

Professional Standard: Registered Air Observer

Authority

This standard was endorsed by the AFAC Emergency Management Professionalisation Scheme Panel on 29 September 2021.

Context

The AFAC Emergency Management Professionalisation Scheme (the Scheme) is a program to recognise the skills, abilities and experience of emergency management practitioners.

Established by AFAC, the National Council for fire, land management and emergency service agencies in Australia and New Zealand, the Scheme is an initiative designed to promote emergency management as a profession.

The Scheme is open to career and volunteer personnel of AFAC member agencies, as well as individuals from other approved organisations or who have AFAC member agency support.

Scope of application

This standard applies to applicants seeking registration in the role of Air Observer.

Under the Fire and Emergency Aviation Training and Assessment Framework (AFAC, 2021) the role is differentiated into Air Observer, and Air Observer (Fire). Credentialling as an EMPS Registered Air Observer will be differentiated into Fire, Non-Fire, or Fire and Non-Fire.

Applicants may be career staff or volunteers of AFAC member agencies or personnel from approved government, commercial or other entities.

Credential

The Registered Aircraft Officer credential is awarded to an individual who has successfully fulfilled all eligibility requirements.

The Air Observer observes an incident (such as flood, earthquake, cyclone, fire) from an aircraft and collects and processes information relating to the incident.

While in flight, the Air Observer may need to communicate directly with ground-based commanders in order to pass on information about the development of the incident or immediate threats to ground crews or the public.

Aerial observation of an incident is conducted from either a fixed wing or rotary wing aircraft, where the pilot is responsible for flying the aircraft and the Air Observer is responsible for the aerial observation mission.

Where an IMT is in place, the Air Observer reports either to the Planning Officer or to the Intelligence Officer. The Air Observer may also be deployed where an IMT is not in place.

Education requirements for Air Observer

Applicants must be able to provide documented evidence of successful completion of the education components and all associated prerequisites as specified in Table 1.

Table 1:

Course or Program
<p>Air Observer (Fire)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PUAFIR005 Observe fire from an aircraft • 22459VIC – Course in the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS) <p><i>And</i></p> <p><i>Hold the required competencies, with statements of attainment in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PUAFIR303 Suppress wildfire • PUAOPE013 Operate communications systems and equipment • PUAFIR017 Work safely around aircraft • PUAOPE014 Navigate to an incident <p>Air Observer (Non-Fire)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PUAFIR006 Observe non-fire incident from an aircraft • 22459VIC – Course in the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System (AIIMS) <p><i>And</i></p> <p><i>Hold the required competencies, with statements of attainment in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PUAOPE013 Operate communications systems and equipment • PUAFIR017 Work safely around aircraft • PUAOPE014 Navigate to an incident
<p>SPECIAL NOTE: Where an Applicant held the competencies specified for the role of Air Observer under the superseded Fire Aviation Training and Assessment Framework (2011), then, so long as they have maintained their currency they are deemed to have fulfilled the equivalent education requirements for credentialling as Air Observer (Fire).</p> <p>Applicants for credentialling as Air Observer (Non-Fire) who do not hold PUAFIR006 Observe non-fire incident from an aircraft may instead rely on a qualification which was awarded after formal assessment and which in the view of the Panel provides evidence of the Applicant’s competence to carry out the role of Air Observer for non-fire incidents. The other listed competencies are still required.</p>

Experience requirements for Air Observer

Applicants must be able to provide documented evidence to demonstrate that he or she:

- Has committed to the EMPS Code of Ethics 2017.
- Is endorsed by their agency as an Air Observer (Fire) and/or Air Observer (Non-Fire)
- Has at least two years’ experience as an Air Observer (Fire) and/or Air Observer (Non-Fire).
- Has at least one operational season’s experience as an Air Observer (Fire) and/or Air Observer (Non-Fire) without mentoring or supervision.
- Is supported by their home agency or jurisdiction.

Definitions

<i>Two years' combined experience:</i>	Is active experience over at least two operational seasons during which the individual has carried out the role of Air Observer.
<i>Operational season</i>	Is that part of a 12-month period in which the natural hazard class managed by an agency is likely to occur with greatest frequency. There is only one operational season in a 12-month period.

Continuing Professional Development

To maintain currency, the Air Observer must complete 10 hours of CPD each financial year. This must include a practical CPD activity, performing the role whilst airborne during an actual or simulated operational situation.

Notes:

- Practical CPD (airborne) for Air Attack Supervisor also counts for Air Observer (Fire) and Air Observer (Non Fire).
- Practical CPD (airborne) for Incendiary Operations Supervisor also counts for Air Observer (Fire) and Air Observer (Non Fire).
- Practical CPD (airborne) for Airborne Systems Operator also counts for Air Observer (Fire) and Air Observer (Non Fire).

Review

This standard will commence 29 September 2021. The Panel will review this standard after five years or as required.

Related professional standards

- Code of Ethics (2017).
- Professional Standard: Continuing Professional Development (2018).