

# VATSIM Executive Committee Policy

## Global Controller Ratings Standards

*Effective: 11 June 2007*

*Full Implementation: 01 January 2008*

### Background

In the real world all ATC are called controller and each is further classified in accordance with the air traffic service he or she is qualified to provide, such as approach controller or centre controller, etc.

The VATSIM "rating names" were deliberately left in a nondescript form with the intention to provide local flexibility in relation to content and standard. In the fullness of time, and with growing numbers, we have had to cope with far more portability of knowledge and skill outside the HOME division. The lack of proper standards has become a major concern since it is undermining the whole portability concept and making it harder for divisions to welcome and accommodate transferees and/or visiting controllers. This is really quite undesirable since it is a double negative; all parties become losers.

We are stuck with the names "Student", "Senior Student" etc even though they do not align with real world ATS or convey a recognizable level of on-line ability or performance.

### Purpose

The purpose of this change is to standardize the ratings so that each has a common meaning in terms of knowledge and skill in relation to the air traffic service that is delivered. If properly administered by divisions and their training departments, standardized ratings should restore portability and also reduce the extent of checking in local competency checks; requiring mainly checks for knowledge of local procedures rather than checking baseline skills in the ability to deliver a particular control service.

## Standard Rating Scheme

The following ratings structure will indelibly and globally link the following air traffic control services to the existing rating levels (names):

### **Student (S1) = TWR.**

This includes all local control services, DEL, GND and TWR.

### **Senior Student (S3) = APP/DEP.**

This allows operation within the TMA, typically as a radar controller. The training and assessment for this rating should focus on those particular aspects of air traffic services that deal with the transition from the enroute track into the TMA environment for and approach to landing and vice versa for departing aircraft joining the enroute track.

### **Controller (C1) = CTR**

This allows operation as an enroute controller providing enroute air traffic services. The training and assessment for this rating should focus on those particular aspects of air traffic services, which include separation, crossing tracks, regional airports, entry into and leaving controlled airspace etc.

### **Senior Controller (C3) = Exceptional Controller**

This rating recognises an individual who is able to provide a service beyond that of a normal Controller (C1).

## **Implementation Notes:**

### **Adjustment - Ratings**

There are no changes in relation to lower levels other than aligning the ratings to the new air traffic service function. It may be necessary for some fine tuning of those already at S1 or S3 to ensure the possession of adequate competency for TWR and APP/DEP respectively.

It is expected that the main issues in relation to adjustment will occur with those already S3 who are currently providing CTR services. These controllers will still be able to log-on as CTR but should be provided additional training or given recognition of prior performance as CTR in order to facilitate their upgrade to C1; the new requirement for CTR.

### **Adjustment - Endorsements**

Adjustment may be required for specialist endorsements, such as Oceanic. It is my view that these should be kept somewhat separate from the rating scheme.

Oceanic endorsement currently has a requirement for S3 and it should logically change to C1. Adjustment would therefore follow the same guidelines as for S3-C1 detailed above.

### **Local Rules**

Local rules may be implemented to regulate progression at each stage provide that these are absolutely essential for maintaining local standards. This is best achieved by the use of a table of graded locations; typically only requiring a distinction between minor and major locations. A person in training for the delivery of a particular air traffic service can initially be assessed to operate at all minor facilities before operating at a major facility.

**Not all divisions will require this type of graded location scheme and will simply have a generic division rating that can be used at any location within the division.**

### **Graduated Locations**

Where a graduated location scheme is essential then there can be considerable local rule as long as it is necessary, fair and reasonable, and also allows individual progression in order to retain controller interest.

The following guidelines may be useful;

### **TWR (S1)**

This allows an individual to operate at any minor location in order to consolidate their rating away from the demands of complex airports and intense traffic. An individual may be required to pass specific local assessment before operating at a major TWR facility. The major facility assessment may include theory, simulation or supervised sessions.

Familiarity with a major airport can also be enhanced by operating as DEL or GND at this location prior to operating as TWR.

### **APP/DEP (S3)**

This can follow a similar scheme to that for TWR (S1) with a table of locations graded as either a major or a minor location. The S3 rating allows an individual to consolidate their APP/DEP skill away from the demands of a busy airport with complex traffic patterns. An individual may be required to pass specific local assessment before operating as APP/DEP at a major facility. The major facility assessment may include theory, simulation or supervised sessions. Familiarity with a major airport can also be enhanced by operating as TWR at this location prior to operating as APP/DEL.

### **CTR (C1)**

There are fewer enroute sector controllers therefore it may not be necessary to have a graded location scheme for this rating. However, should a particular complex or busy enroute sector exist then there may be a case for grading it differently to other enroute sectors and require a specific local assessment before operating as CTR on this enroute sector.

**Note:** In general, this is the highest controller rating since it permits an individual to operate with any of the standard callsigns; DEL, GND, TWR, APP, DEP, and CTR.

### **Senior Controller (C3)**

Other than VATUSA, there are very few Senior Controllers. In view of the nature of this rating, having only a few who reach Senior Controller level should be considered normal.

This is an exceptional or special case and there is considerable opportunity for local flexibility when determining what should be used as the basis of the Senior Controller rating. Some suggestions, and by no means the only ones, are;

A controller who has already demonstrated competency at C1 level and is also:

- providing an exceptionally difficult service
- acting as a mentor
- responsible for the organization or performance of other on-line controllers
- a staff member responsible for operations or training
- recognized as having outstanding ability
- recognized as having an outstanding service record

### **Hard-Coding of Rating**

The only current hard-coding of ratings is CTR must have S3 or higher. There has been no other hard-coding of ratings and this has NOT caused a problem. This is particularly the case where local rules already require a CTR to have a C1 rating; being higher than the minimum hard-coded rating. In these instances there should be little or no change.

The proposal is therefore NOT to change the existing hard-coding since this is needed to best facilitate the new global requirement of CTR having at least C1 and the provision of training to achieve that goal.