Wanaka Helicopters

2024

Self-review Public Summary

NZQA Code of Pastoral Care of

Domestic and International Students

What is this document?

Wanaka Helicopters Limited (WHL) has proudly been a signatory to the Code of Pastoral Care of Students practices from the start of the Diploma programme (2009)[1]. "The Code" contains outcomes upon which the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) provides guidance to establish a national strategy and support domestic and international tertiary learners. Each signatory annually reviews currently listed outcomes and compares their own systems and policies with them. Our Code lead, the Academic Coordinator (AC), gathers evidence, analyses the observations, evaluates adequacy relevant to the Code and recommends remediation or improvements where necessary.

These reviews are part of our quality assurance programmes (which include external reviews) where NZQA and other bodies interview staff, audit documentation, and generally ensure that they can continue to have high confidence that WHL accurately self-reports academic and financial performance. Internally, the annual self-review of training is a process involving a bulky document collection, online QMS, and procedures (especially in aviation!) which include confidential learner, staff, and operations data. Management meets monthly to review these in an ongoing manner and again annually to identify trends and process effectiveness. This document provides a higher-level, short summary of the AC's reporting which can be released publicly without compromising any individual or organisation's rights to privacy. While excluding such sensitive details, the AC will provide further details on systems and evidence upon request.

Outcomes 1-4 are established for all tertiary providers. Outcomes 5-7 are only for those providers who also have student accommodation. Since WHL doesn't provide student accommodation, those outcomes are largely not addressed. Outcomes 8-12 are for providers enrolling international students. International students represent a small proportion of our trainees so these outcomes are addressed, but briefly.

The self-review results in a synthetic achievement rating by the AC according to NZQA guidance publications for each outcome in four implementation categories. This national system lacks an important aspect of actual effect for learners so we additionally identify system implementation/maturity, but also if the system was effectively executed in the preceding year. We encourage NZQA to adopt this expansion of the framework to better serve learners.

System Implementation (Required Evaluation)	Execution - annual review
Well Implemented	Best practice
Implemented	Effective
Developing	Impaired
Early stages of implementation	Compromised

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[1] To prevent later confusion when aeroplanes are mentioned, WHL also delivers the aeroplane strand of the Diploma through our fixed-wing division, also known as Learn To Fly NZ (LTF). We uniquely aim to produce more professional pilots with operational knowledge of both aircraft platforms.

Starting in 2024, NZQA requested that providers include a bullet list or 'infographic' summarising their results in the annual self-review.

Scale:

System Implementation (Required Evaluation)	Execution - annual review
Well Implemented	Best practice
Implemented	Effective
Developing	Impaired
Early stages of implementation	Compromised

- Outcome 1 - A learner wellbeing and safety system
    - System: Well-implemented
    - 2024 Execution: Best Practice
- Outcome 2 - Learner voice:
    - System: Well-implemented
    - 2024 Execution: Effective
- Outcome 3 - Safe, inclusive, supportive, and accessible physical and digital learning environments
    - System: Well-implemented
    - 2024 Execution: Impaired
- Outcome 4 - Learners are safe and well during study
    - System: Well-implemented
    - 2024 Execution: Best Practice
- Outcomes 5-7 - Student Accommodation
    - Not applicable
- Outcome 8 - Responding to the distinct wellbeing and safety needs of international tertiary learners
    - System: Well-implemented
    - 2024 Execution: Effective
- Outcomes 9-11 - Prospective international tertiary learners are well informed, Offers, enrolments, contracts, insurance, and visa requirements are properly obtained, and learners receive appropriate information and advice.
    - System: Well-implemented
    - 2024 Execution Effective
- Outcome 12 - Safety and appropriate supervision of international tertiary learners
    - System: Well-implemented,
    - 2024 Execution: Effective

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Cover Photo: 2024 Cohort of NZ3688 (Rotary and Fixed Wing)

Summary

Tertiary Education Organisation (TEO)

Wanaka Helicopters Limited	(Also known as Wanaka Helicopters, WHL, Wanaka Helicopters Flight Training, WHFT), Aeroplane operations are directed by WHL and conducted by wholly-owned affiliate company trading as Learn to Fly NZ (LTF).
Ministry of Education (MoE) Number	7826
Organisation CEO:	Peter Spencer-Bower, CEO Operating with advice from the WHL Board

Code Contact Person

Name and role: (Also Report Author)	Brian Paavo, PhD Academic Coordinator (AC)
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2024 Active Enrolments (as of 7 Oct)

Domestic (including Australian):	13 (all 18 years or older) enrolled in Qualification >15 in Training Schemes
International:	2 enrolled in Qualification >2 in Training Schemes

Historical Achievements

PPLH[2] Achievements: 444
CPLH Achievement: 286
PPLA Achievements: 14
CPLA Achievements: 1
Diploma-levelQualification Achievements (NZ1706 or NZ3688): 53

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[2] PPLH = private pilot licence helicopter, CPLH = commercial pilot licence helicopter, PPLA = aeroplane, CPLA = aeroplane

Definitions and Aggregate Data

As of 2023 there are some key definitions that carry compliance meanings[3]. These definitions are within the context of events that have reasonable potential to impact student learning.

Complaint - Learner, staff, and management feedback is desirable and can fall along a range of criticality. A 'complaint' is a submission that is outside the normal range of constructive feedback and indicates that the submitter finds something wrong or not satisfactory and is seeking redress through a more formal process.

WHL is required to report complaints in the preceding 12 months: Zero were reported by students, iComplaints, or stakeholder agencies.

During the 2024 staff survey, one management-level staff and one instructor each reported that they had been aware of a complaint that was not captured by formal systems. One indicated that it was mutually resolved, the other reported no resolution being reached. With no further input, it appears that these issues were more indicative of the 'open-door' policy working with feedback rather than rising to the level of a "complaint."

Critical Incident - Critical incidents are here defined as occurrences in which a learner received an injury (beyond minor first aid care) or had a negative well-being outcome due while attending or related to learning activities that required follow-up care.

WHL is required to report critical incidents in the preceding 12 months: Zero

Significant Programme Occurrences: Learners are expected to advance along a typical programme pathway. Unexpected deviations such as withdrawals or being-exited from the programme due to performance, behavioural, or other concerns are significant programme occurrences. While achieving courses is the norm, a reasonable percentage of re-assessments or failures to achieve are expected and not significant programme occurrences.

WHL reports the following significant programme occurrences in the preceding 12 months:
1. Programme withdrawal at the end of the orientation programme. The student reported that living away from home was harder than expected and an opportunity to study closer to home was available.
2. Programme withdrawal at the end of the orientation programme. The student reported that living expenses, specifically accommodation and groceries, in Wānaka were significantly higher than in home town. Student-loan work

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[3] Access at:
https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Tertiary/The-Code/complaints-and-critical-incidents-reporting-and-publishing-data-in-your-self-review-report.pdf

limitations meant that they had insufficient funds to support a reasonable-level of stress during study.

3. A student was grounded pending required written theory exam pass. The student did not resit the exam in the expected period. Eventually the student passed the required written theory, resumed flight training and is "on programme," but delayed by 6-10 months depending upon performance.

Outcome 1

A learner wellbeing and safety system:

Well-implemented, Best Practice

Physical Safety

The system - As an aviation school, 'physical safety' is always front-and-centre of every operation. We know that we provide a safe environment due to our bi-monthly report provided by our Safety Management System Officer.

- Current, valid medical clearance to fly: All students, verified
- Safety Management System (SMS) Data from the previous 12 months.
  - Student involvement in *any*[4] safety report, 19 of 67 reports
  - SMS submissions *by* students, 3 of 67; this is encouraging as an Air Operator as it means students are aware of safety expectations, how to report them, and are actively encouraged to do so.
  - Negative outcomes experienced by students (e.g. upset, minor first aid, anything requiring medical or other support): none[5]
- Six bi-monthly safety system reporting to all staff; all conducted, minuted
- Annual management review of safety system with leadership: conducted, minuted
- Ground operations inductions
  - Fuelling; conducted (individual student records)
  - Aircraft ground movements; conducted (individual student records)
  - Hangar operations; conducted (individual student records)
  - Ground vehicles; conducted on as-required basis
  - Dangerous goods; scheduled November
  - Fire safety / Fire Drills: conducted orientation week, 6-monthly repeated
- Graduate survey data (2021, 2023, and 2024);

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[4] This is a very large group. In Aviation safety management systems all reports require oversight, tracking, and senior-management follow-through. A report may consist of an occurrence (as typically imagined), but may also be identification of a hazard to be addressed or a suggestion for improved operational safety. Because students are exposed to ground facilities (e.g. hangar, apron, etc.) any reports involving these areas are included.

[5] Outcomes were largely student taking some evading action or other preventative or precautionary action in flight or ground operations.

- - Mean response 9.6 out of 10 "I felt safe at airport facilities"
  - Responses range from 9 to 10 "WHL promotes a safety culture"
  - 100% of respondents identified that they felt safe at airport facilities during their study.

Our curriculum which includes risk-management, safety systems, first aid, dangerous goods handling, and decision making probably also help instill practical work safety habits as shown in classroom discussions and even in student reports addressing school environment hazards. We believe that our students are at greater risk on the motorway to school than at school or in the air.

Well-being

A satisfactory system of ensuring student wellbeing is a more nebulous goal. As a small, family-run organisation with open-door policies among staff straight to Director level and a full-time student advocate (AC), our systems appear to be robust. In past years events including personal intervention, voluntary reduction of flight stress periods, individual scheduling, additional study assistance, discounted remedial classes, and other individualised interventions indicate that monitoring is working and students usually reach for assistance where necessary.

- Event-driven, documented 'check-ins' with individual students during the prior 12 months - all appear to have been resolved
  - Death in the family
  - Emigration issues
  - Student social integration
- Staff survey (2021, 2023, 2024) "Rate the safety and supportiveness of the school environment in student well-being"
  - Means out of five stars 2021 (4.5), 2023 (4.7), 2024 (4.7)
- Training (Instructor) Meetings; By this point 10 of 10 have been held, minuted on HeliWiki

Documented observations of trainee well-being and offers of support and intervention have occurred in the past year and recorded in individual student records (SuiteCRM). Graduate surveys[6] continue to indicate that trainees feel safe and supported during study. These observations indicate that staff, especially instructors, are seeking and receiving workplace assistance to aid learners experiencing troubles. As learners are all adults, however, staff must respect individual coping mechanisms and choices unless they are reasonably likely to impact safety. The instructor logs and training meetings (minuted) are additional formal systems to help achieve responsible balance. This is all on top of the formal CAA Medical

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[6] Graduate surveys include all cohorts to date (2016-present) with annual participation variations. As these are long surveys (approximately 50 questions), we are happy to address requests for further information using the annual analyses.

Certificate system required of all trainees and which includes mental health parameters and assessments.

Recommendations

No significant gaps were found in learner well-being and safety systems that we, as providers, feel we can improve. Stresses associated with the high-cost of flight training and accommodation security remain principal concerns and beyond our control. Accommodation insecurity and training unaffordability are an increasing threats. WHL, the Aviation Industry Representatives (AviationNZ), and other Training organisations have actively lobbied government agencies for several years to take remedial measures including supporting accommodation subsidy increases, support school accommodation initiatives, recognising cost differences between helicopter and fixed-wing training, linking student allowance to cost-of-living instead of one-off arbitrary policy amounts, and revising student loan caps (fixed since 2013). There has been no improvement in MoE, TEC, StudyLink provision and the high-staff turnover rate in those agencies confounds strong relationship building.

"While the Ministry received and noted seven submissions regarding the aviation student loan cap, the Ministry did not actively discuss changing the cap [in 2023].*"*

–James Campbell, Senior Policy Manager Ministry of Education

Figure 1. Students undertaking Helicopter Underwater Escape Training which improves their survivability in a real-world incident by 60%. This exercise (where they are forced underwater, flipped upside down) is overseen by an instructor, two safety divers, and you can notice emergency releases for all doors and seatbelts on the side of the training device.

Outcome 2

Learner voice: Well-implemented, Effective

The staff:student ratio remains approximately 1.2:1 and instructor:student 0.7:1 effectively ensuring that each learner has ready access to individuals at every level of the organisation and their voice is consistently heard and heeded in every day operations. This can be seen in our constantly evolving student handbook (a controlled document) and weekly briefs with each cohort. Student feedback (each course), the lack of formal group concerns unresolved by Trainee Management Team meetings (TMT) (1 'notification' event in the past 5 years), and the low-level of student-driven problems is an indication of an effective student voice structure. While each instructor can review past course feedback during their preparation for delivery phase (HeliWiki), the feedback is annually summarised and presented to management. The AC also reports to the board quarterly to escalate student voice issues if they are not resolved by staff or management.

As our handbook explains there are formal complaint and mediation services available to students and contacts are provided to learners for each of our major stakeholder's complaints (CAA, StudyLink, TEC, MoE, NZQA most prominently). We have had conversations, but no mediation has been required nor escalated to the national system. Scheduled three to five times per year (semi-regular due to feedback from student-elected cohort representatives) WHL holds TMT meetings (minuted and distributed to all learners) where representatives add to the standing agenda and ask questions, management also provides announcements and asks after group concerns. Finally, our annual graduate surveys provide feedback (where there is no longer a concern about academic anonymity) about student engagement.

- Individual course feedback;
  - open on each course's moodle page
  - Archived to the instructor-prep page on heliwiki: verified
  - Complete feedback awards (student numbers match feedback reports received) : four times out of thirteen possible times
- Staff Survey (2021, 2023, 2024)
  - "Rate, out of five stars, student access to staff out of scheduled class hours" mean 4.5, 4.4, 4.5
  - "Rate, out of fice stars, student's ability to provide feedback and impact the programme" mean 4.2, 4.7, 4.2
- Graduate Survey (2021, 2023, 2024)
  - "Rate, on a scale from 1 to 10, access to instructors outside of scheduled sessions)" mean 8.8, 8.8, 10
  - "Rate, out of 5 stars, how well was your voice heard in the programme?" mean 4.5
- Training / Management Team Meetings (TMT)

- While the opportunity was expressly presented twice in 2024, neither cohort identified a need or desire to meet for a TMT,
- The next one has been scheduled for 8 November

Recommendations

After delivering the Diploma for more than eight years and flight training for more than 42, the organisation seems to have robust learner-input systems. No significant gaps were identified, though TMT meetings dropped in consistency in 2024, largely due to student representatives reporting no need to meet, therefore the system is fully implemented, but execution was a little lacking in 2025. I recommend that meetings are held regardless 3-4 times per year.

The greatest threats include static course requirements (NZQA credits) in a rapidly-changing industry with more and increasing number of learning and compliance steps which are not funded by the national system, but are expected by employers in the Graduate Outcomes profile. For example, NZQA does not support Crew Resource Management nor First Aid in programmes, but all NZ/Australian employers expect the former and are required by law to have the latter. Students are not able to individualise training options (e.g. aircraft type) and training progressions (e.g. post-qualification pathways) due to national minimum-experience requirements expectations by NZQA and MoE.

Figure 2. Student conducting a fire-bucket sling operation with a two-seat trainer (Robinson R22)

Outcome 3

Safe, inclusive, supportive, and accessible physical and digital learning environments

Well-implemented, Impaired

Aviation is an unusual learning environment compared to most tertiary education situations. Physical safety is well-looked after in this risk-intolerant industry and managed primarily according to CAA regulations (most specifically Rule/AC100 Safety Management Systems) and our obligations under Workplace Health and Safety Regulations (also managed by NZ CAA in flight situations). WHL is a certificated Air Operator with an excellent safety record. What is most unusual about aviation is that our learners undergo extensive screening prior to enrolment which specifically excludes candidates with physical, mental, developmental, or learning characteristics contra-indicated to safely acting as the Pilot in Command of an aircraft with passengers on board. This is most obvious in each Class 01 Medical Certificate issuance, but supported by ongoing assessment. While our offices, hangar, and classrooms are wheelchair accessible, that is for other events and passengers, our learners must all be fully able-bodied and in a fit mental state for flight.

Each course does have digital learning components using our online learning and assessment system, Moodle, but all classes are normally held in-person. Our course materials are made readily available to NZQA/Ringa Hora inspections and assessments are annually available for audit. In 2024, Ringa Hora staff were unable to produce industry-wide pre-moderation evidence, were not familiar with subject matter nor assessment methods, and did not assist with external moderation requests. A meeting was held to identify methods moving forward, but no conclusive resolutions were made other than that in future years they will be making on-site assessments. Continued development and regular review of course materials indicate that each course clearly lays out expectations in course syllabi, assessment standards in rubrics (in advance), and formative assessment opportunities prior to summative assessments.

Each Moodle course has a student feedback module. Summatively open-ended comments are productive, and usually highlight small improvements readily integrated into future deliveries and/or praise for the instructors, but the supportive comments indicate success in digital learning. This is most telling in the large number of 'strongly agree' responses to the questions in each course 'The course helped me do better on the Aspeq exam than I likely would have done on my own' and 'The course content was relevant to my career intentions.'

Inclusivity is a difficult aspect to build into a flight course. The costs of helicopter training are so high that almost all underrepresented groups are at a historical and inherited wealth disadvantage to even beginning training. WHL provides $10,000 (helicopter) and $4,000 (aeroplane) scholarships for at least one NZ Māori/Pasifika each intake. WHL Women in Aviation Scholarships, $5000 for helicopter and $2000 for fixed wing, also seek

to communicate our inclusiveness as well as help address the industry's pilot gender disparity. These seem to be working as our applicant pool has become more diverse and several candidates have mentioned, even during private flight training planning, that they came to WHL because of the message communicated even though they were not individually eligible for the scholarship.

- Staff survey (2021, 2023, 2024)
    - "Rate, out of five stars, the value of support students receive in appropriate print and online learning resources" 4.3, 4.4, 4
    - "Rate, out of five stars, student access to resources including facilities and aircraft" 4.7, 4.5, 4.3
    - "Rate, out of five stars, How effectively do we foster working and learning regardless of sex, race, gender, and age?" (2024 only) mean 4.6, no correlations between respondents age nor gender.
- Graduate survey (2021, 2023, 2024)
    - "Rate, on a scale of 1 to 10, online resources" mean 8.9, 8.1, 7.8 (one respondent was from a 2016 cohort which did not yet have completed online resources, the mean was 10 for all that did)
    - "Rate, on a scale of 1 to 10, ground course assessments" mean 8.2, 8.3, 7.3
    - "Rate, on a scale of 1 to 10, flight progress debriefs/assessments" mean 9.0, 8.9, 9.3

Recommendations

The physical and digital environments are producing good pilots with a high first-attempt pass-rate at flight tests (98%) and an extremely low in-year failure or withdrawal rate (<5%). First-attempt (theory) pass rates significantly exceed national rates (usually by 20% or more in scores). Enrolment systems capture individual's self-identities with regards to gender and ethnicity and meet reporting requirements. No complaints have been received and only once in the past seven years has a learner remarked on feeling 'othered' in discrete interactions. There are no documented instances of inclusivity behaviours negatively affecting learner outcomes.

There has been an increasing number of female-identifying candidates each year since 2017. There has been a marked increase in such candidates in 2024 (for the 2025 programme) for the first time with multiple simultaneous candidates. Similarly the age-range has expanded among graduates from 18 to 49 years of age (median 23) recognising later-in-life learners are succeeding.

While the staff survey results indicate that the staff feel that we are an inclusive environment, I believe that this is relative to the rural GA industry and not the wider accepted modern social norms, hence our inclusivity culture is impaired. Students have been observed carefully navigating social norms resolving cognitive dissonance with the

anachronistic behaviours and attitudes from older and parochial staff norms with their own, typically more accepting, attitudes towards diversity in the broadest sense. Largely students accept the flight school as a microcosm of the industry and - for example - women and men relearn how to interact in a still male-dominated industry.

We should continue to request that governmental agencies match WHL inclusivity initiatives dollar for dollar, but they have so far declined. We encourage broader government and industry initiatives with regard to diversity. I would like to see leadership make an intentional and consistent effort to identify and call out boundaries of inappropriate humour and perceptions related to gender, ethnic, and neuro-diversity and lead the industry rather than perpetuate currently-perceived norms.

Figure 3. 2023 Diploma trainees participate in peer-exercise integrating rotary (VR, left), instructor/ATC (centre), and aeroplane (right) traffic in simulator suite.

Outcome 4

Learners are safe and well during study

Well-implemented, Best Practice

This particular outcome is distinguished from Outcome 1 where the focus is on systems, however the evidence reviewed overlaps. Ultimately the present safety and wellbeing of our learners is managed according to monitoring and self-reporting rules required by Aviation

Medical Certificate holders. In addition to these we have ongoing monitoring of core health through the system mentioned above and attendance as a gross measure. All learners are required to scan in when coming onto the premises since the operations environment is a core part of our education programme. In-person classes also have attendance recording modules (within Moodle). Additionally, we encourage the majority of learners to live with other learners during terms in self-arranged housing. All flights are followed by Front-of-House staff and electronic trackers. As a consequence, it is rare that we don't know a student's whereabouts and general health every weekday during term. The flight-following culture has also cultivated a practice of students notifying staff if absent (for flight or ground study). It is very unlikely a student could be unwell and alone for more than 48 hours without having had one or more interventions or notifications.

Recommendations

We have confidence in our ability to directly or indirectly learn if a trainee is unwell. In each of the few past instances, intervention and support services were activated quickly and accessed from different levels within the organisation. This continued to be the case in 2024. Support was triggered by bereavement, sleep issues, financial issues, and other study-related stressors. The AC recommends continued operations as established with an eye toward learning of potential improvements when any future events reveal a gap in the system.

We should continue to impress upon the regulator and deputised agents, like Aspeq, to bridge the training and assessment gap. High-stakes testing for licencing has significant logical and accountability gaps (e.g. KDRs) that have persisted for decades. Furthermore, assessment design and delivery is one of the few remaining areas to NOT be connected to learner and public safety outcomes[7].

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[7] For example, under the current system the root cause of incidents, including fatalities, relating to weight and balance procedures trace back to the pilot in command or Air Operator and assessment procedures, especially in written theory, are not systematically improved according to safety outcomes.

Figure 4. Trainees who feel safe, but challenged, and who live in an atmosphere of looking after each other is an essential part of a good learning environment. Academic minima COULD be achieved in the immediate vicinity of aerodromes, however, preparing trainees for the weather, terrain, and logistical challenges of the real operational area, here in the Southern Alps, is an investment in future well being and safety for themselves, their passengers, and cargo.

Outcomes 5-7

Student Accommodation

Outcomes 5-7 are only for those providers who also have student accommodation. Since WHL doesn't provide student accommodation, those outcomes are not addressed in any significant manner. However, WHL recognises the national shortage of affordable student accommodation, especially in Central Otago where median house prices are currently 14 times the median adult annual salary. Further, student allowance accommodation subsidies remain woefully inadequate. The amount has remained static for several years and at an unacceptable rate (Wānaka is rural by the current classification system). Subsidies <$100/wk contrast with rooms in shared houses carrying a market price of about $200/wk PLUS utilities, grocery, and transport costs. According to graduate surveys, most students receive about $250/wk in TOTAL aid. The school has made significant investments in property with the express aim of supporting students with housing in a volatile local market, but further support from TEC was declined. Consequently any secure affordable student accommodation remains a distant future objective.

To support our learners insofar as we are able, offer letters are sent out in October and November to help students with planning for mid-January start of classes. All candidates accepting placements are given school email addresses and then connected to each other via this and social media channels with senior (2nd year) students. They and staff invite the new trainees into closed local social media groups which contain the majority of available housing stocks. WHL also cultivates several 'Helicopter Houses' in the

area. Landlords and agencies who have appreciated our long-term (1-2 year), well-behaved students as tenants often pass the property onto the next year's students.

Figure 5. The few international learners we have had take advantage of our family-business culture and our support of local 'helicopter houses' to also experience immersion in Kiwi culture. Here students gather in a historic Canterbury farm sharing meals and preparations for night flying lessons through controlled airspace at Christchurch International Airport and experiencing rural vs urban flight situations.

Outcome 8

Responding to the distinct wellbeing and safety needs of international tertiary learners

Well-implemented, Effective

International trainees have special needs and corresponding requirements before taking on the time, financial, and personal responsibility commitments flight training involves. There are two handbooks for training, one for students enrolled in the entire qualification (NZ3688) and one for trainees undertaking part-time study or studying under a specific programme (as required by Immigration), training scheme (future micro-credential). Both handbooks include a section specifically addressing international trainee needs and general information about NZ customs, laws, and norms.

The AC is responsible for communicating several times with each candidate, collecting evidence, and composing the letter of offer. Often this is in coordination with a delegate of MBIE who holds a liaison position with NZ Immigration. All international learners must show evidence of academic ability to undertake training (usually transcripts or prior flight theory training), and English Proficiency (all pilots must be able to speak English as a flight requirement in any country). Those who speak English as a first language from NZ, Australia, The United States, The United Kingdom, South Africa, and Canada are not required to produce formal testing prior to enrolment, all others are and they are recorded in student training folders and, more recently, on our CRM.

Additionally, trainees must demonstrate a financial ability to achieve in training by depositing funds (corresponding to the offer letter and for courses registered on STEO) into a Student Fee-Protect Public Trust for maximum transparency in financial dealings (which are audited annually). Finally all international students must carry personal health insurance valid for the entire flight training period. The policies are required to provide for at least $250,000 in-country health care and complete coverage of medical evacuation to home country if it becomes necessary. Two national student insurance organisations; Southern Cross and StudentSafe, provide affordable options to our international trainees under an exception of their standard policy (which otherwise excludes flight crew) through a Memorandum of Understanding. A recent internal audit (pre-saging our external audit) of our international learners found no gaps in our required documentation. In the past year, one trainee made a recommendation to provide more in-depth information on costs-related to post-achievement study, but otherwise no issues arose regarding cost-inclusion improvements recommended in 2022.

Recommendations

Improve the user interface of our Student Management System for staff undertaking enrolments and produce a more in-depth induction tool for them. This should take place in conjunction with mandated (2024/25) changes in enrolment forms and reporting (primarily SDR) requirements from TEC/NZQA.

Figure 6. Though WHL primarily trains NZ Domestic learners, we are proud to have trained pilots from each of these countries in the recent past lending a surprisingly international culture for such a small school.

Outcomes 9-11

Prospective international tertiary learners are well informed, Offers, enrolments, contracts, insurance, and visa requirements are properly obtained, and learners receive appropriate information and advice.

Well-implemented, Effective

Because language barriers are heavily mitigated if not entirely removed by the requirements of aviation training, the principal barrier to candidates prior to making a study commitment are our marketing materials. To ensure that correct and timely information is provided without any up-front costs to international learners we do NOT engage any international agents. All prospective trainees receive student handbooks, training agreements, formal offers of placement for Immigration, insurance quotations, and fees associated with training in the prospectus. Unfortunately the biggest unknowns experienced by international (pragmatically the situation is similar for domestic trainees) are the requirements of the CAA syllabi. While references and links to these syllabi are made available, most trainees do not have the technical knowledge prior to training to fully understand and appreciate them in full detail. A recent internal audit of international enquiries (collated in our Customer Relationship Management software) indicates that all international enquiries of the last

year progressing past the initial enquiry stage, received all the required information, forms, and links.

Recommendations

No breaches of policy and no significant information gaps were identified in our review. As mentioned for the outcomes above, the only recommended action is continued personal engagement relating to international course costs and career progression. Execution is effective, but the programme has not had a large enough number of international students to identify if best practices are in effect.

Figure 7. For most of our students becoming a pilot is the fulfillment of a lifelong dream. Whether from the North Island or overseas, learning in the Central Otago environment with its expansive landscapes, challenging weather, and varied airspaces remains a special treat with exceptional career advantages.

Outcome 12

Safety and appropriate supervision of international tertiary learners

Well-implemented, Effective

This outcome would be an essential and separate consideration in many tertiary environments, however the aviation training has intrinsic requirements. All inductions are carried out one-on-one with instructors, documented, and audited by -often redundant- compliance mechanisms for CAA and NZQA. All incoming learners, international or domestic, undertake a 3-day orientation programme, but receive further induction training throughout the two-year programme as they encounter new operations. All flight instruction is done one-on-one, of course. All classroom instruction is conducted via small group discussions with an instructor, there are no large-group lectures. Instructors (who meet monthly and maintain instructor logs of individual student progress) maintain constant situational awareness of each student's progress. These 'background' processes are further augmented by weekly cohort meetings where each small group (up to 7) meets with a flight instructor, reviews progress, plans the coming week, and any gaps are identified and dealt with.

Recommendations

With one-on-one instruction the norm at WHL, supervision and safety practices are solidly in place and no significant gaps have been identified.

Figure 8. Students meet with flight instructor Che' in an early-morning session to discuss the week's flights and flight-study progress reporting, a weekly event during term before the full day of courses, ground and air, take-off.