# Case Study
## Changing to competency based training

◉ **Airways Training**
Courses, programmes, partnerships

## Challenge

▶ Obtaining buy-in and ownership by instructors and operational staff

▶ Establishing the competency standard to be achieved

▶ Keeping it simple

## Results

▶ Consistent application of the standard

▶ Clear criteria for trainees to understand what needs to be achieved for competence

▶ Efficiency, and reduced training time

▶ Safety enhanced as evidence gathered of competence

## Feedback

"Having a competency based system has made it easier to identify skill deficiencies and help trainees where they need it most."

Instructor

## Drivers for change

Airways has been operating a competency based training system since 2000, to train air traffic controllers (ATCs) in New Zealand and internationally. The system is ensuring a competent workforce for the delivery of air traffic services, contributing to safety and reducing costs over time.With increasing pressure to reduce costs in the aviation industry, growing complexity in traffic levels and the increasing rate of change to procedures to meet technology capability, competency based training provides an efficient and effective training solution.

## Changing to competency based training

Moving to a competency based training system took a collaborative effort involving Airways' instructors, assessors and training specialists. The role of the ATC had to be unpicked and criteria established on observable behaviours and skills. Operational and training staff were involved in a year of meetings and discussions to scope and agree on what made a competent ATC. The result was a competency framework consisting of ten competency units with performance criteria. The process of involving a wide mix of operational and training staff created ownership of the new training system and allowed everyone involved to see and understand the benefits of changing to a competency model.

## What we needed to change

By transitioning from our previous error based assessment system (minors and majors) to a competency based training system, a transparent competency standard was established including easy-to-use tools. Although each of our towers and radar sectors had differences, the core ATC competencies remained the same. The environment and the traffic levels set the standard, as these varied at different locations. The appropriate competencies were amended to detail the traffic levels and other conditions that need to be present at the time of competency performance. The environment, conditions and traffic levels set the standard to be achieved.

**16** years ✓
Competency based training

**95**% 👥
Training success rate

**100**% 🎧
Efficient and effective training in service delivery

**AIRWAYS**
making your world possible

We determined that we wanted to establish competency milestones, so we could formally assess how our trainees were tracking towards competence. We established competency standards for each milestone and created word pictures for what performance of each competency would look like. This meant the assessment process was focused on what was important, the observable skills and behaviours, rather than the Assessment form.

The word picture for each competency and milestone formed two tools — the competency assessment form and the competency checklist. The checklist was established for instructors to use to record and track evidence towards or achievement of competence. This enabled the trainee to understand how they were going and what they needed to work on while the person responsible for training was able to see how training was going and the Instructor had a tool for analysing skill deficiencies and areas for improvement. The competency checklist also provided an easy to use method for assessing competence. At Airways we require the Instructor to sign off all the competencies at each level twice before a summative assessment is made.

## The training system

Airways New Zealand's competency training system is now mature, and has been refined and tested over two decades. Competency based training is fully embedded into everyday practice and provides valuable tools that support the trainee and instructor in the journey to competence. Communication and understanding is key to implementing a competency based training system.

## Important facts

| | |
|---|---|
| ▶ **Competency framework** | The knowledge, skills and attributes to do the job |
| ▶ **Competency standard** | The performance criteria and conditions to be demonstrated |
| ▶ **Instructors and assessors** | Trained in use of competency based system |
| ▶ **Challenge** | To develop simple user tools that ensures consistent application of the competency model |
| ▶ **Benefits** | Transparent training process, easy to use tools, Instructor and trainee work together and increased motivation and willingness to learn |

Airways has been providing aviation products and services for organisations throughout the world for more than 30 years.

With customers in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, the Pacific and North America, Airways is constantly improving its training tools and technologies.

### Talk to us today
www.airways.co.nz
international@airways.co.nz

**AIRWAYS**
making your world possible