

# Flight Commander Discussion Guide

*Developed by the Global College of PME*

*A good leader sets goals, measures progress, and rewards performance.  
He or she tries to give everyone a stake in the mission  
of the organization and its outcomes.  
That's the role of leadership.*

- General John M. Loh, USAF (Retired)

Commanders/leaders at all levels have a responsibility to clearly outline their expectations, and how those expectations contribute to mission success. Your task is to set up an appointment to meet with your commander (or equivalent) to discuss his or her expectations for you and your team. Your conversation should focus on understanding how you and your team fit into the organization's vision and mission. The information you glean from your dialogue will prove helpful as you perform your roles and responsibilities and set goals for your flight command tenure.

## Guidelines

As part of the course requirements, you will conduct a pre-course and post-course discussion with your commander (or equivalent). The following provides guidelines for conducting each discussion.

### Pre-Course Discussion

Conduct a two-way interactive (in person, telephonic, Skype, etc.,) discussion with your squadron commander (or equivalent). Focus on the discussion areas below that will arise during the Flight Commander Leadership Course. These will enhance your ability to conduct your roles and responsibilities during your flight commander tenure.

**Note:** Do your homework prior to the discussion. Talk with other flight leaders and members about the topics below before meeting with your commander.

Mission/Vision: Integral to your team and your success is the alignment of your perceptions of the organization's vision and mission with that of your commander (or equivalent). Ask your commander to provide his/her description of the unit's vision and mission. Pay close attention to areas where your perceptions of the unit's vision and mission align and/or misalign with those of the commander. Make sure to ask for clarification on any misalignments.

Also, obtain a copy of your unit's mission and vision statements (if any) for use during the course.

Organizational Expectations: Your discussion should provide you with the commander's expectations for you and your team. Make a concerted effort not to depart without having agreed on expectations (reach concurrence).

The following questions will prove helpful during the discussion:

1. How would you describe the unit's mission/vision?
2. What are your expectations of and goals for me as a flight commander?
3. How do I contribute to accomplishing the mission and goals of the unit?
4. How does my team contribute to accomplishing the mission and goals of the unit?

**Strengths.** Transition from a focus on the organization and team, to more of a personal focus by asking what your commander sees as your top strengths and whether he or she notices any opportunities for improvement.

**Note:** If you do not directly report to your squadron commander, obtain this information on strengths and opportunities from your immediate supervisor or rating official.

**Reflection/Introspection.** After the discussion and before you attend the Flight Commander Leadership Course, take time to stop, think, and reflect. Consider how the information you learned from the discussion will shape how you execute your roles and responsibilities, solidify your team's mission and vision, and help your team master skills for effective mission accomplishment. If you find that you need clarification, schedule follow-on discussions with your commander and/or other individuals with experience in the particular topic.

## Post-Course Discussion

Conduct a two-way interactive (in person, telephonic, Skype, Teams, etc.,) discussion with your commander (or equivalent) following the completion of the FCLC. Below are focus areas for the discussion:

**Professional Development Plan (PDP):** After you have had the time to finalize and reflect on your PDP (part of the final lesson of the Flight Commander Leadership Course), schedule a post-course discussion with your commander. *You cannot officially complete the course until you have conducted this post-course discussion.*

- Prior to your meeting, provide your commander (or equivalent) a copy of your completed Professional Development Plan.

Be prepared to explain your action plan, timeline for goal achievement, and help you might need from the commander and/or others to achieve each goal for your top 3 to 4 goals.

Additionally, recommend you revisit the following areas from your pre-course discussion:

**Mission/Vision:** Recap your commander's vision and mission for the unit. Make sure to seek to understand the "why" of the mission and vision. Focus on areas where your perceptions of the unit's mission and vision align and/or misalign. Make sure to ask for clarification on any misalignments.

**Organizational Expectations:** Recap the commander's expectations for you and your team. Discuss how you and your team might need his/her help meeting certain expectations. Make a concerted effort not to depart without having agreed on expectations (reach concurrence).

**Reflection/Introspection.** After the discussion devote time to stop, think and reflect. Consider how the information you learned from the discussion could prove useful as you execute your

roles and responsibilities, solidify your team's mission and vision, and help your team master needed skills for effective mission accomplishments. If you find that you need more clarification on a topic, schedule follow-on discussions with your commander or other organizational team members who have experience with and knowledge of the particular topic.

**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*