

**BY ORDER OF THE COMMANDER  
AIR FORCE MATERIEL COMMAND**

**AIR FORCE MATERIEL COMMAND  
INSTRUCTION 61-103**



**17 AUGUST 2016**

***Scientific/Research, and Development***

***AFMC PROCESS FOR PROVIDING  
STRATEGIC STUDY TOPICS TO  
EXTERNAL STUDY BOARDS***

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OPR: HQ AFMC/A9AQ

Certified by: HQ AFMC/A9A  
(GS-15 Richard A. Moore)

Supersedes: AFMCI61-103, 27 June 2013

Pages: 5

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This instruction implements guidance from AFPD 61-1, *Scientific Research and Development* to provide detailed operating procedures for the Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC) Process for Providing Strategic Study Topics to External Study Boards. The operating instruction codifies the process and timeline for eliciting, prioritizing and vetting strategic study topics from AFMC Directors and AFMC Center Commanders to support each of the five major study boards. This publication applies to individuals at all levels of AFMC, but does not apply to the Air National Guard (ANG) and the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) and their units.

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## ***SUMMARY OF CHANGES***

This rewrite of AFMCI 61-103 is in response to process improvements, reorganizations, and AFMC Strategic Plan Objective 1-01 effort. It updates and clarifies External Study Board contacts, timelines for Study Topic calls, and website locations for Study Topic input.

### **1. Role of the AFMC External Study Boards Process.**

1.1. The primary objective of the external study board process is to provide AFMC's highest priority strategic study requirements to external study boards. Secondary objectives include minimizing workload, eliminating redundant study requirements and providing feedback to study submitters on the adjudication of their submission.

#### 1.2. Definition of Major Study Boards:

1.2.1. Air Force Studies Board (AFSB) – The AFSB serves as a convening authority for the discussion of a wide-range of strategic level topics related to defense, intelligence, national security, space, and aerospace. In collaboration with Air Force leadership, the board develops studies related to the development and application of science and technology. The AFSB study selection and prioritization of topics are managed by SAF/AQR.

1.2.2. Air Force Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) – The SAB is a Federal Advisory Committee that provides independent advice on matters of critical science and technology issues, challenges relevant to current and near-term AF needs, and maintaining our 'technical dominance' of air, space and cyberspace. The SAB study and selection process is managed by the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force.

1.2.3. RAND Project Air Force (PAF) – PAF's mission is to conduct an integrated program of objective analysis on issues of enduring concern to Air Force leaders by addressing far-reaching and interrelated questions. HAF/A9 manages and allocates studies to RAND.

1.2.4. Air University (AU) – AU conducts independent research, outreach and engagement that contribute ideas for enhancing national security and assuring the continuing effectiveness of the USAF. AU solicits, manages, and provides AU researchers with topics useful to decision makers and those representing sponsors' needs.

1.2.5. Defense Science Board (DSB) – The DSB is chartered to provide independent advice and recommendations on matters relating to the DoD scientific and technical enterprise in order to develop and strengthen the department's research and development strategies for the 21st Century. The DSB works with the Secretary of Defense, the Under Secretary of Defense Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (USD (AT&L)), and the Department of Defense Research and Engineering Enterprise.

1.3. The process will also provide study topics for consideration by HQ AFMC/A9A, whose mission is to conduct rigorous, critical, and objective analysis to inform the decisions of the AFMC Commander and Agile Combat Support Core Function Lead Integrator. More information on each board can be found on the HQ AFMC/A9A website: <https://org.eis.afmc.af.mil/sites/HQAFMCA25/A9A/AFMC%20Study%20Topics/Forms/AllItems.aspx>. The information can be found on the study board description tab located within the AFMC Study Topics spreadsheet.

## **2. Responsibilities.**

### 2.1. AFMC/CA

2.1.1. Solicits topics from HQ AFMC Directors and AFMC Center Commanders for all five major boards and HQ AFMC/A9A study consideration.

### 2.2. HQ AFMC Directors and AFMC Center Commanders.

2.2.1. Reviews previously conducted and requested studies.

2.2.2. Identifies and prioritizes new strategic study topics.

2.2.3. Submits topics annually to HQ AFMC/A9A by deadline specified in the strategic study topics data call.

### 2.3. HQ AFMC/A9A

2.3.1. Collates and prioritizes proposed topics based on level of interest, direct impact, probability of study success, and alignment with study boards.

2.3.2. Vets proposed prioritized topic lists through AFMC 2-Ltrs and Centers for AFMC/CC approval.

2.3.3. Maintains Master Study List, records/identifies received and approved topics.

## **3. How the AFMC External Study Boards Process Works.**

3.1. Each year in December, AFMC/CA will issue a strategic study topics data call, via e-mail and SOCCER, to all HQ AFMC Directors and AFMC Center Commanders. The purpose of the call is to gather AFMC strategic study requirements. Study topics are due to HQ AFMC/A9A by the deadline specified in the strategic study topics data call. The study topic requirements will be submitted in accordance with a template developed by HQ AFMC/A9A which will include study title, description, submitter, and general officer sponsor.

3.2. Study submitters will review previously conducted and requested studies to inform the identification of new study requirements. They will also prioritize their study requests and identify the preferred study board to conduct the study.

3.3. HQ AFMC/A9A will collate and prioritize the topics pertaining to each of the five major study boards. The prioritization criteria will reflect HAF/A9's Research Plan prioritization model, aligned with senior leadership emphasis. Individual topics will typically be prioritized according to analytically tractable attributes and contribution to Air Force objectives. HQ AFMC/A9A will recommend the top topics for each of the study boards, and vet them through the AFMC 2-Ltr directorates and Centers for coordination. After HQ AFMC/A9A topic selection and AFMC Directors and AFMC Center Commanders coordination, HQ AFMC/A9A will prepare and staff the package for AFMC/CC approval. HQ AFMC/A9A will also facilitate the submission of the study topics to the points of contact for the study boards. Once topics are submitted, the decision to accept/conduct a study resides with the board and/or their AF points of contact.

3.4. Below is a more specific breakout of timeline and process for each study board:

3.4.1. The AFSB topic review occurs annually during the March/April time frame. HQ AFMC/A9A facilitates the submission of the AFSB topics approved by AFMC/CC to AFSB and SAF/AQR. SAF/AQR prioritizes, selects and gives direction on topics selected for AFSB study.

3.4.2. The SAB call occurs annually during the January/February time frame. HQ AFMC/A9A facilitates the submission of the SAB topics approved by AFMC/CC to the SAB. SAB selects the “finalists” from topics submitted from across the AF. AFMC-related “finalist” topics are prioritized and staffed for AFMC/CC approval. HQ AFMC/A9A facilitates the final submission back to the SAB, who typically selects 3-5 topics from across the AF.

3.4.3. RAND’s call for topics occurs annually during the March/April timeframe. HQ AFMC/A9A facilitates the submission of the RAND topics approved by AFMC/CC to RAND. RAND works directly with AFMC General Officers to refine the list. The prioritized topics are sent to AFMC 2-Ltr directorates and Centers for coordination then to AFMC/CC for approval. Once approved, the list is forwarded to AF/A9 who works with all MAJCOMs to develop an integrated priority list for the AF. AF/A9 also facilitates prioritization deliberations for the RAND PAF Working Group and Steering Group, with the latter being chaired by VCSAF.

3.4.4. The AU call for topics occurs during the May/June time frame. HQ AFMC/A9A facilitates the submission of all topics, not already selected, that fit into one of the six AU tracks. The six tracks include profession of arms, military studies, international security studies, leadership studies, communication studies, and warfare studies. The topics are sent to graduate students assigned to AU for review and selection of topics of interest. Upon completion of the student’s study, the student submits the completed paper to the organization requesting the study. Once the AFMC organization receives the research paper, the organization will provide feedback of the usefulness of the results to AU.

3.4.5. The DSB call is more sporadic, and it typically does not occur annually. When it does occur, HQ AFMC/A9A facilitates the submission of the DSB topics approved by AFMC/CC to the DSB.

3.5. HQ AFMC/A9A will maintain a master study list on the HQ AFMC/A9A website, located at <https://org.eis.afmc.af.mil/sites/HQAFMCA25/A9A/AFMC%20Study%20Topics/Forms/AllItems.aspx>, identifying all submitted topics and the results of their adjudication through AFMC staffing and AFMC/CC approval.

Michael T. Brewer, Major General, USAF  
Director, Strategic Plans, Programs, Requirements  
& Analyses

**Attachment 1**

**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

***References***

AFMAN 33-363, *Management of Records*

AFMC Strategic Plan Objective 1-01, *AFMC Barrier to Agility*

***Adopted Forms***

AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*

***Abbreviations and Acronyms***

**AFMC**—Air Force Materiel Command

**SAB**—Scientific Advisory Board

**AFSB**—Air Force Studies Board

**AU**—Air University

**DSB**—Defense Sciences Board

**PAF**—Project Air Force

**USD (AT&L)**—Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology & Logistics