CRITICAL THINKING

Upon graduation, our graduates will be required to identify and solve complex problems and effectively respond to situations they have not previously confronted. Acting responsibly in an ever-changing world of ill-defined problems requires critical thinking. At USAFA, critical thinking is defined as: The process of self-aware, informed, and reflective reasoning for problem-solving and decision-making even in the absence of ideal conditions. Cadets’ critical thinking is developed in an intentional manner across the USAFA experience, promoting the use of appropriate critical thinking processes within a discipline or context.

USAFA GRADUATES WILL BE ABLE TO:¹

*Self-aware Reasoning*

**Proficiency 1**: Describe their own assumptions and contexts.

**Proficiency 2**: Explain how their own assumptions and contexts influence approaches to problem solving and decision making.

*Informed Reasoning*

**Proficiency 3**: Identify relevant information that is needed to solve a problem or make an effective decision.

*Reflective Reasoning*

**Proficiency 4**: Identify the assumptions and contexts that underlie an argument.

**Proficiency 5**: Evaluate the strength of an argument in support of an idea or interpretation.

**Proficiency 6**: Propose alternative interpretations of information or observations.

*Problem-solving and Decision Making*

**Proficiency 7**: Identify issue(s) in need of solving.

**Proficiency 8**: Intentionally apply an appropriate process to develop solutions to an issue.

**Proficiency 9**: Assess the merit of multiple options in order to identify the best solution.

**Proficiency 10**: Explain how changes to assumptions or contexts alter the recommended solution.