Instructor supervision

This Practical Flying Guide provides guidance to flight training providers on delivering a structured, documented supervision programme to new instructors, and instructors who're operating in a new flying environment.

Supervision aims at making sure instructors can continue to gain effective knowledge and experience during all phases of flight instruction, Supervision should never stop.

Cover photo: iStock.com/Cheryl Ramalho

Contents

Introduction

The world of aviation is rapidly changing. The use of aircraft and airspace is evolving, and the advances in technology and systems are expanding the scope and the pace of instructor roles at many flight training providers. These changes in technology introduce a wide array of challenges. There is no mandatory training on using electronic flight bags (EFB) The pilot is, in essence, able to download the app and away they go.

So, technology needs to be appropriately managed to maintain aviation safety.

The Civil Aviation Authority has promoted the systems-based approach, including a learning culture that helps instructors gaining experience, while they continue to operate safely.

A learning culture sets processes and practices that encourage, not only individuals, but also flight training providers, to increase knowledge, competence, and performance.

An integral part of a learning culture is supervision, where a supervising pilot provides support and mentoring within a just culture. A supervising instructor provides support for new instructors or for existing instructors. The support is in the form of direct or indirect supervision with one supervising instructor.

Flight training providers are required to provide supervision as part of the training process. The information provided in this guide is targeted at the flight training provider. However, the processes could be used in any type of operation.

This guide focuses on supervision of instructors during all phases of their instructing career. It's one tool, among many, to provide the instructor with ongoing confidence and competence in an instructing environment. Flight training providers could refer to this phase of supervision as 'mentoring'.

What is instructor supervision?

Instructor supervision described in this guide is a structured and documented process providing mentoring, support, and guidance to all flight instructors.

This supervision is tailored to the individual pilot, recognising prior learning, pilot experience, and background.

When is supervision required?

Formal supervision needs to be developed for flight training in the following areas and in accordance with the rules:

- category C instructor
- category B instructor (newly qualified)
- cross country training PPL/CPL (instructor and student)
- flight tests (occurrence trends indicate high levels of risk, approaching and immediately after flight tests)
- IFR instructor training
- Multi engine flight instructor
- Night flight instructor
- Terrain and weather
- Basic mountain flying.

Who can conduct the supervision?

A supervisor can be a category B or A instructor.

The supervisor should have the following attributes:

- substantial experience relevant to the needs and goals of the instructor under supervision
- calm and non-judgemental manner
- good communication skills
- a good understanding of the role of the supervisor

- a good understanding of the instructor's goals.

- Time ie, workload reduced to allow for this role

- Willingness and motivation.

What does a supervisor do?

The supervisor manages the supervision process and is key to success. The supervisor instructor has the following responsibilities:

- act as a supervisor to regularly provide advice, guidance, and feedback.

- ensure flying tasks assigned to, or initiated by the CFI, are consistent with the skill levels, familiarity, and level of progress through the supervision programme. Monitoring regularly to ensure the instructor under supervision isn't teaching outside and above their experience level

- regularly collaborate with the instructors to ensure they gain and maintain the appropriate knowledge and skills to ensure a safe operating environment

- regularly, if possible, observe the instructor in flight, provide constructive feedback, discuss techniques, and record areas of discussion

- regularly provide opportunity and encourage the pilot under supervision to self-evaluate, self-critique, and reflect on performance

- lead by example, hold regular meetings, lead discussions about students' performance/outcomes. Compliance with the appropriate CARs and AC.

Supervision plan

Supporting instructors

The supervision plan should provide opportunities to further develop knowledge and skills. This can be accomplished with a structured induction into an organisation. For a category C instructor, at least the first six consecutive months, and for a minimum of the first 100 hours of instructional flying, the flight instructor is under the direct supervision of the holder of a category A or B flight instructor rating, within one training organisation.

This process should be documented in the flight instructor personnel file and/or organisation exposition and include forms for managing and recording the supervision. Including a logbook sticker by the supervising instructor.

Developing a supervision plan

The supervisor and instructor should meet and work together to create an effective supervision plan. This initial meeting should start with reviewing supporting material (company manuals, standard operating procedures, and so on) and discussing its relevance to the supervision.

Deciding on the phases of supervision, for instance, ab-inito/advanced training/X- country/IFR training.

Deciding on focus areas of the supervision suited to the instructor's individual situation.

On a regular basis, monitoring pre-flight briefings given by the category C flight instructor to students, and flying with the students.

Document the above in a training-type syllabus for recording progress.

Once the supervisor and instructor agree on, and document, the supervision plan, the supervisor should brief the pilot on:

- how the supervision activities will be conducted

- how the supervision will be recorded/reported

- the process for addressing any lack of knowledge or difficulty in following the SOPs.

The supervision plan and any amendments should be authorised by the chief flying instructor.

Ineffective supervision

The following supervisor behaviours would lead to the supervision process being ineffective:

- inadequate attendance, or failing to provide the necessary guidance, training, leadership, or oversight to ensure the instructor operates in a safe operating environment, meets the minimum standards, and complies with the CAR.

- continued inappropriate behaviours or problems where instances are known to the training supervisor, yet are allowed to continue unchecked

- criticising as opposed to constructive critiquing

- not allowing sufficient time for debriefing and self-evaluation

- CFI or supervisor having their own way of doing things, not in compliance with the Flight Test Standard Guide.

Types of supervision

Direct supervision

The term 'direct supervision' refers to the supervisor observing the instructors during pre-flight planning, aircraft preparation, operating in the aircraft (if possible) in a range of normal operations, and during post-flight responsibilities.

Indirect supervision

The term 'indirect supervision' is used when the supervisor is not in the aircraft, where appropriate, or observing a pilot on an exercise not directly related to a flight.

The following are examples of indirect supervision:

- regularly meeting with the instructor to discuss progress – phone contact with the instructor – flight following software.

- instructor conducting a self-assessment, and analysis, and supervising instructor feedback on their progress

- identifying professional training needs and opportunities

- reviewing documentation, check they are complete and up to date

- assigning general duties and responsibilities specific to the role.

Here's an example: A flight training provider located at a busy airport employs an instructor who has little knowledge of the local area and procedures. The flight training provider has a process in their manual which allows for the supervision of instructors.

The supervisor and instructor meet and discuss the supervision process, which, in this case, will concentrate on local area knowledge and company operating procedures. This is documented so it can be referred to throughout the supervision period.

The supervisor guides and assists the new pilot through the induction process, local area familiarisation, and flight training provider SOPs. Once the instructor completes the supervision training, they continue as a supervisor and a point of contact for any questions or comments the new instructor may have.

Supporting instructors who operate infrequently

Category C instructors (out of direct supervision) working in casual or part-time roles may be inducted by a number of different flight training providers. These instructors should advise the respective CFI and/or supervisors about previous instructing experience (ab-initio/X-country).

Some supervision could be consolidated or may not be required, if it's similar to the supervision completed with another flight training provider, if it can be communicated and recorded effectively.

The supervising instructor should authorise the instructor's logbook if the instructor is inducted from another flight training provider.

Instructors operating in a casual or part-time role may need a longer supervision period than a full-time instructor. C Cat instructors under indirect supervision will always require supervision.

Remote supervision

The holder of a category C flight instructor rating, who have completed the period of direct supervision, are still required to be supervised by the holder of a category A or B flight instructor rating, in accordance with rule 61.305(h). This is often referred to as indirect supervision.

It's not acceptable for this supervision to be carried out from a remote location.

With technology indirect supervision could include flight following to monitor flights.

This should be included in the supervision plan authorised by the CFI.

Documenting the supervision process

This section provides information for supervisors on recording the supervision plan, its progress, and briefing outcomes.

The supervisor plays a significant role in providing regular feedback and assisting the instructor in obtaining knowledge in the areas outlined in the supervision plan. Where documentation attests to previous experience, copy and attach that documentation to the supervision plan. For example, lesson plans, flight training, and records of self-assessment.

Instructors should provide training and supervision records from the flight training providers where they were most recently employed. A review of these, when drafting a supervision plan, could provide a recommendation for additional areas to review.

Observable behaviours

Observable behaviours provided in Appendix 1 are developed by ICAO 9868 and could be used as focus points in the supervision process, by modifying them to suit the instructor or operator's supervision requirements. They should not be applied in a prescriptive way, used as a checklist, or as fixed examples.

The supervisor may observe the instructor's knowledge and skills on several occasions during their supervision time frame. The following should be regularly updated and recorded in the supervision plan/record of supervision:

- type of lessons

- type of supervision (direct/indirect)

- a record of any self-assessment

- supervisor comments on any mentoring provided.

A completed, documented supervision plan will inform the CFI, and provide evidence to support the competence of the instructor.

Assessment and review

During the supervision period, provision should be made for regular debriefs, which should start with the supervised pilot self-debriefing and self-critique.

This is important for both directly supervised exercises, and indirectly supervised flights. For indirectly supervised flights it provides the supervisory pilot with an opportunity to assess any events or occurrences during the flight, that the supervised pilot perceived as normal or routine, when in fact, they were not.

Information from the debriefs could provide information for the SMS (if applicable) or risk register to be able to detect hazard trends during supervisory operations.

The supervisor should also regularly:

- encourage the instructor to reflect, assess, and self-critique on his/her flying, and describe how standards were maintained

- assess the pilot's strengths and areas for further development based on their own self-assessment

- provide the instructor with feedback

- plan for future professional learning needs and ongoing support and improvement, if required.

Completing the supervision

Reviewing the supervision plan

In consultation with the CFI, and guided by the originally agreed time frame, the instructor and supervisor will decide when the time is right to finalise the supervision process.

It should be a holistic approach and be based on a range of factors. The pilot should have a sound knowledge and understanding of the focus areas that were agreed to, on beginning the supervision plan, and have confidence that the instructor can deliver a high level of flight instruction.

Finalising the supervision process

The instructor or supervisor may initiate the discussion regarding finalising the supervision process.

Documents relating to the supervision plan should be attached to the supervision plan file. Documentary evidence for every discussion point isn't required and shouldn't be expected.

To finalise the supervision process, the supervisor needs to ensure all requirements in the supervision plan have been covered.

The role of the CFI - from the Good Aviation Practice Booklet *How to be a chief flying instructor*

The CFI has a responsibility for managing the training and checking of the flight instructor.

The CFI should approve the supervision plan and have the final sign-off for the pilot at its completion.

Supervisors should advise the instructor and CFI of any issue(s) with the instructors teaching or flying practices that may negatively impact on safety.

Conversely, the instructor should report to the CFI any safety related issues regarding the actions of the supervisor.

Supervision and the flight training provider safety management system

The supervision outlined in this manual is targeted at flight training providers without a training and check system. However, the process could be used in any type of operation. Operators who have a Safety Management System (SMS) should ensure the supervisor engages with the safety manager during and after a supervision plan is complete. Risks should be identified and entered in the organisation's risk register. The supervisor together with the CFI should analyse the risk and determine appropriate risk mitigations.

Professional development

Professional development is not just confined to the 'supervised' instructors. The 'supervisory' instructor(s) providing structured, effective, and meaningful supervision to other instructors is an important component in the professional development of the supervisory pilot during their pathway to becoming a category A/B/ CFI. Flight instructors benefit from a mentor to engage with, and to receive upskill, Mentoring is not the same as instructing. An instructor teaches a skill. A mentor builds a relationship and trust, and is available for advice and guidance. This will help with non-technical skill and guidance to become a professional instructor.

Engagement in professional development outside the supervision process should be encouraged, but to be used as evidence it must be specific to the instructor's needs. It can be skills or knowledge-based, formal or informal in nature, and, where applicable, self-guided. Professional development for instructors could include opportunities for them to:

- observe more experienced instructors

- demonstrate their area of expertise to colleagues

- if appropriate, provide elements of supervision to less experienced instructors.

Supervision phases, core categories and observable behaviours

The core categories and observable behaviours outlined in the following table are from ICAO DOC 9868 and are provided for guidance. Flight training providers are encouraged to create their own supervision phases, core

categories and observable behaviours tailored to the flight school and operating conditions.

Table B1 - Supervision core categories and observable behaviours – examples

Core category	Description	Observable behaviours (OB)
Application of knowledge	Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of relevant information, operating instructions, aircraft systems and the operating environment.	OB 0.1 Demonstrates practical and applicable knowledge of limitations and systems and their interaction. OB 0.2 Demonstrates required knowledge of published operating instructions. OB 0.3 Demonstrates knowledge of the physical environment, the air traffic environment including routings, weather, airports and operational infrastructure. OB 0.4 Demonstrates appropriate knowledge of applicable legislation. OB 0.5 Knows where to source required information. OB 0.6 Demonstrates a positive interest in acquiring knowledge.

		OB 0.7 Is able to apply knowledge effectively.
Application of procedures and compliance with regulations.	Identifies and applies the appropriate procedures in accordance with operating instructions and environment.	OB 1.1 Identifies where to find procedures and regulations. OB 1.2 Applies relevant operating instructions, procedures and techniques in a timely manner. OB 1.3 Follows SOPs unless a higher degree of safety dictates an appropriate deviation. OB 1.4 Operates aircraft systems and associated equipment correctly. OB 1.5 Monitors aircraft systems status. OB 1.6 Complies with applicable regulations. OB 1.7 Applies relevant procedural knowledge.
Communication	Communicates effectively in all operational situations.	OB 2.1 Determines that the recipient is ready and able to receive. OB 2.2 Selects appropriately what, when, how, and with whom to communicate. OB 2.3 Conveys messages clearly, accurately, and concisely.

		OB 2.4 Confirms that the recipient understands important information.
		OB 2.5 Listens actively and demonstrates understanding when receiving information.
		OB 2.6 Asks relevant and effective questions.
		OB 2.7 Uses appropriate escalation in communication to resolve identified deviations.
		OB 2.9 Adheres to standard radiotelephony phraseology and procedures.

Training and supervising pilots

Core category	Description	Observable behaviour (OB)
Management of the learning environment.	Ensures that the instruction, assessment, and evaluation of lessons are well-planned and conducted in a suitable and safe environment.	OB 1.1.1 Applies TEM in the context of instruction/evaluation. OB 1.2.1 Briefs on safety procedures for situations that are likely to develop during instruction/evaluation. OB 1.3.1 Intervenes appropriately, at the

| | | correct time and level (for example, progresses from verbal assistance to taking over control).

OB 1.4.1 Resumes instruction/evaluation as practicable after any intervention.

OB 1.5.1 Plans and prepares training media, equipment, and resources.

OB 1.6.1 Briefs on training devices or aircraft limitations that may influence training, when applicable.

OB 1.7.1 Creates and manages conditions (eg, airspace, ATC, weather, time) to be suitable for the training objectives.

OB 1.8.1 Adapts to changes in the environment while minimising training disruptions. |
| | Conducts training to develop the trainee's competencies. | OB 1.9.1 Manages time, training media, and equipment to ensure that training objectives are met. Conducts training to develop the trainee's competencies. |

		OB 2.1.1 Refers to approved sources (operations, technical, and training manuals, standards, and regulations).
		OB 2.2.1 States clearly the objectives and clarifies roles for the training.
		OB 2.3.1 Follows the approved training programme.
		OB 2.4.1 Applies instructional methods as appropriate (eg, explanation, demonstration, facilitation, 'discover with assistance', 'discover without assistance').
		OB 2.5.1 Sustains operational relevance and realism.
		OB 2.6.1 Adapts the amount of instructor inputs to ensure the training objectives are met.
		OB 2.7.1 Continuously assesses trainee's competencies.
		OB 2.8.1 Encourages the trainee to self-assess.

		OB 2.9.1 Allows trainee to self-correct in a timely manner.
		OB 2.10.1 Applies trainee-centred feedback techniques (eg, facilitation).
		OB 2.11.1 Provides positive reinforcement.
Interaction with trainees	Supports the trainee's learning and development, and demonstrates exemplary behaviour (ie, being a role model).	OB 3.1.1 Shows respect for the trainees (eg, for culture, language, experience).
		OB 3.2.1 Shows patience and empathy eg, by actively listening, reading non-verbal messages, and encouraging dialogue.
		OB 3.3.1 Manages trainee's barriers to learning.
		OB 3.4.1 Encourages engagement and mutual support.
		OB 3.5.1 Coaches trainees.
		OB 3.6.1 Supports the goal and training policies of the operator/ATO and Civil Aviation Authority.
		OB 3.7.1 Shows integrity (eg, honesty, and professional principles).

		OB 3.8.1 Demonstrates acceptable personal conduct, acceptable social practices, content expertise, and is a model for professional and interpersonal behaviour.
		OB 3.9.1 Actively seeks and accepts feedback to improve own performance.
Assessment and evaluation	Assesses the competencies of the trainee and contributes to the continuous improvement of the training system.	OB 4.1.1 Complies with Operator/ATOs and CAA requirements.
		OB 4.2.1 Ensures the trainee understands the assessment process.
		OB 4.3.1 Applies the competency standards and conditions.
		OB 4.4.1 Assesses trainee's competencies.
		OB 4.5.1 Performs grading.
		OB 4.6.1 Provides recommendations based on the outcome of the assessment.
		OB 4.7.1 Makes decisions based on the outcome of the summative assessment.

		OB 4.8.1 Provides clear feedback to the trainee.
		OB 4.9.1 Reports strengths and weaknesses of the training system (eg, training environment, curriculum, assessment/evaluation) including feedback from trainees.
		OB 4.10.1 Suggests improvements to the training system.
		OB 4.11.1 Produces reports using appropriate forms and media.