



Training Policies and Procedures - CPS-002

Version 1.05

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1. Training Program

1.1. Training Responsibilities

- 1.1.1. Responsibilities of the Training Administrator, Air Traffic Manager, and Deputy Air Traffic Manager in regards to the Training Program are outlined in CPS-001 under “Staff Organization”.
- 1.1.2. Responsibilities of the Staff Instructors and Mentors in regards to the Training Program are outlined in Section 4 of this Central Policy Statement.

1.2. Program Elements

- 1.2.1. The Training Syllabus must be used to guide the training progression of a student. The Training Syllabus lists, in order, what facilities a student will train at, and what lessons, CBT's, exams, and PV or OTS can be expected to earn each rating and/or certification. A syllabus flow chart is included in Attachment 1 of this CPS.
- 1.2.2. VATUSA CBT Training Materials will be used to gain basic knowledge of General ATC, Clearance Delivery, Ground Control, Tower (Local) Control, Approach/Departure, and Center (Enroute) control concepts and methods. This is located [here \(under ZAE\)](#).
- 1.2.3. vZOA CBT Courses will be used to amplify the VATUSA materials, and provide both in-depth, and applied usage of the general concepts and specific major facility information. An emphasis on phraseology and applying ATC methods to actual situations will be given via this element. This material will consist of tutorials or “how-to's” organized in a syllabus fashion to match the needs of students as they progress in VATSIM Global Ratings and local endorsements. The material will include graphics and links/references to both virtual and real-world documentation as needed.
- 1.2.4. vZOA Web Site Resources form the core of knowledge applicable locally to vZOA ARTCC and must be understood in stages as controllers progress through the training program. These resources include:
 - 1.2.4.1. Standard Operating Procedures
 - 1.2.4.2. Letters of Agreement
 - 1.2.4.3. Central Policy Statements
 - 1.2.4.4. Navigation, airspace, and facility charts and tables
 - 1.2.4.5. Self-study of the website training resources is the primary method for gaining knowledge and will be expected of the student by the training staff.

1.3. Training Sessions

- 1.3.1. Observer Sessions are conducted when the student logs into the network as an observer for the purposes of watching a rated controller work a position. This can be highly useful for gaining knowledge.
- 1.3.2. Training Sessions and Self-Monitored Training (SMT) are the primary methods for gaining experience. Students should spend a significant amount of time reviewing the training documents, so that all time allotted with an instructor or mentor is used efficiently and wisely.
- 1.3.3. Training Sessions are conducted by Mentors or Instructors with student controllers of all grades. The Mentor/Instructor should prepare a list of feedback items and review these at the end of the session.
 - 1.3.3.1. To arrange a training session a student may post their training availability on the vZOA website for a mentor or instructor to book. Alternatively, if a mentor or instructor posts their availability a student may book a slot with them.

- 1.3.3.2. The Instructor or mentor may choose to conduct the training session on the live network. The following rules then apply:
 - 1.3.3.2.1. An Instructor will use the “I” modified in their callsign. A Mentor will use the “M” modified in their callsign. The Student will use the “S” modified in their callsign.
 - 1.3.3.2.2. The Instructor/Mentor is responsible to ensure the student adheres to all SOPs and practices. The student will be assumed to be the operational controller of the position by adjacent facilities, unless they are explicitly informed otherwise.
- 1.3.3.3. The instructor or mentor may choose to conduct the Training Session using “Sweatbox”, which is a dedicated training server provided by VATSIM. The instructor/mentor will teach the student how to connect to Sweatbox if their session is going to be conducted on that server.
- 1.3.3.4. Instructors “monitoring” students from a higher up position (i.e. Approach or Center) is not a Training Session and is a discouraged method of teaching. (Students with SMT may be monitored.)
- 1.3.3.5. Instructors/mentors and their students may use the training rooms on the ZOA Discord server to conduct their Training Sessions. These rooms are setup to prevent unwanted visitors from interrupting the session.
- 1.3.3.6. vZOA trains to competency. The teaching plan for a rating generally has several modules which guide training by building knowledge, skills, and abilities step-by-step. A module is not the same as a teaching session.
 - 1.3.3.6.1. Training to competency means that lessons are repeated until the goals of a module are reliably met by the student.
- 1.4. Self Monitored Training
 - 1.4.1. Self-Monitored Training (SMT) is when a controller is authorized by a mentor/instructor to work without supervision as outlined and restricted by policy, to practice and obtain experience in a particular position.
 - 1.4.1.1. SMT that allows the student to work a position higher than their VATSIM rating requires a solo certificate to be entered in the VATUSA website by an Instructor.
 - 1.4.1.2. SMT that allows a student to work a major position may be granted by a mentor in accordance with the criteria in the approved progression.
 - 1.4.2. Certain areas of the ARTCC will be allocated by policy for use in self-monitored training. Self-monitored training may be conducted by any student granted an SMT rating by an instructor or mentor, at any time except during official (scheduled) ZOA events.
 - 1.4.3. Controllers who are controlling a position during a granted SMT period must use the “S” callsign modifier in their callsign at all times. (Ex: SFO_S_TWR).
 - 1.4.4. Self-Monitored Training is restricted to 30 day intervals and will expire at the end of the 30 day period. At the end of the allotted 30 days the student must either have passed the applicable PV or OTS or complete a training session to renew the SMT for another 30 days.
 - 1.4.5. SMT authorization may be revoked by the Instructor or Mentor who granted the SMT authorization, by the Air Traffic Manager, or by the Training Administrator if there are credible concerns that the student requires further training to meet the standards for granting/continuing SMT. Such concerns shall be written in a training note.
 - 1.4.6. Students who go inactive according to CPS-001 under “Roster Removal Policy” will have their SMT revoked. Should a student return to active status they will need to perform a check out with a mentor or instructor to regain SMT.

1.5. Exams and Testing

- 1.5.1. Written Exams, provided by both VATUSA and vZOA ARTCC will be used to verify knowledge for the assignment of promotions in VATSIM Ratings or facility and equipment ratings (Local endorsements).
- 1.5.2. Performance Verification Assessments (PV) will be used to in addition to written exams in order to verify competency and gain facility ratings, or to perform a re-currency check if needed. PV Exams may be conducted on either Sweatbox or the Live Network with a mentor or an Instructor.
- 1.5.3. Over-The-Shoulder (OTS) will be used in addition to written exams in order to verify competency and gain VATSIM controller ratings as outlined in the GRP V2. OTS Exams shall only be conducted by Instructors and is limited to Oakland Tower (S2), NORCAL Area E - CA (S3), and Oakland Center (C1), all other positions will fall under a PV Exam.

1.6. Transferring and Visiting Controllers

- 1.6.1. Any controller that visits or transfers to vZOA with an S1 rating shall not have controlling privileges until they have completed all applicable CBT's and/or required exams, including written exams and practical GRP competency checks administered by a vZOA Mentor or Instructor, and it has been verified they were granted, at minimum, minor controlling privileges at the facility that promoted the controller to S1.
- 1.6.2. Any controller that visits or transfers to vZOA with an S2 rating or above shall not have controlling privileges until they have completed all applicable CBT's, and/or required exams, including written exams and practical GRP competency checks administered by a vZOA Instructor.
- 1.6.3. A controller that visits or transfers to vZOA with a C1 rating or above is required to conduct a separate C1 GRP Competency check in addition to the requirements listed in 1.6.2. Upon successful completion of the GRP Competency check the controller may work OAK_CTR only when NCT_APP is staffed by a certified controller.

2. **Accelerated Training**

2.1. General

- 2.1.1. This policy only applies to controllers holding an S2 rating or above and can only be administered by a member of the ZOA Staff with an Instructor rating. Special Exceptions/Authorization outside this policy may be granted on a case-by-case basis with Air Traffic Manager (ATM) or Training Administrator (TA) approval only.
- 2.1.2. All facility written exams and/or CBT's, up to the prior highest held certification, will have to be taken before the respective performance verification validation, unless the controller is a returning ZOA controller who has returned within 12 months since leaving/manning a position within ZOA.
- 2.1.3. In the case of Visiting Controllers – the visiting controller will be administered all facility written exams and/or CBT's up to the highest level VATSIM GRP would allow at the time of becoming a visitor. (Example, a C1 Visiting controller would be assigned Orientation, SFO GND/TWR, NorCal Approach, and Center written exams at the same time).
- 2.1.4. Real world pilots and controllers may have lessons omitted from the syllabus at the instructor's discretion in order to maximize efficiency. Lesson omitted must be noted in the student's training notes and require Training Administrator approval.
 - 2.1.4.1. Further consideration is required for real world pilots and controllers who fail a PV or OTS due to syllabus lesson omission. Re-training thoroughly should always be a first priority in this situation.

2.2. Accelerated SFO ATCT Certification

- 2.2.1. In order to conduct accelerated San Francisco ATCT training a student must meet the following requirements:
 - 2.2.1.1. S2 rating or higher and previously certified for major tower/local position;
 - 2.2.1.2. Completion of all SFO ATCT exams and/or CBT courses.
- 2.2.2. A combined performance verification may be administered on SFO_TWR to acquire both the GND and TWR major facility certification to any controller with a S2 rating or above, at the KSFO airport (May be completed on live VATSIM network or Sweatbox Server). Controller must perform functions of DEL, GND and TWR all at same time.
- 2.2.3. If the controller does not satisfy requirements set forth in the performance verification requirements for GND and TWR as outlined in the vZOA Major LC grading rubric, the normal training progression shall be followed.

2.3. Accelerated NORCAL Certification

- 2.3.1. In order to conduct accelerated training on NORCAL Combined and skip the area by area training a student must meet the following requirements:
 - 2.3.1.1. S3 rating or higher and previously certified for a major TRACON position;
 - 2.3.1.2. Completion of all NORCAL exams and/or CBT courses.
 - 2.3.1.3. Completion of SFO ATCT Certification prior to starting NCT training.
 - 2.3.1.4. Approval from the Training Administrator or Air Traffic Manager
- 2.3.2. A minimum 120 minute/ 2 hour training session will be conducted covering all NCT procedures on sweatbox.
- 2.3.3. A performance verification may be administered on NCT_APP on the live VATSIM network or sweatbox for NORCAL Combined Certification if the requirements of 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 are satisfied.
- 2.3.4. If the controller does not satisfy requirements set forth in the performance verification rubric for NORCAL Combined, the Instructor may choose to grant SMT on NCT_APP, with a mandatory 10 hrs required on SMT before another re-certification attempt is made. The controller may request, or Instructor may require, remedial training, in which case, the SMT will be delayed until such training is completed.
- 2.3.5. If the second re-certification attempt is failed, the student shall go through and accelerated certification on each NCT Area individually. The student may be given a 5 hr SMT period or a full certification on the Area being trained at the discretion of the instructor.

3. **Evaluation Standards**

3.1. Training Staff Duties

- 3.1.1. The Instructors are responsible for administering PV and OTS evaluations and GRP Competency Checks. Mentors may be delegated responsibility for administering PV evaluations.
- 3.1.2. Prior to taking a PV or OTS evaluation, students enrolled in the ZOA Training Program must:
 - 3.1.2.1. Have satisfactorily completed all items set forth in the Syllabus through PV/OTS preparation.
 - 3.1.2.2. have a recommendation for the PV/OTS in their training notes. A request from a student for a PV or OTS will not be granted unless the student currently meets standards for the rating certification sought. Students will NOT be set up for an automatic failure due to controlling deficiencies.

- 3.1.3. The instructor/mentor shall use the published VATUSA and/or vZOA test standards to determine pass/fail results during a PV or OTS.
- 3.1.4. Any result from a PV or OTS shall be recorded using the appropriate online form for record keeping purposes and review from the Training Administrator and/or VATUSA.
 - 3.1.4.1. Rubrics shall be saved using the naming convention listed at the bottom of the rubric.
 - 3.1.4.2. Any standard marked as Unsatisfactory or as Commendable shall have an explanation for the reason(s) in the comments section of the form.
- 3.1.5. A student who has failed a PV or OTS shall have further training before being recommended for a second exam.
- 3.1.6. An instructor/mentor who assessed a “fail” result shall provide a detailed description via the training note so that any training conducted after this event is consistent and productive in preparing the student.
- 3.1.7. A successful result will be relayed appropriately to the Training Administrator. The instructor/mentor must ensure that the controller’s controlling privileges are updated on the crew roster. If a change in controller rating is the result, the Instructor must record the controller’s promotion on the VATUSA website.

3.2. Evaluation Standards

- 3.2.1. The PV or OTS session is conducted so that specific items are covered according to the rating or certification sought. These items are found online under [ATC Training -> Downloads](#)
- 3.2.2. Both a PV and an OTS are graded via a grading rubric. All OTS exams will use a grading rubric provided by VATUSA, and all PV exams will use a grading rubric provided by vZOA.
 - 3.2.2.1. All PV exams will be graded as satisfactory or unsatisfactory and will have no percentage scores per VATUSA policy.
 - 3.2.2.2. A PV exam receiving an “unsatisfactory” mark will result in a failed PV.
 - 3.2.2.3. Completed PV exams must be uploaded in the student’s training note on the vZOA website prior to updating controller certifications.
 - 3.2.2.4. Completed OTS exams must be uploaded in the student’s training note on the vZOA website prior to updating the VATUSA controller certifications and the vZOA controller certifications. These exams are subject to review by VATUSA training staff on request.
- 3.2.3. If, for whatever reason, the instructor/mentor is unable to complete the PV or OTS an “incomplete” must be recorded in the student training notes. An incomplete will not require any additional training or recommendations and the exam shall be rescheduled.
- 3.2.4. The instructor/mentor shall, in addition to reporting the result of a PV or OTS, keep records of the PV or OTS session so that a meaningful debrief can be conducted. Applicable references to SOP’s, LOA’s, CPS’, and FAA Order 7110.65 are encouraged for the student’s benefit.

4. **Training Staff Program**

4.1. Mentor Requirements

- 4.1.1. The following is required to become an eligible mentor
 - 4.1.1.1. S2 rating with Major LC Endorsement
 - 4.1.1.2. No major disciplinary action on your VATSIM record
 - 4.1.1.3. Current active member of ZOA

- 4.1.1.4. Strong dedication to helping new students learn the ropes
- 4.1.1.5. Have at a minimum 2 hours per month to dedicate to training students
- 4.1.2. The listed requirements may be waived by the Air Traffic Manager or Training Administrator when deemed necessary.

4.2. Mentor Promotion

- 4.2.1. Mentors will be appointed by the Training Administrator.
- 4.2.2. The following path will be taken to gain the mentor rating:
 - 4.2.2.1. Controllers who are interested in becoming mentors may be provisionally made part of the training team by the Training Administrator as Remote Pilot Operators (RPO).
 - 4.2.2.1.1. RPO's will be trained by the TA, an Instructor, or a Mentor on the usage of ASE, TWRTrainer, and Euroscope (if applicable), the training progression for S1 and S2, as well as core training techniques.
 - 4.2.2.1.2. RPO's may audit training sessions with the concurrence of the instructor/mentor who is conducting the session.
 - 4.2.2.1.3. RPO's may, as assigned by the instructor/mentor who is conducting the session, control aircraft during the training sessions, and/or may simulate pilot communications.
 - 4.2.2.1.4. RPO's may, as assigned by the instructor/mentor, provide feedback and teaching during the session.
 - 4.2.2.1.5. RPO's may participate in assignments to create, review, and develop training support materials.
 - 4.2.2.1.6. RPO's shall keep a record of the experience auditing or assisting training sessions, including the date, time spent, level of instruction, mentor or instructor name, and student name and rating.
 - 4.2.2.1.7. At least two mentors/instructors with direct experience of the RPO's teaching skills may nominate the RPO for promotion to mentor. The RPO's record of sessions shall accompany the nomination.
 - 4.2.2.2. The Training Administrator has discretion regarding the appointment of mentors and regarding the mentor's training privileges. A controller with prior vZOA mentor appointment or instructor appointment may request appointment as a mentor without being an RPO.
 - 4.2.2.3. Mentors are initially appointed to a 30 day probationary period. During this period the Training Administrator or appointed Instructor may collect feedback from students, RPO's, and observe training sessions which will be used to further develop the mentor as a member of the training staff.

- 4.2.2.4. At the end of the probationary period, the mentor may be granted full mentorship status.
- 4.2.2.5. Mentor appointments shall specify the mentor's training privileges.
 - 4.2.2.5.1. Privileges shall specify the mentor's which parts of the training syllabus may be trained.
 - 4.2.2.5.2. Privileges shall specify any other permissions or restrictions considered appropriate by the Training Administrator.
- 4.2.2.6. When the mentor gains a new certification or feels they are ready to advance their training permissions, they may request a promotion from the Training Administrator. The above steps may be repeated if deemed necessary.
- 4.2.3. The above progression may be waiver or modified if deemed appropriate by the Training Administrator.
- 4.3. Mentor Responsibilities
 - 4.3.1. Mentors are restricted to instruct only in those areas of knowledge required by their current grade and ratings.
 - 4.3.2. The primary instruction method for mentors should be one on one instruction sessions, either on Sweatbox or on the live VATSIM servers.
 - 4.3.3. Mentors are to utilize both the VATUSA Training Material and vZOA resources to ensure complete and accurate training.
 - 4.3.4. Mentors are to use published testing standards when conducting a PV Exam to ensure fair grading of the assessment.
 - 4.3.5. At the end of each training session mentors are required to submit a thorough training note within 24 hours (immediate submission is preferred) detailing the events of the training session and any certs, ratings, exams, or SMT assigned.
 - 4.3.6. Mentors are required to follow the published training progression and syllabus at all times.
 - 4.3.7. Mentors are required to dedicate no less than 2 hours to training per month, unless otherwise waived by the Training Administrator or Air Traffic Manager.
- 4.4. Mentor Limitations
 - 4.4.1. Mentors may only train up to a level determined by the Training Administrator.
 - 4.4.2. Mentors may not perform any OTS Exams or Exams that provide a student with a VATSIM Controller rating change.
 - 4.4.3. Mentors may be removed from the Training Staff at the discretion of the Air Traffic Manager or the Training Administrator for any reasonable cause, including but not limited to resignation, inactivity in training, violation of VATSIM CoC, or violation of vZOA Policies and Procedures.
- 4.5. Instructor Requirements
 - 4.5.1. Instructors must meet the qualifications as set forth in VATUSA Notice 3120.311
- 4.6. Instructor Promotion
 - 4.6.1. Instructors will be nominated by the Training Administrator to VATUSA in conjunction with VATUSA JO 3120.311
 - 4.6.2. If the new Instructor was not previously a vZOA mentor, they will be trained as outlined in 4.2.2.1

4.7. Instructor Responsibilities

- 4.7.1. Instructors may train students on any vZOA position.
- 4.7.2. The primary instruction method for instructors should be one on one instruction sessions, either on Sweatbox or on the live VATSIM servers.
- 4.7.3. Instructors are to utilize both the VATUSA Training Material and vZOA resources to ensure complete and accurate training.
- 4.7.4. Instructors are to use published testing standards when conducting a PV or OTS Exam to ensure fair grading of the assessment.
- 4.7.5. At the end of each training session Instructors are required to submit a thorough training note within 24 hours (immediate submission is preferred) detailing the events of the training session and any certs, ratings, exams, or SMT assigned.
- 4.7.6. Instructors are required to follow the published training progression and syllabus at all times.
- 4.7.7. Instructors are required to dedicate no less than 3 hours to training per month, unless otherwise waived by the Training Administrator or Air Traffic Manager.

4.8. Instructor Limitations

- 4.8.1. Instructors may be removed from the Training Staff by resignation, for inactivity, if found violating VATSIM CoC, or if found violating vZOA Policies and Procedures.

Attachment 1. Training Syllabus Flow Chart

