OAKLAND ARTCC

Training Policies and Procedures - CPS-002

Version 1.1

Effective 09/01/2023

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 3 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. The overall training flow can be found in Attachment 1 of this document and the detailed training syllabus can be found on the website.

         1.2.1.1.   Modules within the training syllabus can be combined when authorized in writing within the progression documents. The intent is to allow well prepared students to be able to progress through more than one module in a single session.

            1.2.1.1.1.   Some modules are designated standalone and cannot be combined with any other modules during a single session. The intent is that at least one dedicated session is spent covering the standalone module - small portions of the content can be covered if time permits during sessions targeting other modules.

      1.2.2.   VATUSA Academy 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 in the [VATUSA Academy](#).

      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 Website 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.

1.3.3.2. The Instructor or mentor may choose to conduct the training session on the live network. Live network sessions shall not be conducted during events and can only be utilized if the traffic volume and complexity satisfy the teaching goals of a training progression module. The following rules then apply:

1.3.3.2.1. The instructor or mentor will use the "instructor" designation when logging into a position. The student will use the "student" designation when logging into a position.

1.3.3.2.1.1. When using a legacy client (e.g. VRC, vSTARS, vERAM), this is achieved by adding an "I", "M", or "S" (for instructor, mentor, or student, respectively) modifier in the callsign (e.g. SFO_S_TWR)

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 will generally conduct the Training Session using "Sweatbox", which are dedicated training servers 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 or adjacent 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 vZOA Discord server to conduct their Training Sessions. These rooms are set up 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, though the content of a module is typically able to be covered within one 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 an S1 rated student to work a tower (local) control position may be granted in accordance with the criteria in the approved progression.

1.4.1.2. SMT that allows an S2/S3 rated student to work an approach/center position, respectively, may be granted in accordance with the criteria in the approved progression and additionally requires a solo certificate to be entered in the VATUSA website by an Instructor.

    1.4.1.3. SMT that allows a student to work a major position may be granted in accordance with the criteria in the approved progression.

  1.4.2. Any SMT authorizations must be documented in the training note as well as on the website roster.

  1.4.3. Only certain positions within the ARTCC will be allocated for use in self monitored training.

  1.4.4. Self-monitored training may not be conducted during official/scheduled vZOA events or tier 1 support events. Exceptions to this policy must be approved in writing by the Training Administrator on a case-by-case basis.

  1.4.5. Controllers who are controlling a position during a granted SMT period must use the "student" designation when logging into a position.

    1.4.5.1. When using a legacy client (e.g. VRC, vSTARS, vERAM), this is achieved by adding an "S" modifier in the callsign (e.g. SFO_S_TWR)

  1.4.6. Self-Monitored Training is restricted to a maximum of three 30 day intervals and will expire at the end of each 30 day period. At the end of each allotted 30 days the student must either have passed the applicable PV or OTS or completed a training session to renew the SMT for another 30 days. If a student requires a subsequent SMT renewal after the third interval, this must be approved by the training administrator.

  1.4.7. 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 documented in writing by the training administrator.

  1.4.8. 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 be subject to section 1.7 of this policy.

1.5. Exams,Testing, and Certification

  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. The Minor Delivery/Ground Evaluation will be used in addition to written exams in order to verify competency for minor delivery/ground positions. This evaluation may be conducted by an instructor or an authorized mentor.

  1.5.3. Position Verification Assessments (PV) will be used in addition to written exams in order to document competency for a major certification. These are not separate examination sessions, but rather a process to document the student completing the requirements of a major position's training progression and gaining the certification.

  1.5.4. 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. OTS Exams shall only be conducted by Instructors and are limited to rating upgrades to the S2, S3, and C1 ratings. OTS exams must be conducted on the positions specified in the training progression.

  1.5.5. Items covered under sections 1.5.2, 1.5.3, and 1.5.4 of this policy must generally be conducted on the "Sweatbox" server. There are rare circumstances where live network traffic is sufficient to appropriately verify the required competencies, and only in these situations are these sessions authorized.

    1.5.5.1. Exceptions: C1 OTS, NCT Combined PV

1.5.6. A GRP practical competency check is a procedure reserved for validating rating competency specifically for transferring and visiting controllers, and is administered in accordance with section 1.6

1.6. Transferring and Visiting Controllers
   1.6.1. Any visiting or transferring controller with an S1 rating will gain minor facility controlling privileges after the following is complete:
      1.6.1.1. vZOA Staff have verified that the controller previously held at least minor controlling privileges at their previous facility
      1.6.1.2. Any applicable CBTs or exams, as a portion of the competency check authorized by the VATSIM Transfer and Visiting Controller policy
   1.6.2. Any visiting or transferring controller with an S2 or above will gain minor facility controlling privileges after the following is complete:
      1.6.2.1. Any applicable CBTs or exams, as a portion of the competency check authorized by the VATSIM Transfer and Visiting Controller policy
   1.6.3. Any visiting or transferring controller with a C1 rating is subject to the requirements of 1.6.2. Additionally, in order to gain Oakland Center controlling privileges, they must undergo a C1 practical competency check administered by a member of the vZOA Training Staff. Upon successful completion, they may control Oakland Center only when all positions that require major certifications (e.g. NorCal Approach), which would otherwise be covered top-down by center, are staffed by certified controller(s).
   1.6.4. vZOA reserves the right to have visiting or transferring controllers to undergo a practical competency check in addition to the other requirements outlined in this section. This competency check may be administered after initial certifications are granted, at vZOA's discretion, with or without cause.

1.7. Controllers Returning to Roster
   1.7.1. Controllers returning to the roster are first subject to Section 1.6 for regaining their minor facility certifications.
   1.7.2. A controller who is returning to the roster within 6 months of their last training session and/or controlling session is able to regain their previous major certifications after self-certifying to the Training Administrator their review of the policy and procedure changes in the time of their absence.
   1.7.3. A controller who is returning to the roster between 6 and 12 months of their last training and/or controlling session is able to regain their previous major certifications after reviewing materials provided to them by the Training Administrator and completing a written assessment on those materials.
   1.7.4. A controller who is returning to the roster longer than 12 months after their last training and/or controlling session has lost their previous major certifications. These controllers are eligible to go through an Individualized Training Plan to regain their previous ratings.

1.8. Remedial Training
   1.8.1. Transferring and visiting controllers found not to be performing in accordance with their VATSIM rating are subject to section 1.6
   1.8.2. Home controllers found not to be performing in accordance with their VATSIM rating shall be recommended for remedial training. Per VATSIM policy, minor airport controlling privileges cannot be revoked, so the remedial training can only be recommended, not

mandated. An Individualized Training Plan will be developed by the training administrator, and can be executed by any designated member(s) of the training staff.

1.8.3. Controllers found not to be performing in accordance with a major certification shall be recommended for remedial training and can have their certification revoked as an action of last resort. An Individualized Training Plan will be developed by the training administrator, and can be executed by any designated member(s) of the training staff.

1.8.3.1. Controllers shall be given the opportunity to correct their performance prior to removal of controlling privileges. Revocation of privileges is an action of last resort that can only be taken upon thorough documentation of skill deficiencies.

2. Evaluation Standards

2.1. Training Staff Duties

2.1.1. The Instructors are responsible for administering OTS evaluations and GRP Practical Competency Checks. Mentors may be delegated responsibility for administering the minor delivery/ground evaluations and PVs.

2.1.2. Prior to taking a minor delivery/ground or OTS evaluation, students enrolled in the vZOA Training Program must:

    2.1.2.1. Have satisfactorily completed all items set forth in the Syllabus.

    2.1.2.2. Have a recommendation for the minor delivery/ground evaluation or OTS in their training notes. A request from a student for a minor delivery/ground evaluation 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.

2.1.3. The instructor/mentor shall use the published VATUSA and/or vZOA test standards to determine pass/fail results during the minor delivery/ground evaluation or OTS.

2.1.4. Any result from the minor delivery/ground evaluation or OTS shall be recorded using the appropriate form for record keeping purposes and review from the Training Administrator and/or VATUSA.

    2.1.4.1. Rubrics shall be saved using the naming convention listed at the bottom of the rubric.

    2.1.4.2. Any standard marked as Unsatisfactory shall have an explanation for the reason(s) in the comments section of the form.

    2.1.4.3. For the minor delivery/ground evaluation, the vZOA rubric shall be utilized as a way to verify all competencies in VATUSA DP 002 have been satisfied.

        2.1.4.3.1. When this check is conducted by a mentor, this form shall be provided to the Training Administrator if a rating upgrade needs to be processed.

    2.1.4.4. For an OTS exam, the VATUSA rubric shall be completed digitally, and then saved as a PDF to be documented through the vZOA website as well.

2.1.5. A student who has scored "unsatisfactory" on the minor delivery/ground evaluation or OTS shall have further training before being recommended for a second exam.

2.1.6. An instructor/mentor who assessed an "unsatisfactory" 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.

2.1.7. A PV is a procedure where a member of the training staff verifies that a student has sufficiently met the standards of a major position's syllabus and issues a full certification for that position to the student. This must be documented using the appropriate form. A PV can be submitted when all modules for the progression have been completed according to the published guidelines.

2.1.8. Any 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 promotion must be recorded on the VATUSA website.

2.2. Evaluation Standards

2.2.1. Any session which results in a rating or certification change must be conducted so that specific items are covered in accordance with the vZOA training syllabus, the VATUSA Division Training Standard, and the VATSIM GRP.

2.2.2. Both minor delivery/ground evaluations and OTSs are graded via a rubric. All OTS exams will use a rubric provided by VATUSA, and all minor delivery/ground evaluations will use a grading rubric provided by vZOA.

    2.2.2.1. All minor delivery/ground evaluations and OTS exams will be graded as satisfactory or unsatisfactory and will have no percentage scores per VATUSA policy.

    2.2.2.2. A training note with the minor delivery/ground evaluation rubric must be submitted to the vZOA website within 24 hours of the session being completed.

    2.2.2.3. A training note with a printout of the VATUSA digital rubric must be submitted to the vZOA website within 24 hours of an OTS exam being completed.

2.2.3. A PV is graded via a list of standards required for the certification provided by vZOA.

    2.2.3.1. A training note with the appropriate documents in accordance with 2.1.7 must be submitted to the vZOA website within 24 hours of a certification being granted via the PV process.

2.2.4. If, for whatever reason, the instructor/mentor is unable to complete the minor delivery/ground evaluation 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.

2.2.5. The instructor/mentor shall, in addition to reporting the result of a minor delivery/ground evaluation, PV or OTS, keep records of the session so that a meaningful debrief can be conducted. Applicable references to SOPs, LOAs, CPS, and FAA Order 7110.65 are encouraged for the student's benefit.

3.   Training Staff Program

3.1.   Mentor Requirements

3.1.1.   The following is required to become an eligible mentor

3.1.1.1.   S2 rating

3.1.1.1.1.   An S1 rated controller with the Major GC certification is eligible to begin the RPO progression, but may not become a mentor until receiving their S2 rating.

3.1.1.2.   No major disciplinary action on your VATSIM record

3.1.1.3.   Current active member of vZOA

3.1.1.4.   Strong dedication to helping new students learn the ropes

3.1.1.5.   Have at a minimum 2 hours per month to dedicate to training students

3.1.2.   The listed requirements may be waived by the Air Traffic Manager or Training Administrator when deemed necessary.

3.2.   Mentor Promotion

3.2.1.   Mentors will be appointed by the Training Administrator.

3.2.2.   The following path will be taken to gain the mentor rating:

3.2.2.1.   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).

3.2.2.1.1.   An RPO will choose a training progression which they initially want to be authorized to teach. This is typically the S1 minor progression.

3.2.2.1.2.   The RPO will be trained by the TA, an Instructor, or a Mentor on the usage of relevant training tools and review theory concepts for the initially chosen training progression.

3.2.2.1.3.   The RPO may only audit/participate in training sessions with the concurrence of the mentor/instructor leading them.

3.2.2.1.4.   The RPO will first observe at least one training session of the chosen progression, and write a training note summarizing the session for the student.

3.2.2.1.5.   After observing, the RPO will perform aircraft control & communication duties for at least one training session of the chosen progression. They will complete a training note summarizing the session.

3.2.2.1.6.   After performing aircraft control & communication duties, the RPO will teach at least two training sessions of the chosen progression under the supervision of a mentor/instructor.

3.2.2.1.7.   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.

3.2.2.1.8.   Once the above requirements are complete, the RPO will perform a checkout session for the chosen progression with the training administrator. Upon passing, they will be appointed as a probationary mentor certified to teach only the initially chosen progression.

3.2.2.2.   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.

3.2.2.3. 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.

3.2.2.4. At the end of the probationary period, the mentor may be granted full mentorship status.

3.2.2.5. Mentor appointments shall specify the mentor's training privileges.

    3.2.2.5.1. Privileges shall specify the mentor's which parts of the training syllabus may be trained.

    3.2.2.5.2. Mentor training privileges shall be granted in the following groupings: S1 Rating, S2 Rating, SFO GC+LC, S3 Rating + NCT Areas, C1 Rating

    3.2.2.5.3. Privileges shall specify any other permissions or restrictions considered appropriate by the Training Administrator.

3.2.2.6. 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, which will occur in accordance with the process below.

    3.2.2.6.1. The developmental mentor will be trained by the TA or a designated instructor/mentor on any new applicable tools, and go over the theory for the new progression.

    3.2.2.6.2. The developmental mentor will audit one training session of the desired progression while performing aircraft control & communication duties.

    3.2.2.6.3. The developmental mentor will teach one training session of the desired progression under the supervision of a designated instructor/mentor. If the designated instructor/mentor agrees that the developmental mentor is ready to teach the progression on their own, they will gain such privileges.

3.2.3. The above progression may be waiver or modified if deemed appropriate by the Training Administrator.

3.3. Mentor Responsibilities

3.3.1. The primary instruction method for mentors should be one on one instruction sessions, primarily on Sweatbox.

3.3.2. Mentors are to utilize both the VATUSA Training Material and vZOA resources to ensure complete and accurate training. Usage of personal training scenarios must be approved in writing on a case by case basis by the Training Administrator.

3.3.3. Mentors are to use published testing standards when conducting a practical evaluation to ensure fair grading of the assessment.

3.3.4. 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.

3.3.5. Mentors are required to follow the published training progression and syllabus at all times.

3.3.6. 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.

3.4. Mentor Limitations

3.4.1. Mentors may only train up to a level determined by the Training Administrator.

3.4.2. Mentors may only conduct practical evaluations of students up to a level determined by the Training Administrator.

3.4.3. Mentors may not perform any OTS Exams.

3.4.4. 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.

3.5. Instructor Requirements

3.5.1. Instructors must meet the qualifications as set forth in VATUSA DP 002.

3.6. Instructor Promotion

3.6.1. Instructors will be nominated by the Training Administrator to VATUSA in conjunction with VATUSA DP 002.

3.6.2. If the new Instructor was not previously a vZOA mentor, they will be trained as outlined in 3.2.2.1

3.7. Instructor Responsibilities

3.7.1. Instructors may train students on any domestic vZOA position. Instructors may be additionally authorized by the Training Administrator to conduct training for oceanic positions.

3.7.2. The primary instruction method for instructors should be one on one instruction sessions, primarily on Sweatbox.

3.7.3. Instructors are to utilize both the VATUSA Training Material and vZOA resources to ensure complete and accurate training. Usage of personal training scenarios must be approved in writing on a case by case basis by the Training Administrator.

3.7.4. Instructors are to use published testing standards when conducting a practical evaluation to ensure fair grading of the assessment.

3.7.5. 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.

3.7.6. Instructors are required to follow the published training progression and syllabus at all times.

3.7.7. 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.

3.8. Instructor Limitations

3.8.1. 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

Key
- Home (orange arrow)
- Visitor (purple arrow)
- Non-standard (dashed arrow)
- Optional (dotted arrow)

vZOA Orientation

Major CD/GC (SFO)

S1 - Minor CD/GC (OAK)

Major LC (SFO)

S2 - Minor LC (OAK)

Major TRACON NCT Area D

S3 - Minor TRACON (SMF)

Major TRACON NCT Area C

Major TRACON NCT Area A

Major TRACON NCT Area B

C1 - Enroute (ZOA)

Oceanic (ZAK)

C1 Visitors
(completed at any point)

C1 Competency Check (ZOA)