WELCOME TO SOS, CLASS 24B!

You have been registered to participate in the SOS In-Residence course 24B from 8 JAN – 9 FEB.

*If you find this message to be in error, please contact your unit training manager to be removed from the course immediately.

This letter will outline your expectations and what you need to know to successfully complete the In-Residence course. Please read the welcome letter in its entirety for detailed instructions.

You are expected to complete between 120 -130 hours of instruction which includes self-paced readings and homework assignments, electives, and guest speakers.

1. To complete class assignments and participate in class discussions you will need:
   i. Internet access (provided by on-base lodging and SOS bldg.)
   ii. A laptop or computer with a webcam or video enabled device with a camera and microphone (a personal device is preferable). AFNET is not required for any SOS coursework. *Smartphones and tablets are optional tools and can access our learning platform, but we highly encourage the use of a laptop or computer. **DHA Laptops are not compatible with the Air University WIFI**
   iii. A CAC reader (recommended, not required)
   iv. Access to the following apps (recommend they be downloaded to your device)
      a. Microsoft Teams
      b. Google Calendar
      c. Okta Verify App

2. All SOS lesson modules and assignments are located on AU Canvas (a1-ims.okta.com) You will be able to access SOS course material starting Day 1.

3. Education Day 1
   i. Your first event of the day will be in Bldg 1403 in Polifka Auditorium.
   ii. UOD:
      a. (Military): OCPs/ FDUs
      b. (Civilian): Professional and Casual Business attire
   iii. USAF & Civilian Students: Last PT Scoresheet showing all passing components and current through graduation.
      a. USSF Students enrolled in the biometric watches must show proof of the device (PFA Score sheet not required).
      b. USSF Students not enrolled in the biometric program must show current and passing PFA sheets.
   iv. Air Force Reserves: Bring 2x copies of your orders.

**FAILURE TO SHOW CURRENT & PASSING PFA WILL RESULT IN BEING SENT HOME AT YOUR UNIT’S HOME EXPENSE**

4. Your Flight Commander will be contacting you NLT 1630 CST 4 January. Please check your .mil email as this is likely the only initial contact information your Flight Commander has for you. If you do not receive an initial contact from your instructor by Friday, 5 January, please email Student Services at sos.od.studentservices@us.af.mil.
5. If you have any issues with the Maxwell AFB University Inn, please inform your Flight Commander and talk to the front desk.

6. **Student Status:** While enrolled in SOS have your home unit change your duty status from “Present for duty” to “Student”.

If you have further question, please visit our website at [https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/SOS](https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/SOS) or contact SOS student services.

    Email sos.od.studentservices@us.af.mil - DSN 493-3231 - COMM (334) 953-3231

Follow us on social media for additional messages as your class date approaches.
Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/squadronofficerschool](https://www.facebook.com/squadronofficerschool)
Instagram: [Squadron Officer School (@squadron_officer_school) • Instagram photos and videos](https://www.instagram.com/squadron_officer_school/)
LinkedIn: [https://www.linkedin.com/company/squadron-officer-school/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/squadron-officer-school/)
Twitter: [https://twitter.com/SOSUSAF](https://twitter.com/SOSUSAF)
Squadron Officer School Resident Program

Program Description:
The Squadron Officer School (SOS) resident program is a PME course targeting four-to-seven-year Air Force captains, select Department of the Air Force civilians of equivalent grade, and international officers. The post-baccalaureate PDE curriculum covers four core learning areas—Thinking, Warfighting, Leading, and Communication. Throughout SOS, students team build and apply theories, principles, and practices from the core learning areas through experiential exercises, written assignments, briefings, and personal and collaborative reflection culminating in a capstone event for each core learning area.

Leader Prep:
Students will accomplish the readings and other preparation requirements ahead of the associated lesson. Check Canvas daily for required readings, activities, and videos. Please be prepared each day with a laptop/personal device with video and audio ON for each virtual lesson.
United States Space Force at Squadron Officer School

Spacepower Education and Advanced Readiness (SPEAR) Track

Who: All Guardians and Total Force Airman supporting space operations

Welcome to the future of Guardian education! With the standup of the United States Space Force (USSF), Squadron Officer School (SOS) has created the Spacepower Education and Advanced Readiness (SPEAR) track for USSF officers and Total Force Airmen supporting space operations. SPEAR is a Guardian centric program designed to teach our junior officers to lead Guardians and deliver combined arms effects in support of combatant commanders. Unlike the mainline SOS program, SPEAR is a predominantly warfighting track which replaces airpower-focused curriculum with a spacepower-centric program.

All Guardians enrolled in SOS will take part in the SPEAR Track, and will have the opportunity to experience the best that the USSF has to offer. Our team of Guardians has developed a culture built around the four C’s – Character, Courage, Commitment, and Connection – and integrated it throughout the curriculum.

Students will be exposed to several topics previously limited to more senior officers in Air Command and Staff College, in addition to the most current Space Force doctrine and a custom space focused wargame. Additionally, students will be given lessons that incorporate lessons learned from other schools such as the Army Captains Career Course, and will be introduced to the Space Force’s warfighting competencies. Our students experience a distinctly space operations focused take on SOS. The SPEAR track is academically rigorous – students will have approximately 10 hours more curriculum than mainline SOS students, and students will be expected to perform around two hours of reading per night.

As far as the traditional administrivia, unlike the rest of SOS, SGR offers one classified briefing for students and the opportunity to have discussions in classified spaces. So we can ensure you can have the discussions, all Guardians are required to send their security clearance to the Lemay Center prior to attending. Students will need to send a visit request to the Lemay Center for TS-SCI. **Students must have SI/TK/HCS-P/G caveats to attend the space threats briefing.**

Semper Supra!
Squadron Officer School Electives

**SOS Electives**
SOS electives are sessions taught by SOS faculty on a variety of subjects. Upon the start of SOS, students will have the opportunity to select from a list of electives they would like to participate in during the five-week course.

As an SOS student you will participate in one of three types of electives during the five-week course.
- **Think Tank**
- **Air University Advance Research (AUAR) elective**
- **Block/Series electives** (for those not selected for Think Tank or AUAR)

**Think Tank**
Think Tank is an opportunity for a select group of students to tackle a major issue and present creative solutions to current and active stakeholders. It is physically, mentally, and emotionally challenging and students are expected to work well beyond the SOS curriculum. Students present the fruit of that labor, live, to USAF/USSF decision makers. Team members receive intensive coaching on design principles adapted from the best practices in industry, academia, and militaries from across the world. You will learn and practice strategic thinking skills that are directly applicable and highly valuable to leaders of all levels. Join us for our open house on ED1 to learn more! **On Welcome Day is when students will receive the 23G topic.**

**Air University Advance Research (AUAR)**
The Air University (AU) Advanced Research Elective is an opportunity for a selective group of students to conduct independent research on topics of strategic concern. This is a five-week elective requiring approximately 20-40 hours beyond SOS curriculum. Selected students are assigned mentor(s) who guide research efforts and define deliverables. Student researchers receive a bullet on their AF 475 Training Report. Student benefits include advanced study on exciting topics, networking with communities of interest throughout the research experience, and opportunity to shape the Air Force's and Space Force's future.

**AUAR Topics**

**Air Force IT User Experience (UX) Optimization**
Ready to make an immediate impact on Air Force IT? In coordination with the Chief Experience Officer (CXO) of the United States Air Force, students will have the opportunity to dive into a practical project of improving commonly used Air Force systems/applications. Students will solicit feedback and ideas from a user experience (UX) and functional perspective on what optimizations can be incorporated into improving usability. This applied research topic challenges students to design/develop or recommend enhancements to the CXO with guidance from Subject Matter Experts (SME) at Cyberworx and Kessel Run. Previous system design/coding

**Barrier Analysis Working Group Collaborative:**
In coordination with the Department of the Air Force’s Barrier Analysis Working Group (DAFBAWG), Air Command and Staff College, and Air War College, students will leverage their experiences and expertise to help drive positive change across the Air Force through research aligned with current Lines of Effort provided by the BAWG Teams. Students will have access to subject matter experts and mentors from across AU and from the BAWG Teams: Women's Initiative Team (WIT), Black/African American Employment Strategy Team (BEST), Pacific Islander and Asian American Community Team (PACT), Hispanic Employment Analysis Team (HEAT), LGBQT Initiative Team (LIT), Disability Team (DT), and Senior Leader Advancement Team (SLAT).
Students may work individually or in teams. Students have the option to bring their own topic or work on a current Line of Effort within a BAWG. Potential topic areas include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Specialized healthcare programs (WIT/LIT)
- Facial Hair Policy Changes (HEAT/BEST)
- Racial Injustice (ALL perspectives requested)
- Overcome Language Barriers (HEAT)
- Persons with Targeted Disabilities and Access to Professional Development Programs
- Retention In Career Fields/Demographics (HEAT/BEST/WIT)
- LGBTQ Medical Policies, Procedures and Practices (LIT)
- Family Matters (LIT/WIT)

**Future Ideas & Weapons**

In coordination with the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) and the LeMay Center, Future Ideas & Weapons capitalizes airpower as the combined product of hardware, ideas, and organizations, rather than as an expression of the latest technologies; to include Directed Energy (DE), the Radio Frequency (RF) Spectrum, lasers and more. Such technologies are required and must be better understood to fully employ and operate into the 21st century as they will be contested & degraded in the Strategic Competition era.

SOS students will develop a comprehensive understanding of these technologies in the field of study with the publication of their research paper. Students will also have the opportunity to present their work and issues, explain their significance, and address their solutions to AFRL and AFWIC senior leadership.

**Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI): Foundations & Implications**

During this AUAR class-long elective, you will be exploring the capabilities, limitations, and implications of emerging Generative AI art tools. There are several of these tools publicly available. You will spend time learning about the tool by creating relevant, useful images and documenting how you accomplished the outcomes. You will also author foundational analysis of this emerging capability to inform AU and future AU scholars. You may author a paper for publication in War on The Rocks or Over the Horizon…or perhaps being published in the Air University Journal.

**Personnel Recovery in 2030, a Strategy Review** **SECRET REQUIRED**

The future operating environment against peer and near-peer adversaries will challenge personnel recovery in both capability and capacity. The environment will likely require the Joint Force to conduct extended range personnel recovery of individual or mass isolated personnel in high-threat highly contested environments (HCE) such as mass isolation at sea due to ship losses or isolation within advanced anti-access/area denial zones at sea or on land. Using the Personnel Recovery 2035 Strategy, students will develop a threat-driven model defining and assessing key challenges for implementation in HCE conditions on land or at sea. A comparative analysis should address what combinations of capabilities could enable future recovery platform options to operate in an HCE to recover individual personnel on land or at sea, distributed small units on land or islands, and mass isolated survivors of ship losses at sea, and identify the major capability and resource tradeoffs. The range of isolated personnel spans from individual aircrew, boat crew, and ground vehicle crew, to ground units (up to company size) and ships at sea (LCS to CVN).
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Do we need to bring blues/service dress?
-No, blues or service dress are not required for SOS.

What does the average day look like at SOS?
-Students can expect to be in class from 0800-1600, with some variation depending on the events of the day. You are afforded an hour for lunch.

I’m overseas and I’m arriving Saturday night, will my room be available?
-Yes, please call the University Inn prior to your arrival so they can adjust your reservation. Contact your Flight Commander if there are any issues.

What are the COVID protocols while at SOS?
-There is no mask mandate in effect at Maxwell AFB. Please visit the Maxwell Air Force Base Website COVID-19 Information & Updates for the latest information (https://www.maxwell.af.mil/RESOURCES/Coronavirus/).

The DoD rescinded the COVID-19 vaccination requirement. Am I still required to have it?

Are there gym/workout area restrictions?
-The 42 FSS Fitness facilities are currently open. Please visit https://www.lifeatthemax.us/maxwell-fitness-center-annex for the latest information regarding their hours of operation and visiting requirements.

Do we PT on our own time or do we do it with our flight/squadron?
-PT is not built into the daily schedule. You will coordinate with your flight and Flight Commander to find time in the day for your fitness requirements.

Will we have holidays off?
-Yes, SOS observes all Federal holidays and AETC family days.

Are there facilities for laundry in lodging and how much do they cost?
-Yes, there is a laundry room in each of the buildings in lodging. The machines are free, but you need to bring/purchase your own detergent and dryer sheets.

What will the flights look like?
-Flights typically consist of 14 students from various AFSCs, Civilians, ANG and AFRC.

What type of payments does the DFAC take? Can Civilians use the DFAC?
-The Riverfront Inn dining facility takes both cash and card. Civilians who are TDY (with orders) are authorized to use the dining facility.

How much of the course is dedicated to USSF curriculum for USSF personnel?
-All USSF Guardians are organized in their own flight, following a USSF curriculum, separate from the USAF curriculum received by the Airmen. All students will participate in the same experientials and team leadership exercises.
Are we allowed to travel on the weekends? How far can we travel?
-Yes, you are allowed to travel on the weekends. You will need to get all travel plans approved through your Flight Commander/Squadron Commander. Each squadron will go over their travel policy and weekend locator requirements.

I’m flying in and my unit won’t issue me a rental car. Will I be able to walk to get where I need to go?
-University Inn is across the street from the SOS building, the Maxwell Fitness Center is also nearby, and the DFAC is about a third of a mile walk. The BX and commissary are about a 1-mile walk.

I’m working DTS, but I have not received my LOA, can you help me?
-SOS does not handle the LOAs, that is an AETC TDY-to-School function. They can be contacted DSN 487-2971/COMM 210-652-2971 or tdy.school@us.af.mil. They should cross-org you the LOA a few days after you have signed and returned your RIP.

Do we book lodging through DTS?
-SOS reserves the lodging for students so you do not need to book it through DTS. Any Non-Availability letter or notification of no lodging available received through DTS should be ignored.

How do we get from the airport to Maxwell?
-SOS does not offer transportation services. There are several taxi companies that can get on base. Some Uber/Lyft can also get on base, but you would have to make sure the driver has access. Uber/Lyft drivers that do not have base access will be required to drop you off at the front gate.