

# the Winnipeg FIR

**FIR GENERAL POLICY**

# the Winnipeg FIR

1

## Revision Log

Revision Date	Revision	Notes	Initials
27 Sep 2020	1	Initial Creation	NP, KD
09 Feb 2021	2	Modified Communication Policy	NP
02 May 2021	3	Modified Staff Observing Callsigns	NP
26 Jan 2022	4	Added Visiting Controller Policy	NP
12 May 2022	5	Updates to Activity Policy	NP
16 Sep 2022	6	Additions to Staffing	NP
27 Apr 2023	7	Branding updates applied, addition of instructor assignment order for students	NP
07 May 2023	8	Revision to visiting controller policies	NP
08 Jul 2023	9	Updates to new student indoc, new entry exam completion limit details	NP, EM
16 Jul 2023	10	Added section 3.3, adjustment to OTS scheduling policy and OTS marking sheet uploading procedure and deputy signature updated	NP, EM
21 Nov 2023	11	Added section 2.1, adjusted other section numbers and re-designed table of contents and indexed document properly	NP, KD

# the Winnipeg FIR

2

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Section I – Activity and FIR News</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Updates to FIR	3
1.2 Controlling Time Commitment	4
1.3 Controller Inactivity	5
1.4 Visiting Controllers	5
1.4.1 Visiting Fast Tracking	6
1.4.2 Visiting Inactivity	6
<b>Section II – Winnipeg Training Policies</b>	<b>6</b>
2.0 Minimum Training Requirements	6
2.1 Training Progression	7
2.2 Additional Training Limitation	7
2.3 Supervising Students	7
2.4 Instructor Linking	8
2.5 SweatBox Training	8
<b>Section III – OTS Examinations</b>	<b>8</b>
3.0 OTS Exams	8
3.1 Adjudication Eligibility	9
3.2 Exam Planning	9
3.3 Written Examination	10
3.4 OTS Adjudication	10
<b>Section IV – FIR Staff</b>	<b>10</b>
4.0 FIR Chain of Command	11
4.1 Hiring of Staff	11
4.1.1 Removal of Staff	11
4.1.2 Resignation of Staff	11
4.2 Observing Callsigns	12
4.3 Mentor Status Promotions	12
4.4 Instructor Rating Promotions	13
<b>Section V – Winnipeg Communication Platforms</b>	<b>14</b>
5.1 Official FIR Communication Platforms	15
5.2 Coordination Between Controllers	15
<b>Authorizations</b>	<b>15</b>

# the Winnipeg FIR

3

## Section I – Activity and FIR News

### 1.1 Updates to FIR

As a controller in the Winnipeg FIR, each member is expected to remain current with any policies, procedures, and general updates regarding the FIR. Controllers are expected to use up-to-date sector files, updating as soon as possible upon any new releases from the FIR's staff.

Any updates that are considered critical - meaning, knowledge of information that is immediately impacting the Winnipeg FIR and their operations - is to be published on the Winnipeg FIR's Forum on the VATCAN.ca website, as well as in any voice and text chat rooms (Discord, TeamSpeak3, etc.)

### 1.2 Controlling Time Commitment

While also continuing to be up-to-date with all FIR updates, Winnipeg FIR controllers are also expected to be willing to commit a small portion of time to remain current within the FIR. These requirements apply to hours controlled only in the Winnipeg FIR, this means any hours obtained in any other FIRs/ARTCCs/vACCs do not apply to your Winnipeg FIR hours. These hourly requirements are listed below for each type of controller:

Controller Type	Minimum Hour Requirement
Regular Controller (S1-C3)	2 Hours per Month
FIR Instructor (I1, I3)	3 Hours per Month
Visiting Controllers (S1-I3)	1 Hour per Month

Hourly requirements do not apply to controllers on an LOA (Leave Of Absence). While on an LOA, controllers are not to control in the Winnipeg FIR until the LOA has been terminated.

Controllers found to be violating this rule will have their cases individually handled by the FIR Chief and/or the Deputy FIR Chief, VATCAN Executive team, as well as the FIR Chief's designee if necessary.

# the Winnipeg FIR

4

By default, LOAs have a maximum length of 6 months. A consecutive LOA will not be permitted within 6 months of the previous LOA being terminated. In special circumstances, LOA procedures may be modified for some cases by approval of the FIR Chief or their designee.

To request an LOA, controllers should email the FIR Chief directly. Once ready to return to activity, controllers can contact the FIR Chief for assistance. By default, a re-orientation will be required for any members returning from LOA after two calendar months away from controlling.

## 1.3 Controller Inactivity

Any controller that is unable to reach and/or surpass the minimum hour requirement (listed in section 1.2) will be contacted by a member of the Winnipeg FIR Staff at the end of the month to inform them that they did not reach their activity requirement for the previous month,

If a controller remains inactive for more than ninety (90) days following contact from a member of the FIR, the controller will be removed from the FIR (VATCAN.ca and FIR website).

Removal will be communicated with a five (5) day warning email to the user's registered VATSIM email address, giving them a final opportunity to remain a member of the FIR without the requirement of re-certification prior to removal. Should a controller respond and secure their account, they will be required to obtain their minimum hours the following month, or will be removed from the FIR roster.

A re-certification, containing any updates missed, and confirming the controller is fit to control again, will be then completed by a Winnipeg FIR Instructor. The controller's transfer back in on VATCAN.ca will be approved and their certification will be then re-added to the FIR website.

# the Winnipeg FIR

5

## 1.4 Visiting Controllers

By default, any VATSIM controller with a rating equal to or above S2 is considered eligible to visit in the Winnipeg FIR. However, these restrictions should be modified to meet FIR staffing requirements and training constraints (if applicable). These restrictions should be made clearly visible to applicants before beginning the process.

Once an application is received and the entry exam is successfully completed, it is the job of the FIR staff to make contact with the controller, discuss their time constraints, and find a mutual time to begin indoctrination training. Any FIR instructor is eligible to complete visiting checkouts.

All Winnipeg home controllers must complete at least fifty percent or greater of their monthly hours using Winnipeg FIR callsigns to remain active. Failure to comply with this may result in de-certification from both the Winnipeg FIR and other facilities a controller is visiting, subject to that facility's policies.

### 1.4.1 Visiting Fast Tracking

Controllers applying for visiting status from within one of VATCAN's Flight Information Regions, or otherwise approved by the FIR Chief Instructor or its delegates may be eligible for a fast tracked visiting training process.

This process, which is to be agreed upon between instructor and student, will skip basic Canadian ATC training in favour of a shorter course about Winnipeg ACC airspace-specific information.

### 1.4.2 Visiting Inactivity

Visiting controllers in the Winnipeg FIR must abide by all Winnipeg FIR Standard Operating Procedures, as well as the FIR General Policy. Therefore, visiting controllers must abide to the Winnipeg FIR's activity (noted in section 1.2).

Visitors are initially assigned the FIR entry exam once accepted through the VATCAN.ca web infrastructure. This exam allows seven days for completion. If an applicant is not able to complete the exam in the allocated time, the exam will expire, and the applicant will be removed from the FIR - they can re-apply at any time.

# the Winnipeg FIR

6

## Section II – Winnipeg Training Policies

### 2.0 Minimum Training Requirements

All students within the Winnipeg FIR are required to acquire a certain amount of hours on their current certified rating - this is to say, without any supervision - prior to starting the next step in their training. These restrictions are as follows:

Rating Upgrade	Minimum
S1 Rating > S2 Rating	30.0 Hours
S2 Rating > S3 Rating	20.0 Hours
S3 Rating > C1 Rating	20.0 Hours

### 2.1 Training Progression

All students joining the FIR will be required to complete initial training prior to controlling on the network. This training will consist of an initial FIR entry exam, and courses assigned via Winnipeg365. A student will either be considered brand new, or experienced.

While there is no limit to attempts for the FIR entry exam or any training-related exams, exams must be completed within seven (7) days of assignment. If the student is unable to complete an exam, they should contact the FIR Chief Instructor.

Students will not be assigned an instructor or be certified to control on the network until all initial training is completed.

### 2.2 Additional Training Limitation

Additional restrictions may be set on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the FIR Chief and/or Chief Instructor or its delegates, if deemed necessary. Should this happen, notice will be provided to any directly affected members and mentors/instructors of the change.

# the Winnipeg FIR

7

## 2.3 Supervising Students

When supervising a student on the network, the student's instructor or mentor should always abide by the following:

- Instructors and Mentors can only watch a maximum of two (2) students at once while not controlling
- Instructors and Mentors can only watch a maximum of one (1) student while controlling at the same time

## 2.4 Instructor Linking

When a new student joins Winnipeg, and once the required exams and VATCAN prerequisites have been completed, the Chief, Chief Instructor or its delegates shall assign the student an initial instructor. This instructor should introduce the student to the FIR, VATCAN and VATSIM's policies, as well as begin their initial training towards their DEL/GND solo.

While it is preferred that students are assigned to instructors by preference or by instructor availability, if required, the FIR Chief Instructor or FIR Chief shall assign the student to the instructor they believe in their best judgment is the best fit for the student in question. This should be determined by factors such as the student's experience, instructor availability and current wait times in the FIR.

Students will be assigned instructors based on their FIR join date, as reflected on the VATCAN.ca website. This information will be kept track of by the FIR training staff and updated regularly.

## 2.5 SweatBox Training

SweatBox training sessions are used by the Winnipeg FIR to simulate heavy traffic loads to assist controlling trainees in their skills. The files are made available to Mentors and Instructors, and are confidential to the FIR. Sessions are to be run only by FIR Mentors and Instructors, unless otherwise approved by FIR Staff.



# the Winnipeg FIR

8

## Section III – OTS Examinations

### 3.0 OTS Exams

Following training of a student where it is deemed by both their respective Instructor and the Chief Instructor or its delegates that they are ready for their exam, an Over-The-Shoulder (OTS) Examination may be scheduled.

It should be noted that the student's primary instructor is responsible for arranging an adjudicator for the OTS. This process should comply with VATCAN's OTS Protocol.

### 3.1 Adjudication Eligibility

The following members of the Winnipeg FIR are eligible to adjudicate an OTS:

- FIR Chief or Chief Instructor (must hold an I1 rating)
- Any Instructor 1, 3 or higher rated controller from within the Winnipeg FIR

If a local adjudicator cannot be found, the following can also be used:

- VATCAN Division Director, Deputy Director & Training Director (VATCAN1 - VATCAN3, must hold a minimum I1 rating)
- Any Canadian I3-rated controller

To abide by VATCAN's OTS Exam Protocol, no instructor that has been involved with the student's training can conduct the exam. A controller is considered by the Winnipeg FIR to be involved if:

- The Instructor has completed one or more training sessions with the student, classroom or Sweatbox.
- The Instructor has left training notes on the student, confirming they have worked with them at least once. This does not include supervising the student on their position.

# the Winnipeg FIR

9

## 3.2 Exam Planning

An OTS exam in the Winnipeg FIR should be planned with at least fourteen (14) days of notice, and should be communicated to both the Winnipeg Events Coordinator (ZWG4), as well as VATCAN's Communication and Events Director (VATCAN5) for publication to the FIR and the division's various social networks. The FIR Chief Instructor or its delegates, as well as the VATCAN Training Director should also be informed of the scheduling of any OTS exam.

In the case of an OTS exam, the duty of the events coordinator is to ensure that the exam is made known to the public using the FIR's social media (Twitter, Facebook), as well as any other relevant communication methods (Discord, the Winnipeg FIR Events Calendar & VATCAN Events Calendar.)

## 3.3 Written Examination

Prior to an OTS exam, students shall be assigned the written exam through the VATCAN.ca website relative to the rating they will be tested on. Students have seven (7) days to complete the exam from time of assignment.

Exams must be completed with no less than twenty-four (24) hours until the scheduled OTS exam start time. Should a student fail to complete the exam within the time allocated, the OTS should be cancelled by the FIR, and moved forward to when the student has the exam completed. Exceptions to this section can be made with the authorization of the Chief, Chief Instructor and its delegates.

## 3.4 OTS Adjudication

Every OTS exam completed by the Winnipeg FIR must be completed by at least one (1) adjudicator, and must abide by the FIR's OTS Marking Sheets. This sheet, once completed, must include the student and adjudicator's required details, a PASS or FAIL mark, as well as as many comments as deemed necessary by the adjudicator of the exam.

Once this exam is completed, the Marking Sheet should be uploaded via the VATCAN.ca infrastructure, and assuming the exam is passed, the rating should be updated to reflect the promotion.

# the Winnipeg FIR

10

## Section IV – FIR Staff

### 4.0 FIR Chain of Command

The Winnipeg FIR staff team is formed by the following different roles:

- FIR Chief, ZWG1
- Deputy FIR Chief, ZWG2
- Chief Instructor, ZWG3
- Events Coordinator, ZWG4
- Facility Engineer, ZWG5
- Webmaster, ZWG6
- Assistant Chief Instructor, ZWG9

### 4.1 Hiring of Staff

When a staff position is either created, or a new position is created and therefore is vacant, a position can be filled by the incumbent Winnipeg FIR Staff.

When the FIR Chief is said vacant position, the applicant selected must also be approved by the VATCAN Division Director. Otherwise, any hiring decision is at the discretion of the FIR Chief, or can be voted upon by a panel of members of the FIR Staff if deemed necessary.

#### 4.1.1 Removal of Staff

In the case of the FIR requiring the removal of a staff member excluding the FIR Chief for any reason, the FIR shall vote on the removal of the member. A majority (half of staff voting, plus one) is required to pass the motion, as with any other standard vote-requiring procedure. For example, When fully staffed, the FIR should have 5 voting parties on the removal of a staff member, making the majority 3.

The staff member in question shall be informed of the change via email and/or voice communication, and a posting for the position should be created as required.

The FIR Chief's removal is the responsibility of the Division Director - no voting is required.

# the Winnipeg FIR

11

## 4.1.2 Resignation of Staff

If a member of the Winnipeg FIR wishes to resign from their position, the protocol for stepping down is as follows:

FIR Chief (ZWG1)	All Other FIR Staff (ZWG2 - ZWG9)
<p>The FIR Chief should submit their resignation directly to the VATCAN Division Director, VATCAN1. It is also suggested that they inform their FIR Staff about the resignation as soon as the message to VATCAN1 is sent.</p> <p>The resignation of this position should be given with a minimum of seven (7) days notice.</p>	<p>FIR Staff should inform the FIR Chief and Deputy Chief of their intent to resign from their position, preferably with as much notice as possible as to create more ability for controllers to apply to the vacancy.</p>

Applications for the vacant position, as is with any other form of removal, should be posted as required.

## 4.2 Observing Callsigns

When observing, all Winnipeg controllers and/or students are required to logon using a list of options for callsigns. These are either WPG\_*Initials*\_OBS (eg. WPG\_KD\_OBS), WPG\_OBS or *Initials*\_OBS (eg. NP\_OBS.)

When staff are observing, observing may be done using any of the above callsigns, as well as WPG *Staff Number* (eg. WPG1).

Controllers who are not certified to control may login as an observer, but may not login as any controller position.

# the Winnipeg FIR

12

## 4.3 Mentor Status Promotions

The Winnipeg FIR offers mentorship statuses to students who hold a minimum of a Student 3 (S3) rating, and have expressed interest in teaching other controllers.

Mentors are certified to assist controllers with any rating lower than their current rating. They are able to oversee them on the network as *Airport\_M\_Position* (eg. CYWG\_M\_TWR.)

Students are, however, required to have at least one session with their assigned Instructor prior to a mentor beginning to train them on their position.

Mentors are viewed as Instructors in the learning phase prior to being given an Instructor 1 (I1) rating. This means that they can begin the process of teaching other students while continuing to be students themselves - and can learn better ways to communicate information to other students prior to being considered for their I1 rating.

Mentors are typically selected based on the following credentials:

- Minimum of 15 controlling hours within the last 90 Days
- A clear knowledge of their current rating and its included positions
- Clean standing within the VATSIM network and VATCAN
- Recommendation from a staff member internally and/or externally from the FIR. This includes but is not limited to any senior VATCAN member.
- Current training demand and statistics of current instructing situation within the FIR.

## 4.4 Instructor Rating Promotions

Instructors are typically selected based on the following credentials:

- Must currently hold a C1 or C3 rating with 50 hours on said rating
- Must currently hold Mentor status for a minimum period of 60 days
- Minimum of 20 controlling hours within the last 90 Days
- Must not be marked as inactive, and must have achieved the minimum hour requirement(s) within the previous 2 calendar months
- A clear knowledge of their current rating and its included positions
- Clean standing within the VATSIM network and VATCAN
- Current training demand and statistics of the current instructing situation within the FIR.

# the Winnipeg FIR

13

Any members of the FIR who are interested in being promoted to an Instructor rating should submit a letter of interest to the FIR Chief, Chief Instructor or its delegates..

While a Mentor status can be approved by the Winnipeg FIR Staff, an Instructor rating requires the approval of both FIR and VATCAN Executive staff, specifically the Division Training Director.

Mentors and Instructor appointments must always abide by VATCAN's Mentor and Instructor Guidelines. All applicants to mentor and instructor promotions are expected to complete a VATCAN training course for this promotion, as well as any required additional FIR-specific training deemed necessary by the FIR Chief Instructor or its delegates.

# the Winnipeg FIR

14

## Section V – Winnipeg Communication Platforms

### 5.1 Official FIR Communication Platforms

The Winnipeg FIR currently uses three platforms for FIR communications - meaning, an area for all controllers to chat, as well as one for coordination during active controlling. The FIR currently uses both the Winnipeg Discord and VATCAN Discord servers, as well as the VATCAN TeamSpeak3 server and EuroScope's VCCS system.

The VATCAN TeamSpeak server and EuroScope's built-in VCCS are the only currently approved method of communication for coordinating aircraft. Discord platforms shall only be used in cases of outages causing no other options for coordination.

Both the VATCAN TeamSpeak server, the Winnipeg Discord and the VATCAN Discord are all subject to the VATSIM Code of Conduct. All members are expected to maintain a professional demeanor at all times while using any official communication platforms.

### 5.2 Coordination Between Controllers

The Winnipeg FIR uses TeamSpeak for all coordination of aircraft, as mentioned above. All controllers are encouraged to join the VATCAN TeamSpeak server while controlling.

In addition, Winnipeg controllers are required to be available on the VATCAN TeamSpeak server, or have their VCCS configuration operational, to coordinate when any other Winnipeg controllers in the FIR are also controlling. The FIR retains the ability to, without any prior notification, revoke any user's access to the FIR's Discord for any reason within reason.

### Authorizations



Nate Power  
Winnipeg (CZWG) FIR Chief



Tavis Harrison  
Winnipeg (CZWG) Deputy FIR Chief