



## **INSTITUTIONAL COMPETENCIES**

Last Updated: 15 December 2014

[Core values](#) are the ultimate starting point for service. [Airmen](#) subsequently require a means to build their capabilities that will support the needs of the Air Force. These means are known as competencies. To develop the capabilities of Airmen, the Air Force uses a systematic competency-based approach to develop a force capable of providing decisive effects, integrate the [total force](#), and increase the agility of the Service.

Competencies are attributes an individual possesses to successfully and consistently perform a given task, under specified conditions, or meeting a defined standard of performance. This enables Airmen to perform their jobs and contribute to the overall success of the Air Force. Competencies influence human performance and have a subsequent impact on mission and organizational success.

Institutional competencies prepare Airmen to operate successfully across the widest array of Air Force tasks and requirements. These competencies provide a common language and a set of priorities for consistency across the Air Force. The Air Force's institutional competencies are key to ensuring the ability of Airmen to operate successfully in a constantly changing operational environment. They are broadly applicable and span all occupations, functions, and organizational levels. These competencies place the institutional responsibilities into a context of how the individual should be developed and form the framework for force development in the Air Force. The [institutional competency list](#) consists of 8 competencies and 25 sub-competencies. They are grouped into three categories: personal, people/team, and organizational.

Personal competencies are those competencies needed in face-to-face and interpersonal relationships that directly influence human behavior and values. They are essential for individual contribution, for building cohesive units, and for empowering immediate subordinates.

People/Team competencies involve more interpersonal and team relationships. They represent competencies that, when combined with the personal competencies, are essential as Airmen's responsibilities are increased.

Organizational competencies represent those applicable at all levels of the Air Force but are most in demand at the strategic level. Effective organizational competency skills

include technical competence on force structure and integration; on unified, joint, multinational, and interagency operations; on resource allocation; and on management of complex systems. In addition, they apply to conceptual competence in creating policy, vision, and interpersonal skills emphasizing consensus building and influencing peers and other policy makers, both internal and external to the organization.

## **Institutional Competency Proficiency Levels**

Institutional competencies are learned and refined through education, training, and experience. By continuously developing institutional competencies as people assume greater responsibility in the organization, the Air Force is able to execute and sustain the full spectrum of [airpower](#).

Although all Airmen execute institutional competencies, there is variation in terms of proficiency levels across ranks, positions, and grades. Airmen are educated in these competencies over the course of their careers.

An Airman's understanding of the subcompetencies varies based on where the Airman is in his or her career. Each subcompetency contains five levels of proficiency, defined below:

- ★ **Basic** – Airmen are focused on learning and developing a foundation skill set. They face similar challenges, have limited responsibilities, and are given narrowly focused tasks.
- ★ **Intermediate** – Airmen continue to learn and develop professional skills, understand how to leverage other professionals and knowledge sources, and begin to apply knowledge of the assigned objectives to their work.
- ★ **Proficient** – Airmen leverage knowledge of issues and objectives to design and develop solutions. They understand how actions taken in one area of competence impact other related areas, and establish and manage the scope and quality of those areas of an assignment for which they are responsible. They may manage complex organizations.
- ★ **Skilled** – Airmen leverage knowledge of strategies and issues to develop, present, and implement solutions. They consult with other subject matter experts and have a deep understanding how actions taken in one area of competence impact other related areas within proposed solutions. They contribute to the development of new levels of capabilities by articulating the added value of proposed solutions to leadership and staff and are considered subject matter experts within their organizational area. In addition, they may manage large, complex multi-tiered organizations.
- ★ **Advanced** – Airmen impact the organization and the Air Force by leveraging their knowledge and expertise across the theater to identify and address the critical

success factors for complex areas. They apply knowledge of the strategic alignment of solutions with Air Force mission objectives and serve as recognized subject matter experts inside and outside their own organizations and represent the Air Force to external organizations. In addition, they may manage large, complex multi-tiered organizations.

Each subcompetency has descriptive behaviors that dictate the performance action to be exhibited for its five proficiency levels. Due to education, training, and experience, as Airmen progress through their careers, their understanding of the subcompetency grows and their behaviors shift from “Basic” toward “Advanced.” The figure, Sample of Descriptive Behavior Proficiency Levels, provides an example of the descriptive behaviors in the proficiency levels for the subcompetency of Ethical Leadership. See AFMAN 36-2647, [Institutional Competency Development and Management](#). For a comprehensive explanation of professionalism, see Volume 2, [Leadership](#).

### Institutional Competency Assessment Strategy

		Subcompetency: Ethical Leadership		
Basic	Intermediate	Proficient	Skilled	Advanced
Describes Air Force policies, procedures, and core values regarding ethical leadership.	Commits to and follows Air Force accepted codes of conduct and ethical principles (deals with people in an honest and forthright manner; represents information and data accurately and completely).	Models ethical leadership behaviors with others in a way that gives them confidence in one’s intentions and those of the organization.	Assesses, promotes, and recognizes ethical leadership behaviors that reinforce Air Force values.	Formulates, evaluates, monitors, and enforces Air Force ethics policies and procedures.

#### Sample of Descriptive Behavior Proficiency Levels

Measurement of education, training, and experience is a critical part of the force development process. Therefore, competency assessment should lead to more effective management of performance, which encompasses the force development process.

The competency assessment initiative should provide feedback on how well the Institutional Competency Developmental Programs’ (military education and training schools/institutions) curricula and course content are aligned with the institutional competencies and how well the programs are helping students to perform the prescribed enterprise competencies. Some of the benefits of assessing the institutional competencies are:

- ✦ Ensuring institutional competencies are delivered as designed by the descriptive behaviors at the appropriate proficiency levels.
- ✦ Identifying gaps that could exist in the execution of the institutional competencies allowing opportunity for improvement.
- ✦ Improving outcome results of the institutional competency process.

Institutional competencies are used to develop and assess Airmen for the needs of the Air Force. They assist in communicating desired behaviors at the appropriate performance level, control costs, and increase productivity. Assessing the institutional competencies is a critical component of the [force development construct](#) employed by the Air Force. See [AFMAN 36-2647](#) and AFI 36-2301, [Developmental Education](#).

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