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Current practice of forecast training at MeteoSwiss and lessons learned so far

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In order to meet the requirements and regulations for a Meteorological Watch Office (MWO), MeteoSwiss has set up a detailed concept of training and further education for maintaining the competence of its Aeronautical Meteorological Personnel (AMP). MeteoSwiss will present the main concept of its ideas, structures and efforts within the training and further education of particularly forecasters.

The basis for working as an Aeronautical Meteorological Forecaster (AMF) at MeteoSwiss is a completed university education or the Basic Instruction Package for Meteorologists (BIP-M) developed by the WMO. Building on this, the prospective forecasters go through a phase of internal training modules and supervised shifts until they finally take both a theoretical exam and an on-the-job assessment.

The fully trained staff attends a mix of training events on meteorological, climatological and technical topics every year: MeteoAtelier, KlimaAtelier, supplementary internal training courses and a three-day forecaster and observer course. Some of the events are common for all three German, French and Italien speaking national forecasting centres of MeteoSwiss, some are site-specific. These events, besides a required minimum and a recommended number of regular shifts, are mandatory for the maintenance of competence. In addition, forecasters (as well as consultants and observers) are encouraged to attend scientific seminars or conferences on their own initiative. If forecasters do not meet the requirements or are absent for longer periods, measures are defined to reestablish the competence.

The existing training and further education structure meets all the requirements that MeteoSwiss places on its staff and ensures that the Aeronautical Meteorological Personnel remain competent. Nevertheless the current practice also brings with it some difficulties. On the one hand, the setup is very complex and takes up large amounts of time and human resources for coordination and organization. On the other hand, the current structure relies heavily on individuals (i.e. experts and speakers). In the future, MeteoSwiss would therefore like to focus more on online learning and interactive tools. Furthermore, increased international cooperation is desirable.