

## VATSIM Hong Kong Virtual Area Control Centre (HKvACC)

### POLICY DOCUMENT

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SUBJECT: Hong Kong vACC Facility General Policy

**EFFECTIVE DATE: 6 November 2023**

**SCOPE:** To identify the mission, organisational structure and standards of Hong Kong vACC, and to be used as a guide to govern the operation of the vACC.

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## 1. MISSION

1.1 The Hong Kong Virtual Area Control Centre (“HKVACC” hereafter) is set up to simulate air traffic control activities within Hong Kong Flight Information Region (“HK FIR” hereafter) in a realistic, safe and professional manner. This virtual organisation aims to provide an open, welcoming learning environment where all VATSIM members can learn and practise their air traffic control skills. Hong Kong vACC shall remain politically neutral at all times.

## 2. FUNCTIONS OF HONG KONG VACC

2.1 In the view that VATSIM lacks a uniform definition of the functions of a vACC, the follow functions of a vACC shall be adopted at Hong Kong vACC, originally from the policy established by VATSIM Europe Region in 2001:

- Coordinate training of new members .
- Maintain archives of required material for Pilots and ATC within their airspace.
- Coordinate ATC operations within their airspace.
- Organise and publish events within their airspace.
- Brief visiting pilots on procedures.
- Communicate with its division (i.e. VATSEA) regarding local matters.
- Create and maintain a local VATSIM community for all VATSIM members belonging to the vACC area, be they ATC or Pilots.
- Create and maintain a local website.
- Create and maintain local Forums for local members in English or local language as required but at all times with a section in English for Visiting Controllers.
- Maintain an up-to-date local staff contact list.

### 3. LANGUAGES USED AT HONG KONG VACC

- 3.1. English shall be the primary language for all communications and publications and the working language within Hong Kong vACC.
- 3.2. Air traffic control service provided in Hong Kong FIR shall only be in English.
- 3.3. While all official activities shall be conducted in English as the primary language, in certain circumstances, Cantonese may be used as the supplementary spoken language and Traditional Chinese as the supplementary written language to facilitate official activities if needed. This shall not be applicable to any air traffic control activities online following the practice in the real world.
- 3.4. Training at Hong Kong vACC is primarily conducted in English, and all official training materials of Hong Kong vACC are published in English. However, Cantonese or other languages may be used as a supplement if needed but will not be required for eligibility to control within Hong Kong vACC.
- 3.5. In order to assess the English proficiency of incoming controllers, all new trainees, including home controller, transfer controllers and visiting controller, must pass an exam on English proficiency prior to beginning training at Hong Kong vACC. No exception to this rule will be granted regardless of the country of origin or mother tongue of the new trainee.

## 4. STAFF MEMBERS AT HONG KONG VACC

4.1. Appointment of all staff members at Hong Kong vACC, except the Director of Hong Kong vACC, is the sole responsibility of the Director of Hong Kong vACC. The Director of Hong Kong vACC shall periodically review the staff structure and make necessary changes to reflect the operational need of the facility. The Director of Hong Kong vACC shall be appointed by the Division Director of VATSIM Southeast Asia Division in accordance to all applicable VATSIM, regional and divisional regulations.

4.2. All staff members at Hong Kong vACC, including the Director of Hong Kong vACC, shall maintain an active presence on the network to perform the duties of their positions. In rare circumstances that a staff member becomes inactive for an extended period of time without maintaining communication with the Director of Hong Kong vACC, the Director of Hong Kong vACC shall make the decision of terminating the staff role of that member based on reasonable grounds in the interest of the facility. Such decision is deemed final in most cases. However, in the event the Director of Hong Kong vACC has made an unreasonable removal of staff members from the vACC management team, deemed by the Division Director of VATSEA, the removal shall be further reviewed by the division director as needed. The only exception to this regulation is any mentor who volunteers to provide assistance to the vACC on a part-time basis.

### 4.3. Duties of Hong Kong vACC Staff Members:

#### 4.3.1. Director of Hong Kong vACC (ACCHKG1):

- 4.3.1.1. Reviews, monitors, develops and implements policies and activities to achieve optimum efficiency at the Hong Kong vACC.
- 4.3.1.2. Interacts with the divisional staff members and staff members from other vACCs to foster international cooperation and the exchange of ideas.
- 4.3.1.3. Manage progress of ongoing operations.
- 4.3.1.4. Holds and presides over staff meetings on a regular basis.
- 4.3.1.5. Collaborate with all staff members to review membership statistics consistently and ensure that the vACC is attaining sustainable membership growth.
- 4.3.1.6. Collaborate with Training Director of Hong Kong vACC to monitor and refine local training policies with goals of complying with the VATSIM Global Ratings Policy.
- 4.3.1.7. Appoint staff members within Hong Kong vACC in accordance to this policy.

#### 4.3.2. Deputy Director of Hong Kong vACC (ACCHKG2):

- 4.3.2.1. Supplement the role of Director of Hong Kong vACC and fulfill such role in the temporary absence of the Director of Hong Kong vACC.

- 4.3.2.2. Communicate with directors constantly and provide advice to the Director of Hong Kong vACC.
- 4.3.2.3. Serve as an additional liaison with VATSEA and relay information to the lower levels when needed.
- 4.3.2.4. Coordinate with other staff members of the vACC and spearhead projects when needed.

#### **4.3.3. Training Director (ACCHKG3):**

- 4.3.3.1. Manage a team of vACC instructors and mentors to ensure that training standards and policies at the vACC meet the requirements outlined in the GRP.
- 4.3.3.2. Coordinate with Webmaster and all instructional personnel to maintain a web-based resource center on the Hong Kong vACC official website where all training materials of the vACC shall be located.
- 4.3.3.3. Create and maintain a syllabus of the vACC which governs all training activities within the vACC. This policy shall be subject to periodic review of the management team.
- 4.3.3.4. Monitor any issues related to ATC services and bring them to the attention of the Director of Hong Kong vACC to allow for discussion within the management team and to make appropriate actions.
- 4.3.3.5. Develop training materials for use within Hong Kong vACC.
- 4.3.3.6. In the event of the absence of the Director of Hong Kong vACC, temporarily assume the role of acting Director of Hong Kong vACC by the appointment of the Director.
- 4.3.3.7. Maintain effective communication with the Director of Hong Kong vACC and other staff members.

#### **4.3.4. Facilities Director (ACCHKG5):**

- 4.3.4.1. Maintain and update EuroScope related files.
- 4.3.4.2. Coordinate with the Training Director of Hong Kong vACC to ensure that SOP and LOA are consistent with the latest updates of the AIP.
- 4.3.4.3. Closely collaborate with the Training Director of Hong Kong vACC to update Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) in accordance to the Hong Kong AIP and Macau AIP.
- 4.3.4.4. Maintain links to the Hong Kong AIP and Macau AIP on the Hong Kong vACC official website. Communicate with the Training Director of Hong Kong vACC on user feedback of the sector files.

4.3.4.5. Maintain effective communication with the Director of Hong Kong vACC and other staff members on the most recent procedure updates.

4.3.4.6. Create and update Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) as the latest Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) becomes available. In addition, provide proposals to update Letters of Agreement (LOA) with neighbouring facilities according to the latest AIP updates.

4.3.4.7. Manage and coordinate usage of frequencies, callsigns, squawk range with neighbouring vACCs and divisions.

#### **4.3.5. Events Director (ACCHKG6):**

4.3.5.1. Initiate and collaborate with other VATSIM organisations on projects of events and group flights on behalf of the Hong Kong vACC.

4.3.5.2. Promote events affiliated with Hong Kong vACC through internal and external platforms.

4.3.5.3. Serve as the external liaison for Hong Kong vACC when needed.

#### **4.3.6. Public Relations Director (ACCHKG7):**

4.3.6.1. Actively promote Hong Kong vACC to the public through various platforms and social media (e.g. Facebook, VATSIM forums, Twitter etc.)

4.3.6.2. Establish a strong presence for Hong Kong vACC in the local flight simulation community in Hong Kong and Macau by publicity and, if needed, through community outreach.

4.3.6.3. Serve as the external liaison for Hong Kong vACC when needed.

#### **4.3.7. Membership Director (ACCHKG8):**

4.3.7.1. Maintain and manage the online training platform operated by the Hong Kong vACC with the goal of facilitating effective self-paced learning for controllers.

4.3.7.2. Collaborate with the Training Director of Hong Kong vACC to manage content posted on the online training platform operated by Hong Kong vACC.

4.3.7.3. Manage course enrollment of controller trainees and maintain record of training progress.

4.3.7.4. Coordinate with other staff members internally and externally to manage the use of third-party online training platform by Hong Kong vACC.

4.3.7.5. Manage the helpdesk system and respond to all helpdesk queries, transferring tickets to other directors as necessary.

#### **4.3.8. Webmaster (ACCHKG10):**

4.3.8.1. Maintain the official website of Hong Kong vACC and ensure that such website is functional at all times.

4.3.8.2. Provide technical support of web design and the server. This may involve working closely with the host of the server.

4.3.8.3. Manage the content of the Hong Kong vACC website to provide adequate information to all VATSIM members. Essential information includes but is not limited to:

- Controller Roster
- Provide updated Notice-to-airmen (NOTAM) relevant to Hong Kong vACC to all members
- All documents published publicly by Hong Kong vACC
- Method of signing up or transferring to Hong Kong vACC
- Contact method (e.g. email) of all staff members and the training team

#### **4.3.9. Deputy Directors and Departments**

4.3.9.1. Each Director may establish a department under their relative role to support their work as needed and will become the head of such department.

4.3.9.2. The department shall consist of one or more Deputy Directors who are appointed by the Director of Hong Kong vACC using the same process as a director appointment. Directors are not in charge of the appointment or removal of deputy directors within the department.

4.3.9.3. In the case of leave of absence of a director, a deputy director within the department may serve as acting director of the department until the director has returned from the leave. The director shall inform the Director of Hong Kong vACC prior to the leave in order for such personnel change to be made.

4.3.9.4. All deputy directors (Except Deputy Director of the Hong Kong vACC) will be assigned an alphabetical suffix as callsigns. (E.g. Deputy Facilities Director will take the callsign of ACCHKG5A)

4.4. Appointees of all directorial positions, including Director of Hong Kong vACC, must be registered as a member of Hong Kong vACC under VATSEA division and a local controller with active status. In addition, no members of the management team shall be currently holding any staff positions or have held any staff positions in the past three hundred and sixty-five (365) days on any flight simulation network other than VATSIM.



- 4.5. For situations under which a vote is required or needed from members of the management team to make a collective decision on matters related to the operation of Hong Kong vACC, the Director of Hong Kong vACC, the Deputy Director of Hong Kong vACC and each member holding a directorial position shall each have one vote.
  
- 4.6. The recruitment process for any position within the management team at Hong Kong vACC shall open to all VATSIM members. If a candidate is not a local controller of Hong Kong vACC at the time of the application, such applicant must receive the relevant local controller training of Hong Kong vACC and be certified up to the highest position of the rating of the applicant before the appointment to a position within the management team. The recruitment of positions within the management team must be announced through the VATSIM forums, Hong Kong vACC official website and/or other social media platforms. The recruitment period shall be seven (7) days or more.

## 5. INSTRUCTOR AND MENTOR POLICY AT HONG KONG VACC

- 5.1. Method for instructor appointment and qualification is defined by the Instructor policy of VATSEA division.
- 5.2. Instructor certificates on VATSIM (i.e. I1 - Instructor and I3 - Senior Instructor) should not be considered a controller rating or merit-based recognition but a delegation of power to an experienced controller on the network to carry out the duties of an instructor. Under no circumstances shall any instructor appointment be permanent.
- 5.3. Mentors are appointed at Hong Kong vACC to assist instructors with training activities. The difference between a mentor and an instructor is that a mentor cannot administer any Controller Practical Test (CPT) without the authorization from the Training Director. On a case-by-case basis, the Training Director can appoint a mentor to administer a CPT resulting from the lack of availability of instructors. The exam administered by a mentor must be of a promotional exam at least one rating below the current rating of the mentor. For example, a S3 mentor can only administer promotional exams for controllers of S2 rating or below. Such approval shall be on an one-off basis and an instructor must approve the scoresheet of the CPT administered by a mentor.
- 5.4. Hong Kong vACC shall periodically review the performance and online activities of its instructors and mentors. Instructors and mentors who fail to carry out their duties according to the standard set by the Global Ratings Policy of VATSIM and/or additional policy set forth by Hong Kong vACC, the Southeast Asia Division and/or the Asia Region shall be subject to the review of the Training Director of Hong Kong vACC. Director of Hong Kong vACC and/or the Training Director of Hong Kong vACC shall revoke the mentor appointment of any mentor who fails to properly carry out their duties for at least one hundred and twenty (120) days, or report to the Training Director of VATSEA in the case of an instructor.
- 5.5. Qualification for instructors shall be determined using the guidelines set forth by the Southeast Asia Division and the Asia Region.
- 5.6. To qualify to be a mentor at Hong Kong vACC, a controller must hold a rating of S2 or above, maintain a clean disciplinary record (i.e. no major violation of rules in the past), maintain an active presence in accordance to the requirements set forth within this policy and receive a recommendation from the Training Director of Hong Kong vACC or the Director of Hong Kong vACC.

## 6. LOCAL CONTROLLER ACTIVE STATUS REQUIREMENT

- 6.1. To qualify as a local controller at Hong Kong vACC, one must be an active member of VATSIM. If the applicant is transferring from another division to Hong Kong vACC, he/she must maintain an active presence on the network using the definition of “active” under his/her former division. In addition, such an applicant must maintain a clean disciplinary record within the former division and may be required to provide a recommendation from the division head of the former facility.
- 6.2. To qualify to control at each position within Hong Kong vACC, a local controller must undergo local controller training set in accordance to the Controller Training Syllabus of Hong Kong vACC. Providing service at an uncertified position is strictly prohibited in any circumstances and shall be subject to disciplinary actions.
- 6.3. Controllers are expected to maintain an active presence within the vACC. To be considered active, a local controller must provide active local controller service at any position within Hong Kong FIR for **3 hours every three months, counted on the last day of each quarter (March, June, September and December)**. Visiting controller hours outside of Hong Kong FIR cannot be counted towards this requirement. If said controller fails to fulfil the requirement, the controller will be considered “inactive” and will be required to undergo a familiarisation course to ensure that his/her skills are on par with the standard of Hong Kong vACC. After passing the familiarisation exam, the controller will regain active status within the vACC. The Training Syllabus of Hong Kong vACC (HKVACC-P051), under the section “*Keeping Controller Status Current*”, defines additional requirements related to maintaining controller status current.
- 6.4. Staff members of VATSIM Hong Kong vACC, VATSIM Southeast Asia & VATSIM Asia Pacific are exempt from the activity requirement.
- 6.5. Other exemptions can be granted on a case-by-case basis under certain unforeseeable or uncontrollable circumstances (e.g. military deployment, business travel, family matter etc.) through the process of Leave of Absence (Section 9 of this Policy). Leave of Absence must be granted in written format (e.g. email) and must be granted prior to the leave. After-the-fact exemptions are not permitted.
- 6.6. Local controllers who fail to follow Hong Kong vACC local policies and procedures may receive a warning from an instructor or staff members. If the violation recurs or the controller makes multiple violations, the Training Director of Hong Kong vACC and/or Director of Hong Kong

vACC may review the case and decide whether a suspension of active controller status is necessary. Such suspension will be reviewed by the Division Director of the Southeast Asia Division (VATSEA). This suspension of active controller status may be in addition to any suspension/termination of VATSIM membership determined by the VATSEA conflict resolution team depending on the nature of the violation(s).

## 7. VISITING CONTROLLER ACTIVE STATUS REQUIREMENT

- 7.1. To qualify to be a visiting controller at Hong Kong vACC, one must be an active controller at his/her home division. The “active” definition is subject to the definition of the home division. Such controller must also have maintained a good record on VATSIM without any major disciplinary record. A letter of recommendation confirming active status and no major disciplinary record must be provided by the controller’s home division prior to the beginning of Hong Kong vACC visiting controller training.
- 7.2. Visiting controllers will be required to undergo training to qualify to control at each position according to his/her rating at Hong Kong vACC. The Training Director of Hong Kong vACC has the discretion on whether blanket training can be provided to qualify the new visiting controllers to control all positions available to his/her rating. If such blanket training is not available, the new visiting controller must undergo training by position. When the visiting controller receives a promotion at his/her home division, such controller will have to undergo training in order to control new positions available to him/her at Hong Kong vACC.

*(Example: John Doe joined Hong Kong vACC as a visiting controller when he was a S2 controller and was trained to control all positions up to TWR. He just received a promotion to S3 at his home division and was permitted to control APP/DEP positions there. However, John must undergo training related to terminal controller in HK FIR before he can control APP/DEP positions at Hong Kong vACC.)*

- 7.3. Visiting controller training shall consist of a tutorial course aimed to familiarise the controller with the position(s) he/she wishes to control. Such tutorial course shall be followed by a written/oral exam with a passing score of 70% or above. Once such qualification exam is passed, the new visiting controller will be granted permission to control at the specified position. After the permission is granted, to maintain it, the visiting controller must maintain an active presence at Hong Kong FIR on the network following the requirements specified below.
- 7.4. To maintain active visiting controller status, a visiting controller must provide active visiting controller service at any position within Hong Kong FIR for **3 hours every three months**,

counted on the last day of each quarter (March, June, September and December). Controller hours outside of Hong Kong FIR cannot be counted towards this requirement. If said controller fails to fulfil the requirement, the controller will be considered “inactive” and will be required to undergo a familiarisation course to ensure that his/her skills are on par with the standard of Hong Kong vACC. After passing the familiarisation exam, the controller will regain active status within the vACC. The Training Syllabus of Hong Kong vACC (HKVACC-P051), under the section “*Keeping Controller Status Current*”, defines additional requirements related to maintaining controller status current.

- 7.5. Exemptions can be granted on a case-by-case basis under certain unforeseeable or uncontrollable circumstances (e.g. military deployment, business travel, family matter etc.) through the process of Leave of Absence (Section 9 of this Policy). Leave of Absence must be granted in written format (e.g. email) and must be granted prior to the leave. After-the-fact exemptions are not permitted.
  
- 7.6. Visiting controllers who fail to follow Hong Kong vACC local policies and procedures may receive a warning from an instructor or staff members. If the violation recurs or the controller makes multiple violations, Training Director of Hong Kong vACC and/or Director of Hong Kong vACC of Hong Kong may review the case and decide whether an expulsion is necessary. Hong Kong vACC may report such violation(s) to the home division of the visiting controller.

## 8. HONG KONG vACC SERVICES USAGE AGREEMENT

- 8.1. Hong Kong vACC, at its sole discretion, may provide online services, such as website, training platform, forum, Discord server, voice server, etc., to facilitate operational and training activities. The use of such services is considered voluntary and is governed to all global VATSIM policies and any applicable regional, divisional, or Hong Kong vACC policies. Such privilege may be revoked on a case-by-case basis if severe violation is made.
- 8.2. The use of Hong Kong vACC services is also subject to the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and/or any applicable local laws of the user.
- 8.3. No political, obscene, discriminatory, racist, or profane material may be displayed or used where Hong Kong vACC services are hosted.
- 8.4. Hong Kong vACC may share Discord resources with the Southeast Asia Division (VATSEA) and its member vACCs. Users of such Discord resources agree to comply with all applicable VATSIM regulations and respect other users within the Discord server.
- 8.5. In order to facilitate communication among controllers who are on-duty, Hong Kong vACC may require controllers to be mandatorily present in a designated Discord voice channel when providing ATC service in Hong Kong FIR on VATSIM. Such requirements shall be defined within a specific Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) document.
- 8.6. Due to privacy concerns, no person within the Hong Kong vACC Discord may broadcast or distribute any content (including in voice, text or pictorial format) to the public in any manner without the written consent of the Director of Hong Kong vACC, except in a designated voice-channel or text-channel clearly labelled with "broadcast" or "livestream". When a permitted broadcast or livestream is in progress in a voice channel, all eligible participants of the voice channel must be informed prior to the broadcast. Violators of this rule may be subject to disciplinary action.

## 9. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- 9.1. Controllers who wish to apply for Leave of Absence shall request to do so **at least one month** prior to the end of the quarter for said controller to be exempted from the activity requirements for that quarter. **All requests shall be sent to the Training Director of Hong Kong vACC and Director of Hong Kong vACC.** Approved Leaves of Absence are valid until the end of the **next** quarter.
- 9.2. Leaves of Absence can only be renewed for **at most one quarter**, and they shall be submitted before the expiration of the previous Leave of Absence.
- 9.3. When a Leave of Absence expires, there is a cooldown period of **1 quarter** before the controller is allowed to apply for another Leave of Absence.

## 10. REVISION OF THIS POLICY

- 10.1. This policy shall be subject to the periodic review of the Hong Kong vACC management team. A Hong Kong vACC staff member or the Division Director can initiate a request for amendment through the Director of Hong Kong vACC. If the Director of Hong Kong vACC finds reasonable grounds for such amendment, he/she shall then approve the amendment and submit the request for the approval of the Division Director of VATSEA. All amendments shall be recorded in the Record of Revision within this policy.

## RECORD OF REVISION

DATE	REV.	REVISION CONTENT	PROPOSED	APPROVAL
31 JUL 2016	1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Section 3.1, added "...and the working language" to define English as the working language.</li> <li>Rewrite Section 3.3.</li> <li>In Section 4, redefine the role of consultants as volunteers who provide help on a part-time basis.</li> <li>In Section 4, the role of Manager (Standards and Publications) is separated into Manager, Standards and Manager, Publications.</li> <li>In Section 4, revise the appointment methods of positions of the management team and added the role of Deputy Director.</li> <li>Revise wording in Section 6.2.</li> <li>Section 7.3, passing score of visiting controller exam changed to 70% from 80% to be consistent with GRP.</li> <li>Revise Section 8.3.</li> </ol>	A. Tang	E. Lee A. Stefopoulos
12 OCT 2018	2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Section 4.3, revised Organization Chart.</li> <li>Rewrite roles in Sections 4.4.6 and 4.4.7. Renumber ACCHKG7 to ACCHKG8 in Section 4.4.8.</li> <li>In Section 4.6, revised positions to reflect new staff structure.</li> <li>In Section 4.9, position vacancy posting reduced from 14 days to 7 days.</li> <li>Clarifies Section 5.3 in that "exam" means CPT.</li> <li>In Sections 6.3 and 7.4, added a sentence to point out additional requirements listed in the Training Syllabus for controller currency.</li> <li>In Sections 8.1 and 8.4, replaces "TeamSpeak" with "Discord".</li> <li>Added Sections 8.5 and 8.6.</li> </ol>	A. Tang	I. Tan A. Stefopoulos
21 JUN 2020	3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further clarify the status of the English language in Section 3.</li> <li>Expand the management team and establish Assistant Manager positions and departments.</li> </ol>	A. Tang	A. Stefopoulos



30 JUL 2023	4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Remove consultants.</li> <li>2. Rename Learning Solutions to Membership.</li> <li>3. Remove the position of Manager, Streamer Relations.</li> <li>4. Rename all positions to Director.</li> <li>5. Remove the position of Manager, Standards.</li> <li>6. Revise activity requirement.</li> <li>7. Added LOA Policy.</li> <li>8. Rename several staff positions for a clearer meaning.</li> <li>9. Renumber several staff positions for reorganisation.</li> <li>10. Added activity exemptions for staff members.</li> </ol>	<p>J. Patidar A. Lee J. Wai T. Siu</p>	<p>I. Tan</p>
6 NOV 2023	5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Revise activity requirement to be line with GCAP.</li> <li>2. Remove 14 day buffer for controllers who fail to meet the activity requirement.</li> </ol>	<p>J. Patidar A. Lee J. Wai T. Siu</p>	<p>I. Tan</p>