



**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE
IN AIR FORCE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES
FOR
AIR FORCE CIVILIANS**

Q1. What is the purpose of this program?

A1. This program is designed to help Air Force civilians reach their full leadership potential by providing a little to no-cost Associate of Applied Science Degree in Air Force Leadership and Management Studies. Graduates of the program will gain the following competencies:

- They will have a better understanding of the History and Heritage of the Air Force and what it means to be a professional within the Air Force
- They will be steeped in the principles of Leadership and Management within the context of an Air Force organization
- They will have a greater understanding of interpersonal, group and organizational dynamics

Q2. How does this program work?

A2. This 60 credit hour program is designed to be completed in two years in a fully online format. Students will take 10 classes online through Air University and an additional 30 credit hours of general education/elective courses through credit by exam (CLEP/DSST) or through transfer credit, if the student has already completed the equivalent course work at a regionally accredited college or university. The Air Force will pay for one attempt at a CLEP/DSST test for each of these general education/elective course requirements. If the student does not pass on the first attempt, the student may be responsible for funding additional attempts of the same CLEP/DSST test.

Students will coordinate with their academic advisor to select one of four webinar (online class) session times (early morning, middle of the day, or early evening) to best accommodate both the student's and their work center's schedules. Some courses may assign class projects to be completed during work hours (no more than 2 hours per week). Class projects will involve activity related to the mission, allowing students to develop professionally while also providing a positive impact to their work center. All other coursework is expected to be accomplished during off-duty time.

Q3. Is this degree program accredited?

A3. Yes. This program has received regional accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The degree will have the school name "Air University."

Q4. What is E-learning?

A4. E-learning, or online learning, means that you participate in the course in a virtual setting. This program is designed to be completed entirely online by interacting with faculty and peers through remote computer access. You will never have a need to go TDY or attend class in a formal classroom setting as a result of this program. You will find that you can complete many of your readings and assignments at the library after duty hours, or at home if you prefer. This format gives individuals the opportunity to learn at the time that best fits their hectic schedule.

Q5. Who is this program geared towards?

A5. This program is specifically for Air Force civilians who desire to enhance their career, but who do not currently possess a college degree. The primary audience will be full-time permanent appropriated fund



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employees, who do not currently possess an Associate or Bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university.

Q6. Who is eligible to apply this year?

A6. Employees must have, as of the application deadline:

- A full-time permanent appropriated fund Air Force civilian in all grade levels
- Two years federal civil service by the application deadline
- An acceptable rating on most recent performance appraisal
- High school diploma, GED or equivalent
- No post-secondary degree from a regionally accredited 2 or 4-year college or university; however, you may have some college credit
- A signed Learning Agreement. Supervisor's signature on the learning agreement represents supervisor's:
 - 1) Approval to apply
 - 2) Agreement to provide mentoring throughout the program
 - 3) Assistance in gaining access to a government computer for webinar attendance and coursework completion, and
 - 4) Support to take 3 hours per week of online classes during duty hours. *NOTE: If mission requirements are such that the supervisor cannot authorize 3 hours a week of duty time for the webinars, this should **not** prevent civilians from applying. Arrangements can be made to have student attend online classes either early morning, early evening, or possibly during their lunch hour, as best fits the scheduling requirements of the student's office/unit.*
- Local Union Impact and Implementation (I & I) bargaining must have been completed no later than the application deadline for bargaining unit employees to be considered

Q7. How do I confirm that I & I has been completed at my base?

A7. Employees should contact their local Civilian Personnel Office for confirmation of I & I completion.

Q8. Why can't military members apply for this program?

A8. Enlisted members already have access to an Associate Degree program through the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) and officers already possess an undergraduate degree when they are commissioned. This program has been designed to fill a gap in Air Force civilian professional development. The program teaches the same leadership and management concepts to civilians that military members already receive through their various commissioning education and professional military education (PME) courses. Consequently, military members are not the target population for this program and are ineligible to apply.



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Q9. Is there a cost to attend this program?

A9. There are no tuition or book fees associated with the core program curriculum provided by Air University. The Air Force Personnel Professional Development School at Air University will offer the 10 program major classes in a completely online format at little to no cost to the student or their unit. All learning resources will be provided through the school or through Air Force eLearning. Students will be responsible for providing supplies as needed to accomplish their course work. Additionally, students can complete their general education/elective course requirements through funded credit by exams (CLEP/DSST). If a student fails their first attempt at a credit by exam, students will be responsible for the cost of subsequent tests in the same subject. Also, if a student chooses to attend a course (in class or on-line) versus completing by credit by exam, the student will be responsible for the cost of the course. Students may apply for civilian tuition assistance to cover a portion of the cost of these courses. If granted, students may be responsible for only 25% of the tuition cost, as outlined in AFI 36-401, *Training and Education*. However, students are not guaranteed to be approved for civilian tuition assistance.

Q10. How many class seats are available?

A10. The selection for the initial class will be 90 enrollees.

Q11. How do I apply?

A11. Applications must be submitted through the myPers website under Force Development. The application consists of:

- 1) Applicant Worksheet,
- 2) AF Form 4059, Air Force-Wide Civilian Competitive Development Nomination Form,
- 3) Resume,
- 4) Learning Agreement signed by the employee and the supervisor. Forms can be found at: myPers under the Force Development, https://mypers.af.mil/app/answers/detail/a_id/33547

Q12. When will classes begin?

A12. The first course in the program will begin March 2018.

Q13. When will I know if I've been selected?

A13. Selectees are expected to be announced no later than November 2017 and notification will come through official channels.

Q14. What happens once I'm selected for the program?

A14. You will receive official notification that you have been selected through your chain of command. At that time, you will be asked to submit official verification of the answers you provided on the applicant worksheet, which may include: an SF50, a civilian career brief, a copy of your latest civilian appraisal, official high school transcripts or equivalency test scores, and any college transcripts you may have. You will also be required to sign a Continued Service Agreement (CSA) acknowledging a one-year service commitment for attending this program. An academic advisor will contact you to begin discussing your two-year program, how to begin taking CLEP/DSST tests and which tests to take,



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whether any classes you have already taken can be applied towards the program, and how to register for the online learning management system (currently Blackboard) through which classes will be taught. Once assigned, your academic advisor will be available to answer any other questions you may have, either prior to the start of the program or at any time during the program.

Q15. What equipment do I need?

A15. Students will need a computer with internet access. The learning management system (the program used to teach class and interact with faculty and peers) will be accessed through the internet, but students will at times also need access to Microsoft Word and PowerPoint to accomplish assignments. They will also need CAC access at times, especially during initial set up of their account. Students will sign a learning agreement with their supervisor to ensure access to a government computer either in their work center or through other means such as the base library or education center. This will ensure the ability to participate in the instructor facilitated online instruction (up to three hours per week) during duty hours. Additionally, it will ensure access after duty hours, if the student does not have a computer at home. Students may also need a headset to participate in online interactive sessions as well as watching videos without disrupting coworkers. It is the responsibility of the student and their supervisor to ensure computer access throughout the duration of the program, so there is no disruption in the student's ability to complete course requirements on-time.

Q16. How much of a time commitment will this degree require?

Q16. Students can expect to spend up to 15 hours per week working on course requirements. This includes: webinars (online classes), readings, discussion board postings, responding to peers and instructors online, working on class projects, writing short papers, and preparing for oral presentations. Students will also be expected to take one CLEP/DSST test per term, so they may need to spend some additional time preparing for those tests as well.

Q17. Will I accomplish the course during duty time or off-duty time?

A17. Both. Students will be required to attend about 3 hours of webinar (online class) each week. This will normally occur during the duty day. Webinar times will be offered throughout the day, from early morning to early evening hours, if necessary, to help accommodate both student work center requirements and those students working overseas. At times, students will also be required to complete class projects whose focus is related to the work environment. Time to accomplish activities in support of these projects may be necessary during duty hours, but these activities should be work-related and in support of the work center's mission. This may require up to 2 additional hours each week. All remaining course requirements can be completed during off-duty time. However, supervisors are authorized to allow some time for coursework during the duty day, should the mission allow, in accordance with AFI 36-816, *Civilian Telework Program*, para 3.1.2.1, AFI 36-807, *Scheduling of Work, Holiday Observances and Overtime*, para 3.1.3 and the AF/A1 Home Station Learning policy letter dated XXX (in rewrite). Time spent beyond duty hours on class work (unless related to the work center's mission) is not eligible for overtime/compensatory time (under 5 CFR 551.423 and 5 CFR 550.111).



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Q18. What is the Learning Agreement that I have to turn in with my application?

A18. The learning agreement is an agreement between the student, the supervisor, and the school. It is the supervisor's opportunity to express his or her support for the student and their ability to complete this program by agreeing to provide a small amount of time (for most courses it will be about 15 minutes a week) mentoring the employee in discussions on class concepts and how they relate to the Air Force and/or the individual's work center, as well as reviewing and discussing major class projects or reports. The program has been designed that way to increase the student's learning. A mentor brings knowledge and understanding of the Air Force and leadership; a mentor should be, but is not required to be, the student's supervisor. Because the mentor will at no time affect the student's academic grade, there is no degree requirement for the mentor. Additionally, the learning agreement ensures the supervisor's commitment to provide the student with up to 3 hours per week during duty time (subject to mission requirements) for online class participation as well as access to a government computer.

Q19. What is the Continued Service Agreement?

A19. Each student will be required to complete a Continued Service Agreement (CSA) when they are formally accepted into the program. As part of the CSA, the student agrees to remain an Air Force civilian employee for one year after the conclusion of the program, in return for receiving the training that this program provides. This agreement can travel with you if you move to another DoD component. However, if you leave the DoD or federal civil service altogether you may find yourself responsible for repaying the Air Force's portion of the cost of your training, depending on how much of the program you completed prior to departing. Students who do not complete their required continued service may find themselves responsible for repaying the Air Force the cost of each course completed through the program, which is currently estimated at \$600 per course. There are limited exceptions, such as in the event of a reduction in force (RIF), and waivers may be requested in the event of emergency situations. This is a standard requirement for all federal civilian training lasting longer than a predetermined time period. Please see AFI 36-401, as well as the additional guidance on CSAs that can be found on www.opm.gov, for additional information.

Q20. What happens if I do not fulfill all or some of the Continued Service Requirement?

A20. The recoupment policy states that students who do not complete their required continued service may find themselves responsible for repaying the Air Force the cost of each course completed through the program, which is currently estimated at \$600 per course (the cost will be pro-rated based on service already completed.) Students who are dis-enrolled prematurely for reasons within their control or fail to complete the CSA for reasons within their control may be required to reimburse the Air Force for the prorated cost of the education. The CSA will transfer with the student if departing the Air Force for employment with other DoD agencies.

Q21. The schedule appears to be non-stop for 2 years. Are there "breaks" built into the schedule?

A21. The schedule for this program is rigorous. Students will receive a one week break between terms and approximately three weeks off during the late-December/January holiday time frame. However, there will be no summer break as in a traditional college schedule. For students to complete this



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program within two years, students must continue to take courses every term. Because of the small size of the college and the limited number of faculty, each year courses will be offered only once as a primary course and once as a remediation course. Remediation courses are designed specifically for those who have failed a term, and as such are designed to have a much lower faculty-to-student ratio. Remediation courses will not be available for enrollment to students under normal circumstances. In the event of emergency or unforeseeable/uncontrollable events, students may be able to make up a class in the remediation course. There are provisions built in for emergency situations for students to request a term off, or a year off if necessary. However, these are for documented emergency situations, which must be verified and approved by the student's chain of command prior to submitting the request for approval to the Chief, AF Associate Degree Program.

Q22. What if I want or need to withdraw from the program?

A22. Students should assess their ability to commit the time required for this important program before applying. Students are not expected to withdraw from this program as one might from a regular college program. It is the school's goal that all our students succeed, and faculty advisors will work closely with students to ensure they have the support they need. However, we realize that emergency situations do happen, and there are provisions for temporary or permanent withdrawals. Students will need to coordinate the withdrawal request with their academic advisor and their chain of command prior to requesting approval from the Chief, AF Associate Degree Program to withdraw. Students should also recognize that they may owe a prorated service commitment to the Air Force for the time they have spent in the program prior to withdrawal.

Q23. What happens if I fail a class?

A23. Students who fail to obtain a grade of at least a "C" on a course will be required to retake that course. The course will be given in a remediation format, providing for a much smaller student to faculty ratio. However, the program is designed to offer each class only once per year, so students will be expected to enroll in their next class while also taking a required remediation class.

Q24. How does the CLEP/DSST testing process work?

A24. The Air Force has arranged, through this program, to pay for one CLEP/DSST attempt for each general education and elective course required for completion of the program. The Air Force will cover all fees, to include registration and exam fees, for CLEP/DSST exams taken at on-base and "fully-funded" off-base National Test Centers. If selected, the student's academic advisor will walk the student through this process. Additional information will be available both from the student's academic advisor, as well as from the program's website.

Q25. What happens if I fail a CLEP/DSST?

A25. Students who fail an initial attempt at a CLEP/DSST to fulfill their general education and/or elective requirements will, if taking a CLEP/DSST exam to fulfill that same general education/elective block, have to fulfill this requirement at their own cost. While Air University does offer five online courses that can fulfill the three elective requirements, Air University currently does not offer any classes online or in-



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residence to fulfill the general education requirements. Students will be required to either pay for additional CLEP/DSST exams or pay for an online or in-residence class to fulfill those requirements. There are a variety of free resources available to help students prepare for CLEP/DSST courses, which can be found online, at base libraries, and at base Education Centers. Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these resources to prepare themselves appropriately prior to attempting a CLEP/DSST exam. If selected, academic advisors will discuss these resources with students.

Q26. What if I would rather take a classroom course instead of a CLEP/DSST test?

A26. Air University currently offers five online courses that can be taken to fulfill elective requirements. For general education requirements, students may also take a course at a local or online accredited college and transfer the credit into the program. However, students should confer first with their academic advisor prior to taking a class in this manner to ensure the credit hours will transfer. Air University will not fund these courses. However, the student may apply for civilian tuition assistance to supplement the cost of any courses completed in this manner. However, Tuition Assistance is not guaranteed and, even if approved, could result in the student paying 25% of the cost of tuition for each course.

Q27. What courses can I transfer into the program?

A27. Students will be able to transfer up to 30 credit hours into the program to satisfy the general education and elective requirements. These requirements include: Written Communication, Oral Communication, College Math, Social Science, Humanities, Intro to American Government, Intro to Computing, and 3 program-related electives. Students should not register for or take any courses prior to being accepted into the program and coordinating with their academic advisor.

Q28. How does this compare to the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF)?

A28. Like CCAF, this program is sponsored by the Air Force and awards a degree at the Associate level. However, because current law does not allow civilians to attend CCAF, this program has been created in a separate organization of Air University under a completely different authority that allows for Air Force civilians participation. Consequently, only Air Force civilians are eligible for this program. While military members receive some credits for their technical training and OJT/upgrade training (training specifically related to their job) through CCAF, civilians will not have that option in this program. Unlike CCAF, this program will offer only one degree, the Associate of Applied Science in Air Force Leadership and Management Studies. Students will be required to take courses related to the discipline and will not get credit for any work-related training previously offered by the USAF. Students, however, may get transfer credit for equivalent courses taken previously from any regionally accredited college or university to include CCAF.

Q29. Will the credits/degree I receive in this program be transferable to another school?

A29. This degree is regionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Because of this, the program's courses are eligible for transfer credit to other colleges and universities if students desire to continue their education by pursuing a Bachelor's Degree. Just like any accredited school,



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acceptance of transfer credit by other colleges and universities is outside our control and subject to each specific college or university's policies on transfer credit. Therefore, this question would have to be answered by the school you hope to transfer into. Most schools will recognize transfer credits from a regionally accredited college or university; however the amount of credit that may transfer varies based on each school's transfer policy. Unlike CCAF's ABC program, there are no agreements in place to immediately transfer this program's credits into another college's four-year degree program.

Current as of: 10 Feb 17