



Training Policies and Procedures - CPS-002

Version 2.3

Effective 08/15/2025

1. Training Program Description

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. Self-study of the resources outlined in this section is expected to be the primary method for gaining knowledge and will be practiced and reinforced during in-person lessons.
 - 1.2.1.1. Training staff will expect students to spend time learning and reviewing applicable materials outside of in-person lessons.
- 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.
- 1.2.3. vZOA Computer Based Training (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.
- 1.2.4. The [vZOA Training Syllabus](#) defines the breakdown of the training for each rating and endorsement.
 - 1.2.4.1. Each module of the syllabus can be a self-study lesson/CBT, a written examination, a practical examination (where allowed), or an in-person lesson.
 - 1.2.4.2. Certain modules on the training syllabus will provide additional self-study and/or practice material targeting the module's goals.
- 1.2.5. vZOA Website Resources form the core of knowledge applicable locally to the vZOA ARTCC and must be understood in stages as controllers progress through the training program. These resources include Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), Letters of Agreement (LOA), Central Policy Statements (CPS), and other supplemental documents.
- 1.2.6. In-person lessons are conducted by a member of the training staff for one or more students. Each lesson will focus on goals defined in one or more training modules.

2. Training Procedures

2.1. Training Queue

- 2.1.1. Students seeking training for a rating or endorsement will submit a request to begin training, and be placed in a queue for the respective training progression.
 - 2.1.1.1. Each training progression has its queue segmented into three sections: home controllers, visiting controllers, and returning controllers. Returning controllers are home or visiting controllers who previously held a rating they are requesting training for.
 - 2.1.1.2. Each segment of the queue is separately progressed at the following ratio: for every 2 home controllers progressing to training, 2 returning controllers and 1 visiting controller progress to training.
 - 2.1.1.3. The Training Administrator reserves the right to adjust the procedures for progressing the queue as needed.
- 2.1.2. Upon joining the queue, students will be assigned the relevant VATUSA Academy courses, vZOA CBTs, and written exams for the progression; these must be completed prior to commencing training.
- 2.1.3. Once capacity for a given training progression becomes available, the student will be given permissions to request training using the vZOA website and assigned a primary mentor.
 - 2.1.3.1. The Training Administrator determines where capacity is available based on training staff availability and time zone compatibility.
 - 2.1.3.2. Each training staff member will be assigned a different number of primary students that is agreed upon with the Training Administrator.
- 2.1.4. Primary mentors are not solely responsible for training their students, but are expected to serve as the main point of contact for questions & support, as well as prioritizing booking their students over others.

- 2.1.5. Students are subject to the following activity requirements while utilizing the training queue process:
 - 2.1.5.1. Students waiting in the queue will be prompted to reaffirm their placement at the beginning of each calendar month, starting the month after joining the queue. If a student does not respond to the prompt within two weeks, they are removed from the queue.
 - 2.1.5.2. Students in the training phase for a progression must complete at least one session each month. If they do not complete this requirement, their permissions to request training will be removed and they will have to rejoin the training queue.
- 2.1.6. Primary mentors are expected to ensure their students are able to meet the requirement in 2.1.5.2, either through scheduling the student or by coordinating with other members of the training staff to facilitate the booking.

2.2. In-person Lessons

- 2.2.1. Scheduling of in-person lessons is conducted using the vZOA website and becomes available once the student has completed waiting in the training queue. Students are encouraged to post as much availability is feasible in order to increase the likelihood with training staff availability.
- 2.2.2. An in-person lesson typically begins with discussion of any material the student reviewed in preparation for the session, followed by reinforcement of any theoretical knowledge required, and finally followed by a practical portion.
 - 2.2.2.1. This structure may be modified by the member of the training staff to best suit the needs of the student(s).
- 2.2.3. Training staff will typically conduct the practical portion of the lesson using one of the available Sweatbox servers. These are dedicated training servers provided by VATSIM which allow connections from simulated pilots.

- 2.2.4. In limited circumstances where live network traffic is sufficient to meet the goals of a training module, the member of the training staff may choose to conduct the lesson on the live network.
 - 2.2.4.1. Live network sessions must not be conducted during events, except with written approval from the Training Administrator.
 - 2.2.4.2. The member of training staff must not be working another operational position during live network lessons.
 - 2.2.4.3. The member of training staff is responsible to ensure the student adheres to all procedures and demonstrates good judgment.
- 2.2.5. During in-person lessons, both the member of the training staff and the student must choose the respective roles ("instructor" or "student") when connecting using their controller client.
- 2.2.6. Training staff and students shall use the training rooms on the vZOA Discord server to conduct in-person lessons.
 - 2.2.6.1. Other vZOA members should avoid joining any training rooms currently in-use without permission from the member of training staff.

2.3. Training Progression

- 2.3.1. The recommended training flow can be found in [Attachment 1](#) of this document and the detailed set of modules for each rating or endorsement can be found on the website.
- 2.3.2. Authorized deviations from the recommended training flow in [Attachment 1](#) are as follows:
 - 2.3.2.1. For S2 rated controllers, completion of S3 rating training prior to any endorsement training.
 - 2.3.2.2. For C1 rated visitors, completion of Oceanic endorsement training without having completed any other endorsement training.
 - 2.3.2.3. For S1 rated controllers, completion of SFO CD/GC endorsement training prior to S2 rating training. Requires Training Administrator approval.
 - 2.3.2.4. For S2 rated controllers, completion of SFO ATCT endorsement training prior to any Tier II Tower endorsement training. Requires Training Administrator approval.
 - 2.3.2.5. For S1/S2 rated controllers, completion of Military ground/tower endorsement training, respectively, prior to S3 rating training. Requires Training Administrator approval.
 - 2.3.2.6. For S3 rated controllers, completion of any Tier II TRACON endorsement training without having completed SFO endorsement training. Requires Training Administrator approval.
 - 2.3.2.7. For S3 rated controllers, completion of Area A, C, or D Tier I TRACON endorsement training without having completed Tier II TRACON endorsement training. Requires Training Administrator approval.
 - 2.3.2.8. For S3 rated controllers, completion of the ZAK Oceanic endorsement training (for radio operator positions) without having completed any other endorsement training or C1 rating training. Requires Training Administrator approval.
- 2.3.3. Training modules are designed to group together a portion of training working towards similar goals. Although training modules will often correspond one-to-one with in-person lessons, this does not hold in all cases.
- 2.3.4. Modules within the progression for each rating or endorsement can be combined when authorized within the progression documents. Well prepared students and seasoned controllers may be able to progress through more than one module in a single session under this provision.

- 2.3.5. Some modules are designated standalone and cannot be combined with any other modules during a single session. This designation is assigned to a limited number of modules which are considered core to a progression.
- 2.3.6. Any portion of the published progression may be waived or simplified by the Training Administrator for specific students, in addition to the provisions of 2.3.2. The reasoning for the modification must be documented in writing, and available for audit purposes within the ZOA Senior Staff Google Drive.

2.4. Solo Endorsements

- 2.4.1. A solo endorsement, as defined by GCAP Section 7.3, allows for a controller rated S1 or higher, training for their next ATC rating, to independently operate a specific position one rating above their current.
- 2.4.2. Solo endorsements may only be issued for the specific positions noted in each rating progression.
- 2.4.3. Solo endorsements must not be issued for positions requiring a Tier I or Tier II endorsement, unless issued in conjunction with rating training (e.g ZOA Enroute endorsement during C1 training, Bay Area Tower endorsement during S2 training)
- 2.4.4. Solo endorsements are granted in accordance with the criteria in each rating progression.
- 2.4.5. Solo endorsements must be documented in the training note, on the website roster, and additionally be displayed on the VATUSA website.
- 2.4.6. Solo endorsements are not valid during official/scheduled vZOA events or while providing support staffing for an official/scheduled event of an immediate neighbor (ZLA, ZLC, ZSE). Exceptions to this policy must be approved in writing by the Training Administrator on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.4.7. Solo endorsements are issued for a period of 45 days.
- 2.4.8. Extension of a solo endorsement beyond the initial 45 days requires an exemption approved by VATUSA.
 - 2.4.8.1. The extended solo endorsement expires no later than 90 days from the initial endorsement date.
- 2.4.9. Solo endorsements may be cancelled prior to their expiration date in accordance with VATUSA DP002.

2.5. Evaluation and Certification

- 2.5.1. Written exams, provided by both VATUSA and vZOA will be used to verify knowledge for promotions in VATSIM ratings and granting endorsements.
 - 2.5.1.1. Students must submit corrections for each question which they answered incorrectly to the training staff prior to the written exam being considered complete. Appropriate references must be provided as justification for each question's answer, corrections without references will be rejected.
 - 2.5.1.2. Every question on an exam must be attempted before test corrections may be submitted.
- 2.5.2. Practical exams will be used in addition to written exams in order to verify eligibility for a VATSIM rating promotion.
 - 2.5.2.1. Prior to attempting a practical exam for a rating promotion, students must have completed the full VATUSA Academy course for that rating, passed the applicable written exam, and have received a recommendation from a member of vZOA training staff.
 - 2.5.2.2. Training staff must use the published VATUSA or vZOA rubric to determine the pass/fail result.
 - 2.5.2.3. Students who fail a practical exam are considered to have lost the recommendation for it, and must complete further training before re-attempting it.
 - 2.5.2.4. Practical exams must be conducted on one of the Sweatbox servers, with the exception of the C1 rating practical exam.
- 2.5.3. Practical exams are not conducted when considering eligibility for Tier I and Tier II endorsements. These endorsements are granted upon the completion of all of the prescribed modules within the progression.
- 2.5.4. Students may not connect to a position requiring a newly earned rating or endorsement until that rating or endorsement is reflected on the vZOA website.

2.6. Remedial Training

- 2.6.1. Any serious issues or deficiencies in competency must be documented in writing via email (zoa-ta@vatusa.net) to the Training Administrator.
- 2.6.2. Controllers found not to be meeting the required competencies for a rating or endorsement they hold shall be recommended for remedial training to the Training Administrator.
- 2.6.3. Remedial training may include individual counseling of the controller or an Individualized Training Plan developed by the Training Administrator.
- 2.6.4. In the case where a controller refuses the remedial training process, the Training Administrator shall notify the VATUSA Deputy Director - Training Services.

2.7. Oceanic Endorsement Requirements

- 2.7.1. To obtain the ZAK Oceanic endorsement, the controller must meet the criteria defined in the Pacific Ocean LOA.
- 2.7.2. ZOA is not authorized to conduct oceanic training for visitors from participating organizations in the Pacific Ocean LOA. This restriction is defined in the Pacific Ocean LOA.

3. Training Staff Program

3.1. Definitions

- 3.1.1. Instructors are experienced members of the training staff that have demonstrated excellent ability to train students of all levels.
- 3.1.2. Mentors are members of the training staff with varying levels of experience, typically focused on training a particular segment of students.
- 3.1.3. Mentors-in-training (MiT) are new members of the training staff who may only perform teaching duties under the supervision of a mentor or instructor.
- 3.1.4. Remote pilot operators (RPO) are members of the training staff who may assist a mentor or instructor during a training session but may not perform teaching duties, unless they are also MiT for the progression associated with the session.

3.2. Responsibilities

- 3.2.1. Conduct or assist at least 3 hours of in-person lessons per quarter.
 - 3.2.1.1. Activity will be verified for the past 3 months on Jan 1, Apr 1, July 1, and Oct 1.
 - 3.2.1.2. The activity requirement may be waived by the Training Administrator.
- 3.2.2. Conduct or assist in-person lessons with students, providing both theoretical and practical instruction.
- 3.2.3. Treat students respectfully and provide feedback in a constructive manner.
- 3.2.4. Utilize VATUSA and vZOA training resources to ensure complete and accurate training.
- 3.2.5. Comply with the syllabus published for each rating or endorsement progression and request any modifications with the Training Administrator in writing.
- 3.2.6. Utilize only the officially available simulated training scenarios, unless approved by the Training Administrator in writing.
 - 3.2.6.1. Additive modifications to official scenarios are authorized without prior Training Administrator approval provided they do not impede a student from progressing.
- 3.2.7. At the end of each in-person lesson, submit a training note within 2 weeks (as soon as possible preferred) detailing the events of the lesson including material covered, points of improvement, recommendations given, or endorsements granted.
 - 3.2.7.1. If a member of the training staff does not submit a training note within 2 weeks, they will be prevented from booking any further in-person lessons.

- 3.2.8. At the end of each in-person lesson, the student's syllabus progress must be updated on the website within 24 hours (immediately preferred) of the lesson.
- 3.2.9. If an in-person lesson results in the student earning an endorsement, this must be reflected via the vZOA website within 24 hours (immediately preferred) of the lesson.
- 3.2.10. Upon the completion of a practical exam, submit the training note to the vZOA website and the appropriate rubric to the VATUSA website.
 - 3.2.10.1. Any comments documented solely on a VATUSA rubric (which is not visible to the student) shall also be provided in the training note.
- 3.2.11. When submitting a fail result for a practical exam or a needs improvement result as part of a training note, training staff must provide a detailed description of required improvements. This is so that any training conducted after this event is consistent and productive in preparing the student.
- 3.2.12. Mentors-in-training and remote pilot operators must enter the details of sessions they participate in via the appropriate tools.

3.3. Requirements

- 3.3.1. Instructors must meet the qualifications as set forth in VATUSA DP002.
- 3.3.2. Mentors must meet the following qualifications, unless waived by the Training Administrator:
 - 3.3.2.1. S2 rating or higher (this is a VATUSA requirement and cannot be waived)
 - 3.3.2.2. No major disciplinary action on VATSIM record
 - 3.3.2.3. Current active member of vZOA
- 3.3.3. Mentors-in-training and remote pilot operators must meet the following qualifications, unless waived by the Training Administrator:
 - 3.3.3.1. S1 rating or higher
 - 3.3.3.2. No major disciplinary action on VATSIM record
 - 3.3.3.3. Current active member of vZOA

3.4. Limitations

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

- 3.4.2. Instructors may conduct all practical exams and grant all endorsements applicable to any domestic vZOA position. Instructors may be additionally authorized by the Training Administrator to issue any endorsements applicable to oceanic positions.
- 3.4.3. Mentors may train students for any ratings or endorsements up to their VATSIM rating, and up to the limits determined by the training administrator.
- 3.4.4. Mentors may not conduct practical exams with the exception of the S1 rating practical exam, which can be conducted by mentors holding an S3 or higher rating, when authorized to do so by the Training Administrator.
 - 3.4.4.1. Mentors may not be authorized to conduct the S1 rating practical exam earlier than 3 months after first being appointed as a mentor or probationary mentor at ZOA.
- 3.4.5. Remote pilot operators (RPO) may assist training sessions by performing aircraft control & communication duties as delegated by the member of the training staff leading the session. They may not provide any direct instruction to the student.
- 3.4.6. RPOs may assist with sessions up to the limits determined by the training administrator.
- 3.4.7. RPO participation in each individual session is at the sole discretion of the member of the training staff.

3.5. Sanctions

- 3.5.1. The VATUSA Deputy Director - Training Services shall be notified of any policy violation by an Instructor.
- 3.5.2. Training staff found to be in violation of any policy contained in this CPS may be sanctioned in one or more of the following ways:
 - 3.5.2.1. Removal of the ability to perform live network sessions for a duration specified by this policy, or determined by the Training Administrator (maximum of 6 months).
 - 3.5.2.2. Removal of the ability to book in-person lessons for a duration specified by this policy, or as determined by the Training Administrator (maximum of 4 weeks).
 - 3.5.2.3. Removal of the authorization to train towards a particular rating or endorsement, either for a duration determined by the Training Administrator or until further notice.
 - 3.5.2.4. Removal from the training staff, with reinstatement only possible after a minimum of 3 months have elapsed.

- 3.5.3. Instructors found to be in violation of any policy contained in this CPS may additionally be sanctioned through a removal of the instructor status and return to mentor status. This will typically be accompanied by other sanctions.
- 3.5.4. Mentors found to be in violation of any policy contained in this CPS may additionally be sanctioned through a return to probationary status for a minimum of 30 days.

3.6. Remote Pilot Operator Promotion

- 3.6.1. Remote pilot operators (RPO) are appointed at the discretion of the Training Administrator.
- 3.6.2. A controller may serve as an RPO indefinitely and without intent to become a mentor.
- 3.6.3. RPOs will be trained by any member of the training staff on the usage of relevant training tools.
- 3.6.4. RPO appointments will specify the RPO's privileges on a per-rating or per-endorsement progression basis.

3.7. Mentor Promotion

- 3.7.1. The flow for becoming a member of the training staff can also be found in [Attachment 2](#) and is described in further detail in this section.
- 3.7.2. Controllers interested in becoming mentors will be first granted permission to observe in-person lessons, and may do so with the concurrence of the member of training staff conducting the lesson.
 - 3.7.2.1. The controller must choose a single training progression which they initially want to be authorized to teach. This is typically the S1 rating progression.
 - 3.7.2.2. The observation period must last at least 4 weeks and at a minimum include the observation of at least 4 sessions. Only sessions of the chosen progression will count towards this minimum.
- 3.7.3. Controllers interested in becoming mentors shall consider first becoming remote pilot operators (RPOs) to gain further familiarity with training at vZOA and the relevant training tools.
- 3.7.4. Upon completion of the observation period, the controller may be appointed to the mentor in training (MiT) by the Training Administrator.

3.7.5. Mentors in training will progress to mentors as follows:

- 3.7.5.1. MiTs will be trained by any member of the training staff on the usage of the relevant training tools and review theory concepts for the initially chosen training progression.
- 3.7.5.2. MiTs will first observe at least one in-person lesson of the chosen progression, and write a training note summarizing the session for the student.
- 3.7.5.3. After observing, the MiT will perform aircraft control & communication duties for at least two in-person lessons of the chosen progression. They will complete a training note summarizing each session.

NOTE- *This requirement is considered completed if the MiT has previously completed at least two sessions as an RPO.*

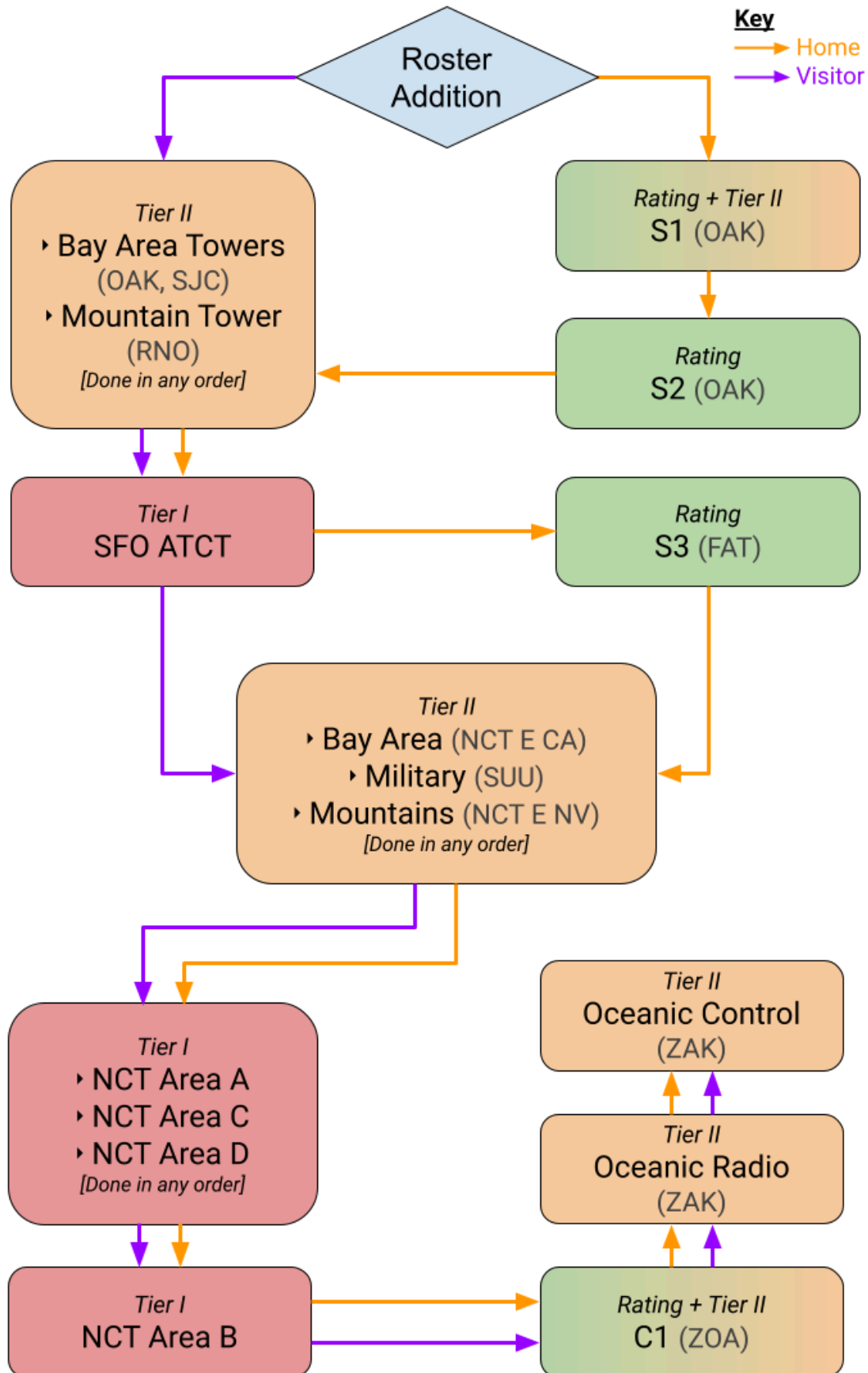
- 3.7.5.4. After performing aircraft control & communication duties, the MiT will teach at least three in-person lessons of the chosen progression under the supervision of a mentor/instructor.
 - 3.7.5.5. MiTs must receive a recommendation from at least one training staff member whose in-person lessons they have assisted. MiTs should seek feedback from the members of the training staff they are assisting for concrete ways to improve their teaching.
 - 3.7.5.6. Once the above requirements are complete, the MiT will perform a checkout session for the chosen progression with the Training Administrator. Upon passing, they will be appointed as a probationary mentor authorized to teach the initially chosen progression.
- 3.7.6. Mentors are initially appointed to a 30 day probationary period. During this period, the Training Administrator or an appointed Instructor will collect feedback from students, RPOs, and observe training sessions conducted by the new mentor. This will be used to further develop the mentor as a member of the training staff.
- 3.7.7. At the end of the probationary period, the mentor may either be granted full mentorship status, or have their probationary period extended one time by 60 days. At the end of the extension period, the mentor must either be granted full mentorship or be returned to MiT status.

- 3.7.8. The Training Administrator has discretion regarding the appointment of mentors and regarding their training privileges. A controller with prior vZOA mentor or instructor appointment may not be required to complete the observation period or MiT duties prior to becoming a probationary mentor.
- 3.7.9. Mentor appointments will specify the mentor's training privileges on a per-rating or per-endorsement progression basis. Privileges for conducting practical examinations for ratings or endorsements will additionally be specified, and may be more restrictive than the training privileges for a given rating or endorsement.
- 3.7.10. The Training Administrator shall monitor the needs of the training staff and maintain a line of communication with mentors regarding gaining additional training permissions.
- 3.7.11. Mentors will gain additional training permissions as follows:
 - 3.7.11.1. The mentor will be trained by the Training Administrator or a designated member of the training staff on any new applicable tools, and review the theory for the new progression.
 - 3.7.11.2. The mentor will audit one in-person lesson of the desired progression while performing aircraft control & communication duties.
 - 3.7.11.3. The mentor will teach one in-person lesson of the desired progression under the supervision of the Training Administrator or a designated member of the training staff. If the Training Administrator or the designee agree that the mentor is ready to teach the progression independently, they will gain these new privileges.
- 3.7.12. Any portion of the above progression may be waived or modified by the Training Administrator.

3.8. Instructor Promotion

- 3.8.1. Instructors will be nominated by the Training Administrator and approved by VATUSA in accordance with VATUSA DP 2.
- 3.8.2. Individuals are typically nominated for the instructor role after serving as a vZOA mentor for a period of at least one year, and demonstrating excellent teaching abilities and professionalism.
- 3.8.3. If a new instructor was not previously a vZOA mentor, they will be trained in teaching and examining each vZOA training progression individually. They will gain authorization to teach and administer practical exams for each progression at the Training Administrator's discretion.

Attachment 1. Recommended Training Flow



Attachment 2. Training Staff Progression

