ATC TRAINING POLICY

Version 1.0

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Document Control

ATC Training Policy Version x.x – For Review		
Date	**Version**	**Description**
01/04/2017	0.1	Initial document.

Change Process

Any amendments to this document should be directed by email to the Director ATC Training & Standards (atc@vatpac.org).

Scope

This document outlines all aspects of how the VATPAC ATC Training Department and trainees undertake the ATC training program.

The rules for issuing VATSIM ATC Ratings are outlined in the VATSIM Global Ratings Policy. The VATSIM Global Ratings Policy lists the required competencies for each rating and a student is required to demonstrate competency in each of these before being granted their respective rating. All training is competency based and provides the core skills and background knowledge to enable a student to demonstrate competency for each rating.

Until a candidate has been granted an ATC Rating or Solo Endorsement, they are not authorised to control the corresponding position on the VATSIM Network unless under the direct supervision of an ATC Training Staff member.

Note: Procedures for awarding the rating of Senior Controller (C3) are outside the scope of this policy.

Referenced Documents

Title	Location
VATSIM Global Ratings Policy	https://vatsim.net
VATPAC Constitution	https://vatpac.org
VATSIM Region Transfer & Visiting Controller Policy	https://vatsim.net
VATPAC Controller Positions and Ratings Policy	https://vatpac.org

1   Training Process

1.1.1.1   The VATPAC ATC Training process starts with a series of prerequisites that must be completed prior to commencing the ratings theory exam and mentoring. The prerequisites for each rating (S2, S3 & C1) can be found at https://vatpac.org or https://academy.vatpac.org.

1.1.1.2   ATC Training is a four-phase process driven by the student:

a) Enrolment in the VATPAC ATC Training Academy and self-study.

b) Theory Assessment

c) Practical Mentoring

d) Practical Assessment

1.1.1.3   VATPAC does not offer an (S1) Tower Trainee rating. The training and assessment process shall be of efficient design to not unreasonably delay progression to the rating of (S2) Tower Controller.

1.1.1.4   At all times throughout the training process, information regarding students' performance and progress shall be treated with the utmost confidentiality. No information regarding student progress or performance may be shared outside the ATC Training department. Notwithstanding this, student performance may be deidentified and used by the training department to develop training tools and enhance controller performance in the community.

2   Theory Assessment

2.1.1.1   A trainee, having met the prerequisites for a rating, may request access to the theory exam by emailing training@vatpac.org.

2.1.1.2   The theory assessment consists of a series of questions which can include, short answer, long answer, numerical or multi-choice questions. Further details regarding the theory assessment can be found on the rating theory assessment page on the VATPAC ATC Academy website.

2.1.1.3   Once the trainee has successfully completed the theory assessment, they should review the training material on any question they answered incorrectly and send corrected answers to training@vatpac.org. On

completion of the theory assessment, trainees will wait for a mentor to be assigned and undertake practical mentoring.

3   Mentoring

3.1   *Purpose*

3.1.1.1   The purpose of mentoring is to:

a) Review and clarify any questions about the material covered in the corresponding ATC Academy course, including those areas requiring reassessment.

b) Provide trainees with an opportunity to become familiar with the practical aspects of what they have learnt in the theory course.

c) Prepare trainees to successfully attempt the practical assessment.

3.1.1.2   For S2, S3, C1 & Oceanic Endorsement trainees, a series of mentoring sessions must be completed before attempting the practical assessment.

3.1.1.3   For Procedural Endorsement trainees, mentoring is recommended.

3.1.1.4   Mentoring sessions will only be conducted if the trainee has completed the relevant theory assessment(s) with a passing grade.

3.1.1.5   If a trainee has existing knowledge and experience, Director ATC Training & Standards (VATPAC3) or their delegate may waive any requirement, except a theory and practical assessment.

3.1.1.6   Mentoring shall only be conducted by an authorised member of the VATPAC ATC Training department as defined in section 7 of this document.

3.1.1.7   Mentors will be provided with a checklist of items for each course that must be completed prior to submitting the trainee for practical assessment.

3.1.1.8   There is no requirement placed upon the number of mentoring sessions that must be completed, but the mentor should ensure that all of the elements on the mentoring checklist have been completed and that the trainee is suitably prepared to control on the network before submitting the student for practical assessment.

3.1.1.9   All practical mentoring sessions, aside from an over-the-shoulder (OTS) session for the purpose of issuing a solo endorsement, shall be conducted as simulated 'Sweatbox' scenarios unless instructed otherwise by VATPAC3 or their delegate.

3.1.1.10   Mentoring is complete when:

a) All items on the relevant mentoring checklist have been completed; and

b) The mentor is satisfied that the trainee is suitably prepared to control on the network; and

c) For TMA & ENR trainees seeking a solo endorsement, the mentor has conducted an OTS session for the purpose of issuing a solo endorsement.

3.1.1.11   The completed mentoring checklist, along with any comments, will be shared with the trainee by their mentor and will be added to the ATC Training record and retained by the ATC Training Department.

4   Solo Endorsement

4.1   Overview

4.1.1.1   As per section 4.5 of the VATSIM GRP, the purpose of a solo endorsement is to allow a trainee to develop confidence at a particular rating before attempting the practical assessment. It is not a substitute for the timely advancement of a trainee.

4.1.1.2   Solo endorsements are available for TMA (S3) Controller and Enroute (C1) Controller trainees only.

4.1.1.3   A solo endorsement is valid for an initial period of 30 days but may be renewed/extended up to a total of 90 days at the discretion of VATPAC3 or their delegate.

4.1.1.4   A solo endorsement will not be renewed/extended if a trainee has not effectively exercised the endorsement to progress their skills during the validity period.

4.1.1.5   The solo endorsement is valid until such time as it expires, or the trainee successfully undertakes the practical assessment and is granted their ATC rating. There is no minimum time that a trainee must hold the solo endorsement.

4.2   Approval Process

4.2.1.1   Upon completion of mentoring and an OTS session on the live network, and the ATC mentor is satisfied that the trainee is ready for the assessment, the trainee will be eligible for a solo endorsement.

4.2.1.2   VATPAC3, or their delegate, will add the trainee to the list of approved solo endorsees on the VATPAC website under 'authorisations'. This list will include the trainee's name & CID, the position on which they are approved, the start and end dates of the endorsement, and the mentor who approved the trainee's solo endorsement.

4.3   Exercising a Solo Endorsement

4.3.1.1   A trainee shall not exercise the privileges of their solo endorsement until their details appear on the list of approved solo endorsees.

4.3.1.2   The trainee must comply with all requirements set out by VATPAC at https://vatpac.org/controllers/authorisations/solo-endorsment/ and the VATSIM Global Ratings Policy.

4.3.1.3   When exercising a solo endorsement, trainees must:

a) Include in their controller info the message "Solo Endorsed" and a link to the list of approved solo endorsees in 4.3.1.2.

b) Control only the positions on which they are authorised and not provide extended services.

c) Not use the Audio for VATSIM Cross-Coupling Feature.

d) Not control during a VATPAC advertised event where the position on which they are authorised is listed an event related control position.

e) Not control within two hours before or after the VATPAC advertised event where the position on which they are authorised is listed as an event related control position.

f) Comply with all instructions from staff members of the VATPAC ATC Training Department and the VATPAC Board of Directors when logged onto the network under a solo endorsement.

4.3.1.4   Members of the ATC Training Team may, at any time, observe the solo endorsee, provide feedback and/or make recommendations regarding the continuation or termination of the solo endorsement.

4.4   Termination of a Solo Endorsement

4.4.1.1   VATPAC3 or their delegate may terminate a solo endorsement at any time, or on the advice of a member of the ATC Training Team.

4.4.1.2   Upon termination of a trainee's solo endorsement, their details shall be removed from the list of approved solo endorsees.

4.4.1.3   A solo endorsement shall be terminated when:

a) The trainee is assessed as competent in their practical assessment and their rating upgrade has been processed by VATSIM.

b) The period of validity for the endorsement has concluded.

c) The trainee is deemed to be not yet competent in their practical assessment with a recommendation from the instructor that the student cease the solo endorsement and undertake further mentoring.

d) In each case, the trainee's details shall be removed from the solo endorsement authorization list.

4.5   Over-The-Shoulder (OTS) – On Network Session

4.5.1.1   A trainee seeking a solo endorsement must complete an OTS session of no less than one (1) hour with a member of the ATC Training Department.

4.5.1.2   The mentor conducting the OTS with the trainee will log onto the network with any staff or OBS callsign.

4.5.1.3   A mentor conducting an OTS may control or open a non-standard sector for the purpose of ATC Training under the authority of VATPAC3 or their delegate.

4.6   Solo Endorsement Appeal Process

4.6.1.1   Should a trainee wish to dispute a decision regarding a solo endorsement, they shall follow the path of appeal listed below:

a) Raise any questions with their last assigned Mentor/Instructor.

b) Appeal to the Director ATC Training & Standards (VATPAC3).

c) If unsatisfied with the outcome of the above process, the trainee may make an Administrative Appeal to VATPAC Board of Directors (ref. VATPAC Constitution).

5   Practical Assessment

5.1.1.1   The purpose of the practical assessment is to practically evaluate the student's competency against the minimum requirements of the applicable rating. These requirements are set by VATSIM and everyone is assessed against the same criteria to ensure consistency and fairness in the assessment process.

5.1.1.2   VATPAC uses a competency-based system which means there is no 'pass or fail'. This means that trainees can make as many attempts at the practical assessment as they require, however repeated attempts may result in a different scenario being used for additional assessment.

5.1.1.3   Once an ATC Instructor is assigned, the instructor will then send the trainee details of the assessment and start coordinating a time and date to conduct the practical assessment. The ATC instructor will also include the 'Candidate Information Pack' which goes into further details of the practical assessment and information that the candidate might find useful prior to sitting the practical assessment.

5.1.1.4   An ATC Instructor is anyone within the ATC Training Department who holds an I1 or I3 rating. Anyone who does not hold this rating within the VATPAC Training Department (including mentors) is not authorised to conduct practical assessments.

5.2   Appeal Process

5.2.1.1   Should a trainee feel that the practical assessment is conducted unfairly, or the trainee's outcome was in any way incorrect or unfair, they can appeal the assessment outcome. Trainees wishing to file an appeal must outline why they believe the practical assessment was conducted unfairly, or the trainee's outcome was in any way incorrect. The following pathway for appeal shall be followed:

   a) Raise the appeal with Manager ATC Training & Assessment who may discuss the appeal with the Director ATC Training & Standards and decide the outcome of the appeal.

   b) If the appellant is unsatisfied with the above outcome, they may make an Administrative appeal to the VATPAC Board (ref. VATPAC Constitution).

6   Transfer & Visiting Controllers

6.1   Overview

6.1.1.1   This section applies to members of other divisions applying for Region Transfer or Visiting Controller status within VATPAC.

6.1.1.2   A controller from a division other than VATPAC or VATNZ whose rating was not awarded by VATPAC or VATNZ shall be required to complete and pass the highest relevant theory assessment and be assessed as competent in a practical check ride conducted by a VATPAC Mentor or Instructor.

   a) A C1 controller will only be required to pass the ENR theory assessment, not the TWR or TMA theory assessments.

   b) A S3 controller will only be required to pass the TMA theory assessment, not the TWR theory assessment.

   c) A S2 controller will only be required to pass only the TWR theory assessment, although must also complete the VATPAC Procedural Tower course to control at a nominated Procedural Tower.

   d) All practical check rides can be conducted as OTS sessions however sweatbox may be used at the instructor or mentor's discretion.

6.1.1.3   Once a controller has fulfilled these requirements, they shall have the ability to control within VATPAC's airspace in accordance with the VATSIM Visiting Controller Policy and VATPAC Controller Positions and Ratings Policy.

6.1.1.4   For controllers whose home division is not VATPAC, their details will be added to the Visiting Controllers roster on the VATPAC website.

6.1.1.5   If a transfer or visiting controller applicant has previously been awarded a rating by VATPAC, the requirements for a check ride for that rating may be waived at the discretion of VATPAC3 or their delegate. For example:

a) A TMA controller who transfers to another division, may apply for visiting controller status up to TMA Controller without undertaking a check ride.

b) A visiting controller who having already been approved to control within VATPAC Airspace subsequently obtains a higher rating from another division, the new rating shall be subject to a competency check for the purposes of visiting controller privileges.

c) A transfer or visiting controller who requests visiting controller status at a higher rating than that previously granted by VATPAC, shall not be permitted to control in VATPAC airspace until such time as a competency check at their highest rating is conducted.

6.2   Obligation

6.2.1.1   A visiting or transfer controller must employ correct VATPAC phraseology and follow local procedures as set out in the MATS and Local Instructions.

6.2.1.2   The Director ATC Training & Standards and VATPAC Board reserve the right to terminate a visiting controller's status if they believe correct procedures and lapses in training are not being followed by the controller and that controller is in breach of VATSIM Code of Conduct C3.

6.2.1.3   The controller is expected to continually update themselves with VATPAC local instructions and procedures changes.

6.2.1.4   A visiting and transfer controller must meet all the requirements set out by VATSIM under the Transfer and Visiting Controller Policy.

6.3   Certification Process

6.3.1.1   Once the controller has completed the theory assessment, they will be provided with practical training by the ATC Training Department.

6.3.1.2   During practical training, the trainee will be trained on VATPAC procedures and phraseology as well as local controller client procedures.

6.3.1.3   Upon completion of practical mentoring, and the ATC Mentor or Instructor is satisfied that the trainee is competent to control in VATPAC airspace, the trainee will be eligible for visiting controller status.

6.3.1.4   Transfer controllers and visiting controllers do not need to undergo the practical assessment with an instructor if the controller is deemed competent prior to this.

6.3.1.5   VATPAC3, or their delegate, will add visiting controllers to the list of approved visiting controllers on the VATPAC website under 'authorisations'. This list will include the name & CID of the controller.

6.3.1.6   Visiting Controllers must not exercise their rights to control in VATPAC until their name and CID are clearly shown on the VATPAC visiting controller list on the VATPAC website.

7   Training Staff

7.1   Overview

7.1.1.1   Staff within the ATC Training Team are appointed by Director ATC Training & Standards. Staff of the ATC Training Team includes:

a) Manager ATC Training & Assessment

b) Manager ATC Standards

c) Instructor and Senior Instructor

d) Mentor

7.1.1.2   All staff are required to contribute to the ATC Training process, adhere to this policy and conduct their business in accordance with their respective position description and VATPAC Staff Expectations Policy.

7.1.1.3   The structure outlined in 7.1.1.1 may be varied by the Director ATC Training & Standards at his/her discretion with update to this policy at the next available review.

7.2   Internal Training

7.2.1.1   All ATC Training Staff are subjected to training and approval for the various aspects of their role.

7.2.1.2   A Mentor/Instructor is only authorised to conduct mentoring or assessment for ratings for which they are approved.

7.2.1.3   A Mentor/Instructor in training is authorised to conduct mentoring or assessment under the direct supervision of an appropriately rated Instructor or Mentor.

8   Appendix A

8.1   Theory Assessment Pre-Requisites

8.1.1   Tower Controller (S2)

8.1.1.1   To be eligible to undertake the Tower Controller Theory Examination for a S2 rating the trainee must meet the following criteria:

a) Have a minimum of 50 hours total on-line as a Pilot/Observer; and

b) Have a minimum of 20 hours online meaningfully observing ATC; and

c) Have effectively studied the Tower Controller course available at the VATPAC ATC Academy.

Note: The Training Administrator will assess whether the candidate has effectively observed ATC and has effectively studied the theory material prior to issuing the exam.

8.1.2   TMA Controller (S3)

8.1.2.1   To be eligible to undertake the TMA Controller Theory Examination for a S3 rating the trainee must meet the following criteria:

a) Not already hold a TMA Rating; and

b) Hold a Tower Rating with a minimum of 50 hours controller a TWR position across a minimum period of 1 month; and

c) Have controller TWR positions across a variety (at least 3) different aerodromes; and

d) Have completed effective study of all sections of the TMA Controller course available at the VATPAC ATC Academy.

Note: The Training Administrator will assess whether the candidate has the required experience at an S2 level and has effectively studied the theory material prior to issuing the exam.

8.1.3   Enroute Controller (C1)

8.1.3.1   To be eligible to undertake the Enroute Controller Theory Examination for a C1 rating the trainee must meet the following criteria:

a) Hold a TMA Rating; and

b) Have 50 hours logged as a TMA controller over a period of at least 1 month; and

c) Have completed effective study of the Enroute Controller course available at the VATPAC ATC Academy.

8.1.3.2   The TMA controller should endeavour to log "meaningful" TMA hours (i.e. At times and places where traffic is appropriate, and at a variety of locations).

Note: The Training Administrator will assess whether the candidate has the required experience at an S3 level and has effectively studied the theory material prior to issuing the exam.

8.1.4   Oceanic Controller Endorsement

8.1.4.1   The Oceanic Controller Endorsement allows a controller to operate an oceanic control position under the VATSIM Pacific Oceanic Agreement only.

8.1.4.2   To be eligible to undertake the Oceanic Controller Theory Examination the trainee must meet the following criteria:

   a) Hold an Enroute (C1) Rating; and

   b) Have at least 125 hours of active ATC (not including solo endorsement) with at least 25 hours in an enroute position.

   c) Be a member of VATPAC or visiting controller from a division other than those signatories of the VATSIM Pacific Oceanic Agreement. Members of other divisions (VATNZ or VATUSA) wishing to obtain an Oceanic Rating should do so via their home division.

8.1.4.3   Recognition of prior knowledge may be given at the discretion of VATPAC3 or their delegate.