Air War College Distance Learning
Senior Developmental Education (SDE) Program
Edition 18

Student Handbook

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The Air University
eSchool of Graduate Professional Military Education
Maxwell AFB, AL
www.au.af.mil

This handbook will remain in effect until superseded. Check the “AWC DL Home” tab in Blackboard® for updates or changes to this handbook.
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1. ABOUT THE PROGRAM

1.1. GENERAL

This Student Handbook is designed as a single-source document for establishing policy, guidance, and procedures related to all students participating in Edition 18 of the Air War College Senior Developmental Education Distance Learning program (AWC DL). Students are required to know and adhere to the contents of this handbook.

1.2. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the AWC DL program! While a correspondence option has been available to Air War College students for over 65 years, Edition 18 of the program leverages technology, course facilitation, and collaborative opportunities to enhance the learning experience. This edition uses self-paced courses to allow students to engage with the curriculum at a convenient pace while the facilitated courses maximize opportunities for interaction between students and with the course instructor (CI). Edition 18 connects students and faculty through engaging content with analysis, discussion, and research on real-world issues/challenges important for all experienced airpower leaders.

This DL program consists of 9 courses including the eOrientation course (see Figure 1 below). They are administered using the Blackboard® Learning Management System (LMS). Of these, six (6) are self-paced, online courses that deliver readings, videos, and interactive content, and validate student understanding using the tools of the LMS. Three (3) facilitated courses are CI-led, and offer opportunities to use and deepen the skills learned in the self-paced courses through interaction with peers and the CI.

![Figure 1, Edition 18 Program Flow.](image)

1.2.1. DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms are used throughout this handbook to describe specific attributes of our courses.
By type of interaction:

**Facilitated Course** – A facilitated course has a dedicated instructor, and usually 15-20 students who directly engage with their instructor and with their peers during the course. These courses are conducted over a continuous time period of three to four weeks. Students must engage during each of those weeks, but these courses are asynchronous so students are not tied to a specific date and time for online interaction. In Edition 18 the facilitated courses are “Applied Airpower & Security Studies,” “Applied Senior Leadership” and the final “Focused Studies” course.

**Self-paced Course** – A self-paced course does not have an instructor but generally has a very large number of students (can be more than 1,000 students). Students may, depending on course guidance, have some engagement with their peers during these courses. Students have up to four months to complete these courses.

By material covered:

**Foundational Courses** – Foundational courses cover the core learning areas that apply to every AWC student. These courses include both self-paced (eOrientation, International Security Studies, Airpower & National Strategy, Strategic Leadership, Senior Leadership) and facilitated (Applied Airpower & Security Studies, Applied Senior Leadership) types of courses.

**Focused Studies Courses** – Focused studies courses expand learning beyond the core areas allowing AWC DL students to tailor their educational experience by selecting areas of study that they determine best meet their needs. The focused studies courses are the self-paced “Elective” and the facilitated “Focused Studies” course.

By similarity of courses:

**Series** – A series of courses (such as the Leadership Series) refers to courses that are closely related and build directly upon each other. A series typically involves two self-paced courses followed by a facilitated course. During the self-paced courses students will accomplish assignments that they must bring into the facilitated course. The final facilitated course in a series is called an “Applied” course. There are two series in Edition 18, the “Airpower and Security” series and the “Leadership” series.

**Applied Course** – An applied course is the final course in a series of courses. It utilizes knowledge gained through previous self-paced
courses and provides the student with the opportunity to apply that knowledge through interactions with peers and their instructor.

1.2.2. WEBSITES

AWC DL uses the following websites:

**AUSIS:** [https://ausis.maxwell.af.mil/](https://ausis.maxwell.af.mil/) (used for program and course registration, and checking grades) Note: A valid DoD-issued Common Access Card (CAC) and CAC reader are necessary to access AUSIS. If you have trouble accessing the website directly, try going through the Air Force portal at [https://www.my.af.mil](https://www.my.af.mil) to get to AUSIS.

**Blackboard:** [https://awc.blackboard.com](https://awc.blackboard.com) (contains all course material) Note: If you use a different Air University Blackboard® site such as acsc.blackboard.com some elements of the curriculum may not work properly.

**Support Website:** [www.aueducationsupport.com](http://www.aueducationsupport.com) (contains FAQs and provides access to the help ticket system)

1.3. PROGRAM OVERVIEW - EDITION 18

1.3.1. COURSES

The courses within this program edition are:

**GSS 700S, Graduate Skills Studies / eOrientation** (self-paced): Students gain familiarity with the AWC DL program, eSchool policies, the Blackboard® LMS, critical thinking skills, and Student Support Services. Students will also complete lessons on developing critical thinking and writing skills.

**WAR 701S – 707S, Focused Studies, Electives**

The elective courses are the first point in the program where students can tailor their PME experience to better meet their professional needs. Students must choose one from the following list of electives:

**WAR 701S, Coercive Airpower** (self-paced):

This course gives you the tools to understand and evaluate airpower strategies—and the opportunity to produce one for this purpose. From its inception, airpower has been characterized as an asymmetric means of warfare. Airpower allows the country that can use it most effectively to bypass the traditional defenses of adversaries and strike at those things that are valued more than the forces engaged on the battlefield. Airpower advocates have argued that striking at high-value assets, or merely threatening to do so, would force an adversary to concede the stakes at the root of the conflict without first having to defeat its military. Victory would rest upon affecting the adversary’s estimates of the likely costs and
benefits of complying with what was demanded and the likely costs and benefits of defying those demands. Airpower has therefore been seen as a uniquely coercive instrument. The course addresses the intellectual foundations of airpower strategy, focusing upon how the threat or use of airpower can achieve political objectives. This course will examine the theoretical concepts surrounding coercion, the intellectual history of coercive airpower strategies, how these strategies can be used in anticipated and actual conflicts, and evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, triumphs, and disappointments of these strategies in theory and practice.

WAR 702S, COIN & SSTR (self-paced):

The counterinsurgency (COIN) and support to stabilization, security, transition, and reconstruction (SSTR) operations course examines the challenges posed by Irregular Warfare in today’s environment with an emphasis on insurgencies and reconstruction. The American military has historically preferred to conduct conventional large-scale operations against foes similarly structured and disposed to itself. It has been much less enthusiastic about conflict at the lower end of the spectrum, although, ironically, such operations have occupied much more of its time and attention than their conventional counterparts. This course does not portend to offer an “answer” for COIN and SSTR operations, nor does it propose a specific “Air Force answer” for COIN and SSTR strategy. Instead, this course attempts to expose you to several different viewpoints and theories on how to conduct COIN and SSTR.

WAR 703S, ISR for the Warfighter (self-paced):

This course rests on a foundation of modern Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities from the national intelligence community and the Department of Defense (DoD). With the continuing challenges of warfare in the twenty-first century, including declining budgets, it is imperative that military leaders have a clear understanding of how to leverage national and DoD intelligence capabilities to maximize both efficiency and effectiveness of available resources. The past decade has seen an exponential increase in the demand for timely, accurate, and actionable ISR. As such, this course will help military leaders understand the inner workings of the ISR enterprise to ensure available ISR assets are effectively employed to meet service, joint, national, allied, and coalition requirements. With changing operational environments and the ever-increasing demand for ISR, this course will help students look at adaptive and creative methods to maximize available, but limited, ISR resources.

WAR 704S, Cross-Cultural Communications (self-paced):

Everyone who performs a job in a cross-cultural environment (which we see now is almost any environment) needs to understand not only the
mission but also the potential effects of cross-cultural interaction. Appropriate cross-cultural communication training and education will reduce the negative effects of culture shock, stereotypes, and ethnocentrism; all of which impact mission effectiveness. This course will provide foundational knowledge essential for developing cross-cultural communication competence, focusing on the theories, skills, and applications that are relevant to military personnel.

WAR 705S, Negotiations in the Military Environment (self-paced):
This course will expose students to the day-to-day realities of negotiation. Hierarchical and well-defined military organization negotiation is a normal and daily process, and today our political and military realities demand that we operate successfully in more non-traditional and cross-cultural environments. This course will teach helpful processes which will improve your mission effectiveness across many environments and daily challenges. Course themes include Leadership and Conflict; Practical Negotiation in the Military Context; Negotiation Theory; Trust, Information, and Power; Alternative Dispute Resolution; Mediation, Arbitration, and Third-Party Conflict Resolution; Negotiation Skills; and, Negotiation in many environments.

WAR 706S, Space / Cyber Operations (self-paced):
This course focuses on military applications of space and cyberspace systems, to include capabilities, limitations, dependencies, and vulnerabilities. Space and cyber policies, law, and doctrine establish the guidelines for using space and cyberspace, each has a unique environment which places limits on their use. The course provides an understanding of current space and cyberspace systems and how they support the warfighter, as well as an understanding of the issues facing senior leaders in applying space and cyber power. The readings will include background information on their characteristics, limitations, organizations, missions, functions and contributions to warfighting. This elective will not make you a space and cyberspace expert and is particularly designed for personnel who are not space and missile operations specialists, nor cyber personnel. However, it will give you keen insight into the fundamental issues impacting contemporary military space and cyberspace operations.

WAR 707S, Joint Concepts and Planning (self-paced):
This course examines the stakeholders, processes, and perspectives that translate strategic guidance into Joint effort across the range of military operations. This course is self-paced and includes a mix of readings, presentations and other media. The course begins with an examination of strategic guidance, and then takes a closer look at how Combatant Commanders translate that guidance using operational design to develop
an operational approach to achieving national goals and military end states. It further examines joint concepts that forecast the future operating environment and the anticipated joint ways and means necessary to operate in that environment. Finally, it examines how stakeholders’ [Joint, Interagency, Inter-governmental and Multi-national-(JIIM)] structures, processes and perspectives, reconcile, integrate and apply national ends, ways, and means.

**Foundational Studies**

The six foundational studies courses apply to all students and are presented in two series of three courses each. The first three courses make up the Airpower and Security Series. The next three courses are the Leadership Series. These courses must be completed in the order presented.

**Airpower and Security Series:**


This course engages senior level AWC students with sophisticated concepts in International Relations and Strategy. The goal of this course is to expose senior leaders to avenues of understanding order and interactions in the international community beyond the military context. Primary topics in this course include Strategy, Power Polarity and Power Transitions, Democratic Peace, International Political Economy, and International Law. The course will familiarize students with the intricacies, scholarly debates, and potential applications for each concept. Students will craft a paper that draws elements of the course material into an analysis of a future security situation.

**AIR 700S, Airpower and National Strategy** (self-paced):

This course examines the relationship between airpower and strategy: how national strategy guides the employment of airpower, and how airpower’s inherent capabilities inform and shape strategy. The course examines airpower’s effect on the “ways” by which national ends are accomplished. Finally, it examines the complexities and competing perspectives in how airpower has been applied to various problem sets.

**AIR 701A, Applied Airpower and Security Studies** (facilitated):

This three-week facilitated course serves as a culmination to the series of courses examining U.S. grand strategy and Airpower (air, space, and cyber). Students will engage in peer-to-peer and instructor interactions sharing ideas and perspectives. This course builds on the previous two courses. For this course students will consider U.S. grand strategy and propose general approaches to specific national security issues. Subsequently, students will assess the suitability of cooperative and coercive Airpower strategies for such future end states.
Leadership Series:

LDR 710S, Strategic Leadership (self-paced):
In this course, students explore the skills necessary to lead in a culturally complex and ambiguous environment, to include identifying, integrating and prioritizing scarce resources and competing stakeholders. Students will also learn the leader’s role in decision making, negotiating, and problem solving. At the end of the course, students will develop a strategic leadership paper that can help inform their approach to current and future strategic environments.

LDR 711S, Senior Leadership (self-paced):
This course explores the impact of personal and professional conduct and accountability, and their relationship to command climate, organizational culture and the perception of the American public. Additionally, students will learn the importance of a solid ethical foundation and how leaders can experience derailment. Students will conclude the course by completing a personal development plan that describes their near- and long-term professional and personal goals.

LDR 712A, Applied Senior Leadership (facilitated):
This three week facilitated course develops the concepts students learned in Senior Leadership and Strategic Leadership self-paced courses by providing opportunities to apply their knowledge to case studies and in exchanges with their professional peers. Students will analyze ethical and leadership issues from the perspective of senior leaders, emphasizing professional conduct and accountability, and their impact on command climate and organizational culture. Students will conclude this course by completing a strategic leadership paper that addresses a current strategic leadership issue that they are facing within their organization.

NSP 8XXA, Focused Studies, Problem Solving in National Security (facilitated):
The four-week facilitated Problem Solving in National Security course promotes critical thinking about complex national security issues. Students will have a choice of courses. Not all courses will be offered every month; a calendar showing the offerings will be posted on Blackboard®. Although additional courses may be added in the future, the range of courses initially being offered are as follows:

- NSP 810A – USAFRICOM Region
- NSP 820A – USCENTCOM Region
- NSP 830A – USEUCOM Region
- NSP 840A – USNORTHCOM Region
This course includes interaction with the instructor and with peers. The course begins with research and a systems-based analysis of a specific real-world security issue that challenges American national security objectives, and results in a group synthesis of a policy response to the issue reflecting the perspectives of both (a) a national security policy team and (b) a senior airman tasked with assessing airpower’s role in a proposed response.

This course blends individual and group efforts with peer-to-peer interaction to generate both instructor-facilitated and student-directed learning. This is accomplished through a mix of reading, research, writing, and threaded discussion participation that requires understanding of, and critical thinking about, the course material. Primary student assignments include research, written work, and threaded discussion contributions in a specified geographical region.

1.3.2. SCHEDULING

Throughout the AWC DL program students must take the courses sequentially, completing one before signing up for the next. There are two exceptions to this rule on course sign-ups. First, once students finish the prerequisites and sign up for the “Applied Airpower & Security Studies” course, they may also begin the Leadership Series by signing up for the self-paced “Strategic Leadership” course. If they finish the first leadership course they can accomplish the “Senior Leadership” course and then the “Applied Senior Leadership” course. This will allow students to work on the Leadership series while waiting for their “Applied Airpower & Security” course to begin. Second, after students complete the “Applied Airpower & Security Studies” course they can sign up for and complete the “Problem Solving in National Security” course. This allows greater flexibility in timing and choice of regions. Due to the high workload involved for the facilitated courses it is strongly recommended that students only take one facilitated course at a time.

Students are allowed up to 4 months to complete each self-paced course. Extensions are not granted for the self-paced courses. Students who do not complete a self-paced course, including self-progress checks and deliverables, within 4 months will be automatically removed from the course and be required to re-enroll through AUSIS.

The facilitated courses are offered every month, and begin on the first Monday of the month. The one exception is that the last Problem Solving in National Security course of the year begins mid-November rather than the beginning of December. The schedule for all upcoming facilitated courses is posted on the SDE Program Information module of the “AWC DL Home” tab on Blackboard®. Students must plan ahead and sign up for the facilitated course of their choice by
the registration deadline posted on the schedule (~2 ½ weeks prior to the class start date). Students who are on a tight timeline to complete the program must pay close attention to the course registration deadlines.

Instructors are allotted up to 10 calendar days to post final course grades once the course ends. Please note that grades and enrollments may take up to 24 hours to transmit between AUIS and Blackboard®.

Program Timeline: The eSchool allows 60 months to complete this program. A student can reasonably complete the program in six to eight months. The eSchool recognizes that deployments, TDYs, moves, command tours, life issues, etc. will lengthen the time required for some students. The 60-month program limit was set to accommodate students who experience a series of those types of events.

Promotion boards/desired graduation dates are recurring issues for many students. Courses must be completed early enough to allow for grading and posting of grades, plus to allow time for the results to be reflected on records for pre-board activities. As a guide, students should complete all courses AT LEAST 3 weeks in advance of any due date/cut-off dates for boards. This is only a guide and does not guarantee posting. The earlier courses are completed, the better the chances of being posted in time.

Check the AWC Announcements module on the Blackboard® “AWC DL Home” tab to obtain the latest information on updates and changes to the program. Additionally, individual courses will include an Announcements section to disseminate course-specific information.

1.3.3 PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Graduation Requirements: In order to be eligible for graduation, students must be in “good standing” and are required to successfully complete (grade of Passing, SATISFACTORY or higher) the following:

Graduate Skills Studies / eOrientation Course

One self-paced Elective course

The 3-course Airpower and Security Series (two self-paced and one facilitated)

The 3-course Leadership Series (two self-paced and one facilitated)

One facilitated Focused Studies course (Problem Solving in National Security)

Exams, assessments, and self-progress checks are some of the methods used for assessing student competency (understanding and synthesis) of course materials. The electives have a multiple-choice final exam. Self-paced foundational courses use a variety of methods including progress checks and
writing assignments. The written assignments from the self-paced courses will be utilized in the “Applied” course for that series. Facilitated courses also use a variety of assignment types including threaded-discussion questions to gauge understanding and application of the material and typically use written essays as the final exam. In general, the rubrics for all assignments—threaded discussions, essays of various types, and final examinations—focus on course content, critical thinking, and communications skills as the major components for determining academic achievement. The “Support Center” tab on Blackboard® provides resources on “Studying,” “Thinking” and “Writing” to help prepare for these assessments.

Students must ensure adequate preparation for each assessment, as multiple failures will result in course suspension and possible program disenrollment.

As defined in Air University Instruction (AUI) 36-2609, all AWC DL assessments are considered individual work and students are expected to complete exams without collaborating with others, except as indicated in lesson or course instructions.

1.4 DESCRIPTION AND ROLES

1.4.1. EDITION 18 - LEARNING OUTCOMES

A student who completes Edition 18 should be able to:

- Illustrate the skills required to lead successfully at the strategic level in the complex national security environment

- Analyze the contextual requirements for the effective strategic employment of airpower

- Comprehend the elements of successful military strategies which, in concert with other instruments of national power, support national security objectives

- Critically analyze complex political-military issues and clearly articulate national security strategy options

1.4.2. DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION (DE) CREDIT

Edition 18’s academic curriculum consists of one self-paced elective, four self-paced foundational courses, and three facilitated courses that may provide DE credit. Air Force officers are awarded SDE credit upon successful completion of the program. However, sister-service students must contact their personnel office to determine if credit is awarded for successfully completing Edition 18. Civilians must contact their personnel office to ensure their records are updated to reflect graduation status.
1.4.3. USAFR STUDY HOURS / RESERVE POINTS

It is the responsibility of the individual reservist (student) regarding the status of their reservist’s point accrual balance and to ensure records are updated and accurate. To compute reserve retirement points: 3 educational hours = 1 reserve retirement point accrued. There is no retroactive credit given if the hours have changed since completing a course. For more detailed information, contact ARPC (1-800-525-0102). Current educational hours for Edition 18 are as follows:

- eOrientation Course: 10 educational hours
- Focused Studies, Elective: 45 educational hours
- Foundational Studies, Airpower & Security series: 60 educational hours
- Foundational Studies, Leadership series: 55 educational hours
- Focused Studies, Problem Solving in National Security: 30 educational hours

1.4.4. METHODS OF STUDY

Edition 18 is designed as a combination of self-study and instructor-facilitated courses using digital curriculum delivered through the https://awc.blackboard.com website.

1.4.5. STUDENT ROLE

As an Edition 18 student, you are responsible for completing this program utilizing the eSchool online curriculum contained on the Blackboard® LMS, with eSchool faculty and staff support. Your goals, preparation, and pacing will directly affect what you take away from your AWC DL experience. Your goals will set the tone for everything you do and provide a personal milestone for measuring your progress. Academic preparation will enable you to critically analyze course materials and successfully complete each competency assessment. We urge you to take advantage of the multitude of tools available to you within Blackboard®. First and foremost is the eOrientation Course, which is intended to help prepare you for the AWC DL program. Additionally, there are a multitude of resources available on the awc.blackboard.com website in the “Support Center” tab within the “Resources” module. These resources include advice and resources dealing with studying, thinking, writing, library resources and even Blackboard® tutorials. These resources will help ensure you gain the most from this program.

While a feature of the new program is student-to-student collaboration and peer-to-peer review, each student in the program is required to complete his/her own assigned work, as indicated in lesson instructions; participate and contribute to group projects and threaded discussions, as applicable by the course instructions and course-instructor direction; and, abide by all facets of academic integrity as outlined in AUI 36-2609, Academic Integrity, 2 April 2012.
2. STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

2.1. ENROLLMENT/ WITHDRAWAL/ DI SENROLLMENT

2.1.1. COURSE ENROLLMENT

During initial enrollment and throughout the program, it is the student’s responsibility to ensure AUSIS reflects both the correct email address and the correct name. Email is our primary means of communication. The name data in AUSIS is used to produce your graduation certificate and to update your personnel records to reflect program graduation. Misspelling or use of nicknames will cause an error between the AU systems and the AFPC MILPDS.

- Your initial enrollment into the eOrientation course occurs automatically once you have successfully registered for the AWC DL program on AUSIS. Students are not automatically enrolled in subsequent courses but rather are given the freedom to enroll based upon their personal and professional schedules.

- Enrollment in each self-paced course is a 1-step process. Please review the Directions for Enrollment and Registration posted in the Announcements on the AUSIS program homepage located at https://ausis.maxwell.af.mil/ (click on the Air War College icon). Once you have enrolled in a self-paced course in AUSIS, the system may take up to 24 hours to synch with Blackboard®, process the enrollment, and display the course material in your account.

- Enrollment in facilitated courses is a 2-step process. In AUSIS, you must first enroll in a course and then you must click on Select Group to select the date that you want to attend. If you do not select a group, you will not be placed into a course. Please review the Directions for Enrollment and Registration posted in the Announcements on the AUSIS program homepage.

2.1.2. COURSE WITHDRAWAL

Students can withdraw from a facilitated course prior to the registration deadline in AUSIS by clicking on the blue Group hyperlink and selecting a new date. After the registration deadline, students need to submit a help ticket at http://www.aueducationsupport.com/ with the following information: full name/rank; last 4 of SSN; course to withdraw from. PLEASE NOTE: Students who withdraw from a facilitated course on or after the course start date will receive an UNSATISFACTORY grade for that course. See paragraph 2.3.3 for additional information on unsatisfactory grades.

2.1.3. PROGRAM WITHDRAWAL

To withdraw from the Edition 18 program, submit a help ticket to Student Support Services at http://www.aueducationsupport.com/ providing the following information: full name/rank; last 4 of SSN; effective date of withdrawal; course(s)
currently enrolled; service component (Active Duty/Guard/Reserve/Civilian, and, if other than Air Force, Service); reason for withdrawing from the program.

2.1.4. disenrollment

Disenrollment may be a) voluntary (Without Prejudice), b) disciplinary (With or Without Prejudice) or c) for unacceptable academic performance (With or Without Prejudice). With or Without Prejudice determinations are made by the eSchool Associate Dean IAW with AU policy. “Without Prejudice” disenrollments result in temporary student dismissal from the AWC DL program, but the student may request re-enrollment. “With Prejudice” disenrollments result in complete student dismissal from the current and all future AU AWC programs.

Automatic disenrollment notifications are sent via AUSIS for students who have a course failure. These disenrollments are considered “Without Prejudice.”

Students who were disenrolled “Without Prejudice” may request re-enrollment into the program once their disenrollment circumstances are adjudicated. Adjudication requirements may include Course-Director directed study, which must be accomplished prior to re-enrollment. These actions are documented in the students’ AUSIS record or during the Formal Academic Probation/Suspension feedback process. Re-enrollments may require students to start the program completely over in order to ensure the most current program objectives are met by the student. This determination is made by the eSchool Dean.

Re-enrollment for course failures and other “Without Prejudice” disenrollments requires the student to login to AUSIS and re-enroll in the course or submit a Help Ticket to Student Services either using the “Support Center” tab in Blackboard® or by going to http://www.aueducationsupport.com/. The ticket must include all the actions the student has taken to rectify their circumstance and any required actions they were directed to take per the Probation/Suspension/Review process. The re-enrollment will be validated by Student Services prior to a student being re-enrolled.

2.2. Standards

2.2.1. Grading

Self-Paced: Edition 18 contains self-paced courses where students are assessed using a variety of methods. Electives use a final multiple choice exam which requires a minimum score of 75% to pass. If a student fails an elective final exam twice they will be required to enroll in a different elective. Assessments for other self-paced courses utilize progress checks, which can be taken multiple times, but require a score of at least 80% to pass. Self-paced courses within each of the series (Airpower & Security, and Leadership series) contain writing assignments. These assignments are evaluated as part of the
series. To complete the self-paced courses students must certify they have completed all the required writing assignments. However, those assignments will not be reviewed by an instructor until the “Applied” course for that series.

**Facilitated:** Edition 18 contains instructor-facilitated courses where students participate in threaded discussions, group projects, and collaborate with fellow students. Requirements are detailed in the individual course instructions, but generally, standardized rubrics (scoring tools for subjective assessments) are provided to all course instructors teaching in the facilitated courses to provide a standardized feedback format to each student and to ensure common learning outcomes are understood and obtained. Students can view a course’s grading rubric(s) by clicking on “My Course Grades” on the left course menu of Blackboard®.

Students are graded on the scale as outlined in Figure 2 below. Students who earn an “Excellent” or “Outstanding” as their overall average will have that distinction indicated on their certificate. You may request a copy of your official transcript through the Air University Registrar’s Office. NOTE: The distinction of “Excellent” or “Outstanding” will not appear on your transcript.

The courses weigh towards the overall program grade as follows:

- Elective – 10%
- Applied Airpower and Security Studies – 30%;
- Applied Senior Leadership – 30%;
- Problem Solving in National Security – 30%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Approximate Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>96 - 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect or nearly perfect work. Demonstrates an exceptional level of understanding and a superb mastery of the learning outcomes. Quality of content, organization and critical analysis are clearly superior. Superb analysis and application of course concepts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>90 – 95.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates a high level of understanding and mastery of the learning outcomes. Quality of the assignment is original and innovative. Effective analysis and application of course concepts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>75 – 89.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates an acceptable understanding of the concepts denoting mastery of the learning outcomes. Fully satisfactory. The assignment is logical, factual, well supported and covers the main points.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>0 – 74.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The level of understanding is not sufficient for meeting desired objectives. Well below fully satisfactory. Improper or incorrect documentation. Inadequate critical analysis and support. Cheating, plagiarism or violations of academic integrity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PLEASE NOTE: Anyone who receives a final grade of “Unsatisfactory” in a facilitated course must retake the course. The maximum score the student can earn in the repeated class is a “Satisfactory”. 
2.2.2. GRADE APPEALS

Course Instructors (CIs) assign a grade in the facilitated courses to each assessment according to the student’s demonstrated mastery of the objectives being evaluated. CIs submit compiled grades for their course(s) via Blackboard® during the grade-submission window. Students who wish to obtain further explanation or review of a grade from the course director may initiate an appeal through their CI (see Attachment 1 for Grade Appeal Form). Students must wait at least 1 business day after grades are posted before initiating a grade appeal and have up to 3 business days to initiate an appeal. In the event the CI is unavailable, students should initiate their grade appeal with the applicable Course Director (CD). Documented evidence must be submitted to support an appeal and must accompany the Grade Appeal Form (see Attachment 1). CIs/CDs will review appeals for grade changes and respond to students within 10 working days of receipt of the Grade Appeal Application Form and documented evidence. A second appeal is permitted with additional justification and is forwarded to the Curriculum Department Chair (or equivalent) for review after being coordinated through the CI/CD. Appeals are only accepted for individual graded assignments. There is no appeal for final course grades. The Dean is the final approval authority for final course grades. Once approved, the grades are made available to students via the AU Portal, subject to the results of any grade-appeal process.

2.2.3. ADMINISTRATIVE SUSPENSION

If a student signs up for a facilitated course and then does not attend or satisfactorily complete the course, the student will receive an UNSATISFACTORY grade. Upon receiving a total of three UNSATISFACTORY grades from any mix of the facilitated courses in the program, the student will be placed on administrative suspension. A suspended student must petition to be reinstated by submitting a letter of request from the first O-6 (or equivalent) in the student’s chain of command, addressed to the “Dean, eSchool of Graduate PME,” explaining any extraordinary circumstances that justified the performance which resulted in the unsatisfactory grades. The commander's/supervisor's endorsement must include a statement that he/she has counseled the individual on the importance of taking the facilitated courses seriously, to avoid wasting the money invested by the US Government on these courses. Students who are suspended will not be readmitted into the program until this action is accomplished.

2.3. PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

Air University (AU) expects its students, as professionals, to be fully committed to their personal and professional development and to take full advantage of their admission to

Figure 2, Grading Scale.
Student conduct that disrupts the successful achievement of the AU mission is not permitted. Students whose unprofessional or inappropriate conduct disrupts course activities may be subject to punitive action, ranging from a reduction in the course grade to permanent dismissal from the program. Course instructors and faculty members have authority to determine what is and is not acceptable conduct. Instructors noting incidents of unprofessional behavior will notify the course director and Director of Student Services for inquiry and action. Any student who is undergoing review or investigative proceedings related to unprofessional conduct or academic misconduct may be placed in an administrative hold status. While in this status, the student will not be allowed to enroll in any courses until the proceeding is fully resolved and a course of action is determined.

2.3.1. ATTENDANCE

All Facilitated courses are conducted “asynchronously,” so while “attendance” is mandatory, there are no specified times during the day when students must be active in the course. However, students are expected to meet minimum participation requirements in all class activities and complete all class assignments by the assignment due dates.

As a reminder, for facilitated courses, students may withdraw prior to the course start date. Withdrawals or Drops on or after the start date will result in an UNSATISFACTORY grade. The facilitated courses represent a substantial investment by the US Air Force in the student’s development; professional courtesy and proper use of US Government resources demand a similar investment by the student.

2.3.2. ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The AWC DL program may include candid lectures and articles from senior leaders across the Department of Defense as well as speakers from US Government agencies and from the civilian sector. These presenters consent to distribute their presentations because they are assured their comments will be shared only among participating students, instructors, and faculty. Students in the AWC DL program share an important responsibility with their resident colleagues at Maxwell AFB – respecting and protecting the confidentiality of these speakers’ presentations. To meet this responsibility, all students must adhere to academic freedom and non-attribution policies as described in AU Instruction 36-2608, Academic Freedom. It is important to note that students are not allowed to attribute any materials contained in the courseware to persons or entities outside of the eSchool of Graduate PME without permission from AU. Similarly, students shall respect the contributions of classmates and guests who might participate in their online sessions. Explanatory notes on AU’s academic freedom policy follow:

1. Academic freedom allows students, guest speakers, contributing
authors, and participants in established classes to state opinions openly and to support or challenge ideas without concern their remarks will be attributed to them.

2. Non-attribution facilitates the free expression of opinions and ideas and allows for professional disagreements within the context of an academically stimulating environment. Essentially, non-attribution means not associating specific comments, ideas, opinions, or conversations with specific individuals.

3. Although individuals may debate relevant issues, academic freedom must be tempered by good judgment to refrain from making offensive remarks, unfounded opinions, or irresponsible statements either verbally or in writing. Offensive remarks or irresponsible statements include comments disparaging any person’s race, color, national origin, ethnic group, religion, or sex. Offensive remarks or irresponsible statements – whether oral or written – will not be tolerated.

Individuals who violate the academic freedom policy are subject to adverse administrative and/or disciplinary actions as described in AUI 36-2608, Academic Freedom.

2.3.3. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Integrity is a cornerstone of the military profession and permeates every aspect of military service. Within this academic environment, integrity is important to ensure graduates are skilled in the areas prescribed by joint and Air Force directives and to preserve the validity of the AWC DL assessment program. AU Instruction 36-2609, Academic Integrity, defines academic integrity as “uncompromising adherence to a code of ethics, morality, conduct, scholarship, and other values related to academic activity.” Every student enrolled in the AWC DL program is responsible for adhering to this standard. Students are warned that having knowledge of a violation and failing to report it is also a violation of academic integrity.

Students found guilty of academic integrity violations are subject to sanctions imposed by AU. These sanctions can affect student credit for completed work as well as a student’s eligibility for future PME and academic opportunities.

Collaboration and discussion in the facilitated courses among students in the same seminar are highly encouraged, but each student is expected to do his/her own work. It is a breach of integrity to use, receive, or give work to another student outside of a particular course.

ORIGINAL WORK:

Student work submitted for grade must be composed solely by the student (or identified group of students for a group assignment) except where clearly documented in accordance with citation requirements, and
the work must be composed specifically for the current assignment. No work previously submitted in any other course or academic / PME program will be resubmitted or reformatted, in whole or in part, for submission in a current assignment without prior written approval of the course instructor. Additionally, students are prohibited from using the work of other students (current or former) in any way, to include the formulation of ideas or outlines, to complete assignments.

The act of appropriating, or stealing, the literary composition of another, or parts or passages of another’s writings, ideas or language, and passing them off as one’s own work constitutes plagiarism. Every student must ensure quotations or paraphrased passages are properly cited within ALL written work submitted.

To assist students and instructors in identifying potential acts of plagiarism, the AWC DL program uses SafeAssign®. This commercial tool identifies areas of written work that require proper sourcing. In the eOrientation course, students and instructors complete a short tutorial that explains how to use this valuable tool. eSchool of Graduate PME policy allows students to submit their work to SafeAssign® at least once prior to submitting the work as final through SafeAssign® to their CIs. All essay and paper assignments are required to be submitted through SafeAssign®.

**CHEATING:**

Cheating is the act of giving or receiving improper assistance such as, but not limited to:

- Uploading and/or downloading study aids or notes (also known as “dirty purples,” “gouge,” or “the pony”) to or from websites; or providing or receiving such notes via any other method
- Copying material from another student’s assessment
- Using notes and issued materials, or other references not authorized for use during an assessment, or other assigned work
- Knowingly permitting another to copy work or presentation materials, or excerpts/ideas/answers from an assessment
- Collaborating with other persons on individual assignments, except where permitted
- Sharing study materials or any assessment information after completing an assessment. This is to preserve the integrity of the assessment and ensure that all students have an equal opportunity at success in the program

Cheating is a violation of academic integrity standards. Further, unauthorized discussion, disclosure, or possession of assessment
materials constitutes a violation of Article 92 of the UCMJ. Unless instructed otherwise by an eSchool faculty or staff member, assessment materials may be discussed only with CIs and eSchool faculty.

Individuals who violate the academic integrity policy are subject to adverse administrative and or disciplinary actions as described in AETC Instruction 36-2909.

2.3.4. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND TREATMENT

SEXUAL HARASSMENT:

As a military institution, AU upholds the highest standards of professional and personal conduct at all times. Individuals must be treated with dignity and respect. Any form of sexual discrimination or mistreatment will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment is forbidden and beneath the dignity of military officers and civilians.

AU’s goal is to maintain an environment free from sexual harassment. No one may make sexual comments to another person. Such comments are NOT protected by Academic Freedom. In addition to not engaging in this behavior themselves, students, CIs, and faculty share an obligation to inform the chain of command if they are aware of comments considered sexual harassment.

TOLERANCE AND DIVERSITY:

Ethnic or racial jokes, slurs, or mistreatment are discriminatory, are not acceptable, and will not be tolerated in any AU course. This applies to all communications, spoken or written. As with sexual harassment, this behavior is NOT protected by Academic Freedom, and anyone aware of such behavior is responsible for reporting it to proper authorities.

2.3.5. ELECTRONIC MAIL AND THREADED DISCUSSION DECORUM

Students are expected to use common sense and good judgment when using email, Blackboard’s® message system, discussion boards, and forums. Note: for documentation purposes, messages (including any associated attachments/files) and all threaded discussion transmissions are automatically monitored, tracked, recorded, and archived.

The Discussion boards and message system are not the correct forum for venting grievances or complaints. Students have the ability to provide suggestions for improvements to administrative, programmatic, or curriculum-related policies, procedures, or other AWC DL program-related issues using student surveys.
CHAIN OF COMMAND:
In Edition 18 facilitated courses, the CI is the primary focal point for all student matters. Students are instructed not to circumvent their chain of command by communicating directly with higher levels without first coordinating with their CI. If the CI is the problem, students should contact the Course Director.

OFFICIAL VERSUS PERSONAL COMMUNICATION:
Blackboard’s® message system is for official communication only. eSchool instructors, faculty, and students are restricted from using this system for personal gain (i.e., advertising for sale of goods or services, etc.) or for personal communications unrelated to the educational program for which it was purchased.

2.3.6. INFORMATION PROTECTION

COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL:
Do not reproduce copyrighted documents in whole or in part without permission from the eSchool of Graduate PME. Dissemination of copyrighted material is not authorized (i.e., selling the material, providing material to a commercial company for use). All copyrighted material conforms to the copyright laws of the United States and may not be further reproduced in whole or in part without the express permission of the copyright holder.

PRIVACY OF INFORMATION:
The Privacy Act imposes civil and criminal penalties for disclosing personal information from a “system of records” to someone not entitled to that information. “Systems of records” include personnel records, medical records, and other official records that are retrieved by an individual’s name, social security number, or other personal identifier. Therefore, the use of Blackboard’s® message system to distribute home addresses, home telephone numbers, number and sex of dependents, home of record, age, date of birth, and other personal information without first getting the consent of the subject is prohibited. If consent is requested and received, it is important to ensure any electronic correspondence reflects the fact that approval was received from the subject. Posting your own information implies your consent; this does not extend to family members – their consent must be documented and stated.

FOREIGN DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION:
Air Force Policy Directive 16-2, Disclosure of Military Information to Foreign Governments and International Organizations, states that disclosure of information, documents, or training materials to foreign governments or international organizations is not allowed unless approved by the Secretary of the Air Force/International Affairs Disclosure (SAF/IAD) section. In accordance with
this policy, the eSchool of Graduate PME educational materials (including syllabi, instructional narratives, multimedia presentations, and all interactive communications that are part of the AWC DL program) may not be distributed to foreign visitors without expressed approval coordinated through SAF/IAD via the eSchool of Graduate PME and the AU Foreign Disclosure Office. Refer inquiries on such information or documents to your CI who will submit a request for approval through the Director of Student Services to AU and SAF/IAD.

INFORMATION SECURITY IN PROFESSIONAL PAPERS:

Student papers and reports must be written at the unclassified level. In some cases, a compilation of unclassified sources could result in a classified report/paper. If a student has doubts as to whether information is classified or releasable, they are instructed to contact a USAF security manager prior to uploading the document onto the Blackboard® system. **In no instance** will students place information on the AWC DL Blackboard® website that has the potential to be classified or could be of possible intelligence value. This includes sensitive or restricted types of information such as “For Official Use Only” information and proprietary information.

3. RESOURCES

3.1. INFORMATION AND LIBRARY SERVICES

Air University’s Muir S. Fairchild Research Information Center (the “MSFRIC” – also known as the Air University Library) promotes the use of library technology and resources, teaches library research classes, and provides access to a variety of library resources. Students can access a variety of MSFRIC services online by selecting the “Support Center” tab, scrolling down and then clicking on the “Library” icon. Use the link to “How to Search MSFRIC Resources” for a detailed explanation and suggested process for conducting your research.

3.2. WRITING RESOURCES

For writing assistance, self-paced writing guides and tutorials are provided on the awc.blackboard.com website both in the eOrientation Course as well as in the “Support Center” tab by scrolling down to and clicking on the “Writing” icon.

4. STUDENT SUPPORT - INTERACTION WITH INSTRUCTORS AND FACULTY

4.1. STUDENT REGISTRATION SYSTEM

Students are required to ensure their contact information (contained in the student registration system database) is kept current. Students can initiate changes to their contact information using the AU Portal at [https://auportal.maxwell.af.mil/](https://auportal.maxwell.af.mil/). This step is
vital to facilitating timely communication between the students and the eSchool. Updates to AUSIS contact information are not transferred to Blackboard. Students must also update their email in Blackboard to facilitate communications with their instructors.

4.2. SELF-PACED COURSES

Student Services is your primary point of contact for self-paced courses. They can assist with your technical issues and basic course questions. If your issue requires specific subject matter expertise, they will forward your help ticket to the course director who will then contact you with guidance on the issue.

4.3. FACILITATED COURSES

Course Instructors (CIs) are the leaders in the online classroom environment. Credentialed experts in their fields of study, they are selected, trained, and assigned to:

- Provide clarification and assistance to students
- Help students achieve desired levels of learning
- Assess student performance
- Provide substantive, qualitative feedback to improve both student performance and the program itself
- Personally observe students’ online “classroom” interaction, helping them to meet course requirements while maintaining a supportive, professional online learning environment
- Be solely responsible for instruction and student evaluation, but consult with appointed academic advisors to assist students placed on academic probation
- Assist or refer students to Student Services for help with administrative matters

CIs provide specific guidance for their classes; however, the information in this handbook applies to all courses and students in the program. Student Services is your primary point of contact for registration into the facilitated courses.

4.4. TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Throughout this program you may require assistance on a variety of issues. As stated above, if you are in a facilitated courses, contact your instructor first, and if the instructor cannot resolve the issue, contact Student Services.

Student Services can help if you experience technical issues, issues with course content (self-paced only), and questions regarding enrollment, dis-enrollment, program eligibility, grades, or withdrawing from a course. You can contact eSchool Student Services by opening a help ticket. To open a help ticket go to the “Support Center” tab in Blackboard® and click on the “Help Ticket” icon or open the AU Education Support Center webpage at http://www.aueducationsupport.com/ics/support/ticketnewwizard.asp?style=classic.
Enter your contact information and ticket description. Fill out the “Ticket Description” as described below and click “finish” when complete. Note: Neither the eSchool nor AU handles issues pertaining to the Air Force Portal.

- User Type: Current Student
- Organization: Your organization
- Program: Select the program you are enrolled in
- Course: Select the course you are currently enrolled in
- Request Type: Student Services
- Request Type Detail: Select appropriate response
- Problem Details: Provide as complete a description as possible of the problem/issue

4.5. SURVEYS

Surveys generally come in two forms: End-of-Course, and End-of-Program. At the end of each course, and upon completion of the entire program, students have an opportunity to provide feedback on the course content (including assessments), instructor, student services, and technical support. Candid and constructive comments are used to improve the AWC DL program.

4.6. STUDENT RIGHTS

Over and above any rights of appeal or filing of grievances and complaints as described in previous sections of this student handbook, any AU student has a right to appeal adverse actions taken against him/her by following the appropriate course of appeal as described in the Air University Catalog, available at http://www.au.af.mil/au/catalogs.asp.

4.7 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4.7.1. ONLINE SERVICES

AUSIS (https://ausis.maxwell.af.mil) is your interface for student administration (i.e., program enrollment, course registration and grades). If the correct email address is loaded into AUSIS, then you will receive emails regarding program enrollment notifications, course grades and other administrative details.

Air War College Blackboard® (https://awc.blackboard.com) is your primary interface for Edition 18 courses. Additionally, program announcements are posted on the “AWC DL Home” tab of Blackboard® and course announcements will be posted in individual course home pages. Finally, if the correct email address is loaded in Blackboard®, then you will receive e-mails regarding events within individual courses.
4.7.2. PERSONNEL RECORD UPDATES

AUSIS automatically updates the Air University Registrar Education Program Management system (AUREPM) with PME completion data, which, in turn, updates the Military Personnel Data System (MiliPDS), and, subsequently, officer records. You are responsible to ensure that your “Service Component” is correct in your AU Portal and AUSIS student record. Your personnel records should reflect that you have completed SDE within 7 business days after all requirements are met and your instructor posts your final course grade. Guard/Reserve students must coordinate with ARPC to ensure retirement points based on study hours are correctly assigned/updated. The eSchool provides the study hours required to complete the AWC DL program and updates Blackboard® and the AU catalog as required to reflect current hours.

4.7.3. IT CHALLENGES

In an effort to secure our military networks, changes in network configurations and modifications to hardware and software are made on a continual basis. We have experienced situations where networks are disabled (at the service, MAJCOM, or base level) and software does not work as desired. The eSchool of Graduate PME continuously works these issues on behalf of our world-wide student population, but has no control over changes to the military networks. We rely on you to make us aware of any problems. If you have specific issues at your base, submit a help ticket via the Student Services Support System providing a detailed description, to include screen shots if applicable. If available, it may be more advantageous to use a home computer to complete some of your academic requirements.

4.7.4. AIR UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR

The Registrar is responsible for creating and forwarding transcripts in response to student and academic institution requests. The Registrar also serves as the AU liaison to Educational Service Officers worldwide.

Program Transcripts: The Registrar will furnish a transcript upon receipt of your written request. The request can also be made by accessing the education support website at http://www.aueducationsupport.com and selecting “AU Transcript Request” from the top menu bar.
ATTACHMENT - GRADE APPEAL FORM

AIR UNIVERSITY eSchool of Graduate PME
AWC DL PROGRAM

Students wishing to appeal a grade issued by their instructor must first confer with the instructor by phone or through messages system in Blackboard® LMS and attempt to resolve the dispute informally. This must be done after a 24-hour “cooling off” period after the instructor posts the grade. No appeal may be initiated after three working days and only graded assignments may be appealed. Following this conference, if the issue remains unresolved, the student may appeal the grade using the process described below.

Documented evidence must be submitted to support an appeal. The documented evidence will be a concise written summary of the student’s position, including relevant facts, desired resolution, arguments supporting the desired solution, and relevant supporting documentation. The evidence should be attached to the Grade Appeal Form, be no more than two pages, and e-mailed/faxed to the instructor. Note: The burden of proof in a grade dispute lies with the student.

The instructor will review the student’s appeal, provide comments, and submit it to the Course Director for adjudication within 24 hours of receipt. The Course Director will respond to the student and instructor by Email within three working days of receipt of the submission, providing a decision and brief justification.

I, ____________________________, (Last 4 of SSN #) __________, have informally discussed the disputed grade with my instructor and am not satisfied with the resolution. Therefore, I am submitting a formal appeal for review by my instructor and for final decision by the Department Chair (or equivalent). I understand the resulting grade may be lower, higher, or remain the same and that the Department Chair’s (or equivalent) decision is final.

Course name and section: ____________________________________________

Course instructor name: ____________________________________________

When course was taken: __________ Grade received: __________ Grade sought: __________

Student Signature __________________ Date: ______________

(Typed Name and attached request to the Course Director from the instructor’s personal Email account is acceptable in lieu of signature)

Date/Time Appeal Received by Instructor: __________ Instructor initials: __________