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 in the absence of ideal information.* Cadets’ critical thinking is developed through an educational and experiential approach that is intentional and developmental, spanning the 4-year course of study and culminating in well-designed critical thinking learning experiences within cadets’ chosen major.

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:** Solve problems and make reasoned decisions under volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous and time-constrained conditions.

**Proficiency 11:** Explain how changes to assumptions or contexts alter the recommended solution.