

**BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY  
OF THE AIR FORCE**

**AIR FORCE MISSION DIRECTIVE 12**

**16 JANUARY 2025**



**Personnel**

**UNITED STATES AIR  
FORCE ACADEMY (USFA)**

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OPR: AF/A1PT

Certified by: SAF/MR

Supersedes: AFMD12, 21 June 2023

Pages: 5

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This mission directive provides general guidance about the mission and assigned duties of the United States Air Force Academy consistent with the statutory authority granted to Superintendent in Title 10, United States Code, Sections 9431-9434, *Establishment; Superintendent; faculty*, the authority delegated to the Secretary of the Air Force in Department of Defense Instruction 1322.22, *Military Service Academies*, Department of the Air Force Policy Directive 36-35, *United States Air Force Academy*, Department of the Air Force Manual 36-2032, *Military Recruiting and Accessions*, and Department of the Air Force Instruction 36-3501, *United States Air Force Academy Operations*. This organization is a Direct Reporting Unit of the United States Air Force. Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the office of primary responsibility using the Department of Air Force Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*; route Department of Air Force Forms 847 from the field through the appropriate functional chain of command. Ensure all records generated as a result of processes prescribed in this publication adhere to Air Force Instruction 33-322, *Records Management and Information Governance Program*, and are disposed in accordance with the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule, which is located in the Air Force Records Information Management System.

**SUMMARY OF CHANGES**

This document has been substantially revised and must be reviewed in its entirety. This version amends the mission, highlights priorities, reinforces cadet ownership of culture and climate, and updates Superintendent's responsibilities.

**1. Mission.** The mission of the United States Air Force Academy is to forge leaders of character, motivated to a lifetime of service, and developed to lead our Air Force and Space Force as we fight and win our Nation's wars. The Academy offers an elite college experience with developmental military, academic, and athletic programs that produce officers prepared to lead warfighters in technically complex combat environments. The Academy commissions cadets who are reflective of the best and brightest young Americans from across our great nation and who have demonstrated the character, aptitude, and intellectual rigor required to serve with distinction as officers in the United States Air Force and United States Space Force.

**2. Command.**

2.1. The Secretary of the Air Force will ensure that the United States Air Force Academy is a recognized elite academic institution that produces the highest quality Air Force and Space Force officers consistent with the expectations of the Department of Defense as outlined in Department of Defense Instruction 1322.

2.2. The United States Air Force Academy is assigned to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force who serves as the direct superior to the United States Air Force Academy Superintendent as directed by Department of the Air Force Policy Directive 36-35.

2.3. The Chief of Staff of the Air Force coordinates with the Chief of Space Operations before directing major changes to the United States Air Force Academy. The Chief of Staff of the Air Force also coordinates with the Chief of Space Operations regarding any significant events affecting Space Force assets and future accessions.

2.4. The Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs is responsible for staff oversight and support of the United States Air Force Academy per Department of the Air Force Policy Directive 36-35.

2.5. The Superintendent, United States Air Force Academy:

2.5.1. Implements Secretary of the Air Force policy.

2.5.2. Reports directly to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, with consultation to the Chief of Space Operations as appropriate.

2.5.3. Exercises administrative control over assigned personnel, including cadets and preparatory school cadet candidates.

2.5.4. Exercises military command, control, and governance over the United States Air Force Academy and the United States Air Force Academy reservation in accordance with Department of the Air Force Instruction 36-3501. Is the decision authority for all internal governing bodies unless such authority is further delegated.

2.5.5. Appoints an Academy Board which advises the Superintendent, USAFA on all matters concerning the academic aspects of the academic, military, physical, and character development programs at USAFA (including standards); cadet performance evaluations in the academic, military, physical, and character development programs; and graduation and reappointment requirements. The Academy Board also carries out the duties prescribed by 10 U.S.C. § 9451.

2.5.6. Serves as the General Court-Martial Convening Authority for assigned personnel including cadets, preparatory school cadet candidates, and permanent party at United States Air Force Academy.

2.5.7. Organizes, trains, and equips assigned forces to develop and produce warfighters of character immediately prepared to lead upon commissioning.

2.5.8. Serves as the President of an accredited, undergraduate institution of higher education, authorized to confer Bachelor of Science degrees.

2.5.9. May serve as a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association Board of Directors or the Board of Directors of any athletic conference where United States Air Force Academy is a member. The Superintendent is authorized to participate in the management and direction of the conference(s) consistent with Title 10, United States Code, Section 1033, Participation in management of specified non-Federal entities: authorized activities, and the 65 Federal Register 14255 (16 March 2000).

2.5.10. Keeps the Secretary of the Air Force, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and Chief of Space Operations informed on matters of concern.

2.5.11. Annually commissions officers into the Air Force and Space Force.

**3. Responsibilities.** The United States Air Force Academy will develop, graduate, and commission cadets consistent with the following goals, practices, and policies:

3.1. **Leadership:** Instill holistic leadership skills, airmindedness, space mindedness, and cyber mindedness in all cadets, developing them to become Warfighters to Win, Leaders of Character and Quality, and Critical Thinkers to Adapt.

3.1.1. Align cadet leadership structures and responsibilities with Department of the Air Force roles, holding cadets accountable for fostering an appropriate culture and climate in the Cadet Wing.

3.1.2. Empower cadets with increased responsibility to exercise their leadership skills over their teams, and hold cadets accountable for results. Provide feedback to help cadets learn from successes and failures. Ensure cadets understand that as officers, they will be expected to take responsibility for adherence to standards, performance, and well-being of the Airmen and Guardians they will lead and work beside.

3.1.3. Develop cadets through a four-class development system, establishing responsibilities and accountability for all cadet classes, focused on maturing levels of leadership throughout the cadet experience.

3.1.3.1. New cadets will initially experience a Basic Military Training-like environment their first summer and undergo summer training programs with the operational forces of the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Space Force thereafter.

3.1.3.2. Upon completion of their summer training, cadets will begin a progression centered on developing a Cadet Fourth Class as a Teammate/Follower, a Cadet Third Class as a Front-line Engaged Supervisor, a Cadet Second Class as a Team Leader, and a Cadet First Class as a Unit Leader. Align appropriate roles and responsibilities commensurate to class year and documented skill set.

3.1.4. Provide a leadership laboratory to teach cadets values-driven leadership through the practice of enforcing standards, conduct, stewardship, and their individual roles and responsibilities.

3.1.5. Recognize the accomplishments of each cadet class as it moves through the four-year leader development program.

3.1.6. Create experiential cadet training opportunities that introduce regulated challenges (e.g. fog of war) to develop the leadership and resiliency required to lead themselves and their teams through adversity, especially in combat environments.

3.1.7. Develop cadets as leaders who understand and can foster organizational cultures that value each member's contribution, in which all members are treated with respect, and which maximize overall organizational performance.

3.2. **Academics:** Provide an exceptional education through accredited Bachelor of Science degree program that produces intellectually developed leaders for the Department of the Air Force.

3.2.1. Instill in cadets the intellectual curiosity, innovative spirit, and desire for self-improvement that are hallmarks of critical thinkers.

3.2.2. Develop a core curriculum with a strong foundation in warfighting requirements, science, technology, mathematics, and engineering, complemented by a foundation in the social sciences and humanities. Educate cadets on the history of warfare, with an emphasis on air, space, and cyber warfare as well as modern warfare.

3.2.3. Offer a range of rigorous academic majors and seek to graduate more than half of each class with degrees in engineering, science, technology, or math.

3.2.4. Conduct cadet research and all associated academic activities to ensure research opportunities worthy of an elite undergraduate institution.

3.2.5. Partner with Department of Defense customers, industry, other academic institutions, Air University, Air Staff and Space Staff stakeholders, and the Air Force Research Laboratory to ensure that cadet research is operationally relevant and intellectually challenging.

3.3. **Fitness:** Maintain an intensive holistic fitness program to enhance cadets' physical ability, stamina, and mental toughness through physical fitness, education, and training.

3.3.1. Hold cadets to high standards of physical fitness and teach them to take ownership of their mental, physical, spiritual, and social well-being.

3.3.2. Foster excellence and leadership through competition, challenging cadets with intercollegiate, club, and intramural competitive opportunities, both as individuals and as teammates. Competitive activities should develop a desire to strive for excellence and continued improvement, while honing team leadership and followership skills.

3.4. **Professionalism:** Ensure a rigorous military training program (basic military training, air, space and cyber training) to educate cadets on the basic concepts of warfighting, ensuring that upon commissioning they are qualified and certified in Department of the Air Force readiness tasks.

3.4.1. Instill commitment to and respect for honorable conduct and the Air Force and Space Force core values. Support a cadet led honor system that enforces personal integrity based on the commitment by all cadets that “We will not lie, steal, or cheat, nor tolerate among us anyone who does.”

3.4.2. Maintain traditions that foster professional behaviors and preserve the heritage of the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Space Force while eliminating those traditions and practices that are inconsistent with professional conduct.

3.4.3. Develop cadet appreciation and understanding of Air Force and Space Force operations in the context of the Joint Force.

3.4.4. Develop programs to motivate cadets for operational careers through participation in aviation, space, and cyber experiences.

3.5. **Commissioning:** Commission Second Lieutenants into the United States Air Force and United States Space Force in accordance with Department of the Air Force guidance and direction.

Frank Kendall  
Secretary of the Air Force