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# FORCE DEVELOPMENT (Active-duty Officer) CONOPS



**U.S. AIR FORCE**

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## DRAFT

### INTRODUCTION

This Concept of Operations (CONOPS) outlines a cohesive plan for developing professional airmen who instinctively blend their skills, knowledge and experience to leverage their respective strengths to best achieve mission success. It supports the active duty officer aspects of the Air Force Core Competency, *Developing Airmen*.

CONOPS capabilities will integrate current and emerging Air Force skill requirements, the abilities and goals of the officers who fill these requirements, the education and experiences that serve to develop officers, and the systems that are necessary to assess and manage these elements. The continuing, overall objective is to *successfully accomplish the full spectrum of changing Air Force missions by developing officers with the required skills to apply current and future capabilities*.

Changing the way we approach developing our people in the Air Force will better prepare them to lead in the 21<sup>st</sup> century--and better meet their informed expectations. We will achieve these goals by implementing, supporting and adhering to an enduring program of deliberate Force Development (FD). *Simply, FD is the series of experiences and challenges, combined with education and training opportunities that produce AF leaders*. In other words, it is the Air Force method of growing leaders at all levels--tactical, operational and strategic.

To operate successfully in the perpetually changing military environment, tomorrow's Air Force leaders need to be expert in their own specialties and familiar with other complementary skills. A combination of complex strategic, operational, and tactical tasks, robust technology and continuing resource constraints makes it necessary for senior leaders to have an even broader perspective. Thus, FD must affect two critical activities: provide some individuals with deliberate, fruitful experience outside of their primary career field (breadth) while continuing to develop all officers' expertise deep in that primary career field. Additionally, to ensure we continue to succeed as an Air and Space Expeditionary Force, we need to develop a common airman culture that transcends all career fields.

The foundational doctrine for FD is based on what we want our people to know, when we want them to know it and what we want them to be able to do with that information. **People** are the key to achieving the objectives of FD. **Training** and **education** are the centerpiece investments we make in them; and our people's excellence in all they do is the Air Force's return on that investment.

### WHY FD?

It is important to recognize that nothing is broken; there is no single, great problem that must be solved. We develop airmen now. However, because we have a much smaller force today, which is experiencing a very high operational tempo while absorbing a high technological growth rate, we must better utilize the time and effort of our people. They are our most precious resource. It is logical then, as an institution, we *optimize* development in the future so our investment in people and their investment in the Air Force best realize their expectations and meet the needs of our Service and our Nation.

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### WHAT IS FD?

It is the series of experiences and challenges, combined with education and training opportunities that produce AF leadership. In short, FD is the process used to ensure we properly develop our people in order to meet their expectations and AF requirements.

### FD OBJECTIVES

The overall **goal** of FD is to *successfully accomplish the full spectrum of changing Air Force* missions by developing officers with the required skills to apply current and future capabilities. Attaining this goal requires the Air Force to achieve the following objectives:

1. Deliberately connect all training and education opportunities to assignment experiences so as to achieve a blended set of competencies which meet Air Force needs
2. Purposefully connect individuals goals to Air Force needs to best achieve both
3. Ensure Air Force personnel-directed decision processes invest the right education, training and experience in the right officers at the right time
4. Define and target Air Force requirements when placing the right person in the right place at the right time
5. Enhance leader and officer understanding of their roles in officer development
6. Utilize leadership and officer inputs in the Developmental Assignment process and provide institutional perspective feedback when necessary

### FD STRUCTURE

FD will improve the Air Force's ability to "grow" officers with the skill-sets they need to join a pool of well-qualified potential future leaders and commanders who are prepared to support and lead the world's predominant air and space force and meet its future challenges.

- **Force Management**--the management of personnel in the aggregate to meet mission requirements from recruitment to separation
- **Force Development**--the management of individual career paths to maximize the capabilities of each airman who is part of the managed force

To implement FD at the operational level, effective force management requires separate and distinct entities to provide management oversight and, ultimately, execution-level FD decisions. These entities include the Force Development Council (FDC), Functional Authorities (FAs), Force Development Office (FDO), Force Development Support Office (FDSO), Development Teams (DTs), and Assignment Teams (ATs).

- The **FDC** will serve as a corporate body to provide an institutional perspective on Air Force-wide FD issues and make recommendations to the CSAF and SecAF. Functional Authorities (FA), MAJCOM CVs, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, and appropriate Air Reserve Component and civilian representation will make up the FDC

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and provide a review of total force management. The Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force will chair the FDC.

- The **FAs** will provide oversight and advisory services related to specific functional “families”. They may address multiple specialties and civilian occupational services that fall under their purview. These groupings are referred to as the “functional community”. FAs are senior leaders and will include designated Deputy Chiefs of Staff, Assistant Secretaries, and select Directorate (General Officer or SES)-level leaders. They will:
  - Direct and approve functional assignment prioritization plans, IAW applicable FDC guidelines
  - Provide strategic oversight of Total Force Development (TFD)
  - Serve as a member of the FDC and provide corporate perspective of functional community requirements and FD
  - Conduct annual Total Force Career Field Review on specialties under their management and report results to the FDC
  - Advise HQ USAF/DP on anticipated reorganizations, realignments, and mission changes that may affect programs
  - Establish Advisory Council and DT membership (may be delegated)
  
- The **FDO** will be responsible for establishing regulatory policies, and program guidelines. It will:
  - Oversee policy governing development and management of appropriate systems required to assess and analyze functional communities’ health
  - Serve as proxy when the FDC is not in session
  - Coordinate FDC activities, prioritize and facilitate FDSO analytical and data-gathering support provided to the functional community management structure and other associated FD activities
  - Validate and approve developmental education quota distribution IAW guidelines as determined by the FDC
  - Validate FA developed prioritization plans and ensure they are properly incorporated into the FD construct
  - Update, implement, monitor and ensure adherence to Air Force FD policy
  - Work closely with the Air Force Personnel Operations Agency, Air Force Manpower and Innovation Agency, Air Force Personnel Center, Air Education and Training Command and the United States Air Force Academy
  - FDO, through the Directorate of Learning and Force Management (AF/DPL) will ensure CFMs are provided the training to manage their TFD program

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- Air Force Senior Leader Management Office will provide the FDO with Air Force senior leader requirements and associated analytical data
- The **FDSO**, will be responsible for:
  - Providing day-to-day analytical support to the FDO, FAs, DTs and ATs
  - Collecting, compiling, and analyzing career field health and sustainment information for all functional communities
  - Integrating career field assessments to provide FDO and FDC with corporate level force-wide oversight
  - Executing the FDO's policies and guidelines
  - Providing various reports, spreadsheets, written correspondence, and other related products to DTs and ATs in order to execute FD
  - Augmenting ATs as appropriate with administrative and logistical support to DTs

(FDSO Interaction Matrix at Appendix 1)

- **DTs** will be responsible for overseeing personnel development to meet functional community and broader Air Force institutional requirements. DT composition will vary depending on the functional community, but, as a minimum, will include the Career Field Manager (CFM), appropriate functional representatives, an AFPC AT representative and appropriate MAJCOM POCs. The DTs, using the Officer Development Plan (ODP) and the web technology envisioned to support it, will:
  - Understand an individual's **developmental preferences** and personal parameters
  - Take into account commander/senior rater **recommendations and assessments** of developmental potential
  - **Nominate** individual officers for special developmental opportunities (education, command, instructor duty)
  - Make analytically-supported "**development vectors**" for individual officers designed to optimize their potential skills development over time
  - Provide **feedback** to the officer (and command chain) on their recommended development path (vector)

DTs will accomplish the preceding tasks with analytical support including key information: the aggregate balance between resources and requirements in each career field; the career field's need for and ability to support permanent cross-flow into/out of the career field; and the career field's ability to provide developmental experience to officers who are experienced in other specialties. DTs, working with the FDSO, will also be required to roughly quantify the opportunities within the career field for key categories of developmental opportunity--such as MAJCOM, HQ USAF, Joint Staff opportunities; educational opportunities; command opportunities and so on, so that developmental vectors are assigned with realistic potential for achieving these goals.

- **ATs** will be responsible for:
  - Identifying individuals who should be actively considered for assignment
  - Providing primary logistical and administrative support to DTs

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- Executing developmental assignments within established functional guidance and prioritization plans
- ATs and AFPC will retain final assignment authority

### THE ASSIGNMENT PROCESS

FD will require modifications to the process as it exists today. The changes build upon the existing Air Force Assignment System (AFAS), and incorporate more deliberate planning. They are designed to meet Air Force needs, while better accommodating an individual's goals and objectives. The most significant modifications are the incorporation of the DT and evolution of the current Preference Worksheet towards a robust Officer Development Plan (ODP). Today's officer corp depends on the Assignment Management System (AMS) to fairly manage filling the mission requirements while balancing individual goals. It has served its designed purpose well; however, the AMS "Preference Worksheet" has a significant limitation as a force development platform. It provides only a *one-way* flow of information *from* the officer, through the commander, *to* the AFPC assignment team. The ODP (and on a limited basis, the transitional ODP, or T-ODP) will provide feedback to the individual officer so he or she can express their preferences and understand developmental opportunities. It will also give the chain-of-command and DTs a more sophisticated tool to better mentor individuals and make informed decisions.

The ODP replaces two prominent processes:

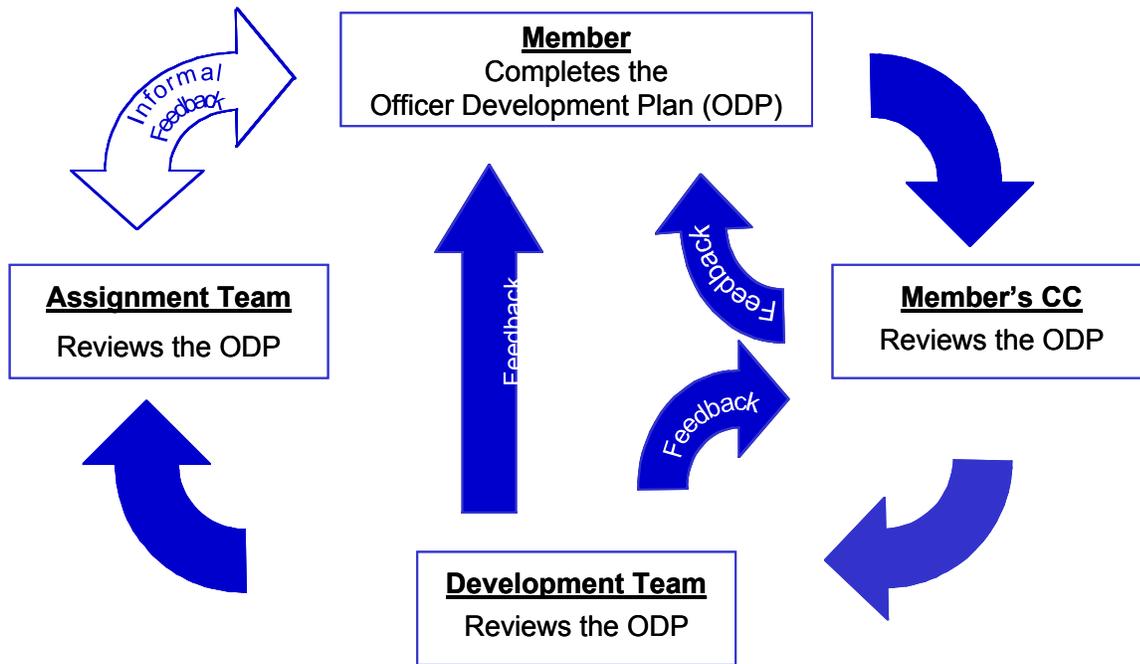
- The **AMS Preference Worksheet**
- The AF **Form 3849**, used now to nominate officers for military education, command, and other special selection processes

ODP enables another:

- **Feedback** dealing with an officer's future development will be central to ODP and strongly supported by the ODP process. It will provide a rater with a logical opportunity to save time and combine two clearly related, but previously separate personnel processes (performance feedback and assignment, or developmental recommendation). Feedback date of accomplishment will be documented in the ODP for the rater's convenience.

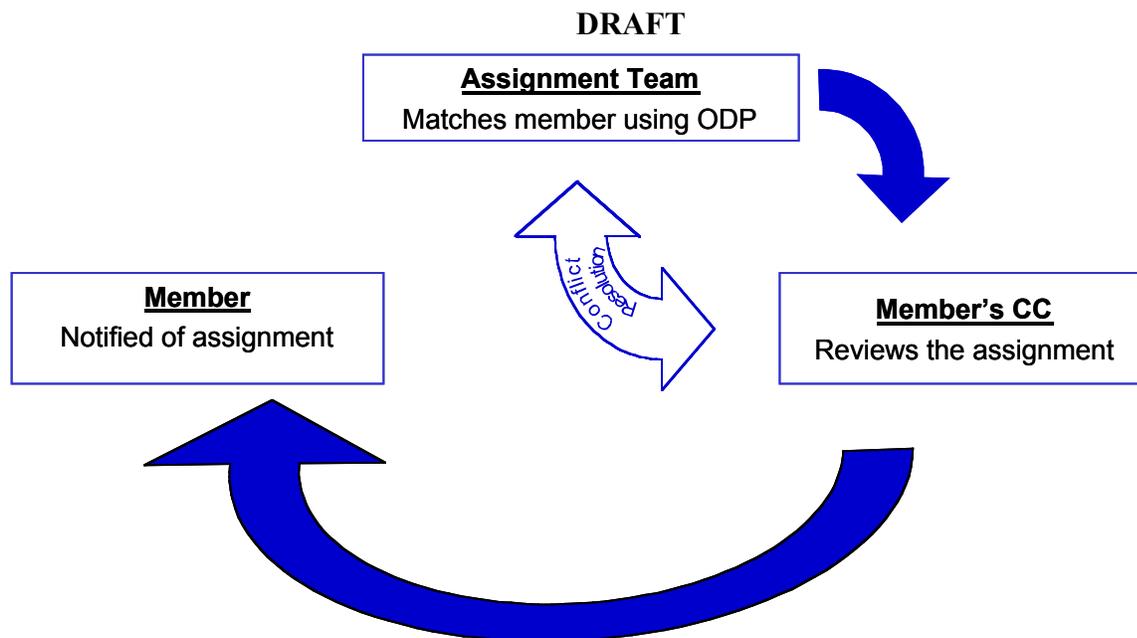
Officers and commanders/supervisors will regularly document current and future career plans, desires and intents on the ODP. The ODP will flow through the commander to the DT, unless the officer is competing for a special selection opportunity. In this case, the ODP will go to the senior rater before it goes to the DT. The DT will review the plan, recommend a developmental vector and provide feedback to the commander and officer electronically via the ODP.

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It's important to understand the ODP is intended to become the single, central tool that communicates an officer's goals and his or her leadership's developmental assessments and recommendations. Development and assignment teams will use this transient, timely information to make informed assignment and developmental decisions. It will allow all players in the developmental decision-making process to see, evaluate, and react to the inputs of all other players--and it will eliminate many parallel forms, administrative procedures and processes that support today's fragmented developmental decision-making.

ATs will use the ODP to match officers to Air Force requirements in line, as much as possible, with the DT vector. Using the DT vector and recommendations from commanders, supervisors and career field advisors, AFPC ATs will execute the development plan, matching officers with available opportunities for development to satisfy Air Force needs in the most optimum manner possible. In situations where the DT vector diverges from the individual's and/or the commander's desires and recommendations, the ATs will work to resolve the conflict through the member's commander/senior leadership. The Commander, AF Personnel Center and, as designated, the AF Director of Assignments, will serve as the final assignment authority.



In addition to capturing developmental vectors, the ODP will allow officers and commanders to annotate AEF association, allowing visibility to the assignment teams. In turn, ATs will have this information when building the current AFAS Vulnerable Mover List (VML). When a potential assignment selection conflicts with an AEF commitment, ATs will work with Commanders and DTs to resolve.

The assignment process will remain as flexible as possible to accommodate developmental requirements. AFAS currently has the flexibility to allow for a tailored VML and requirements determination, as well as providing the basic framework for assignment cycles. The FD system will capture metrics to monitor this modified process to ensure we are developing the right officer at the right time to meet mission requirements now and in the future. As FD matures, analysis will likely suggest adjustments to the assignment process.

**DEVELOPMENTAL IDENTIFIER (DID):**

The current manpower and classification system does not always allow for clear visibility into individuals’ assignment experiences. Many officers have served in jobs that have their primary AFSC associated with the position, in spite of the fact they are doing non-primary AFSC duties. For example, as assignment officer at AFPC is typically not serving in a 36P (personnel) billet; rather they are in a billet carrying their primary AFSC, e.g. 11F (fighter pilot). DIDs provide the flexibility to capture experiences without driving a specific manpower requirement under the traditional classification system. They also provide DTs, ATs and senior leaders a clearer sight picture of an officer’s career, enabling them to match the officer to current and future AF assignment related requirements. To extend the preceding example, a 36P DID would be given to the assignment officer who was assigned to do fighter assignments at AFPC. The normal time required for the award of a specific DID will be 12 months. The DID will be visible on an assignment SURF, so DTs and ATs will have maximum visibility into an officer’s experiences and capabilities.

**DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION (DE)**

Education is a vital investment in our people and FD recognizes the necessity of providing the right education to the broadest possible group of officers, both to develop them individually and

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to meet Air Force requirements. It also recognizes there is limited time available in people's careers to pull them out of the field to provide them educational opportunities. Given that, a review of, and changes to our education system was initiated to better realize FD goals. The result is an expansion of the Air Force's view of professional development and formal education opportunities and how we improve the utility of the time the institution and our people invest in AF-sponsored educational programs. PME and Advanced Academic Degree opportunities are now seen more broadly as DE opportunities.

This perspective change results in expanded education options to include traditional in-residence PME and advanced academic degree programs, education with industry (Academic Year 2005), fellowships, and special schools.

FD defines three distinct levels of development; tactical, operational and strategic, and the associated levels of education.

- **Tactical Level.** Development to gain knowledge and experience in a primary skill, combined with educational and leadership training experience.
- **Operational Level.** Development to continue widening experience and increased responsibility within a related family of skills.
- **Strategic Level.** Development that provides challenges to gain breadth of experience and leadership perspective. This is the level leaders integrate across broad mission areas and specialties to accomplish Air Force missions.

These doctrinal levels of development can roughly be associated with periods of an individual's career. The event facilitating the transition from one level to the next is DE. This is another change from ISS and SSS. Intermediate Developmental Education (IDE) prepares officers for the transition from the tactical to the operational level and Senior Developmental Education (SDE) and is directed towards the transition from the operational to the strategic level. A key concept to understand at the Intermediate level of Developmental Education (IDE) is officers who attend non-traditional programs and do not have a military education component attached to them, must also complete the appropriate Distance Learning version of Air University's curriculum. This will be administered as part of their education experience unless the individual has already completed it.

Air University also modified the ACSC curriculum to better achieve this desired development. The existing curriculum was rewritten into three distinct modules. Modules 1 and 2 (*Strategy, Airpower & Leadership*, and *Joint Warfighting*) are designed to impart in-depth education on employing air and space power to achieve desired effects while preserving Joint PME curriculum. They focus more on **Enduring Competencies**, best defined as the personal and leadership qualities that provide a common grounding for all Air Force members. Module 3, *Specialized Studies*, is designed to provide officers with specific education in preparation for assignments outside of their primary career field.

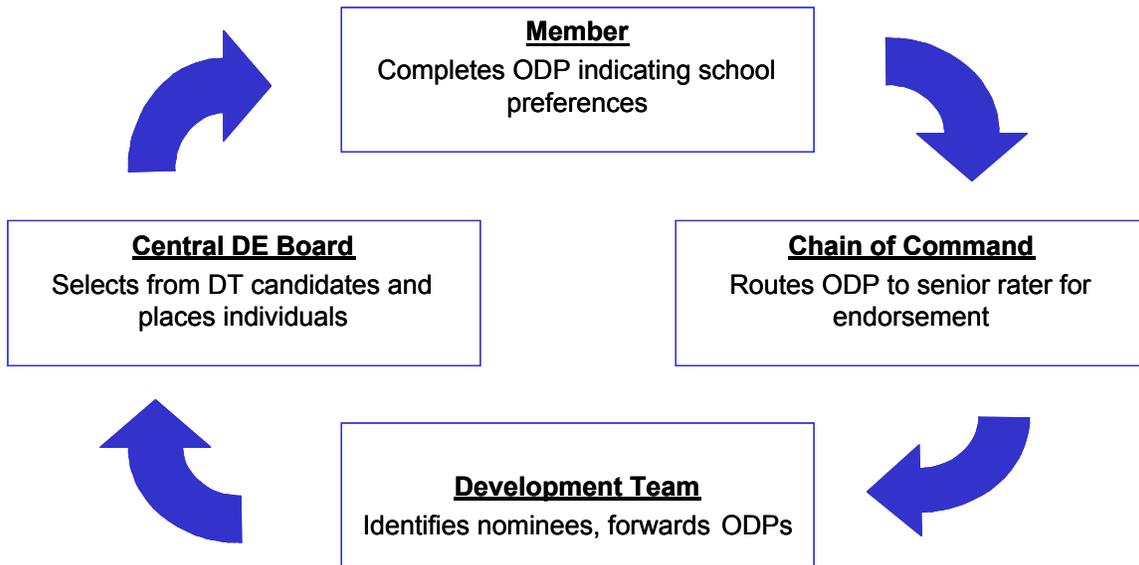
Specialized Studies is truly a new concept. In the past we have routinely sent officers to jobs, particularly staff jobs, with little or no preparation. While on-the-job-training has worked, the investment of time during the operational education opportunity to prepare officers for those

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non-primary AFSC jobs will better serve the individual and the organization they are assigned. The idea of using AAD opportunities as qualifying educational experiences directly supports this concept. For many officers, their *Specialized Studies* will be the AAD program they attend.

Another change to be implemented is the selection process for school attendees. In the past, promotion boards have identified school candidates who would later compete for actual selection. Historically, only about 70% of these “candidates” were selected to attend Intermediate Service School during their window of eligibility. The process also allowed senior raters to nominate a small number of non-candidates for consideration at the school selection board. In the future, the promotion board will identify fewer officers (approximately 10% of the year group) who will be termed “**selects**”, vice “candidates”, with the objective 100% of these officers will attend IDE. All other officers promoted on a board will be termed “candidates” and will be eligible to compete for the remaining quotas, estimated at approximately 25% of a given year group. Officers must be recommended by their chain of command and nominated by the appropriate Developmental Team for consideration by a central Developmental Education Designed Board (DEDDB). This board will replace the previous school selection and designation boards.

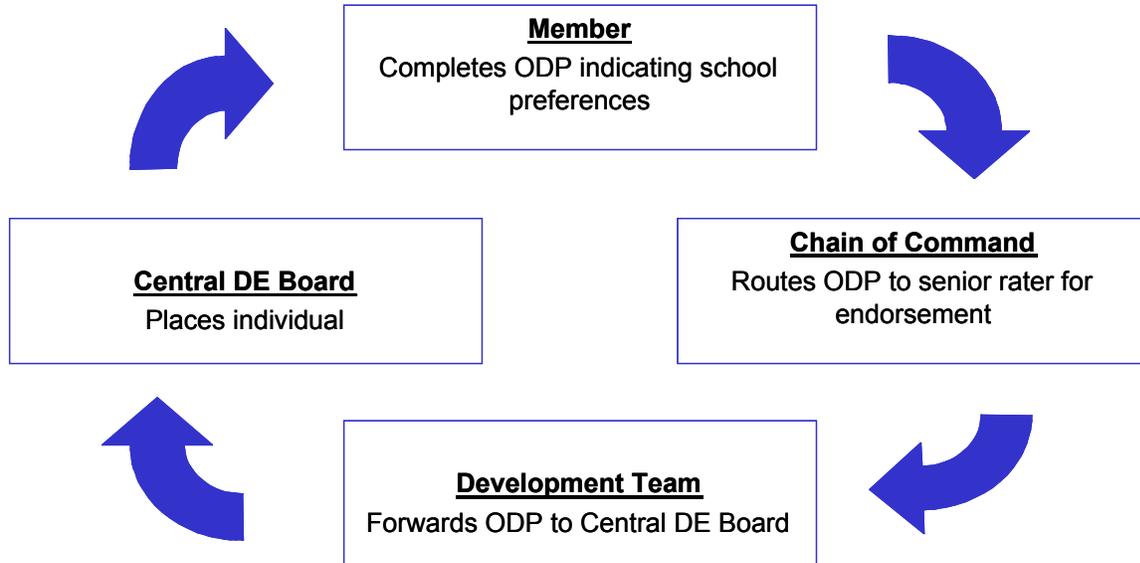
The candidate selection process will be as follows: Candidate officers will indicate their school preferences on their ODP. The ODP will be routed through the chain-of-command to their senior rater for endorsement. These factors, along with the officer’s record, will be the basis for the DT to provide a recommendation and forward candidates’ ODPs to the DEDDB for the academic year best meeting the officers’ career timing. If selected, the DEDDB will designate the specific school the officer will attend using their ODP.



For officers selected by a promotion board the ODP process is focused on identifying school preferences and the best time to attend school based on AF requirements. At the appropriate

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time, for officers nominated, the DT forwards the ODP to the DEDB for specific school placement in that academic year.



The FDO mentioned in the FD section will provide corporate-level oversight for developmental educational opportunities. Specifically within the DE construct, the FDO will ensure education requirements are developed in coordination with the functional communities and specifically the FA. This process will be managed by the FDO and may include a process similar to the current Air Force Education Requirements Board (AFERB) process. After coordination and further analysis by the FDSO, nomination targets will be furnished to the DTs. Once again, the DEDB will determine which officers are actually designed for attendance in any given Academic Year.

**CAREER PATH GUIDANCE**

Officer career paths have historically been depicted in “pyramids”, indicating upward progression and implying fewer types of jobs exist at senior levels. Under FD, these “pyramids” will be modified to illustrate development levels and corresponding windows of opportunity for education and training to help focus officer’s expectations and give them a better roadmap. In addition, the modified diagrams will illustrate where an officer’s career field inventory stacks up against a career field’s requirements allowing more realistic expectations with respect to cross-flow opportunities.

The Career Planning Diagram (CPD) (Appendix 2) provides an overview of professional development throughout an officer’s career. The template provides a general career model with specific details for each Air Force specialty, replacing the “career pyramids” with a more robust display. Common to all career fields are development opportunities at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. At the foundation, officers will establish a solid grounding at the tactical level in a primary career field. Some officers will remain at the tactical level providing depth of expertise in a particular field. Others will progress into positions with increasing levels of

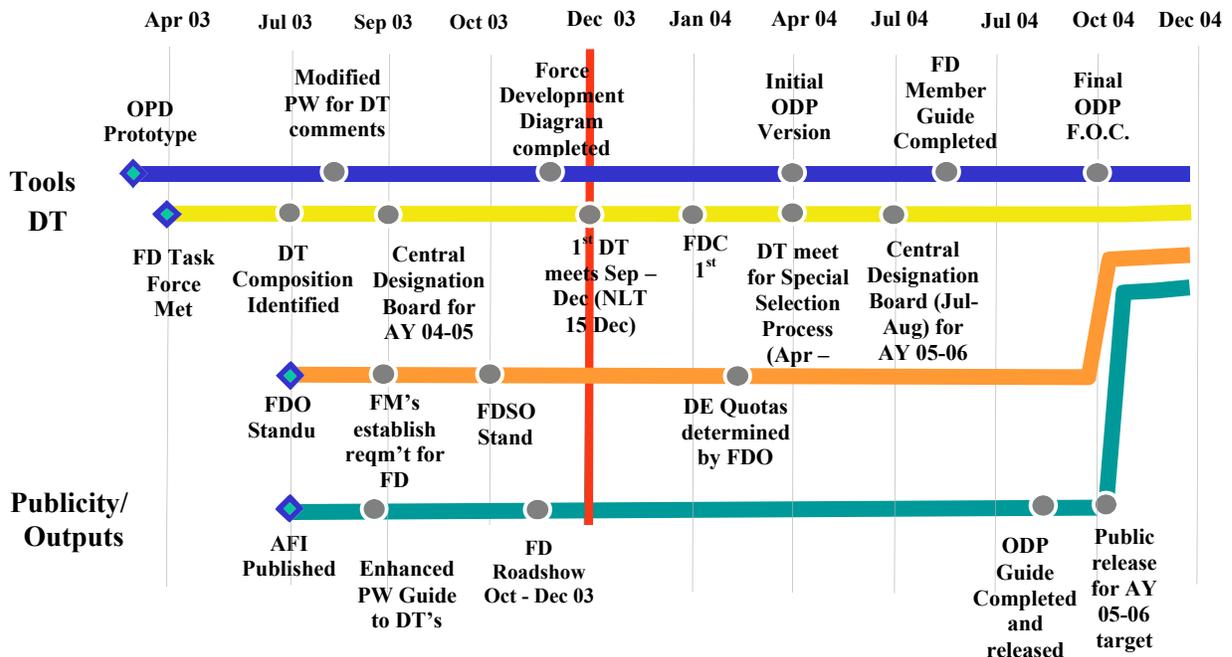
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responsibility and leadership opportunities at the operational and strategic levels. The diagram will reinforce there is no “set path” to senior leadership.

This construct includes instructor and DE opportunities. Instructor opportunities are available at each level of development. Officers are expected to perform instructor duties at some point in their career. DE opportunities include both appropriate level military education and specialized education designed to develop officers either within their career field, or to prepare them for an assignment outside of their core career field.

**SEQUENCED ACTIONS**

The following diagram shows the sequenced actions that are required for successful implementation of Force Development.



**SUMMARY**

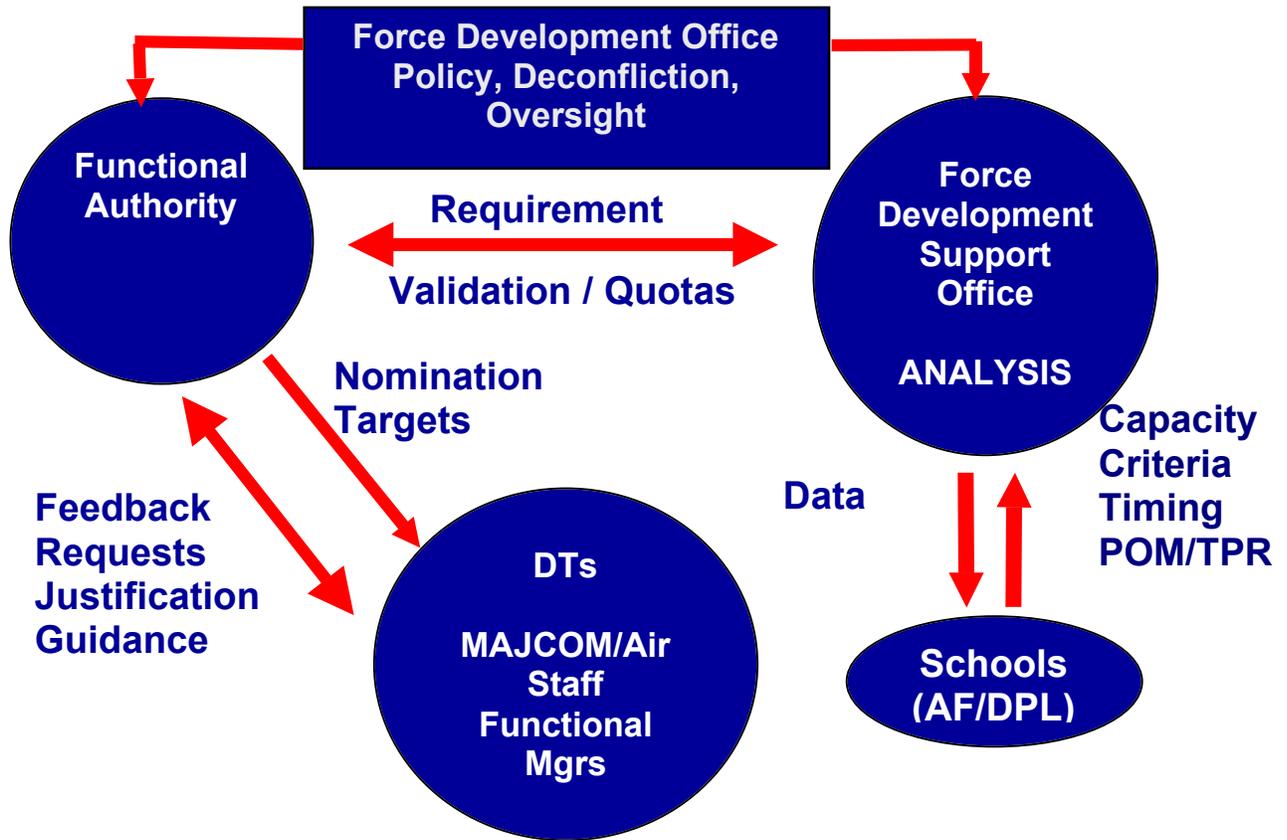
Today, we develop highly competent and credible “specialists” in various AFSCs. However, to excel in today’s rapidly changing military environment, tomorrow’s Air Force leaders need to be knowledgeable about different functional areas. With FD, development will take on a more deliberate approach. The FDO will consolidate all FD policies and procedures and ensure compatibility across all functional communities, while the FDSO will provide the appropriate analysis and support. Together, they will ensure AF Seniors Leaders, via the Force Development Council, are provided with an effective sight picture and appropriate input on the development of the officer force. Career Planning Diagrams will provide officers and commanders with a roadmap for development, and the ODP will provide communication between the individual, the

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commander/chain of command, DE, AT and the institution. These elements come together when ATs facilitate synergistic education and assignments to improve and develop our force, while realizing the needs and desires of our officers and our Air Force.

Appendix 1

**Force Development Support Office Interaction**



## Appendix 2

### Career Planning Diagram

The diagram below is for use by the functional managers and Development Teams. It identifies each element of this construct and closely aligns itself to the career field inventory and requirements structure. This diagram is adaptable to the enlisted and civilian forces.

**Occupational Skill Requirement** - identifies experiences outside members' core ID and RDTM that compliments their primary specialty. These requirements are important and have been established for each career field in order to produce leadership at the appropriate levels.

### Example: 36P Career Planning Diagram

