



ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

TRAINING PROGRAM

OPERATION & MANAGEMENT

**VIRTUAL AIR TRAFFIC SIMULATION NETWORK**
VATUSA DIVISION – WASHINGTON ARTCC**ORDER**
vZDC-A-02F**SUBJ:** vZDC-A-01F, effective June 24, 2026

This administrative order prescribes the policy and procedures for all aspects of controller training, certification, and endorsement at Virtual Washington ARTCC (vZDC). This order is approved by the Deputy Director of Training Services, VATUSA3. It is managed at vZDC by the Training Administrator. For questions concerning application of this policy, contact the TA.

This document is only to be used in a simulated environment. This document shall not be referenced or utilized in live operations in the National Airspace System (NAS). The Virtual Washington ARTCC (vZDC), VATUSA, and VATSIM do not take any responsibility for uses of this order outside of the simulation environment.

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Chapter 1. General | 8 |
| Section 1. Introduction | 8 |
| 1-1-1. PURPOSE OF THIS ORDER..... | 8 |
| 1-1-2. AUDIENCE | 8 |
| 1-1-3. WHERE TO FIND THIS ORDER | 8 |
| 1-1-4. WHAT THIS ORDER CANCELS..... | 8 |
| 1-1-5. EXPLANATION OF CHANGES | 8 |
| 1-1-6. DENOTATION OF CHANGES | 8 |
| 1-1-7. EFFECTIVE DATES AND SUBMISSIONS FOR CHANGES | 8 |
| 1-1-8. RECOMMENDATION FOR PROCEDURAL CHANGES..... | 9 |
| 1-1-9. TRAINING CULTURE | 9 |
| Section 2. Terms of Reference | 10 |
| 1-2-1. WORD MEANINGS | 10 |
| 1-2-2. ABBREVIATIONS | 10 |
| Section 3. Scheduling | 12 |
| 1-3-1. SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRAINING | 12 |
| 1-3-2. INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY | 12 |
| 1-3-3. MENTOR AVAILABILITY | 12 |
| 1-3-4. TRAINING QUEUE MANAGEMENT | 12 |
| 1-3-5. IMPROMPTU TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES..... | 12 |
| 1-3-6. TRAINING TEAMS | 13 |
| 1-3-7. TYPES OF TRAINING TO SCHEDULE..... | 14 |
| Chapter 2. Training Staff | 15 |
| Section 1. Appointments | 15 |
| 2-1-1. VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS..... | 15 |
| 2-1-2. APPLICATION SUBMISSION | 15 |
| 2-1-3. PROBATIONARY PERIODS..... | 15 |
| 2-1-4. PERMANENT APPOINTMENT STATUS | 15 |
| Section 2. Duties and Responsibilities | 16 |
| 2-2-1. TRAINING ADMINISTRATOR | 16 |
| 2-2-2. ASSISTANT TRAINING ADMINISTRATOR | 16 |
| 2-2-3. INSTRUCTOR | 16 |
| 2-2-4. MENTOR | 17 |
| 2-2-5. TRAINEE | 17 |

Section 3. Requirements18

 2-3-1. TRAINER ELIGIBILITY 18

 2-3-2. CONTINUING QUALIFICATION 18

 2-3-3. MONTHLY SERVICE COMMITMENT 18

 2-3-4. APPROVAL TO CONDUCT TRAINING 18

 2-3-5. EXTENDED PERIOD OF UNAVAILABILITY 19

Chapter 3. Curriculum and Standards20

Section 1. vZDC Academy Curriculum20

 3-1-1. DEFINITION 20

 3-1-2. PROGRESSION 20

Section 2. Transferring Controllers21

 3-2-1. DEFINITION 21

 3-2-2. CONSOLIDATION 21

 3-2-3. PROGRESSION 21

Section 3. Visiting Controllers22

 3-3-1. DEFINITION 22

 3-3-2. SCOPE 22

 3-3-3. LIMITATIONS 22

 3-3-4. INITIAL TRAINING 22

Section 4. Returning Controllers23

 3-4-1. DEFINITION 23

 3-4-2. LESS THAN SIX MONTHS AWAY 23

 3-4-3. NOT MORE THAN 12 MONTHS AWAY 23

 3-4-4. MORE THAN 12 MONTHS AWAY 23

Section 5. Endorsements24

 3-5-1. DEFINITION 24

 3-5-2. LISTING OF ENDORSEMENTS 24

 3-5-3. AUTHORIZED SOLO ENDORSEMENTS 24

 3-5-4. SOLO ENDORSEMENT RESTRICTIONS AND LIMITATIONS 25

 3-5-5. AUTHORIZATION TO AWARD SOLO ENDORSEMENTS 25

 3-5-6. RECORDING OF SOLO ENDORSEMENTS 25

 3-5-7. TEMPORARY ENDORSEMENTS 26

Section 6. Standards27

 3-6-1. PRIMARY TABLE OF STANDARDS 27

 3-6-2. LOCALLY ADAPTED STANDARDS 27

Chapter 4. Controller Applications28

Section 1. Concept of Environment and Use28

 4-1-1. OVERVIEW 28

 4-1-2. TRAINING SESSION REALISM 28

Section 2. Consolidated Radar Client (CRC).....29

 4-2-1. OVERVIEW 29

 4-2-2. CORE FUNCTIONALITY FOR TRAINING 29

Section 3. vATIS.....30

 4-3-1. APPLICATION OVERVIEW 30

 4-3-2. TRAINING APPLICATION 30

Section 4. Sweatbox Servers.....31

 4-4-1. DESCRIPTION..... 31

 4-4-2. ACCESSING SWEATBOX SERVERS 31

 4-4-3. AUTHORIZED USE..... 31

 4-4-4. TEST SERVER 31

Section 5. vTDLS.....32

 4-5-1. OVERVIEW 32

 4-5-2. TRAINING APPLICATION 32

Section 6. vStrips.....33

 4-6-1. OVERVIEW 33

 4-6-2. TRAINING APPLICATION 33

Chapter 5. Training and Checking Events 34

Section 1. Training Sessions.....34

 5-1-1. TYPES OF TRAINING SESSIONS 34

 5-1-2. REQUIREMENTS TO TRAIN ON THE LIVE NETWORK 34

 5-1-3. CALLSIGN USAGE WHILE TRAINING ON LIVE NETWORK 34

 5-1-4. TRAINEE CALLSIGN USAGE WHILE TRAINING ON SWEATBOX..... 34

 5-1-5. TRAINER CALLSIGN USAGE WHILE TRAINING ON SWEATBOX 35

 5-1-6. CALLSIGN WITH SOLO ENDORSEMENT 35

Section 2. Knowledge Validations36

 5-2-1. OVERVIEW 36

 5-2-2. MINIMUM PASSING SCORE AND REATTEMPTS 36

 5-2-3. WRITTEN QUESTION BANK AND VALIDATION 36

 5-2-4. ORAL QUESTION BANK AND VALIDATION 36

 5-2-5. GETTING STARTED AT ZDC..... 36

 5-2-6. VATUSA S2 RATING COURSE 36

 5-2-7. VATUSA S3 RATING COURSE 37

5-2-8. VATUSA C1 RATING COURSE 37

Section 3. Skills Validations 38

5-3-1. OVERVIEW **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

5-3-2. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS 38

Section 4. VATSIM Rating Changes 39

5-4-1. PROMOTION TO S1 39

5-4-2. PROMOTION TO S2 39

5-4-3. PROMOTION TO S3 39

5-4-4. PROMOTIONS TO C1 39

Section 5. Global Ratings Policy Checkouts 40

5-5-1. CHANGE SUMMARY 40

Chapter 6. Records and Documentation 41

Section 1. Routine Training Feedback 41

6-1-1. PURPOSE 41

6-1-2. BEST PRACTICES 41

6-1-3. NEW CURRICULUM DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS 41

Section 2. Dossier Entries 42

6-2-1. SYSTEM SUMMARY 42

6-2-2. REQUIRED ENTRIES 42

Section 3. Master Training Record 43

6-3-1. RESERVED 43

Section 4. Welcome Letter to New Controllers 44

6-4-1. PURPOSE 44

6-4-2. CHANGES OR UPDATES TO THE WELCOME LETTER 44

Chapter 7. Scenario Development and Training Software 45

Section 1. Scenario Design Standards 45

7-1-1. PRINCIPLES 45

Section 2. ATCTrainer 46

7-2-1. APPLICATION OVERVIEW 46

7-2-2. ZDC REFERENCE GUIDE 46

7-2-3. OTHER TRAINING APPLICATIONS 46

Index 47

Appendix A. Training Flow – Stage 1 49

Appendix B. Training Flow – Stage 2 50

Appendix C. Training Flow – Stage 3 51
Appendix D. Training Flow – Stage 4 52
Appendix E. Training Flow – Visiting Controllers 53

Chapter 1. General

Section 1. Introduction

1-1-1. PURPOSE OF THIS ORDER

This order prescribes all aspects of the Virtual Washington ARTCC (vZDC) Training Program. The requirements of this publication establish standards used throughout each element of training and codify best practices and established practices for delivering training within vZDC. This order is for use with vZDC, VATUSA, and the VATSIM network and is not associated with or applicable to any facility outside the VATSIM network.

1-1-2. AUDIENCE

This order applies to all vZDC controllers and any non-assigned (i.e. visiting) controller receiving training from the vZDC Training Department to work at any facility or airspace delegated to vZDC.

1-1-3. WHERE TO FIND THIS ORDER

This order is available on the vZDC web site at <https://www.vzdc.org/publications/downloads> under the General Policy & Facility Administration category.

1-1-4. WHAT THIS ORDER CANCELS

This order supersedes vZDC-A-02E, *Training Program Operation and Management*, dated 15 September 2025.

1-1-5. EXPLANATION OF CHANGES

Removes “Legacy” training path for center as the entire vZDC Academy has been completed and is now active. Clarified center solo endorsement authorization to issue. Provides Training Queue assignment management process and ratio for assignment. Assigns standard training team durations based on stage of training. Expands impromptu training offering to visiting controllers.

1-1-6. DENOTATION OF CHANGES

Changes are indicated via the use of the shading tool. The changed text is highlighted in grey to indicate a change. No indication is made where text was removed from the document. Grammatical revisions and other changes to improve readability without changes in policy will not be marked.

EXAMPLE –

Changed or added text is highlighted grey.

1-1-7. EFFECTIVE DATES AND SUBMISSIONS FOR CHANGES

This publication is independent of normal publication cycles and will be revised when changes are determined necessary. Feedback for this publication will be submitted through the Publications Feedback form.

1-1-8. RECOMMENDATION FOR PROCEDURAL CHANGES

During published revision periods recommendations will be submitted in accordance with the process prescribed in paragraph 1-1-7 of this section. Outside published revision periods, send recommendations for change to ta@vzdc.org with any supporting documents and additional information.

REFERENCE –

vZDC-A-02F, Para 1-1-7, Effective Dates and Submissions for Changes

1-1-9. TRAINING CULTURE

a. Aviation is inherently complex and is always undergoing change. To manage change, training is tailored to provide what is needed for the controller to adjust to and learn from the change. The willingness to embrace change, learn from it, and communicate it fairly and in its proper context is a core element in successfully navigating change. It is this leadership that drives the culture desired at vZDC.

b. Respect is the most important tenant in a positive training culture. Treating everyone with respect is always paramount. Training can present challenging scenarios and feedback that is intended to be constructive can be perceived as pointed. It is each controller's responsibility to always remain calm, professional, and respectful.

c. Learning the right way from the beginning and avoiding bad habits or incorrect technique early provides a foundation that will set the controller up for success in subsequent training. For this reason, all training events will be conducted in a manner that would be acceptable on the live network.

d. Good communication between trainers and trainees is vital to effective training. This includes communicating during training events by asking questions, seeking feedback, and ensuring an open dialogue is maintained. Good communication beyond formal training events is also important. Trainers and trainees are expected to respond to communications outside of training events in a reasonable amount of time. Lastly, anytime someone is running late or needs to reschedule, communicating this as early as possible shows respect for the others time and is expected.

Section 2. Terms of Reference

1-2-1. WORD MEANINGS

As used in this order:

- a. "Controller" means any person of any rating, including Observer (OBS), regardless of their assigned facility.
- b. "Endorsement" means approval to operate a controllable position which requires additional competencies or knowledge above that of an ATC Rating. Endorsements are given for Tier 1 and Tier 2 Facilities. Solo Endorsements are given to controllers that meet requirements for solo.
- c. "Instructor" means controller holding the VATSIM rating of I1 or I3 and assigned to vZDC.
- d. "Mentor" means controller designated by the vZDC Training Administrator, and assigned to vZDC, to serve as a mentor within vZDC and perform training as authorized by this instruction.
- e. "Rating Examination" means any training event where satisfactory completion results in award of a new VATSIM controller rating.
- f. "Senior Staff" refers to the Air Traffic Manager (ATM), Deputy Air Traffic Manager (DATM), and Training Administrator (TA).
- g. "Trainee" means any controller that is actively enrolled in or seeking training as offered through the vZDC Training Program.
- h. "Trainer" means any person, either instructor or mentor, authorized to conduct a training event under the provisions of this instruction.

1-2-2. ABBREVIATIONS

As used in this order, the abbreviations listed below have the following meanings:

- a. CRC. Consolidated Radar Client.
- b. GOAP. General Operating and Administrative Policy for vZDC.

REFERENCE –

vZDC-A-01E, General Operating and Administrative Policy

- c. GCAP. Global Controller Administration Policy.
- d. RE. Rating Examination.
- e. OTS. Over-the-shoulder. Legacy term for Rating Examination.

REFERENCE –

VATSIM Global Ratings Policy, <https://vatsim.net/docs/policy/global-ratings-policy>

- f. TA. Training Administrator.
- g. VATSIM. Virtual Air Traffic Simulation Network.
- h. VATUSA. United States Division of VATSIM Network.

i. vZDC. Virtual Washington Air Route Traffic Control Center.

Section 3. Scheduling

1-3-1. SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRAINING

Trainees must be active in pursuing their training goals. This includes coordinating training events with their training team. Trainers are responsible for engaging with trainees regularly and providing time monthly to offer training. Both trainees and trainers will work to ensure that each trainee is progressing in the vZDC Training Program.

1-3-2. INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY

Instructors should make available a minimum of two training sessions per month. These sessions should be made available in the vZDC designated scheduling program. Impromptu training session offerings that result in a completed training event count towards this total.

1-3-3. MENTOR AVAILABILITY

Mentors should make available a minimum of two training sessions per month. These sessions should be made available in the vZDC designated scheduling program. Impromptu training session offerings that result in a completed training event count towards this total.

1-3-4. TRAINING QUEUE MANAGEMENT

a. The Training Queue is a persistent list of controllers who have submitted a request for training. The queue is managed on the vZDC website and accessed through the Training Administration section. The queue is divided into “Home” and “Visitor” lists for more accurate tracking and utilization of available trainers.

b. The TA will make training team assignments based on trainer availability and the trainee’s place in the queue. Consideration of type of training (approach, tower, etc.) is given based on trainer qualifications. The TA will make assignments that maximize overall training production capability.

c. The following queue assignment blending ratios will be utilized. Average wait for a training team assignment for home controllers is the controlling variable in which queue ratio is utilized.

1. Less than 3 months: 3 home controllers, 1 visiting controller.

2. 3 months to 6 months: 5 home controllers, 1 visiting controller.

3. More than 6 months: Visiting controller training will be manually sequenced by the TA to ensure visitors retain access to vZDC training resources.

REFERENCE –
VATSIM-POL-TVCP, para 6.2(b), Visiting.

1-3-5. IMPROMPTU TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

a. Impromptu training opportunities occur when a trainer has unplanned availability to offer a training session and an available trainee responds to the offering. Trainees will not solicit trainers

for impromptu training sessions. Impromptu training opportunities will be posted on the respective Discord channel.

b. If a training session is scheduled within 24 hours, trainees will advise the advertising trainer of the scheduled session so that a trainee without a session scheduled may take advantage first. If no other trainee takes the impromptu offering, the trainee with a scheduled session may take the impromptu session offering.

c. Impromptu training sessions are available to home and visiting controllers.

1–3–6. TRAINING TEAMS

Training team refers to the primary trainer, alternate trainer(s), and the trainee. Trainees may train with trainers other than those on their training teams when such opportunities exist (i.e. impromptu offerings). Training team members will work together to accomplish at least one training session per week.

NOTE –

This paragraph consolidates Ch1, Sec 4, Training Teams, from vZDC-A-02D and formally replaces the optional program of training teams and replaces in its entirety the legacy training scheduling program.

d. Trainer Responsibilities. All trainers on the training team are responsible for being actively involved in the progress of their trainees. Trainers will:

1. Trainers assigned as primary trainer are responsible for ensuring their trainee(s) are progressing in the vZDC stage curriculum.

2. Trainers will monitor their trainees' progress, to include review of lessons completed by a trainer other than themselves.

3. Trainers will make available time for their trainees and will be receptive to their trainees' scheduling requests.

4. Trainers will also serve as the primary contact for responding to questions trainees have while in training.

e. Trainee Responsibilities. Trainees must maximize their time on a training team and take advantage of all training opportunities offered. Trainees will:

1. Trainees will comply with any limitations imposed by their trainers regarding contact times, frequency of contact, and expectations for training.

2. Trainees will continue to study and be prepared for each lesson.

3. Respond to initial team assignment notifications by the TA within three days. Failure to respond within three days will result in being unassigned and returned to the training queue.

4. Complete the VATUSA Rating Course and Exam prior to being assigned a training team. Trainees need not have the course complete at the time the training request is submitted.

5. Trainees will advise their training team via the training team discord channel of any known or planned absences that will exceed seven (7) days without contact. Trainees that have not had

a session and have not been in coordination with their training team for more than 21 days will be removed from the training team and will rejoin the training queue for a new training team.

NOTE –

This policy is to ensure trainer availability is not wasted due to high training volume.

f. Training Team Management. The TA will make training assignments first come first serve based on available trainers. The queue for training is managed via the vzdc.org website Training module.

g. Team Communications. Training teams should use the team channel created by the TA on Discord as their primary communications method. This serves as a group communication tool for all involved and ensures everyone is aware of the status of training.

h. Duration. For Stage 1, Stage 2, and Stage 4, the entire stage is completed under the same training team assignment unless directed otherwise by the TA based on trainee performance. For Stage 3, Blocks 1-4 are conducted under a team assignment, and Blocks 5-7 are conducted under a separate team assignment, unless waived by the TA.

1–3–7. TYPES OF TRAINING TO SCHEDULE

- a. Clearance Delivery and Ground (DEL/GND Training).
- b. Local Control (TWR Training).
- c. Approach Control (APP Training).
- d. En Route (CTR Training).

Chapter 2. Training Staff

Section 1. Appointments

2-1-1. VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Training Administrator (TA) will publish an announcement anytime a position within the training department becomes available. Vacancy announcements are intended to ensure the widest distribution of the announcement and ensure all members interested in filling the position can express their interest.

2-1-2. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The vacancy announcement will include specific instructions for submission. At a minimum, this will include deadline for submission, required elements of the application, and any minimum eligibility requirements to be appointed to the position sought.

REFERENCE –

VZDC-A-02F, Para 2-3-1, Trainer Eligibility.

2-1-3. PROBATIONARY PERIODS

a. All training department positions incur a three-month probationary period. During this period the newly appointed trainer will be evaluated to ensure they are meeting the standards required for the position and that the role is a good fit for them.

b. Appointments to instructor ratings are made by VATUSA and additional instructor rating probationary requirements are established by VATUSA.

NOTE –

The vZDC established probationary requirements exceed the minimum probationary period established by VATUSA.

REFERENCE–

VATUSA DP002C, Training Policy, Para 3.2.4, Probationary Instructor Program.

2-1-4. PERMANENT APPOINTMENT STATUS

a. Upon completion of the probationary period, the appointment will be considered permanent, and the trainer will hold the role until they choose to vacate the position, it is determined no longer necessary by the TA, or are removed from the position for cause.

b. Instructor ratings may also be removed by VATUSA in accordance with division policy.

REFERENCE–

VATUSA DP002C, Training Policy, Para 3.2.4, Probationary Instructor Program.

Section 2. Duties and Responsibilities

2-2-1. TRAINING ADMINISTRATOR

Duties and responsibilities for the Training Administrator (TA) are contained in the vZDC General Operating and Administrative Policy.

REFERENCE –

VATUSA DP001, General Division Policy, Para 6-3, Training Administrator.
vZDC-A-01E, Para 1-4-3, Training Administrator.

2-2-2. ASSISTANT TRAINING ADMINISTRATOR

The Assistant Training Administrator position may be filled at the discretion of the TA with the approval of the Air Traffic Manager (ATM). Duties and responsibilities are those listed in the GOP and as delegated or assigned by the TA.

REFERENCE –

vZDC-A-01E, Para 1-4-3, Training Administrator.

2-2-3. INSTRUCTOR

Instructor duties and responsibilities include:

- a. The primary duty of providing training to controllers seeking training at vZDC.
- b. Administer all knowledge validations and skills validations for controllers completing training under the Refreshed Curriculum.
- c. Approve S1 promotions for controllers completing training under the Legacy training program upon recommendation by a mentor at their discretion. Instructors should review the most recent three training feedbacks before approving the S1 rating.
- d. Administer training events (Rating Examination) for trainees completing a block or phase of training for award of a new rating.
- e. Enroll trainees in the respective rating course in the VATUSA Academy.
- f. Verify trainees are enrolled in the respective vZDC course for their current rating in the VATUSA Academy.

NOTE –

Lesson plans and associated curriculum are under development and courses are not available for all tracks of training.

- g. Complete training feedback documentation following each training session in a timely manner and in a way that provides constructive feedback for reference by the trainee in self-study.
- h. Instructors are encouraged to contact trainees after receiving a scheduling notification message, so the trainee knows who the session is scheduled with. Due to a software limitation, this information is no longer communicated to the trainee in their confirmation message.

REFERENCE –

VATUSA DP002C, Training Policy, Para 3.2.1, Instructor.

2-2-4. MENTOR

- a. Augment the instructor group by providing training sessions for controllers for initial and recurrent training programs.
- b. Engaging with trainees to understand their training progress and help guide them through the training program to achieve successful completion of training at vZDC towards their desired level of rating or endorsement.
- c. Run simulator sessions for trainees to teach fundamental air traffic control concepts and techniques and evaluate trainee performance based on applicable publications and guidance.
- d. Complete training feedback documentation following each training session in a timely manner and in a way that provides constructive feedback for reference by the trainee in self-study.
- e. Mentors are encouraged to contact trainees after receiving a scheduling notification message, so the trainee knows who the session is scheduled with. Due to a software limitation, this information is no longer communicated to the trainee in their confirmation message.
- f. Mentors should hold at least an S3 rating.

REFERENCE –

VATUSA DP002C, *Training Policy, Para 3.3, Mentor.*

2-2-5. TRAINEE

- a. Studying all available training materials to be prepared for the next lesson or block of training. Primary reference publications include FAAO 7110.65, *Air Traffic Control*, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the facility in training at and adjacent vZDC facilities and airspace, and Letters of Agreement (LOA) for all facilities with an LOA with the facility in training.
- b. Scheduling training on a regular basis. Trainees should strive for at least one session per week when training team availability permits.
- c. Training with a positive attitude that is receptive to feedback. Feedback provides a critical piece of the training program and allows progression and improvement when it is accepted and applied.

Section 3. Requirements

2-3-1. TRAINER ELIGIBILITY

a. Instructors must hold a C1 or higher rating, be fully certified in vZDC, currently serving as mentor with vZDC, and not have had any recent unprofessional activity or suspension. Instructor candidates must have a demonstrated record of strong technical knowledge and skill while also maintaining excellent interpersonal skills.

REFERENCE –

VATUSA DP002C, Training Policy, Para 3.2.2, Eligibility.

b. Mentors must hold S2 or higher and be certified in all vZDC Tier 1 facilities. Mentors will have logged at least 30 hours in a control position in vZDC as a certified S2 before being eligible to apply to become a mentor.

2-3-2. CONTINUING QUALIFICATION

Trainers are expected to remain current on all changes that effect operations at vZDC. This includes changes to applicable FAA Orders, VATSIM, VATUSA, and vZDC publications (i.e., SOP, LOA, etc.). Trainers will ensure that changes are communicated with trainees, that trainees are aware of changes, and that trainees are using the current publication.

2-3-3. MONTHLY SERVICE COMMITMENT

Trainers should conduct two training sessions per calendar month. Sessions may be scheduled Sweatbox sessions, impromptu sessions on either Sweatbox or live traffic, or formal training sessions where a trainee is monitored working on the live network. Training team members performing additional duties for the training department unable to provide two training sessions will have their monthly service commitment recognized complete assuming the additional duties have been completed in a timely manner and an attempt to offer at least one training session was made.

REFERENCE –

VZDC-A-02F, Para 1-3-2, Instructor Availability.

VZDC-A-02F, Para 1-3-3, Mentor Availability.

2-3-4. APPROVAL TO CONDUCT TRAINING

a. *Legacy Training Events* may be conducted to the level approved for the individual trainer by the Training Administrator. The term “trainer” as used in this order refers to an instructor or mentor. Any trainer may conduct any training event except for Rating Examinations (RE) training events that result in a new VATSIM Controller Rating.

b. *Refreshed Training Curriculum* training events may be trained by any member of the training staff that holds the rating and endorsement that the training event is preparing the trainee to achieve.

2–3–5. EXTENDED PERIOD OF UNAVAILABILITY

Trainers that will be unable to meet the required minimum training requirements may request deferral of activity requirements to the TA by emailing ta@vzdc.org. Trainers are expected to notify the TA in advance to ensure trainees are not assigned during periods of unavailability and to permit the TA to plan training capacity appropriately.

Chapter 3. Curriculum and Standards

Section 1. vZDC Academy Curriculum

3-1-1. DEFINITION

The vZDC Academy Curriculum consists of stages of training that are published, administered, and maintained on the VATUSA Academy eLearning system. This curriculum is the primary means of maintaining lesson plans, knowledge validation questions, and delivering training to all trainees at vZDC.

3-1-2. PROGRESSION

a. All controllers are assigned “Getting Started” upon transferring to vZDC. This eLearning module provides a quick overview of vZDC policies and overview of the various tools necessary to control at vZDC.

b. *Stage 1* results in completion of the S1 Rating and endorsement in all vZDC Tier 1 facilities (delivery/ground). Block 1 of Stage 1 is conducted at RDU. Block 2 of Stage 1 is conducted at the Tier 1 facilities of vZDC. Satisfactory completion of the Stage 1, Block 1, Skills Validation (1-1-SV) results in the trainee receiving their S1 Rating (minor delivery/ground).

c. *Stage 2* results in completion of the S2 Rating and endorsement in all vZDC Tier 1 facilities (tower). Block 1 of Stage 2 is conducted at RDU. Block 2 of Stage 2 is conducted at the Tier 1 facilities of vZDC. Satisfactory completion of the Stage 2, Block 1, Skills Validation (2-1-SV) results in the trainee receiving their S2 Rating (minor tower).

d. *Stage 3* results in completion of the S3 Rating and endorsement in all vZDC Tier 1 facilities (approach). Blocks 2 through 4 are conducted at RDU. Blocks 5 through 8 are conducted at the respective Tier 1 facility. Satisfactory completion of the Stage 3, Block 4, Rating Examination results in the trainee receiving their S3 Rating (minor approach).

NOTE –

This training progression permits trainees to seek to continue rating advancement following a minor only track without completing the Tier 1 facility endorsements. While this path is not recommended by the training team, it is an available training path for the trainee. This alternate training path ensures compliance with recent VATSIM policy changes.

REFERENCE –

vZDC-A-02F, Appendix A, Training Flow – Stage 1.
vZDC-A-02F, Appendix B, Training Flow – Stage 2.
vZDC-A-02F, Appendix C, Training Flow – Stage 3.
vZDC-A-02F, Appendix D, Training Flow – Stage 4.

Section 2. Transferring Controllers

3-2-1. DEFINITION

A transferring controller is any controller that transfers their home facility to vZDC from any facility other than the VATUSA Academy and holds a rating of other than Observer (OBS).

3-2-2. CONSOLIDATION

Transfer controllers must perform at least 50 controlling hours at their current rating in the ARTCC where the rating was granted before being eligible to transfer to vZDC.

REFERENCE –

VATUSA DP-001, General Division Policy, Para 12.2, Transferring Controllers.

3-2-3. PROGRESSION

Transferring controllers with a rating of S1 or higher may control at any unrestricted facility appropriate to their VATSIM rating. Transferring controllers seeking endorsement in a Tier 1 or Tier 2 facility must complete the vZDC Academy Curriculum track appropriate for the endorsement sought.

Section 3. Visiting Controllers

3-3-1. DEFINITION

Any controller not assigned to vZDC as their home facility is a visiting controller to vZDC and subject to the requirements of this section.

3-3-2. SCOPE

This order provides policy for training and endorsement only. Administrative policy regarding visiting controllers is contained in vZDC-A-01F, *General Operating & Administrative Policy*, Chapter 3, Section 5, *Visiting Controllers*. Visiting controllers are provided training as necessary for Tier 1 and Tier 2 facility endorsement. Fundamental air traffic control principles are expected to be learned from the home facility.

REFERENCE –

vZDC-A-01F, Ch 3, Sec 5, *Visiting Controllers*.

3-3-3. LIMITATIONS

a. Visiting controllers will not receive training towards a rating. Training is limited to that training required to obtain a specific endorsement at vZDC within their currently held VATSIM rating.

b. An increase in VATSIM rating or additional Tier 1 endorsements at a visiting controller's home facility does not grant Tier 1 (or Tier 2) endorsement at vZDC. Visiting Controllers must complete the required training at vZDC for Tier 1 and Tier 2 endorsements.

3-3-4. INITIAL TRAINING

a. Upon acceptance to vZDC as a Visiting Controller, controllers will be assigned the Getting Started course for vZDC found in the VATUSA Academy under Washington ARTCC Courses. This course provides a quick overview of the resources needed to control within vZDC.

b. In accordance with VATSIM policy changes, visiting controllers are permitted to control those facilities not designated as Tier 1 or Tier 2 upon being approved as a visitor.

c. Visiting controllers seeking endorsement at Tier 1 and Tier 2 facilities will request training and be assigned a training team via the training queue. Visiting controllers will follow the training path for Tier 1 endorsement for the type of facility endorsement sought (i.e. for Tier 1 ground positions, follow the Stage 1, Block 2 training footprint). For visiting controllers seeking Tier 1 endorsements at Potomac TRACON, endorsement at BWI, DCA, and IAD ATCTs must first be completed.

d. Ground, Tower, and Approach (each PCT area) are classified as individual Tier 1 endorsements. The vZDC Academy Stage 1, 2, and 3 courses and their respective Blocks of instruction towards Tier 1 endorsement are the basis for all Tier 1 training. Trainers have the ability to combine lessons and progress the trainee through the syllabus at a faster rate based on their level of experience, knowledge, and demonstrated technical proficiency.

REFERENCE –

vZDC-A-02F, Appendix E, *Training Flow – Visiting Controllers*.

Section 4. Returning Controllers

3-4-1. DEFINITION

As used in this order, a “Returning Controller” refers to any controller returning to vZDC following removal from the active roster for any reason.

3-4-2. LESS THAN SIX MONTHS AWAY

Upon completion of the following requirements, the TA may reinstate appropriate endorsements at vZDC. Controllers removed from the active roster for less than six months will:

- a. Rejoin vZDC.
- b. Complete familiarization and refresh on all SOP, LOA, and FAAO 7110.65 changes through self-study.
- c. Notify TA via ta@vzdc.org that the required publications have been reviewed and that they are ready to resume active controlling status.

3-4-3. NOT MORE THAN 12 MONTHS AWAY

Upon completion of the following requirements, the TA will reinstate appropriate endorsements at vZDC. Controllers removed from the active roster for not more than twelve (12) months will:

- a. Complete VATUSA specific requirements for returning to active status.
- b. Rejoin vZDC.
- c. Complete familiarization and refresh on all SOP, LOA, and FAAO 7110.65 changes through self-study and complete a knowledge validation with an approved trainer.
- d. Complete a familiarization session via simulator or live network with an approved trainer and receive a satisfactory skills validation. The skills validation may be conducted as the familiarization session at the discretion of the trainer.
- e. The trainee must inform the trainer of the endorsement(s) sought to renew.

3-4-4. MORE THAN 12 MONTHS AWAY

Controllers that have not held an active endorsement at vZDC for more than twelve (12) months must complete all VATUSA specific requirements and then rejoin vZDC. Upon rejoining, and upon request of the controller to obtain endorsements for Tier 1 facilities, the controller will be placed in the appropriate training pathway based on assessed proficiency, knowledge, and experience. Until demonstrated and validated by the TA otherwise, all prior endorsements are considered void, and the controller must recomplete the training process for the respective endorsement until proficiency is regained for the endorsement to be restored.

Section 5. Endorsements

3–5–1. DEFINITION

Positions designated as Tier 1 or Tier 2 require an endorsement from a trainer to control. Those positions that have not been designated as Tier 1 or Tier 2 are considered “unrestricted” and may be controlled by any controller with the appropriate VATSIM Rating.

3–5–2. LISTING OF ENDORSEMENTS

- a. Baltimore (BWI) Ground/Delivery (Tier 1).
- b. Baltimore (BWI) Tower (Tier 1).
- c. Dulles (IAD) Ground/Delivery (Tier 1).
- d. Dulles (IAD) Tower (Tier 1).
- e. Washington (DCA) Ground/Delivery (Tier 1).
- f. Washington (DCA) Tower (Tier 1).
- g. Chesapeake Area (CHP), Potomac TRACON (Tier 1).
- h. Shenandoah Area (SHD), Potomac TRACON (Tier 1).
- i. Mount Vernon Area (MTV), Potomac TRACON (Tier 1). Endorsement for CHP and SHD must be received prior to training for MTV.
- j. Washington Center (Tier 2).

NOTE –

Endorsements for BWI, DCA, and IAD may be given individually or during a single session based on the training received, performance evaluated, and instructor discretion. Trainers will ensure trainees are fully aware of what endorsements have been granted and will document the endorsements awarded accurately in the vZDC training feedback system and dossier entry.

REFERENCE –

vZDC-A-01E, Para 1-3-3, Tier 1 Facilities.
vZDC-A-01E, Para 1-3-4, Tier 2 Facilities.

3–5–3. AUTHORIZED SOLO ENDORSEMENTS

Trainers may issue trainees “solo endorsements” to obtain experience on the network by controlling without a monitor. Trainers granting the solo may apply additional restrictions to the solo endorsement as determined necessary by the authorizing trainer. Solo endorsements may be made for any vZDC facility. The following requirements must be met to grant a solo endorsement:

REFERENCE –

vZDC-A-02F, Para 3–5–2, Listing of Endorsements.
vZDC-A-02F, Para 3–5–5, Authorization to Award Solo Endorsements.

- a. Three training sessions must be documented for the specific facility that a solo endorsement will be granted for.

b. Solo endorsements will include the specific airport and associated facility the endorsement applies to.

c. Only one solo endorsement may be active at any given time, and it will only be for the position the trainee is actively in training for.

d. Temporary endorsements for Tier 1 or Tier 2 facilities will not be granted unless the trainee has the required VATSIM rating for the type of facility the solo endorsement will be made for.

EXAMPLE –

S2 rated controller may be granted a solo endorsement for RDU APP as it is an unrestricted facility whereas the same S2 may not be granted a solo endorsement for PCT APP as PCT is designated as Tier 1 and thus requires the trainee hold the S3 rating before a solo endorsement is made.

3–5–4. SOLO ENDORSEMENT RESTRICTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

a. Trainees may not work at events in a position where only a solo endorsement has been made unless waived by a member of the vZDC Senior Staff.

b. Solo endorsements are valid for thirty (30) days. One monitored live session, or one simulated training session must be completed prior to each solo endorsement extension with a trainer permitted to grant solo endorsement. Endorsements may be extended to 45 days from initial date of issuance.

c. Extensions beyond 45 days up to 90 days require approval of the Training Administrator, and the Deputy Director -Training Services.

NOTE –

Solo endorsements are granted for trainees nearing completion of training and are intended to give the trainee an opportunity to put everything together in preparation for endorsement or rating advancement. Solo endorsements are not intended to be a substitute for regular training progression.

REFERENCE –

VATUSA DP002C, Training Policy, Para 4.3.3, Solo Endorsements.

3–5–5. AUTHORIZATION TO AWARD SOLO ENDORSEMENTS

a. Instructors may grant solo endorsements to any trainee for any terminal position or Tier 1 facility, subject to the rating and tier restrictions for solo endorsement.

b. Mentors may grant solo endorsements to any trainee for any local control position or Tier 1 Ground Control/Clearance Delivery position they are certified for at vZDC.

c. Enroute solo endorsement (Washington Center) will only be issued by the TA or with TA concurrence.

3–5–6. RECORDING OF SOLO ENDORSEMENTS

All solo endorsements will be entered on the VATUSA website and on the vZDC controller roster.

3-5-7. TEMPORARY ENDORSEMENTS

a. Temporary Endorsements may be granted for trainees with an assigned training team actively working towards Tier 1 or Tier 2 endorsements. Trainers will comply with paragraph 3-5-4, *Solo Endorsement Restrictions and Limitations*, when granting temporary endorsements for a position.

b. Temporary endorsements for Tier 1 or Tier 2 facilities will not be granted unless the trainee has the required VATSIM rating for the type of facility the solo endorsement will be made for.

Section 6. Standards

3-6-1. PRIMARY TABLE OF STANDARDS

VATUSA Division Training Policy, Chapter 2, *Training Standards*, is a complete listing of each standard established for each rating based on the VATSIM Global Controller Administration Policy (GCAP) and adopted to the standards applicable to air traffic control in the National Airspace System and VATUSA's, and vZDC's, area of operations.

REFERENCE –

VATUSA DP002C, *Training Policy*, para 4.3.1, *Rating Training Programs* [[VATUSA ATC Competencies](#)].

3-6-2. LOCALLY ADAPTED STANDARDS

Standards requiring additional training or emphasis for vZDC specific operation types are presented here and require additional review and study for proficiency.

NOTE –

Local standards will be added in future updates of this policy. No local standards are included currently.

Chapter 4. Controller Applications

Section 1. Concept of Environment and Use

4-1-1. OVERVIEW

This chapter is provided to establish guidelines and general operating practices regarding the various applications available for use to control on the VATSIM network and in vZDC with a narrowed focus on training specific areas of emphasis. As new applications are made available this chapter will be updated to best incorporate the changes and provide a standardized approach to training with these new tools.

4-1-2. TRAINING SESSION REALISM

vNAS enables training sessions to maximize realism by incorporating most tools available during live network controlling into the training environment. Trainers are encouraged to utilize all available tools during simulated training events to maximize realism and create the most beneficial training environment.

Section 2. Consolidated Radar Client (CRC)

4-2-1. OVERVIEW

Consolidated Radar Client (CRC) is the replacement controller client for VRC, vSTARS, and vERAM and is the only vNAS compatible controller client available for vZDC. CRC simulates tower cab, ASDE-X, STARS, and ERAM. It introduces numerous new advantages that make controller workflow more efficient, realistic, and functional across all control positions.

4-2-2. CORE FUNCTIONALITY FOR TRAINING

Training is conducted using CRC exclusively. All tools available within CRC may be utilized by the trainee.

Section 3. vATIS

4-3-1. APPLICATION OVERVIEW

Virtual Automated Terminal Information Service (vATIS) is a utility designed to allow controllers to setup and broadcast an ATIS for any airport(s) under their control. vATIS uses the currently published weather observation and maintains profiles for standard airport configurations. The system will notify the controller when a new observation is available, and the controller can release the new ATIS.

4-3-2. TRAINING APPLICATION

vATIS is only usable when connected to the live VATSIM network. vATIS functionality should be discussed by the trainer during the appropriate phase of training.

Section 4. Sweatbox Servers

4-4-1. DESCRIPTION

VATSIM operates two servers not connected to the live network. These networks are called the Sweatbox servers. These servers allow trainers to run simulation software that enables adding, deleting, and manipulating aircraft to simulate air traffic for trainees to practice and develop their skills as controllers.

4-4-2. ACCESSING SWEATBOX SERVERS

Sweatbox or Sweatbox-2 may be selected when connecting to a controller client/tool that is supported in the simulated (not live network) environment.

4-4-3. AUTHORIZED USE

Use of the Sweatbox server is restricted to members of the training team and vZDC staff members. Trainee use without a training team member is not permitted.

4-4-4. TEST SERVER

The Test Server is available for testing purposes and should not be used for routine training activities.

Section 5. vTDLS

4-5-1. OVERVIEW

vTDLS (Tower Data-Link Services) is the system that allows controllers to send pre-departure clearances (PDC) to aircraft. vTDLS only simulates the PDC functionality and is only available at those airports that have TDLS available (ADW, BWI, DCA, IAD, RDU).

4-5-2. TRAINING APPLICATION

vTDLS supports Sweatbox server connections. As such, vTDLS is incorporated into lessons and trainers should encourage its use throughout all training.

Section 6. vStrips

4-6-1. OVERVIEW

vStrips is a web-based simulation of paper flight strips used in many FAA terminal facilities. vStrips is intended to be utilized in air traffic control tower (ATCT) facilities only and offers minimal support to terminal radar positions.

4-6-2. TRAINING APPLICATION

vStrips may be utilized with Sweatbox scenarios. Use of flight strips is encouraged and trainees and trainers may utilize vStrips at their discretion.

NOTE –

When vZDC policy is published regarding use of vStrips in control positions, that policy will be applied during training.

Chapter 5. Training and Checking Events

Section 1. Training Sessions

5-1-1. TYPES OF TRAINING SESSIONS

Regular training sessions are categorized into two formats of training:

a. “Live Sessions” are those training sessions where a trainee is logged in on the VATSIM network and provides real time air traffic service to other users connected to the network.

b. “Sweatbox Sessions” or “Sim Sessions” are training sessions where the trainee is logged in on a Sweatbox server and controls simulated traffic that is controlled by a trainer.

5-1-2. REQUIREMENTS TO TRAIN ON THE LIVE NETWORK

a. Trainees that have earned the S1 rating, or higher, may be monitored by a trainer on the network. Trainees will only be monitored on live traffic in positions they are actively in training for. Trainees may work combined airspace if all combined airspace is collectively either certified or in training.

EXAMPLE-

Trainee is certified in CHP and in training for SHD, the trainee could be monitored working CHP and SHD combined but not CHP, SHD, and MTV since MTV has not been trained.

or

Trainee is certified in CHP and SHD and in training for MTV, the trainee may be monitored in PCT combined as the trainee is either certified in or in training for all airspace to be controlled.

REFERENCE -

VATUSA DP002C, Training Policy, Para 4.1.2e, Monitored live network activities.

b. Trainers monitoring trainees must be able to assume control of the position from the trainee if traffic or complexity becomes beyond the ability of the trainee. In most instances, trainers monitoring a trainee will connect to the same position the trainee will work by selecting the *same* position as the trainee in the CRC connection dialog window. Trainers will select “Instructor” from the role dropdown.

5-1-3. CALLSIGN USAGE WHILE TRAINING ON LIVE NETWORK

While being monitored during training on the live network, trainees will select “Student” from the role dropdown in the CRC connection dialog window.

5-1-4. TRAINEE CALLSIGN USAGE WHILE TRAINING ON SWEATBOX

Trainees must connect to the Sweatbox server by selecting the correct position for the training file that will be run. For trainees conducting a vZDC Academy lesson, the lesson plan scenario information section specifies the position that must be used. Failure to correct to the correct position will result in application and server errors while the scenario is running.

5-1-5. TRAINER CALLSIGN USAGE WHILE TRAINING ON SWEATBOX

Trainers will connect to Sweatbox using the same position the trainee is connected as. This will enable the trainer to actively monitor the trainee during the scenario. The instructor role should be selected. Trainers will avoid connecting to positions other than the trainee's position to ensure errors are not caused with the scenario file.

5-1-6. CALLSIGN WITH SOLO ENDORSEMENT

CRC callsigns are not changeable by the controller. Controllers with a solo endorsement will connect with the role selection of "Student."

Section 2. Knowledge Validations

5–2–1. OVERVIEW

Knowledge validations (KV) are those training events that validate the trainee’s knowledge level is satisfactory for continued progression in the training program. An unsatisfactory result from a knowledge validation provides areas to focus training on so the trainee can reattempt the KV with a successful outcome. KVs are categorized as either “written” or “oral.”

a. *Written Exam* requires the trainee to answer questions from a test bank and receive a passing score.

b. *Oral Exam* requires the trainee to answer questions given from the trainer and the trainer determines whether the provided explanation is satisfactory or unsatisfactory based on the context of the question.

5–2–2. MINIMUM PASSING SCORE AND REATTEMPTS

All written exams require a minimum grade of 80% to receive a passing score. VATUSA Course retake processes are managed by the VATUSA Academy. vZDC Courses with knowledge validation events are graded within the course content and will guide any corrective action as necessary.

REFERENCE –

VATUSA DP002C, Training Policy, Para 4.3.2.1, VATUSA Academy Coursework.

5–2–3. WRITTEN QUESTION BANK AND VALIDATION

The VATUSA Academy learning management system is the primary platform for written testing in vZDC. Any written exams authorized for use at vZDC will be administered through the VATUSA Academy and the Washington ARTCC Course content.

5–2–4. ORAL QUESTION BANK AND VALIDATION

The oral question bank is a question bank of standardized and validated oral questions with associated references for evaluating an accurate and correct answer. This question bank should be used by trainers to ensure relevant and technically correct questions are being presented to the trainee during knowledge evaluations.

5–2–5. GETTING STARTED AT ZDC

All controllers must complete the Getting Started at Virtual Washington ARTCC course found in the VATUSA Academy system. This self-paced course guides the trainee through the key elements of administrative and operational policy that is applicable at vZDC. No training will be conducted until this course requirement has been completed.

5–2–6. VATUSA S2 RATING COURSE

Trainees will be enrolled in the VATUSA Academy S2 Course by an instructor when they commence training towards the S2 Rating. The Academy course facilitates all general knowledge learning and validation requirements for the rating. This course replaces the legacy rating exam

system. This course must be completed prior to beginning training. Trainees will email zdc-instructors@vatusa.net when they are ready to enroll in the course.

5–2–7. VATUSA S3 RATING COURSE

Trainees will be enrolled in the VATUSA Academy S3 Course by an instructor when they commence training towards the S3 Rating. The Academy course facilitates all general knowledge learning and validation requirements for the rating. This course replaces the legacy rating exam system. This course must be completed prior to beginning training. Trainees will email zdc-instructors@vatusa.net when they are ready to enroll in the course.

5–2–8. VATUSA C1 RATING COURSE

Trainees will be enrolled in the VATUSA Academy C1 Course by an instructor when they commence training towards the C1 Rating. The Academy course facilitates all general knowledge learning and validation requirements for the rating. This course replaces the legacy rating exam system. This course must be completed prior to beginning training. Trainees will email zdc-instructors@vatusa.net when they are ready to enroll in the course.

Section 3. Skills Validations

5-3-1. OVERVIEW

Skills Validations (SV) are those training events that validate the trainee's technical and practical proficiency level is satisfactory for continued progression in the training program. An unsatisfactory result from a skills validation provides areas to focus training on so the trainee can reattempt the SV with a successful outcome. There are two forms of skill validations:

a. *Rating Examinations (RE)* are used to validate the trainee's ability to meet vZDC, VATUSA, and VATSIM standards. A satisfactory RE results in advancement in rating or additional endorsement within vZDC. RE must be conducted by an instructor.

REFERENCE –

VATUSA DP002C, *General Training Policy, Para 4.3.4, Rating Examinations.*

b. *Stage Checks* are skills validations within the vZDC curriculum to verify the trainee's progression matches the expected performance level for the current stage of training. A satisfactory stage check results in continued progression in the trainee's current curriculum. An unsatisfactory result provides the trainee, and the training team focus areas to improve so the trainee can reattempt the stage check with a satisfactory result.

5-3-2. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The grading standard for validation events is established by VATUSA and based on VATSIM's Global Controller Administration Policy (GCAP). The competencies and criteria for satisfactory or unsatisfactory grading are defined in the VATUSA Division Training Policy and are the primary source for referencing performance standards for each rating.

REFERENCE –

VATUSA DP002C, *Training Policy, para 4.3.1, Rating Training Programs* [[VATUSA ATC Competencies](#)].

Section 4. VATSIM Rating Changes

5-4-1. PROMOTION TO S1

Trainees will be promoted to S1 upon successful completion of their Stage 1 Block 1 Skills Validation (1-1-SV). Instructors administering the 1-1-SV will promote the trainee to S1 upon successful completion of the validation event. Mentors will utilize the Training Discussion Discord channel to request rating advancement be completed for the trainee. Instructors will respond to the Discord posting *first* to indicate they are responding, then update the promotion through the VATUSA website.

5-4-2. PROMOTION TO S2

The Stage 2 Block 1 Skills Validation event (2-1-SV) is an “Rating Examination” training event and therefore requires an Instructor (I1) to administer the event. The rating change is entered following satisfactory completion of this event by the instructor in the VATUSA system.

5-4-3. PROMOTION TO S3

The Stage 3 Block 4 RE event is the “Rating Examination” training event for the S3 Rating and therefore requires an Instructor (I1) to administer the event. The rating change is entered following satisfactory completion of this event by the instructor in the VATUSA system.

5-4-4. PROMOTIONS TO C1

Upon completion of satisfactory RE, instructors will process the VATSIM rating promotion.

Section 5. Global Ratings Policy Checkouts

5-5-1. CHANGE SUMMARY

Based on the VATSIM GCAP change effective March 2024, GRP Checkouts are no longer conducted. Controllers rostered at vZDC (home or visitor) may control any unrestricted facility up to their current rating. Endorsements are required to control at any Tier 1 or Tier 2 facility.

Chapter 6. Records and Documentation

Section 1. Routine Training Feedback

6-1-1. PURPOSE

Training feedback is formally provided to the trainee through submission of a training ticket on the vZDC website. The training ticket collects important information about the session and provides a way to record for the trainee, and subsequent trainers, progress, and notes about a completed session.

6-1-2. BEST PRACTICES

The following are considered best practices and should be considered when completing the training ticket:

a. If the session included a sweatbox scenario, include the scenario file that was ran, and any additional details about the scenario (weather, complexity, traffic volume, airport configuration, etc.).

b. Briefly summarize any topics that were discussed or that additional focus was given during the session.

c. Include references to the appropriate publication (i.e. .65 para 2-3-4) to help focus the trainee's study following a session.

d. Recognize performance areas that were demonstrated as meeting the standard for the rating or endorsement in training for.

e. Include in the trainer comments field recommend next steps or focus areas for the next training session.

6-1-3. NEW CURRICLUM DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Trainers will include in the trainee feedback section (visible to the trainee) the lesson number and its completion status. The following outcomes will be used to determine the lesson outcome:

a. *Complete*. Indicates all lesson objectives were met and the completion standards for the lesson were satisfied successfully.

b. *Incomplete*. Indicates not all lesson objectives were met. Potential reasons for an incomplete include technical issues, unforeseen early completion of the lesson due to outside factors, or just more time was needed to focus on specific areas of the lesson.

c. *Additional Training Required*. If the trainee struggles with the lesson content and is unlikely to successfully complete the lesson by simply recompleting the lesson, additional training required should be indicated. When additional training required is noted, the trainer will email ta@vzdc.org with additional information so a tailored plan of action can be determined.

Section 2. Dossier Entries

6-2-1. SYSTEM SUMMARY

Dossier entries on the vZDC website controller profile provide a written log of administrative actions associated with the controller. These entries are not exclusive to training program milestones. Entries in the Member Dossier provide a log for referencing which staff or training team member made a change in a controller's status.

6-2-2. REQUIRED ENTRIES

The following actions require the trainer to make an entry in the controller's dossier:

- a. Any change in a controller's VATSIM rating.
- b. Any change made to a controller's endorsements.
- c. Solo Endorsements, including those recorded in the VATUSA system.
- d. Appointments to training team roles.
- e. Training or other accomplishments not recorded in another system.

Section 3. Master Training Record

6-3-1. RESERVED

The Master Training Record will be incorporated in a future training order revision.

Section 4. Welcome Letter to New Controllers

6-4-1. PURPOSE

All controllers will receive an automatic welcome message upon acceptance to vZDC. This letter is maintained within the VATUSA Facility Management system. The letter will include guidance on accessing and completing the Getting Started at ZDC course and other important details necessary to begin controlling at vZDC.

6-4-2. CHANGES OR UPDATES TO THE WELCOME LETTER

The TA will submit any changes needed to the welcome letter to the DATM and the DATM will make all updates to the VATUSA letter.

Chapter 7. Scenario Development and Training Software

Section 1. Scenario Design Standards

7-1-1. PRINCIPLES

For sim scenario development, three areas of consideration must be applied:

a. *Lesson Plan Objectives* are the core driver for what is programmed in any sim. Understanding the objectives and the specific “take-aways” the trainee should have following the sim are critical while designing a scenario. The events that will be programmed to teach the specific lesson objectives must be considered and implemented in the problem first.

b. *Traffic Volume and Sector Saturation* is determined based on the stage in training. Over saturating airspace defeats the purpose of the scenario and results in the trainee not benefiting from the session. When developing scenarios, care should be given to ensure that the active traffic count (aircraft under the control of the trainee) does not exceed a defined traffic standard for the position and phase of training.

c. *Factors Impacting Complexity* are added to scenarios for trainees who’ve mastered the fundamental elements and are ready to apply their knowledge and experience to nonstandard or undefined areas of operations. Simulated runway closures, changing of airport configuration (changing from landing west to landing east during a scenario), holding, emergencies, and special use airspace activation are examples of events that can increase complexity. As a general rule, assume any single complexity factor introduced should count as three active aircraft when factoring sector saturation.

Section 2. ATCTrainer

7-2-1. APPLICATION OVERVIEW

a. ATCTrainer is part of the Virtual National Airspace System (VNAS) project and suite of new applications for use with VATSIM. ATCTrainer replaces TowerTrainer, EuroScope, ESKey, and Aircraft Situation Editor (ASE). ATCTrainer is cloud based and stores all scenario files remotely. This ensures trainers are always using only the approved and current training files. ATCTrainer and provides a realistic training simulation in the terminal, TRACON and en route environments. With an easy-to-use interface and simple commands compatible with any ATC client, ATCTrainer is simple to set up and easy to use. ATCTrainer supports VATSIM Velocity allowing for fast position updates for supported ATC clients.

b. ATCTrainer information is accessible from the <https://virtualnas.net/atctrainer> website.

7-2-2. ZDC REFERENCE GUIDE

A reference guide for ATCTrainer has been created for vZDC specifically. This guide provides supplemental information for trainers in how to utilize ATCTrainer within the context of the vZDC Training Program. It is maintained separately from this order to ensure it is easily updated and always contains the most current and relevant guidance. Use of this guide is required by all trainers, and it must be referenced for all vZDC training events.

7-2-3. OTHER TRAINING APPLICATIONS

ATCTrainer is the only authorized training tool permitted for use for training at vZDC. All legacy training products are no longer supported, updated, or permitted for use. Trainers will utilize only the training files available for selection in the ATCTrainer drop down menu.

INDEX

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A | | L | |
| ASSISTANT TRAINING ADMINISTRATOR | 16 | LIVE SESSIONS..... | 34 |
| ATCTRAINER | 46 | | |
| AVAILABILITY..... | 12 | | |
| B | | M | |
| BEST PRACTICES | 41 | MENTOR | 10 |
| BOOKING LIMIT | 12 | MONTHLY SERVICE COMMITMENT..... | 18 |
| C | | O | |
| CALLSIGN USAGE..... | 34 | ORAL EXAM..... | 36 |
| CALLSIGN WITH SOLO | 35 | | |
| CONTINUING QUALIFICATION..... | 18 | | |
| CONTROLLER..... | 10 | | |
| D | | P | |
| DOSSIER ENTRIES | 42 | PROBATIONARY PERIODS | 15 |
| DOSSIER ENTRIES | 42 | PROMOTIONS | 39 |
| E | | R | |
| ENDORSEMENTS..... | 24 | RATING CHANGES..... | <i>SEE</i> |
| ENDORSEMENTS..... | 24 | <i>RATING EXAMINATIONS</i> | 38 |
| G | | RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRAINING | 12 |
| GOP | <i>SEE</i> GENERAL OPERATING POLICY | RETURNING CONTROLLERS | 23 |
| I | | S | |
| IMPROMPTU TRAINING | 12 | SCENARIO DESIGN STANDARDS | 45 |
| INSTRUCTOR..... | 10 | SCHEDULING | 12 |
| INSTRUCTOR DUTIES | 16 | <i>SECTOR SATURATION</i> | 45 |
| K | | SENIOR STAFF | 10 |
| KNOWLEDGE VALIDATIONS | 36 | SKILLS VALIDATIONS | 38 |
| | | SOLO ENDORSEMENTS | 24 |
| | | SOLO ENDORSEMENTS | 24 |
| | | <i>STAGE CHECKS</i> | 38 |
| | | STUDENT | 10 |
| | | SWEATBOX SERVER..... | 31 |
| | | SWEATBOX SESSIONS | 34 |
| T | | T | |
| | | TA..... | <i>SEE</i> TRAINING ADMINISTRATOR |

TEMPORARY ENDORSEMENTS26
TRAINER.....10
TRAINER ELIGIBILITY18
TRAINING ADMINISTRATOR16
TRAINING CULTURE9
TRANSFERRING CONTROLLERS.....21

VATIS.....30
VATSIM.....10
VATUSA.....10
VATUSA ACADEMY GRADUATE.....20
VISITING CONTROLLERS22
VZDC11

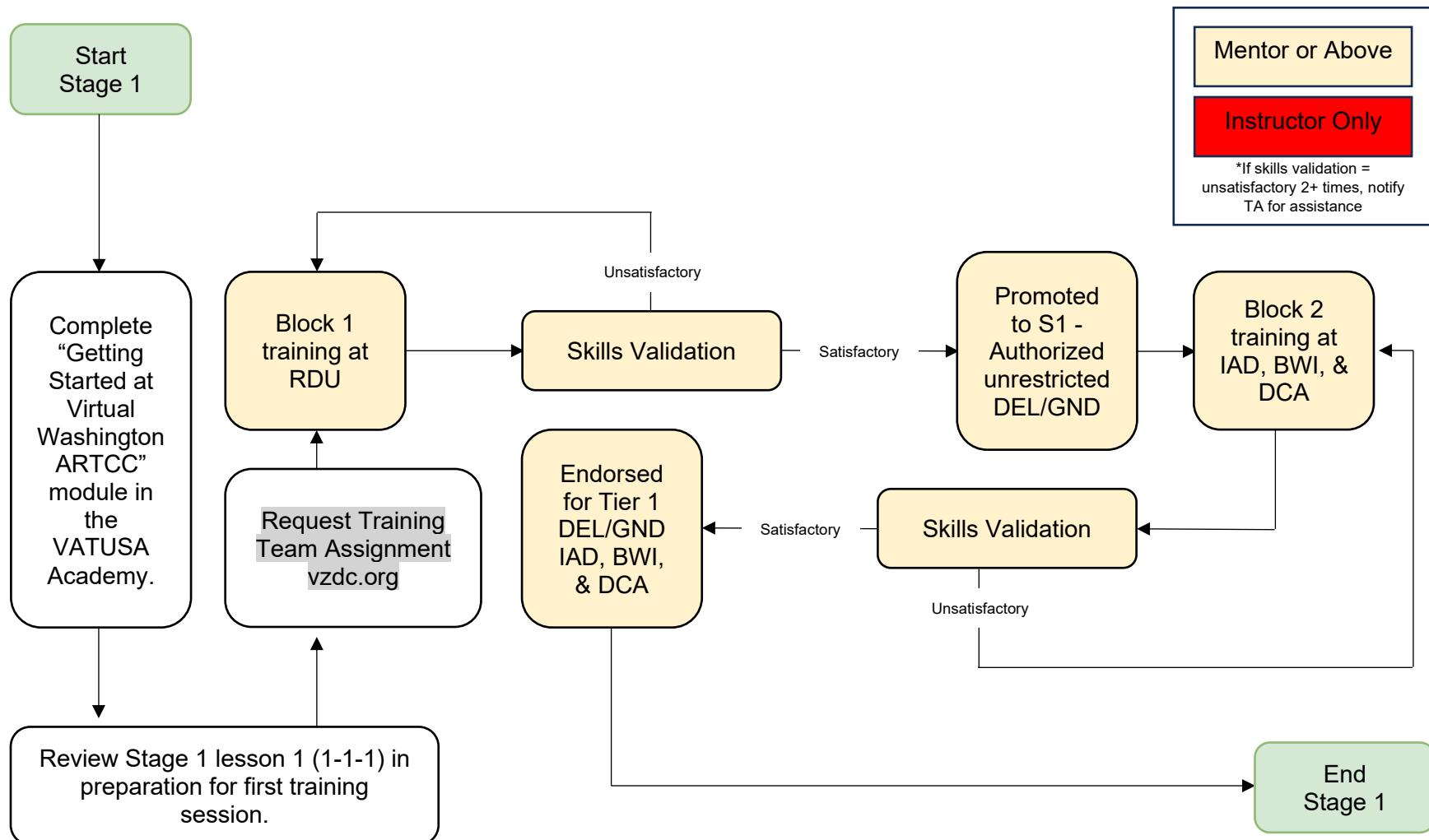
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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS.....15

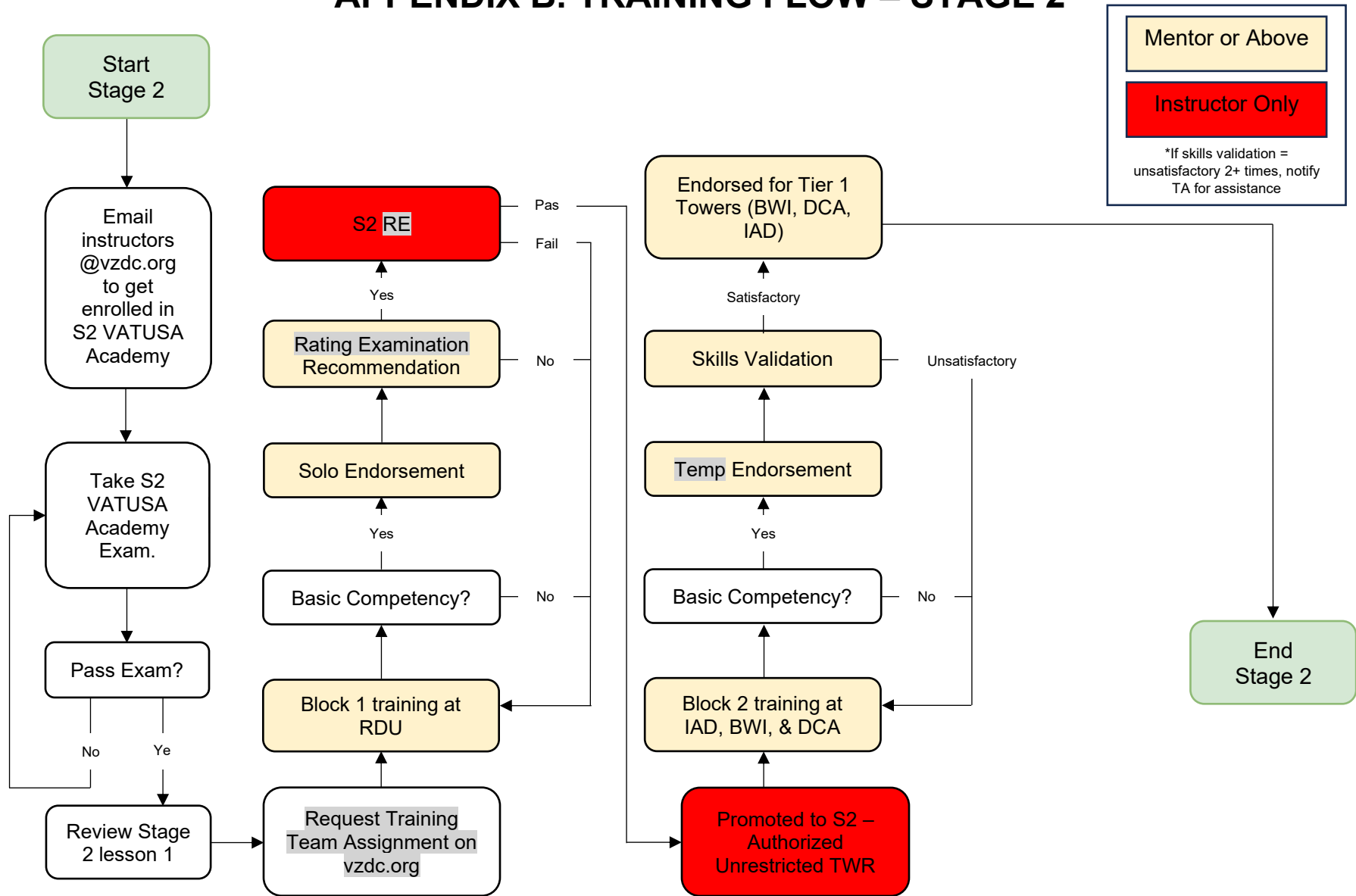
W

WRITTEN EXAM36

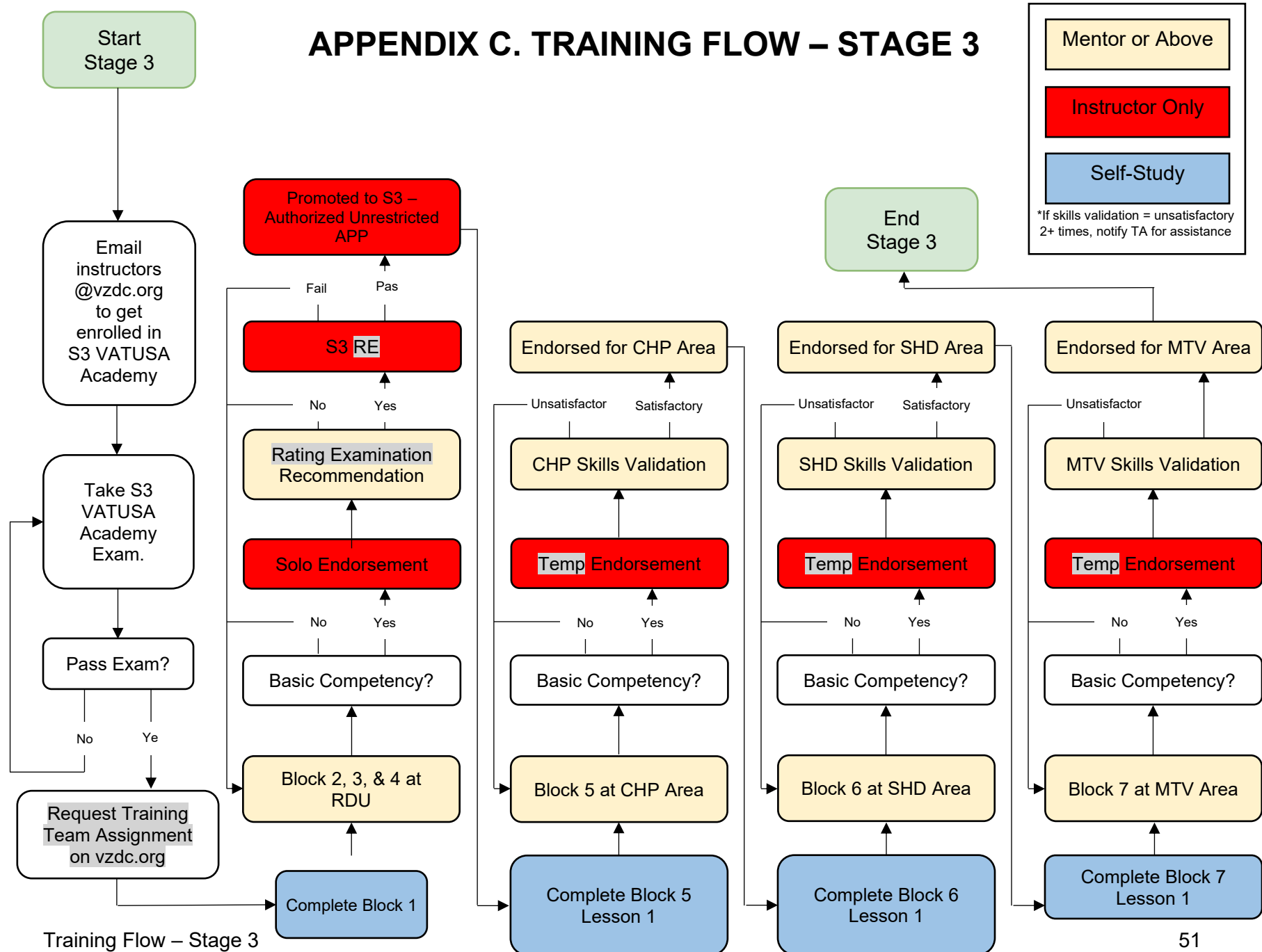
APPENDIX A. TRAINING FLOW – STAGE 1



APPENDIX B. TRAINING FLOW – STAGE 2



APPENDIX C. TRAINING FLOW – STAGE 3



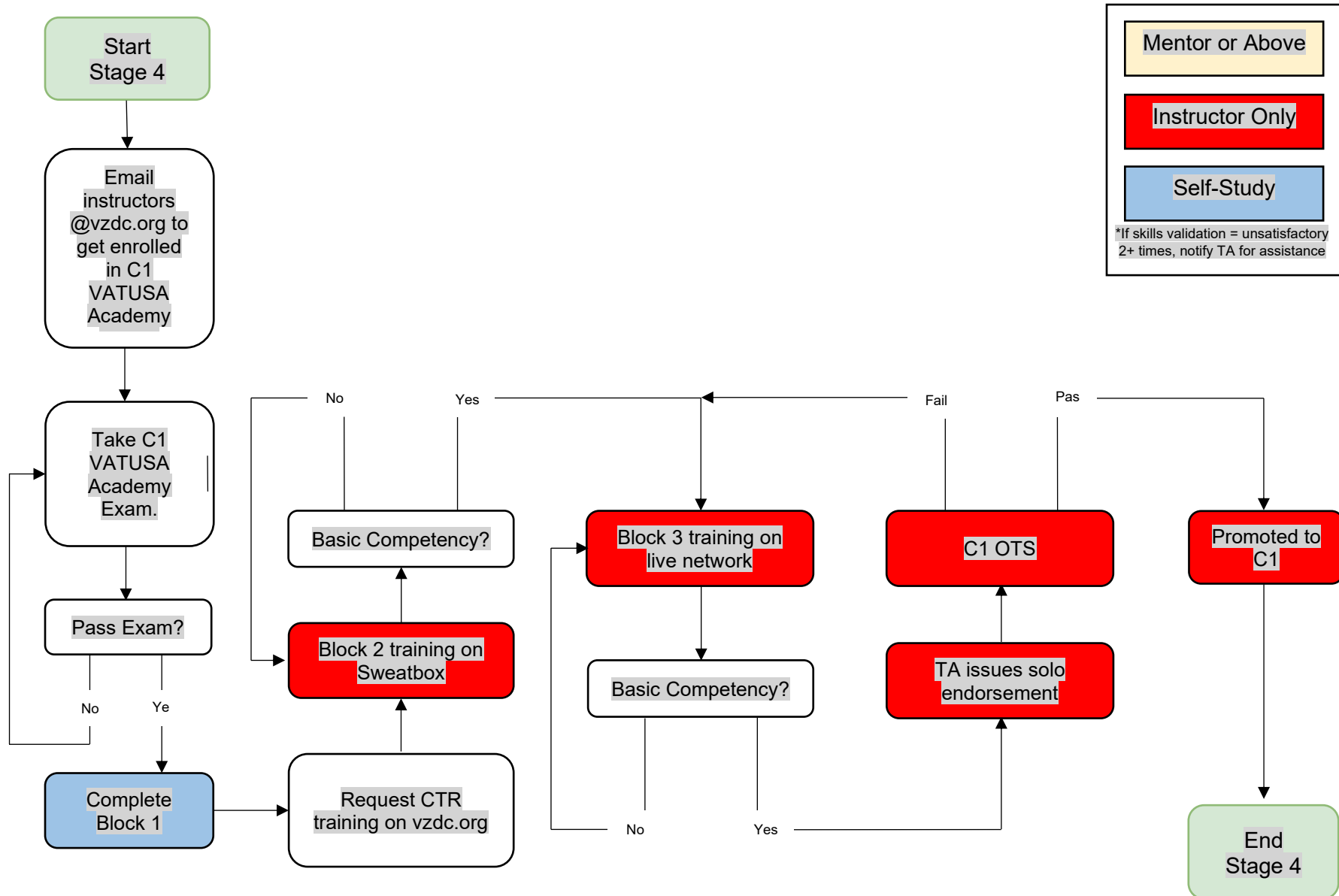
Mentor or Above

Instructor Only

Self-Study

*If skills validation = unsatisfactory 2+ times, notify TA for assistance

APPENDIX D. TRAINING FLOW – STAGE 4



Training Flow – Legacy Path to C1

APPENDIX E. TRAINING FLOW – VISITING CONTROLLERS

