



VIRTUAL AIR TRAFFIC SIMULATION NETWORK

NORTH AMERICA REGION – USA DIVISION

vZAU – CHICAGO ARTCC

ORDER
vZAU
3120.4A

Effective:
1/1/2021

Subject: Air Traffic Technical Training

This policy establishes and directs the vZAU Training Program and defines the standards, requirements, and individuals in the training program. All training staff are required to be familiar with this order and follow each procedure without deviation.

The procedures prescribed by this order are general and align with VATSIM Global Ratings Policy V2.2014.1. Should any procedure in this order be found in violation of the VATSIM Global Ratings Policy, it shall become void.

Please note, this order is intended for use on the VATSIM network and only applies in a virtual environment simulated on the VATSIM network. It is not applicable for live operations in the National Airspace System.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1-1 Purpose of this Order

This order establishes and directs the vZAU Chicago ARTCC Training Program and defines the standards, requirements, and regulations to which all training program participants must adhere. It prescribes vZAU training procedures and policy for use by any individual participating in the training program.

1-2 Audience

This order applies to any/all participants in the vZAU training program, including the Training Administrator, Instructors, Mentors, students, as well as any individual under the scope of the training program. Although all participants in the program are subject to this order, only the Training Administrator, Instructors, and Mentors of vZAU must be familiar with the provisions of this order.

1-3 What This Order Cancels

The following Orders/Notices are cancelled and superseded; their content has been added to this Order:

- a. ZAU 02.100 Training Order, dated July 20, 2020

1-4 Explanation of Changes

- a. This is the first version of this order.

1-5 Mission

- a. It is the mission of the Chicago ARTCC to provide safe and efficient air traffic services to simulated air traffic on the VATSIM network.
- b. The Facility will strive to maintain a professional, friendly, supportive, and educational environment for both network controllers and pilots.

1-6 Word Meanings

As used in this Order:

- a. *Must*, or an action verb in the imperative sense, means mandatory.
- b. *Should* means recommended
- c. *May* and *need not* mean optional
- d. *Will* indicates futurity

1-7 Abbreviations and References

This Order uses abbreviations and refers to words/phrases as defined in the following tables:

TBL 1-1-1
Abbreviations

ABBR / REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION
ATM	Air Traffic Manager
DATM	Deputy Air Traffic Manager
TA	Training Administrator
EC	Events Coordinator
FE	Facility Engineer
QA	Quality assurance (program)
IAW	In accordance with
MTCR	Master Task Certification Record
the program	The training program established in this program
training staff	Mentors and instructors as defined in this order
Solo Cert	Solo Certification
the website	www.chicagoartcc.org and any/all associated features/programs

Chapter 2 - Administration

Section 1 - Training Roles and Responsibilities

2-1-1 Training Administrator

The primary role of the Training Administrator is to **enable the training program** by assisting instructors/mentors and ensuring a constant, steady, and aggressive training schedule in adherence to (and enforcement of) this order.

- a. IAW this order (unless otherwise indicated), the TA is responsible for the following:
 1. Recommending training staff appointments to VATUSA and/or the ATM.
 2. Managing training staff.
 3. Conducting briefings with training staff regarding changes to this order and ensuring understanding and adherence to all training policy and material.
 4. Assigning students' primary instructors and primary mentors.
 5. Conducting QA checks on training/mentor sessions.
 6. Monitoring students' progress by periodically reviewing each student's evaluations.
 7. Conducting monthly record reviews on all members.
 8. Managing student promotions and certifications.

2-1-2 Instructor

The primary role of the instructor is to **execute the training program** by ensuring his/her availability for a minimum of one hour per calendar week to train students via either live, sweatbox, or classroom training.

- a. The one-hour requirement may be spread over two 30-minute sessions, or one 1-hour session, and is not included in monthly controller proficiency.
- b. IAW this order (unless otherwise indicated), the instructor is responsible for the following:
 1. Training/instructing students
 2. Managing and updating students' Master Task Certification Record to accurately reflect students' progress.
 3. Completing training evaluations on each training session conducted
 4. Recommending practical exams
 5. Conducting QA checks on training/mentor sessions

2-1-3 Primary Instructor

The Instructor may also be assigned by the Training Administrator as a Primary Instructor for a student. Primary Instructors are assigned to act as their students' key point-of-contact for everything training-

related. This allows the student to better focus on his/her training by minimizing “overhead”. Additionally, the Primary Instructor **reinforces the training program** by providing better training accountability for each student.

- a. The Primary Instructor has all the responsibilities of an Instructor, but has expanded authorization/responsibility with his/her assigned students’ training and career progression which include:
 1. Conducting initial skill checks
 2. Receiving and concurring/disagreeing with practical exam recommendations
 3. Recommending student promotions

2-1-4 Mentor

The primary role of the Mentor is to **augment the training program** by ensuring his/her availability for a minimum of one hour per calendar week to train students either live, Sweatbox, or classroom training.

- a. The one-hour requirement may be spread over two 30-minute sessions, or one 1-hour session, and is not included in monthly controller proficiency.
- b. The difference between the instructor and mentor is primarily the method of training involved. The mentor has less of a “training” role and acts more like an “advisor” to the student. Mentors also have less administrative responsibilities than instructors, allowing them to focus on providing needed training sessions.
- c. IAW this order (unless otherwise indicated), the Mentor is responsible for the following:
 1. Training/mentoring students
 2. Completing training evaluations on each training session conducted

2-1-5 Primary Mentor

The Mentor may also be assigned by the Training Administrator as a Primary Mentor for a student. Primary Mentors are assigned to assist or fill in for a Primary Instructor and is intended to act as the primary advisor to the student. This allows the student to better focus on his/her training by minimizing “overhead”. This is a further expansion of the QA program.

- a. The Primary Mentor has all the responsibilities of a Mentor, but has expanded authorization/responsibility with his/her assigned student(s) training and career progression which include:
 1. Conducting initial skill checks as assigned by the TA, ATM, or Primary Instructor.
 2. Discussing practical exam recommendations with the TA and/or Primary Instructor.
 3. Recommending student promotions to the TA or Primary Instructor.

2-1-6 Student

The primary role of the student is to **participate in the training program** by ensuring he/she devotes time to study and sign up for training sessions.

- a. Soliciting training via various forms of media is prohibited and will be reported to and logged by the TA.
- b. Students are responsible for attending scheduled training sessions **on time** and cancelling prior to **24 hours** from the session.
- c. Students are expected to arrive to each session adequately prepared having completed any assignments made by the instructor/mentor.

Section 2 - Evaluation Forms

2-2-1 Policy

Training staff (specifically the training staff member) must complete an automated training session evaluation report through the ZAU website. This ensures documentation of students' training progress and heightens training staff awareness of each student's progress (current focuses, strengths, and weaknesses) which helps make each subsequent training session more efficient. Each of these training evaluation reports will be submitted via the ZAU website but will also reflect onto the VATUSA website under each student's training log. An evaluation form is required to be completed after every training session. The submission of each training evaluation form to both ZAU and VATUSA holds ZAU to compliance with the VATUSA Centralized Training Records system. Training staff should only submit a form to the ZAU website.

2-2-2 Application

vZAU uses a web-based system to electronically complete, store, and recall training evaluation forms. This system is available on the website to each member of the training staff. In the event of a website failure or maintenance where the evaluation feature is unavailable, training staff are to report student progress and session evaluations to the TA.

Section 3 - Master Task Certification Record

2-3-1 Policy

vZAU maintains a "Master Task Certification Record" (MTCR) on each student/controller ("member") assigned to the ARTCC. This record is a "running record" constantly being updated to reflect the most-current status of a vZAU member regarding his/her competencies, abilities, certifications, and endorsements by documenting which tasks he/she is certified on. This is another tool to ensure the highest level of awareness of a member's situation. It is intended to minimize training delays and maximize the efficiency of the overall training program.

2-3-2 Application

vZAU uses a web-based system to electronically view and update the MTCR. This system is available on the website to each member of the training staff. In the event of a website failure or maintenance where the MTCR is unavailable, training staff are still responsible to ensure the accuracy of members' MTCR as soon as the system is restored.

Chapter 3 - Training

Section 1 - Procedures

3-1-1 Training Facilities

- a. Chicago Midway International Airport (KMDW) is designated as the primary Chicago ARTCC training facility and must be used for live, *Sweatbox*, and classroom non-major training.
- b. General Mitchell International Airport (KMKE) may be used for training on facility specific procedures utilizing the live network, *Sweatbox*, and classroom non-major training.
- c. Chicago O'Hare International Airport (KORD) is designated as the primary Chicago ARTCC major training facility and must be used for live, *Sweatbox*, and classroom major training.

NOTE—*No other facility may be used for training unless the Instructor or Mentor has been given permission by the Training Administrator.*

Section 2 - Curriculum

3-2-1 Training Utilization

Upon assignment to the vZAU Chicago ARTCC, each new or transferring student/controller will be automatically entered into the training program and will be assigned a Primary Mentor. The TA will provide the individual with an electronic briefing which quickly explains the training process and provides further instructions for obtaining training.

3-2-2 Skill Check

- a. The purpose of the skill check is to gauge the current ability and knowledge of a student/controller. This tool is designed to give perspective to the entire training staff on the individual needs of the student/controller, and not intended to be used for certification.
- b. Skill checks must be conducted on *Sweatbox* where traffic can be adjusted to the needs of the student/controller and administered by the Primary Instructor.

3-2-3 GRP Competency Checks

Upon transfer, or approval of a visiting request, all controllers will be required to complete a GRP Competency check IAW VATSIM *Global Ratings Policy Appendix A* and VATUSA *Division Training Policy 3120.4A*.

a. Transfers

1. If the transferring controller is deemed GRP competent, he/she will be certified on all minor positions granted by their rating and the GRP. The controller will still be subject to training on all local Standard Operating Procedures, as prescribed by *VATUSA Division Training Policy 3120.4A*.
2. If the transferring controller is not deemed GRP competent, he/she will be subject to recurrent training until the controller is compliant with all the competencies defined in the VATSIM GRP Appendix A for their specific rating.

b. Visitors

1. Visiting controllers may be checked out on positions that require a Major Endorsement by the following members of the training staff:
 - i. Instructor(s)
 - ii. Mentor(s)

3-2-4 Sessions

- a. **Training sessions** are the most common type of session conducted at vZAU, where an instructor or mentor will meet with the student either on the live network, Sweatbox, or for classroom instruction. Scheduling is initiated by the student and covered in further detail in section 3 of this chapter.
- b. **Target sessions** are similar to training sessions, except scheduling is initiated by the training staff. It is a tool available to training staff to target a particular task item with a student who requires additional training on that item. It provides a “short-cut” by skipping a signup process and should not be used regularly.
- c. **Community sessions** are a tool to discuss/train on one or more specified topics to a group of people. They are instructional in nature and administered only by an instructor. Because of the open attendance, the instructor cannot focus on one student’s needs and therefore cannot open or close any student’s task items associated with the session. It is intended strictly as a learning tool where anyone may attend with the intention of learning.

3-2-5 Exams

- a. VATUSA written exams may be utilized at the Training Administrator’s discretion.
- b. **Written exams** are assigned by and at the discretion of the student’s instructor. Written exams are detailed below:
 1. **ZAU – Clearance Delivery/Ground Written Exam**
 - (a) Available: **after sweatbox S1 training completed**
 - (a) ZAU members: **required** for OBS
 2. **ZAU – Local Control Written Exam**
 - iii. Available: **after sweatbox S2 training completed**

- iv. ZAU members: **required** for S1 members training toward S2

3. ZAU – Major Local (ORD ATCT) Written Exam

- i. Available: **after sweatbox ORD ATCT training completed**
- ii. ZAU members: **required** for S2 members training toward the Major Endorsement

4. ZAU – Radar Written Exam

- i. Available: **after S3 training completed, before OTS**
- ii. ZAU members: **required** for S2 members training for S3

5. ZAU – Major Radar (C90) Written Exam

- i. Available: **after sweatbox C90 training completed**
- ii. ZAU members: **required** for S3 members training toward the Major Endorsement

6. ZAU – Chicago Center Written Exam

- i. Available: **after majority of C1 training completed**: TA's discretion
- ii. ZAU members: **required** for S3 members training toward C1

NOTE—No controller will be required to take a written exam prior to receiving training, however, all written exams required by that rating will be required to be completed prior to promotion IAW this policy.

- c. **Practical Exams** are assigned by the TA at the request of the student's Primary Instructor. Practical exams are the over-the-shoulder (OTS) portion of the certification process, where the student is strictly monitored for compliance with FAA orders, VATSIM competencies, and ZAU facility specific procedures. In the interest of QA, practical exams should not be administered by the student's Primary Instructor. After the completion of a practical examination, the Instructor whom completed the exam is required to submit an OTS form via the VATUSA website.

1. Practical exams that will result in a rating change are to be conducted by:
 - i. The Training Administrator
 - ii. The Air Traffic Manager (if they hold an I1 rating)
 - iii. The Deputy Air Traffic Manager (if they hold an I1 rating)
 - iv. An Instructor designated by Senior Staff to complete the OTS
2. Practical exams that will result in the controller getting a Major Endorsement are to be conducted by:
 - i. The Training Administrator
 - ii. The student's primary instructor / mentor.
 - iii. An instructor / mentor assigned by the TA.

Section 3 - Training Sessions

3-3-1 Scheduling

Training sessions will be scheduled using the **Training Schedule** feature of the website. In the event of website failure – and only in this event – students should request training through the Discord training channel . Students should never request training through Discord private message or other media forms.

3-3-2 Cancellation

- a. Due to vZAU’s student-to-instructor ratio and limited availability of training sessions, students (as well as training staff) must make every attempt possible to attend sessions for which they signed up for.
- b. Both student and training staff must submit cancellations prior to 24 hours from the session. Students who cancel within 24 hours from the scheduled session will be considered absent unless a valid reason has been received and determined by the TA. (See 3-3-4)

3-3-3 Tardiness

- a. Due to the large amount of preparation and material to be covered in each training session, **it is important for students and training staff to show up on time**. Students who do not show within 10 minutes of the start time will be considered absent and the session will be terminated. (See 3-3-4)
- b. Training staff who are continuously tardy will be subject to administrative actions which may include written/verbal warning or removal from training staff (subject to the TA’s discretion)
- c. To avoid tardiness, students are encouraged to show on Discord ten minutes prior to their scheduled training session time, although this is not mandatory.

3-3-4 Absence

Because of the high demand for training and the limited number of instructors/mentors, absences are not tolerated at the Chicago ARTCC. When there is a no-show, that time could have been spent training one of many devoted students, and it is not acceptable.

- a. Students who receive an absent on their record (“Absent Student”) may subject to certain delays in future training. vZAU management strives to provide quality training to those students who demonstrate the dedication and desire to actively pursue training. Absences will be cumulative for a period of one (1) quarter and will be considered “reset” at the beginning of a new quarter. A student will be considered perpetually absent when there have been >3 training sessions missed in a row without valid excuse being submitted to the Training Administrator.
- b. Absent students have demonstrated a lack of dedication, and may receive further training:
 1. If there are no other students in queue for each training session
- c. The staff member administering the training session may opt to use this policy to “bump” absent students or may choose to confirm them at his/her discretion. However—if there are no students in the queue, the absent student **MUST** be confirmed for the session.

3-3-5 Preparation

Students are required to have Instructor assigned reading completed prior to their next session. Failure to do so may cause a delay in student and training program progression.

Chapter 4 - Career Progression

Section 1 - Certification and Promotion

4-1-1 Approval

- a. The TA is the approving official for rating promotions S1 through C1.
- b. Promotions above the C1 rating are initiated and coordinated by the TA, governed by VATSIM *Global Ratings Policy*, and handled by VATUSA.

NOTE—*In the event that a TA is not in place at the time of promotion, the Air Traffic Manager will be the approving official.*

4-1-2 Scope

Promotions are only processed with controllers assigned to the Chicago ARTCC. vZAU is not responsible (nor authorized) to process rating promotions of visiting controllers IAW VATSIM policy.

4-1-3 Process

- a. Although all instructors have access to the VATUSA *promote* feature, vZAU **requires** promotion requests for S1-C1 be submitted to the TA by the student's Primary Instructor.
- b. Requests must be electronically submitted through the website's Training Panel. In the event of website failure, promotion requests may be submitted to the TA via email.
- c. This is another QA measure which ensures the training staff member with the **most amount of insight and knowledge** of the student is the one who verifies the student is ready for the promotion and increased responsibility. Other benefits include:
 - Higher TA awareness of the current training situation of the entire ARTCC
 - TA's hands-on insight to the individual student's progress
 - The streamlining that occurs when all promotions are conducted at the TA level

4-1-4 Requirements

All rating promotions are subject the following requirements:

1. **S1 – Tower Trainee:** Promotion to S1 allows a student to perform as a Ground Controller at any facility in vZAU **not designated major**.
 - i. Must pass ZAU – Clearance Delivery/Ground Written Exam with a score of 80% or higher.
 - ii. Must pass VATUSA - Basic ATC/S1 Written Exam

- iii. Must pass a Ground Control Practical Exam.
- 2. **S2 – Tower Controller:** Promotion to S2 allows a student to perform as a Tower/Local Controller at any facility in vZAU **not designated major**.
 - i. Must obtain S1 rating and all major S1 endorsements in vZAU.
 - ii. Must pass ZAU – Local Control Written Exam with a score of 80% or higher.
 - iii. Must pass VATUSA – S2 Rating (TWR) Controller Written Exam
 - iv. Must pass a Local Control Practical Exam.
- 3. **S3 – TMA Controller:** Promotion to S3 allows a student to perform as an Approach/Departure Controller at any facility in vZAU **not designated major**.
 - i. Must obtain S2 rating and all major S2 endorsements in vZAU.
 - ii. Must pass ZAU – Radar Written Exam with a score of 80% or higher.
 - iii. Must pass VATUSA – S3 Rating (APP/DEP) Controller Written Exam
 - iv. Must pass a TMA Controller Practical Exam.
- 4. **C1 – Enroute Controller:** Promotion to C1 allows a controller to perform as an Enroute/Center Controller at vZAU.
 - i. Must obtain S3 rating and all major S3 endorsements in vZAU.
 - ii. Must pass ZAU – Chicago Center Written Exam with a score of 80% or higher.
 - iii. Must pass VATUSA – C1 Rating (CTR) Written Exam
 - iv. Must pass an Enroute Controller Practical Exam.

4-1-5 Solo Certification

All information regarding the approval and operating under a solo certification is prescribed in this section.

The goal of the solo cert is for students to practice their skills in a live network environment. Solo certifications must be pre-approved by the Training Administrator prior to being issued.

- a. **S2 on any minor radar facility**
 - i. The student must be satisfactory on all topics prescribed for S3s in the ZAU Training Syllabus.
 - ii. The student must pass the VATUSA S3 Rating (APP/DEP) Controller Exam
- b. **S3 on Chicago Center**
 - i. The student must be satisfactory on all topics prescribed for C1s in the ZAU Training Syllabus.
 - ii. The student must pass the VATUSA – C1 Rating (CTR) Center Controller Exam.

NOTE—*All Solo Certifications are at the discretion of the Training Administrator.*