

**CAREER FIELD EDUCATION AND TRAINING PLAN  
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION CAREER FIELD (33SX)  
OFFICER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDE**

*From the Director, Communications and Information, Headquarters, United States Air Force*



As we march into the next millennium, it is becoming even more obvious that information is truly the fifth dimension of warfare (in addition to air, land, sea, and space). To be successful in this dimension, the communications and information community must operate in that dimension—not just as force enhancers, but also as information operators in our own right. We will grow into that role only by becoming aerospace operators whose unique contribution is our special set of skills in communications and information technology.

Globally engaged enterprises involved in highly competitive activities understand the value of information. The Air Force, understanding the value of information in its air and space operations, has acknowledged information superiority as one of its core competencies. The communications and information officer plays a significant role in achieving information superiority—by understanding the basic tenets of air and space operations, by understanding the warfighter's information needs, we apply the full range of information technologies and services to enable the Air Force to operate better, faster and cheaper. To ensure we remain the world's premier Air Force, our cadre of communications and information officers represents the center of gravity for communications and information. That "center of gravity" must be the world's best in doing their job.

This document lays out the strategies to develop our communications and information officers. These strategies will enable our officer corps to maximize their potential by matching their skills and desires with the needs of the Air Force. This document provides a framework for commanders and supervisors to use when mentoring their junior officers, and for individuals to use when assessing their own professional development. It is a quick reference document and is not intended to replace Air Force or DoD directives.

This CFETP is the communications and information officers' officer professional development (OPD) bible. Every communications and information officer, commander and supervisor should read this, work this, and give me inputs for changing it. We are a high performing cadre of professional officers and this is our plan to sustain that capability—it will only help us if we read it, use it, follow it, and improve it.

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# **COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION CAREER FIELD (33SX) OFFICER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDE**

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## **Introduction**

The Air Force Communication and Information community conducted a 33SX Utilization and Training Workshop (U&TW) 10-15 May 1998. The 33SX Air Force career field manager; MAJCOM/SC, USSTRATCOM/J6, and ANG/SC functional managers; HQ AETC operations representatives, 333 TRS training personnel, and the Director, AFIT Software Professional Development Program (SPDP) attended.

During the U&TW, the attendees reorganized the Air Force Communications and Information Officer Training (AFCOT) course content to align with the Air Force's shift to expeditionary operations and the draft Air Force Communications and Information core competencies. They also reviewed and updated the existing draft Career Field Education and Training Plan (CFETP), including clarifying terms and explanations and inserting the new course training standards into Part 2 of the CFETP.

This guide/CFETP provides information for communications and information officers, commanders, and supervisors to facilitate effective professional development for communications and information officers, both active, guard, and reserve. The guide lays out career progression guidelines, recommends training and education throughout each phase of an individual's career, lists education and training resources available in the specialty, and identifies other sources of training.

Typical career progression is shown in a revised and updated career pyramid. It is absolutely critical that every officer becomes well grounded in the operational employment of aerospace forces. An officer can achieve this through operational assignments, Professional Military Education, self-study. As officers progress through their career, it is important that they keep their skill set sharp through refresher training and professional continuing education (PCE). Hence, this guide presents a listing of education and training courses that are available to help each officer stay current. Finally, this guide addresses the process our community employs to keep the career field training current and applicable. A glossary of abbreviations and suggested reading supplements the guide.

## **Specialty Qualifications**

Knowledge, education, training, and experience levels required for award of the 33S AFSC are clearly specified in AFMAN 36-2105, Officer Classification, pages 114-117. This manual identifies all requirements for the 33S1, 33S3, 33SXA (electrical engineering specialty), and 33CO (group/deputy group commander) specialty codes. All 33S officers should review this manual.

## **Career Progression**

Future Air Force leaders will be those officers who fully understand the operational Air Force, can demonstrate breadth and depth in their career field, have proven their ability to lead, and think of themselves as aerospace operators first, specialists second. Becoming a future Air Force leader is an on-going process; successful senior officers built their careers one

assignment at a time, always keeping in mind that their current assignment was the most important assignment for career progression. Officers should consider each assignment, first and foremost, for the contribution the officer can make to the world's premier Air Force, and second, for the variety and breadth it can contribute to an entire career.

### **A Balanced Approach**

To experience the full breadth of opportunities in sufficient depth normally requires a variety of assignments. Consider the following in your professional development requires the following:

- A balanced approach in expertise to professional development--fixed communications, tactical communications, operational deployments, project management, maintenance, acquisition, architectures, budget, etc. are examples of expertise; officers need experience in a variety of these, not narrow specialization.

- An overseas tour--approximately 14 percent of the communications-information billets worldwide are overseas. Short tour overseas assignments represent prime opportunities to quickly fill gaps in your professional development and to hone skills operating in a typically austere environment. A balanced approach in tours of duty--CONUS, overseas, MAJCOMs, joint, unit and headquarters, executive officer, instructor, commander, fixed comm, deployable comm, special duty, etc., all lay a foundation.

- A change in MAJCOM--experience in several different MAJCOMs will give you a broader view of the total Air Force mission and a deeper understanding of how all the "pieces" fit together. This knowledge will lay the foundation for your future success as an Air Staff or joint staff officer, as will the completion of professional military education, advanced technical or managerial degree, and continuing technical training/education.

Successful professional development is essential for those who will eventually hold top leadership positions in the Air Force. A balanced approach to professional development will generate officers with specialty expertise, success in command positions, ability to apply the tenants of aerospace doctrine, and a record that validates these credentials.

### **Role of Commander/Supervisor**

Commanders, supervisors, and senior 33SX officers must take an active role in officer career development. Senior 33SX officers should provide advice in career planning. Officers should review career goals with their commander at least annually.

Commanders or supervisors should guide and counsel officers during mentoring sessions and performance feedback sessions. They should discuss career progression using the 33SX career pyramid shown on the following page as a guide, but ultimately you must make the decisions.

## Career Pyramid

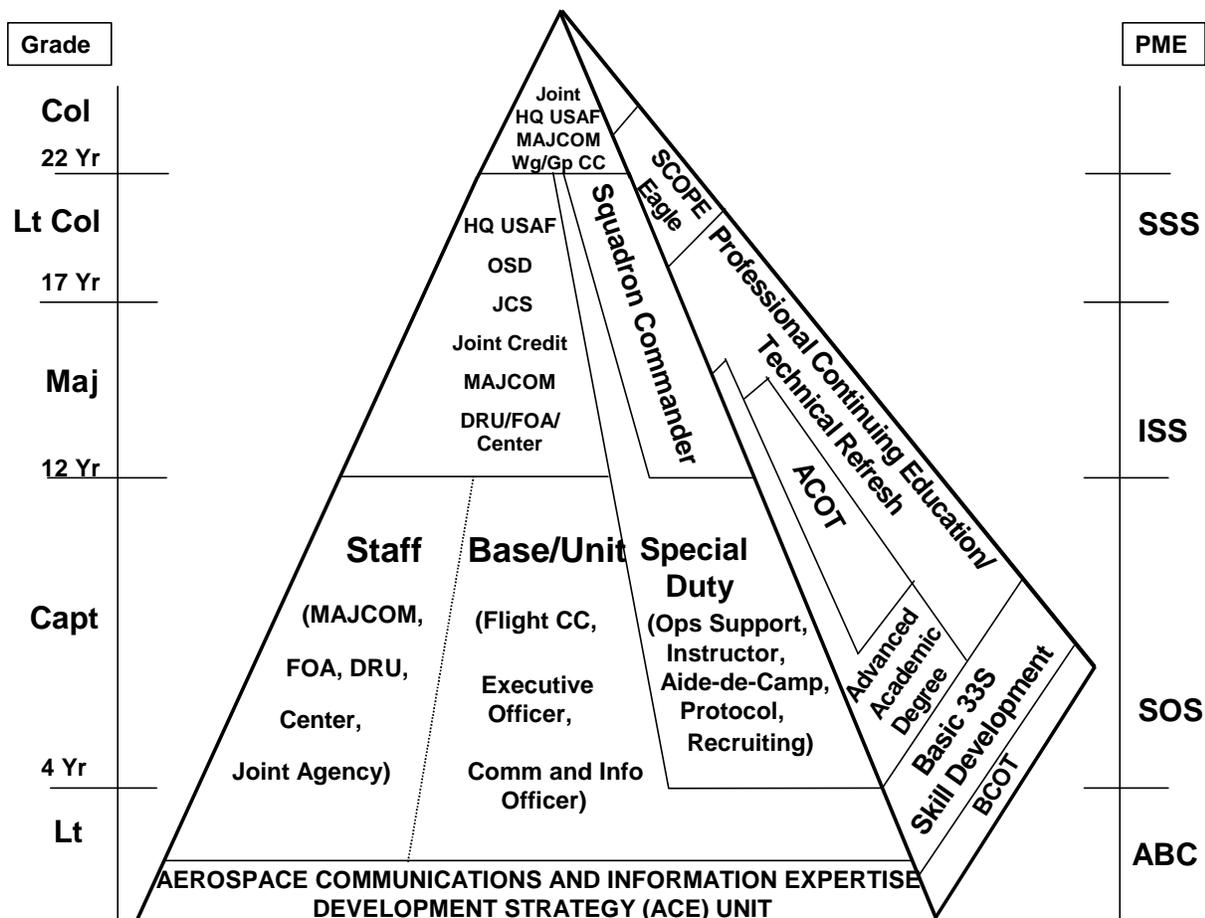
The 33SX career pyramid graphically displays the types of opportunities available at different times in your career. The following paragraphs describe the pyramid from the bottom up. Please keep in mind the pyramid is only a guide. It can't possibly represent every single successful career path, and there is no single career path that guarantees success!

When initially assigned to the communications-information career field, officers should try to build depth through technical experience within the career field. The first step is completion of BCOT. Information on the BCOT curriculum is available at the following URL:

<https://wwwmil.keesler.af.mil/ACOT/bcot.html>

An officer's early years are best spent learning the basics of the Air Force communications-information business, particularly in an operational context. While officers may have a specialty (i.e. communications and information), they are airmen first, and must take advantage of every opportunity to learn about the operational Air Force. The Aerospace Communications and Information Expertise (ACE) tour, discussed in Appendix 1, provides a great opportunity to focus on both the technical and operational aspects. Follow-on assignment for ACE lieutenants will normally be to a staff-level job to begin developing breadth.

Aerospace power is the Air Force's mission. Success is measured in sorties launched, weapons on the target, and cargo delivered on a worldwide scale. Everything we do supports these activities. Upon promotion to captain, officers should complete Squadron Officer School and begin pursuing a relevant advanced academic degree, furthering technical and leadership knowledge, through the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) or a civilian institution.



Between the 4th and 11th years of commissioned service, a variety of new options become available. Officers will have the opportunity to:

- Become schooled in the operational art of war. Not every officer will be assigned to a deployable unit, but every officer is an operator and must be schooled in the operational art of war -- the employment of Air Force forces. An officer's operational focus is best developed and maintained through hands-on experience, beginning with the ACE program. To become an expert in this area requires follow-on experience through more senior grades at other operational assignments. Jobs focused on the operational art in the 33S business might include Air Expeditionary Force (AEF) squadron mobility officer, AEF deployment commander, AFFOR/A6 planner, combat comm squadron commander, joint operations officer at a regional CINC, and AFFOR/J6. Professional military education supplements, broadens, and rounds out the direct experience gained through practical application in "line" assignments. Those who successfully work these jobs must also balance their career by spending tours working other facets of our career field.

- Build depth by managing a flight or branch. In addition, managing a flight or branch will test and enhance your leadership skills in the most direct way possible.

- Instruct at the schoolhouse at Keesler AFB. This duty will enhance understanding of the career field, and hone speaking, writing, and briefing skills, while positively impacting hundreds of other communications-information officers.

- Attend Squadron Officer School (SOS). Promotion to captain affords the opportunity to attend SOS in-residence between the 4th and 7th year of service. The current Air Force expectation is that every officer will have the opportunity to attend SOS.

- Compete for an Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) Degree Program. AFIT offers a number of technical master/doctorate degree programs suited for 33S professionals. The Air Force Personnel Center assigns officers graduating from AFIT to advanced academic degree (AAD) coded positions directly supporting Air Force requirements at all organizational levels. The assignment is a 3-year controlled tour. Recommended advanced degrees include engineering, computer sciences, systems management, information resource management, public or business administration, and computer technology. If attending AFIT is not possible, try to complete a master's degree program during off-duty hours, preferably in an area related to the 33S career field.

- Complete a special duty assignment. Officers between their 4<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> years of service should plan to complete one special duty assignment. These include opportunities to serve as instructors at a Reserve Officer Training Corps detachment, Basic Military Training, Officer Training School, Squadron Officer School, or the United States Air Force Academy. Other assignments include positions in recruiting, command posts, courier, or protocol. The best timing for these assignments is after achieving career field depth and breadth.

- Be an executive officer. Executive officers bring communications and information expertise directly to the wing and group mission areas. They are responsible for inter- and intra-wing/group communications and serve as a liaison to the communications

squadron. Executive officers work directly for the wing or group commander, benefiting greatly from the opportunity to observe senior leadership in action.

As you approach your Major's board, continue to seek mentoring and career advice from your supervisor and commander. Your PCS and PCA moves, PME, and assignments should be planned carefully with the guidance of a senior 33SX officer.

You should also complete the Advanced Communications and Information Officer Training (ACOT) course between the 8th and 13th year of commissioned service. This course provides an excellent forum to network with peers and prepare for more senior positions. The opportunity to attend ACOT is 100 percent for both officers and civilians. For information on the course curriculum, visit the ACOT web site at the following URL:

<https://wwwmil.keesler.af.mil/ACOT/acot.html>

Professional Continuing Education (PCE) and tech refresh training are additional education and training options, either in residence, or through exportable courses and on-the-job training. This training is available to personnel to increase their skills and knowledge beyond the minimum required. The next section addresses PCE and tech refresh.

When selected for major, officers are eligible to enroll in Intermediate Service School (ISS). The Air Force designates about 20 percent of the officers selected for major as in-residence ISS candidates. If not afforded the opportunity to attend ISS in residence, officers should complete the course by correspondence or seminar within 2 years after pinning on major to remain competitive.

The technical foundation you build early in your career will pay great dividends as a staff officer. Staff billets above the wing level for communications-information officers are prevalent in some NAFs, and every MAJCOM, agency, HQ USAF, SAF, and all joint service organizations. Experience in more than one command is desirable.

Technical expertise coupled with staff experience and jobs in leadership roles prepare selected officers for command. Majors and lieutenant colonels compete for squadron commander jobs. Squadron commanders are selected through a board process that meets once per year. Assignments for senior lieutenant colonels also include opportunities to serve as ROTC detachment commanders or deputy communications group or support group commanders. After a successful staff or leadership tour as a deputy group or squadron commander, About 15 to 20 percent of officers selected for promotion to lieutenant colonel or colonel will also have the opportunity to compete for in-residence attendance at Senior Service School (SSS). Upon graduation, many of these officers are assigned to the Air Staff or a joint-duty billet, while a select few are chosen for command at the group level. If not afforded the opportunity to attend SSS in residence, officers should complete the course by correspondence or seminar within 2 years after pinning on lieutenant colonel.

There is no one ideal career path for communications and information officers. However, a successful Air Force career normally includes a strong technical base, solid staff experience, and challenging leadership positions. Squadron commander, joint duty, and an Air Staff tour are the key building blocks for promotion to senior leadership positions. Whatever your goals, the often-used phrase still holds true: "How well you do in your current job is the most important factor in determining your future success."

## **Education and Training Courses and Resources**

Communications and information officers face a difficult challenge staying current in a career field so heavily involved in rapidly changing technologies. This section identifies training courses currently available (beyond ACOT and BCOT) for communications and information officers to further their knowledge of the career field. Pending the establishment of a formal professional continuing education program, officers should consider completing their choice of courses below, choosing those most appropriate for the job they hold or anticipate being assigned to. The list is not all-inclusive and will be updated periodically.

### **Air Force Institute of Technology Courses**

A number of communications and information-related courses are available through the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT), Wright-Patterson AFB, OH. Examples include the Information Resource Management program, offered at both the graduate and doctorate levels. These are in-residence courses requiring a PCS move. More information is available at AFIT's School of Engineering and Management website (<http://en.afit.af.mil>).

AFIT also offers the Software Professional Development Program. The program consists of four distance learning courses and a 3-week in-residence course. The objective of the program is to provide continuing education for USAF members involved in any aspect of software engineering, including acquisition, writing, or modification of software. Specific topics include software lifecycle management, technical development, object-oriented analysis and design, and software requirements design and engineering. For more information on this course, contact the Director, Software Professional Development Program, AFIT/LSS, DSN 785-6565, ext 4204, or visit the AFIT Distance Learning website at <http://dl.afit.af.mil>.

### **Information Resource Management College (IRMC), National Defense University**

This course offers leading-edge training in Information Resource Management for Lt Cols (or civilian equivalent) and above. Applications for the course meet a selection board. Several courses, seminars, symposia and workshops are offered with differing lengths from 3 days to 14 weeks. Refer to the annually published NDU IRMC catalog or website (<http://www.ndu.edu/irmc>).

### **USAF Joint Special Operations Staff Officer Course**

The USAF Special Operations School (USAFSOS), Hurlburt Field, FL, sponsors this course, which furthers knowledge of operational art. The 10-day course is suited for mid-career officers (03-05) and civilian equivalents and focuses on the responsibilities of joint and component command special operations staff positions. There are no tuition or registration fees, but TDY expenses are unit funded. Call USAFSOS at DSN 579-6452 for more information.

## **Air Force Communications Agency (AFCA) Seminars**

AFCA offers the following 5-day seminars at Scott AFB.

- Bridge Course
- Information Protection
- Maintenance Management
- Planning and Implementation
- Systems & Network Management

The complete course curriculum and schedule for each of these seminars can be found on the communications and information Seminars Home Page (<http://www.afca.scott.af.mil/seminars/>). These courses are particularly suited for officers who have little or no base-level communications experience.

## **Computer Based Training**

The Air Force has contracted with Computer Based Training Systems USA Ltd. to provide information technology computer-based training courses as an integral part of the Air Force strategy to operationalize and professionalize communications and information networks. These courses cover both technical areas and widely used end-user applications. Courses in the following categories are available.

- Application Development and Programming
- Cisco Routers
- COBOL
- Internet Security
- LAN Technologies
- Lotus Notes
- Managing Information Systems
- Microsoft End-User Operating Systems and Tools
- Microsoft Exchange Server
- Microsoft Internet Explorer
- Microsoft Networking Essentials
- Microsoft Office 97
- Microsoft Windows 95
- Network Management and Security
- Netscape
- Novell Certified Internet Professional
- Oracle
- Systems and Database Design
- Technical Support
- Telecommunications
- UNIX
- WAN Technologies

These courses can be run on your own PC. Contact your local comm squadron for the CBT software, or call AFCA/XPFS at DSN 576-4191 for assistance.

### **Professional Societies**

The following courses are available through the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association (AFCEA):

- Command, Control, and Communications
- DoD Acquisition for Government and Industry Managers and Engineers
- C4ISR Architecture Framework Implementation
- Data Management Systems
- Digital Data Communications and Emerging Technologies
- Global Command and Control System
- Military Satellite Communications

Visit the web site at <http://www.afcea.org/education/index.htm> for more information on these and other courses available from AFCEA.

Another professional society offering communications courses is the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). This organization offers an assortment of courses including:

- Cellular Radio and Personal Communications
- Satellite Communications
- Theory of Spread Spectrum Communications
- An Introduction to Antennas via Distance Learning

More information on IEEE courses is available at <http://www.ieee.org>. An electrical engineering degree is not required to participate.

### **Other Courses**

The Acquisition Professional Development Program (APDP) offers the opportunity to become certified in communications-computer acquisition. For information on the requirements of APDP certification, visit the web site at <http://www.safaq.hq.af.mil>.

The Association for Computer Machinery (ACM) has an extensive listing of practical courses on their web site at <http://www.acm.org/education>.

The Air Force offers a number of courses via distance learning. For more information on available courses, visit the web site at <http://www.au.af.mil/afdlo>.

## **Career Field Training Review Process**

The Air Force Director of Communications and Information, AF/SC, has overall responsibility for the communications and information specialty. The communications and information Air Force Career Field Manager (AFCFM), assigned to the Air Force Communications and Information Center, Directorate of Plans and Programs Force Management Division, HQ AFCIC/XPF, conducts Utilization and Training Workshops (U&TWs) to identify training requirements and develop/update this guide. Additionally, HQ AFCIC/XPF assists commands/agencies and HQ AETC Technical Training to obtain resources for the identified training. AF/SC approves communications and information officer training requirements.

Communications and Information MAJCOM Functional Managers (MFMs) attend and are voting members of U&TWs. MFMs should review this guide annually to ensure currency and accuracy, and then forward recommended changes to the AFCFM. MFMs must program command training requirements and be involved with obtaining and allocating training quotas for the Advanced Communications and Information Officer Training (ACOT) course. MFMs identify eligible officers and distribute ACOT quotas to their units. HQ AFPC/DPASC centrally manages quotas for the Basic Communications and Information Officer Training (BCOT) course since this course is an integral part of the accession pipeline.

The 333rd Training Squadron personnel develop and revise formal resident training based upon requirements established by users. The AFCFM will periodically call together MFM's for a Utilization and Training Workshop (U&TW). The U&TW is key to developing the training requirements for the communications and information courses. They review current CTS's to determine if the current course content is adequate to prepare our officers for the challenges they will face in the career field. The AFCFM presents the U&TW proposals to the O-6 Steering Group for their review. 333 TRS personnel work with the AFCFM and MFMs to develop procurement and acquisition strategies for obtaining resources needed to provide the identified training. 333 TRS personnel advise U&TWs and provide MFMs with evaluation feedback on all courses.

## **Maintenance of the Guide**

The 33SX Air Force Career Field Manager (AFCFM), HQ Air Force Communications and Information Center, will review the guide at least quarterly and post updates to the guide as necessary, once the updates are approved by HQ USAF/SC, HQ USAF/SCX, and the O-6 Steering Group, as necessary. The guide will remain in electronic format to facilitate updates.

The Major Command (MAJCOM) communications and information functional managers (MFMs), AFCA, and Air Education Training Command (AETC) training specialists will review the guide by 1 May of each year to ensure currency and accuracy and forward recommended changes to the AFCFM. The AFCFM will notify MAJCOMs by 1 Apr of each year to review the guide.

As AETC training personnel develop/revise formal resident and exportable training based on requirements established by users, they will coordinate with AFCIC/XPF to incorporate the results in updates to this guide.

## **Appendices**

1. ACE Program
2. Glossary of Terms
3. Suggested Reading

### **Appendix 1: Aerospace Communications and Information Expertise (ACE)**

The ACE program was established to provide a common operational foundation for new communications and information officers. The Air Force needs officers who understand the basic Air Force operational mission, and who understand how communications and information technology and services enable the war-fighting mission. To accomplish this, the ACE program assigns accessions to operational units for their initial tour of duty to help ensure that accessions have a thorough grounding in the operational aspects of the career field. ACE officers are assigned primarily to base level communications units, as well as combat communications units, combat camera units, air communications squadrons (ACOMS), the 738<sup>th</sup> Engineering and Installation Squadron (738 EIS), and the Scope Network Division at the Air Force Communications Agency (AFCA).

#### **ACE Responsibilities**

Unit commanders are critical to the success of this program. The mentorship and training they provide, in conjunction with the guidelines discussed below, will help ensure our future communications and information leaders obtain the operational experience critical to their officer professional development.

The Air Force Career Field Manager (AFCFM) maintains overall responsibility and oversight for ACE. The AFCFM and the Chief, Communications-Information Officer Assignment Branch, HQ AFPC/DPASC, will conduct an annual review of ACE allocations. They will review the list of approved units, allocation of ACE candidates to each unit, and current ACE manning, and send annual projections to the MAJCOM/SCs and MAJCOM functional managers for their review, adjustment, and approval.

HQ AFPC/DPASC is responsible for assigning accessions to approved units.

ACE lieutenants must pursue their professional development by taking full advantage of the opportunities the assignment has to offer. Officers should expect to serve in various positions, each providing valuable experience in different facets of the operational communications and information mission.

#### **ACE Tour Progression**

Accessions going to CONUS ACE units will serve a 2-year tour with the entered active duty date (EAD) as the start date. OCONUS accessions will serve a normal tour length starting when the ACE lieutenant reports for duty at the ACE unit. ACE lieutenants must attend the

Basic Communications and Information Officer Training Course (BCOT). For CONUS tours, the normal time to attend BCOT is within the first 6 months of the ACE tour. Sometimes BCOT quotas are not available and attendance must be delayed. In those cases, officers should complete BCOT no later than the first year of the ACE tour. Accessions serving OCONUS will attend BCOT en-route to duty. In the event a projected OCONUS ACE accession does not have BCOT scheduled en-route, notify HQ AFPC/DPASC immediately.

Lieutenants should PCS at the 2-year point (2 years after EAD). There are two key reasons why lieutenants must move 2 years after entering active duty (EAD):

a. The ACE lieutenant must move at two years to make room for the new accessions, and to provide officers for non-ACE unit requirements. While the senior 33S leaders in non-ACE units are generally supportive of ACE, they can't go indefinitely without manning. Our only other option to sending these units graduating ACE lieutenants is to send them accessions, which defeats the purpose of this program. We also need to move accessions placed in ACE units prior to CY98 into non-ACE units at the 2-year point or DEROS.

b. AFPC must move 2Lts at two years from EAD to ensure retainability of officers for a PCS move. An officer must have 2 years retainability for CONUS to CONUS, or CONUS to OCONUS Long assignments. Identifying an officer for an assignment with an RNLTD at their 2 year from EAD point will ensure they have retainability to PCS, even if they opt to separate.

Movement at the two-year point is imperative to the success of ACE. Follow-on assignments to a MAJCOM staff, FOA, or DRU will be the norm. Extending tours in the ACE unit is highly discouraged. Lieutenants need to move on to make room for new accessions.

### **Guidelines for Commanders**

The goals of the ACE program are to operationalize our future Communications and Information leaders, provide a common first step in officer professional development, provide leadership opportunities, provide mentoring opportunities, improve retention rates, and produce experienced/operationally oriented officers. There are nearly as many approaches to meeting these goals as there are ACE units. Any game plan that successfully meets the goals of the ACE strategy is acceptable. Game plans need to be flexible enough to take advantage of the particular backgrounds of ACE lieutenants and unique missions of the ACE units.

Commanders should try to provide ACE lieutenants formal leadership opportunities within squadrons, making them responsible for a piece of the mission as well as people and resources. Flight commander leadership may not be appropriate, but workcenter level leadership under a flight commander is a sound alternative. ACE Lieutenants should stay in one position long enough to become proficient in that position, so the squadron can reap the benefits of having a fully trained officer occupying the position. At the same time, their participation in additional duties, special projects, or other operational duty across the wing is not contrary to the intent of the ACE program as long as the duties are within reason. Commanders must make the calls here on a case-by-case basis using their own best judgment.

BCOT provides lieutenants with a solid foundation in the communications and information area of expertise. However, each MAJCOM and each base has its own perspective, challenges, and limiting factors as they relate to supporting the Air Force mission. Commanders should tailor on-the-job training in light of these differences on an individual basis to augment BCOT.

When it comes time for the ACE lieutenant to PCS, commanders must be careful about the expectations they create in their officers. Experience has shown that when these expectations are not met, officers become discouraged and disheartened. As discussed in the ACE Tour Progression section above, the expectation should be that the officer will go to a MAJCOM, FOA, or DRU staff, versus another unit-level job. One of the main tenets of ACE is to provide experienced/operationally-oriented officers to non-operational units. This was the primary selling point for the non-ACE units. If AFPC doesn't send the ACE graduates to non-ACE units, those non-ACE units will have no choice but to stop supporting ACE since we will be unable to fill their positions to manning entitlement.

Mathematics is the driver. There are more CGO positions in non-ACE units than there are in ACE units. To maintain all units at CGO entitlement, the vast majority of ACE graduates must move into non-ACE units or executive officer billets. Officers who have never had the opportunity of a tour in a base level squadron need to have priority in gaining that type of assignment to help round out their officer professional development.

Mentoring is key here. When counseling their ACE lieutenants, squadron commanders must show their officers that the key to a successful career is to do all types of jobs in different types of units to round out their officer professional development. ACE unit commanders must know the big picture when mentoring their young officers. Commanders and ACE lieutenants must understand that a "shiny penny" will be a "shiny penny" no matter where they are sent, and there is no one correct path to ensure future success. A broad spectrum of diversified jobs creates the best promotion recommendation form.

There are opportunities outside the ACE unit at the base for ACE lieutenants to gain operational experience and leadership opportunities. ACE unit commanders can continue to mentor these officers while they work outside the comm unit. They should work with their leadership and other squadron commanders to create a game plan that meets the goals of ACE and those of the wing. Also keep in mind that exec duty, with its focus on information management, is part of the communications and information career field. It provides an excellent opportunity to gain information resource management experience while at the same time offering insight to senior leadership challenges.

AFPC will not oppose ACE 2Lts being matrixed to work outside of their ACE unit. ACE unit commanders should continue to mentor these officers in their capacity as the 33S career field functional manager at their base.

### **Expected Outcomes**

ACE lieutenants should gain a solid foundation in aerospace operations during their 2-year tour. More specifically, their exposure to squadron operations should result in skill sets

that are a function of the unit mission. The behavior statements outlined in the Basic Communications and Information Officer Course Training Standard are tied to core competencies. These behavior statements represent what each ACE lieutenant can expect to have reinforced during his/her 2-year tour at the unit. They also serve as metrics commanders can use to measure ACE lieutenant development and performance.

## **Appendix 2: Abbreviations/Terms Explained**

**Accession.** Someone newly entered into the Air Force, i.e. one who entered the Air Force in 1999 is a 1999 accession.

**Air Force Career Field Manager (AFCFM).** A person who directs the development and coordination of courses and standards for training and educating personnel in a specific career field.

**Advanced Communications Officer Training (ACOT).** Formalized communications and information course provided to a fully qualified mid-career officer, between 8 and 13 years from commissioning (or between 11 and 17 for officer grade civilian equivalents). The course is aligned under the 333<sup>rd</sup> Technical Training Squadron, Keesler AFB, and runs for 23 days. The primary focus of the course is technology refresh.

**Aerospace Communications and Information Expertise (ACE) Program.** A career development strategy for new communications and information officer accessions that focuses on early exposure to operational assignments at the wing/base level.

**Basic Communications Officer Training (BCOT).** Formalized communications and information course at Keesler AFB for new accessions who have completed a commissioning program. BCOT attendance is either en-route to an officer's first assignment, or within the first year of commissioned service. The course is aligned under the 333<sup>rd</sup> Technical Training Squadron runs for 65 days. The primary focus of the course is to provide a broad brush of basic communications fundamentals.

**Career Field Education and Training Plan (CFETP) Guide.** A CFETP is a comprehensive, multipurpose document encapsulating the major areas of education and training for a career field. It outlines a logical development plan including training resources and identifies career field training to eliminate duplication and ensure a defensible training budget.

**Course Training Standard (CTS).** A training document identifying the training content and level members will receive in a specific course.

**Initial Skills Training.** A formal resident course resulting in award of the entry-level Air Force Specialty (AFS).

**Intermediate Service School (ISS).** Intermediate level of Professional Military Education (PME).

**MAJCOM Functional Manager (MFM).** A person who directs the development and coordination of courses and standards for training and educating personnel in a specific career field at the MAJCOM level.

**O-6 Steering Group.** A team chaired by HQ USAF/SCX (AFCIC/XP) and composed of the MAJCOM/SC deputies, an AFPC rep, and a senior civilian rep. Team meets semiannually (Jun and Dec) at Keesler AFB to discuss education, training, and career field management issues concerning communications and information officer, civilian, and enlisted personnel.

**Resource Constraints.** Resource deficiencies, such as money, facilities, time, manpower, information, and equipment precluding delivery of desired training.

**Scope Eagle.** Course for communications and information Colonels, Colonel selects, and civilian equivalents. Scope Eagle is aligned under the 333<sup>rd</sup> Training Squadron and runs for one week. The course consists primarily of guest speakers from the senior leadership ranks of the Air Force communications and information community and provides attendees with an update on numerous programs and career field issues.

**Senior Service School (SSS).** Highest level of PME.

**Special Duty Assignment (SDA).** A duty assignment outside an individual's primary career field, such as Squadron Officer School instructor.

**Squadron Officer School (SOS).** First level of PME.

**Utilization and Training Workshop (U&TW).** The forum a career field uses to identify utilization patterns and define training requirements and responsibilities for a specialty. Chaired by the AFCFM and includes representatives from field organizations.

### **Appendix 3: Suggested Reading**

**The Air Force Chief Of Staff Professional Reading Program.** Access the complete list of books in the program at <http://www.af.mil/lib/>

**AFI 36-2105, Officer Classification.** Describes the various officer specialties, the coding system used to differentiate them, and the knowledge, education, training and experience requirements of each specialty.

**AFI 36-2110, Officer Assignments.** Contains the policies and prescribes the procedures for moving officers between organizations, bases, and commands. It also provides information on assignment limitations, tour lengths, and various waivers.

**AFI 36-2402, Officer Evaluation System.** Assists raters and ratees in giving and receiving performance feedback and in preparing officer performance reports and promotion recommendation forms.

**AFI 36-2501, Promotion of Active Duty List Officers.** States the actual procedures for promoting active duty officers below the grade of brigadier general. This document explains how the Air Force conducts selection boards and makes promotion selections.

**AFPAM 36-2611, Officer Professional Development Guide.** Provides general information on professional development common to all officers. It provides an excellent means for organizing your professional development notes and references.

**AFCAT 36-2223, US Air Force Formal Schools.** Contains course descriptions for the various training courses available and the procedures for obtaining the training. This document lists everything from technical training to formal professional military education.

**Career Field Education and Training Plans for specialties within the 2EXXX, 3AXXX, 3CXXX and 3VXXX enlisted career fields.** These plans provide guidance for the planning, development, and life-cycle training requirements for airmen within these communications and information specialties. It identifies mandatory skills airmen should obtain during their careers as communication and information professionals.

**Air Force Civilian Career Programs Training and Development Guide.** Distributed annually to Civilian Personnel Offices. Lists approved training, PME, and executive development courses for members of the AF Civilian Careers Program.

## **Feedback**

This initial publication of the Communications and Information Officer Professional Development Career Guide is the first step in ensuring that force management issues remain visible to all personnel working in the communications and information career field.

This guide will be reviewed annually by the AFCIC Force Management Branch (AFCIC/XPF) and the O-6 Steering Group, for approval by AFCIC/CC. Please take the time to provide any recommended changes, comments, or suggestions to AFCIC/XPF so they can be included in the annual update.

SEND COMMENTS TO:

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