Training Passport Concept in Ground Operations

IATA Whitepaper

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. GROUND OPS TRAINING PASSPORT CONCEPT

1.1 Background

As aviation emerges from the devastating effects of the COVID 19 pandemic, and air travel rapidly returns to its pre-pandemic level, a major challenge continues to be the shortage of skilled aviation professionals, particularly at airports, as well as difficulties with staff attraction and retention.

Employers have a legal obligation to ensure a safe work environment for their employees, which includes a properly trained workforce capable of safely performing the tasks to which they are assigned. Ground operations personnel undergo regular training, however, at present, there is no systemic structure in place that allows organizations to formally recognize levels of employee training and competence to be utilized during employee carrier. The impact of this shortfall is two-fold: employees may not be properly rewarded for their level of competency, while employers may have to invest in remedial training instead of investing into the retention programs to make the mainly labour intensive, 24/7 jobs attractive.

This white paper introduces the "Training Passport" concept for ground handling personnel to address some of these challenges.

1.2 Concept

The training passport concept/scheme focuses on retention of qualified, skilled ground operations personnel when their contract moves to another organization. It should ease cross-utilization of skilled personnel, leveraging on the implementation of the industry training standards, and its global recognition. This concept aims to support global standardization of training and oversight, cost reduction, workforce mobility, and safe operations.

The training passport concept consists of the following pillars:
- Adoption of an industry training standard by the ground handling organization across its operations
- Validation of their training program's compliance with an industry standard as published in AHM 1110
- Providing "the training passport" containing the employees training records to their personnel
- Mutual recognition of the training passport concept by airlines and ground handling service providers (GHSPs)

The potential savings are based on not repeating training previously validated under a training passport scheme, faster onboarding of personnel to the operations, reducing the cost for airline oversight and their own training provided to third party personnel.

IATA and Airport Services Association (ASA) and their members jointly advocate and drive the implementation of the global training standards (provided in AHM 1110) as a baseline standard. Both organizations jointly advocate for an adoption of the training passport concept, which will allow regulators and airport authorities to benefit from standardized and safer training environment that shall be accepted by all key industry stakeholders. The training passport concept also provides an opportunity to elevate the quality of training, it brings a greater possibility to have a global mutual recognition of the training across the industry as well as simplifying 3rd party and regulatory oversight.

1.3   Global Adoption of Industry Training Standards

The training standards for ground operations were developed by subject matter experts representing airlines and GHSPs with an aim to provide the industry with a global standard that can be universally adopted. These standards have been developed under the IATA remit and published in the IATA Airport Handling Manual Chapter 11.

The AHM 1110 Ground Operations Training Program for GHSPs offers the industry a minimum standard training requirement for frontline personnel in the areas of passenger, baggage and ramp handling and load control. Chapter 11 also includes detailed courses, syllabus topics for frontliners, supervisory level, trainer qualifications covering operational and safety elements and supporting implementation of the IATA Ground Operational Manual (IGOM). The standards also define requirements for how training shall be managed, monitored, and maintained within the organization as well as covering requirements for individuals delivering training and the assessment process to evaluate if learning has taken place.

Any organization wishing to be a part of the training passport scheme will need to first align its training program and management with the AHM 1110 requirements and provide evidence of their compliance.

1.4   Validation of Compliance with AHM 1110

Compliance with AHM1110 shall be validated by the third-party validation body. The validation body should demonstrate a solid management for the validation program and shall have robust system in place for its validators, their qualification, training, performance monitoring, and process for ongoing improvement and skills maintenance.

The validation process shall be standardized to ensure each organization that requests the validation undergoes the same validation process as per their scope of services. The validators shall be independent from the validated company to prevent any conflict of interest. The validation body shall keep records of all conducted validation providing relevant detail as well as having a repository to allow for checking and confirmation of validation status and required

The acceptance of such validation program is subject to individual company's decision but is the key to success for this program and global recognition of the training passport.

1.5   Training Passport Records

The training passport concept assumes that organizations will provide their current and/or former personnel with their individual training records or suitable summary of the training, confirming training taken, and skills acquired, as per the industry requirements.

The training records shall include relevant information such as training courses and syllabi, which can be shared with the new employer as evidence of training and prospective employer can check with the scheme for confirmation of the organization accreditation. It supports the retention of skilled and experienced workers in the industry and for the individual. It provides an incentive to remain in the industry and develop work skills leading to professional growth.

The training records of personnel shall include following information as well any information required by AHM:
- Employer name or logo
- Logo of the validation organization testifying compliance with AHM 1110
- Name of employee
- Summary of training received
    - Name of the training
    - Topic or standards covered by this training, including AHM1110 syllabus
    - Competency achieved
    - Passing score
    - Training date and validity

Organization that will provide "training passport" to its employee must be able to prove AHM chapter 11 compliance.

1.6   Mutual Recognition

Where the AHM1110 standards are applied, independently validated, and accepted by airline members, all relevant stakeholders could reduce or avoid delivery of their own training requirements that are often remarkably similar or even same as the industry standard.

Ground handling organizations that adopt the training passport concept, and airlines that accept it can align to the same standards, remove duplicate training, reduce training scope, and ensure a global standard is both promoted and acknowledged.

A ground handling organization will be able to recognize qualification, skills and experiences gathered from a prospective job candidate's previous employer and assess the level of personnel proficiency. This will reduce training requirements to areas not covered by AHMM 1110 such as aircraft and ground support equipment specifics, company policies, HR procedures, laws and regulations as applicable in country of an employment and similar. Airlines also could reduce their resources and costs for their own oversight and use the result of the independent validation. It will expedite onboarding process and reduce time off from operations.

1.7 Summary

The training passport concept can deliver outcomes which benefit the individual, ground handling service providers, airlines, and the wider aviation community, and the economies of the countries they work in.

To achieve this aspirational step toward a training passport, all the stakeholders will need to build a framework of adoption and mutual recognition and acceptance for the training passport concept.

This IATA Training Passport concept aims to support the global standardization, training and oversight cost reduction, social workforce mobility, and safe operations.

2. TRAINING PASSPORT SCHEMA – IATA'S IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 Schema Overview

Conduct self-assessment of the training against AHM 1110	Publiication of the gap via Ops Portal and remove any gaps	Apply for and undergo ISAGO audit	Obtrain ISAGO certificate for the training	ISAGO logo declaring complainace with AHM 1110	Provide, make training records to personnel

2.2 Declaration of Compliance with AHM 1110

Organizations need to self-assess their training program against the AHM 1110 and publish the gap analysis including self-assessment and document references via IATA's Operational Portal

The company will assess:
1. training program setup and management with requirements of AHM1110 *Sections 1-8,*
2. job roles/functions against at the AHM1110, *Section 10* defined job roles, as a minimum.
3. training modules required for each company job role as outlined in *Section10.*
4. company courses/training which is corresponding to courses outlined in AHM1110 *Section 11.*
5. company training syllabi and topics against the relevant Training Modules outlined in AHM1110 *Sections 11.2 -11.5*.

For any gaps identified, the company needs to align with the AHM1110 by updating its training program, training material, and delivering missing training to its personnel.

2.3 Validation Compliance via ISAGO Audit

Once a company declares their compliance with AHM 1110, IATA will verify the compliance via ISAGO audit. The ISAGO is a safety and operational audit for ground operations, with well-established program management based on the ISO (International Standards Organisation) (International Organization for Standardization) principles. The ISAGO audits are performed by auditors, who are members of the Charter of Professional Auditors (CoPA). IATA has introduced the CoPA to ensure that audits are performed by qualified and knowledgeable professionals and the quality of audits is maintained at the highest level.

Any organization that has completed and maintained ISAGO accreditation for any operational discipline, will be automatically audited for their compliance with AHM1110. An organization can also request the ISAGO audit specifically for its training program. ISAGO accreditation lasts for 24 months at which point a renewal audit takes place.

2.4   Industry Acceptance

The airline's acceptance of the IATA Training Passport will be tracked via the ISAGO airline membership (100+ airlines as of May 2023) which provides access to the ISAGO Registry and audit results / reports.

The regulatory and airport authority recognition and acceptance will be tracked via Memorandum of Understanding or Cooperation signed with those entities (More than 35 entities endorsing ISAGO as of May 2023).

2.5   IATA Training Passport

When the ISAGO audit is completed, the organization will receive the ISAGO certificate and the company name and profile will be displayed in the ISAGO One Source registry together with the ISAGO Training stamp confirming the organization's compliance with the AHM1110.

The IATA OneSource is a publicly available repository of all ISAGO accredited companies also displaying compliance with the AHM 1110.

The company will also be granted to use this stamp on their training certificates provided to its employees.

3. CAREER PATHWAYS

3.1 Diversity of Potential Pathways

Within the ground handling organizations there is massive career development potential which can allow a person to grow in their career and remain in the aviation sector. The addition of a recognition of prior training is seen as a great aid to enable career development for an individual and supports organizations in retaining and developing their existing talent as well as attracting new talent to the industry.

An outside view of a ground handling organization may at first glance only recognise job roles such as passenger service (check-in) or baggage loading, however all organizations have many additional roles which allow for an individual to join an organization and experience a full career growth within the company. The scope of the different job roles and functions is diverse and many of the skills and knowledge developed in one area are transferable to other roles.

Some operational and non-operational/management roles may include:

Ground handling operational roles are mainly in the following areas:
- Ramp handling
- Passenger handing services
- Baggage handling
- Load control
- Operational Control Centres
- Airport lounges and VIP services
- Security
- Aircraft fuelling
- Fuel facility operations
- Cargo export and import
- Security and x-trays operations
- Cargo warehouse

Non-operational/management roles are mainly in the following areas:
- GSE fleet maintenance
- Training
- e-Learning developers
- Emergency and crisis response
- Health and safety
- Data analytics
- Environmental
- Quality management
- Planning, rostering, and allocation.
- Human Resources
- Internal audit
- Marketing
- Commercial
- Payroll
- Administration
- Legal
- IT

3.2 Vertical and Horizontal Transitions

Within each of these roles, it is possible to grow into more senior levels of responsibility. It is also possible to transition across roles, taking the experience and knowledge already gained into other roles thereby widening the experience of the person and retaining skills and knowledge within an organization. Many companies work hard to develop internal talent and balance internal promotion against external recruitment because of the nature of the aviation industry and the specialist knowledge required.

3.2.1 HORIZONTAL TRANSITION

The horizontal transition is the most organic carrier development. An employee is hired for the basic level to perform simple – limited tasks and these tasks are increasing over time either within the same position or the same position level. An employee can also transition within its department or other departments.
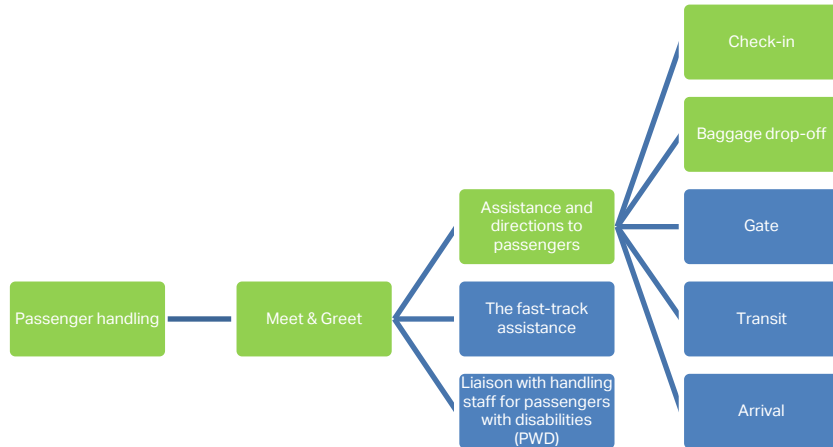
3.2.2 VERTICAL TRANSITION

During the vertical transition, an employee is moving from the current position up, to the higher level, with increased of decision-making responsibilities and/or direct reports. For instance, moving from agent to team leader or to a supervisor level, IATA in AHM1110 provide the minimum syllabus requirements for a supervisor of people along with the technical tasks performed within the department.
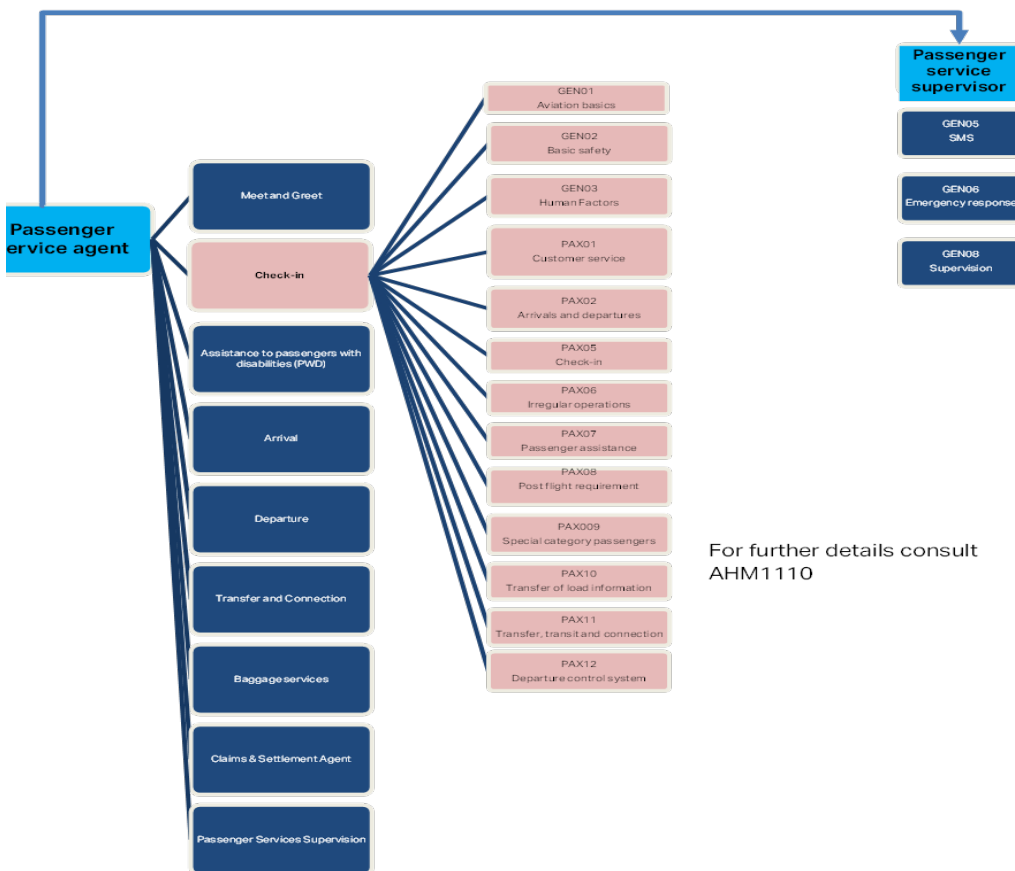
3.2.3 TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The AHM1110 defines the minimum training requirements for the operational job functions, supervisory and managerial levels. If any employee transitioning horizontally or vertically shall undergo the training for additional tasks or horizontal responsibilities.

Example:

For further details consult
AHM1110

3.3   The Place for Academia in The Pathways

Many of the roles described in 3.1 have associated formal qualifications which are either required pre-employment or an employee needs to achieve within a certain timeframe.

However, there are few effective formal qualifications available for the operational roles. Internal qualifications exist but are not accredited on any formal government curriculum. As more organizations adopt training passports based on internationally recognized standards it may be possible to approach educational authorities in countries to promote including a formal educational qualification to be included in the national curriculum.

3.4 Recommendations

To widely promote and accurately reflect the actual job roles, functions, and tasks it is a recommended option for IATA to create a similar model as used in the link below for the hotel and hospitality industry; https://www.careerpathwaymaps.co.uk/sample# In order to maximise the awareness of pathways and opportunities, this should not remain only in a web page in IATA, or other industry trade bodies such as ACI or ASA but rather be shared wider with national government education and employment departments to ensure a saturation level is attained. This can become a monitored platform to review visits to the site and show the awareness levels increasing.

Should a similar model to the one proposed in the link above for hotels and hospitality be adopted, this should be linked into the industry standard for training (IATA AHM1110) to further embed and promote industry standards within ground handling.