

AETC Wing Spark Innovation Cell Charter

1. Purpose

This charter establishes suggested business rules by which AETC Wings may choose to operate as Wing Spark Cells. This charter enables the [\(insert wing here\)](#) Spark cell to quickly respond to unit-level innovation initiatives with resourcing options, facilitating rapid project start-up. The Wing Spark Cell office may make modifications to this charter through coordination with the Wing/CC.

2. Reference

AETC HQ Spark Cell Charter & Business Rules, [DD MMM 2018](#)

3. Background

In March 2018, Lt Gen Kwast (AETC/CC) directed his CAG to enable AETC Wings to stand up innovation offices, called “Spark Cells,” to invigorate unit-level innovation based on the model developed at Travis AFB. This grassroots innovation framework allows units to build a network with industry, academia, and DoD to provide rapid solutions to warfighter needs.

4. Scope

The focus of the Wing Spark Cell Office is to review innovation initiatives at the appropriate level to determine the merit and viability of action plans and to develop resource options to facilitate rapid project start-up by the unit. The Cell garners authority from the AETC Spark Cell Charter to establish a structure to execute innovative initiatives.

5. Spark Cell Framework

[Insert wing here](#) should establish three organizational entities to lead their Wing Spark Cell program:

- The [Insert wing here](#) Wing Spark Cell Mentorship Group
- A [Insert wing here](#) Wing Spark Cell Champion
- The [Insert wing here](#) Wing Spark Cell Office

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The following roles and responsibilities are encouraged for implementation of the Wing Spark Cell structure:

Spark Mentorship Group:

The [Insert wing here](#) Spark Mentorship Group is an executive-level forum that provides strategic advice, advocacy, and mentorship to the [Insert wing here](#) Spark program. The Group will meet as deemed appropriate by a majority of the group. All Spark Cell Mentorship Group meetings are open forums.

Members:

- [Insert wing here](#) Spark Cell Champion (Group Chair)

AETC Wing Spark Innovation Cell Charter

- Group Members (up to 12 executive-level civilians as approved by the Champion)
- [Insert wing here](#) Spark Cell Office
- Squadron Commanders (suggest one from each Group as appointed by the Champion)
- Superintendents (suggest one from each Group as appointed by the Champion)
- AF Reserve Representatives (as required)
- Legal/Contracting/Finance/Cyber Representatives (as required).

Spark Champion:

The [Insert wing here](#) Spark Champion (typically the Wing/CC or other Wing senior leader) provides executive-level advocacy for [Insert wing here](#) innovation initiatives, mentorship to the [Insert wing here](#) Spark Cell Office, and excites a culture of innovation across the base.

Spark Cell Office:

The [Insert wing here](#) Spark Cell Office is the organizational focal point and responsible for daily operations of [Insert wing here](#) Spark activities. The office will be manned by a staff of on-loan personnel and volunteer Project Managers (PMs). The Wing Process Manager (WPM) should have an active role in Spark Cell activities. The [Insert wing here](#) Spark Cell Office is responsible for:

- Incubating ideas from within the wing
- Creating and managing a network of contacts
- Develop action plans for unit-level innovation initiatives
- Coordinating base-level initiatives with appropriate agencies
- Supporting the Wing Spark Mentorship Group

On-Loan Personnel:

The Wing/CC and the Champion may appoint a staff of on-loan personnel based on recommendations from Group and/or Squadron Commanders. This staff is in charge of the daily operations and provides continuity for the Spark program. Additional staff can be provided by Squadron Commanders, who may assign their Airmen to the Wing Spark Cell Office for a specified period of time. These Airmen can be assigned to work on a specific project or as augmentation for the overall Wing Spark program.

Wing Spark Project Managers:

Project Managers (PMs) are volunteers that are actively involved with the Wing Spark program, but their primary duties take precedence. If there is a conflict between primary duties and Wing Spark activities, PMs will coordinate and get approval from their supervisors before working on the Wing Spark activities.

AETC Wing Spark Innovation Cell Charter

7. Wing Spark Networks

DoD Networks:

The [Insert wing here](#) Spark Cell Office should develop relationships with other DoD entities pursuing innovation activities, to include other Spark offices.

Industry and Academic Networks:

The [Insert wing here](#) Spark Cell Office should develop a network with industry and academic partners. These non-traditional partnerships are critical to the success of the Spark program and will be managed with integrity. Members of the Wing Spark program will not obligate government resources without coordination and approval from the appropriate authorities.

8. Program Management

The [Insert wing here](#) Spark program is always learning better ways to execute projects. Due to the iterative approach, no specific method will be defined in this charter. The [Insert wing here](#) Spark Cell Office should maintain a portfolio of project plans in addition to updating the AETC Innovation Advancement Division's SharePoint repository with their previous projects and lessons learned.

Types of Activities:

[Insert wing here](#) Spark pursues three types of activities which may overlap:

- Tools for the Warfighter: Identifying a problem set and creating, prototyping, experimenting, and/or fielding the hardware/software solutions
- Collaborative Research: Developing problem statements or hypotheses for analysis by an academic institute or consultant group. Note: The WPM should be integral to the problem definition process.
- Knowledge Exchange: Providing academic or practical opportunities for individual or organizational learning

Funding:

Each FY the Wing/CC should plan funds for the [Insert wing here](#) Spark program. Funds may be supplemented by the MAJCOM, the HQ, or other agencies. As such, all [Insert wing here](#) Spark funds will be communicated to the appropriate organizations.

Legal, Contractual, Financial, and Cyber-Security Considerations:

When appropriate for a given activity, members of the Wing Spark Cell will address the legal, contractual, financial, and/or cybersecurity issues with the appropriate agency. Due to the non-traditional nature of some Wing Spark activities, members should not limit themselves to local counsel when pursuing answers.