

PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION CENTRE

Armed Forces Academy of Gen. M. R. Stefanik

Č.: Q – 79

INTERNAL SYSTEM OF QUALITY of the Professional Military Education Centre of the Armed Forces Academy of General M. R. Stefanik V3.0



COUNCIL FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE
of the Armed Forces Academy
of General Milan Rastislav Stefanik

The Internal System of Quality at the Professional Military Education Centre of the Armed Forces Academy of General Milan Rastislav Stefanik (Version 3.0) was approved by at the Council for Quality Assurance of the Armed Forces Academy of Gen. M. R. Stefanik on September 21, 2023.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACO	Allied Command Operations
ACT	Allied Command Transformation
AFA	Armed Forces Academy of General M. R. Stefanik
AJP	Allied Joint Publication
APP	Allied Procedural Publication
Bi-SCD	Bi-Strategic Commands Directive
C2	Command and Control
C3	Command, Control and Communication
CA	Comprehensive Approach
CBL	Competence Based Learning
CG	Command Group
CIS	Communication and Information System
CoI	Community of Interest
COPD	Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive
CRE	Course Review/Evaluation
CRT	Curriculum Review Team
DAT	Defence Against Terrorism
DEEP	Defence Education Enhancement Program
DCF	Delayed Course Feedback
DCOS	Deputy Chief of Staff
DIR	Director
D DIR	Deputy Director
DMS	Document Management System
DoK	Depth of Knowledge
E&IT	Education and Individual Training
ePRIME	Partnership Real-time Information, Management and Exchange System
ETOC	Education and Training Opportunities Catalogue
EXER	Exercise
HO/TO	Hand Over/Take Over
IT	Information Technology
ICD	International Courses Department
ISOC	International Staff Officers Course
JFT	Joint Force Trainer
LF HQ	Land Force Headquarters
LL	Lessons Learned
MDMP	Military Decision-Making Process

METT	Mobile Education Training Team
MoD	Ministry of Defence
NCA	NATO Command Arrangements
NCS	NATO Command Structure
NGI	National Guard Indiana
OLPP	Operational-Level Planning Process
OPP	Operations Planning Process
PBL	Project Based Learning
PDCA	Plan, Do, Check and Act
PDP	Personnel Development Programme
PEC	Program Evaluation Cycle
PLO	Performance and Learning Objective
PMEC	Professional Military Education Centre
PoW	Program of Work
PTEC	Partnership Training Education Centre
QA	Quality Assurance
QC	Quality Control
QAM	Quality Assurance Manager
QAMR	Quality Assurance Management Review
QC	Quality Control
QMS	Quality Management System
QMT	Quality Management Team
RA	Requesting Authority
SAT	System Approach to Training
SBL	Scenario Based Learning
SCE	Series of Courses Evaluation
SME	Subject Matter Expert
SOP	Standing Operating Procedure
SVK	Slovakia
TNA	Training Needs Analysis
TPLF	Tactical Planning for Land Forces
TRA	Training Requirement Analysis

PREAMBLE

The purpose of this document is to describe implementation of both, the Internal quality assurance system at the Armed Forces Academy of General Milan Rastislav Stefanik (hereinafter referred to as AFA) as well as the requirements of BiSC 075-007 – Directive on Education and Individual Training, into the principles of the Internal Quality System at the Professional Military Education Centre of AFA. These principles are applicable to all Education and Individual Training (E&IT) activities provided internally at the PMECC as well as to external (mobile) activities in support of the AFA's role as the Partnership Training Education Centre.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT - THE PMECC MISSION

Professional Military Education Centre (hereinafter referred to as PMECC) is a component of AFA, subordinated to the Vice-Rector for Education. PMECC chiefly provides the **professional military education** of soldiers of the Slovak Armed Forces to meet the requirements on the state service performance in accordance with para 33 sect. 2 and para 37 of the Act No. 281/2015 Coll. on the State Service of Professional Soldiers, and, at the same time, according to para 2 sect. 3 of the Act No. 268/2009 Coll. on the Lifelong Education, it conveys the **supplementary education** subsequent to school education and enables obtaining partial or full qualifications or satisfying interests and gaining the ability to participate in the life of civil society.

For this reason, PMECC provides education not only to professional soldiers, but also additional education of civil employees of the Ministry of Defence and other departments of the State Administration, recruited graduates of civilian colleges, civil public and additional education conducted based on specific contracts and conventions.

The main forms of education, which the PMECC ensures in cooperation with other components of AFA, are courses required for military rank (so-called Career Courses), courses for duties' performance and for higher qualification (so-called Short-Term Specialized Courses, the proficiency/competence training and the update training), International Courses, the Supplementary Pedagogy Study and the Third Age University.

The PMECC is involved in performing main tasks of the Partnership Training Education Centre (hereinafter referred to as "PTECC") by conducting International Courses in English. PTECC status was granted to AFA by decision of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in 2004. Based on that AFA is listed among NATO Education Training Facilities in the document of NATO Military Committee, MC 0458/3 Education, Training, Exercise and Evaluation (ETEE) Policy.

The main goal of International Courses organized by AFA via PMECC is to educate students from member and partner countries of NATO in planning and decision-making processes at the NATO tactical (Tactical Planning for Land Forces - TPLF) and operational (Operational-Level Planning Process - OLPP) level. In this way, the PMECC participates in the standardization processes, aiming to improve operational efficiency through interoperability between units of the NATO Member and Partner Nations.

1. INTERNAL SYSTEM OF QUALITY AT THE PMECC

The internal system of quality at PMECC is based on the document Internal Quality Assurance System at the AFA ("Internal System of Quality Assurance")¹. The internal quality assurance system was issued in accordance with Act no. 131/2002 Coll. on higher education institutions and on amendments to certain laws as amended (hereinafter referred to as the "Higher Education Act") and Act No. 269/2018 Coll. on ensuring the quality of higher education and amending Act no. 343/2015 Coll. on public procurement and on the amendment of certain laws as amended (hereinafter referred to as the "Act on Ensuring the Quality of Higher Education"). Quality assurance and internal assessment is based on the Long-Term Intention for the period 2022-2032² and the Quality Assurance Policies³.

BiSC 075-007 – Directive on Education and Individual Training (hereinafter referred to as BiSC 075-007) describes in details procedures and NATO requirements for the institutional accreditation of an Education and Training Facility (ETF). The first unconditional institutional accreditation of AFA obtained on July 28th 2018 (Certificate No: 7780/TSC TPX-0150/TT-ACT0179/Ser:NU) is valid until July 28th 2024.

The PMECC main effort is to attain the highest quality in Professional Military Education through a continuous quality improvement of existing and developing courses, which is reinforced by Lessons Learned and Doctrines Development. In order to meet required level of quality, the PMECC sets up processes and procedures which are publicly available and reflect NATO common understanding to minimum criteria for Internal Systems of Quality.⁴

These processes and procedures are key subject matters of the System of Quality at the PMECC, which is the property of the AFA, is not classified and is applied for official use only.

1.1. The AFA International Courses' Statement

Modern military operations are complex, human endeavours characterized by the continuous, mutual adaptation of give and take, moves, and countermoves among all participants. The unpredictability of human behaviour affects all military operations.

Commanders face thinking, uncooperative, and adaptive enemies, changing civilian perceptions, and differing agendas of various organizations in an operational area. Commanders and their subordinates must learn from experience, anticipate change, and develop adaptability so that they can conduct operations more effectively than their opponents can. Commanders integrate and synchronize operations through mission command and control.

Commanders understand they do not operate independently but as part of larger, often multinational forces. From this reason, they integrate and synchronize their actions with the rest of the forces to achieve the overall objective of the operation.⁵

¹ <https://www.aos.sk/www/data/uploads/files/Kvalita/internal-system-of-quality-assurance.pdf>

² <https://www.aos.sk/www/data/uploads/files/Kvalita/long-term-intention-for-the-period-of-2022---2032-as-amended-by-addendum-no.-1.pdf>

³ <https://www.aos.sk/www/data/uploads/files/Kvalita/quality-assurance-policies.pdf>

⁴ Annexes D and E to BiSC 075-007 from Sept. 10th 2015

⁵ ALLIED JOINT DOCTRINE FOR THE PLANNING OF OPERATIONS (AJP - 5), May 2019, para. 1-9,

The NATO Planning Process has been standardized at the operational level (Allied Joint Doctrine for Operational-Level Planning, AJP-5, and Allied Command Operations Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive, COPD). However, the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP/TPLF) at the Tactical Level has been kept in individual countries' responsibility using their own doctrines, which can lead to partial MDMP differences mirroring national interests, will, habits and options. Therefore, the level of quality and implementation of new approaches in the planning process at the tactical level differs between the respective allied members. The planning process at the tactical level of command is not complicated to understand as a whole, but its individual stages may be understood differently according to the readiness level of staff and individuals.

AFA is dedicated to not only keeping the NATO Institutional Accreditation, but we intend to conduct NATO *certified* international courses of the NATO Tactical Planning Process (in accordance with the Allied Publication APP-28 "Tactical Planning for Land Forces") and courses on the Planning of Joint Operations (in accordance with the planning process described in AJP-5, Allied Joint Doctrine for the Planning of Operations and Chapter 4 of COPD, Allied Command Operations Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive). In case of the tactical level, the development and annual review of international courses' curriculum is mentored and supervised by lecturers from the 38th Infantry Division, Indiana Army National Guard, based on the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic and the National Guard of Indiana (US). Pilot courses on the Planning of Joint Operations were mentored by lecturers from the Bundeswehr Command and Staff College (DEU) within the initiative of military education institutions of the Visegrad Group (V4) - „V4+ COPD Education Enhancement Initiative “.

The main goal of the international courses is to support dissemination of operations planning and decision-making procedures at the NATO tactical and operational level, and to contribute to the NATO and Partners officers' professional development and their interoperability within NATO-led operations. Teaching staff from partner education institutions, sponsored by the NATO Defence Education Enhancement Program (DEEP), also attends the international courses organized by AFA via PMECC.

1.2. Implementation of the NATO Quality Assurance Policy

In response to the NATO identified requirements on E&IT, which fulfilment is estimated by the NATO assigned Requirements Authority of the respective E&IT discipline, an improvement of the AFA/PTEC in E&IT is discussed during the Annual Quality Assurance (QA) Conference and then implemented.

The Internal System of Quality at the PMECC and its improvement process have to reflect all of the changes and identified shortfalls within the NATO QA policy as well as changes in the AFA's structure and its internal documents. This process of the Internal System of Quality improvement is conducted by the PMECC Quality Management Team (QMT) monitored by the

see https://www.coemed.org/files/stanags/01_AJP/AJP-5_EDA_V2_E_2526.pdf

Council for Quality Assurance of AFA and culminates during every PMECS Annual QA conference.

2. INTERNAL SYSTEM OF QUALITY AND ITS PROCEDURES

2.1. PMECS Roles and Vision

PMEC performs a main part of the AFA - PTEC's mission, which is to support and enhance the NATO Partners interoperability in the field of Planning and Decision-Making Processes at the NATO Tactical and Operational level. The PMECS structure is designed to be able to perform tasks in support of the following three pillars of the PTEC mission:

1. Professional Military Education and Individual Training.
2. Lessons Learned Review and Implementation.
3. Standardization and Expertise.

PMECS roles within these PTEC pillars:

- organizes different level of courses mainly for international community;
- provides premises for international courses' execution;
- deploys a Mobile Training Team to conduct courses abroad - if required;
- selects, analyses and stores Lessons Learned (LL) from area of planning processes;
- implements selected LL into international courses curriculum;
- represents a multinational hub for information sharing and comparison in area of Tactical Planning Process;
- provides the staff pre-deployment or certification training - on request;
- through the Department of Military Tactics and Operational Art of AFA, it cooperates with the Land Forces (LF) HQ of SVK AF in area of LL implementation into SVK Land Forces doctrines;
- cooperates with the respective Community of Interest (CoI) within the NATO Global Programming processes;
- assists in NATO standardization processes - if required.

The way that PMECS influences, develops and promotes identified evolution requirements on Tactical and Operational-Level Planning Processes domains has been stated in the AFA Long-Term Intention:

“The Armed Forces Academy as a Partner Training and Education Centre (PTEC) fulfils the objectives of support and interoperability in the field of planning and decision-making processes at the NATO tactical and operational level.”

2.2. PMEC Quality Strategy

The aim of the PMEC Quality Strategy is to support systemic approach to education and individual training in line with doctrines, policies and directives of NATO⁶, EU⁷ and AFA⁸.

The quality strategy enhances the Internal System of Quality with monitoring, revision and implementation of the best practices, which is observed during preparation of courses, that are available as products to Member and Partners NATO Countries. The Internal System of Quality fixes sustainment and development of E&IT quality by implementing guidelines for course chief instructor, course director, instructors, external Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and students, and by implementing other tools for effective work.

2.3. Quality Standards

- a. PMEC follows the principles of BiSC Directive 075-007 on E&IT in the field of Courses Development and Documentation. Within the Global Programming, the process typically starts with the corresponding Training Needs Analysis (TNA) to address an E&IT deficiency, which was identified in the Training Requirement Analysis (TRA) of a respective discipline.
- b. PMEC adopted the System Approach to Training (SAT) model to analyse, design, develop, implement and evaluate existing and new international courses.
- c. PMEC takes measures to permanently comply with both the NATO QMS and QA standards defined in Annexes D and E to BiSC Directive 075-007.

2.4. Organization of the Internal System of Quality at PMEC

In order to deliver desired outcomes, the QA within PMEC is recognized as the responsibility of all its members.⁹ In addition to internal and external AFA stakeholders, the Internal System of Quality of PMEC, is tracked and affected by the Council for Quality Assurance of AFA and the PMEC internal stakeholders as follows:

- a. Council for Quality Assurance of AFA as the executive coordinating and advisory body of the Rector of AOS, it methodically manages and coordinates processes related to the creation, implementation and use of the internal quality assurance system of AFA, and it evaluates the QA status at least once a year¹⁰. PMEC is represented by the PMEC director or a person authorized by him in the Council for Quality Assurance of AFA.
- b. **PMEC Quality Management Team (QMT)** ensures the implementation of QA processes and procedures within the PMEC. It supervises their monitoring and effectiveness at intervals referring to the Annual Quality Assurance Plan (see Annex A) and approves

⁶ Directive on Education and Individual Training BiSC 075-007

⁷ Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

⁸ Internal system of Quality Assurance <https://www.aos.sk/www/data/uploads/files/Kvalita/internal-system-of-quality-assurance.pdf>

⁹ Internal System of Quality Assurance No.: Q-50, Art. 6 – Functions, competences and duties in securing and evaluating internal quality assurance system

¹⁰ Smernica Rady pre zabezpečovanie https://weblm.aos.sk/data/component_file/100/120/f413.pdf

corrections, if required. The Quality Management Team leader plays also the role of the PMEC Quality Assurance Manager (QAM). Once a year, the QMT submits a PMEC Annual QA Report to the Council for Quality Assurance of AFA, which is regularly submitted to the HQ SACT/JFDD. In the years, in which the institutional accreditation is performed, the Annual Report is replaced by the Self-Assessment Report of AFA.

- c. The **PMEC QMT** consists of the following PMEC members:
- he ICD Chief as the QMT leader – the Quality Assurance Manager;
 - the PMEC Director as a QA supervisor;
 - Chiefs of PMEC Sections;
 - Course directors of all courses provided by PMEC.
- d. The **Director of PMEC** is responsible for supervising the implementation of processes and procedures of the E&IT QA policy through the PMEC command and control structure (C2) (Figure 1). Besides that, he supervises and coordinates the PMEC Annual Quality Assurance Plan (see Annex A) in the framework of the AFA's annual Program of Work (PoW) and oversees the PMEC's Internal System of Quality continuous improvement.

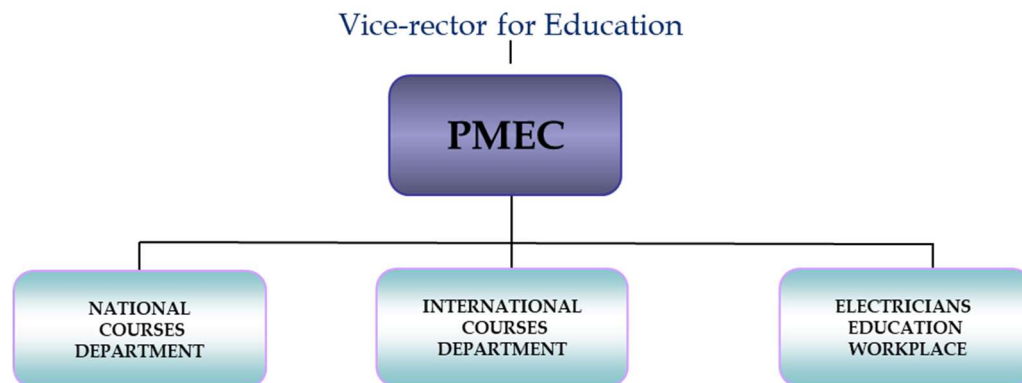


Figure 1 The PMEC's structure

- e. **Chief of International Courses Department (ICD) as PMEC QAM** is responsible for implementation of the PMEC's Internal System of Quality. Within his liabilities he:
- is responsible for the overall preparation and conduct of the PMEC's QA Process;
 - monitors the completion of planned PMEC's QA steps;
 - approves the annual training plan for ICD instructors/Personnel Development Program;
 - identifies performance deficiencies within every course analysis;
 - conducts the evaluation of the E&IT quality and performance measurement of instructors and students;
 - oversees the SAT model implementation during the new courses' Curriculum Design;
 - oversees the SAT model and the new courses' documentation standards during Curriculum Development;
 - manages the E&IT planning, new courses' Curriculum implementation, and Course Certification;
 - supervises processes of both Students' and Instructors' Evaluation;
 - manages implementation of the Communication Plan of PMEC;
 - coordinates preparation of the Courses QA Battle Rhythm; monitors, updates and improves the operational procedures as required;

- oversees conducting of surveys focused on international courses' effectiveness and applicability; ensures forwarding Delayed Course Feedback (DCF) questionnaires to course attendees and their superiors circa six (6) months after courses completion.

**f. Chief of the National Courses Department and
Head of the Electricians' Education Workplace**

- Apply PMEC's Internal System of Quality on instructional processes.
- Support the courses' measurements and assessment process.
- Identify Education and Individual Training (E&IT) solutions and design new courses' curriculum.
- Lead draft and update of Course Curriculum.
- Lead E&IT planning, and Curriculum implementation.
- Verify outcomes of the Students Evaluation process.
- Apply outcomes of the Instructors Evaluation process.
- Chair the coordination meetings with instructors concerning the QA needs.
- Implement measures of the PMEC's QA continuous improvement.
- Prepare the annual Instructors Education and Training Plan and submit it to the PMEC Director for approval.
- Are responsible for all steps specified in the relevant Courses QA Battle Rhythm.
- Are responsible for the new Courses Curriculum design in accordance with national rules.
- Are responsible for seeking, requiring and allocation of required internal or external SMEs (i.e. mentors, lectures, instructors, etc.) in favour of courses provided or directed by the PME Centre in collaboration with the Heads of Departments of AFA.
- Assists to the Heads of Departments of AFA in new Specialized Courses development and subsequently with their comprehensive organizational support.
- Are responsible for whole organization of own educational activities (organized by the section/workplace – such as the University of Third Age and the specialized part of the University Graduates Officers' Course).
- Apply internal PMEC's QA on instructional processes within on educational activities and identify performance deficiencies of all their iterations during analysis.
- Lead draft and update of Course Curriculum of own educational activities.
- Endorse particular courses final reports, including Lessons Learned (LL) and best practices observed and implemented before or during running own educational activities as well as recommended measures for the next courses continuous quality improvement. They submit those reports to the PMEC Director for approval.

g. Course Director/Senior Instructor/Chief Instructor

- Are responsible for executing individual Courses QA Battle Rhythm, for the running of course and for ensuring that all quality assurance steps specified in this document are observed and applied.
- Are responsible for preparation of Course Curriculum
- Participate in the coordination meetings with instructors concerning the QA needs and state the instructor E&IT needs for the following cycle/year.

- Supported by the respective Chief/Head of Section, they select SMEs (i.e. mentors, lectures, instructors, etc.) and ensure they are provided with the most current, updated version of the Course's Learning Objectives and Lessons Plan (Schedule).
- Collect student test/performance assessment, instructors' evaluation forms, students' evaluation forms and their own Lessons Identified (LI) during the course.
- Endorse particular courses final reports, including Lessons Learned (LL) and best practices observed and implemented before or during running the course as well as recommended measures for the next courses continuous quality improvement. They submit those reports to the PMEC Director for approval.

2.5. E&IT Business Model

A. Common Understanding the NATO Bi-Strategic Commands Directive

To implement E&IT, which reflect NATO operational requirements in line with political and military guidance, the PMEC applies the NATO Global Programming framework referred in Bi-SC 075-007 Directive on E&IT.

PMEC in a scope of global programming ensures that E&IT activities are based on requirements of the respective Requirement Authority and the Department Head for Operations Planning related matters and performance gaps identified by Operational Commanders.

PMEC endeavour to enhance quality of NATO Tactical and Operational Level Planning E&IT aims to ensure a match between each learner's skills and the knowledge acquisition through appropriate guidance and diagnostic assessment.



Figure 2 Global Programming Framework

B. Guiding Principles

PMEC's standards and guidelines for quality assurance include:

- PMEC's Internal System of Quality is publicly available.
- A formal mechanism for approval, periodic review and monitoring of PMEC's provision of E&IT is in place.

- Students' assessment criteria, regulations and procedures are applied consistently.
- QA procedures have to ensure that instructors, SMEs and guest speakers were qualified and competent.
- Resources (bibliography) available to learning process are adequate and appropriate for each individual course offered.
- Public and/or NATO information means (web page of AFA, ETOC, e-PRIME) are utilized to ensure that PMEC course catalogue containing current and accurate data is released.

C. Curriculum Review Process

Internal reviews of the courses curriculum or their parts are primarily carried out by the Course Leaders and Senior Instructors and reinforced by utilizing of Lessons Learned tools. This group is commonly understood in line with Figure 5. (in para 3.4.) as the Curriculum Review Team (CRT). To ensure that updated Learning Objectives meet NATO operational requirements, the CRT implement changes of the particular course content.

The Global Programming parties (RA, DH, JFT and CoI) are routinely informed about all international courses' curriculum enhancement and adjustments – through outputs from the PMEC's Annual QA conference, Annual QA (Self-Assessment) Report, the PMEC Annual QA Plan and specific review results initiated by new operational requirements as well as dialogue between PMEC and the other parties.

D. Quality Management System

Quality Management System as established at PMEC pertains to two different concepts - Quality Control (QC) and Quality Assurance (QA).

Quality Control aims to identify deficiencies and to revise documents with a focus on process outputs. Quality control, therefore, *is a reactive process*. The goal of QC is to emphasize uncovering and identifying of weaknesses of the final product.

Quality Assurance is a way of preventing deficiencies with a focus on the process when developing a product. It *is a proactive process*. The goal of QA is to improve development and test processes so that the final product should be suitable for intended purpose. Deficiencies (mistakes) should be avoided or at least eliminated.

Principles of Quality Management System (QMS) are reflected in all PMEC's processes and they reinforce a continuous improvement of its entire staff. The capstone processes have been addressed by the AFA Internal System of Quality¹¹ and subsequently by this document. If needed, the capstone processes are updated by PMEC's internal procedures and submitted to the AFA Council for Quality Assurance of AFA for endorsement. The PMEC personnel – command group, instructors, military and civilian administrative employees are selected in accordance with job descriptions and they are annually evaluated by their direct superiors in accordance with national standards.

¹¹ Internal system of Quality Assurance article 3 <https://www.aos.sk/www/data/uploads/files/Kvalita/internal-system-of-quality-assurance.pdf>

Tracking the *Quality Assurance* and *Quality Control* of E&IT processes, PMEC has identified dedicated (AFA and PMEC) stakeholders, which would routinely perform processes, which are depicted in the following matrix.

No.	Process	AFA PMEC STAKEHOLDERS					
		AFA QA Board	PMEC QAM	QMT	Course Curriculum Developer	Course Director	Support Staff
1.	QAMR	Establish and oversees	Lead	Review and update	Support	Support	Support
2.	Internal QA	Oversees	Conducts	Establish and oversees	Apply	Apply	Apply
3.	Analysis	Oversees	Review AARs	Endorse AARs	Identify performance deficiencies	After action review	Support Data Collection
4.	Measure and Assessment	Oversees	Leads the evaluation processes	Establish processes	Support	Assist	Data Collection
5.	Curriculum design	Oversees	Endorse SAT model implementation	Identify solutions and design training	Assists	Assists	Support
6.	Curriculum Development	Oversees	Endorse SAT model	Lead draft and update	Develop CCDs	Assist Curriculum development	Support
7.	Education and Training Planning	Oversees	Supervises	Provide direction and guidance	Apply	Lead	Publish
8.	Curriculum implementation	Oversees	Supervises	Lead and Verify	Assist	Conduct	Support
9.	Course Certification	Oversees	Supervises	Verify and endorse	CCDs preparation	Assist	Support
10.	Students Evaluation process	Oversees	Supervises	Establish the process		Lead	Assist and collect data
11.	Instructors Evaluation process	Oversees	Supervises	Establish the process		Lead	Assist and collect data
12.	Faculty Development	Oversees	Supervises	Establish and Conduct		Assist (Propose)	Apply
13.	Communication plan	Oversees	Supervises	Verify and endorse	Lead	Assist	Support
14.	Quality continuous improvement	Oversees	Supervises	Verify and endorse	Apply	Lead	Support

Table 1 E&IT as a subject to Quality Assurance and Quality Control

2.6. NATO Quality Assurance Management Review

The NATO QA management review (QAMR) as a part of QC is a *self-assessment process* to update the PMEC's and/or the AFA's Internal System of Quality, to identify new and ongoing shortfalls and to recognize the best practices. The review involves a formal review of the management system with the aim to identify needs for changes and improvements. The result of the management review shall include decisions on measures concerning improvements of products and services as well as the need for resources.

The QAMR is carried out annually during the fourth quarter of the year and promptly discussed, evaluated and endorsed at the annual PMEC QA conference. The PMEC QAM is responsible for processing of the review, which is subsequently submitted to the Council for Quality Assurance of AFA for review in a form of the PMEC Annual QA Report and implemented into the AFA Annual Report¹².

Following headings are included in the Management Review:

- a) Results from audits, inspections and previous management reviews.
- b) Results of previous corrective or preventive measures.
- c) Results of courses review and series of courses review.
- d) Influences and changes of circumstances that may affect the QMS (e.g. human resources, HO/TO of QA responsibilities, personnel rotation, etc.)
- e) Resource requirements.

3. APPROVAL, MONITORING AND REVIEW PROCESS OF PROGRAMMES

3.1. Analysis and Development Criteria

A. Background

Education and Individual Training comprise the structured activities that develop the skills, knowledge and attributes required in the performance of assigned duties and upon which information can be correctly interpreted and sound judgement applied (and exercised).¹³

E&IT are complementary activities, which reinforce each other. Education focuses on the function of explaining concepts, doctrines, practices and teaching procedures, for instance with the complexity of lessons learned and best practices. Individual Training focuses on practicing and applying that knowledge, which helps to grasp the subject matter completely, and provides premises for well-trained soldiers and successful operation in multinational environment.

Multinationalism in E&IT represents more efficient approach when in balance with the availability of experienced instructors, resources and time. Effectiveness, efficiency and affordability are fundamentals for delivering E&IT at the highest quality.

¹² Annex K Annual QA Report

¹³ BiSC 075-007 from Sept. 10th 2015, Annex B (Glossary)

Within courses' analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation, the PMEC follows NATO principles in order to provide the high quality E&IT products to customers. To guarantee outcomes of that approach, it is very important to employ within the learning methodology the best practices applicable to the course curriculum.

Learning methodology is the system of methods that are used during the process of teaching and learning (with the focus on learning).

B. Course Development Criteria

As indicated in paragraph 2.5. above, a project of an E&IT activity (course), to which QA principles and standards are applied, starts with the corresponding Training Needs Analysis (TNA) to address a training deficiency previously identified during the Training Requirement Analysis (TRA). However, some projects may arise as a consequence of direct customers' requests or by PTEC's initiative. These requests may vary from single SME support (as a guest lecturer to complement training or exercises) to full ad hoc training provided by a selected Mobile Training Team (MTT).

As a general rule, the following principles are applied to E&IT activities development conducted by the PMEC. Courses ought to be:

- addressing requirements identified by the RA;
- developed in close cooperation with Community of Interest;
- in line with the actual NATO Planning standards;
- consistent with minimum required proficiency (in area of MDMP/OLPP);
- open to NATO Partner nations as much as possible;
- utilizing the most recent didactical scope and learning methodologies;
- modular in composition (when possible);
- developed in close coordination with the requester/customer.

3.2. Curriculum Design and Development, Educational Standards

The new course development process, which the PMEC follows, is a complex of external and internal factors and actions influencing the end state of a final product. The requirements are coming either from the RA, BiSC Military Partnership Division or NATO DEEP authorities, or from other AFA's external stakeholders. Once the requirement is assessed and validated in close cooperation with the customer, PMEC moves on with the product development, in accordance with the Global Programming Framework.

Applying the recent information from operations, concept development and suitable education methodologies, the course content is reviewed and validated during a pilot course. Even if the ultimate goals are the NATO certified courses, the NATO approval is not "awarded" to every one of them. This, on the other hand, enables more freedom of action in tailoring the course content to better reflect changing environment or customers' needs.

A. Selection of Learning Methodology

For the delivering of knowledge by means of course curriculum, the PMEC selected the following three suitable learning methodologies, which were applied and variably combined during courses execution.

- ***Competency Based Learning (CBL)*** focuses on outcomes and addresses what students are expected to be able to do rather than to learn about (know). Students move forward by demonstrating their competence, which means they prove that they have mastered the required knowledge and skills (called competencies). CBL advocates defining educational goals in terms of precise measurable descriptions of knowledge, skills and behaviours a student should demonstrate at the end of a course. CBL is adaptive to the changing needs of students and the customers' needs.
- ***Scenario Based Learning (SBL)*** uses interactive scenarios to support active learning strategies such as problem-based or case-based learning. It involves students working their way through a scenario, usually based on an ill-structured or complex problem, which they are required to solve. In the process, students must apply their subject knowledge, critical thinking and problem solving skills in a real operation context.
- ***Project Based Learning (PBL)*** is a teaching method whereby students gain knowledge and skills by working in groups for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge. Based on an assignment, the problem is being resolved in the form of realistic battle staff products. The focus is not only on the product but also on the decision making process itself.

B. Curriculum Design

During the design phase of the curriculum, the combination of strategies and learning methods, human and material resources, assessment procedures and work schedule are employed - in an attempt to fulfil the particular course objectives.

Curriculum developers ensure that the document follows instructional principles, and that methods and activities are well defined and appropriate to the content for the specified target audience. These instructional principles are followed by required Depth of Knowledge (DoK) which is stated in Bi-SC Directive 075-007 and for convenience summarized in the following matrix.

Level	DoK Title	Description	Key Words
500	Master Skills and Competences	Full extent of comprehension	Leadership and Command
400	Expert Skills and Competences	Investigate and apply solutions to complex problems	Excel
300	Advanced Skills and Competences	Reason, analyze and interpret concepts, patterns and relationships	Apply
200	Foundation Skills and Competences	Use foundational conceptual and procedural knowledge	Understand
100	General Knowledge	Recall elements and details of structure or process	Remember

Table 2 Depth of Knowledge

When designing the Performance Objectives (POs) and Enabling Learning Objectives (ELOs), instructional designers use the Bloom's taxonomy, to match the required tasks with the appropriate level of the course. Use of Bloom's Taxonomy to establish objectives and the use of objectives during course design helps to promote a coherent and measurable course.

For any given category, there are key words that help the instructional designer to develop and write the POs and ELOs. The following table provides an example of words and verbs for each level.

Category	Examples and Key Words (verbs)
Remembering: Recalling or retrieving previous learned information.	Key Words: defines, describes, identifies, knows and recognizes.
Understanding: Comprehending the meaning. Stating a problem in one's own words.	Key Words: Comprehends, explains, infers, interprets, rewrites, summarizes, and translates.
Applying: Using a concept in a new situation or unprompted using of an abstraction.	Key Words: Applies changes, computes, constructs, demonstrates, discovers, solves and uses.
Analyzing: Separating material or concept into component parts so that its organizational structure may be understood.	Key Words: analyses, breaks down, compares, contrasts, differentiate, infer, outlines, relates and selects.
Evaluating: Making judgments about the value of ideas or materials.	Key Words: Appraises, compares, concludes, criticizes, defends, interprets, justifies, and relates, supports.

Table 3 Bloom's Taxonomy

POs and ELOs are being developed in three essential legs: Standards, Conditions, and Criteria. Standards define the minimum acceptable performance. Conditions define the environment, tools and processes that are used to achieve the minimum acceptable performance. Criteria define how the minimum acceptable performance is measured.

POs and ELOs are the backbone of the course instructional design as referred in BiSC Directive 075-007. Its Annexes also provide templates for supporting documentation, which covers training audience description, the learning sequence and activities, the student assessment strategy, pre-requisites for the course, the instructors' number and characteristics, as well as generic timetable and resource requirements.

3.3. Curriculum Implementation

The purpose of the Curriculum Implementation is to initiate the management, support and administrative functions necessary to successfully conduct E&IT solutions. Conducting E&IT addresses the planning, preparation, execution as well as close out of a specific course's activities. The curriculum implementation results in the production of qualified graduates. The curriculum implementation cycle is described in Figure 3.

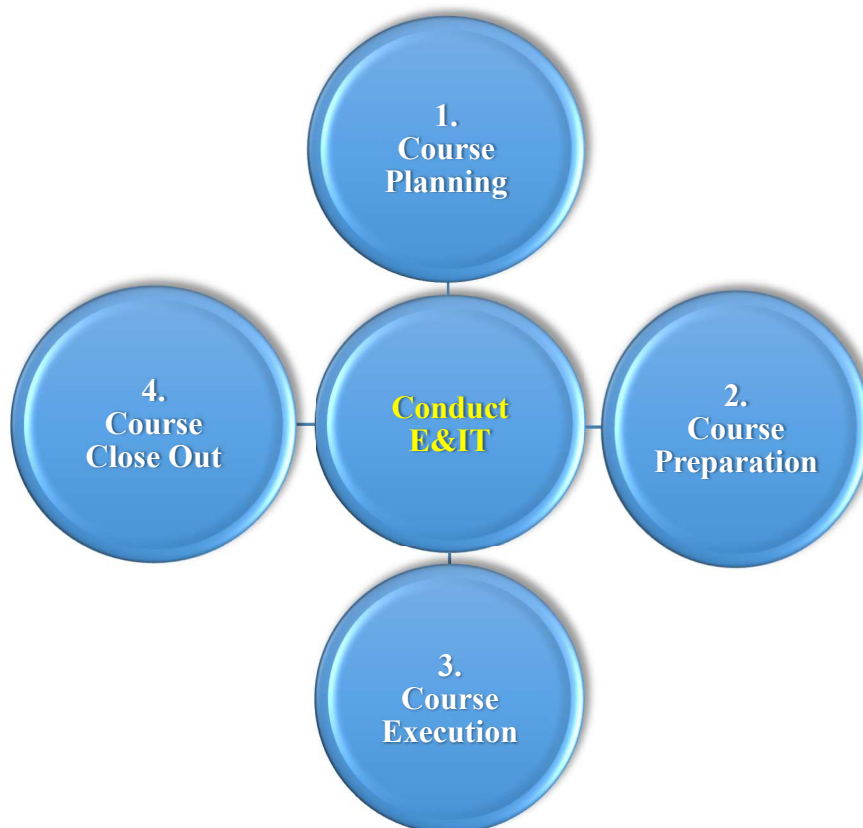


Figure 3 Conducting E&IT

3.4. Instructional Process and Curriculum Evaluation

A. Quality Assurance Processes

The Quality Assurance Processes utilized at PMEC are in general terms defined in article 3 of “Internal System of Quality Assurance” at AFA¹⁴; however, in details, they are elaborated in accordance with the BiSCD 075-007. These QA Processes and Procedures are fully integrated into the PMEC Annual QA Plan (Annex A) and annually reviewed. Recommended changes or amendments are submitted for the PMEC directors’ approval within the next annual plan.

The Evaluation Phase is supported by two distinct processes:

- a. Post course reviews, which focus on judgments of specific E&IT activities. It is the process of gathering and analyzing data from inside and outside of the E&IT environment in order to determine how well the particular course was conducted and how well are graduates prepared for their job;
- b. Institutional reviews that are focused on the Education and Training Facility (ETF) and providing an overall review for periodic reviews of quality management.

The overall *Quality Assurance Cycle* of the PMEC depicts how the Evaluation Processes (Curriculum and Student Evaluation Process etc.) work/function – based on the fact, that it is a part of a NATO PTEC. Detailed procedures for the Single Course Evaluation Cycle are described in Annex B. After several (usually 3) iterations of a specific course, the QAM initiates the Series of Courses Evaluation Cycle as described in Annex C.

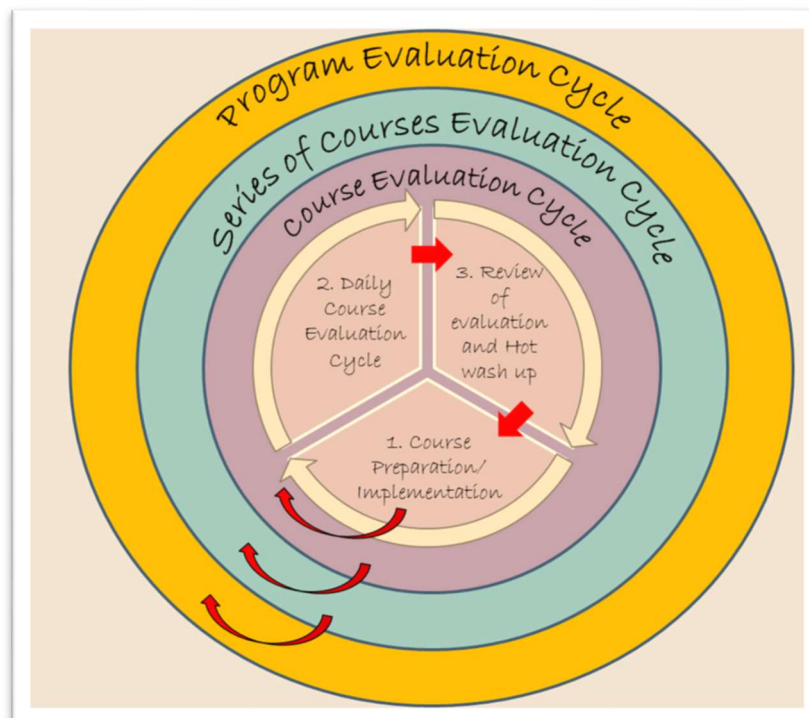


Figure 4 Courses Quality Assurance Cycle

¹⁴ <https://www.aos.sk/www/data/uploads/files/Kvalita/internal-system-of-quality-assurance.pdf> part 2, article 3

After each course, designated members of the Quality Management Team (QMT) under the guidance of the PMEC Quality Manager (QAM) conduct a Course Review/Evaluation (CRE). The minimum participation of QMT members to conduct course evaluation is as follows: PMEC Quality Manager (QAM), Syllabus Review Group (instructors, external experts and Lesson Learned Administrator) and course support staff (Figure 5).

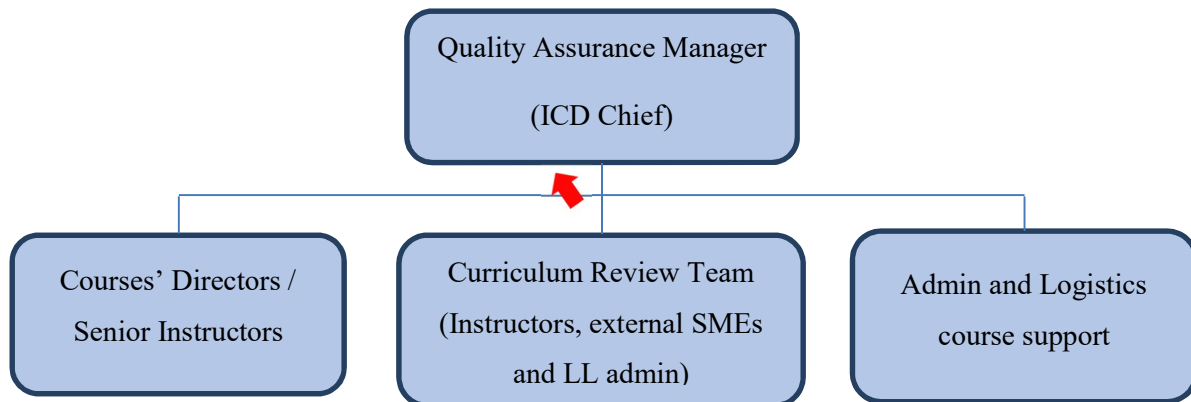


Figure 5 The minimum of QMT for CRE

Series of Courses Evaluation (SCE) is conducted by QMT assigned members including the PMEC Director - based on the outcomes of all particular course evaluations and on the external inputs/demands from the Community of Interest – always after the third iteration of the course.

Program Evaluation Cycle of E&IT (PEC) provided by PMEC is based on individual CREs and SCE. The process is conducted by the QMT and is culminating at the QA conference.

B. The PMEC Annual Quality Assurance Plan

This plan summarizes all planned courses, the anticipated schedule for Quality Assurance activities, evaluation reviews and approvals in a table. The plan is prepared by QAM and submitted for approval to the PMEC Director. The annual plan provides a complemented overview of the AFA Program of Work (PoW). This plan is also used as a summary feedback mechanism to improve strengths and weaknesses, enhance opportunities and eliminate threats. Fulfilment of the PMEC Annual Quality Assurance Plan is evaluated at the annual QA conference. The format of PMEC Annual Quality Assurance Plan is provided in Annex A.

C. Course QA Management Process

Figure 6 depicts the tasks of personnel involved in the course of QA and Evaluation process.

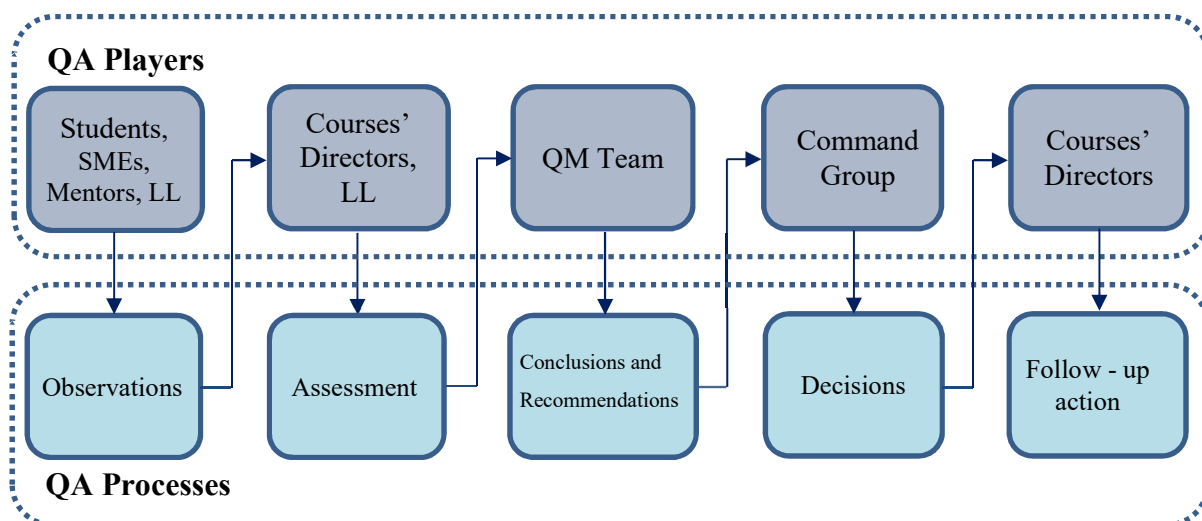


Figure 6 QA Evaluation Process

D. Evaluation Scheme per Single Course

The purpose of the single course evaluation is to assess the efficiency, effectiveness and overall quality of an E&IT solution, and to determine how it can be conducted better within the PMEC. Evaluation scheme of a single course is described in the Table 4 below.

Frequency	Lead by	Who (Conducted by)	How	What	When	Where
Once	Course Director	Instructors	Meeting/ Correspondence	Course schedule	Week prior	Meeting room
Daily	Senior Instructor	Students	Briefing/ Discussion	General feedback	Start of Classes	Classrooms
Daily	Senior Instructor	Students	Briefing/ Discussion	Lectures & exercises feedback	End of Classes	Classrooms
Daily	Course Director	Instructors	Meeting	Hot Wash Up	End of the day	Meeting room
Weekly	QAM	Course Director	Meeting	Instructors performance	End of Classes	Office
Weekly	Senior Instructor	Students	Evaluation Sheet	General feedback	End of week	Classrooms
Once	Course Director	Instructors Students	Briefing/ Discussion	Overall Course completion	Last day	Classroom
Once	QAM	QMT	Study	Analysis of Evaluat. Sheets, results & feedback	Within 14 days after course completion	Office
Once	QAM	QMT	Memorandum	Course review report	Within 21 days after course completion	Office
Once	QAM	Course Director	Meeting	After Action Review (draft)	Within 21 days after course completion	Office
Once	QAM	Students/their superiors	Digital Survey	Delayed Course Feedback	6 months after course completion	---

Table 4 Guidelines for courses evaluation

E. Course Feedback Mechanism

The mechanism of course feedback is paramount for the support of how to evaluate and improve the quality of courses and training activities. This mechanism consists of collecting and analysing opinions, comments and best practices. This feedback is conducted by all PMEC personnel involved in QA, including in-house instructors, guest SMEs, mentors, students and their employers.

At the PMEC, a quantitative and qualitative analysis is conducted which feeds the first step of the QA Evaluation process. The feedback is monitored during the course preparation and execution as well as after the particular course ends. For enhancing course effectiveness and validity, and to reduce shortfalls in E&IT, superiors of course graduates fill in the Delayed Course Feedback (DCF). (Annex F).

The DCF is being submitted six months after the E&IT activity and is incorporated into the Series of Courses evaluation cycle. The whole mechanism of the course feedback is depicted in Figure 7.

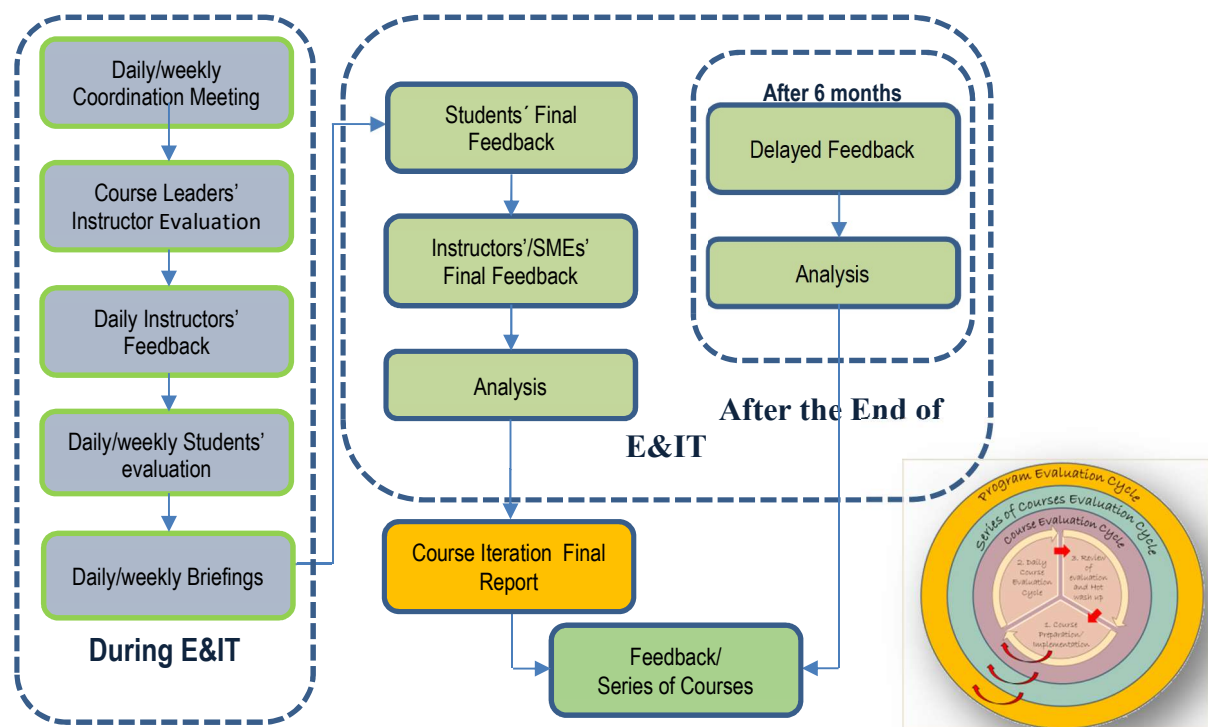


Figure 7 Course Feedback and Evaluation Process

4. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

The assessment of teaching and learning can be viewed as two complementary and overlapping activities that aim to benefit both the quality of student learning and the professional development of the instructor. Assessing learning alone is not sufficient because the ultimate success of students is also dependent upon their motivation and commitment to learning. Similarly, assessing only instructor's teaching behaviours and his/hers course activities is not sufficient because qualities of an instructor may be albeit appreciated by students; however, objectively, he may not be optimally helpful to their learning and growth.

Assessing teaching and learning can help instructors improve and refine their teaching practices and help improve students' learning and performance.

4.1. Students' Assessment Strategy

The students' assessment strategy is based on Bi-SC 075-007 Directive, in which this kind of assessment is expected to support students learning by the learning objectives of the course curriculum. In line with the set up student assessment criteria, the PMEC demonstrates that the course (product) complies with the stated requirements. In general, it means that the PMEC is able to rate the course participants' progress towards the course learning objectives. Within the Internal System of Quality at the AFA, the Students' Assessment is included in Article No.3.

Even when using various teaching methods within the courses scope of the learning objectives, the progress still depends on course content, course duration and training audience. While delivering courses/products, PMEC applies two forms of students' assessments as follows:

Formative assessment is a range of formal and informal assessment procedures conducted by instructors during the learning process in order to modify teaching and learning activities to improve student attainment.¹⁵ The goal of formative assessment is to monitor student learning to provide ongoing feedback, which can be used by instructors to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning.

Summative assessment (or summative evaluation) refers to the assessment of students where the focus is on the outcome of a course.¹⁶ The goal of summative assessment is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against selected standards or benchmarks. The summative assessment is in fact the basis for a final assessment of the course participants.

After every assessment, all students/working groups are informed on respective results of assessment by the Course Director. The Course Director, supported by instructors/SMEs, explains to students/working groups whether they meet or must improve their demonstration of learning objectives.

Results of the formative and summative assessments of students/working groups are the input data for the Courses Quality Assurance Cycle as depicted at the Figure 4.

4.2. Students/Course Participants Final Grades

Student/course participant assessment results are summarized and rated by the student final grade, which is assigned by the Course director at the end of the course. Within PMEC's E&IT activities, there are stated only two possible final grades:

'Successfully completed the course' OR 'Participated in the course'

¹⁵ CROOKS, T. (2001). "[The Validity of Formative Assessments](#)". British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, University of Leeds, September 13–15, 2001

¹⁶ R. W. TYLER, R. M. GAGNE, & M. SCRIVEN (Eds.) (1967). "The methodology of evaluation". *Perspectives of curriculum evaluation*. Chicago, IL: Rand McNally. pp. 39–83.

Certificates with indicated grades are being issued by PMECC and signed by the Chief of ICD and the Rector of the AFA. The certificate of completion is not granted to the student who missed required number of lessons/exercises or was evaluated “Unsatisfactory” (Annex E); in that case only certificate of participation is issued.

At the end of courses with a total study period of more than 21 days, a Final Evaluation Report (Annex E) is being elaborated with a detailed evaluation of students. The classification is refined to five evaluation grades (A-very good, B-good, C-satisfactory, D-weak and E-unsatisfactory). This report is sent via Defence Attachés to the Ministry of Defence of the respective country.

4.3. Assessment Plan

The Assessment Plan is a part of the course documentation. It identifies assessment instruments to be utilized. Assessment plan contains answers to the following questions:

- Why is a particular assessment carried out?
- What is being assessed?
- Who is to perform the assessment?
- How is a particular assessment executed?
- When is a particular assessment realized?
- What assessment criteria and grades are used?

The assessment plan contains information about how the course participant's progress is tested and the overall performance is assessed. The respective Course Director informs course students about the assessment system at the beginning of the course.

4.4. Assessment Concept

A. Single course's student assessment

Courses with a total study period up to five days are examined only by summative form of student assessment. It can be carried out, for example, through a seminar where active participation provides confirmation that the learning objectives have been achieved. Courses with a total study period of more than 5 days are examined in accordance to combination of formative and summative assessment methods.

B. Practical examination

When a practical examination (e.g. staff exercise) is chosen as an assessment method, the respective instructor's assessment of each student's performance is included. The evaluation criteria and selection of assessment methods is stated in the Course Assessment Plan (e.g. instructors' checklist).

C. Re-testing of students

Courses with a total study period up to five days, do not generally offer opportunities for retesting. In courses with a total study period of more than five days, re-testing may be granted to a student – in case the course participants who fail a 'Successfully Completed' examination requests for re-testing via particular Course Director or Senior Instructor.

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE OF FACULTY AND STAFF

To guarantee quality of faculty and staff (as well as external lecturers) directly involved into E&IT activities, the PMEC practices procedures which are depicted in Figure 8.

A. Preparation and Assessment of the Course Instructors and Support Staff

To ensure adequate education and training of internal instructors, PMEC designs the Personnel Development Program (PDP) (Annex H), which identifies the required skills of instructors and their advancement - before a particular course starts. The PDP defines specific international conferences and selected courses and exercises to be attended by individual instructors. The PDP also includes orientation briefings to familiarize newcomers with processes used by the AFA and PMEC. The required skills of instructors are stated in their job descriptions.

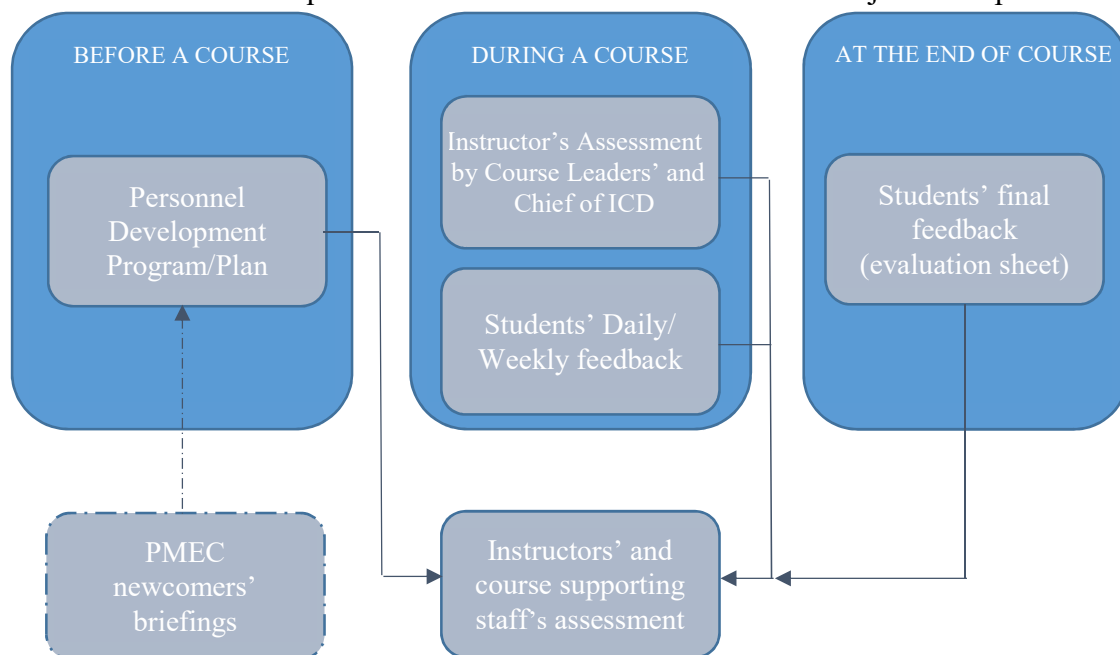


Figure 8 Instructors' and support staff preparation and assessment

Instructors are assessed based on their ability to:

- implement the intended learning objectives;
- effectively structure programs/lectures/practices and their schedule;
- address student's questions and clarify difficult points;
- comply with safety regulations (during field exercises);
- guide the students toward a successful learning outcomes;
- wisely use resources, material and teaching aids (smart boards, projectors, etc.);
- effectively manage their group;
- guide and mentor students during practices and syndicates;
- use proper terminology;
- demonstrate required language proficiency.
- the instructors' teaching skills are monitored by the Course Director through means such as the Instructors Performance Evaluation Form (Annex D) or the students' feedback/evaluation sheet (Annex F), which are used as inputs for the Course Evaluation Review. Instructors and PMEC's newcomers who are to perform particular lectures for the first time are also monitored by their respective supervisor (e.g. Chief of Course Director).

B. Preparation and Assessment of the Course Support Staff

The quality of course can be seen not only through the contribution of highly educated and experienced instructors but through well-prepared support staff as well. Preparation of support staff in areas of administration, security etc. is annually specified in the Personal Development Plan.

The support staff is responsible for:

- Administrative issues of the course, e.g. booking training facilities, recording of documentation, communication with applicants.
- Legal issues, e.g. preparing and submitting of contracts with SMEs for signature.
- Financial issues, e.g. calculating reimbursement of the course expenses or for SMEs.
- Logistic support, e.g. applying for/supplying with necessary materials; applying for transportation, lodging and catering.
- Setting-up of classrooms and training fields.
- Safety and security briefings.
- Medical support (applying for it) in case of field exercises/practices, etc.

Assessment of the support staff is carried out by the respective Course Director. It is also reinforced by instructors' and students' feedbacks/evaluation sheets, and it becomes part of the CRE and the course documentation.

6. LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

PMEC provides students with support and gives them access to teaching aids, learning resources (student study materials), etc. The main intention of the learning resources

management and student support is to fulfil student's needs before and during the course execution.

Learning resources and support mechanisms should be:

- accessible to students;
- designed according to student's needs;
- responsive to feedback from those who use them;
- regularly monitored and improved.

Learning resources and student support within PMEC is requested by Course Director via PMEC's Director, and is provided by the AFA support staff in accordance with valid AFA procedures.

6.1. Material Resource Management

The AFA provides following material recourses to PMEC in favour of international courses' execution:

- Classrooms with modular designs that can be configured according to the intended seating capacity.
- Classroom equipment and furniture.
- Visual aids: monitors and TV sets, smart boards, projectors.
- Audio sets (wireless), loudspeakers.
- Printers, fax machines, photocopy machines.
- Consumable material for hands-on training.
- Consumable office/stationary material for instructors and students.
- Students' particular course learning resources (study materials in electronic and hardcopy versions, internet connectivity).
- The AFA Simulation Centre.

Material and other support requirements (facilities, teaching aids, learning resources, etc.) are managed in accordance with the Annual PMEC QA Plan (Annex A).

To book or request the AFA resources, the Course Director (Section Chiefs) have to submit their requirements via chain of command to the AFA Bursar, who manages, coordinates, and incorporates submitted requirements into the AFA planning process.

Any course requirements, which are submitted by the Course Director, have to be consulted with the ICD Chief and the PMEC's Director in advance.

Administrative details, such as requirements for lodging, meals and transportation to/from the AFA are synchronized during coordination meetings of the ICD Chief. To start the administration of entry passes (badges) for international students, the in-processing documentation and final roster of students is provided by the ICD Chief to the head of AFA and Information Security Department.

To improve learning resources management and students' support for a particular course, PMEC gathers comments, opinions, recommendations, and monitors students' satisfaction. Later on, all of this is analysed and summarized in the Course review/Evaluation report.

6.2. Course Admission and Seat Allocation

A. Course Admission Policy

The AFA international courses admission policy is regularly discussed during the PMECS Annual QA Conference. As a general rule, the course admission is free of charge for students from Sponsoring Nations (based on an MoU) and from DEEP Nations.

The courses admission (for students from non-Sponsoring Nations) is designed by the AFA Budgeting and Finance Department in close cooperation with the PMECS. After discussion and consideration during the PMECS Annual QA Conference, the course admission recommendation is submitted to the AFA rector for final approval.

All details about E&IT deliverables including course admission are incorporated in the annual courses portfolio, which is publicly available at the AFA web site under International – International Courses – Course Catalogue¹⁷ as well as in the student information guide (Annex G).

B. Seat Allocation Policy

PMECS Director, supported by the ICD Chief, specify the seat allocation policy of international courses in cooperation with both the AFA Science and Foreign Relations Department and the Budgeting and Finance Department. Certified courses are filled with priority according to NATO's needs, based on a refined seat allocation plan (SAP) for certified courses one year in advance. The results are finally discussed during the Annual QA Conference. The ICD Chief implements the policy and is the final authority to approve the roster.

One of the PMECS's priorities is informing of customers from NATO member and partner countries about iterations of international courses by sending them a Calling Notice about the particular course from the courses portfolio with attached registration form. The corresponding course calling letter mentions the seat allocation policy, which takes into account the NATO and Global Partnership priorities.

Applications for courses are collected by the Course Admin (prior to the registration deadline) and listed in a course students' roster in accordance with the following criteria:

- To satisfy Sponsoring Nation needs in area of E&IT: The AFA Sponsoring Nation is privileged to have two seats allocated in every respective course iteration.
- Allocation of seats in NATO certified courses is primarily done based on NATO SAP (Seat Allocation Program). NATO SHAPE reimburses the course expenses (transport, lodging, and catering) and course fee to the AFA in line with NATO's reimbursement policy and based on Purchase Order (PO).
- To support NATO DEEP needs: The individual Partner Country DEEP Authorities can ask for accepting their nominees to attend the AFA international courses. The NATO HQ (DEEP) reimburses the course expenses (transport, lodging, and catering) to the AFA in

¹⁷ <https://weblm.aos.sk/en/article/international-courses-course-catalogue>

line with NATO's reimbursement policy. In accordance with the NATO Policy, the courses admission for DEEP students is not applied.

- When aforementioned priorities are covered then free seats of the particular course are granted for other customers.
- Seats allocation of courses, which are delivered by the ICD Mobile Training Team (MTT), remains in responsibility of the Host (Requesting) Nation.

The course students' roster is summarized and submitted by the Course Admin for the ICD Chief's approval. When approved, each selected student is notified about his/her acceptance to the particular course by sending him/her the course Confirmation Letter.

Should the number of applicants exceed the course capacity, customers whose demands could not be satisfied are informed, and they are included in the Course Waiting List or (with their consent) registered for the next course iteration.

7. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION PROCEDURES

7.1. Information Management

Information are a valuable source for any organization. They are of vital importance to make adequate, informed decisions and to support the organizational decision making process. In that way, information and knowledge adds value to the organization. Therefore, it is important that Information & Knowledge is managed in a deliberate and coordinated manner.

Information includes both electronic and physical (printed) information. Procedures that guarantee the correct handling of information are set by the Information and Knowledge Management (IKM), whose members are designated AFA employees (Figure no. 9). The main activities of IKM include: collecting, managing, protecting, storing and disseminating the right information to the right people at the right time.

The AFA Bursar is responsible for the functional aspects of the IKM process. The Courses Admins as Information Managers monitor the functional aspects and the use of the information and oversee the information sharing through the (web) portals on behalf of the respective supervisors. The Head of international courses IKM process is the Chief instructor.

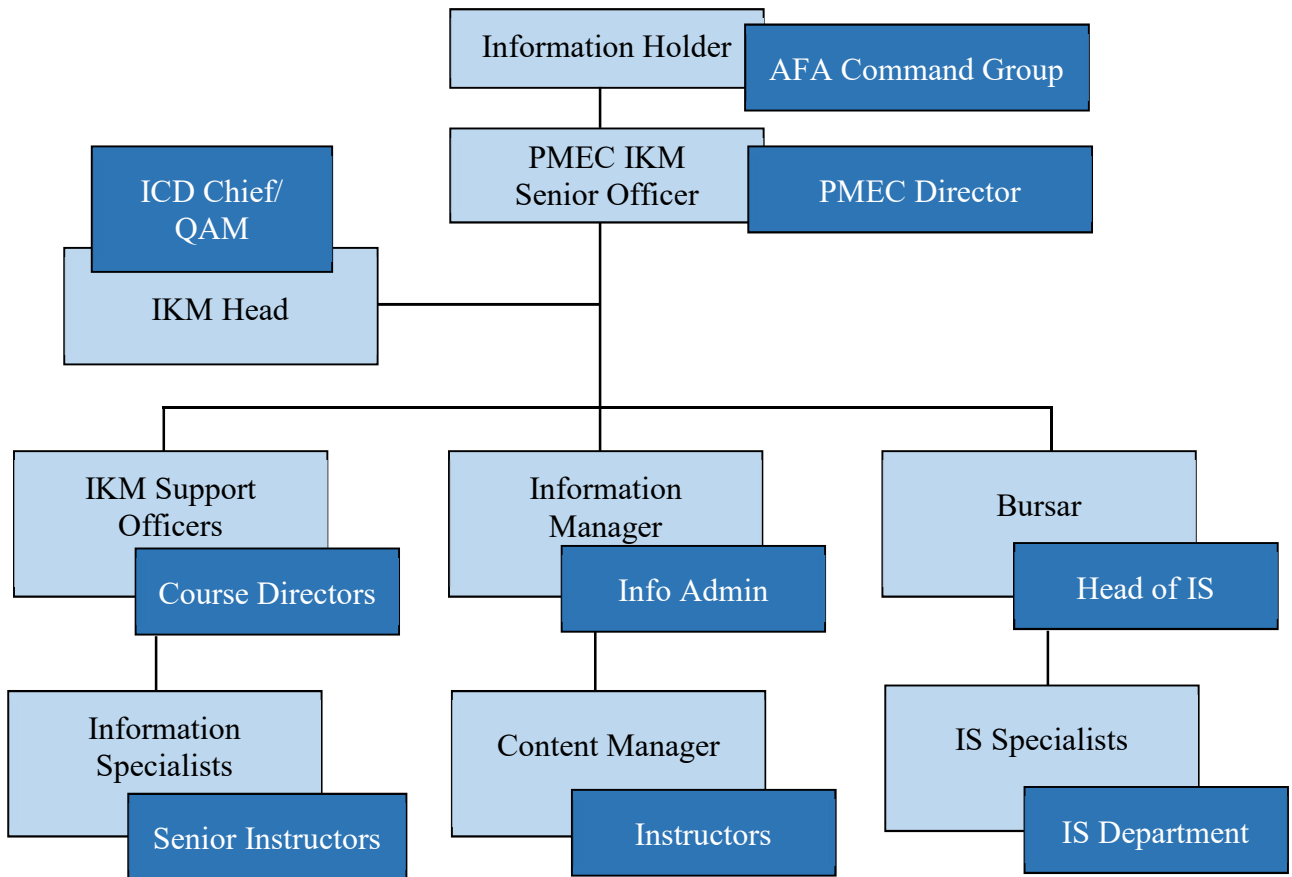


Figure 9 IKM functional hierarchy

7.2. Communication Plan

Information flows internally through different channels, not exclusively on computing systems. The guiding principles of the information management policy are based on:

- **Bottom-up information flow** (within AFA structure) providing timely and fully coordinated information in support of the AFA Command Group's decision-making process.
- **Top-down information flow** (within AFA structure) providing members of the PMEC with constant access to decisions, direction and guidance at critical time throughout the staffing processes.
- **Across** (AFA structure) **information flow** organizing staffing processes to avoid duplication and ensuring the most up-to-date information is available to all. The goal is a sensibly organized "corporate memory".
- **Within** (PMEC structure) **information flow** identifying organizational functions to achieve optimal information flow.

Based on those principles, the PMEC Communication Plan is designed to allow the gathering and the distribution of relevant information including following ones:

- E&IT opportunities offers,
- Courses Catalogue,
- Instructional matrix,
- Learning resources and costs.

The purpose of the communication plan is to ensure timely and efficient communication and its further improvement. ICD Chief (QAM) provides relevant, accurate and consistent information to the AFA and PMEC stakeholders and other appropriate audiences. By effectively communicating, the ICD Chief can accomplish his work with the support and cooperation of each stakeholder group.

The communication plan provides a framework to managing and coordinating wide variety of communications that take place during the E&IT processes. The communication plan specifies who receives the information, how the information is delivered, what information is to be disseminated, who communicates, and the frequency of the communication (how often).

The communications plan is included in Annex I.

7.3. Information Systems

Information system at PMEC is used for internal sharing of information for its members via the on-line course management system (Moodle) or by e-mails. System Moodle provides a central storage and collaboration space for documents, information and ideas. It helps groups of people to share information and work together. System Moodle respects intellectual property and information security principles. This system is not suitable for dealing with classified information. Each student as well as each PMEC instructor is assigned by his/her own Moodle user profile.

In specific cases (e.g. COVID security measures), online teaching using the Microsoft Teams application (mainly for national courses) or the NATO application Big Blue Button (BBB, mainly for international courses) is used.

Internet connection is provided to all PMEC members, guests and students through internal information system and via the AFA WIFI access points. Internet Access to students during the MTT mission is provided by the Host Nation.

Learning resources for (international) courses students are also available on the AFA/ICD local network during the course. Manuals and doctrines are also available on public websites, whose web addresses are provided to course participants.

On AFA web site under International – International Courses are provided all information concerning¹⁸:

- course dates and plans,
- points of contact (POCs),
- Student Information Guide,
- course location,
- accommodation and fees,

¹⁸ <https://weblm.aos.sk/en/departments/international-courses>

- other preliminary information.

8. PUBLIC INFORMATION

In accordance with the general AFA public information policy, all releasable information are available on the AFA web site. To inform about international E&IT activities, there is a dedicated webpage (AFA/ICD) where related information on courses, training events, workshops and/or other activities are possible to find.

In line with NATO ACT directives, information about offered E&IT deliverables, PMEC is using the on-line NATO Education and Training Opportunities Catalogue (ETOC) and the Partnership Real-time Information, Management and Exchange System (ePRIME), where participants or customers can find all the training and courses details. All relevant information in both information systems are continuously updated.

9. FINAL REGULATIONS

Meeting individual regulations of the Internal System of Quality at the PMEC contributes to enhancement of every individual performance at the PMEC, and, at the same time, it contributes to meeting customers' demands. The Quality Assurance of Education and Individual Training is a long-term process, which is finally supposed to enhance the confidence of customers and stakeholders, effectiveness, reduction of costs, enhancement of performance, better quality of the working environment, clear allocation of responsibilities and the quality enhancement of products / courses.

On the date of entry into force of this internal regulation, Internal System of Quality of the Professional Military Education Centre of AFA No. AOS-275/3-13/2018 from May 31st 2018 is cancelled.

The Internal System of Quality at the AFA's PMEC becomes valid and effective on the date of approval by the Quality Assurance Council.

In Liptovsky Mikulas, on August 28, 2023

COL Jozef WESSELENYI, PhD.
PMEC Director