



## Safety Oversight and Certification Advisory Committee Task Notice

October 5, 2020

**ACTION:** Notice of a task assignment for the Safety Oversight and Certification Advisory Committee (SOCAC).

**SUMMARY:** The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) proposes a new SOCAC task to examine and make recommendations on preparing the FAA and assisting the industry in planning for future personnel knowledge and skill needs.

The work will be used to assist future FAA hiring needs and assessments as the Agency and industry workforce turns over and to position FAA to meet its strategic goal of aligning workforce development and training with its long-term plans.

SOCAC should focus on the following key areas and elements—

- Safety critical positions required for system oversight and product certification
- Evaluation and improvement of workforce development programs and training
- Collaborative internal and external learning opportunities
- Understanding the impact of training on FAA operations and measuring to expected program outcomes.

The tasking requests identification of opportunities for mutual exchange of knowledge, experience and skills education and capabilities among and between all aviation stakeholders (FAA, Industry, International partners, public interest groups, trade unions, etc.). Additionally, SOCAC should propose innovative learning and knowledge transfer opportunities to ensure continued competency and development for stakeholders.

This notice informs the public of the new SOCAC activity.

**BACKGROUND:** Congress requested the establishment of the SOCAC to provide advice to the Secretary on a variety of policy-level issues related to FAA safety oversight and certification programs and activities. SOCAC is governed by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C., Appendix 2).

The FAA and the aviation industry expect to experience significant turnover in managerial, technical, and administrative personnel in the near future. The expectation has been exacerbated by the advent of the COVID-19 virus. Loss of knowledge and experience can introduce risk to the National Aerospace System (NAS) unless it is transferred or replaced in a timely and efficient manner. Identification of mitigation strategies, and of possible certification and oversight system inefficiencies is an important factor to the continued and future success of the NAS.

At the same time, there is an increase in non-traditional aviation entrants and innovative technologies and systems, such as unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), expanded automation to artificial intelligence, robotics and additive manufacturing. The FAA's Safety Management Systems will continue to evolve, enabling it to leverage information systems and resources in support of risk-based decision making. However, keeping abreast of new entrants and innovative technologies requires an assessment of current and an exploration of different knowledge exchange strategies to meet the challenge.

In recent reviews of the certification processes, experts and the FAA's internal analysis highlighted the need to foster the FAA's workforce to enhance the certification and safety oversight system. Furthermore, a robust workforce development, training and skills assessment will identify and address knowledge and experience gaps for all stakeholders.

The FAA has initiated skills assessment, workforce development and training goals. SOCAC will be asked to consider these initiatives when developing recommendations to ensure alignment with FAA strategies and goals:

- **AVS Strategic Plan:** A vision of the United States' aviation safety system, with key elements that position the FAA's Aviation Safety organization to ensure aviation safety while meeting stakeholders' needs in an ever-changing technical environment. Its strategic themes, supported by initiatives and specific activities will be guiding AVS achievements.
- **AIR Comprehensive Strategic Plan:** A translation of AIR's strategic vision into initiatives and actions that, when implemented, will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Aircraft Certification Safety System. The initiatives touch every aspect of the certification process, including safety regulations and policies and how AIR and stakeholders can achieve mutual objectives.
- **Aviation Safety Workforce Plan 2020-2029:** This plan provides staffing estimates for AVS Services and Offices and includes September 2019 actual on-board levels. It also incorporates changes in aircraft fleet and operations forecasts, inspector and engineer attrition, and other elements that will be useful to the SOCAC task assignment.

On September 16, 2020, the FAA assigned to SOCAC the Workforce Development and Training (WDAT) task. SOCAC delegated this task to the Subcommittee and may solicit the support of subject matter experts for assistance.

**THE TASK:** SOCAC will provide advice and recommendations on ways to develop, supplement, and train the Agency's aviation safety workforce. At the same time, SOCAC will identify complementary and mutual strategies and learning opportunities for all other stakeholders. As the FAA completes its involvement to an integrated systems approach that considers the entire product safety lifecycle, the identification of opportunities to support and reinforce this shift in workforce development and training products will benefit all stakeholders. FAA requests SOCAC consider the development and integration of non-traditional knowledge, skills or capabilities that may be needed to support an integrated systems approach to

certification and oversight. The committee should review any relevant materials to assist in achieving the task objectives.

Specific SOCAC actions assigned:

1. In support of FAA Learning Strategy development, make recommendations on standards for knowledge and skills of stakeholder personnel responsible for the application, certification, continued compliance and oversight of design, production, operation and maintenance approvals and certificates.

(Learning Standards and Skills Identification)

- a. Review the regulations, advisory and guidance material to identify any current standards for knowledge, experience and/or training for stakeholder personnel involved in or responsible for applications for certifications, approvals or delegations in design, production, operations and maintenance. Submit the results of this review with the knowledge and skill providing the highest value for design, production, operation, and maintenance focus areas.
- b. When conducting the review in item 1a, identify standards that are applicable to all stakeholders responsible for making applications, certificating, continued compliance and oversight of certificates and approvals, particularly delegated activities in design, production, operations and maintenance, and provide recommendations for common criteria or standards.

(Staff Skillset Recommendations)

- c. Using the review conducted in item 1a, provide recommendations on personnel knowledge and skill to sustain both traditional and evolving regulatory roles and responsibilities. For those identified as evolving or non-traditional, provide recommendations on roles and responsibilities.
- d. Provide recommendations, including barriers and potential solutions under which the FAA may quickly supplement its staff with subject matter expert assistance on an as needed basis.

(Learning Opportunities)

- e. Identify opportunities for the FAA, industry, and other aviation stakeholders to develop and exchange knowledge. Identify barriers that may restrict learning experiences and recommend methods by which those barriers can be overcome. The goal is to provide training and experience to agency, industry, and other aviation stakeholder personnel to meet current and emerging needs.

- f. Propose methods for mutually and collaboratively developing and providing educational experiences that can be found acceptable for compliance with 14 CFR requirements and for encouraging continued education for stakeholders responsible for making applications, certificating, continued compliance and oversight of certificates and approvals or delegating in design, production, operations and maintenance activities in—
  - i. Regulatory compliance,
  - ii. Technical knowledge, and
  - iii. Professionalism.

In completing this task, SOCAC should explore the creation of partnerships with universities and other external educational organizations.

SOCAC should make recommendations related to performance measures that provide a means to evaluate the effectiveness of these learning opportunities on the knowledge and skills required to meet the recommended standards.

2. Develop a report containing recommendations on the findings and results of the tasks explained above.
  - a. The recommendation report should document both majority and dissenting positions on the findings and the rationale for each position.
  - b. Any disagreements should be documented, including the rationale for each position and the reasons for the disagreement.

**SCHEDULE:** The recommendation report should be submitted to the FAA no later than 12 months from the first meeting of the subcommittee.

**SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIVITY:** The subcommittee must comply with the procedures adopted by SOCAC and as follows:

1. Conduct a review and analysis of the assigned tasks and any other related materials or documents.
2. Provide a status report at each SOCAC public meeting.
3. Draft and submit the recommendation report based on the review and analysis of the assigned tasks.
4. Present the recommendation report at the SOCAC public meeting.

**PARTICIPATION OF SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS:** Unless a current SOCAC member, an individual must be invited as a subject matter expert (SME) to assist with the tasking. A SME is not considered a member and must be invited to attend meetings for the purpose of providing SOCAC with technical assistance. Individuals interested in serving as subject matter experts for

the Workforce Development and Training tasking may submit a résumé or curriculum vitae to the FAA. See “Nomination Process” for details.

The provisions of the August 13, 2014, Office of Management and Budget guidance, “Revised Guidance on Appointment of Lobbyists to Federal Advisory Committees, Boards, and Commissions” (79 FR 47482), continues the ban on registered lobbyists participating on Agency Boards and Commissions if participating in their “individual capacity.” The revised guidance now allows registered lobbyists to participate on Agency Boards and Commissions in a “representative capacity” for the “express purpose of providing a committee with the views of a nongovernmental entity, a recognizable group of persons or nongovernmental entities (an industry, sector, labor unions, or environmental groups, etc.) or state or local government.” (For further information see Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (LDA) as amended, 2 U.S.C 1603, 1604, and 1605.)

**NOMINATION PROCESS:** Interested individuals should submit, in full, the following materials to be considered as a SME. Failure to submit the required information may disqualify a candidate from the review process.

1. A résumé or curriculum vitae.
2. A statement describing the candidate’s interest in the task and the expertise the candidate would bring to the tasking.

Nominations must be submitted electronically (by E-mail) to [9-AWA-ARM-SOCAC@faa.gov](mailto:9-AWA-ARM-SOCAC@faa.gov). The subject line should state “Workforce Development and Training Tasking SME Nomination.” The FAA must receive all requests by **Monday, October 19, 2020, at 5:00 pm Eastern Daylight Time**. The SOCAC Subcommittee and FAA will review the requests and select SMEs as needed.

### Confidential Information

All final work products submitted to the SOCAC are public documents. Therefore, it should not contain any nonpublic proprietary, privileged, business, commercial, and other sensitive information (collectively, Confidential Information) that the working group members would not want to be publicly available. With respect to working groups, there may be instances where members will share Commercial Information within the working group for purposes of completing an assigned task. Members must not disclose to any third party, or use for any purposes other than the assigned task, any and all Confidential Information disclosed to one party by the other party, without the prior written consent of the party whose Confidential information is being disclosed. All parties must treat the Confidential Information of the disclosing party as it would treat its own Confidential Information, but in no event shall it use less than a reasonable degree of care. If any Confidential Information is shared with the FAA representative on a working and/or task groups, it must be properly marked in accordance with the Office of Rulemaking Committee Manual, ARM-001-15.

The Secretary of Transportation determined the formation and use of the SOCAC is necessary and in the public interest in connection with the performance of duties imposed on the FAA by law.

SOCAC meetings are open to the public. However, subcommittee and task group meetings are not open to the public, except to the extent individuals with an interest and expertise are selected to participate. The FAA will make no public announcement of these meetings.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Robert H. Duffer, telephone - (206) 231-3774; email - [robert.duffer@faa.gov](mailto:robert.duffer@faa.gov).