

Guide to the NEW Global Standards for ATC Ratings

Background

For quite some time the VATSIM Board of Governors and the Executive Committee considered the introduction of Global Standards for ATC Ratings.

VATSIM inherited numbered ATC ratings, reduced these from six to four, and for the first time gave them names; Student, Senior Student, Controller and Senior Controller. The roles and duties associated with each of these were left for local determination.

It was not anticipated that there would be such a wide variation between regions and divisions however, in the fullness of time it became apparent that the VATSIM ATC ratings scheme should be standardized. The requirements and processes for becoming ATC also needed to be both standardized and simplified. All of these steps were considered essential so that any member wishing to become ATC, no matter where they were located, could readily do so and be presented with the same equal opportunity.

Purpose

The purpose of this change is to standardize the ATC ratings so that:

- Each rating has a common meaning in terms of knowledge and skill in relation to the Air Traffic Service that is delivered.
- The standards for controller ratings are appropriate for adoption within a hobby environment.

In selecting a suitable model, the following features were important:

- The rating should directly relate to the Air Traffic Service.
- There should be three progressive rating steps to reach Centre.
- A rating should be based on basic knowledge and skill.
- Assessment should be competency-based.
- The training and assessment processes should facilitate streamlining.
- The new scheme should provide wider ATC coverage and not reduce it.
- No existing controller would lose their rating.
- There should be opportunity for advancement beyond the new global scheme.

A general model that satisfies these requirements can be seen in the three distinct types of real world Air Traffic Service.

- Local Control (TWR)
- TMA Radar (APP/DEP)
- En-Route Control (CTR)

Aligning this with VATSIM ATC ratings was much more difficult since it had to bring together the various schemes that had arisen from quite different ideologies in relation to training, education, assessment, testing and rating.

The Global ATC Ratings Model

The VATSIM Executive Committee determined that the only model able to achieve this outcome and satisfy all of the requirements is:

- Tower Controller (TWR) = Student (S1)
- Approach Controller (APP/DEP) = Senior Student (S3)
- Centre Controller (CTR) = Controller (C1)

Senior Controller (C3) provides a service beyond that of a normal Controller (C1). This is outside the scope of the global ratings scheme and therefore left for local determination.

Implementation

No existing controller will lose their rating.

Some controllers may have their rating adjusted in a positive direction, and there may be a few instances where it is necessary for a controller to receive additional training before this occurs.

Local rules may be implemented to establish a two-tier grading of locations; minor and major. There is no provision for more than these two tiers.

Each basic rating step will allow a controller to provide that particular type of Air Traffic Service at any minor location in their airspace. This allows a controller new to the airspace to operate at a minor location in order to consolidate their rating away from the demands of a complex major airport with heavy traffic.

Before operating at a major location, a controller may be required to pass an assessment for that specific major location.

Note: Not all divisions will require this type of graded location scheme and will simply designate all location within the division to be minor locations.

Completion Date

Completion date for the change is 31st December 2007 so that the new Global Standards for ATC Ratings will be fully operational by 1st January 2008. This provides a considerable period of lead time for training department to adjust their current schemes.

Further consultation and assistance in implementing these changes is available from your local Regional Director or VP Regions.

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