



Controller Positions and Ratings Policy

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Review:	14 October 2020
Authority:	Director Operations

WARNING

Information contained in this document is intended for flight simulation purposes and must not be used for any real world aviation use.

Table of Amendments

Version	Effective Date	Changes
N/A	28 August 2015	Policy redrafted incorporating many director's interpretations Removed currency requirements of ATC training staff
N/A	18 November 2015	Reformatted and renumbered for new website.
5	28 May 2017	Significant restructure and formatting changes
5.1	8 February 2018	Paragraph references removed and re-referenced to Sections and subsections.
5.2	14 October 2019	Audio for VATSIM implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restrictions on frequency use for top-down coverage added 3.2.2.6, 3.2.3.4, 3.2.4.7. - Added requirements for frequency selection and configuration for enroute controllers extending to adjacent sectors 3.3.3.1 a, b and c. - VATPAC sector diagram updated.

Preliminary

1.1 Purposes

The purposes of this policy are:

- a) to restrict control positions to competent controllers;
- b) to define the procedures for top-down coverage;
- c) to define the procedures for extended coverage;
- d) to allow for the reservation of control positions by certain VATPAC staff; and
- e) to define the requirements for the activation of non-standard control positions.

1.2 *Policy owner and review schedule*

1.2.1 This policy is owned by the Director Operations.

1.2.2 This policy shall be reviewed annually and the most recent review date shall be displayed on the VATPAC website.

1.3 *Definitions*

In this policy:

- a) available means that
 - 1) in relation to a person, that person is connected to the VATSIM Network; or
 - 2) in relation to a control position, a person is connected to the VATSIM Network under that control position;
- b) Board refers to the VATPAC Board of Directors;
- c) Director refers to the Director Operations;
- d) a local controller includes a VATNZ controller, in accordance with Section 2.3;
- e) non-standard position is defined in Section 3.1.2;
- f) normal sector is an en route sector other than an upper sector or oceanic sector;
- g) oceanic sector is defined in Section 3.1.5;
- h) the Pacific Oceanic Roster can be found at the Pacific Oceanic Partnership website;
- i) the procedural tower endorsement register is the list of controllers having attained the endorsement published on the VATPAC website;
- j) staff member is defined in Section 4.2.2;
- k) senior controller is defined in Section 4.2.3;
- l) standard position is defined in Section 3.1.1;
- m) upper sector is defined in Section 3.1.4;

- n) the visiting controller register is a list of approved visiting controllers published on the VATPAC website.

2 Minimum Competency of Controllers

2.1 Policy does not override VATSIM global policies

- 2.1.1 While this policy reiterates some of the requirements of the Code of Conduct and Global Ratings Policy, this policy does not override any VATSIM global policy. If the policy conflicts with a VATSIM global policy, this policy continues to operate to extent to which it does not conflict with VATSIM global policies.

2.2 Evidence of competency

- 2.2.1 A controller meets the requirement to hold an ATC rating if:
- a) the controller is a local controller—the CERT record for the controller indicates that the controller holds that ATC rating; or
 - b) the controller is a visiting controller—the visiting controller register indicates that the controller is permitted to exercise the privileges of that rating within VATPAC airspace.
- 2.2.2 A controller meets the requirement to hold a procedural tower endorsement if the controller's name is listed in the procedural tower endorsement register.
- 2.2.3 A controller meets the requirement to hold an oceanic endorsement if the controller's name is listed on the Pacific Oceanic Roster.

2.3 VATNZ controllers to be treated as local controllers

- 2.3.1 A controller whose CERT record indicates that his/her home division is VATSIM New Zealand shall be treated as a local controller for the purposes of this policy, except when prohibited by subsection 2.3.2, unless the prohibition is overturned by subsection 2.3.1.
- 2.3.2 Notwithstanding subsection 2.3.1, a VATNZ controller may be prohibited from controlling in VATPAC airspace, provided that the conditions in subsection 2.3.3 are met.
- 2.3.3 The VATPAC Division Director shall give notice to a VATNZ controller that they have been prohibited from controlling in VATPAC airspace. Such notification shall be copied to VATNZ Division Director and VATPAC Director Operations.
- 2.3.4 A controller who has been prohibited by subsection 2.3.3 may appeal such a notice to the Board who, by resolution, shall:
- a) overturn the notice, if an absolute majority is attained; or
 - b) uphold the notice, if an absolute majority is not attained.

2.4 **Minimum level of competency**

2.4.1 The minimum level of competency to be held by a controller prior to operating a control position shall be:

Type of Position	Rating	Endorsement
Clearance Delivery	S2	None
Surface Movement Control	S2	None
Tower (except Procedural)	S2	None
Procedural Tower	S2	Procedural Tower
Procedural Tower	S3	None
Approach	S3	None
en route (normal sector)	C1	None
en route (upper sector)	C1	None
en route (oceanic sector)	C1	Oceanic

2.4.2 A controller holding an S3 rating or higher is not required to hold a Procedural Tower endorsement to operate a Procedural Tower position but is nonetheless strongly encouraged to undertake such training.

2.5 **Exception for trainee controllers**

2.5.1 The Director ATC Training or his/her delegate may exempt a controller from the minimum competency requirements in Section 2.4 for training purposes. A controller relying on an exemption under this section must only do so in accordance with the explicit or implied conditions, purposes and times of that exemption.

2.5.2 Where an exemption issued under subsection 2.5.1 is the grant of a solo validation under the Global Ratings Policy, the details of the exemption shall be published on the VATPAC website.

3 Control Positions

3.1 Types of Positions

3.1.1 Standard positions

3.1.1.1 A control position is a standard position if it is listed on the VATPAC website.

3.1.2 Non-standard positions

3.1.2.1 A control position is a non-standard position if:

- a) it is not listed on the VATPAC website;
- b) approved description of its area of responsibility, frequency and login identifier are available; and
- c) the area of responsibility is within VATPAC airspace.

3.1.2.2 A controller must not operate a non-standard position, unless approved by a senior staff member or a senior controller.

3.1.3 Procedural Tower positions

3.1.3.1 A control position is a Procedural Tower position if it is listed on the VATPAC website as a Procedural Tower position.

3.1.4 Upper sector

3.1.4.1 An en route control position is an upper sector if it is listed in Schedule 1 and shown in Schedule 2

3.1.5 Oceanic sector

3.1.5.1 An en route control position is an oceanic sector if it is listed as an oceanic sector in the Oceanic Endorsement Syllabus.

3.2 Top Down Coverage

3.2.1 Supporting the top-down philosophy

- 3.2.1.1 A controller should endeavour to provide a service to the greatest number of pilots:
- a) if the controller holds an S2 rating, by operating a Tower position;
 - b) if the controller holds an S3 rating, by operating an Approach position;
 - c) if the controller holds a C1 or higher rating, by operating an en route position.
- 3.2.1.2 Certain circumstances may mean that it is more operationally advantageous for a controller to ignore this advice, including events and similar situations when concentrating ATC is better than spreading out.

3.2.2 Top-down coverage—Tower, Surface Movement Control, Clearance Delivery

- 3.2.2.1 If Clearance Delivery is not available, the controller responsible for Surface Movement Control shall assume the responsibility of Clearance Delivery.
- 3.2.2.2 If Surface Movement Control is not available, the controller responsible for Tower shall assume the responsibility of Surface Movement Control.
- 3.2.2.3 A controller shall not operate a Clearance Delivery position when either Surface Movement Control or Tower is unavailable.
- 3.2.2.4 A controller shall not operate a Surface Movement Control position when Tower is unavailable.
- 3.2.2.5 If there are multiple Surface Movement Control or Tower positions at a location, local Instructions shall indicate the local rules for top-down coverage.
- 3.2.2.6 A controller providing top-down coverage from either a Tower or Surface Movement Control position shall do so using only the primary frequency designated to their logged-in position. Use of multiple frequencies (other than an ATIS) is not permitted.

3.2.3 Top-down coverage—Approach

- 3.2.3.1 If Tower for the primary aerodrome under a terminal control area is unavailable, the controller of the Approach position shall assume responsibility of all of the aerodrome control functions at that aerodrome, provided traffic load permits.
- 3.2.3.2 If Tower for any other aerodrome under a terminal control area is unavailable, the controller of the Approach position may assume responsibility of all of the aerodrome control functions at that aerodrome.

- 3.2.3.3 If there are multiple Approach positions at a location, Local Instructions shall indicate the local rules for top-down coverage.
- 3.2.3.4 A controller providing top-down coverage from an Approach position shall do so using only the primary frequency designated to their logged-in position. Use of multiple frequencies (other than an ATIS) is not permitted.

3.2.4 Top-down coverage—en route

- 3.2.4.1 If the Approach position normally responsible for a terminal control area under or adjacent to a normal sector is unavailable:
- a) at Adelaide, Brisbane, Cairns, Darwin, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney and Townsville, the controller of that normal sector shall assume responsibility for the terminal control area, provided traffic load permits; or
 - b) at other locations, the controller of that normal sector may assume responsibility for the terminal control area.
- 3.2.4.2 If Tower for the primary aerodrome under a terminal control area assumed by the controller of a normal sector under subsection 3.2.4.1 is unavailable, that controller shall assume responsibility of all of the aerodrome control functions at that aerodrome, provided traffic load permits.
- 3.2.4.3 Subsection 3.2.4.2 is not intended to capture Gold Coast. Assumption of aerodrome control functions at Gold Coast is optional.
- 3.2.4.4 If Tower for any other aerodrome under a terminal control area assumed by the controller of a normal sector under subsection 3.2.4.1 is unavailable, that controller may assume responsibility of all of the aerodrome control functions at that aerodrome.
- 3.2.4.5 If the Procedural Tower position normally responsible for a terminal control area and aerodrome is unavailable and that terminal control area lies under a normal sector, the controller of that normal sector may assume responsibility for that terminal control area and all aerodrome control functions at that aerodrome.
- 3.2.4.6 If a terminal control area is located under or adjacent to multiple normal sectors, Local Instructions shall specify the local rules for top-down coverage.
- 3.2.4.7 A controller providing top-down coverage from an Enroute position, shall do so using only the primary frequency designated to the overlying sector. Use of additional aerodrome and/or TMA frequencies (other than an ATIS) for the purpose of top-down control is not permitted.

3.2.5 Down-up coverage

- 3.2.5.1 Down-up coverage is not permitted, except where permitted by subsections 3.2.5.3 and 3.2.5.4.
- 3.2.5.2 Without affecting the generality of subsection 3.2.5.1, the following rules apply:
- a) the controller of a Tower position may not assume responsibility for airspace normally under the responsibility of an Approach position; and
 - b) the controller of an Approach position may not assume responsibility for airspace normally under the responsibility of an en route position;
 - c) except when subsection 3.2.5.3 applies.
- 3.2.5.3 Despite subsections 3.2.5.1 and 3.2.5.2, this section does not affect the use of airspace releases.
- 3.2.5.4 Despite subsection 3.2.5.1, for the purposes of short-term, temporary controller relief:
- a) the controller a Surface Movement Control position may assume responsibility for Tower; and
 - b) the controller of a Clearance Delivery position may assume responsibility for Surface Movement Control and/or Tower.

3.3 Extended Coverage

3.3.1 Extended coverage - Tower, Surface Movement Control, Clearance Delivery

- 3.3.1.1 The controller of a Tower, Surface Movement Control or Clearance Delivery position may not extend to any other location. Rules for internal division of the aerodrome maneuvering area shall be specified in Local Instructions where necessary.

3.3.2 Extended coverage - Approach

- 3.3.2.1 The controller of an Approach position must assume responsibility for the entire terminal control area except when subsection 3.3.2.3 applies.
- 3.3.2.2 The controller of an Approach position must not extend to any other terminal control area.
- 3.3.2.3 Where multiple Approach positions are available:
- a) if the rules for assumption of terminal control area internal airspace divisions are specified in Local Instructions, controllers must follow those rules; or
 - b) if those rules do not exist, then assumption of internal airspace divisions shall be as agreed between the controllers.

3.3.3 Extended coverage – en route (normal) sectors

3.3.3.1 The controller of a normal sector may extend coverage to another normal sector (“second sector”) having either partially or fully overlapping lateral extents or sharing a common lateral boundary when that other normal sector is unavailable, except when subsection 3.3.3.4 applies. This airspace extension must cover the entire second sector. (See schedule 2)

- a) When providing extended coverage to an adjacent sector, a controller shall configure their client software to transmit and receive on the primary frequency of the assumed sector. Paragraph 3.2.4.7 applies.
- b) In addition, controllers shall utilise the “cross-coupling” feature of the Audio for VATSIM system to link all frequencies assumed by the controller.
- c) The enroute controller shall remain aware of sector boundaries and frequency ranges, instructing pilots to switch to the most appropriate frequency when leaving/entering adjacent sectors.

3.3.3.2 The controller of a normal sector must not extend his/her airspace except in accordance with subsection 3.3.3.1, unless Section 3.3.4 applies.

3.3.3.3 Top-down coverage rules apply to the total airspace for which a controller is responsible.

3.3.3.4 Where an upper sector is available, the controller of a normal sector may only extend his/her airspace if:

- a) doing so would not deprive the controller of an upper sector of any airspace; or
- b) he/she obtains the approval of the controller of the upper sector and doing so would not deprive the controller of the upper sector of more airspace than the high portion of a normal sector.

1) Example: (See Schedule 2)

If Melbourne Upper and Wollongong are online, the controller of Wollongong may extend to Mudgee, but must not extend to any normal sector in the Melbourne FIR. The controller of Wollongong may extend to Mudgee because doing so does not deprive the controller of Melbourne Upper of any airspace.

3.3.3.5 The high portion of a normal sector means that portion of a normal sector that is part of the airspace of an upper sector.

3.3.4 Extended coverage – en route (upper sectors)

3.3.4.1 Where a normal sector is available and has airspace that overlaps with that of the upper sector, the upper sector shall relinquish that airspace.

3.3.4.2 The controller of an upper sector may also relinquish the high portion of one normal sector to a controller of a normal sector, in addition to the requirements of subsection 3.3.4.1.

3.3.4.3 Refer also to Schedule 2, subsection 3.3.3.5 and subsection 3.3.3.6 for

further context and for the meaning of high portion of a normal sector.

3.3.4.4 Where an Approach position is available and its terminal control area is under or adjacent to the upper sector and, but for this subsection, an aircraft would be uncontrolled between the terminal control area and the upper sector, the controller of an upper sector shall extend his/her airspace downwards as required to provide services to that aircraft.

3.3.4.5 Except as provided by subsections 3.3.4.2 and 3.3.4.4, an upper sector must not extend its airspace.

3.3.5 Extended coverage – en route (oceanic sectors)

3.3.5.1 The controller of an oceanic sector must not extend his/her airspace, except when subsection 3.3.4.4 applies.

3.3.6 Airspace releases not affected

3.3.6.1 This section does not affect the use of airspace releases.

4 Authority of VATPAC Staff

4.1 Reservation of Positions

4.1.1 Positions reserved for events

4.1.1.1 The Director or the Director Events and Communications or delegate of either may reserve certain standard positions for the better running of events by publishing a notice of reserved positions in a conspicuous location.

1.1.1 4.1.1.2 A notice under subsection 4.1.1.1 shall contain:

- a) a statement noting that the notice relates to an event;
- b) the name of the event;
- c) a list of control positions that are reserved; and
- d) the time or times during which the control positions are reserved.

4.1.1.3 A controller must not operate a control position subject to a notice of reserved positions under subsection 4.1.1.1 without the approval of the Director or the Director Events and Communications or a delegate of either.

4.1.2 Positions reserved for special operations

4.1.2.1 The Director or their delegate may reserve certain standard positions for the better running of special operations by publishing a notice of reserved positions in a conspicuous location.

1.1.1 4.1.2.2 A notice under subsection 4.1.2.1 shall contain:

- a) a statement noting that the notice relates to a special operation;
- b) the name of the special operation;
- c) the names of participating organisations;
- d) a list of control positions that are reserved; and
- e) the time or times during which the control positions are reserved.

4.1.2.3 A controller must not operate a control position subject to a notice of reserved positions under subsection 4.1.2.1 without the approval of the Director or his/her delegate.

4.1.3 Positions reserved for ATC training activities

- 4.1.3.1 The Director ATC Training or his/her delegate may reserve certain positions for the purposes of ATC training by publishing a notice of reserved positions in a conspicuous location.
- 4.1.3.2 A notice under subsection 4.1.3.1 shall contain:
- a) a statement noting that the notice relates to ATC training activities;
 - b) a list of control positions that are reserved; and
 - c) the time or times during which the control positions are reserved.
- 4.1.3.3 A controller must not operate a control position subject to a notice of reserved positions under subsection 4.1.3.1 without the approval of the Director ATC Training or his/her delegate.

4.2 Activation of Non-Standard Positions

4.2.1 Who may activate non-standard positions?

- 4.2.1.1 Subject to the conditions in this division, a non-standard position may be activated by:
- a) a senior staff member; or
 - b) a senior controller.

4.2.2 Who is a senior staff member?

- 4.2.2. A person is a senior staff member if:
- a) they are entitled to log onto the VATSIM Network using a VATPACx style login identifier, and
 - b) they are listed as a director on the VATPAC website under the About Us, Board of Directors section
 - c) they are listed as senior staff on the VATPAC website under the About and Senior Staff section.

4.2.3 Who is a senior controller?

- 4.2.3.1 A person is a senior controller if they hold:
- a) a C3 rating; or
 - b) I3 rating or higher;
 - c) their CERT record indicates that his/her home division is VATPAC Australia Pacific.
- 4.2.3.2 Controllers holding an I1 rating are not senior controllers for the purposes of this policy.

4.2.4 Activation of non-standard positions for events, etc.

- 4.2.4.1 The Director, Director ATC Training or Director Events and Communications may activate non-standard positions for the better running of events, special operations or for the purpose of ATC training and may do so at their discretion.

4.2.5 Ad-hoc activation of non-standard positions by staff members

- 4.2.5.1 A staff member may activate a non-standard position, when, in that staff member's judgement, such an activation would provide for better enjoyment of the Network by a majority of affected members. In making such a judgement, the staff member is advised, but not required, to have consideration of the conditions in Section 4.2.6.

4.2.6 Ad-hoc activation of non-standard positions by senior controllers

- 4.2.6.1 In this section, genuine operational need means that traffic volume and complexity has become overwhelming and is compromising the quality of the service provided by the affected control positions.
- 4.2.6.2 Where a senior staff member is not available, a senior controller may activate a non-standard position, if and only if:
- a) non-standard positions are not activated in lieu or at the expense of standard positions;
 - b) a genuine operational need exists to activate the non-standard position;
 - c) the non-standard position is only active while that genuine operational need exists;
 - d) there is agreement from affected controllers;
 - e) the affected controllers are appropriately briefed on:
 - 1) the area of responsibility of the non-standard position;
 - 2) the frequency of the non-standard position;
 - 3) the correct login identifier of the non-standard position;
 - 4) any major coordination issues that arise from the use of the non-standard position;
- 4.2.6.2 the senior controller adequately supervises the use of the non-standard position or transfers that responsibility to another senior controller or staff member.

Schedule 1 - List of Upper Sectors

Item	Name of Position	Description
1	Melbourne Upper	Within the lateral limits of the Melbourne FIR, excluding the lateral limits of the Indian Oceanic sector, between FL245 to FL600
2	Brisbane Upper	Within the lateral limits of the Brisbane FIR, excluding the lateral limits of the Tasman Oceanic sector, between FL245 to FL600

Schedule 2 – VATPAC Sectors

