

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

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



**1 OCTOBER 2020**

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

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

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This instruction implements guidance from AFD 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. This publication may not be supplemented. Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the OPR listed above using the AF Form 847, Recommendation for Change of Publication; route AF Forms 847 from the field through the appropriate functional chain of command. Submit requests for waivers through the chain of command to this Publication OPR for non-tiered compliance items. Ensure that all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with (IAW) AFI 33-322, Records Management and Information Governance Program, and disposed of IAW Air Force Records Information Management System (AFRIMS) Records Disposition Schedule (RDS). The authorities to waive wing, and unit level requirements in this publication are identified with a tier number (“T-0, T-1, T-2, T-3”) following the compliance statement. See DAFI 33-360, Publications and Forms Management, for a description of the authorities associated with the Tier numbers. Submit requests for waivers through the chain of command to the appropriate waiver approval authority, through the

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### ***SUMMARY OF CHANGES***

This rewrite of AFMCI61-103 is in response to process improvements and reorganizations. It updates and clarifies External Study Board contacts and timelines for Study Topic calls.

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## **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 which meet sponsor needs and aid decision making.

1.2.5. Defense Acquisition University (DAU) – DAU provides acquisition training to ACQ-coded Air Force personnel. DAU also conducts studies and analysis to support

AFMC organizations. DAU students need high impact topics to conduct work on, so they have solicited topics from AFMC's study call.

1.2.6. Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) – AFIT educates Air Force personnel across all commands. Students at AFIT are responsible for conducting thesis and capstones supporting Air Force issues.

1.3. The process provides study topics for consideration by AFMC/A9A, whose mission is to conduct rigorous, critical, and objective analysis to inform the decisions of the AFMC Commander.

## **2. Responsibilities.**

### 2.1. AFMC/CD

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

### 2.2. 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 AFMC/A9A by deadline specified in the strategic study topics data call.

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

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

3.3. AFMC/A9A then collates and prioritizes topics pertaining to each of the six major study boards. The prioritization criteria reflects HAF/A9's Research Plan prioritization model, aligned with senior leadership emphasis. Individual topics are typically prioritized according to analytically tractable attributes and contribution to Air Force objectives. AFMC/A9A recommends the top topics for each of the study boards and vets them through the AFMC 2-Ltr directorates and Centers for coordination. After AFMC/A9A topic selection and AFMC

Directors and Center Commanders coordination, AFMC/A9A should prepare and staff the package for AFMC/CC approval. AFMC/A9A should 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 detailed breakout of timeline and process for specific study boards:

3.4.1. RAND's call for topics occurs annually during the February/March timeframe. 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.

3.4.2. The SAB call occurs annually during the early March time frame. 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. AFMC/A9A facilitates the final submission back to the SAB, who typically selects 3-5 topics from across the AF.

3.4.3. AFMC/A9A should submit the remaining topics to the 5 other boards in February. Boards should notify the submitting office directly if a topic has been selected for study.

3.5. AFMC/A9A should maintain a master study list identifying all submitted topics and the results of their adjudication through AFMC staffing and AFMC/CC approval.

DONNA D. SHIPTON, Major General, USAF  
Director, Strategic Plans, Programs,  
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**Attachment 1**

**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

***References***

DAFI33-360, Publications and Forms Management, 15 Dec 2018

AFI 33-322, *Records Management and Information Governance Program*, 22 March 2020

***Abbreviations and Acronyms***

**AFIT**—Air Force Institute of Technology

**AFMC**—Air Force Materiel Command

**AFSB**—Air Force Studies Board

**AU**—Air University

**DAFI**—Department of the Air Force Instruction

**DAU**—Defense Acquisition University

**PAF**—Project Air Force

**SAB**—Scientific Advisory Board