

# ZAB Albuquerque ARTCC - Training Operations Manual 7210.002

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ZAB Albuquerque Training Operations Policy Manual - Policy 7210.002  
v1.0

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## **PURPOSE:**

This manual establishes policies and procedures for training operations that are common to all ZAB Albuquerque ARTCC Students, Controllers, Staff, Visiting Controllers, Mentors, and Instructors. It is integral to the success of the training department that this manual be read and understood by all members and visitors of the Albuquerque ARTCC. Failure to abide by any material contained within this manual could be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including removal of controlling privileges, removal from the ARTCC, or access to the VATSIM Network. Each ARTCC is granted the authority to establish local training procedures for facility certification within their organization.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

This manual shall be maintained by the TA. If there is not a TA, or the TA does not wish to maintain this policy, the ATM or his designee shall maintain this manual. If the ATM wishes to employ a FAB, all changes to this manual must be approved by the FAB. At no time shall any policy in this manual conflict with a VATSIM, VATNA, or VATUSA policy. Upon vacating the position, the outgoing TA shall provide the source file of this policy to the incoming TA, so that they may continue to modify this policy as needed. Policies shall be maintained in accordance with established VATSIM Global Rating Policies.

## **DISTRIBUTION:**

This manual shall be used by every controller and visitor at ZAB in coordination with the training staff and department, and shall serve as reference to training operations at ZAB. All members of ZAB shall become familiar with these policies as they relate to training and exercise their best judgement when encountering situations not covered by these policies.

## **CANCELLATION:**

This manual shall cancel the following policies:

1. 7210.1001 – Controller Ratings and Certifications
2. 7210.1002 – Major Facility Designation
3. 7210.1006 – Mentors
4. 7210.1009 – Instructors
5. 7210.1010 – Training Operations at ZAB
6. 7210.1011 – Testing
7. 7210.1015 – Temporary Training Solo Endorsements (TTSE)

## **DEFINITIONS:**

This manual will use many abbreviations that shall be used as follows:

1. VATSIM - The Virtual Air Traffic Simulation Network
2. VATNA - VATSIM North America, a region within VATSIM
3. VATUSA - VATSIM United States, a division within VATNA
4. ZAB - The Albuquerque ARTCC, an ARTCC within VATUSA
5. ATM - ZAB Air Traffic Manager
6. DATM - ZAB Deputy Air Traffic Manager
7. TA - ZAB Training Administrator
8. FAB - ZAB Facility Advisory Board

## **1. MAJOR FACILITY DESIGNATION**

- A.** VATSIM provides that a Region may designate a facility as “Major Airport” to ensure the airspace is controlled by a suitably qualified and/or experienced controller. To operate within a designated airspace, a controller must hold the appropriate controller rating AND a certification endorsement for that designated airspace. ZAB has designated the following facilities as “Major Airport”:

KPHX – Phoenix-Sky Harbor International Airport – Phoenix, Arizona

## **2. CONTROLLER RATING AND CERTIFICATIONS**

### **A. Controllers rated Pilot/Observer – (OBS)**

- 1) Shall not be allowed to log on to the VATSIM network to control live traffic under any circumstances. All training shall be conducted on the “Sweatbox” server.

### **B. Controllers rated Student 1 – (S1)**

- 1) Shall be allowed to control any clearance delivery or ground positions within the ZAB ARTCC that are not designated as a major facility as defined in section 1.A.
- 2) Shall be allowed to control clearance delivery and ground at any major facility, as defined in 1.A., after attaining the proper endorsement.
- 3) Shall be allowed to control any tower position, as long as they are being monitored by an instructor or mentor.

### **C. Controllers rated Student 2 – (S2)**

- 1) Shall be allowed to control clearance delivery, ground and tower positions within the ZAB ARTCC that are not designated as a major facility as defined in section 6.A.i.
- 2) Shall be allowed to control clearance delivery, ground and tower at any major facility, as defined in 1.A., after attaining the proper endorsement.
- 3) Shall be allowed to control any approach position, as long as they are being monitored by an instructor or mentor.

### **D. Controllers rated Student 3 – (S3)**

- 1) Shall be allowed to control clearance delivery, ground, tower, departure and approach positions within the ZAB ARTCC that are not designated as a major facility as defined in section 1.A.
- 2) Shall be allowed to control clearance delivery, ground, tower, departure and approach at any major facility, as defined in 6.A., after attaining the proper endorsement.
- 3) Shall be allowed to control any center position, as long as they are being monitored by an instructor or mentor.

### **E. Controllers rated Controller 1/Controller 3 – (C1/C3)**

- 1) Shall be allowed to control clearance delivery, ground, tower, departure and approach positions within the ZAB ARTCC that are not designated as a major facility as defined in section 1.A.
- 2) Shall be allowed to control clearance delivery, ground, tower, departure and approach at any major facility, as defined in 6.A., after attaining the proper endorsement.
- 3) Shall be allowed to control any center position after attaining major endorsements for all major facilities as defined in section 1.A.

## **3. MENTORS**

**A. Mentors** - Mentors are non-instructor controllers that are given training privileges within ZAB. They are authorized to conduct training sessions, live network monitoring, and ATC theory instruction. They are not authorized to perform over-the-shoulder (OTS) examinations, assign VATUSA exams, issue rating changes, or certify students to work positions. They serve in an assisting role to the Instructors and the Training Department to help students receive training and experience towards their next promotion.

### **B. Requirements to become a Mentor**

- 1) Rated S3 or higher, with a major endorsement of at least the tower level.
- 2) No major disciplinary action within the past 6 months.
- 3) Member of ZAB for at least 1 month
- 4) Recommendation from an existing Mentor/Instructor, or a ZAB staff member.
- 5) Approval from the TA, ATM or DATM

### **C. Application Process to become a Mentor**

- 1) Any controller wishing to become a Mentor may apply for the position directly to the TA. Their application must be as follows:

- 1) An email sent to [ta@zabartcc.org](mailto:ta@zabartcc.org), with [atm@zabartcc.org](mailto:atm@zabartcc.org) and [datm@zabartcc.org](mailto:datm@zabartcc.org) CC'd.
- 2) The email must contain a summary of why the controller feels they would be a good Mentor, and a brief overview of their VATSIM history, including any disciplinary action.
- 3) They must also have a current Mentor/Instructor or ZAB staff member send a Letter of Recommendation to the TA, ATM and DATM.
- 4) Upon receipt of the email, the TA has 7 days to respond to the application, either denying the application (with just cause), or by issuing the candidate a mentor examination.
- 5) Upon successful completion of a mentor exam, the application will be placed in "accepted status." Accepted status merely means that the member has been approved as a viable candidate for a Mentor role, it does not mean that the member is automatically a Mentor.
- 6) When a need arises for a Mentor, the TA shall have a pool of candidates to choose from, and will reach out to any controller who has an "accepted" application that meets the current need.
- 7) If an application is denied, the TA must state the reason why it is denied, and set a re-eligibility date for reapplication not less than 90 days, but not more than 180 days from the time of denial.

#### **D. Procedures for monitoring a student on the network**

- 1) During periods of traffic where the mentor feels they are able to both work a position of their own, and monitor the position the student is working, they may do so.
- 2) During periods of traffic where the mentor feels they are unable to both work a position of their own, and monitor the position the student is working, or the mentor does not wish to work a position of their own, they may do so. The mentor will use the callsign of the student, except they will place a \_M\_ in the middle of the callsign to designate that they are mentoring a student.  
*Example: Mentoring PHX\_T\_TWR, the callsign would be PHX\_M\_TWR.*
- 3) Mentors shall also continuously monitor both the text and voice channels the student is using, as well as maintaining the ability to step in and take over control if the mentor feels that the student is either not handling the traffic well, or has too much traffic for good learning to happen. In the event of either case, it shall be documented in detail in the student's training notes for that session.
- 4) Mentors may not train students on any position that they themselves are not qualified to work.
- 5) Mentors will be given access to the Instructor Panel on the website, allowing them to view students requesting sessions. They will be provided with TWRTrainer, ACSim and any other training programs available for training at ZAB. Associated situation and training files for these programs will also be made available.

#### **E. Removal as a Mentor**

- 1) Controllers with whom Mentor status has been given may have their status revoked for justifiable reasons. In the event a Mentor is not capable of the associated duties, the TA shall send notice to the ATM, DATM and the Mentor of the removal of Mentor status by stating the reason for removal and a re-eligibility date for re-hire as a mentor, which shall not be less than 90 days from the removal date. A mentor may be removed for any just reason, to include (but not limited to):
  - 1) Inactivity (both as a Mentor and as a controller, per ZAB Order 7210.001 4.A.)
  - 2) Failure to document training sessions, or poor documentation of training sessions.
  - 3) Failure to show up for training sessions previously scheduled by that mentor, or excessive cancellations of training sessions.
  - 4) Disciplinary action, both within ZAB, and outside of ZAB (but still within the scope of VATSIM).
  - 5) Evaluating students on material not required by the GRP, or holding students to a higher standard than the GRP allows (greater than 80% competency).
  - 6) Withholding advancement or training because of circumstances not allowed by the GRP.
  - 7) Willful disobedience of any VATSIM, VATNA, VATUSA or ZAB policy or disobedience or any directive given by staff members within those groups.
  - 8) Failure to represent themselves and/or the ARTCC in a professional manner.

## **4. INSTRUCTORS (I1)**

**A. Instructors** - Instructors are I1 rated controllers that have been given training privileges within ZAB. They are authorized to conduct training sessions, live network monitoring, ATC theory instruction, over-the-shoulder (OTS) examinations, issue rating changes, assign VATUSA exams and certify students to work positions. They serve as the direct link between students and the TA, providing the students with the highest quality of training possible.

**B. Requirements to become an Instructor:** (Some or all may be waived by authority of the TA)

- 1) Rated C1 or higher, with a major endorsement for all positions within ZAB for at least 3 months.
- 2) No major disciplinary action within the past 12 months.
- 3) Member of ZAB for at least 3 months.
- 4) At least 2 months prior instruction experience (can be satisfied by serving as a Mentor, prior I1/Mentor rating at a previous ARTCC or prior I1/Mentor within ZAB).
- 5) Recommendation by a current Instructor, or ZAB staff member.
- 6) Successful completion of a comprehensive interview with the TA.
- 7) Controllers are reminded that an I1 is not the next rating to achieve after earning your C1. Instructors are hand-picked by the current staff on hand because of their continued dedication to the ARTCC and knowledge of ATC procedures. Due to this, there is currently NO application process to become an Instructor. If the ARTCC has a need, the TA will reach out to candidates that he/she believes will do well in the role with further instructions on how to become an Instructor if the controller wishes to become one.

**C. Instructor responsibilities**

- 1) Instructors are expected to conduct at least five (5) hours of work for the training department each month and are responsible for ensuring that all student training requests are met in a timely manner by:
  - 1) Conducting training sessions with students, whether on the "Sweatbox," the live network, or offline ATC theory.
  - 2) Development of training materials that students and other training staff may use for training and self-study.
  - 3) Conduct multi-student theory "classrooms" on advanced subjects, rarely encountered situations, or controller client set-up.
- 2) To ensure Instructors are contributing to the training department, periodic assessment of activity shall be conducted by the TA.

**D. Removal as an Instructor**

- 1) Controllers whom Instructor status have been given may have their rating revoked for justifiable reasons. In the event an Instructor is not capable of successfully handling the associated duties, the TA shall send notice to the ATM, DATM and the Mentor of the removal of the Instructor status by stating the reason for removal and a re-eligibility date for re-hire as a mentor, which shall not be less than 90 days from the removal date. Some of the reasons for removal from Instructor status include, but are not limited to:
  - 1) Inactivity (both as an Instructor and as a controller, per ZAB Order 7210.001 4.A.)
  - 2) Failing to document training sessions, or poor documentation of training sessions.
  - 3) Failing to show up for training sessions previously scheduled by that Instructor, or excessive cancellations of training sessions.
  - 4) Disciplinary action, both within ZAB, and outside of ZAB (but still within the scope of VATSIM).
  - 5) Evaluating students on material not required by the GRP, or holding students to a higher standard than the GRP allows (greater than 80% competency).
  - 6) Withholding advancement or training because of circumstances not allowed by the GRP.
  - 7) Willful disregard of any VATSIM, VATNA, VATUSA or ZAB policy or any directive given by a senior staff member.
  - 8) Failure to represent themselves and/or the ARTCC in a professional manner.

## **5. GENERAL TRAINING PROCEDURES**

### **A. Requesting Training**

- 1) Any controller who wishes to receive training shall make a request on the ZAB website containing the desired day and time for the session to occur and the desired position that the controller wishes to be trained on.
- 2) If a Mentor/Instructor is available at the time/date that the student requests the session, they may “take” the session and train the student.
- 3) If no Mentor/Instructor takes the session by the time the sessions is scheduled to start, the session will be archived on the website to show that the student is actively requesting training.
- 4) If a Mentor/Instructor signs up for the session, and either party must cancel the session, the cancelling party must email the other person, adding the TA as a recipient, stating a reason for cancellation. Notes for the session shall be updated by the Mentor/Instructor to reflect the session was cancelled, including the reason for cancellation.
- 5) Students are requested to not “pester” Instructors for training. ZAB is a volunteer organization, and every staff member donates their time, and is not compensated. If an Instructor wishes to train someone, they can do so, however, training of every single student that requests training is not required, so long as the Instructor meets the activity requirements.
- 6) Any student experiencing issues scheduling training or any issue with a particular Mentor/Instructor shall contact the TA for resolution

#### **B. Testing**

- 1) Although most training is more successful in a practical environment, certain exams are still required to test comprehension of the training materials provided.
- 2) Students are required to achieve a passing grade of 80% to be promoted to the next rating. Any grade of 79.9% or less shall be considered non-passing, and will require a retake after a 7 day waiting period.
- 3) Tests are valid as long as the controller is an active member/visitor of ZAB.
- 4) Tests for members that have left ZAB are valid for a 6 month period, after which time tests may have to be reassigned to members that wish to return to ZAB, either from inactivity, or from another ARTCC.
- 5) The above validity period of 6 months may be extended at the discretion of the ATM, DATM or TA, provided that the student can display sufficient competency upon return.

### **6. Self-Monitored Training (SMT)**

- A.** A student, who completes basic training at the Tower, Approach or Center level, has passed all relevant VATUSA exams, and has been recommended to the TA by an Instructor or Mentor, may be certified to perform Self-Monitored Training during off-peak hours.
  - 1) Off-Peak Hours are defined as any time Monday – Friday, except between the hours of 1600 to 2000 (Phoenix Local Time GMT -7) and any time Saturday – Sunday, except between the hours of 1200 to 1800 (Phoenix Local Time GMT -7).
- B.** While conducting SMT, the student shall
  - 1) Place a message in his/her “Controller Info” text stating that they are currently working under an SMT certification.
  - 2) Continuously monitor traffic conditions to ensure that he/she can handle the workload while still being able to learn from the session.
  - 3) Immediately discontinue the session if traffic does not permit learning, or if asked to by an Instructor/Mentor.
- C.** A student shall not work under a SMT certification during any approved ARTCC events (those posted in the ZAB Events section of the Forums) or during peak hours as defined in A.1 of this section.

*\*\* Remember, the goal of VATSIM is to educate and provide realistic simulation of air traffic procedures to pilots and controllers and, most importantly, to provide a fun environment for everyone to enjoy. This is a free service to everyone, and should be respected as such. Your membership is a privilege and not a right.*