

The Air New Zealand Aviation Institute FTO Partnerships - What Does It All Mean?

Earlier this year, Air New Zealand announced a new partnership with five Flight Training Organisations for the provision of airline style ab-initio flight training. Mark Woodhouse of Waypoints Aviation offers an explanation of this programme and what it means for those seeking a career with our national airline. As well as being an A-Cat Flight Instructor, GA Flight Examiner and CFI of the Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School, Mark is also currently a Second Officer with Air New Zealand on the Boeing 777.

Air New Zealand Aviation Institute FTO Partners

Air New Zealand FTO Partners are the Flight Training Organisations (FTOs) that Air New Zealand has chosen to work with to provide airline style ab-initio flight training under their Aviation Institute umbrella. Initially there are five FTO Partners around New Zealand. They are:

- Air Hawke's Bay (Hastings);
- International Aviation Academy of NZ (Christchurch);
- Massey University School of Aviation (Palmerston North);
- Nelson Aviation College (Motueka); and,
- Southern Wings (Invercargill).

This article is written to explain this initiative, to describe its origins and to explain how student pilot training and education will change in the future as a result.

Background to Air New Zealand's Involvement in Ab-initio Flight Training

Over the past two or three years Air New Zealand has been considering how best to contribute to the improvement of ab-initio flight training in New Zealand. In 2009 they held three cluster group meetings and received input from some sixteen FTOs. During this process Air New Zealand gave an overview of their operational and commercial priorities and of the qualities and characteristics they expected to be applied in the selection of student pilots for ab-initio flight training. They also described the elements they would like to see included in a course of ab-initio flight training for airline pilots. Air New Zealand also took on board feedback from the training industry, including among other things:

- That FTOs wanted Air New Zealand to define the competencies they wanted in their new pilot applicants;
- That FTOs wanted Air New Zealand to get involved in helping them deliver on these competencies;
- That FTOs felt their instructors lacked airline experience and knowledge and that Air New Zealand should get involved with their instructors by sharing airline specific knowledge through a variety of means;
- That some FTOs felt that more robust selection processes were needed so that student pilots who gained admittance to a course knew that they had a good likelihood of success; and,
- That FTOs considered that the career of an airline pilot needs to be marketed by Air New Zealand so that it is a career that school leavers aspire to.

As a result of this consultation it became clear to Air New Zealand that there was a range of involvement options available to them, from doing nothing, to making informal or formal arrangements, to identifying preferred suppliers (FTO Partners), or

to establishing an Air New Zealand Flying School.

The option Air New Zealand chose was to identify a number of FTO Partners as preferred suppliers of suitably trained and educated low hour graduate pilots, and to work closely with their FTO Partners to establish a pathway into their airlines for the successful graduate pilots. Following a rigorous review of their organisation, flight training programmes and ability to meet the Aviation Institute's standards, in April this year, Air New Zealand formed a partnership with five FTOs, as listed above.

New Zealand Diploma in Aviation

All student pilots at FTO Partners will enrol in programmes for either the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation or the Bachelor of Aviation Degree (Massey University School of Aviation only).

The New Zealand Diploma in Aviation is currently in the final stages of development, and is scheduled to be established by the beginning of 2012. There are currently about 28 aviation diplomas offered by various tertiary institutions around New Zealand, all with different requirements. These will be phased out and transition arrangements will be put in place to progressively transfer all students currently enrolled on any other diplomas over to the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation.

The New Zealand Diploma in Aviation will have four strands:

- General Aviation;
- Flight Instructor;
- Agricultural; and,
- Airline Preparation.

All student pilots will complete a normal PPL and CPL in accordance with the current NZ CAA syllabus requirements. After that, the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation course completion requirements will depend on the strand chosen. Those student pilots who are enrolled with one of the Air New Zealand FTO Partners will complete the Airline Preparation Strand. For the Airline Preparation Strand, student pilots will follow their CPL with a multi-engine instrument rating (MEIR), an ATPL ground course and an Airline Integration Course (AIC).

It is expected that other experienced pilots will be able to apply to the ATTTO to have their qualifications and experience recognised, under "Recognition of Prior Learning", toward the issue of the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation. Details of recognition of prior learning arrangements will be made available when the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation development process is complete.

Air New Zealand Aviation Institute - Airline Integration Course

On completion of the CPL, MEIR and ATPL examination credit, student pilots undertaking the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation - Airline Preparation Strand, will undergo a secondary selection process for entry onto the Air New Zealand Aviation Institute - Airline Integration Course (AIC).

The AIC is a new course (currently under development by Air New Zealand) that will help low hour student pilots to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes they will need to work in a multi-crew airline environment. The AIC will provide an in depth understanding of the flight deck of large air transport aircraft and their array of systems, the interactions graduate pilots will have with

fellow crew and other airline personnel, and the range of factors and influences that will drive their decision making processes.

Air New Zealand intends to run up to ten AICs each year, with an estimated limit of eight student pilots per course. Selection into an AIC will be provisional on student pilots completing an approved ground course and achieving a pass to the required standard in all ATPL subjects. Student pilots graduating from FTO Partners will have first preference for entry onto an AIC when they are eligible.

The AIC selection process will be carried out after student pilots have completed their CPL, MEIR and ATPL examination credit, so that those who are not successful for selection onto an AIC can reapply to complete the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation in another strand.

Recruitment into the Air New Zealand Group from 2012

From 2012 onward, the recruitment pathway into any of the Air New Zealand Group airlines will include low hour pilots who have completed the Air New Zealand Aviation Institute New Zealand Diploma in Aviation - Airline Preparation Strand training programmes run by their FTO Partners. These programmes incorporate three selection steps:

- A standardised selection process to enter the New Zealand Diploma in Aviation training course offered the FTO Partners;
- An Air New Zealand run secondary selection process for entry into the Air New Zealand Aviation Institute Airline Integration Course (AIC); and,
- The successful completion of the Airline Integration Course.

On completion of an AIC, pilots will enter the industry in an hour building capacity until they reach the minimum experience required for placement as a First Officer. CAR Part 121, the rule regulating the operation of large air transport aircraft (Bombardier Q300 size and above), requires that any new pilot must have at least 500 hours total flight time. This means that on completion of the Aviation Institute FTO Partner programmes graduates are not legally able to fly as pilots for Air Nelson, Mt Cook or Air New Zealand. The only airline within the Air New Zealand Group that can legally hire pilots with less than 500 hours experience is Eagle Airways, which operates Beech 1900D aircraft governed by CAR Part 125.

Nevertheless, all graduates of the Aviation Institute FTO Partner flight training programmes, who have successfully completed an AIC, will join the Air New Zealand database pool of potentially suitable low hour "Preferred Pilots", alongside experienced pilots, for selection as turboprop First Officers in times of high demand - which is widely forecast to occur in the near future. An online tool will enable all pilots in that pool to update their personal details at any time.

Graduates of the Aviation Institute New Zealand Diploma in Aviation - Airline Preparation Strand training programme will be deemed eligible for interview into the Air New Zealand Group from the date of their graduation.

When an Air New Zealand Group airline needs to hire pilots, recruiters will refer to this database pool and select interviewees from eligible candidates within the pool. Eligibility includes having at least the minimum number of total flight hours required by each airline. The minimums vary, and requirements for each of the Group airlines are listed on the Air New Zealand website at

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<https://careers.airnz.co.nz/operations/pilots>.

That said, Air New Zealand makes no guarantee of employment at the completion of training and hour building.

What About Me?

An obvious question you may be asking yourself is, what does this mean for me if I choose to train at an FTO that is not an Air New Zealand FTO Partner? Or if I am already part way through my training? Or if I am an instructor, even with one of the FTO Partners? Am I now ineligible for consideration to join one of Air New Zealand's group of airlines?

Good news! Yes, you can still apply to be considered to join one of the Air New Zealand Group airlines as a pilot.

Student pilots currently enrolled with an FTO Partner, who have begun their flight training prior to 2012, are not part of the Aviation Institute programme, as they have not been through the standardised selection process. However, they will still be eligible to apply for selection onto

an AIC if they are endorsed by their FTO Partner. Eligibility for selection into an AIC will be provisional on a student pilot having gained a CPL, a MEIR and passes to the required standard in all of the ATPL subjects. Student pilots who are graduates of an FTO Partner, and who are not part of the Aviation Institute programme, but who successfully complete the AIC selection process will be given preference for AIC places ahead of other successful candidates who have not graduated from an FTO Partner.

Alternatively, student pilots currently enrolled with an FTO Partner can choose to gain flight experience in the general aviation

environment at the end of their training course, and then apply for an AIC, or apply directly to an Air New Zealand Link airline when they have met the traditional entry criteria.

If you were trained, or are currently training, at an FTO that is not an FTO Partner, once you have completed your CPL, MEIR and ATPL examination credit you can apply for an AIC. To be accepted onto an AIC you will need to successfully complete the

AIC selection process, however there are a limited number of places on the AIC (approximately 80 student pilots per year), and preference will be given to graduates of FTO Partners.

Alternatively, student pilots currently training at an FTO that is not an FTO Partner, and other qualified pilots, can choose to gain flight experience in the general aviation environment and then apply for selection onto an AIC or apply directly to an Air New Zealand Link airline when they have met the traditional entry criteria.

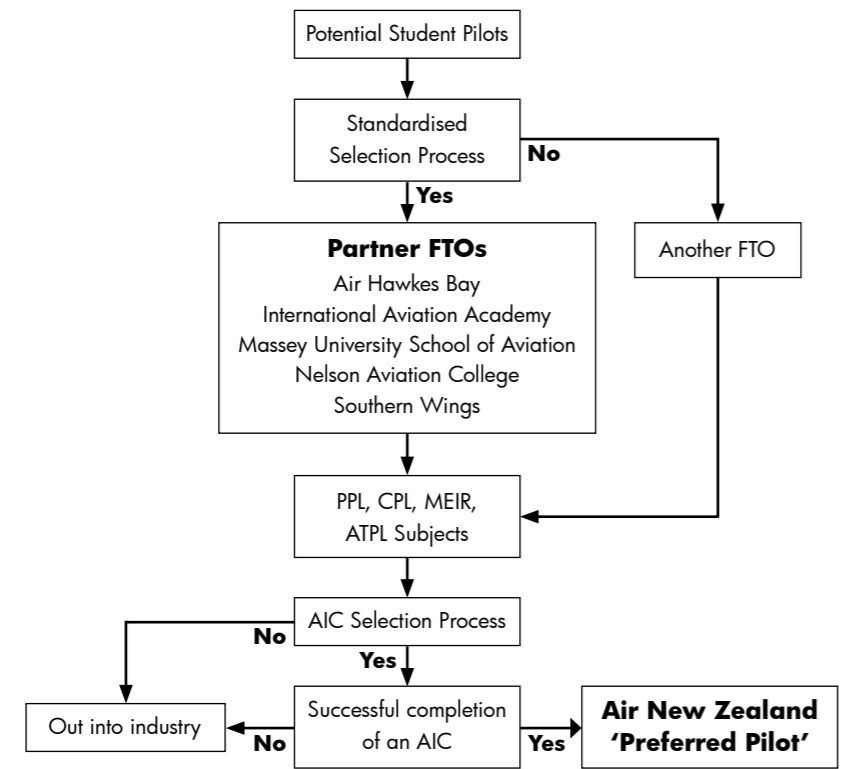
Buying a Jet Type Rating

While some airlines require pilot applicants

to complete a type rating at their own expense, pilots employed by Air New Zealand Group airlines are type rated at the airline's expense. They are then bonded for a period of time and sum of money. If the pilot were to resign within the period of their bond they must repay the bond (or a portion of it). Self funding a type rating on a turboprop or turboprop aircraft, such as a Bombardier, Boeing or Airbus will not make a low hour pilot eligible for employment as a pilot within the Air New Zealand Group, as they have not been through the standardised selection process.

However Air New Zealand will provide type ratings to suitable

Pathways to Air New Zealand Group Airlines



self funding individuals. Normal entry requirements are 1000 hours total time with 400 hours multi engine in a multi-crew environment. Those with less experience will need to undertake an AIC prior to their type rating. If you wish to self fund a jet type rating in the hope of gaining employment with another jet operator, you should contact that operator to check their pilot entry requirements before committing to the type rating training.

Air New Zealand Aviation Institute - First Officer Programme

The Air New Zealand Aviation Institute - First Officer Programme is designed for sponsored foreign airline cadets, and will include the AIC and a turboprop or turboprop type rating.

Following a joint cadet selection process, undertaken by the customer airline and the Air New Zealand Aviation Institute, initial training through to the New Zealand CPL, MEIR and ATPL examination credit is provided by one or other of the FTO Partners. Cadets graduating from this phase of training then transition onto an AIC.

Following successful completion of the AIC, graduates are well placed to handle the demands of the final stage of the First Officer Programme, i.e. their first turboprop or turboprop type rating. Dependent on specific customer airline requirements, type rating training may be conducted by the Air New Zealand Aviation Institute, or for other aircraft types, by a preferred provider.

Customer airlines may request specific outcomes for their airline cadets but it is expected that on graduating the cadets will have completed the following:

- A New Zealand CPL and MEIR;
- A New Zealand ATPL examination credit;
- An Airline Integration Course;

- A turboprop or turboprop type rating; and,
- A NZ Diploma in Aviation - Airline Preparation Strand.

The Air New Zealand Aviation Institute - First Officer Programme is scheduled to start in 2012.

In Conclusion

Air New Zealand are clearly serious about getting alongside their FTO Partners in order to implement the feedback they received from industry, in the way they perceive as being best for their airline, for the industry and for student pilots. To what extent they are successful, only time will tell. However their initiative appears to be a genuine and reasonable attempt to define and deliver competencies they want in their new pilot applicants, to introduce a robust student pilot selection process, and to assist in the development of industry instructors by sharing airline specific knowledge and experience.

I look forward to seeing their initiatives bear fruit.

If you are a student pilot currently under training, a recent or past graduate, or a flying instructor interested in progressing a career with Air New Zealand, I suggest you get a MEIR, then you get your ATPL examination credit (and you pass the exams well!). From there you should be eligible to apply for an AIC. If you successfully complete the AIC you will be considered by Air New Zealand as a low hour "Preferred Pilot".

If you are looking at becoming a pilot and are motivated to work for Air New Zealand then they would suggest you apply to one of the five collaboration partners and get involved.

Work hard, and remember, nothing worth having comes easily.

Mark Woodhouse



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