2018 to 2020 gained employment in this and related industries.</p> <p>Stakeholders value the skills, work-readiness and professionalism of the graduates. Southern Wings actively prepares graduates to work in teams, to understand customer service, and be good communicators. Employers attest to graduates being adaptable and professional, and are preferred employees because they are well prepared and understand the industry's safety culture. The training contributes qualified pilots to help address the current shortage of skilled pilots in New Zealand due to the Covid-19 lockdowns.</p> <p>Southern Wings provides a comprehensive training package that allows graduates to fulfil other industry positions as they gain the sufficient flight hours and experience to move into commercial airline pilot positions such as freight, cargo and customer</p>

	<p>service. Other stakeholders such as air traffic controllers also attest to the high calibre of the graduates who are well trained to listen to instructions and understand the requirements of the industry, which is important to ensure safety in the air.</p> <p>Further study in the instructor strand provides a pool of instructors for flight training organisations; many Southern Wings graduates have been selected and prepared to be instructors at Southern Wings.</p> <p>Graduate destinations are tracked, and ongoing stakeholder engagement is used to understand employment outcomes and the needs of industry.</p>
Conclusion:	A good network of partners and industry engagement ensures ongoing support for the organisation and its graduates.

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>Regular and ongoing interaction with stakeholders is a strong characteristic of the organisation. The programmes are structured around CAA requirements and bound by compliance; nevertheless, a well-structured learning environment with experienced and qualified instructors provides students with individualised training and support.</p> <p>To ensure that delivery across both Southern Wings' campuses remains consistent, the academic leadership team regularly maintains teaching and learning policies and procedures and professionally develops tutorial staff to standardise practice. Ongoing updates from CAA are closely monitored at programme and subject levels, and updates are maintained to ensure currency of programme content. All teaching staff subscribe to CAA updates and review teaching requirements and keep abreast of changes. Regular course reviews and feedback from Aspeq's Knowledge Deficiency Reports are used to update subject knowledge. Team meetings between tutors enable sharing of information to improve teaching practice and inform course and programme review.</p> <p>A range of learning strategies are used to engage students who</p>

	<p>have different learning requirements. A variety of learning tools such as textbooks, course workbooks, aeroplane parts, aeroplane inspections, maps, apps for weather, navigational assistance, flight simulations, videos and presentations are used to support learning. Multiple formative assessments and detailed feedback reports from external examinations are used to guide the students, inform improvements required, and help students prepare for the external summative assessments. Individual training plans are set to help the students and teaching staff track student progress.</p> <p>Theory and practice are interspersed to ensure the theory supports the practical experience. Well-maintained and diversified fleet aircraft with different instrument features and multi-engines offer a diversity of learning experiences to enable students to progress to different stages of flight training. Central to the training is a strong focus on understanding all aspects of safety.</p> <p>External moderation by Service IQ in 2019 and 2020 indicates acceptable outcomes for both years and provides an extra layer of validation for the external examination results.</p>
Conclusion:	Southern Wings' programmes are effectively designed to deliver authentic learning opportunities and essential learning contexts to support high achievement. Comprehensive processes are used to ensure ongoing high-quality training is delivered.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>A rigorous behavioural interview with a risk focus includes communication skills, leadership experience and meeting criteria for fit and proper persons, ensuring the best candidates are selected and are well suited for success in the industry.</p> <p>Student goals are understood and comprehensively tracked, with any student issues discussed at weekly staff meetings, allowing early intervention to support students to achieve their flying and theory learning goals.</p> <p>Small classes ensure that instructors get to know individual students and can cater for their learning styles and needs.</p>

	<p>Theory assessment feedback reports are made available and ensure continuous improvement. Individual flying records are kept and updated after each assessment. These points are discussed in the pre- and post-flight briefings and provide further support for students to reflect on and make improvements. Individual feedback sessions with the instructors support student learning.</p> <p>Southern Wings operates a 'Just Culture' environment where students learn to work under a duty of care, to follow procedures and rules, and to avoid causing harm or unjustifiable risk. Student wellbeing is therefore paramount, and training includes a focus on human factors. Students are encouraged to talk about their wellbeing and seek support. A healthy lifestyle is encouraged with various websites and support material provided, and a personal checklist called 'I'm Safe' is used when students go on a flight. Students are also encouraged to look after their physical and mental health and are required to have a Class 1⁴ medical each year.</p> <p>Auckland students are accommodated when in block training at the Invercargill site. This is an opportunity for the Auckland students to gain a different flying experience and includes some social networking with other students.</p> <p>Student feedback is used to understand learning needs and inform improvements made to teaching practice. An online tracking system is used to track individual student learning needs and adapt teaching to accommodate different learning styles. Cultural and learning needs are well supported in an inclusive learning environment. Tutor reports are used to make improvements to student learning.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Capable leadership and instructors supported by a highly effective pastoral approach encourages healthy living and provides the necessary support for students to succeed while maintaining good health and wellbeing.</p>

⁴ For this medical they must have no history and no current mental health issues. It is a legal requirement for students to declare any change in medical condition (be that physical or mental) to the medical unit of the CAA.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Southern Wings' purpose and direction is well considered, clear and understood by all staff and management. A sustainable business model is evident, with over two decades of successful operation and little reliance on international students. The organisation is driven by a strong and long-serving, dedicated leadership with oversight of all operational activities. There is a deliberate focus on the success of the graduates.</p> <p>The Auckland campus was impacted by the Covid-19 lockdowns; however, management's response was measured and effective to limit the impact on students completing their studies.</p> <p>Leadership is shared across staff, with excellent and well-established systems and processes to support decision making. Strong and regular communication between teaching staff and management ensures resourcing – such as learning materials, modern technology, variety of aircraft and electronic devices – is effective for teaching and learning needs.</p> <p>Academic leadership and quality are supported by robust processes. Course outcomes, and student and instructor feedback are used to closely monitor performance and inform decision making.</p> <p>Instructors are highly qualified professionals with extensive experience in the industry and who understand the CAA programme requirements. Instructors are mentored into the teaching role and provided with a variety of professional development training with Air New Zealand and CAA. The annual competency assessment ensures instructors keep current and abreast of industry changes. Support is available for further study in relevant industry subjects, and the trainers engage in researching aviation developments. Succession planning is in place to identify graduating students who have the necessary skill sets to be mentored as future flight instructors.</p>
Conclusion:	Southern Wings has a clear vision and understanding of its business, with strong and passionate leadership committed to providing effective support for educational achievement.

	Monitoring of performance is consistent, regular and effective.
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1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Southern Wings is meeting most of its compliance requirements, with compliance tasks and obligations shared between the safety manager and the training manager and tracked through the organisation's compliance calendar.</p> <p>Key compliance accountabilities are mostly managed well, with the organisation submitting annual attestations to NZQA in a timely manner. Participation in external moderation activities with Service IQ has reported acceptable outcomes however at the time of writing this report, Ringa Hora found that Southern Wings were using material that had not been pre-moderated and against an expired version of the unit standard. Ringa Hora are working with Southern Wings to rectify the issue and the moderation concerns should have minimal impact. CAA authorisation certificates to conduct training and assessments were renewed in 2021 and are valid until 3 April 2026. The last TEC audit was completed in 2017 and reported in the previous EER.</p> <p>Southern Wings has completed quarterly reporting instead of reporting within 90 days of completed assessments. Although this gap has not yet impacted students, it requires further consideration and immediate remediation.</p> <p>Self-review against the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 has sound processes, involving relevant staff, and accountabilities are well managed. Further work is being done to ensure processes are evident and improvements are made to address any gaps self-identified.</p>
Conclusion:	Southern Wings has effective systems in place to ensure most of its key compliance accountabilities are managed well. The gap in managing NZQA programme rules is ongoing from the previous EER and requires remediation.

Focus areas

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

2.1 Diploma in Aviation for Aeroplane Flight Instructors (Level 6)

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

Recommendations

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

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

Requirements

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

NZQA requires Southern Wings Limited to:

- Ensure credits for students are reported to NZQA within three months following assessment, as per [Part 2 – Maintaining consent and approval Section 13\(1\)\(b\) of the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2021](#). Policies and procedures on credit reporting must be amended, and relevant staff must be advised, to comply with said Rules.
- Review and familiarise staff with assessment and moderation requirements for unit standards as per the NZQA guidelines for Consent to Assess Against Standards.

Appendix 1

Table 1. Southern Wings' and national average pass marks

2020 Southern Wings' average pass mark	
PPL*	87%
CPL*	86%
IFR*	87%
BTK*	85%
ATPL*	84%
Total	86%
2020 Southern Wings' average 1st attempt	
PPL	94%
CPL	94%
IFR	98%
ATPL	97%
BTK	100%
Total	97%

Based on number of sittings

2020 National average pass mark	
PPL	79%
CPL	79%
IFR & BTK	79%
ATPL	80%
2020 National average pass at 1st attempt	
PPL	73%
CPL	75%
IFR & BTK	75%
ATPL	81%

Table 1. Cont.

2021 Southern Wings' average pass mark	
PPL	82%
CPL	97%
IFR	83%
BTK	81%
ATPL	83%
Total	85%
2021 Southern Wings' average 1st attempt	
PPL	91%
CPL	96%
IFR	90%
ATPL	95%
BTK	90%
Total	92%

Based on number of sittings

2021 National average pass mark	
PPL	77%
CPL	79%
IFR & BTK	79%
ATPL	78%
2021 National average pass at 1st attempt	
PPL	74%
CPL	83%
IFR & BTK	82%
ATPL	84%

*Note:

- PPL Private Pilot Licence
- CPL Commercial Pilot Licence
- IFR Instrument Flight rating
- ATPL Airline Transport Licence Theory

Table 2. Southern Wings all programme completions

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Enrolments	14	17	18	31
Airline completions	6	12	4	-
General aviation completions	3	2	2	-
Instructor strand completions	-	1	-	-
Māori enrolments	2	1	-	1
Māori completions	1	1	-	-
Pasifika enrolment	1	1	1	1
Pasifika completions	1	1	-	-

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 fraud⁵*
- *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.*

⁵ 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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