

# Professional Development of Cadets

The purpose of this lesson is for students to comprehend the structure of Cadet Program.

## Desired Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify the mission, goals, and five elements of the Cadet Program.
2. Be familiar with the management of the cadet program and accompanying cadet records and tests.
3. Discuss progression through the cadet program, including the significance of milestone awards.
4. Describe the importance of national cadet special activities.

**Scheduled Lesson Time:** 30 minutes

## Introduction

The CAP Cadet Program presents a unique opportunity for America's youth to learn leadership skills, gain knowledge and understanding of aerospace science, develop an appreciation for the importance of life-long physical fitness, and gain reinforcement of their core values through character development. CAP senior members are important to the Cadet Program through their management of the program, supervision of cadet activities, and mentoring of cadet members. Even though you may be a member of a unit with no cadets assigned, all members are responsible for being familiar with and providing support to the Cadet Program as it is one of the three missions of Civil Air Patrol. Today, former CAP cadets fill leadership positions in business, government, non-profit organizations and the military. Many former cadets continue their association with CAP by transitioning to CAP senior membership. You will meet these former cadets at all levels of leadership within CAP.

### 1. Identify the mission, goals, and five elements of the Cadet Program

The mission of the Cadet Program is to provide the youth of our nation with a quality program that enhances their leadership skills through an interest in aviation, and simultaneously provide service to the United States Air Force and the local community. The Cadet Program seeks to provide America with a pool of young, dynamic aerospace leaders for the future. United States citizens or aliens admitted for permanent residence between the ages of 12 and 18 years of age are eligible for initial cadet membership. Individuals who join CAP as a cadet prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday may remain cadets until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

The goals of the Cadet Program are to:

1. Provide an environment where cadets learn teamwork, refine their communications skills, become self-disciplined and develop self-confidence;
2. Develop the cadet's knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for understanding aerospace principles and the total impact of aerospace power upon society;
3. Assist the cadet develop a personal ethical foundation and an understanding of the moral issues through discussion and debate;
4. Guide cadets in how to become physically fit and develop a lifelong habit of regular exercise;
5. Encourage cadets to participate in a variety of special activities and programs to enhance their learning of leadership principles and aerospace science.

Through study and performance, cadets work through a series of achievements and milestone awards. As cadets progress, they advance in grade, increase the scope of their leadership responsibilities, earn awards, and become eligible for nationally-sponsored special activities and scholarships.

#### Five Elements of the Cadet Program

The Cadet Program accomplishes its mission of developing young, dynamic aerospace leaders through the application of the program's five elements. The Cadet Program elements are:

1. Leadership
2. Aerospace Education
3. Character Development
4. Physical Fitness
5. Activities

**Leadership** - The goal of the Leadership program element is to develop in cadets the ability to think independently and lead others in an atmosphere of teamwork and mutual respect. CAP introduces youth to Air Force perspectives on leadership through self-paced study, classroom instruction and hands-on opportunities to apply leadership principles to real-world challenges within the Cadet Corps. Senior members, acting as mentors and instructors, help the cadets develop their leadership potential. Cadets must pass multiple-choice tests of their leadership knowledge to complete most achievements and earn milestone awards. Some tests require cadets to perform drill and ceremonies. Other achievements include speech, essay assignments, reports and service in various staff assignments.

**Aerospace Education** - The aerospace education element inspires in youth a love of aviation, space, and technology; provides them with a foundation in aerospace's scientific principles; and introduces them to aerospace career opportunities. Cadets are

introduced to aviation, space and technology through self-study and group-study methods. Cadets' use specially designed educational materials to expand their knowledge and understanding of aerospace science related topics. Senior members and experienced cadets act as aerospace instructors and mentors. Cadets also have opportunities for hands-on learning through the model rocketry, Satellite Tool-Kit and Aerospace Excellence (AEX) programs. Cadets must demonstrate their proficiency by passing a multiple-choice test of their aerospace knowledge for most achievements. Some milestone awards require the completion of a comprehensive aerospace test.

**Character Development** - Character Development (formerly known as Moral Leadership) develops in cadets a commitment to live CAP's Core Values, and the ability to think critically about moral and ethical issues. CAP develops character in cadets through mentoring, character education and activities that promote a drug-free ethic. Commanders are required to provide a character development program for cadets. A CAP Chaplain or Character Development Instructor (CDI) should coordinate the program. In units without a chaplain or CDI, the commander may appoint a senior member to conduct the character development program. The senior member conducting the forum does not formally evaluate or test the cadets, but facilitates the forums to ensure all cadets participate in the discussion. Although normally coordinated by chaplain corps personnel, this is not a religious meeting, but a forum for cadets to examine their own moral standards and values in the framework of a guided discussion. Civilian clergy and other community leaders may be invited to participate when accompanied by a CAP senior member. The character development program will be conducted at least once per month for approximately 1 hour. All cadets present should participate.

**Physical Fitness** - Physical Fitness is important to the overall growth and development of the individual. In recognition of this fact, the physical fitness element is designed to develop in cadets a habit of regular exercise. The fitness program encourages units to provide drills, games and other activities that promote physical fitness. Commanders should schedule time for cadet fitness training; simply administering the required fitness tests is not sufficient to meet this element's purpose. The Cadet Physical Fitness Test (CPFT) consists of four events: the sit and reach, curl-ups, push-ups, and a mile run or a shuttle run. For the performance standards required of each event, see CAPP 52-18, *Cadet Physical Fitness Program*. The CPFT is usually administered by a senior member (who does not need to be the unit's testing officer). In some instances, the test may be administered by CAP-USAF personnel or a physical fitness instructor approved in advance by the unit commander. Cadets may assist in proctoring the CPFT under the supervision of the test administrator. Physical exercise in the Cadet Program will be used only to improve cadets' physical fitness while increasing confidence, teamwork and determination. Fitness training shall never be used as a form of punishment or as a vehicle to teach remedial discipline.

**Activities** - Cadet Program's activities element is designed for cadets to apply their leadership skills, explore aerospace careers and display their overall enthusiasm for the cadet ethic. Each squadron decides what activities it undertakes based on the

interests of its leaders and members. All units should strive to be well-rounded and offer activities encompassing all three CAP missions. The cadet staff should help plan and lead unit activities. Cadet activities should be "hands-on," enabling cadets to apply what they have learned in the other four program elements. Activities may be conducted locally, regionally and at the national level. All activities must emphasize safety. Units may establish an activities committee to help manage cadet events. Advanced cadets serve as mentors and instructors, helping junior cadets advance in leadership, aerospace education or physical fitness. Each activity should have an educational or training goal and at least one objective that is specific and measurable, but there is no standard, formal test instrument for cadet activities. Commanders should always seek feedback from cadets and staff on ways to improve local activities. For major events, activity directors should provide their commander with an "after action report" that discusses the activity's successes and lessons learned. Units should keep these reports on file to aid in planning subsequent activities.

## **2. Be familiar with the management of the Cadet Program and accompanying cadet records and tests**

### Senior Member Involvement in the Cadet Program

Since the Cadet Program is one of the three missions of the Civil Air Patrol it is incumbent upon all senior members, regardless of the unit to which they are assigned or their specific interest in CAP, to support the program. Support may be as involved as enrollment in the Cadet Programs Specialty Training Track (See CAPP 216, *Specialty Track Study Guide - Cadet Programs Officer*) or working beside a cadet during an emergency services mission, or perhaps providing a cadet orientation flight.

Senior member support and guidance is essential for the conduct of a successful Cadet Program. All aspects of the program rely upon senior members to act as commanders, directors, supervisors, administrators, escorts, instructors, trainers, advisors, chaperones, and mentors. Many senior members with prior military service find that they are able to share the benefits of their experiences with cadets. Those members without military experience also make important contributors to the cadets' leadership and aerospace development by sharing their managerial and leadership experience in other professions. Prior military experience is not a requirement for participation as a senior member in the Cadet Program. A sincere interest in the development of our nation's youth, willingness to guide and mentor cadets and the ability to learn are all that is required of a cadet programs officer.

The Commander must appoint senior member staff to support the conduct of the Cadet Program at the unit level and ensure the program elements are effectively managed. Generally, it is necessary to staff the following positions

1. Leadership Officer
2. Aerospace Education Officer

3. Chaplain or Character Development Instructor
4. Activities Officer
5. Testing Officer

All senior member Cadet Program staff officers report directly to the squadron commander in cadet squadrons or to the squadron deputy commander for cadets in composite squadrons (See CAPR 20-1, *Organization of Civil Air Patrol*).

In addition to the senior member staff, commanders should appoint a cadet staff to provide leadership opportunities to cadets as they progress through the Cadet Program achievements. Commanders may keep cadet command and staff positions vacant until such time as cadets obtain appropriate grades and maturity to handle the responsibilities commensurate with these assignments. Cadets may not serve in any senior member staff position but they may serve as assistants to senior staff officers.

Appointed by the squadron commander, the senior cadet in a unit is known as the cadet commander. In cadet squadrons, the cadet commander reports directly to the squadron commander whereas in composite squadrons the cadet commander reports to the squadron deputy commander for cadets. The cadet commander is responsible for managing and supervising the cadet staff and those cadets assigned to the squadron. Commanders should maximize the use of their cadets both in planning and conducting the Cadet Program. Cadets should be encouraged to plan and conduct the unit's weekly meetings and other activities. Senior members shall mentor and supervise the cadets to ensure the Cadet Program's mission and goals are being fulfilled and all program elements are being conducted in accordance with CAP policies and procedures (See CAPP 52-6, *Mentoring*, for further information).

Most squadrons meet weekly for 2 1/2 hours. The cadet staff, with senior member guidance, plans the program. Units should organize their weekly meetings around a master schedule based on a 13-week quarter. This system ensures the unit fulfills the minimum training requirements, and allows ample time for other special training opportunities.

Cadets are required to participate actively in their local unit if they are to progress in the Cadet Program. Excessive, unexcused absences may be cause for termination from CAP. Any school-related activity is considered an excused absence. Cadets are responsible for notifying the unit about school activities in advance. School-related absences do not excuse cadets from the prerequisites needed to earn promotions.

### **3. Discuss progression through the Cadet Program, including the significance of milestone awards**

Youth become CAP cadets through a two-step process of orientation and membership. During orientation, prospective cadets receive an introduction to CAP's missions, and the benefits of the Cadet Program in particular. During the membership process,

prospective cadets apply for membership in CAP. Units are encouraged to spend at least 3 weeks introducing prospective cadets to CAP and the Cadet Program prior to membership. Many units have discovered that such an orientation period increases member retention. Commanders should pair each prospective cadet with another cadet, who will serve as a mentor. Mentors accompany prospective cadets during meetings, introduce them around the squadron, assist in their orientation and generally share their excitement for being a cadet and make them feel welcome.

Parents (or guardians) should be invited to the first meeting. The squadron commander (or deputy commander for cadets) should personally meet with the parents to discuss the goals and benefits of the Cadet Program, as well as the financial costs of membership, meeting schedules, contact information and cadet protection policies.

Upon joining CAP, new cadets receive a Member Kit, which includes cadet texts and other resources specially designed for new cadets. Prospective cadets officially become members of CAP when National Headquarters adds their name to the unit roster in CAP e-Services. New cadets are eligible to receive an Air Force-style blues uniform at no cost, depending on the availability of federal funding through the Air Force. Cadets who leave CAP within their first year of membership are expected to return the uniform items to the unit so the commander may issue the uniform to another cadet.

**Cadet Program Achievement Structure** - The Cadet Program is comprised of sixteen achievements divided into four phases. The completion of each phase is marked by the awarding of a milestone award. There are five milestone awards in the Cadet Program.

1. Wright Brothers Award marks completion of Phase I
2. General Billy Mitchell Award marks completion of Phase II
3. Amelia Earhart Award marks completion of Phase III
4. General Ira C. Eaker Award marks completion of Phase IV
5. Carl A. Spaatz Award is the highest award in the Cadet Program

The milestone awards mark the cadet's transition from one phase of the Cadet Program into another phase where he or she will assume new leadership roles commensurate with his/her increased maturity and development as a cadet.

The Wright Brothers Award signifies completion of Phase I of the Cadet Program and promotion to the grade of Cadet Staff Sergeant. It is at this level where cadets really begin to exercise the leadership education they've been given, as they become eligible for staff positions within the unit with increased responsibility and authority.

The General Billy Mitchell Award is a significant milestone award as it not only signifies the completion of Phase II and promotion to the grade of cadet second lieutenant but also entitles the recipient to additional special benefits. These benefits include eligibility for CAP scholarships, participation in Air University distance learning programs, credit

towards AFROTC's General Military Course, and advancement to the grade of E-3 (Airman First Class) upon enlistment in the USAF. Service academies also look favorably upon cadets who have achieved the Mitchell Award.

The Amelia Earhart Award signifies completion of Phase III of the Cadet Program and promotion to the grade of Cadet Captain. On top of the benefits awarded for the Mitchell, Earhart cadets become eligible to participate in the International Air Cadet Exchange, and to compete to become a CAP Cadet of the Year. The winner of the National Cadet of the Year Award receives special recognition at the CAP annual Summer National Board and Conference and receives a cash award from given in the name of the Air Force Association.

The fourth milestone award is the General Ira C. Eaker Award, signifying completion of Phase IV of the Cadet Program. Cadets receiving this award promote to Cadet Lieutenant Colonel and become eligible to test to receive the General Carl A. Spaatz Award.

The fifth and final milestone award, General Carl A. Spaatz Award, is conferred upon a cadet who completes the entire Cadet Program and successfully passes the Spaatz Award Examination. Less than one half of one percent of all cadets achieve this prestigious award named in honor of the first Chief of Staff of the US Air Force and first Chairman of the CAP National Board.

Recipients of the Mitchell, Earhart, Eaker and Spaatz milestone awards are also entitled to advanced grade and achievement in the CAP Senior Member Professional Development Program (See CAPR 50-17, *CAP Senior Member Professional Development Program*).

Cadets complete achievements and milestone awards sequentially. Cadets may complete Achievement 1 any time after joining CAP. They may attempt the Spaatz Award exam any time after completing Phase IV. All other achievements require a minimum separation of 2 months (approximately 8 weeks) between each achievement and milestone award. Cadets who fail to progress in the Cadet Program by completing at least two achievements per year may be terminated from the program.

To progress in the Cadet Program cadets must complete the specified learning requirements for each achievement. In general, each achievement requires completion of leadership and aerospace tests, monthly character development session attendance and regular participation in unit activities. Specific requirements for completion on each achievement and milestone award are listed in CAPR 52-16, *Cadet Program Management*.

To see a graphic representation of the requirements for cadet achievements and promotion, click on Cadet Path of Progression at the top of the lesson.

[Recording Training Progression](#)

**Cadet Records** - CAPF 66, *Cadet Master Record*, is the permanent record of cadet accomplishments. The personnel or administrative officer establishes and maintains a CAPF 66 for each cadet upon joining CAP. Units may record CAPF 66 data using a database or spreadsheet in lieu of using a hard copy. Each cadet's personnel file also must include a CAPF 52 series, *Phase Certification Form* (CAPF 52-1, 52-2, 52-3, or 52-4 as appropriate for each applicable phase). The CAPF 52 series forms are temporary records charting a cadet's progress within each phase of the Cadet Program. When a cadet completes a phase, he/she forwards the completed CAPF 52 to National Headquarters for validation and processing of the milestone award. Cadet achievement completion and promotion may also be documented using the "Cadet Promotion" module of CAP e-Services.

Cadets, and their parents, may inspect their files at any time. It will be freely given to the gaining unit commander if the cadet transfers units. During a transfer, the old and new commanders must ensure the cadet's records are complete and up-to-date. Commanders must ensure all records are treated in accordance with CAPR 10-2, *Files Maintenance and Records Disposition*, and CAPR 39-2, *Civil Air Patrol Membership*.

**Achievement and Milestone Tests** - Commanders will provide opportunities for cadets to test for their achievements at least every 30 days. Cadets may not test beyond their next achievement. Some leadership achievement tests require cadets to perform drill and ceremonies. Cadets who are unable to drill due to a disability or injury will complete drill tests to the extent possible. The commander may waive all or part of a drill test for cadets in restricted physical fitness categories.

Testing officers must provide feedback to cadets who fail tests. If a cadet fails a test, the testing officer will consult the test's answer key and inform the cadet which sections of the textbook he/she needs to review. Cadets should be assigned mentors to help them study and better understand the material.

In special circumstances, commanders may grant oral testing, using common sense and good judgment.

CAPR 50-4, *Test Administration and Security*, governs all tests. To order cadet tests, mail, fax or e-mail a request to National Headquarters. Requests must be signed by the testing officer or unit commander, or originate from the commander's e-mail address. Units may make a reasonable number of copies of the cadet test booklets and answer keys, but must inventory and number the copies.

#### **4. Describe the importance of National Cadet Special Activities**

National Cadet Special Activities (NCSAs) enable cadets to explore civilian and military aerospace careers, receive flight training, and develop leadership skills. National Headquarters announces NCSAs and their prerequisites and application procedures each fall, on-line at [http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/cadet\\_programs/activities/](http://members.gocivilairpatrol.com/cadet_programs/activities/).

Cadets must have graduated from an encampment, and received the endorsement of their wing commander, before attending an NCSA.

Wings may hold a "Special Activities Selection Board" to allow their commander to gain a better understanding of the cadets who are applying for cadet activities.

Cadets must complete 80% of the NCSA to be eligible to graduate. The activity director determines if a cadet successfully completes an activity and receives credit for the NCSA. Cadets who successfully complete one of the NCSAs become eligible for the NCSA ribbon (see CAPR 39-3, *Award of CAP Ribbons, Medals, and Certificates*).

If due to medical or disciplinary reasons a cadet must be sent home early from a NCSA it shall be the obligation of the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) to pay for transportation and/or related costs. Parents acknowledge this obligation by signing their cadet's CAPF 31, *Application for CAP Encampment or Special Activity*.

## **Lesson Summary and Closure**

This module has presented to you a survey of the CAP Cadet Program mission and goals, the five elements of the Cadet Program, an overview of how to manage and administer the program, the significance of various cadet milestone awards, and how you can contribute to the development of our nation's youth. While the individual cadet's active participation is essential for success, without the guidance and mentoring of committed senior members the cadet is not able to achieve his or her fullest potential.

Senior members who choose to volunteer their time to support the Cadet Program will find the experience extremely rewarding. Long time cadet program officers can tell you about the pride they have shared with the cadets they have mentored as they witnessed them receive milestone awards, been invited to their graduations from universities and service academies, and been present at other significant moments of accomplishment.

Whether you have chosen to specialize as a cadet programs officer, conduct cadet flight orientation rides, attend a wing awards ceremony or find yourself working beside a cadet at a mission base the information you have learned here will provide you with a better understanding of the training and abilities of CAP's cadet members. You may also find that your fellow senior member with whom you work is a former CAP cadet.

## **Works Cited**

CAPR 10-2, *Files Maintenance and Records Disposition*  
CAPR 20-1, *Organization of Civil Air Patrol*  
CAPR 39-2, *Civil Air Patrol Membership*  
CAPR 39-3, *Award of CAP Ribbons, Medals, and Certificates*  
CAPR 50-4, *Test Administration and Security*  
CAPR 50-17, *CAP Senior Member Professional Development Program*  
CAPP 52-6, *Mentoring*  
CAPR 52-16, *Cadet Program Management*

CAPP 52-18, *Cadet Physical Fitness Program*  
CAPP 216, *Specialty Track Study Guide - Cadet Programs Officer*