



ROYAL AIR FORCE

AP 3393 Volume 2

Officer Career Management

1st Edition

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment Statement

This policy has been equality and diversity impact assessed in accordance with Departmental policy. This resulted in:

- Part 1 screening only completed (no direct discrimination or adverse impact identified / policy is a reflection of statutory requirements and has been cleared by a Legal Adviser). This policy is due for review in Apr 13 or as required by changes to TOS policy.

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RECORD OF AMENDMENTS

Amendment Number	Authority	Amended by	Date
AL1	SO1 Mpr Structures		8 Sep 11
AL2	SO1 Mpr Structures		1 Mar 12

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW OF AP 3393 VOLUME 2 - OFFICER CAREER MANAGEMENT

AP3393 Volume 2 is owned and published by HQ Air Command Manning and details the career management policy for officers serving as members of the Regular RAF. This AP does not apply to members of the Reserve Forces. Heads of Branch are responsible for the content, but not format, of the career maps contained in Chapter 4. Suggestions for amendments are to be addressed to Manpower Structures (Ground), Room 2E05 Spitfire Block, HQ Air Cmd, RAF High Wycombe. AP3393 Volume 2 is intentionally separate from AP3393 Volume 1 in that it contains no content relevant to officers' terms and conditions of service, but rather is limited to career management policy issued under the authority of the Air Secretary as delegated to Assistant Chief of Staff Manning.

CHAPTER 1

OFFICER CAREER MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

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CHAPTER 1

OFFICER CAREER MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Introduction

101. The RAF selects, trains and invests in high quality personnel. It is in the RAF's interest to employ them effectively and achieve a cost-effective return of investment; moreover, individuals seek challenging and rewarding careers. The Career Management Strategy seeks to meet the needs of the Service and the individual.

Career management aims and objectives

102. Based on fair and accurate appraisal of performance and potential, the aim of career management is to fill positions with suitable, trained personnel at the right time, encourage both recruitment and retention, and provide opportunities for personnel to make the most of their potential. Therefore, the RAF will: develop individuals for future appointments commensurate with their skills, ability and potential; offer individuals a degree of choice in the career path they follow, consistent with Service requirements; broaden their experience and competency base, while recognising that many appointments need deep specialist skills; and plan careers effectively, while taking account of personal aspirations and circumstances.

Principles of career management

103. The RAF applies 5 principles of career management for officers:

- a. **Through Service Career Management.** The Service plans an individual's broad through-life career development based on their reported performance, potential and personal preference.
- b. **Inter active management.** Inter active management involves the individual, the job owner and the Career Manager (representing the Service interest). The Career Manager is the appointing authority.
- c. **Open and transparent.** RAF career management strives to be as open and transparent as possible.
- d. **Appraisal based.** Officers are selected for promotion, courses, appointments and progression through the Mainstream (MS)¹ and entry to the Executive Stream (ES)² on the basis of the strengths, weaknesses and potential recorded in their appraisal and course reports.
- e. **Service need.** The RAF is required to produce an operational output. Career Managers will work to meet personal aspirations wherever they do not conflict with the overriding Service need, which is the dominant principle.

Career management purposes

104. The RAF seeks to assign the right person to the right position at the right time, whilst endeavouring to meet the needs of the RAF and those of the individual. In so doing, it aims to achieve 3 purposes: appointing, succession planning and career development.

¹ Of the Functional Branches, as defined in AP3393 Volume 1 Chapter 3; the 2-stream construct described in this chapter is not applicable to the Specialist Branches, as defined in AP3393 Volume 1 Chapter 4.

² See Para 105 et seq for further details of the MS and ES.

- a. **Appointing.** 'Appointing' is the broad process of matching individuals (taking into account their aptitude, professional competencies and, where practical, personal preferences) to the available positions. Drawing on Defence Planning Assumptions and the RAF Strategy, Operational Sponsors, Heads of Branches (HoBs) and the Manpower Requirements staff determine the RAF's size, shape and structures, including the skills required to deliver operational capability.
- b. **Succession planning.** All organisations need to be able to find people with the right skills to fill more senior appointments and key posts. Civilian organisations need only plan for their most senior posts and can otherwise rely on the market to provide talent. With a single point of entry, succession planning necessarily applies throughout the structure from aircraftman to air marshal. 'Appointing' is broadly about numbers of individuals, whereas succession planning is the identification of individuals who either have the appropriate competencies or the aptitude to acquire them. The process must provide the necessary range and depth of experience at each rank and depends, in part, on a reasonably stable and structured environment so that a sufficient number of individuals can be aligned to the liability at each rank within their specialisations.
- c. **Career development.** Career development describes the inter relationship between appointing, succession planning and the individual's career experiences, education, training and aspirations. Career development is the responsibility of the career manager, the chain of command and the individual officer. Working within the parameters of realistic career expectations and opportunities, all must guide a career along a course that balances the Service manning requirements with the individual's competencies and aspirations (both professional and personal). The aim is to meet the needs of both and for the individual to be retained for as long as it is in the interests of both parties. The end-state should be an officer who has provided value to the RAF, has had a rewarding career, and can resettlement successfully with experience, skills, accredited qualifications and aspirations met.

Career management model

105. **Outline.** The career management model provides a structured framework in which officers' careers are managed and developed. Management, shown in Figure 1-1, occurs at the Foundation, Intermediate and Strategic Levels.

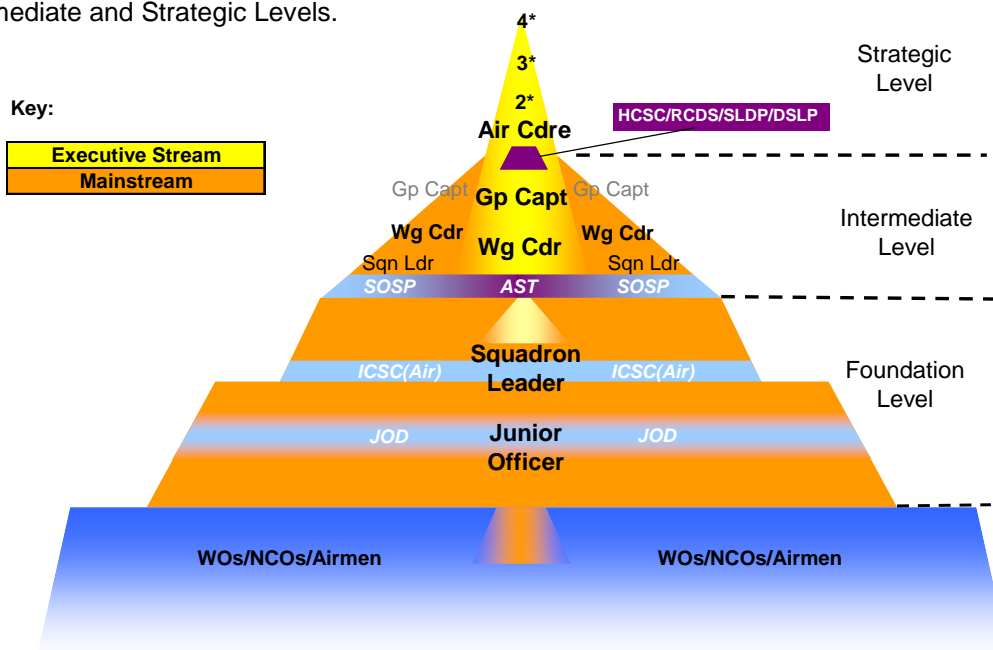


Figure 1-1 – The Career Management Model³.

³ Schematic diagram – not to scale.

106. **The Foundation Level.** All officers commissioned into the Functional Branches of the RAF begin their careers in the Foundation Level, where their employment will normally be within roles related to their individual branches; generic career maps are included in AP3393 Volume 2 Chapter 4. Service in the Foundation Level will imbue officers with the specialist skills to be professionals in their field and to have an understanding of Air Power. All officers at this level are employed in their branch MS, where they will have the opportunity for their further potential to be explored. More details of MS employment and training are contained in AP3393 Volume 2 Chapter 2.

107. **The Intermediate Level – The No 3 Combined Selection Board (CSB).** The Intermediate Level comprises senior sqn ldrs⁴, wg cdrs and gp cpts. Officers enter the Intermediate Level of career management when firm indications are evident to their Career Managers of the individual's potential to progress further through the ranks. This is usually at the point at which evidence is available of performance in command and staff appointments at sqn ldr rank. Those officers deemed competitive for further advancement by their Career Managers through a pre-boarding process are then presented to the No 3 CSB in order to be considered for promotion to wg cdr and/or selection for AST and entry to the ES. Candidates can still be presented to the No 3 CSB if they are assessed as competitive for promotion only or selection for AST and commensurate entry to the ES without promotion.

108. **The Intermediate Level – Advanced Staff Training (AST) and the ES.** All officers selected for AST will also be made a linked offer of entry to the ES⁵; confirmation of selection for AST is conditional upon acceptance of the offer to enter the ES; employment as an ES officer in designated ES appointments is conditional upon successful completion of AST⁶. Personnel who decline AST will not enter the ES and those who do not successfully complete the course will be withdrawn from the ES. Officers in the Specialist Branches, as defined in AP3393 Volume 1 Chapter 4, are not subject to ES selection and their attendance at AST is therefore based on the requirements of their respective branches to fill key positions and meet individual developmental needs.

109. **The Intermediate Level – officers who do not attend AST.** Sqn ldrs in the Intermediate Level who are not selected to attend AST may be promoted to wg cdr and beyond; wg cdrs will still be considered for selection for AST and further promotion, provided they are deemed competitive in pre-boarding. However, as their seniority increases, when personal preferences and circumstances dictate, or when selection to AST becomes increasingly unlikely, these sqn ldrs and wg cdrs should expect to remain within the MS. Further details of MS employment are in AP3393 Volume 2 Chapter 2, but in essence, Career Managers of MS officers in the Intermediate Level will aim, where practical, to increase the predictability of assignment⁷ and decrease the degree of assignment-related movement⁸. In addition, Career Managers will also, where practical and appropriate, assign officers to appointments that provide developmental opportunities to deepen their professional specialist knowledge⁹. Regardless of stream, all officers are presented to the same promotion boards and advance on the basis of merit, not the stream they occupy. However, historically a high proportion of those who subsequently achieve gp capt and higher rank have attended AST, selection for which is linked to assessed performance and potential, and this is expected to continue.

⁴ See AP3393 Volume 2 Chapter 2 Para 204 for clarification of the transition point.

⁵ Officers who are already AST qualified at 1 Sep 11 have been assessed for entry to the ES by Career Management staff and selected accordingly; for those who do not wish to enter the ES, the right to request transfer from the ES to the MS is defined in AP3393 Volume 2 Chapter 3 Para 309.

⁶ Notwithstanding this caveat, MS officers may exceptionally be employed in ES appointments when the Service need requires.

⁷ For example, through increased notice of assignments that generate movement.

⁸ Such as through longer tour lengths or successive tours at the same or geographically close locations; officers will still be expected to carry out operational and other detachments as necessary.

⁹ For example, strengthening knowledge in particular areas through successive related assignments, as opposed to broadening experience through a series of more widely varied appointments.

110. **The Strategic Level.** The Strategic Level comprises all air rank officers. At the Strategic Level, be it in single-Service or Joint appointments, air officers create strategic goals, provide leadership and vision, determine priorities, set resource parameters, and promote and defend Defence and single Service aims and interests. At the most senior level, an officer's function is to command, advise, influence and make policy across a spectrum of Defence activity, ensuring the Service is properly equipped, manned and trained to meet its mandated tasks. The employment and future development of air officers will be determined by a number of factors, including the time left to serve. Appointment within the Strategic Level will exploit their competencies, experience in differing Employment Fields (EFs)¹⁰ and potential, so that they may compete effectively in the highest echelons of Defence. Gp capt at the Intermediate Level may be selected to attend the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS) or the Higher Command and Staff Course (HCSC) prior to entering the Strategic Level¹¹. However, attendance at either of these courses is not a pre-requisite for promotion to air rank and entry to the Strategic Level.

111. **Specialists.** Officers of the Specialist Branches, as defined in AP3393 Volume 1 Chapter 4, are employed in positions related to their specialisation. As such, their development and progression are defined by different criteria. Whilst they may attend AST as part of this development, and reach the Strategic Level, they do not enter the ES.

Predictability and movement

112. Only a small number of officers are needed to fill the most senior positions and, in order to reach the upper echelons of the Strategic Level, the length of time in each appointment for these officers may need to be relatively short – circa 2-3 years¹². Historically, the Service appointed almost all officers to tours of approximately this duration. While this may be required for initial development at the Foundation Level, for MS officers in the Intermediate Level and some more experienced junior officers in the Foundation Level, this relatively short duration of appointments could often run counter to personal, family and Service aspirations and the Service requirement to develop deeper professional specialisation. In establishing the ES and MS, the Service is able to differentiate between those officers:

- a. Who have the potential to reach the highest ranks and who are willing to accept a higher degree of assignment-related movement that may be required to realise that potential
- b. Whose valuable contribution does not require the same degree of career management unpredictability and movement.

This principle is applied to the ES and MS at the Intermediate Level, and by engagement with career management staff outside that level. In broad terms, for MS officers at the Intermediate Level or for the most experienced officers at the Foundation Level, tour lengths will normally be 3 years and over; ES officer tour lengths are likely to be 3 years and less.

Position types – ES and Open

113. To enable ES and MS personnel to be employed most effectively, it is necessary to differentiate between positions. Wg cdr and gp capt positions that normally require an ES officer to fill them are designated 'ES'¹³; MS officers would not routinely be appointed to ES positions. All other positions are regarded as 'Open', defined as positions that can be filled by either ES or MS officers of the appropriate rank, branch and competency.

¹⁰ See Para 115 for further details of EFs.

¹¹ As may air cdres already in the Strategic Level.

¹² Noting that the duration of tours at the Strategic Level may lengthen if the job owner defines a requirement, eg, for increased continuity.

¹³ The authority for designating positions as 'ES', or reverting them to MS, rests with Heads of Branch and Heads of Employment Field, who will consult Manning before approving new ES positions to ensure that it is practical to meet the requirement.

Competencies and EFs

114. **The EF concept.** To provide a framework for managing careers at the Intermediate Level, EFs¹⁴ were originally introduced as a means of identifying and tracking the competencies that an individual may acquire throughout their career. They also have the benefit of enabling a wide range of different perspectives and competencies, from across the Service's branches, to be brought to bear in areas of emerging interest. The original EFs were updated¹⁵ to those listed in Para 115, to meet the needs of today's operational environment. It is intended that a proportion of MS officers at the Intermediate Level will deepen specialist competency by extended employment within branch-based roles in a particular EF¹⁶; the potential also exists for some MS officers at the Intermediate Level to develop a career within an EF, unrelated to their branch¹⁷. However, ES officers will be more likely to move in and out of the fields¹⁸, gaining a broad set of competencies as they develop skills for higher ranks. This model makes it possible to maintain specialisation and branch structures, with the benefits that ensue, while still broadening people in and out of branch-related appointments (at all levels) as required; flexibility is the key, both for the organisation and the individual. New EFs are expected to emerge as the operational environment evolves.

115. **RAF EFs.** The RAF EFs are currently as follows:

- a. **Force Employment.** The Force Employment EF encompasses the delivery of air or other military power, such as flying operations and Force Protection, and is mainly branch related. It can also include aspects of C2, such as CAOC/PJHQ appointments.
- b. **Force Support.** The Force Support EF encompasses direct support to air and other military power delivery (eg, front-line engineering, logistics, ATC, etc and related staff appointments in A/J2, 4 and 6); it is mainly branch related.
- c. **Security Co-operation.** Officers employed in Security Co-operation roles are typically employed in inter-agency activities and 'soft power' roles, encompassing Defence diplomacy, positions with other Government Departments and international organisations, roles with other nations, information operations, human intelligence, Military Assistance to Stabilization and Development, media ops and corporate communications.
- d. **Strategy & Policy.** The Strategy & Policy EF comprises most positions at MOD Head Office and those at HQ Air and in other TLBs that involve core strategy and policy activity; it includes many of the broadening appointments required to develop the competencies required for appointments in the Strategic Level.
- e. **Acquisition.** The Acquisition EF comprises acquisition appointments, mainly in the DE&S, and is largely the domain of Eng and Logs Branch officers. Some positions, eg, Requirements Managers, may also be open to other branches.
- f. **Human Resource.** The Human Resource Employment Field is the main EF for Personnel Branch officers, albeit some positions are also open to other branches, eg, those in career management and branch & trade sponsorship.
- g. **Training.** The Training EF encompasses instructor, command and staff appointments in the training environment, including collective training (A/J7).

¹⁴ Operations; Support to Operations; Policy, Plans & Programmes; Acquisition; Personnel; and Training EFs were introduced as part of the RAF Officers' Career Management Strategy; PMA/128005/5/O&NCA dated 30 Nov 03 refers.

¹⁵ In 2010, as a result of the 2009 Career Management Review.

¹⁶ For example, Engineer officers in Acquisition and Personnel officers in Training.

¹⁷ For example, successive tour in the Strategy & Policy EF.

¹⁸ For example, a Flying Branch officer moving between Force Employment, Human Resources and Strategy & Policy.

CHAPTER 2

THE MAINSTREAM

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CHAPTER 2

THE MAINSTREAM (MS)

Introduction

201. With the exception of the officers of the Specialist Branches detailed in AP3393 Volume 1, all officers begin commissioned service in the MS of their branch and remain in this group throughout the Foundation Level phase of their careers. At the Intermediate Level, certain officers will be selected for the ES, as outlined in AP3393 Volume 2 Chapter 1 and further detailed in Chapter 3, with all others remaining in the MS; some officers in the ES will return to the MS later in their careers. Career management of the MS varies between the Foundation and Intermediate career phases.

Selection

202. **Main entry.** With the exception of Specialist officers, all officers begin commissioned service in their branch MS.

Career management – Foundation Level

203. **Appointments.** At sqn ldr and below, there is no formal classification of appointments as 'ES' or 'Open'. However, certain particularly demanding positions will continue to be filled with officers of the highest calibre and potential. HoBs and Heads of EF have the option to notify Career Managers of appointments that they judge to be suitable for sqn ldrs with the highest potential.

204. **Tour lengths.** Tour lengths in the Foundation Level will be defined by the development requirements of officers and will not normally be greater than 3 years; some tours will be appreciably shorter in length, for example in-command and some key staff appointments¹⁹. However, officers may express preferences for longer tours or greater geographic stability for personal or other reasons, subject to the overriding Service requirements at the time. In these circumstances, officers may require additional career advice if their Career Managers consider that longer tour lengths early in the career of an officer may affect their professional development. Sqn ldrs with seniority of 9 years or greater and who are assessed as being unlikely to be selected for AST will normally experience tour lengths of at least 3 years. This change as seniority increases is linked to the lower developmental needs of an officer with appreciably higher seniority when compared with officers recently promoted and with lower seniority in rank.

Career management – Intermediate Level

205. **Appointments.** Wg cdr and gp capt positions are classified as 'ES' or 'Open'. MS officers will not normally be employed in ES-annotated positions, except to meet overriding Service requirements. Employment of an MS officer in an ES role will not confer any right of entry to the ES, the gateway to which is solely through selection for AST and conditional upon its successful completion.

206. **Tour lengths.** MS officers at the Intermediate Level will normally serve tour lengths of at least 3 years. Additionally, they may request, subject to Service requirements and availability, consecutive appointments in the same or geographically close locations, in order to provide greater positional stability²⁰ for them and, where applicable, their spouses/partners/families.

¹⁹ When the availability of appointments that provide key developmental opportunities is constrained, shorter tour lengths are appropriate to enable the optimum number of officers, and hence the Service, to benefit.

²⁰ Noting that officers will still be expected to carry out operational and other detachments as necessary.

Career development – training and education

207. **Generic training.** Officers in the MS will undertake PMD(Air) as defined in AP3393 Volume 1 Chapter 5 Section 1. Those officers who transfer to the ES will complete AST but, when sqn ldrs and wg cdrs are assessed by their Career Managers as being unlikely to become competitive for AST, they will be recommended for entry to the Senior Officer Study Programme (SOSP)²¹. Career Managers will normally make the assessment of an individual's competitiveness for AST by the 9-year seniority point for sqn ldrs and the 5-year seniority point for wg cdrs.

208. **Specific training.** The SOSP is intended to support the generic training and education requirements of MS officers. In addition, Heads of Branch, may, through the Higher Education Board, put in place branch-specific training to support MS officers later in their careers.

Appraisal reporting and promotion

209. Officers in the MS are subject to the same appraisal reporting as ES officers. Reporting officers may refer to the demanding nature of a position (including as ES or MS) but promotion selection boards will judge ES and MS officers together and fairly, based on the evidence of performance and potential evident within officers' OJARs irrespective of their stream.

²¹ Scheduled for introduction in 2012.

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CHAPTER 3

THE EXECUTIVE STREAM (ES)

Introduction

301. With the exception of officers of the Specialist Branches, the ES is a group of officers, all of whom are identified for their high potential to progress through the ranks, and who undergo AST and are subsequently placed in the demanding and Joint appointments that are likely to prepare them most effectively for potential employment at the Strategic Level²². Further outline information on the ES and AST is given in AP3393 Volume 2 Chapter 1.

Selection

302. **Entry.** Officers are selected for AST and the ES by the No 3 Combined Selection Board (CSB). Selection for AST and the ES may occur before, simultaneously with, or after promotion to wg cdr. Entry to the ES occurs on an individual's acceptance of a formal offer to enter the Stream. Employment as an ES officer in designated ES appointments is conditional upon successful completion of AST. Personnel who decline AST will not enter the ES and those who do not successfully complete the course will be withdrawn from the ES; see Chapter 1 Paras 107 and 108. Additionally, Career Managers are to review the retention in the Stream of those sqn ldrs who, having entered the ES, subsequently fail to achieve promotion before attaining 9 years of seniority in rank. The ES JPA competency is awarded on successful completion of AST²³.

303. **Early identification.** The No 4 Promotion Selection Board may identify to career managers a select few officers with the clear potential to enter the ES in the future, so that such officers can be employed in suitably demanding roles. Career management in this way does not imply subsequent selection to the ES will occur, which depends on performance at sqn ldr level and the decision of a future No 3 CSB.

Career management

304. **Appointments.** At wg cdr and gp capt level, certain positions are annotated as 'ES'; others are annotated 'Open'. Career Managers will endeavour to match these ES positions to ES officers. However, where necessary to meet the Service requirement, which has priority, Career Managers may employ Mainstream (MS) officers in ES posts.

305. **Tour lengths.** Officers in the ES will normally complete appointments of up to 3 years in duration. However, certain ES appointments, for example where programme continuity is vital, may require ES personnel to complete longer tours.

306. **Performance review.** Officers in the ES will be subject to Annual Performance Reviews (APR) once they have attained 5 years of seniority in rank²⁴; reviews will be conducted by Career Managers and their supervisory staff. The purpose of these reviews is to provide career advice and, when appropriate, to make the decision to return officers to the MS, as detailed in Paras 310 and 311. When carrying out performance reviews, Career Managers will balance the need to:

- a. Retain sufficient officers in the ES to man the ES establishment.

²² Where employment is less role-specific and more related to the competencies the officer has developed.

²³ Officers who are already AST qualified at 1 Sep 11 and are selected for entry to the ES will be awarded the ES JPA competency on selection.

²⁴ This applies to wg cdrs, gp capts and air cdres. The initial review is to be held as soon as practical after the 5-year seniority date has been reached; subsequent reviews are to take place at approximately 12 monthly intervals, at times deemed appropriate by the officer's Career Manager and their supervisory staff.

- b. Provide sufficient career opportunities to develop those ES officers identified as having proven potential to compete for promotion.

Retaining too many, relatively uncompetitive, ES officers in the Stream would otherwise result in too few ES appointments being spread too thinly to develop those with the highest ability and potential sufficiently rapidly.

307. **Return-of-service (RoS) commitment.** There is no specific RoS requirement attached to membership of the ES. However, for the majority, entry to the ES will coincide with starting AST, which will continue to attract a RoS commitment. In addition to AST, command appointments attract an amortisation requirement, as detailed in AP3393 Volume 1 Chapter 8 Section 7.

Appraisal reporting and promotion

308. Officers in the ES are subject to the same appraisal reporting as MS officers. Reporting officers may refer to the demanding nature of a position (including as ES or MS), but promotion selection boards will judge ES and MS officers together and fairly, based on the evidence of performance and potential evident within officers' OJARs irrespective of their stream.

Exit from the ES

309. **By election.** An officer wishing to leave the ES may elect to do so in consultation with their Career Manager, subject to Service requirements. If their application is approved, they will return to the MS either on approval if they are filling an 'Open' position, or on leaving any ES-annotated position they are occupying at the time of application.

310. **As a result of APR.** The APR, starting at the 5-year seniority point, as defined in Para 306, will assess whether an officer's suitability for the most senior ranks has developed as expected. In cases where it has not, the review will determine whether an officer's progress justifies retention in the ES, or whether they are to be returned to the MS.

311. **At 9-year seniority.** Any ES officer who has not been selected for promotion prior to attaining 9 years seniority in rank will be required to return to the MS, unless there are extenuating circumstances²⁵, which will be considered on an individual basis by their Career Manager.

312. **On change of appointment.** Officers leaving the ES, for whatever reason, may be required to serve the remainder of their current appointments before transferring to an 'Open' position, subject to the Service requirements at the time.

²⁵ Extenuating circumstances will embrace prolonged periods of authorised absence during which seniority is accrued, including maternity and paternity leave.

CHAPTER 4

RAF OFFICER FUNCTIONAL BRANCH CAREER MAPS

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CHAPTER 4

RAF OFFICER FUNCTIONAL BRANCH CAREER MAPS

Introduction

401. AP3393 Volume 2 Chapter 1 sets out the concept of streamed officer careers, in which streaming hinges on whether or not an individual is selected to undertake AST by the No 3 No 3 Combined Selection Board²⁶. To provide individual officers, their line managers and career managers with an indication of the potential differences between MS and ES careers, a series of Functional Branch career maps are set out in the annexes to this chapter. These maps are to be used in conjunction with the explanatory notes below; they are for indicative purposes only and do not constitute an authoritative source of information on individual careers. In particular, they are not an authority for policy such as a rank ceiling for a particular stream or branch, the expected rate of promotion, potential tour lengths or appointment types.

Career map format - overview

402. It is impractical for a single career map to display the full range of different career paths potentially applicable to all officers of a branch. This is a consequence of factors such as an individual's age on commissioning, antedated seniority awarded, aptitude, performance and potential, combined with variations over time in employment opportunities²⁷ and the requirements for operational deployments. The career maps contained in the annexes to this chapter are designed to provide an *indication* of the career progress and typical reach of the **highest** performing MS and ES officers in a branch. They do not show the career reach to be expected by *all* officers and are not to be read as defining 'career ceilings'.

Career map format - detail

403. **Length of service (LoS).** For a career map to be of practical use, it is necessary to include a timeline. As officers can be commissioned over a wide range of ages, the maps use LoS as their reference, rather than age. However, the LoS reference bar is only indicative of career progress, as:

- a. Rank and seniority on appointment, and speed of promotion to the rank of flt Lt, depend primarily on the mode of entry to a given branch²⁸.
- b. Promotion to the rank of sqn ldr and above is by selection.

The decision as to which type of entry is used to define the LoS timeline in each branch's career map²⁹ rests with the appropriate Head of Branch (HoB).

404. **Rank.** The rank bars provide an indication of the:

- a. Earliest point at which promotion has occurred in this branch in the recent past, defined by the leading edge of the rank bar; the many factors affecting time promotion make it impractical to define the

²⁶ The No 3 CSB combines the functions of the sqn ldr to wg cdr promotion selection board and the AST selection board.

²⁷ For example, due to the introduction of new capabilities, transfer of existing capabilities, deletion of extant capabilities or structural changes that result in reductions in the RAF's trained strength requirement.

²⁸ As set out in AP3393 Volume 1 Chapter 6 Section 1.

²⁹ Generally either University Graduate Entry or Basic Entry, as defined in AP3393 Volume 1 Chapter 1 Section 3.

transition between plt off, fg off and flt lt, hence a single bar is used to illustrate junior officer progression³⁰.

- b. Growth in the number of officers promoted at a given LoS, shown by the darkening shade of the rank bar.
- c. Normal Retirement Date appropriate for the rank concerned³¹.

As the rank information is based upon historic data, it is not to be interpreted as a forecast of when promotion will occur in the future.

405. **MS.** The MS bar in the career map indicates the type, order and duration of training courses and tours representative of the career path of the majority³² of MS officers who reach the highest rank typical for officers of their branch who have not completed AST. It is an intentional feature of the MS bar that the indication of promotion to sqn ldr rank and above is not coincident with the leading edge of promotion. Instead it is at the approximate point at which historic data indicates the earliest promotion of those who are not subsequently selected for AST. The start point of the provisional identification of the select few officers³³ that may be identified by the No 4 Promotion Selection Board as having the potential to enter the ES in the future is aligned with the leading edge of promotion to sqn ldr rank. This is based on a broad assumption that those who are promoted earliest are likely to be those displaying the highest potential for eventual ES selection. However, this is not to be taken as a guarantee that early promotion is directly linked to potential, or eventual, ES selection.

406. **ES.** The ES bar is an illustrative example of the order, type and duration of training courses and tours judged as representative of the career path to be expected of an ES officer who reaches the highest rank identified by the HoB as potentially achievable by officers of their branch³⁴. By definition, the majority of ES officers will not attain the highest rank shown.

407. **Selection for the ES.** Selection for the ES (by the No 3 CSB) is represented by a series of arrows showing flow from the MS to the ES. The leading edge of selection is aligned to the earliest point of promotion to wg cdr (see Para 404) and is indicated by a narrow, faint arrow to indicate that relatively few officers are likely to be selected this early in their careers. Thicker, darker arrows are used to illustrate the point at which the bulk of a branch's selections for AST³⁵ have historically occurred. Similarly, thinner, fainter arrows indicate the approximate upper boundary of historic AST selection. The relatively low numbers selected for AST from most branches make the designation of an AST selection zone particularly imprecise, as the LoS of selectees can vary from year to year. For this reason, the ES selection bar is depicted as intentionally lengthy and with indistinct leading and trailing edges. It is important to note that the map provides an *indication* of the typical point of ES selection and does not define or imply a rigid selection zone, outside which selection is barred.

408. **Return to the MS from the ES.** ES Officers may be returned to the MS as a result of a performance review, on reaching a defined seniority ceiling or by application³⁶. In the career map, return to the MS is indicated by the yellow arrows, which start at the point equivalent to 5 years of seniority in wg cdr rank having been reached.

³⁰ The policy regarding time promotion to flt lt is set out in AP3393 Volume 1 Chapter 6 Sections 1 to 3.

³¹ As defined in AP3393 Volume 1 Chapter 8 Section 3.

³² Noting that exceptions may occur of non-AST qualified MS officers attaining a higher rank than that shown in the career map; the career map is indicative, not prescriptive in this respect. In addition, ES officers who have attained higher rank may be re-streamed (by application or selection) back into the MS.

³³ Flt lts on promotion to sqn ldr.

³⁴ Noting that this type of career path is experienced by very few officers and does not imply a branch career ceiling, merely an indication of the highest rank judged potentially achievable by the appropriate HoB for officers of the each branch.

³⁵ At the outset of the streamed career model on 1 Sep 11, historic data refers to AST selection only.

³⁶ As defined in AP 3393 Volume 2 Chapters 1 and 3.

Career map sponsorship

409. ACOS Manning is responsible for the format of and generic information contained in the Functional Branch officer career maps; individual HoBs are responsible for the branch-specific detail contained within the Maps. Queries on details are to be addressed in the first instance to:

- a. HQAIR SO1 Manpower Structures (Ground)³⁷, regarding format.
- b. Individual branch sponsors³⁸, regarding branch-specific detail.

Annexes:

- A. [Explanatory Generic Career Map.](#)
- B. [Fg Branch Career Map.](#)
- C. [ATC Branch Career Map.](#)
- D. [ABM Branch Career Map.](#)
- E. [Intelligence Branch Career Map.](#)
- F. [Flt Ops Branch Career Map.](#)
- G. [RAF Regiment Branch Career Map.](#)
- H. [Provost Branch Career Map.](#)
- I. [Engineer Branch Career Map.](#)
- J. [Logistics Branch Career Map.](#)
- K. [Personnel Branch Career Map.](#)

³⁷ HQAIR 95221 – 7799.

³⁸ The list of branch sponsors is contained in Appendix 1 to Annex A to [GAI 1058](#).