



**GUIDE TO THE AFMC  
MENTORING PROGRAM**

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This manual provides guidance on how to implement a Mentoring Program, in AFMC, enhancing professional development for the entire work force. Although optional, it makes mentoring a strongly encouraged supervisory and leadership activity and helps develop well-rounded, professional, and competent subordinates. It can be applied to all AFMC military and civilian personnel. The doctrines of integrity, service and excellence should be adhered to when using this manual in implementing the guide. See **Attachment 1** for a glossary of references, acronyms, and abbreviations.

## **1. Definition and Purpose:**

1.1. Mentoring is a relationship in which a person with greater experience or wisdom guides another to a higher level of personal and professional excellence. The key to successful mentoring is providing feedback to subordinates on their current duty performance, personal and professional development needs, and guidance for them to achieve near-, mid-, and long-term career goals.

1.2. The immediate supervisor is usually the primary mentor and plays the most important role in the mentoring process for subordinates (coach, guide, role model, etc.). This in no way restricts the subordinate from seeking additional counseling and professional development advice from other sources or mentors. For example: chief master sergeants can serve as mentors to all enlisted personnel who seek their guidance; a senior logistician can provide mentoring services to junior maintenance officers; a senior personnel officer can be a mentor for young personnel officers not necessarily in the same organization. If other than the supervisor, the name of the mentor should be known by the supervisor.

1.3. Mentoring of military and civilian personnel plays an important role in the support of the Air Force and AFMC missions. People are more effective at carrying out the mission when they are professionally prepared to assume the duties and responsibilities inherent in their grade or position. Professional development is not a new concept. It occurs at every echelon and activity.

1.4. The supervisor is crucial to successful mentoring. Several programs exist to help the supervisor focus attention on a subordinate's professional development. Among these are performance feedback, professional military education (PME) programs, academic education assignment policies and oppor-

tunities, recognition programs, and the AFMC Manual individual's own personal development actions. When the supervisor's ability to mentor a subordinate is limited (grade, experience level, personality, geographical separation, etc.) he or she should recommend other options for the subordinate to pursue.

1.5. Mentoring prepares each individual for the specific and general responsibilities he or she may be required to assume during the course of a career. Mentoring is not a promotion enhancement program; it is a professional development program designed to help each individual reach his or her maximum potential.

1.6. Mentoring is more than just career guidance, however. It is also exposure to Air Force history and heritage and air and space power doctrine. Supervisors should encourage subordinates to read and understand air power literature, such as AFM1-1, Volumes 1 and 2, *Basic Aerospace Doctrine of the US Air Force* and biographies of aerospace pioneers.

## 2. Mentoring Responsibilities:

2.1. Mentoring is an inherent responsibility of leadership. Supervisors should know their people and accept personal responsibility for them. They must take an active role in the professional development of the people they supervise by evaluating each subordinate's performance and potential, counseling and advising them on professional development, and serving as positive role models.

2.1.1. Senior leaders need to make themselves available to subordinate personnel who seek their guidance or counsel on matters relating to career and professional development.

2.2. As part of the performance feedback sessions and appraisal reviews, the immediate supervisor could conduct a mentoring session. Supervisors should discuss performance, potential, and professional development plans with their subordinates during performance feedback sessions required by AFI36-2402, *Officer Evaluation System*, for commissioned officers; AFI36-2403, *The Enlisted Evaluation System*, for enlisted personnel; and AFI36-1001, *Managing the Civilian Performance Program*, for civilian employees. (AFI36-401, *Employee Training and Development*, identifies civilian training requirements).

2.2.1. Before conducting a performance feedback/mentoring session, the supervisor should complete a review of the subordinate's duty performance and personnel records to determine the subordinate's current level of professional development. The supervisor should document key aspects of the review and could use the Performance Feedback Worksheet (PFW) format at [Attachment 2](#).

2.2.1.1. For military personnel, the session can be documented on the reverse side of AF Form 724A, **Field Grade Officer Performance Feedback Worksheet**; AF Form 724B, **Company Grade Officer Performance Feedback Worksheet**; AF Form 931, **AB through TSgt Performance Feedback Worksheet**; or AF Form 932, **MSgt through CMSgt Performance Feedback Worksheet**, as appropriate, integrating the mentoring process with the mandatory performance feedback process.

2.2.1.2. For civilian employees, supervisors may use AF Form 971, **Supervisor's Employee Brief**, AFMC Mentoring Worksheet, the appraisal feedback form, or a locally devised professional development worksheet to document the career analysis and professional development plan.

2.2.2. A professional development plan, documented on the PFW, should also address such factors as promotion, career training, PME, academic education (associate's through master's or advanced degrees), physical fitness requirements, personal goals and expectations, professional qualities, next assignment, and long-range plans. The supervisor signs the PFW, provides a copy to the subordinate, and files a copy until at least the next performance report.

2.2.3. Supervisors of officers should carefully study the career path pyramid and career experience matrix found in AFPAM36-2630, *Officer Professional Development Guide*, as it pertains to their subordinates' specific Air Force specialties. Pay particular attention to assignment and job levels as they apply to company grade through more senior field grades. Also, note the technical expertise key on each career experience matrix to determine what leadership opportunities and staff experience are considered mandatory, essential, desired, or optional.

2.2.4. Supervisors of enlisted personnel should carefully review the Career Field Education and Training Plan (CFETP). These plans are filed in AF Form 623, **On-the-Job Training Record**, and contain essential professional development guidance. Each enlisted specialty should have its own CFETP.

2.2.5. Supervisors of civilian personnel should refer to AFI36-1001 when establishing job performance requirements and AFI36-401 when developing civilian career enhancement plans or identifying required training. Civilian personnel enrolled in a civilian career program should follow the recommended career guidance contained in AFMAN36-606, Volume 2, *Air Force Civilian Career Planning*.

2.2.5.1. Civilians not eligible for, nor enrolled in, a career program should determine the specialty and level of desired professional development they wish to pursue. If they wish to work toward a specific career program and grade, the supervisor should help them determine the prerequisites, benefits, and requirements for entry into that career program and begin developmental planning. If they wish to remain within their current career path and compete for more responsible positions, the supervisor should develop a plan which will allow them to become as competitive as possible through technical training programs and education courses.

2.2.5.2. Base civilian personnel offices can advise supervisors on career counseling and qualifications that increase competitiveness within a chosen career field.

2.2.6. In addition to the above tools, the following are available:

2.2.6.1. Career Development Plans

2.2.6.2. Individual Development Plan

2.2.6.3. AF Directive 36-6, *Civilian Career Management*

2.2.6.4. AF Instruction 36-601, *Air Force Civilian Career Program Management*

2.2.6.5. Career Program Training and Development Guide

### **3. PME and Base-Level Professional Development Courses :**

3.1. PME enhances performance in each phase of professional development. PME builds on a foundation of supervisory and leadership abilities shown during the earlier stages of an individual's career. It is the foundation on which future professional development is based. In the final analysis, the appro-

appropriate role of PME in professional development is to provide the right PME at the right time with the right focus.

3.1.1. Base-level professional development consists of such courses as the Lieutenants' Professional Development Program (LPDP), Noncommissioned Officers' Professional Development (NCOPD), and Civilian Professional Development Programs that are self-supported and offered as resources permit and needs dictate.

3.2. The focus for company grade officers and comparable grade civilians should be on developing the skills they need to enhance their professional competence. Therefore, officership and communication skills are paramount and a primary focus of LPDP and Squadron Officer School (SOS), the Air Force's company grade PME courses.

3.2.1. The AFMC LPDP was implemented commandwide to introduce lieutenants to the skills needed for supervising personnel, leading teams and to improve their overall effectiveness. The curriculum's design centers on an interactive approach to teaching interpersonal skills, team building and leadership.

3.2.2. SOS assists in developing company grade officers and civilian equivalents into seasoned professionals capable of increased contributions to varied Air Force missions. It inspires their dedication to the profession of arms by teaching officership values, application, leadership tools and air and space power.

3.3. Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) educates midlevel officer grade personnel and civilian equivalents in doctrine, jointness, the profession of arms, and war fighting at the operational level. Locally conducted seminars usually involve participation by local/visiting senior Air Force managers who provide input from their areas of expertise. ACSC can be taken by correspondence.

3.4. Air War College (AWC) is the senior Air Force PME school. It prepares senior personnel (lieutenant colonels, colonels, and civilian equivalents) to lead in the strategic environment, emphasizing joint operations and the employment of air and space power in support of national security. Locally conducted seminars usually involve participation by local/visiting senior Air Force managers who provide input from their areas of expertise. AWC can be taken by correspondence.

3.5. See AFI36-2301, *Professional Military Education*, for officer and civilian PME information and requirements.

3.6. Enlisted PME and professional development courses focus on developing those skills needed to enhance professional competence and leadership abilities. These skills allow enlisted personnel to perform in positions of increased responsibility.

3.6.1. The importance of enlisted PME is highlighted by the fact that completion of Airman Leadership School (ALS) is a prerequisite to assume the grade of staff sergeant. ALS offers instruction and practice in leadership and followership, written and oral communicative skills, and military citizenship in the Air Force. Students learn to appreciate their role as military supervisors and how they contribute to the overall goals and mission of the Air Force.

3.6.2. Completion of the Noncommissioned Officer Academy (NCOA) in residence is a prerequisite to assume the grade of master sergeant. NCOA offers instruction in the Air Force organization and mission, professional skills, leadership and management, and human behavior. It also includes formal and informal group leadership, management theory, problem-solving techniques, and the supervisor's role in effective communication.

3.6.3. Residence completion from the Air Force Senior NCO Academy (SNCOA) is a prerequisite to assume the grade of Chief Master Sergeant. SNCOA provides the education necessary for senior NCOs to become more effective leaders and managers during peacetime, time of crisis, and conflict. Graduates should approach their assignments with an expanded perspective of the military profession and with broadened leadership and managerial capabilities.

#### **4. Education:**

4.1. Associates, bachelors, masters, or other advanced academic degrees are important to professional development to the extent they enhance the degree holder's job and professional qualifications. A degree directly related to the individual's primary specialty area is the most appropriate because it adds to the depth of experience. An associates, bachelors or advanced degree in management or more general studies would tend to enhance job performance for personnel reaching grade levels where breadth of development begins to take place.

4.2. The Base Education Office can provide information on a wide variety of educational financial assistance programs available to employees. Programs include military/civilian tuition assistance, GI Bills, career program funding, and occupational work force development funding.

#### **5. The Assignment System:**

5.1. The individual's primary focus should be on his or her current assignment. When an individual becomes eligible for reassignment, he or she should then address assignment preferences with the supervisor or a more senior person in the subordinate's career path.

5.2. The focus of the mentor's and individual's efforts should be toward obtaining an assignment that enhances professional development without necessarily keying on a specific position or location.

5.3. AFI36-2110 governs assignment of military personnel. Assignments should complement the individual's professional development needs and be second only to mission requirements. However, some mandatory assignments may temporarily sidetrack an individual from his or her planned career path.

5.3.1. For officer professional development assignments, see AFPAM36-2630 for career path guides. This pamphlet also provides requirements and expectations in a subordinate's particular career specialty.

5.3.2. For enlisted professional development assignments, review the CFETP. It will help you to better understand the professional development requirements and expectations in a subordinate's particular career specialty.

5.4. For civilians, registration in most career programs requires the signing of a mobility agreement. Each career program registrant is encouraged to keep current their geographic location preferences. Civilians are also encouraged to broaden their career paths and be available for Air Force-wide assignments.

**6. Professional Organizations and Associations.** See [Attachment 3](#) for a partial list of organizations that support military and civilian segments of the population.

**7. AFMC Mentoring Worksheet.** Recommend use of the AFMC Mentor Worksheet ([Attachment 2](#)), the military performance worksheet, or a locally produced document which contains, at a minimum, the categories located on the AFMC Mentor Worksheet.

STEVE N. SMITH  
Director, Personnel

**Attachment 1****GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES, AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

AFI 36-401, *Employee Training and Development*  
AFMAN 36-606, Volume 2, *Air Force Civilians Career Planning*  
AFI 36-1001, *Managing the Civilian Performance Program*  
AFI 36-2110, *Assignments*  
AFI 36-2301, *Professional Military Education*  
AFI 36-2402, *Officer Evaluation System*  
AFI 36-2403, *The Enlisted Evaluation System*  
AFPD 36-25, *Military Promotion and Demotion*  
AFI 36-2502, *Airman Promotion Program*  
AFPAM 36-2630, *Officer Professional Development Guide*  
AFI 36-2803, *The Air Force Awards and Decorations Program*  
AFI 36-2805, *Special Trophies and Awards*  
AFI 36-3401, *Air Force Mentoring*  
AFM 1-1, Volumes 1 and 2, *Basic Aerospace Doctrine of the US Air Force*

***Abbreviations and Acronyms***

**ACSC**—Air Command and Staff College  
**ALS**—Airman Leadership School  
**AWC**—Air War College  
**CFETP**—Career Field Education and Training Plan  
**LPDP**—Lieutenants' Professional Development Program  
**NCOA**—Noncommissioned Officer Academy  
**PME**—Professional Military Education  
**SNCOA**—Senior NCO Academy  
**SOS**—Squadron Officer School

**Attachment 2**

**AFMC MENTOR WORKSHEET**

Name: Rank/Grade: Mentor:

SSN:

AFSC/Series: Org: Office Symbol: Phone:

Position Title:

Required Certifications:

Current Certifications Held:

Education Level Major: Yr. Degree:

PME Completed:

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**PROFESSIONAL GOALS**

Short-Term Goals:

Long-Term Goals:

Training Required:

Education:

PME:

Development Assignments:

Self Development:

Comments:

_____	_____	_____	_____
Mentor	Date	Employee	Date

_____	_____
Signature	Signature

**Attachment 3****PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS**

There are several organizations and associations that were founded to support various segments of the military or civil service population. The following is a list of some of these organizations. It is provided for information only and cannot be considered an endorsement of their activities by the US Air Force.