The objectives of WINGS training are:

- to assess pilot knowledge, judgment, and skill in critical flight and ground tasks and,
- to improve pilot performance in risk management, planning, and execution of general aviation flight operations.

In other words, WINGS training confirms that pilots can perform to the minimum standards associated with their certificate level and seeks to improve that performance level.

Aviation instructors are the key to aviation safety. Flight Instructors are the General Aviation safety gatekeepers. When aviation instructors emphasize safe practices in aviation it tends to have a long-lasting effect on students. WINGS instructors should be a role model who has set the bar at a high level of safety. They should instruct beyond the minimum standard and set the example in aeronautical decision making, starting at the before flight briefing and following through to the debriefing.

WINGS Flight Activities include both ground and flight elements that are accomplished as a proficiency training event - not as a test. Instructors are expected to provide evaluation and training necessary to ensure airmen are proficient in each element of each WINGS activity. At the beginning of any WINGS activity, Instructors should evaluate the experience, currency, and routine flying practices of the pilot and develop a suitable plan to achieve the objectives of the activity.

The most effective WINGS training activities are holistic and scenario-based. By that we mean that WINGS Instructors evaluate and train pilots in the performance of flight operations – not to execute an isolated series of maneuvers. Scenario-based holistic training emphasizes and accelerates development of critical thinking, risk management, and flight management skills that are necessary to prevent pilot-induced accidents.

WINGS should expand pilots’ horizons.

Earning a WINGS phase should be challenging and fun. Planning and successful execution of an operation slightly beyond a pilot’s comfort zone is very satisfying. The pilot has not only demonstrated minimum standards of performance but has learned something new that improves performance on common operations and adds a new capability to the repertoire. Therefore, a prime objective of every WINGS flight is to learn something new and/or learn how to do something better.

The WINGS mission (lesson) plan:

WINGS pilots are rated aviators who should participate in planning their scenario-based training experiences. It is essential for WINGS Instructors to observe WINGS pilots functioning as Pilots in Command. Thus it may be more appropriate to think of the lesson plan as a mission plan. Together, the WINGS pilot and WINGS Instructor plan and discuss a mission that will incorporate one or more WINGS flight activities.

During preflight the WINGS, mission is resourced with pilot knowledge, skills and flight planning information. Effective Risk Management is an essential element in every WINGS activity. WINGS Instructors should guide WINGS pilots in the identification of hazards and elimination or mitigation of
risks associated with each WINGS mission. The use of a Flight Risk Assessment Tool to facilitate risk management is highly encouraged.

In flight – The WINGS Instructor ensures the safety of flight, evaluates and critiques pilot performance, and provides instruction that leads to improved performance.

A post-flight critique is conducted after landing and securing the aircraft but the WINGS Instructor should evaluate and critique performance throughout the mission and offer suggestions and demonstrations for performance improvement either on-the-spot or after the flight.

WINGS Flight activities can be accomplished as a standalone or combined with other WINGS flight activities in preparing pilots for completion of a WINGS Phase. Depending upon the airman’s proficiency, the activity might be accomplished in a single session, however more than one session is often advantageous because an interval in training enhances absorbing and retaining of subject matter.