



Defence Academy
of the United Kingdom

Defence Academy Strategy

2020-25

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Strategic
Command



Vision:

To continue to be recognised for delivering a global gold standard¹ of Defence education.

Mission:

To develop the intellectual edge for success on operations, and leadership in government, with our allies and coalitions in an era of persistent engagement.

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¹ In this context the meaning of gold standard is ‘authoritative or recognised exemplar of quality’.

Foreword



Air Marshal Edward Stringer CB CBE MA BEng RAF
Director General Joint Force Development and Defence Academy

We live in turbulent times. The strategic backdrop is shifting in almost all its dimensions: geopolitical, economic, technological and environmental. Defence must adapt if we are to deliver our national strategic objectives. Defence Education has a key role in ensuring our people have the skills to deal with the complexities they will face in their profession, as they progress in their careers. It is essential that the Defence Academy organises itself to deliver the education required by our people, including cross government and Public Sector colleagues, as well as our international partners. The education must be relevant, focussed, timely, and efficient and must be delivered in a way that also meets our people's aspirations.

The Defence Academy Strategy 2020-2023 is a pragmatic response to the challenge and builds around 13 Strategy Actions. It is a clear statement of the priorities and work required to deliver proactively targeted Defence Education; increase access to the many not the few; and to do so in a commercially and fiscally responsible manner.

The strategy is unashamedly ambitious and demanding and needs to be. It delivers guidance for our people to test the 'what', 'why' and 'how' against the vision, mission and priorities. It is also a clear statement to our core customers, both organisational and individuals that we intend to deliver on our promise to them and maintain our international brand and reputation for excellence.

Introduction

"War is an incredibly complex endeavour. It is ... the most demanding intellectually and morally. The cost of slovenly thinking at every level of war can translate into the deaths of innumerable men and women".

Williamson Murray

The rapidly changing strategic environment impacts the United Kingdom's security. That, coupled with fiscal realities and the evolving needs and expectations of our core customers are driving improvement in current Defence Academy (DefAc) structures, processes and outputs. The scale of the challenge we face means that our strategy is a near-term strategy, covering the period of most significant transformation up to 2025.

This strategy will focus on delivering the intellectual component of fighting power capability needed to meet the changing security environment. While remaining sustainable and affordable, this strategy will:

- State the DefAc vision and mission.
- Describe the strategic environment in which the DefAc must operate and the challenges that we face.
- Set out the guiding principles and strategy actions required to deliver our mission.
- State the resources the DefAc has to deliver the aims of the strategy.
- And outline the key risks and assumptions that underpin the strategy.

The DefAc sits within Joint Force Development as part of the Strategic Command (UKStratCom) enterprise. We will directly support UKStratCom's transformation agenda in two key areas: Cyber and Multi-domain integration. The Defence Cyber School is based in the DefAc and will continue to develop and deliver its pathway to grow our capability with national partners and allies; all courses and interventions will reflect multi-domain integration and we will develop the planning, experimentation and exercising of activities and effects across all domains at a tempo that exceeds our adversaries.

This strategy² aims to set out the associated DefAc strategic actions against which resources will be prioritised and allocated to deliver exemplary, 'gold standard' education that meets the needs of Defence and our Partners Across Government (PAG). The DefAc must focus on providing educational excellence that will deliver success in an era of persistent competition and on operations; remaining a world-leading Professional Military Education (PME)³ institution; and maximising value for money in its operations and delivery.

² The strategy will support the delivery of the DefAc's contribution to the JFD Business Plan and UKStratCom Strategy.

³ PME is taken to encompass the traditional command and staff education but also business and technology and wider defence and security considerations.

The Imperative for Change

The character of the strategic context and operating environment is changing:

- “The world is becoming ever more complex and volatile. The only certainty about the future is inherent uncertainty, yet we must prepare.”⁴
- The distinction between war and peace has blurred; adversaries, state and non-state, threaten the stability of the rules-based international order.
- Persistent, multi-faceted and sub-threshold state-on-state and non-state competition, contested access to, and control of, all domains.
- Securing Information Advantage and influencing adversaries, actors and audiences will be more complicated and competitive in the instant digital news era yet essential to delivering future strategic, operational and tactical success.
- Previously high-end capabilities have proliferated and become cheap. So, the risk of failure in traditional force-on-force military conflict will increase.
- The risk of technological surprise, either by state or non-state actors or even individual extremists, is increasing.

Therefore Defence is:

- Adopting the National Security Advisor-led Fusion approach to deliver defence and security for the UK.
- Seeking creative solutions, building on our hard-earned strengths, to provide credible military options and maintain our freedom of action and political utility.
- Being pragmatic, recognising the constraints of the Defence budget.

- Demanding more agility in our thinking so that we can adapt quickly and respond to the unexpected.

- Leveraging and supporting the UK's ability to act in the world through multinational and bilateral frameworks and partnerships, and with NATO in particular.

The Integrated Operating Concept 2025 is Defence's response to the imperative for change. It is a 'mindset shift to deliver advantage, through information-led, integrated, engaged, agile and adaptable approach'.⁵ It drives the development and adaptation of the DefAc curricula to produce professionals with the intellectual edge required for success.

Guiding Principles

The DefAc must ensure that curricula are focused, agile enough to rapidly account for changes in the strategic environment, and meet today's needs of our customers and people. To achieve this, our underlying principles are to:

- Deliver high-quality education that is sharply focused on the strategic context and Defence need reflecting integration across the five domains.
- Provide education using the technologies and techniques that deliver the best outcomes for our 21st century, digitised customers and students.
- Streamline our education structures and supporting functions to achieve synergy, while ensuring the student learning experience is optimised.
- Develop an educational research capability to enhance DefAc's offer and support the JFD and UKStratCom enterprise, including networking and collaborating with relevant external institutions.
- Retain and develop the DefAc reputation as the PME provider of choice for UK Defence, wider government, UK industry and international partners.



- Operate in an effective, efficient and economic manner, including seeking revenue generation, to deliver our business outputs at minimum net cost.
- Have a constantly enquiring and self-critiquing, learning-based, adaptive approach that encourages courageous failure.
- Work as an inclusive, integrated, effective Whole Force, recognising people as our most important asset, promoting appropriate challenge and empowerment across all activity.
- Be outcome focused, responsive and proactive to emerging demands, and able to adjust education through rapid assessment, development, testing and application.
- Be recognised as an innovative and adaptive campus where the best want to work.
- Support national DE objectives to contribute to Global Britain by being international by design.
- Be good stewards of our estate and the natural environment working to reduce our carbon footprint.
- Develop mental dexterity to enable personnel to thrive in the chaos and lightning-speed of modern warfare, making rapid judgments when there is no clear right or wrong, and able to visualise the battlespace in five domains.

The DefAc mission is: 'Develop the intellectual edge'⁶ for success on operations, and leadership in government, with our allies and coalitions in an era of persistent engagement'. This is the outcome against which all our efforts, decisions and actions must be constantly evaluated. It requires focused engagement, world-class education and innovation across the DefAc.

⁴ GST sixth edition.

⁵ The Integrated Operating Concept 2025.

⁶ Simply put: the ability to think better and faster than our future adversaries. Our graduates must be capable of simplifying complexity, grasping subtlety and be comfortable with ambiguity. They must be 'match fit' for 'a' conflict on leaving the DefAc.



Approach and Coherent Actions across the DefAc

'One Academy'. We will continue to evolve to a One Academy operating model that harnesses the synergies inherent in its faculties benefiting from the diverse mix of military, civil servant, academic and contractual support; this sits at the heart of delivering success. This will require continued change in both physical structures and culture. Every member of the DefAc has an important part to play in supporting and delivering our training and education outputs. This will be achieved through collaboration and partnering across DefAc and valuing all contributions. A shared mission with a common sense of purpose must override previous federated approaches. Existing structures and processes should not be a straightjacket to novel thinking. Therefore we will:

- Think and operate as a team of teams, within a 'One Academy' model.
- Have a service-orientated culture - going out of our way to help those requesting assistance and advice: our 'can do' attitude will be all-pervading.
- Conduct all activity with accuracy, diligence, efficiency and humility.
- Build and develop the knowledge and skills of our workforce and recognise and reward excellence.
- Build an ethos of empowerment, accountability and appropriate risk appetite.

DefAc Core Values. All personnel should embody and actively promote the core values of their element of the whole force. In addition, these are the values it takes to succeed at the DefAc:

- **Bold** – without risk there is no innovation. We must be bold enough to question ideas and perceived wisdom, provoke new ways of thinking, strip away the superfluous, challenge the inefficient, empower our individuals and focus on the things that really count.

- **Collaborative** – change requires effective and persistent communication and involvement of those affected, including a willingness to listen to and act on feedback. We will be connected across faculties, schools and teams, communicating consistently, frequently and via multiple channels.

- **Innovative** – at all levels from day-to-day business to major proposals for improvement. We will foster a culture of appropriate mission command that empowers our personnel and rewards creativity.

- **Inclusive and diverse** – respect and celebrate diversity. With a generosity of spirit, we will value emotional intelligence as well as knowledge.

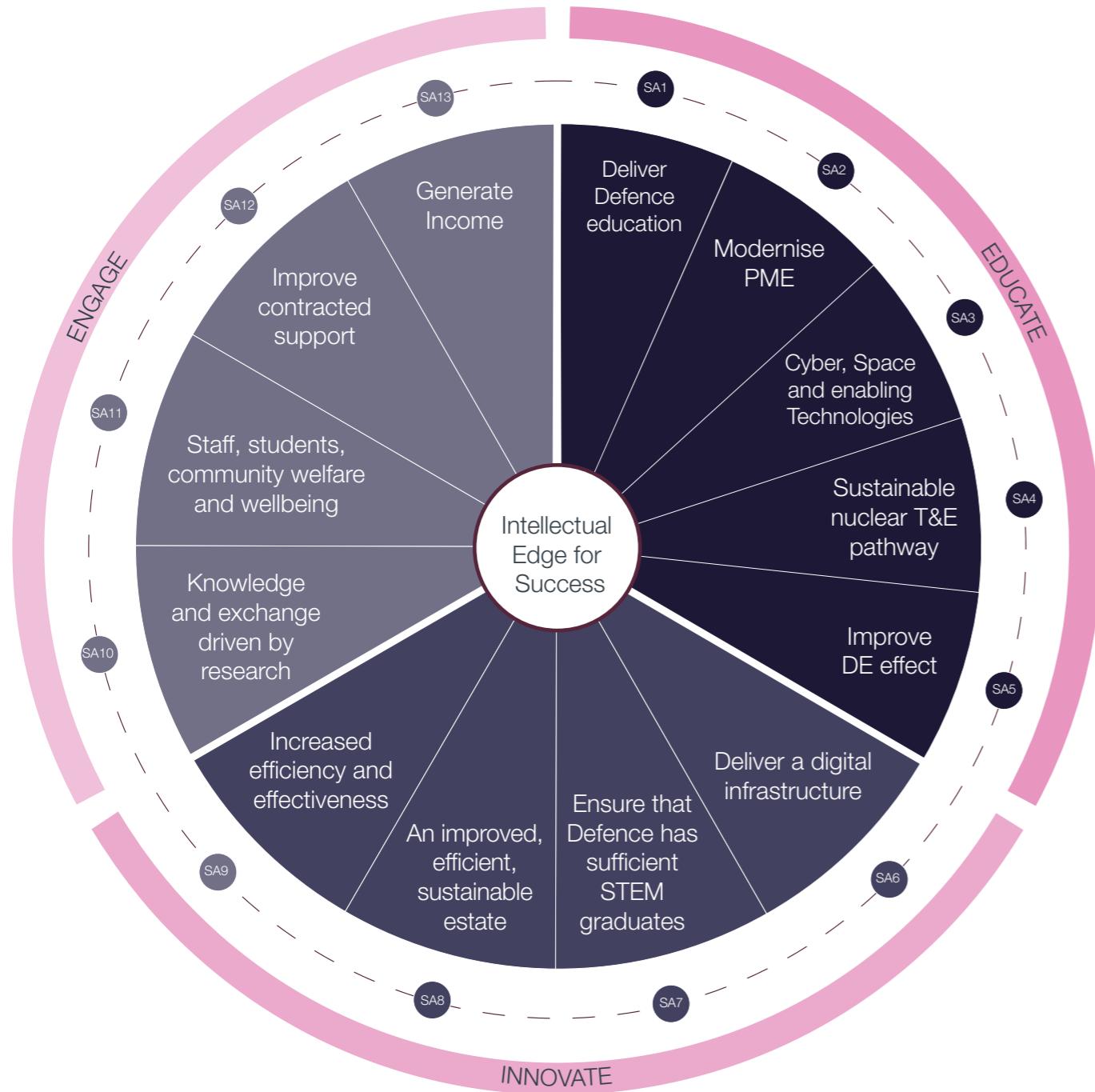
- **Strive for excellence** – not perfection, but understanding the importance of critical thinking, discipline and responsibility, expecting the very highest standards of ourselves and our students. We will adhere to the Chilcot principle of 'Reasonable Challenge' in all that we do.

Intellectual Leadership. Core to delivery will be intellectual leadership, which demands that we grow our own understanding of the environment for which we are preparing our students. This requires us to be masters of our craft and to embrace intellectual curiosity and professional debate so it permeates throughout the DefAc and we are seen as 'thought leaders' for Defence. We must maximise the possibilities of the DefAc as an arena for debate not simply as an extended classroom.

Cost Reduction. Maximum efficiency and effectiveness must underpin all DefAc activity. Cost reduction will continue through ongoing scrutiny of our business to drive out unnecessary portfolio, structural, process, and legacy costs. Our principal mechanism for achieving our savings target will be revision of the supporting contracts to get the best value for money. We will review and revise our estate and infrastructure utilisation to drive out inefficiency and identify where we must invest for the best educational outcomes.

Strategy Actions

Actions and Responsibilities. By combining the analysis, approach and direction given above, the following strategy actions set out how the DefAc will meet its mission and vision:



EDUCATE

Strategy Action 1

Deliver a global gold standard of Defence education.

We will deliver our outputs to the standard, volume, time and quality agreed with Training Requirements Authorities (TRAs) and within the limits of our operating budget. This will require us to act as an intelligent training and education provider through the Customer Executive Board process. We will support other Defence outputs as required including the Integrated Security, Defence and Foreign Policy Review (ISDFR) and wider Defence initiatives. **(Lead: Chief Operating Officer and Academic Delivery Faculty Heads)**

Strategy Action 2

Modernise Professional Military Education (PME).

We will deliver against an education strategy that provides more diversification, digitisation and choice to the future students. Defence Education Pathways Programme (DEPP), Project VITTORIA and the Future Academic Provision Programme will be key in this area. **(Lead: Head Development Faculty)**

Strategy Action 3

Support the UKStratCom leadership and coherency of Space and Cyber domains and the development and analysis of enabling technologies. We will support and cohere Defence education of the space domain and we will lead on the education in the cyber domain. We will develop an Information Warfare Group, including the Joint Information Activities Group, to bring together Defence education and training capabilities. We will provide appropriate education from awareness to expert in enabling technologies such as big data, AI, robotics and quantum in partnership with our customers and our education delivery partners. **(Lead: Business and Technology Faculty)**

Strategy Action 4

Deliver a sustainable nuclear training and education pathway.

Project JASON will determine the sustainable future location and support arrangements for the Nuclear Faculty. **(Lead: Chief Operating Officer supported by Head Nuclear Faculty)**

Strategy Action 5

Deliver a modern, coherent and expanding DE effect.

We will maximise the DefAc's contribution to DE effect through an international-by-design approach.

This will be done collaboratively with JFD and Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Cap and FD)'s staff to support MOD and National objectives. **(Lead: Chief Operating Officer, in collaboration with HQ JFD)**

INNOVATE

Strategy Action 6

Deliver a digital infrastructure in the DefAc.

We will implement an innovative approach using AI data to digitise the working and training environment at the DefAc. We will examine our use of digital tools and working practices to ensure we adopt a forward-leaning approach to the delivery of our outputs. We will promote flexible working and wider access to course content and delivery, to ensure we continue to lead the way in a fast changing digital world. **(Lead: Head Support and Development Faculties)**

Strategy Action 7

Transition to Defence STEM Undergraduate (DSUS) Scheme.

The Defence Technical Officer and Engineer Entry Scheme (DTOEES) will continue to supply STEM graduates to Defence until end of Academic Year 23/24. Welbeck is to close by Sep 21 and the DSUS scheme is to be in place to meet the future Defence requirement for technical and engineer officers. **(Lead: Head Technology & Business Skills Faculty)**

Strategy Action 8

Deliver an estate that is fit for purpose, efficient and sustainable.

We will reconfigure our estate to make best use of what we have; optimise utilisation, collocating faculties in support of the One Academy organisation design, vacating and disposing of unsuitable infrastructure and freeing up spare infrastructure. We will modernise our sport and health facilities and we will improve waste management and reduce our energy usage and reliance on fossil fuels. We will seek ways to generate our own energy in order to reduce our carbon footprint. We will ensure our systems and processes minimise impact on the environment and enhance the natural beauty of the estate. **(Lead: Head Support Faculty)**

Strategy Action 9

Revise support arrangement for increased efficiency and effectiveness. Support activity will be improved through central control (under the Support Faculty) to ensure standardisation of output and allow resources to be effectively targeted at the point and time of need. This will be a subordinate line to Improving Contracted Support (SA 8) and will seek to reduce the administrative load on the academic delivery faculties. **(Lead: Head Support Faculty)**

ENGAGE

Strategy Action 10

Develop intellectual knowledge and facilitate its exchange driven by research. We will invest in our staff training, education and qualifications to stimulate their professional intellectual curiosity. This will include establishing the Centre for Defence Education and Research and Analysis (CDERA) that will allow us to: improve our own research and experimentation; make better use of our academic partners' research; share research with allied and partner academies and colleges; and share specialist advice to the MOD and Partners Across Government (PAG). **(Lead: Head Development Faculty)**

Strategy Action 11

Improve staff, students and the wider community welfare, wellbeing and engagement. We will value our people, managing their health and wellbeing efficiently and effectively through a coherent welfare governance

mechanism, supported by accurate risk assessment and care. We will recognise our people, making time to balance output and work-life balance, and ensuring good performance is rewarded. We will look after our families and local residents to ensure they feel part of the DefAc community. We will engage with the local community amongst whom we live. These actions will be underpinned by a strong sense of inclusivity and diversity. **(Lead: Head Support Faculty)**

Strategy Action 12

Improve Contracted Support. The contracts line of activity will seek to maximize value for money in our hard and soft Facilities Management (FM) contracts, balancing economy, effectiveness and efficiency. **(Lead: Head Support Faculty)**

Strategy Action 13

Generate income through Business Development. We will seek to maximise the income we generate through the sale of spare capacity within the DefAc. Additionally, we will identify opportunities to invest in Business Development activity for both Government and commercial customers in order to create additional income and to reinforce the DefAc's intellectual leadership. **(Lead: Head Development Faculty)**



Resources

Finance. The resources provisionally allocated to the running of the DefAc for the next 5 years are as follows:

	£m				
	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Workforce	52.7	53.6	54.8	56.1	57.4
Non Workforce expenditure	82.4	84.4	86.1	85.2	83.3
Income	-19.2	-19.6	-20.0	-20.4	-20.9
Total Resource DEL	115.8	118.5	120.9	120.9	119.8

These figures include an Annual Budgeting Cycle (ABC) 16/17 efficiency and savings challenge which increases each year, reaching £32m by FY 23/24. This represents a 26% saving against our FY 15/16 budget baseline of £124m.

While the DefAc has already achieved significant efficiency savings against the 15/16 budget baseline of £124m, the figures above may hide the need for future efficiency savings. This is due to the step decrease in Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) from FY 19/20, and the requirement to fund annual pay rises and inflation in future years. Increased efficiencies and several of the Strategy Actions will contribute towards these targets.

People. Our people are our vital resource. The DefAc has a permanent MOD and contractor staff and long-term student population of c2,500. These figures include more than 650 MOD permanent staff who, in collaboration with key contractors, Serco, Cranfield University, Eurest Support Services (ESS) and King's College London (KCL) deliver the gold standard PME that is the hallmark of the DefAc. In addition, there is a weekly short-term student population of c1,500 who attend shorter courses and conferences.

The first year of the strategy will see the DefAc's new organisational design structure embedded. We will employ a greater number of skilled civil servants and provide greater capability and resilience to the DefAc.

The maturing establishment of the Development Facility will provide the focus for educational research, communications, business development, e-learning and learning development and assurance. This will make the DefAc better prepared for current and future challenges while remaining effective and efficient.

Our offer is further enhanced by the unwavering support of the families of our staff, many of whom live nearby. We also rely on and hugely appreciate the goodwill and hospitality of the local communities, particularly in Shrivenham and Watchfield.

The Estate and Support. Shrivenham Station forms the main site of the DefAc, which also delivers education at the Defence Sixth Form College at Welbeck, at the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS) in London and at our Nuclear Faculty at HMS Sultan (Gosport). Also host to Joint Force Development (JFD) HQ, the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC), and the Military Aviation Authority (MAA), Centre of Air Safety Training (COAST), Shrivenham Station occupies c750 acres in South Oxfordshire. The DefAc is delivered in partnership through three prime support contracts: one with Serco for hard and soft facilities management; one through a PFI with Defence Management (Watchfield); and one with Cranfield University for technical academics. KCL are subcontracted to Serco to deliver leadership and defence studies academic support while ESS support with the management of catering, cleaning and waste.

"If you think education is expensive, try ignorance."

Andy McIntyre

Key Assumptions

- The Organisation Design (OD) remains the current structure for future planning purposes.
- The DefAc will be required to deliver the agreed savings measures and more are likely in the future.
- The DefAc will have to add unique value and precision to our courses.
- The DefAc will remain a net contributor to UKStratCom income generation; but additional pressure/demand will be applied.

Key Risks

Key risks to the strategy centre around the DefAc not being able to generate the planned savings from the contracts and the estate while maintaining outputs. We will mitigate this by robust project management and monitoring of costs. If required, and in the full knowledge of our customers⁷, outputs may have to change.

The second key risk is our personnel. We need to manage their physical and mental wellbeing in the face of the transformation of Defence as well as the DefAc. We are asking them to undertake considerable change while contributing to Defence initiatives and maintaining the delivery of a gold standard education. We will treat this by our leaders and managers at all levels engaging with our workforce in a diverse and inclusive environment.

Summary

Developing the intellectual edge for success on operations, and leadership in government, with our allies and coalitions in an era of persistent engagement is the primary purpose of the DefAc and this strategy outlines the key actions to deliver it. This strategy describes the ends, ways and means through which the DefAc will support Defence and PAGs to help build and gain the competitive advantage through the conceptual component. The focus on developing an intellectual edge is our highest priority and we must be committed to providing the best possible education to our people. In summary, I want DefAc students and graduates to be leaders:

- **With an** ... appropriate understanding of history, contemporary issues, technology, business, language, culture, theory and doctrine.
- **Who can** ... think, understand, analyse, decide and communicate all the way through a problem.
- **Who are** ... knowledgeable and keen to learn; innovative agents of change; not unhinged by complexity or the unexpected; and dedicated to improving their organisation.
- **Who remain** ... students of their profession for the remainder of their service.

This strategy is effective on receipt and supersedes all previous DefAc strategy documents. It will be underpinned by supporting implementation plans.

If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people.”

Chinese proverb attrib to Kuan Chung (c.? -645BC)

⁷ DefAc customers are the sS, the CS, functional champions, PAG and our allies.



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