

Squadron Commander Discussion Guide

Developed by the Air University Global College

As the unit commander (or equivalent), you must actively identify, select, and deliberately develop promising professionals capable of leading as flight commanders/leaders. The selection and development process is an essential part of building an inspiring leadership team focused on caring for people and accomplishing the mission. Integral to the development of this crucial leadership role is for you to articulate your expectations for flight commanders/leaders and for their teams. Additionally, you must clarify how meeting the prescribed expectations will contribute to successful mission accomplishment. This document provides guidance on how to conduct the *Flight Commander Leadership Course's* requirement for the attendee to meet with his/her unit commander (or equivalent) to complete pre-course and post-course discussions.

Guidelines

Flight commanders/leaders selected to attend the *Flight Commander Leadership Course* (FCLC) must conduct a pre-course and post-course discussion with their commander (or equivalent). These discussions are mandatory requirements for course completion. The following guidelines will help the commander prepare for and conduct each discussion session.

Pre-Course Discussion

Before the first day of FCLC, the flight commander must request a two-way interactive (in person, telephonic, Skype, Teams, etc.) discussion with their squadron commander (or equivalent). The discussion provides an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between two key leadership team members. *The flight commander has been provided questions and should initiate most topics within the discussion.* The flight commander's questions should provide an opportunity for the squadron commander to share the organization's mission/vision, expectations, and goals for how the flight commander/leader and his/her team will contribute to mission accomplishment.

During the FCLC lessons, flight commanders/leaders will share their organizational mission/vision and the commander's expectations with their classmates. The pre-course discussion will prepare the participants to engage in various course discussions.

Below are areas on which the flight commander/leader should focus during the discussion:

Mission/Vision: Describing the who, what, and how of the mission is crucial. The commander must also devote his/her attention to explaining the "why" for the mission/vision. Explain the organizational story in such a way that the flight commander can convey the who, what, how, and *why* for the mission/vision succinctly to his/her team.

Note: Participants will also require a hardcopy of the organization's mission and vision (if any) for use during in-course exercises.

Organizational Expectations: The flight commander/leader should solicit your expectations and goals for the flight commander and the flight. Make a concerted effort not to end the discussion without having agreed on expectations (reach concurrence).

Strengths. The flight commander/leader should solicit what you see as his/her top strengths and whether you have any recommendations or noticed any opportunities for improvement.

Note: If the leader does not report directly to you, direct the member to obtain this information on strengths and opportunities from his/her immediate supervisor or rating official.

(Optional) The commander should share his/her leadership philosophy. Encourage the flight commander/leader to develop their personal leadership philosophy and share it with their team.

Post-Course Discussion

The flight commander must request a two-way interactive (in person, telephonic, Skype, Teams, etc.) discussion with their squadron commander (or equivalent) following the completion of the Flight Commander Leadership Course. This post-course discussion is required for course completion. *Commanders are responsible for presenting each of their unit's course attendees with their certificate of completion.*

Below are recommended focus areas for the discussion:

Professional Development Plan (PDP): Reviewing and discussing the PDP with the flight commander is the primary focus of the meeting. The PDP provides the flight commander an opportunity to identify specific goals, develop action plans, and chart timelines for achieving those goals.

The flight commander is responsible for providing the commander a copy of his/her completed PDP prior to the scheduled meeting. Recommend squadron commanders establish a process that specifies a format (i.e., electronic or hardcopy) and a deadline for turn-in. The squadron commander should review the document prior to the discussion.

Note: See attachment for the instructions provided to the flight commander for completing the PDP.

Revisit Pre-course Discussion Topics: Review the following areas from your pre-course discussion:

Mission/Vision: Have the flight commander/leader express the organization's mission/vision and how his/her team fits into it.

Organizational Expectations: Have the flight commander/leader recap some of the expectations you conveyed in the pre-course meeting and explain how they plan on meeting them. Make a concerted effort not to depart without having agreed on expectations (reach concurrence).

Flight Commander Leadership Course Feedback: Ask the member for highlights from the course.

Proposed questions:

1. What aspects of the class do you feel better prepared you for your role as a flight commander/leader?
2. How can we better prepare future attendees before attending the course?
3. What are some other possible education and training tools that might aid you in your role as a flight commander/leader?

Suggested publications to review: available on the Department of the Air Force E-Publishing site: (copy and paste into your browser: <https://www.e-publishing.af.mil/Product-Index/>)

- Air Force Policy Directive 1, *Air Force Culture*
- Air Force Instruction 1-1, *Air Force Standards*
- Air Force Instruction 1-2, *Commander's Responsibilities*