The Non-Commissioned Aircrew Initial Training Course for

Non-Commissioned Aircrew,
Senior Non-Commissioned Officer
Air Traffic Controllers

and

Senior Non-Commissioned Officer
Weapons Controllers

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THE NON-COMMISSIONED AIRCREW INITIAL TRAINING COURSE

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Officer Commanding
NCAITC

AARON SECTION

GRAY SECTION

SNCO Ex Plans

HANNAH SECTION

THOMPSON SECTION
**NCAITC Mission Statement**

*The mission of the NCAITC is to deliver air-minded training and the necessary leadership skills required to produce credible, motivated, physically and mentally robust Senior Non-Commissioned Officers (SNCOs) in order to undertake specialist professional training.*

## Introduction

### The Non-Commissioned Aircrew Initial Training Course (NCAITC)

Following the 10 week Basic Recruit Training Course (BRTC) at RAF Halton, Non-Commissioned Aircrew (NCA), SNCO Air Traffic Control (ATC) and SNCO Weapons Controller cadets continue their phase 1 training on the 11 week NCAITC at the RAF College (RAFC) Cranwell¹.

Delivered by the Officer and Aircrew Cadet Training Unit (OACTU), the NCAITC provides a significant step-up from the training delivered on the BRTC. Whilst on the BRTC, recruits are provided with a solid foundation in the basic attitudes, knowledge and skills² required to be junior airmen and airwomen in the RAF. The NCAITC is very different. The NCAITC provides leadership training to SNCO cadets similar to that given to RAF officer cadets. Like Initial Officer Training (IOT), the NCAITC is physically and mentally demanding. Those who have been selected to undertake it must be physically fit and mentally prepared for the challenge if they wish to succeed. The NCAITC is not an attendance course; it is pass or fail. The course provides first class training and mentoring by appropriately qualified and highly experienced staff and standards expected from NCAITC cadets are high. A strict assessment strategy is applied across every aspect of the course to ensure only those who meet the high standards required to be a SNCO in the RAF graduate.

### OACTU

OACTU consists of 4 training squadrons; A, B, C and D. IOT for the majority of officer cadets is delivered by B, C and D Sqns whilst A Sqn delivers specialist entry officer courses and the NCAITC.

A Sqn is commanded by a squadron leader from the Flying Branch. The Officer Commanding (OC) A Sqn is supported by the Deputy Sqn Commander (DSC) who is a flight lieutenant. OC NCAITC is a flight lieutenant from the Flying Branch who will usually have served as NCA prior to being commissioned. On arrival at OACTU, NCAITC cadets will be allocated to a training section named after WWII non-commissioned aircrew recipients of the Victoria Cross. Each section (Aaron, Gray, Hannah and Thompson) is commanded by a Master Aircrew (MAcr) or an ATC/Flight Operations Warrant Officer (WO), one of whom will be the Course Commander for the course as a whole. In addition, the NCAITC staff includes a RAF Regiment SNCO and JNCO responsible for discipline, drill, the conduct of inspections and the planning and delivery of the practical leadership exercises.

The learning environment provided by OACTU is safe, appropriate and has been graded outstanding by OFSTED³. All OACTU staff and trainees are subject to the RAFC Cranwell Welfare & Supervisory Care Directive (SCD). The SCD aims to ensure welfare issues are dealt with sensitively and effectively and gives direction on the conduct of training, care of recruits, specific care of personnel under 18 and Service discipline.

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¹ Requirements for serving and ex-serving personnel of all ranks and services to complete NCAITC are detailed in Air Publications (AP) 7000 and 3376 Vol 1 Part 2.
² Extracted from Recruit Training Squadron Mission Statement.
³ 2016.
Being a SNCO

Being a SNCO in the RAF is a considerable undertaking and an immense responsibility. SNCOs are regarded as the bedrock of discipline, standards and professionalism in the Service. They are responsible for the management, development and discipline of the airmen and airwomen below them whilst providing professional advice and guidance to the officers above them. SNCOs are expected to demonstrate high levels of leadership and followership skills, communicate effectively at all levels, show initiative and make difficult and timely decisions based on carefully evaluated information.

Not everyone is able to demonstrate these abilities. Many non-commissioned servicemen and women do not have what it takes. In most ground trades, those that do will take many years to reach the rank of sergeant. For those who aspire to become NCA, SNCO ATCs or SNCO WCs, the journey is much quicker; but it is not an easy journey. If selected by the Officers and Aircrew Selection Centre (OASC), NCAITC cadets will have demonstrated that they have the potential to develop the abilities required to become a SNCO in the RAF. The NCAITC will help cadets do this through carefully designed instruction, coaching and mentoring but, to make the grade, cadets will have to work hard; harder than many will have ever worked before. They will need to assimilate a great deal of information, develop and practice new skills and techniques, and demonstrate consistently high personal and professional standards. They will be expected to think for themselves, to challenge the norm and to evaluate. They will need to have a positive attitude, demonstrate integrity, be determined, highly motivated and resolute. They will need to be able to recognise stress in themselves and others and operate under physical and mental pressure.

Being a SNCO is a privilege and should not be taken lightly. Becoming a SNCO is not easy. It is not meant to be because SNCOs must:

- Be competent to command, organise and direct a flight placed under their control in the efficient execution of any task which may be entrusted to them consistent with their rank.
- Be prepared to accept a high degree of responsibility, show initiative and inspire confidence.
- Bear their share of responsibility for the morale, welfare, discipline and leadership of the airmen, airwomen and civilian staff on their unit.
- Exercise a level of management consistent with their rank.
- Show pride in their Service and to take an active interest in promoting its ethos and good name in accordance with the Ethos, Core Values and Standards of the Royal Air Force.
- Set the highest possible standards of behaviour in respect of Equality and Diversity, and ensure their staff does the same.
- Embrace Mission Command as an everyday practice.
- Understand the role Leadership plays in affecting Change and appreciate the importance and promotion of Followership in the RAF.
- Show a positive attitude to the RAF Fitness Strategy and fitness in general, setting an example for their subordinates to follow.

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4 Queen's Regulations for the Royal Air Force, QR503, Appendix 27
5 Air Publication (AP) 1, Ethos, Core Values and Standards for the Royal Air Force
6 Allowing subordinates to make decisions, giving them the freedom to exploit the situation, to be agile.
Being an Air-minded SNCO

Leadership training with an air-minded context is at the core of the NCAITC. NCA, SNCO ATCs and SNCO WCs must be able to employ each of the following RAF Leadership Attributes\(^7\) in the air environment:

- **Warfighter – Courageous.** SNCOs are expected to demonstrate the physical courage required to overcome the adversity of operations and the moral courage to ‘do the right thing’. NCAITC cadets will be expected to take responsibility for their actions, to admit mistakes and learn from them. As SNCOs, they must demonstrate the courage to act and intervene when others might not. NCA, SNCO ATCs and SNCO WCs must demonstrate the integrity to admit a mistake, or the courage to intervene to prevent a mistake, in order to accomplish the mission, safeguard flight and protect lives.

- **Emotionally Intelligent.** Emotional intelligence is knowing what makes you and others tick. It is having good inter-personal skills, accurate self-analysis and knowing how your words and actions affect those around you. NCAITC cadets who demonstrate emotional intelligence will be able to better manage relationships at all levels and remain calmer under pressure. There are few environments subject to as much pressure as operating in the air or when controlling aircraft.

- **Flexible and Responsive.** SNCOs must be open-minded, responsive to change and able to cope with the discomfort of change. The air environment in which NCA and controllers operate is extremely dynamic. The situation can change rapidly, an emergency may arise and priorities will need to be re-evaluated. Decisions will need to be made quickly and communicated clearly. And at any time, the situation may change again.

- **Willing to Take Risks.** SNCOs constantly need to make decisions and understanding risk is vital to good decision making. There are few environments in which the need to balance decisions against risk is as important as in the air environment. NCAITC cadets are mentored in timely decision making. Assessing and taking risk is an important part of the learning process because, more than most, aircrew and controllers need to understand the consequences of failure if risks are to be taken.

\(^7\) Air Publication (AP) 7001, Leadership in the Royal Air Force
• **Able to Handle Ambiguity.** Not everything in the air environment will happen as expected. Situations will arise where a clear course of action is not obvious yet action must be taken. This is ambiguity. NCA, SNCO ATCs and SNCO WCs must be able to handle it. The ability to do so requires flexibility and responsiveness, mental agility and a willingness to take risks. NCAITC cadets will experience ambiguity during practical leadership exercises whilst learning how to overcome it through effective evaluation.

• **Mentally Agile and Physically Robust.** Mental agility is strongly linked to problem solving and decision-making whilst physical robustness is essential in order to withstand the physical demands of operations without losing the ability to think. Operational deployments, frequent airborne missions and long busy shifts controlling aircraft can be physically exhausting and stretch mental capacity. NCAITC cadets will be introduced to the pressure of problem solving in the classroom and will experience the pressures of problem solving and planning whilst being physically tired throughout the practical leadership phase.

• **Politically and Globally Astute – Air Warfare Minded.** Effective NCA, SNCO ATCs and SNCO WCs must understand how their individual and team roles contribute to the delivery of air power. As operators they must understand why a course of action may be required but, as leaders they will be required to influence those around them in order to achieve the aim. NCAITC cadets will study Air Power and practice influencing those around them through presentation, briefings and practical leadership exercises.

• **Technologically Competent.** Air power is largely technologically driven. Aircraft and the means to control them are extremely complex. Those that operate and control aircraft require considerable training and must understand the capability and limitations of the technology at their disposal. Above all, to remain technologically competent, NCA, SNCO ATCs and SNCO WCs must embrace lifelong learning and personal development: this starts on the NCAITC.

• **Able to Lead Tomorrow's Recruit.** Effective SNCOs must recognise the qualities that new recruits bring and must learn the leadership skills that will allow them to maximise their potential. To do so will require emotional intelligence, flexibility, mental agility and moral courage, essential traits which the NCAITC seeks to cultivate and develop.
Becoming an Air-minded SNCO –
The Training Environment

**Familiarisation Visits (FV).** Before commencing the NCAITC, candidates will have the opportunity to undertake two familiarisation visits (FVs). The first of these takes place during the selection visit to OASC. Candidates will visit No 45(Reserve) Squadron and RAF Cranwell ATC, where they will receive presentations on NCA and ATC phase 2 training, experience the training environment and speak to both students and instructors. Those who are successful at OASC, will be invited to attend a second FV on completion of BRTC; normally 1-2 weeks before the start of the NCAITC. During this visit, NCA, SNCO ATC and SNCO WC candidates receive an orientation of RAFC Cranwell and the NCAITC accommodation, meet cadets from the current course and receive a brief from OC NCAITC. Candidates will also undertake, and must pass, the OACTU FV Fitness Test during their second FV. More information on the NCAITC physical education (PEd) and training (PT) programme can be found later in this pamphlet.

**Arrival and Induction.** NCAITC cadets will arrive at RAFC Cranwell on the Saturday immediately preceding the first week of the course and will receive introduction briefings from the Course Commander and OC NCAITC on the adjacent Sunday. These briefings will cover standards, dress, behaviour, ethos, core values and general administration. Cadets will also receive training staff contact details if needed ‘out of hours’ and are encouraged to carry them at all times. The process for informing staff of family or welfare issues will be covered during the Initial Interviews during the Induction Week.

**Course Programme.** The NCAITC is a phase 1 course which lasts for 11 weeks and is a significant departure from the BRTC at RAF Halton. The NCAITC concentrates on leadership development and from the beginning, cadets are coached to think for themselves, be ‘self-starting’, take responsibility for their own actions, organise themselves and each other and demonstrate physical and emotional robustness. 11 weeks is not a long time in which to develop a SNCO.

The NCAITC programme is as follows:

- **Induction Week.** OACTU Entry Fitness Test. Arrivals administration, interviews and addresses, photos, kitting, welfare and H&S briefings, Beliefs & Values, MT licensing, introductions to Defence Writing, Leadership & Followership. Daily PEd and intro to ‘Battle’ PT (see later under Physical Education and Training for description of ‘Battle’ PT).

- **Working Weekend 1.** Providing assistance to a local community conservation project.
• **Week 1.** Diversity & Inclusion brief, Drill, Defence Presentation brief, Written & Verbal Comms (inc 2 min talks), introduction to pine poles and lashings, confidence course, Leadership theory, Essential Service Knowledge (ESK). Daily PEd and ‘Battle’ PT.

• **Working Weekend 2.** Working weekend undertaking project work in local area.

• **Week 2.** Leadership theory and exercise, Written & Verbal Comms, Drill, Navigation theory & exercise, exercise protocols, climatic injuries. Daily PEd and ‘Battle’ PT.

• **Week 3.** Leadership theory and exercises, Navigation exercise and test, ESK, Written Comms exam. Daily PEd and ‘Battle’ PT. OACTU Fitness Assessment (OFA).

• **Week 4.** INITIAL PRACTICAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING (IPLT). Beliefs & Values.

• **Week 5.** ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING (APLT).

• **Week 6.** ESK and exam, Beliefs & Values, Maths, Drill, Verbal Comms (inc 5 min talks), charity/social evening, mid-course interviews. Daily PEd and ‘Battle’ PT. OFA. Exercise ULTIMATE CHALLENGE.

• **Week 7.** EXERCISE SOUTHERN BORDER.

• **Week 8.** Air Power Studies, Verbal Comms (10 min talks), Drill, Maths, ESK, Ethos & Heritage visit, training Dining-in-Night in Warrant Officers’ & Sgts’ Mess. Daily PEd and ‘Battle’ PT.

• **Week 9.** EXERCISE BORDER PATROL.

• **Working Weekend 3.** Working weekend. Defence Presentation preparation.

• **Week 10.** Defence Presentations, Maths exam, Beliefs & Values, Progress Review Board (PRB), phase 2 trg briefs, ATC and 45(R) Sqn visits, end of course interviews, Graduation.

**Course Content.** The course is busy: there are 3 working weekends; 4 practical leadership weeks; PEd most days including ‘Battle’ PT; inspections of kit and accommodation; social events to organise including a training dining-in-night attended by senior officers; a 40 min defence presentation to write, rehearse and present to senior officers; and a carefully developed programme of leadership, written & verbal communication, land navigation, Essential Service Knowledge (ESK), Air Power Studies and maths lessons. There are examinations in land navigation, ESK, written communication and maths, and summative assessments (pass or fail) on inspection standards, verbal communications, fitness and leadership. A typical working day will commence at 0630 hrs with breakfast followed by inspection. Lessons will run from 0800 hrs to 1730 hrs with an hour for lunch, as well short morning and afternoon breaks. Cadets will also be busy most evenings with homework, revision, preparation for inspection, preparation for deployment and management of additional duties.

• **Leadership Theory.** It begins with drill practice but unlike at Halton, NCAITC cadets will be taught to give the orders. In leadership lessons, cadets will study the Action Centred Leadership (ACL) model and how to balance the needs of the Task, Team and Individual. They will study effective control and delegation; team dynamics; problem solving; accurate note taking and
the importance of Followership and Mission Command. In preparation for the practical leadership phase, cadets are taught how to give an effective brief using the mnemonic SMEAC (Situation Mission Execution Any questions Check understanding) and how to balance the needs of Task, Team & Individual by considering the mnemonic PICSIE (Plan Initiate Control Support Inform Evaluate).

- **Verbal Comms.** Clear, concise, accurate verbal communication is vital in the air environment. NCA, SNCO ATCs and SNCO WCs must be able to convey detailed information quickly, unambiguously and calmly in any situation, especially when under pressure. On the NCAITC, cadets will be coached in giving orders and briefings, will be assessed on the delivery of 5 min and 10 min presentations and as a section, deliver a 40 min Defence Studies Presentation to a senior audience.

- **Written Comms.** The ability to communicate clearly, concisely and accurately in written form is as important as being able to do so verbally. SNCOs must be able to write and discern orders, instructions and briefs unambiguously so as to avoid confusion. Cadets are introduced to the conventions of Defence Writing; the types and specific layout of Service correspondence. These include loose minutes, minutes of a meeting, military letters and e-mails.

- **Land Navigation.** NCAITC cadets are taught how to navigate over land, accurately and expeditiously, using a map and compass in order to be able to complete the practical leadership exercises. These lessons also introduce NCA, SNCO ATCs and SNCO WCs to working with compass bearings and headings, maps and charts, geographic co-ordinates and time/distance/speed calculations; vital skills for aircrew and controllers of aircraft.

- **Essential Service Knowledge.** SNCOs are responsible for setting and upholding the highest standards of personal and professional behaviour, for maintaining good Service discipline and for developing those under their command. NCAITC cadets will study, amongst other topics, the Ethos, Core Values and Standards of the RAF as laid down in Air Publication 1 (AP1), Service Law, responsibilities of a SNCO and the Servicepersons’ Joint Appraisal Report (SJAR).

- **Air Power Studies.** Air warfare minded SNCOs must be politically and globally astute. To that end, NCAITC cadets will study the employment of Air Power and its effectiveness in meeting today’s global security challenges and those of the future, current UK operations and the nature of counter-insurgency operations around the world.

- **Maths.** NCA and controllers routinely work with numbers and must be able to calculate headings and bearings, wind components, fuel loads, aircraft weight and balance, numerical components of Electronic Warfare, time, distance and speed quickly and accurately. NCAITC cadets will undertake maths revision lessons without calculators. Importantly, mental maths exercises develop mental agility which is linked to decision making. Mental agility and the ability to make good decisions will assist NCAITC cadets during the practical leadership phase and throughout their professional careers.

- **Physical Education and Training.** All service-men and woman must maintain a minimum level of physical fitness and as leaders, SNCOs must be physically robust, physically courageous and set an example to
their subordinates. The physical education (PEd) and training programme delivered on the NCAITC is demanding. It has been carefully designed by qualified staff to increase aerobic fitness, physical strength and endurance whilst minimising risk of injury. The programme will also stretch cadets mentally; they will be expected to demonstrate a positive mental attitude, determination and motivation during every session. Not only are these attributes required of SNCOs in the RAF, they will assist cadets throughout the NCAITC. Serving airmen and women, including personnel from other services, undertaking the NCAITC will complete the same PEd and training programme as direct entrants (DE) and must be in-date the RAFFT on arrival. The NCAITC PEd and training programme consists of the following elements:

- **OACTU FV & Entry Fitness Tests.** These tests are based on the standard RAF Fitness Test (RAFFT) which consists of a Multi-Stage Fitness Test, press-ups and sit-ups. NCAITC cadets must meet at least the minimum required standard based on age and gender but will be expected to continue to max effort.

- **PEd.** Apart from the final week, whilst on the Ethos & Heritage visit or during the practical leadership weeks, cadets will undertake daily PEd. Sessions take place in the gym, swimming pool and outdoors and include a variety of exercises and runs designed to improve cardio, muscular and general fitness.

- **Battle PT.** Some PEd sessions will focus on ‘Battle’ PT. For these sessions, cadets will wear issued combat clothing, including helmets and webbing. ‘Battle’ PT includes a confidence course session and educates cadets in the safe carrying of equipment and heavy loads such as water-filled containers and pine poles. Sessions become increasingly more demanding and develop the physical robustness, physical courage and fighting spirit required of SNCOs in the RAF.

- **OACTU Fitness Assessment (OFA).** The OFA consists of a 1.5 mile run outdoors followed by a press-up and sit-up element. The purpose of the OFA is to assess cadet fitness prior to the practical leadership exercise phases. Cadets must pass the OFA prior to the mentored leadership weeks (IPLT, APLT and Ex SOUTHERN BORDER) and again prior to the assessed leadership exercise week (Ex BORDER PATROL). Cadets who are unable to take, or who fail, the OFA will be removed from the NCAITC.

- **Ex ULTIMATE CHALLENGE.** Ex ULTIMATE CHALLENGE is a 3 hour ‘Battle’ PT session in which NCAITC and officer cadets compete in teams. Conducted under strict supervision and control, the session begins with a series of demanding relay races and exercises using heavy training equipment. The relay phase is immediately followed by up to a 10km race in which teams carry a stretcher and weighted dummy, or build and push a chariot. The event is a gruelling test of aerobic fitness, physical robustness, strength and endurance. Above all, it tests cadet motivation, determination and war-fighting spirit. For many, Ex ULTIMATE CHALLENGE will be the most challenging experience of their lives so far but cadets who complete it experience an enormous sense of pride in themselves and their team.
• **Additional Duties.** SNCOs in the RAF are expected to assist with the running and organisation of their place of work and wider RAF station. The running of facilities such as messes, sports teams and social clubs relies on personnel of all ranks committing time and energy beyond that required to fulfil their primary duties alone. Undertaking additional (or secondary) duties also contributes to personal and career development by providing opportunity to demonstrate organisational, leadership and management ability in a wider context. NCAITC cadets will be mentored in a variety of additional duties including: positions on the OACTU No 1 Training Mess Committee; other OACTU committees; organisation of NCAITC social and charity functions, project weekends, exercises and co-ordination of the Graduation Programme.

• **Working Weekends.** The first two weekends of the course are working weekends during which cadets support conservation and community projects in the local area. Cadets travel to and from RAFC Cranwell daily, departing after breakfast and returning in time for dinner. The weekends encourage team bonding and cohesion away from OACTU. They also provide cadets with an early opportunity to experience planning and execution of activities. Moreover, cadets are provided with the opportunity to act as ambassadors for the RAF.

• **Inspections and Personal Administration.** Routine inspection of uniform, equipment and accommodation helps develop self-discipline and teamwork, improves attention to detail, encourages maintenance of high standards and contributes towards the development of the air-minded SNCO. The NCAITC daily inspection phase lasts for the first 3 weeks, depending on the time it takes for cadets to achieve and demonstrate the required standard. The standard required is extremely high because the standard of self-discipline, teamwork and attention to detail required to operate safely in the air environment is extremely high.

**Practical Leadership Exercises.** Whilst on the NCAITC, cadets will undertake 4 practical leadership exercise weeks during which they will be coached and mentored in the PICSIE functions (Plan Initiate Control Support Inform Evaluate) of leadership and followership. The exercises are progressive in nature and cadets will not be expected to demonstrate anything that has not been taught previously. However, the exercises are physically and mentally demanding. Designed to develop the ability to assimilate information, plan and deliver solutions whilst operating under pressure, NCAITC practical leadership exercises will test physical robustness, mental agility and the warfighting spirit of cadets to the full. Cadets will navigate over large distances on varying terrain carrying personal and exercise equipment including pine poles, stretchers, ropes, water filled containers and safety equipment. Attention to detail and adherence to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) throughout the exercises is critical; both
support the PICSIE functions of leadership, mitigate ambiguity, contribute directly to safety and prepare the air-minded SNCO for operations in the air environment. The practical leadership exercises are:

- **Initial Practical Leadership Training (IPLT):** IPLT takes place on the North Airfield at RAFC Cranwell. Cadets are mentored and coached throughout a series of leadership tasks, each lasting approximately 2 hours, covering distances of 8-10km per day over flat terrain with few obstacles. Breakfast and dinner will be taken in the No1 OACTU Mess as normal and a hot lunch will be provided in the field. Cadets will return to their normal accommodation at the end of each day.

- **Additional Practical Leadership Training (APLT):** APLT takes places on Stanford Training Area (STANTA) in Norfolk. Leadership tasks are more complex than those undertaken on IPLT and cadets will cover approximately 10-15 km per day over more challenging terrain. Cadets will experience increased physical and mental pressure but will continue to be coached and mentored throughout each task. Cadets will eat from Operational Ration Packs (ORPs) and sleep in bivouacs (under shelter sheets) each evening.
Ex SOUTHERN BORDER (Ex SB): Ex SB takes place on the Otterburn Training Area (OTA) in Northumberland. The leadership tasks increase in complexity and cadets will cover up to 18 km each day over difficult, hilly terrain with additional weight. The OTA is predominantly exposed countryside and the weather can be unpredictable bringing additional challenges. Cadets will experience a significant increase in physical and mental pressure and, although still being coached and mentored, will be expected to demonstrate determination, motivation, physical robustness and the warfighting spirit. As per APLT, cadets will eat from ORPs but will be accommodated in tents instead of bivouacs to help ensure adequate rest and sleep. Ex SB is the final opportunity to develop and practice practical leadership skills before the assessment week on Ex BORDER PATROL.

Ex BORDER PATROL (Ex BP): Ex BP is the summative (pass or fail) leadership assessment phase of the NCAITC. Like Ex SB, Ex BP takes place on the OTA in Northumberland. The complexity of each task, weight carried and distances covered remain the same as those for Ex SB to ensure nothing new is introduced during testing. Again, meals will be provided from ORPs but this time, cadets will be accommodated in hardened accommodation to provide better opportunity for rest and sleep. Cadets must pass one assessed lead and will have 2 opportunities to do so. However, passing an assessed lead does not guarantee graduation from the NCAITC. To graduate as a SNCO, cadets must have met the required standard across all elements of the course.
Discipline and the Review Process on the NCAITC

“The most effective discipline is self-discipline, which comes from within and is not imposed. Good discipline enables us to achieve more than we would normally expect of ourselves. Because discipline is vital to success, commanders must be able to enforce it when necessary … Discipline must, therefore, be rigorously but fairly upheld by everyone in positions of authority” 8.

Discipline. The standard of discipline expected on the NCAITC is extremely high. From arrival to graduation, cadets are expected to demonstrate high levels of self and collective discipline, pay attention to detail, develop and maintain the highest personal and professional standards and be courteous to other cadets and staff at all times. Throughout the course, the conduct and training performance of cadets, both on and off-duty, will be constantly measured against the Core Ethos and Values of the RAF (AP 1) and the formal OACTU Assessment Strategy.

The OACTU Tiered Review Process. Cadets who fail to achieve and maintain the required standards, or who struggle with any aspect of training, will be subject to the OACTU Tiered Review process. The aim of the process is to identify factors affecting cadet performance, allow closer mentoring by staff and provide additional support if appropriate in order to allow cadets to continue on course. Although the process is not part of the formal RAF disciplinary process, cadets may also be placed on Review for disciplinary reasons. Cadets who respond positively to additional support may be moved back down through the Tiers, or be removed from review altogether. Cadets who do not respond positively to additional support, or who repeatedly demonstrate lapses in discipline, may proceed to the next review level. Cadets on Tier 3 will be considered for withdrawal from training.

- **Tier 1.** Course Commander Review.
- **Tier 2.** OC NCAITC Review.
- **Tier 3.** Sqn Cdr Review.

The Progress Review Board (PRB). On return from Ex BP, a PRB will be convened by OC OACTU to determine whether or not each cadet has reached the standard required to graduate. Every aspect of a cadet’s performance and attitude will be scrutinised in accordance with the OACTU Assessment Strategy. Academic results, fitness and practical leadership performance will provide vital evidence to the PRB as will the cadet’s performance whilst on the 3 Tier Review Process (if applicable). Passing any or all of the summative elements of the course does not guarantee graduation. The PRB will also place considerable emphasis on a cadet’s maturity, integrity and attitude to training and will look to be assured that the cadet truly understands, and is able to demonstrate, the qualities of a SNCO. Cadets who do not meet the standard required to graduate will be recommended for re-course or withdrawal from training.

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8 AP1
**Graduation**

For those who achieve the standard required, the NCAITC culminates with a formal graduation ceremony at which each cadet is promoted to acting (unpaid) sergeant and presented with a certificate by a senior or air officer, normally from the Flying or Air Ops branches. The ceremony takes place in the Rotunda of College Hall Officers’ Mess in front of friends and family and is followed by a formal lunch in the Warrant Officers’ & Sergeants’ (WOs’ & Sgts’) Mess, again, with friends and family. Lunch in the WOs’ & Sgts’ Mess is a particularly significant milestone for the newly graduated sergeants because it marks the first occasion on which they are able to enter the Mess in their own right as senior non-commissioned officers.
Summary

Non-Commissioned Aircrew, DE SNCO Air Traffic Controllers and SNCO Weapons Controllers are amongst the most professionally demanding and rewarding roles in the RAF. But reward does not come for free. Professional training for NCA, SNCO ATCs and SNCO WCs is lengthy and challenging; and the challenge starts on the NCAITC.

The NCAITC is significantly more demanding than the BRTC. The BRTC provides recruits with a foundation in the basic attitude, knowledge and skills required for service in the RAF as junior airmen and airwomen whereas the NCAITC aims to develop the personal qualities and leadership skills required to be an air-minded SNCO: integrity, moral courage, physical robustness, mental agility, emotional intelligence, the ability to handle ambiguity and a willingness to assess and take risk.

The pace of the NCAITC is fast and the learning curve is steep. It requires a high level of physical fitness, motivation and determination. From the outset, cadets will be encouraged to think for themselves, to use their initiative, to evaluate the situation and act appropriately. They will be expected to achieve and demonstrate the highest standards of dress, deportment and conduct, pay particular attention to detail and adhere to stringent procedures. Self-discipline and effective teamwork are essential. Cadets will be taught new skills and techniques in the classroom and in the field. They will practice them on leadership exercises designed to develop their ability to make decisions whilst under physical and mental pressure and they will be tested to see if they have what it takes to enter the next stage of training as senior non-commissioned officers in the Royal Air Force.
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