



Course Plan 2025



Baltic Defence College
Ad Securitatem Patriarum

**Higher Command
Studies Course**

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Course Director's Foreword

On behalf of the Commandant of the Baltic Defence College, I would like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to all participants of the Higher Command Studies Course 2025. Fully sponsored by the Framework Nations, the Higher Command Studies Course (HCSC) offers senior officers and government officials the opportunity to continue their professional education by studying strategic-level topics. Its goal is to provide participants with the knowledge, understanding, and tools they need to become creative, proactive, and agile commanders, policymakers, and managers capable of making sound, decisive, and future-oriented decisions.

The faculty of the College and guest speakers will equip you with the tools necessary to deal with the dynamics of the security environment, innovate in the face of political, economic, social, and environmental changes, and develop and implement appropriate strategies. The unique international civil-military composition of the course will foster a welcoming educational environment in which students can learn from one another and share professional experiences. Besides tracing these theoretical developments, you will make many new friends and expand your professional networks. Moreover, we will provide you with opportunities to learn about the rich culture and history of the Framework Nations.

I eagerly await your active participation and contribution to the course. I hope this course encourages and facilitates your professional development as future senior military officers and government officials.

This course plan details the learning requirements for each core module that must be met through the HCSC 2025 and general information about other activities to help students achieve the course objectives. This course plan is published under the authority of the Commandant of the Baltic Defence College.

Eugeniusz CIEŚLAK
Colonel (ret.), PhD
Course Director

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Section 1 – About the Baltic Defence College

1.1 Mandate of the Baltic Defence College

The Baltic Defence College (BALTDEFCOL) was founded in 1999 by Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania with support from their allies and partners. The mandate of the College was set out in the founding document. In 2023, the Baltic States Ministerial Committee approved the BALTDEFCOL Development Plan for 2024-2032, which provides political guidance for the development and future operations of the College and sets strategic goals and ways to achieve them. It ensures that the College remains responsive to the evolving character of academic best practices and remains a Professional Military Education (PME) institution of choice in a constantly evolving strategic environment.

The vision for BALTDEFCOL is to be a modern, future-oriented, attractive, competitive, and English-language-based international defence college with a regional focus and Euro-Atlantic scope. The BALTDEFCOL functions as a PME institution at the operational and strategic levels, applying the latest educational principles, effective management, and the most efficient use of intellectual and material resources.

The college's mission is to educate military and security-related civilian personnel of the Framework Nations, allies, and partners while promoting international cooperation, networking, and contribution to security and defence policy research to meet the long-term defence and security needs of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

In July 2022, the NATO Allied Command of Transformation (ACT) granted the BALTDEFCOL unconditional institutional accreditation status. This marks yet another historic milestone in recognising BALTDEFCOL's high-quality standards in delivering education and BALTDEFCOL's relevance for NATO and its partners.

BALTDEFCOL's primary geographical scope in educational matters is on:

- The Baltic region;
- The wider Baltic Sea region with particular focus on Russia;
- NATO/EU; and
- The wider NATO/EU area of interest.

As a core program, BALTDEFCOL delivers for Officers and Civil Servants two PME courses:

- Higher Command Studies Course (HCSC) – a five-month senior-level course.
- Joint Command and General Staff Course (JCGSC) – a ten-month general staff officer operational level course.

For the mid-level governmental organisations and agency officials (civil servants):

- Civil Servants' Course (CSC) – an operational-level security and defence course.

In addition to its core PME programme, the BALTDEFCOL delivers the following continuing education courses:

- Senior Leaders' Course (SLC) – a one-week course for General/Flag officers and civilian equivalents.
- Command Senior Enlisted Leaders' Course (CSELC) – a three-month strategic level course for top-level Senior Enlisted Leaders working directly for General/Flag Officers.

1.2 Professional Military Education (PME) System

The Professional Military Education System of the Framework Nations divides officer education into four development levels (Figure 1). The first two levels, concerned with junior officers' basic training and education, are national responsibilities. The Baltic Defence College's Joint Command and General Staff Course and Higher Command Studies Course (or their equivalents) are the third and fourth levels of military education in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Development level 1	Development level 2	Development level 3		Development level 4	Continuing Education	
Basic	Junior	Advanced		Senior	Executive	
Tactical	Tactical	Operational		Strategic	Strategic - Political	
Basic and specialist courses	Captain career and intermediate courses	Civil Servants' Course	Joint Command and General Staff Course	Higher Command Studies Course	Senior Leaders' Course	Command Senior Enlisted Leaders' Course
National or international military academies		BALTDEFCOL or international staff/war colleges				
OF-1	OF-1 – OF-2	OF-3 – OF-4 and selected civil servants		OF-4 – OF-5 (P) and selected civil servants	OF-6 / (P) – OF-7 and CIV equivalents	OR-9

Figure 1 Diagram of the Professional Military Education (PME) System for Officers of the Framework Nations.

1.3 Policy on Equal Treatment and Code of Conduct

In 2019, the BALTDEFCOL implemented its Policy on Equal Treatment. This policy will be introduced and explained to students at the beginning of the course. This policy ensures a pleasant working environment, learning conditions, and protection from unfair and unequal treatment. Mutual trust and respect for the dignity and rights of all people are essential characteristics of this environment, and they are directly related to the BALTDEFCOL's Code of Conduct, which all members of staff and students are expected to follow. The Code of Conduct contains the following principles:

RESPECT:

- People (listen to everyone)
- The multinational environment
- Students – as colleagues
- The chain of command:
 - Make decisions at the right level
 - Show loyalty to decisions

RESPONSIBILITY:

- Be professional – lifetime learning
- Express your opinion
- Use common sense

OPENNESS:

- Have no hidden agendas
- Get input before decisions
- Talk to – and not about – people

HAVE FUN:

- Involve families
- Encourage socialising to do things together



The Baltic Defence College

Section 2 – About the Higher Command Studies Course

2.1 Outline

The HCSC was established in 2004 to educate senior military officers and government officials on the challenges associated with adapting defence institutions at the national, Allied, and European levels to prepare them better to participate in the full spectrum of twenty-first-century operations. The core rationale for the course is to ensure that the Baltic states' armed forces will be able to make an effective contribution to meet the strategic challenges of today and tomorrow, and their respective leadership will understand the requirements for and will be ready to lead significant defence development programmes. Thus far, the College has conducted twenty HCSCs. Three hundred thirty-nine students from 34 countries have graduated from these courses. Many have since been assigned essential and demanding positions in their home countries or international organisations.

The HCSC 2025 will be held from 13 January to 19 June 2025 for twenty-three weeks. Students are expected to spend time preparing for the course and studying assigned publications before arrival. During the residential period, each working day comprises six academic hours of classroom activities. Students are expected to spend up to three hours per day on individual preparations on average during working days and up to five hours on weekends. As a rule, each week must include at most 27 hours of contact time. Exercises and selected activities, such as study trips and conferences, may necessitate additional or modified study hours.

The HCSC is highly engaging, and students must conduct individual research and participate in various collective research projects, discussions, and exercises. Two study trips will complement classroom activities.

2.2 Aim

The aim of the HCSC is to prepare senior military officers and civilian government officials from the Framework Nations, their Allies and Partners for executive responsibilities at strategic levels both nationally and within the international community.

2.3 Learning Objectives

The delivery of education throughout the HCSC is organised to achieve learning objectives that delineate critical fields of knowledge and appropriate skills for the students to master. The curriculum of the HCSC 2025 is designed to produce graduates who are able to:

1. **Assess** key drivers and trends in the evolving security environment and appraise their implications for the security and defence of the Euro-Atlantic community, the Baltic Sea Region, and the Baltic states.

This course objective is supported and achieved through all educational components, particularly Module 1, Security Environment, Module 2, Russia in the International System, and all other Modules, Electives, the Research Paper, the Annual Conference on Russia, and both study trips.

2. **Contribute** to developing and implementing defence policies, strategies, plans and management decisions to achieve national and Allied strategic objectives.

This course objective is supported by and achieved through the following educational components: Module 4, Defence Policy and Strategy Development; Module 5, Defence Management, Module 6, Strategic Operations

Planning, and Module 7, Strengthening Deterrence and Defence, but is also supported by Modules 1 and 3, both study trips, and the Research Paper.

3. **Develop** as creative, proactive, and agile leaders while performing executive responsibilities at the strategic level in interagency, national, and international environments, demonstrating the traits essential to the profession of arms.

This course objective is supported and achieved by all educational components, mainly by Module 3, Strategic Leadership, but also supported by all other Modules, Electives, study trips, and the Research Paper.

4. **Formulate and communicate** solutions to complex problems in security, defence, strategic leadership, and high command problems using critical thinking and practical communication skills.

This course objective is supported by and achieved through all educational components, particularly the Academic Foundations Module and Module 3, Strategic Leadership, as well as all other Modules, Electives, study trips, and the Research Paper.

2.4 Recognition of the HCSC

In designing and implementing the HCSC, the BALTDEFCOL aims to meet the standards and requirements of civilian post-graduate degree programmes. However, the HCSC is designed first and foremost as a senior professional military education course, and it is entirely up to universities to determine which, if any, modules of the HCSC may be accredited towards their Master's or any other programmes, as well as respectively, their value in ECTS credit points. Several NATO and partner countries accredit the HCSC at the national level as a Professional Military Education Level 4 programme, and some of the electives are simultaneously NATO- and EU-certified courses.

2.5 Module-based Participation

The HCSC offers additional opportunities for external participants from governmental institutions or universities to attend portions of the HCSC curriculum by selecting a particular module or several modules. Such participants, while benefitting from attendance at the HCSC, will not receive the Course Diploma. A comprehensive student assessment system for HCSC students does not apply to these participants. The external participants (i.e., civil servants of security and defence institutions or students from other educational institutions) in some HCSC modules will add more perspectives to discussions. Senior officers and civil servants from the security and defence institutions, as well as postgraduate (or, by exception, senior undergraduate students) of the Framework Nations, Allied, and Partner countries, are eligible to participate in the following modules of the HCSC 2025: Module 1, Security Environment, Module 2, Russia in the International System, Module 3, Strategic Leadership, Module 4, Defence Policy and Strategy Development, Module 5, Defence Management, and Module 6, Strategic Operations Planning.

Section 3 – Educational Framework

3.1 Introduction

The HCSC's educational framework is based on a variety of academic approaches, including lectures, panel discussions, seminars, and small group (syndicate) activities and exercises to facilitate adult learning at an advanced level. Consequently, the primary responsibility for learning and achieving the specified learning outcomes is placed on the student. To aid in this, the HCSC and the Baltic Defence College aim to provide the best possible educational environment for learning. The HCSC is built to maximise the experience and knowledge already found at the Baltic Defence College and is bolstered with specific additional skills and intelligence from outside. Thus, active learning and all students' full participation and contribution are heavily encouraged; this allows students to share their knowledge, experience, and learning with others in an open and positive environment.

In summary, the HCSC is designed for self-motivated and experienced professionals with the requisite English language skills to engage with their peers and who want to excel during their time in Tartu.

3.2 Educational Charter

The delivery of education at the Baltic Defence College is guided by an 'Educational Charter', which includes six principles related to both students and faculty:

1. **Education is not received but achieved:** as education is the basis of professional and individual self-improvement, students are therefore encouraged to devote themselves to their studies, understanding that the effort they put in will be rewarded by what they get out of the educational process.
2. **Minds are not vessels to be filled, but fires to be kindled:** the faculty should not simply provide facts for students to learn; through small group learning methods, they should also seek to mentor students to help them develop their ability to think for themselves. The objective is not to educate students on what to think but rather to show them how to think.
3. **Knowledge is a potent weapon, so arm yourself well:** research facilitates the acquisition and transmission of knowledge. While knowledge is not necessarily power, power can only be wielded effectively with knowledge. Students are inspired to research information supporting their interests and requirements. Equally, the development of education requires continuous research and self-development on the part of faculty.
4. **Professionalism is the key to education and research:** responsible faculty must be experts in their respective fields, capable of enacting quality management over the educational process, able to maintain excellent educational materials, and ready to devote themselves to their students and work.
5. **Assessment should be rigorous and fair:** assessment should be understood and designed as a productive learning experience for students, meaning faculty should always endeavour to provide professional, meaningful, and constructive feedback. Meanwhile, students should receive this feedback in the positive way it is intended, as a learning tool to facilitate self-improvement.
6. **Voices should not be raised, and arguments should be improved:** in keeping with an ethos of free enquiry and transparency, the Baltic Defence College will always

foster an open atmosphere where faculty and students can engage – sometimes even robustly – in discussion and debate.

3.3 Learning Levels – Bloom’s Taxonomy

Like other institutions practising Professional Military Education, the Baltic Defence College employs a system incorporating Bloom’s taxonomy of learning to structure its educational products. This taxonomy was developed by Dr. Benjamin Bloom in 1956 to delineate various aspects of learning. Bloom identified three components of education, namely the Cognitive (mental), Affective (emotional) and Psychomotor (physical) domains of intelligence, though the cognitive has been by far the most influential. Indeed, Figure 2 depicts the latest revision of ‘Bloom’s Taxonomy’ – by a team of academics led by Dr Lorin Anderson, a student of Bloom, in 2000 – illustrating the **cognitive domain** progression of learning.

Learning Level	Alternatives	Explanation	Examples
6. Create	Assemble, Formulate, Generate, Modify, Plan	A cognitive process through which elements are linked together or reorganised to form a coherent or functional whole or a new pattern or structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate security strategy • Generate a campaign plan • Create a defence policy
5. Evaluate	Assess, Appraise, Justify, Rank, Validate	A cognitive process whereby theories, concepts, ideas or phenomena are scrutinised and judged about their relevance or superiority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the best weapon • Justify a budget • Validate a procedure
4. Analyse	Consider, Contrast, Distinguish, Examine, Investigate	A cognitive process whereby a piece of information is split into parts, with each relationship articulated about the others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate a campaign plan • Distinguish components • Consider problems
3. Apply	Classify, Demonstrate, Employ, Use, Utilise	A cognitive process whereby information is articulated about a particular situation (often to overcome an issue or problem).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ a doctrine • Use a field manual • Apply legal protocol
2. Understand	Convert, Describe, Estimate, Explain, Identify	A cognitive process whereby the meaning of various theories, concepts, ideas or phenomena is obtained and articulated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify analogies • Explain phenomena • Explain historical dates
1. Remember	List, Outline, Recall, Reproduce, State	A cognitive process whereby information – previously discovered – is recalled and articulated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline a policy • Recall a doctrine • List important individuals

Figure 2 Bloom’s Updated Taxonomy (adapted from Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001. Expanded version is presented in BALTDEFCOL SOP for the Planning of Education, Annex G)

Bloom’s Updated Taxonomy helps the lecturer ascertain the correct level students should be capable of achieving in the proposed educational activity. In sum, generally:

- Before a concept can be understood, it must be remembered;
- Before a concept can be applied, it must be understood;
- Before a concept can be analysed, it must be applied (either in practice or theory);
- Before a concept can be evaluated, it must be analysed;
- Before a new concept can be created, other concepts must be remembered, understood, applied, analysed and evaluated.

Since then, several attempts have been made to develop a more detailed taxonomy, incorporating several 'levels of knowledge' alongside Bloom's six different levels of cognition. These include:

- **Facts** – Actualities, Data, Events, Objects, Phenomena, Realities, Truths;
- **Concepts** – Conceptions, Designs, Ideas, Models, Notions, Theories;
- **Procedures** – Measures, Methods, Practices, Tactics, Techniques;
- **Processes** – Frameworks, Plans, Policies, Schemes, Strategies;
- **Principles** – Attitudes, Doctrines, Charters, Ideologies, Philosophies, Rules, Values.

	Levels of Cognition →						
	Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyse	Evaluate	Create	
Levels of Knowledge ↓	Facts	List	Describe	Classify	Consider	Rank	Assemble
	Concepts	Recall	Explain	Use	Differentiate	Assess	Modify
	Procedures	Reproduce	Identify	Employ	Examine	Validate	Plan
	Processes	Outline	Estimate	Utilise	Investigate	Justify	Formulate
	Principles	State	Convert	Demonstrate	Distinguish	Appraise	Generate

Figure 3 Levels of Knowledge Integrated with Bloom's Updated Taxonomy

The Baltic Defence College integrates these levels of knowledge with Bloom's Updated Taxonomy to better help define which keywords should be used in generating particular Learning Outcomes, i.e., those statements relating to what students should be able to do after completing a course or module (see above).

The HCSC utilises these learning levels to identify particular learning outcomes deemed necessary for the course and its modules. In keeping with the HCSC's educational philosophy and the background of the students attending the course, a large portion of teaching is provided between cognition levels four and six.

3.4 Course Documents

The key documents of the HCSC, which cover all aspects related to the course and the curriculum, consist of the Course Plan and Weekly Timetables. Students should also be familiar with the BALTDEFCOL Regulations, which describe the Baltic Defence College's tasks, rules, and norms.

Course Plan

The HCSC Course Plan provides an overview – down to the modular level – of the entire curriculum.

Weekly Timetable

The weekly schedule overviews HCSC lectures, group activities, and other events. This weekly timetable, issued at least two weeks ahead of each week, is subject to change and may be amended and reissued as needed. Roundtable seminars, formal dinners, and fire-side chats with guest speakers are examples of HCSC's extracurricular activities and other academic and recreational activities.

3.5 Educational Components

The Baltic Defence College has chosen to follow the Bologna Process, which was initiated within the European Higher Education Area to standardise the duration of European educational courses and assessment procedures to facilitate the easy transfer of qualifications between academic institutions. In Estonia, 26 hours corresponds to 1 ECTS credit. The HCSC includes 1030 hours or 41 ECTS credit points in total. The time allocated should enable the average student to pass each module – and, therefore, the course – but those students seeking to gain the highest grades should expect the need to put in more time and effort. Each week, an average of 44 hours of study time is allocated, which is typically divided into two basic formats:

1. **Contact Hours (CH):** within the curriculum, this includes the time spent in lectures, syndicate activities, exercises, and study trips, during which students are expected to be integrated with faculty or acting under the direct supervision of faculty:
 - a. **Lectures** are one of the ways through which adult education is provided, allowing all students to congregate together with an expert – either a member of the faculty or a guest speaker – who presents on a topic to stimulate students' thinking and convey key facts, experiences, or ideas while simultaneously drawing students into debate and discussion;
 - b. **Plenary Discussions** are group discussions or syndicate presentations in the class moderated by either a member of the faculty or a guest speaker;
 - c. **Syndicate Activities** allow students to present and provide briefings on particular topics to one another. The HCSC students will be divided into two syndicates, whose composition shall be fixed for the duration of the course. Syndicate activities generally consist of preparatory reading, a presentation, and a discussion. These discussions encourage students to consider course material at a higher cognitive level. They are chaired, in rotation, by students (the Syndicate Leader or Task Leader), who are expected to carry out additional work in preparation for this role;
 - d. **Supervision** is essential for students to complete selected written assignments through regular meetings with an academic supervisor. It is critical to understand that the role of the supervisor is not to write the student's assignment for them but rather to provide essential feedback and advice on drafts of their paper, which can then be used to make improvements and amendments to future versions;
 - e. **Conferences** provide opportunities to share scientific knowledge and in-depth expertise on a specific topic. Students will be provided with a chance to participate in such events, including the BALTDEFCOL Conference on Russia 2025;
 - f. **Faculty- or student-organised seminars** usually consist of group discussions chaired by an assigned faculty member and may also be structured around briefings, presentations, or preliminary readings. This method facilitates the exchange of views, trains analytical skills and critical thinking, and fosters an ability to reflect on a given subject area;
 - g. **Individual Research Project (Research Paper)** is a work of individual research carried out by a student on a topic related to the course curriculum, which consists of required reading, tutoring, a written paper, and a presentation. During the course, students will be tasked to produce a research paper (of around 5000 words) involving detailed research and applying academic standards;

Section 4 – Organisation of the HCSC

4.1 Faculty Organisation

Course Director

The Course Director is directly responsible to the Commandant for the development, planning, and execution of the course. When requested, the Course Director is assisted by the Dean, the Curriculum Developer, Module Coordinators, Senior Mentors, Assessors, and any relevant faculty members.

Module Coordinators

Module Coordinators oversee the development, planning, conduct, and assessment of various modules of the HCSC. They are responsible for liaising with, utilising, and administering matters related to external support, e.g., Senior Mentors, Guest Speakers, and study trips.

Senior Mentor

Senior Mentors help students by supervising their work, advising them on how they might tackle particular tasks and what resources they might use, and evaluating their achievements. They will observe and participate in the students' discussions and lectures on curricular topics. They will also assist with the course evaluation.

Faculty

Faculty are civilian and military personnel deployed by nations or hired directly by the College to plan and implement educational activities and assess students' assignments. The faculty implements educational activities as Module Coordinators, supervisors of research papers, assessors, and lecturers. Directors of the Department, Dean, and other Management Group members are also part of the Faculty.

Course Secretary

The Course Secretary is responsible for all daily secretarial and administrative duties for the HCSC.

4.2 Student Organisation

Class Leader

The students will elect one of their peers as the Class Leader. To conduct their official duties, the Course Director will delegate authority to the Class Leader concerning fellow HCSC students.

The Class Leader is the students' voice and represents them in all issues related to education and life outside the College. They will disseminate information to the students, collect their views on significant issues, and relay feedback to the Course Director and faculty members. This includes planning and carrying out the course feedback session at the end of the course.

The Class Leader's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining direct communication with and seeking guidance from the Course Director regarding HCSC initiatives;
- Disseminating information to HCSC students;
- Serving as a nexus to gather the overall view of the class on significant issues, relating them to the Course Director;
- Organising the planning and execution of HCSC social and other events, both within and outside of the College;
- Organising the planning and preparation of end-of-course mementos on behalf of HCSC students;
- Organising an HCSC feedback briefing at the end of the course.

Class Assistant

Every week, the Course Director will nominate a Class Assistant. They will be responsible for meeting, accompanying, introducing, and thanking Guest Speakers on behalf of the HCSC. The Class Assistant should also ensure the classroom is prepared correctly before and tidied after use.

Syndicates

Students will be divided into two syndicates, the composition of which will be set for the duration of the course.

Syndicate Leader

Each syndicate will elect a Syndicate Leader from among its members. The syndicate leaders will be in charge of representing the views of the syndicates and addressing organisational and administrative issues related to the syndicates. The Syndicate Leader will also be responsible for organising the Syndicate members to carry out the rotational tasks of the Syndicate Chair.

Task Leader

The Module (Elective) Coordinator will appoint students as Task Leaders for exercises and other tasks, responsible for their fulfilment by subordinated teams.

4.3 Student Responsibilities

While in the HCSC, students have several responsibilities regarding both academic rigour and individual propriety. In particular, students should:

- Conduct themselves with propriety both at the College and in public places;
- Respect guest speakers, faculty, and other students in an appropriate manner;
- Act scholarly in class, syndicate, and extra-curricular activities;
- Meet with their supervisors regularly;
- Undertake the necessary preparation to engage fully with syndicate activities;
- Ensure compliance with the applicable academic regulations and standards in all oral and written assignments;
- Use artificial intelligence in individual and group tasks only, and in a range being authorised by the respective Module/Elective coordinator, and in-line with the BALTDEFCOL Policy on the use of Artificial Intelligence.

Section 5 – Curriculum

5.1 General

The curriculum is delivered in a modular structure, and these modules represent smaller units of education, lasting between two and three weeks. Module coordinators are responsible for particular modules on the HCSC; they organise and facilitate teaching and the assessment process of their modules.

Faculty or guest speakers provide education and are assisted by Senior Mentor(s).

The Course and each Module have pre-defined learning outcomes linked with Bloom's Taxonomy (see Figure 2). These statements describe what each student should know or be able to do at the end of the course or each module. Assignments of the Modules are designed to assess the achievement of these outcomes.

5.2 Modules

Introduction to the course

The HCSC will begin with an in-processing period. During the in-processing, HCSC students will be given essential information on the policies, procedures, and protocols that will help them succeed during the course. The students will receive introductory lectures about course flow and academic settings of the college, conduct an English language test, and focus on getting to know each other and fostering team building by forming their syndicate groups. The introductory module on academic foundations will familiarise students with research methodology and academic writing. The research advisor fair will enable students to make their own informed decisions on the individual research projects they will pursue during the course. A Distinguished Guest Speaker will address the HCSC class of 2025 and will share their personal experience.

The HCSC comprises seven discrete and sequential core modules with many curriculum-related activities. The course starts with a preparatory module focused on academic foundations. An individual research project complements the core modules and focuses on preparing a research paper. These activities are optimised for residential delivery and are designed to attain the desired level of learning in the applicable subject. Depending on the circumstances, a part of the curriculum may be delivered through distance and blended learning using MS Teams and other advanced distributed learning platforms. Each module has a module aim and key learning outcomes linked to the course aim, objectives, and learning outcomes. This does not mean that each learning outcome – at the level of the HCSC – is mutually exclusive insofar as the HCSC is an integrated course.

The modules are delivered as follows:

IM	Academic Foundations
M1	Security Environment
M2	Russia in the International System
M3	Strategic Leadership
M4	Defence Policy and Strategy Development
M5	Defence Management
M6	Strategic Operations Planning
M7	Strengthening Deterrence and Defence
RP	Research Paper

5.2.1 Introductory Module: Academic Foundations

This module aims to improve the course participants' skills needed to study and learn effectively.

The module will encourage critical thinking and enhance the communication skills of the course participants. As such, the module will address effective reading and major writing tasks to be completed throughout the course and will examine the essential elements of researching, writing, and discussing research findings. Secondly, the module will discuss leadership, cooperation skills, and civil-military interactions within an academic environment that will enhance participants' understanding of the requirements at the senior, strategic level of professional military education and will facilitate the establishment of productive group dynamics throughout the course. The module will also introduce the main concepts of international relations, strategic studies, and deterrence, facilitating further studies.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the module, students should be able to:

1. Appraise requirements related to participation in a strategic level professional military education programme.
2. Improve skills needed for effective studying, researching, and communicating in a professional military education environment.
3. Examine leadership and cooperation skills that support an environment conducive to learning and positive group dynamics.

Assignment	Assessment
Diagnostic writing and oral presentations	Diagnostic/formative
Credits: 2 ECTS	

5.2.2 Module I: Security Environment

This Module aims to provide students with an understanding of the contemporary security environment and its implications for security and defence.

The module will examine international security's major drivers and trends to address the current and future security environment using the 360-degree approach. The module will introduce students to theories and approaches within international relations and security studies. Then, it will explore broad themes and geopolitical issues in the contemporary security environment. Students will reflect on how the broader security environment affects the Baltic region by assessing the global political trends and emerging issues, such as technological developments, climate change, and governance challenges. Overall, the module will teach students about the future security environment, allowing them to identify problematic security and defence trends and their implications for the Baltic states.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the module, students should be able to:

1. Evaluate the impact of changes to the security environment on the security and defence policies of the Baltic states.

2. Appraise the key drivers and trends in the broader security environment by critically applying theoretical models and concepts.
3. Assess the security and defence implications of changes to the global and regional security environment.

Assignment	Assessment
A group presentation on security and defence implications of changes in the security environment for the Baltic states, an individual paper based on the presentation, and individual contributions to the achievement of the module learning outcomes.	Summative Graded Pass/Fail/Pass with Distinction
Credits: 5 ECTS	

5.2.3 Module 2: Russia in the International System

The module aims to examine Russia's strategic posture, related policies, and actions to advance its interests in current international affairs.

The module will explore Russia's political perceptions regarding contemporary geostrategic realities and how they affect its interests. It will assess Russia's actions, intentions, and capabilities that drive its ambitions abroad, including the Ukraine war. It will then reflect on the factors shaping Russia's policies and actions vis-a-vis some major international actors and regions, such as NATO, the European Union, the United States, and China, and the post-Soviet space. To this end, the module will examine Russia's interactions with these key state actors and international institutions to build insights into their impact on the wider Baltic Sea region's current political and security situation. By exploring how Russia uses available instruments of power to implement its foreign policy ambitions, the module will deepen the students' understanding of how Russia's actions will likely influence the security of the Baltic region. The annual *Conference on Russia* will reinforce the material covered in the module. The course participants will also be able to engage with a diverse group of political and military leaders, top-level practitioners, and influential experts who will address emerging threats, security challenges, and opportunities precipitated by Russia's behaviour.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the module, students should be able to:

1. Assess Russia's interests and actions in international affairs and generate policy recommendations to address these strategically.
2. Assess the major security and defence challenges that Russia brings for the Baltic states, the wider Baltic Sea region, and the Euro-Atlantic Community.
3. Evaluate the connections between Russia's domestic political dynamics and foreign and security policy.

Assignment	Assessment
Group presentations on a Russia-related crisis-response scenario, an individual paper based on a selected topic, and personal contributions during the module's sessions.	Summative Graded Pass/Fail/Pass with Distinction
Credits: 5 ECTS	

5.2.4 Module 3: Strategic Leadership

The module aims to examine the concepts of strategic leadership to shape the conditions for students to succeed at a strategic and senior command level.

Considering strategic leaders' responsibilities, competencies, and tasks, the module will focus on four major topics: the strategic leadership environment, the inner environment of organisations, how to make changes happen, and personal aspects of strategic leadership. It will explore strategic leadership lessons learned from the war in Ukraine. Additionally, some related concepts, such as STRATCOM, negotiations, and new technologies will be discussed from the perspective of a toolkit to facilitate strategic leadership. The module will help students reflect critically upon their previous leadership experience and prepare them to identify and explore the challenges leaders face at the strategic level. The module is developed as a combination of different learning activities, such as lectures, seminars, case studies, group activities, and most importantly, self- and group reflections, all of which are designated to prepare the students for leading, influencing, and motivating others in the joint, interagency, and multinational environment.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the module, students should be able to:

1. Appraise the challenges of operating in the strategic leadership environment.
2. Consider strategic leadership principles and theories to shape and develop sustained organisational performance.
3. Examine leadership characteristics at the strategic level and reflect on personal traits and competencies as a strategic leader.

Assignment	Assessment
Course participants' contributions during all educational activities, leadership demonstrated during team tasks to achieve the overall goal, and general initiative and effort displayed to support the learning process of the class, as well as an individual paper on leadership philosophy.	Summative Graded Pass/Fail/Pass with Distinction
Credits: 3 ECTS	

5.2.5 Module 4: Defence Policy and Strategy Development

This module aims to explain the environmental and procedural variables involved in strategy formulation and to assess recent developments in defence policy and planning at the national, bilateral, and multilateral levels.

The module will begin with a review of strategy formulation theories and will continue with recent developments and trends in defence policy's political, military, economic, administrative, and sociological domains. These will then be discussed using examples of Baltic defence policies and strategies. The module will introduce the ends-ways-means framework, which can derive strategy from national objectives and interests regardless of state size and connect it to more particular strategy formulation methodologies. These will eventually be used in a group exercise called 'Strategic Formulator', which will enable students to participate in the creation of a national defence strategy for a specific country.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the module, students should be able to:

1. Develop a proposal of national defence strategies for the Baltic states and their feasibility assessment.
2. Appraise the evolution of the Baltic states' national defence policies and strategies while considering their interrelationships with NATO and the EU policies and strategies.
3. Assess interrelationships between the national and international stimuli related to ends, ways, and means while developing a defence strategy based on national purposes.

Assignment	Assessment
Group presentations during the Strategic Formulator Exercise, an individual paper on the exercise outcomes, and personal contributions to achieving the module learning outcomes.	Summative Graded Pass/Fail/Pass with Distinction
Credits: 3 ECTS	

5.2.6 Module 5: Defence Management

The module aims to offer students the instruments for investigating, assessing, and formulating defence management strategies and planning.

The module will begin with a general overview of defence economics and resource management by analysing defence management theories, principles, and processes. Then, the module will focus on defence management solutions related to capabilities development, acquisition, sustainment, and human resource management. The module will discuss national, multinational, and collective capability building while considering the requirements of the Baltic states and lessons learned. As a result, students will evaluate how financial, material, infrastructural, and personnel decisions influence the ability to formulate policy recommendations on effective defence planning under resource constraints.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the module, students should be able to:

1. Formulate coordinated guidance and implementation concepts for effective defence management.
2. Assess the impact of resource allocation on defence management.
3. Consider the different methods for making rational, disciplined decisions to allocate resources for efficient and effective capability building in the face of uncertainty.

Assignment	Assessment
Group presentations on case studies, an individual paper based on case studies, and individual contributions to achieving the module learning outcomes.	Summative Graded Pass/Fail/Pass with Distinction
Credits: 3 ECTS	

5.2.7 Module 6: Strategic Operations Planning

The module aims to prepare students to effectively contribute to strategic operations planning for deterrence and defence by considering regional and allied synergies within a comprehensive framework.

The module will introduce NATO's crisis response and operations planning systems and processes. Building on the outcomes of Modules 2 and 4, the module will focus on the practical application of strategic operations planning processes, including using planning frameworks and methods to develop strategic assessments and military response options for the Baltic states. The module will conclude by estimating other phases of NATO's strategic operations planning, execution, and assessment while exploring linkages between various NATO planning systems. Throughout the module, students will individually analyse selected strategic operations planning issues within a comprehensive framework.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the module, students should be able to:

1. Comprehend NATO crisis response processes and apply NATO strategic operations planning processes.
2. Appraise requirements for integrating NATO and national strategic planning for deterrence and defence.
3. Consider the complexities of planning for comprehensive defence within NATO and nationally.

Assignment	Assessment
Group presentations on strategic operations planning products (strategic assessment; military response options), an individual paper on selected strategic operations planning issues, and individual contributions on achieving the module's learning outcomes.	Summative Graded Pass/Fail/Pass with Distinction
Credits: 3 ECTS	

5.2.8 Module 7: Strengthening Deterrence and Defence

The module aims to enable students to successfully contribute to developing and implementing credible deterrence and defence strategies for the Baltic states, considering regional and allied synergies.

The module will start with analysing theoretical frameworks and conceptual models for deterrence. It will then critically examine the security threats and current allied and national concepts and capabilities for deterrence and defence in the Baltic Sea Region. The assessment will focus on existing gaps and limitations that affect allied, regional, and national capabilities for deterrence and defence. It will also discuss the challenges resulting from diverging perceptions of deterrence and forward defence among states, international organisations, politicians, and the military. A critical review of credible deterrence case studies will introduce students to the Strategic Deterrence Exercise, which will challenge students to formulate a proposal for a credible deterrence and defence strategy for the Baltic States in 2035 that integrates regional and Allied cooperation. This exercise would incorporate considerations strategic assessments prepared during previous modules for initial scenario planning.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the module, students should be able to:

1. Appraise credible deterrence and defence options for the Baltic states by integrating regional and allied cooperation.
2. Examine and validate foundational theories of deterrence through their practical application to contemporary realities in the Baltic Sea security environment.
3. Evaluate the current deterrence and defence concepts and capabilities related to the security of the Baltic states and the Baltic Sea region.
4. Assess the impact of changes to the security environment on formulating and implementing deterrence and defence strategies for the Baltic Sea region.

Assignment	Assessment
Group presentations during the Strategic Deterrence Exercise, an individual analytical paper, and personal contributions to achieving the module learning outcomes.	Summative Graded Pass/Fail/Pass with Distinction
Credits: 5 ECTS	

5.2.9 Research Project

This module allows students to conduct in-depth critical analysis on a topic linked to the strategic aspects of the security environment, security and defence policy, defence strategy, or defence management.

The research process allows students to strengthen their argumentation and expression skills while writing a research paper. To complete the module, students must prepare a research paper according to BALTDEFCOL standards. The research paper must be completed as an individual effort. Ideally, HCSC research papers should focus on a real-world issue important to the security and defence of the Framework Nations, Allies, or Partner Countries. The research paper should be written only for the Research Project module in the HCSC and not presented nor published elsewhere.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the module, students should be able to:

1. Prepare a research paper using principles of critical thinking and argumentation.
2. Apply academic standards, ethical principles, and formal requirements for conducting research.
3. Present the critical aspects of the research paper and defend its conclusions and recommendations.

Assignment	Assessment
Research paper due on 28 April 2025 by 09.00 Presentation of the research paper 20 May 2025	Summative Graded Pass/Fail/Pass with Distinction
Credits: 5 ECTS	

5.2.10 Study Trips

Study Trips are group visits to institutions, organisations, and agencies outside of the Baltic Defence College. They constitute an essential and integral part of the HCSC curriculum and are planned to support the course's learning objectives and respective modules. The strategic requirements of the Framework Nations, as expressed in the Development Plan, inform the decisions on the scope and destinations of the study trip in consecutive academic years. The study trips provide students with an excellent opportunity to meet national, regional, and global practitioners in decision-making environments, allowing students to obtain first-hand knowledge of Allied, European, and national policies, armed forces, and cultural values. The HCSC 2025 curriculum envisions two study trips: the International Study Trip and the Baltic Defence Study Trip.

Credits: 2 ECTS each

International Study Trip:

The HCSC 2025 international study trip focuses on NATO, the European Union, and the wider Baltic Sea region. The trip will provide a chance to review the defence policies of Belgium and Germany and explore strategy-making at the Alliance and national levels. The visit to the EUMS and NATO headquarters will explore the development of NATO and the EU policies in general and the place of the wider Baltic Sea region in these policies.

The international study trip is intended to support the learning objectives of Module 1 and Module 2 as it will expose students to Allied assessments on the security environment and perspectives on relations with Russia. The trip will also help students meet the learning objectives of Modules 4, Module 5, and Module 7, as it will discuss developments in defence policy and strategy, defence management, and deterrence and defence at the Allied and national levels.

Baltic Defence Study Trip:

During the study trip to the capitals of the Baltic states, participants will interact with security, defence, and communication planners and experts to identify the deterrence gaps and challenges and their cooperation potential, collect the necessary information to improve deterrence and resilience-related planning and propose practical solutions. The visits include tours of parliaments, ministries of (national) defence, defence forces institutions, and discussions with relevant experts in ministries of foreign affairs, ministries of interior, think tanks, and specialised agencies. During the study trip, participants will discuss the significance and utility of new knowledge for solving research tasks.

This study trip supports the learning objectives of Module 4 and Module 5 through interaction with practitioners involved in defence security and strategy development and implementation, as well as allows for first-hand experience with the defence management challenges that the Baltic states face. It reinforces the learning objectives of Module 1 and Module 2, including discussions on trends in the security environment and Russia. The trip also facilitates the achievement of Module 7 learning objectives through professional discussions related to deterrence and defence requirements and challenges.

5.3 Electives

HCSC students will participate in electives conducted jointly with JCGCS and CSC. Some electives are expressly designed to meet the HCSC criteria. Students will select one of the topics on which they wish to expand their knowledge or that can enable preparation for their future career assignments. These attractiveness and high quality of these electives are also due to the close cooperation with the centres of excellence in the Baltic states and beyond.

Credits: 2 ECTS each

5.3.1 Operational Level Energy Security

The elective aims to apply energy security factors relevant to NATO by introducing fundamental concepts and analysing energy security developments in the current geopolitical situation and their potential impact on alliance security and military operations at the operational level.



In accordance with the NATO ACT approved Course Control Documents III:

- Day 1 Energy Security Awareness: NATO's role in energy security, NATO ENSEC COE: introduction and activities, military aspects of energy security, geopolitics of energy security.
- Day 2 & 3 Critical Energy Infrastructure Protection (CEIP): power production and distribution in the Baltic states, energy in conflicts, hybrid warfare and energy security, critical energy infrastructure protection (CEIP), energy infrastructure in the maritime domain, intersection of cyber security and Critical Energy Infrastructure (CEI).
- Day 4 Energy Efficient Operations: energy efficiency in military operations, energy behaviour changes with military application, NATO operational energy concept.
- Day 5 Syndicate Presentations/Assessment.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the elective, students should be able to:

1. Analyse energy security developments and their potential impact on military operations.
2. Analyse risks to Critical Energy Infrastructure (CEI) by focusing on the entire energy system.
3. Apply innovative energy efficiency approaches to improve NATO capabilities.

5.3.2 NATO Intermediate Strategic Communications

The elective/course aims to develop an understanding of the information environment and apply a STRATCOM mind-set when planning and conducting operations; ensure STRATCOM integration and execution occurs at all levels within their headquarters.



Audience: This elective is for non-communicators (not STRATCOM/PAO staff) and familiarises staff officers with STRATCOM activities at strategic level organisations.

Educational Method

- The elective/course will consist of lectures, seminars, and group work, and involves the students' individual work and presentations.
- Lectures provided by specialists from the NATO Strategic Communications COE, LVA NAF, EST NAF, SHAPE and STRATCOM academy.

The elective/course is certified as a NATO course and consists of Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL) as an online course, lectures, seminars, and group work, involving students' individual work and preparation. Lectures will be delivered in cooperation with specialists from the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, the Baltic states, the NATO Force Structure, and the NATO Command Structure.

The elective/course is open to external students. The course can be organised as an online course depending on the necessity and time available. Pre-requisite course (optional): Introduction to Strategic Communications (Online course on ACT Joint Advance Distance Learning Portal)

The main topics of this elective are the STRATCOM framework, the STRATCOM narrative, the implementation of STRATCOM, and the information environment – challenges and opportunities for a military leader.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the elective, students should be able to:

1. Understand the fundamentals of NATO Strategic Communications.
2. Understand NATO STRATCOM policy and its relationship to Political-Military (POLMIL) Direction and Guidance (D&G).
3. Understand the information environment in relation to STRATCOM.
4. Understand the role, function, utility, and limitations of STRATCOM related functions and capabilities.
5. Implement STRATCOM considerations into the processes and products of their branch/department.

5.3.3 Resistance Operating Concept

The elective aims to enhance students' ability to utilise the Resistance Operating Concept to develop a national, organised resistance capability, implementing a whole-of-government approach to deter external actors.

Educational Method

- In-class lectures and VTCs.
- Individual preparation & discussions based on required reading and video materials.
- SME Instructors. 3Bs, POL, UKR, USA perspective.

The main topics of this elective are Total Defence (Resilience and Resistance), the Resistance Operating Environment, Structure, Supporting concepts, and National approaches to ROC.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the elective, students should be able to:

1. Examine the organisation of a total defence program, building resilience, and planning resistance before a conflict.
2. Use resistance planning considerations in the discussion of the operating environment, threats that lead to instability, and programs to counter these effects.
3. Employ interagency functions and considerations for the development of an organised resistance.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of resistance operating concepts in the review of a historical case study.

5.3.4 Joint Logistics and HNS

The elective aims to provide students with an understanding of NATO Joint Logistics and Host Nation Support (HNS) at the operational level.

The elective consists of lectures, group work, round tables, and daily plenary discussions. The CJSE 'JOINT RESOLVE' scenario will be used throughout the elective.

Educational Method

- Lectures (max 30%), including guest speakers from key NATO Joint logistics HQs and agencies. Also, 3B Joint HQs will be engaged with HNS topics.
- Mix of syndicate work and roundtables will cover most of available timetable (overall min 70%).
- Self-guided reading and research but synchronised and shared within the group and recommended by the lecturer/instructor.
- Each theme will be worked out in groups (number of students in each depends on the theme and total number of students).
- Presentations (in PPT, white boards, charts on the maps) must be prepared and explained at least once per each student during the elective.
- Each theme is requesting participation of all students.

The main topics of this elective are: NATO Joint Logistics capabilities and organisational forms, logistics inputs to the situational awareness of a potential crisis in Baltic sea region countries (EST, LVA, LTU), Comprehensive Understanding of Operational Environment factor analysis (from a logistics perspective), use of host nation support (HNS) in the planning and conduct of operations, development of a basic logistics concept of operations, and the purpose and the role of Resource Coordination Working Group/Resource Coordination Board in the Joint Task Force Headquarters' (JTFHQ) daily Battle Rhythm.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the elective, students should be able to:

1. Apply the principles of Operational Planning Process in Comprehensive Understanding of Operational Environment (CUOE) from logistics perspective.
2. Describe joint logistics challenges in the provision of logistical support to Joint Operations.
3. Estimate necessary requirements for the provision of HNS in the Joint Operations Area.
4. Identify the key principles and practices for effective planning, execution, and control of the logistics concept of operations.

5.3.5 Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence

The elective aims to develop and enhance students' knowledge regarding Human Intelligence (HUMINT) and Counter-Intelligence (CI), including other intelligence disciplines, within the framework of the Joint Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (JISR). The elective consists of lectures, adult learning via the JADL online courses, work in small groups, student presentations, and plenary discussions.

The elective mainly focuses on the role of staff officers in support of the intelligence process. The main topics to be covered are Tools and Techniques of Intelligence Analysis, Basics of Counterintelligence, TESSOC, and Elicitation, OSINT, HUMINT as an intelligence asset, History lessons of Operational Intelligence during WWII, RUS AF, and the war in UKR.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the elective, students should be able to:

1. Examine the intelligence process, linking the tactical, operational, and strategic levels by utilising tools and techniques of intelligence analysis and processing.
2. Identify the role of HUMINT and CI as the contributions of intelligence collection disciplines to military operations.
3. Analyse historical and recent examples of Russian armed forces operational level intelligence, including their HUMINT and CI aspects.

5.3.6 Law of Visiting Forces

The aim of the elective is to introduce the law of visiting forces in the contexts of both peacetime and for an armed conflict.

The elective focuses on the status of forces agreements relevant not only in planning and conduct of contemporary military operations but also when serving in international headquarters or participating in military exercises abroad.

Educational Method

- Individual preparation (audio files and PowerPoint slides, prep readings).
- Discussion sessions following individual preparation, almost no lectures. EC asks questions from students, adds necessary knowledge, and answers questions.
- Group assignments implementing knowledge previously acquired. The assignments are scenario-based and complex, require similar approach as in real life. Every assignment ends with student presentations (EC chooses presenters) and discussion.

The main topics of this elective are the essence of the law of visiting forces, NATO status of forces agreements, the European Union's and United Nations' status of forces agreements, and the law of visiting forces in an operational context.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the elective, students should be able to:

1. Explain the international legal frameworks established for visiting forces.
2. Employ the law of visiting forces in a peacetime environment.
3. Employ the law of visiting forces in the environment of an armed conflict.

5.3.7 Cyber Defence Policy on National and International Levels

This Elective intends to analyse the strategic aspects of cybersecurity in national and international security contexts through the evaluation of comprehensive cyberspace policies and approaches. The elective will underscore the multidimensional character of cyber defence.



Educational Method

Stress the importance of the comprehensive (whole of nation) approach specifically regarding the cyber defence and to emphasise the crucial role of coordination between public, private and civil society stakeholders.

The conduct of the elective is practical/case-driven and in addition to cyber-related knowledge is focused on sharpening skills of the course participants:

- Policy Analysis
- Strategy Formulation
- Critical thinking, communication, presentation and teamwork

Guest speakers representing diverse opinions from the political, military, academic, and private sectors will stress the importance of cyberspace for the contemporary security environment and its effects on conventional and hybrid warfare. The Elective is EU certified and will be delivered in cooperation with the European Security and Defence College (ESDC).

The main topics of the Elective are key concepts - cyberspace, cybersecurity, and cyber defence; Threat environment and threat actors in cyberspace; Laws, norms, and responsible behaviour in cyberspace; Cyber diplomacy; Practical aspects of cybersecurity: vulnerabilities and responses; Cyber policy dilemmas; Military considerations: deterrence, defence, or defence forward; and Comprehensive approach and resilience in cyberspace.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the elective, students should be able to:

1. Consider the strategic aspects of cybersecurity.
2. Analyse trends in the cybersecurity environment.
3. Apply cybersecurity terminology, concepts, issues, and components.
4. Assess the role of cybersecurity in national and international security contexts.

The elective is designed to provide general awareness of the importance of cyberspace considerations for operational and strategic aspects of contemporary defence and security and does not require any IT related skills or knowledge.

5.3.8. Russian History and Strategic Mindset

This elective aims to identify the core historical developments and cultural properties of Russia that shape its politics today and are used constantly for the making of strategic decisions.

Educational Method

- Lectures.
- Presentations by the students.
- Group discussions.

Students will be provided with an overview of Russian history and its geopolitical aspects influencing its military-strategic decisions. At the end of the course, students will be familiarised with the development of Russian thought and the formulation of its cultural identity. This elective will be structured as a seminar with student presentations. The task will consist of the analysis of a contemporary speech from the Russian political elite, looking for cultural and historical references within them, and identifying them and their importance in the speech.

The lecture series takes us briefly through Russian history. Defining the key events building up what we now consider Russia. Emphasising key identity and country building core events. Including the beginning of Kievan Rus, the Rule of the Mongols, Moscow, and Muscovites and onwards to the end of the Russian Empire. The elective does not cover XXth century Russian history. The elective sets certain limits on the topics covered, but at the same time allows the group to delve deeper into the topic.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the elective, students should be able to:

1. Explain the importance of the core historical events in Russia's history.
2. Express an understanding of Russian political and strategic culture, as well as its cultural identity.
3. Express the importance and the development of Russian thought and formulation of Russian history.
4. Categorise and be able to explain the importance of large conflicts before the 20th century that have influenced Russia's strategic mind-set.

5.3.9 Strategic Decision-Making in NATO

This Elective exposes students to the processes, methods, and best practises of NATO Decision Making processes and procedures at the highest level (NATO HQ).

Students will appraise NATO planning and decision-making processes that take place at the military-political level using realistic but artificial documents. The elective will use a combination of lectures and simulated processes (exercise "Consensus Building").

At the successful conclusion of each course, each student should be able to evaluate the knowledge and practical experience obtained regarding the political-military processes in NATO. The students should also have first-hand experience on how to evaluate the challenges of building consensus in a realistic scenario.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the elective, students should be able to:

1. Appraise NATO political-military decision-making processes, methods, and best practices.
2. Assess the challenges of consensus building during operations planning at the NATO strategic levels.

5.3.10 Project Management Certification

The aim of the elective is to extend the elective participant's knowledge of how project management and leadership principles support the process of problem-solving and prepare them for formal project management certification examination.

Educational Method

- Lectures/online studies/internal exam.
- Lectures covering theory coming from M3, M5 and elements of M4.
- Required reading.
- Online – according to a certification authority methodology.
- Mentoring.
- Exam – internal exam as a rehearsal before online one.

The main topics covered during this elective are Introduction to elective; rehearsal / refreshment of M3 and M5; Online course (combination of online materials prepared by BDC and course provided by certification authority – 29 modules*), mentoring.

Certification exam – to be taken independently by students.

*Each module covers a Competence Element in the IPMA International Competence Baseline (same set of modules as part of knowledge base to pass a written exam at certification levels from D-A).

Learning outcomes

At the end of the elective, students should be able to:

1. Understanding the organisational, societal, and political context of a project.
2. Understanding the personal and social competences required to manage a project.
3. Understanding organisational influences and demands on the management of a project.

5.3.11 JOPG Leaders' Course

This elective aims to prepare JOPG leaders and deputies to seamlessly manage a planning team during a planning event.

Educational Method

- 30% lecture vs. 70% practical exercises.
- Scenario based vignettes throughout the course to enable discussion.
- Syndicate work based on vignettes and pre-readings.
- Heavy participation from TA is required.
- Learn from each other's experience.

The main topics that are covered during this elective are Review of the OPP, Intro to scenario, Planning-to-Plan, JOPG Composition, JOPG Battle Rhythm, Practical exercises; Review Phase 2 of OPP, CUOE, SSA, MRO, Framing the Problem, Practical exercises; Review Phase 3 of OPP, Key Factor Analysis, CCIR and Decision Support Matrix, Practical exercises; Wargaming, COA Analysis, Risk Analysis, Practical exercises.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the elective, students should be able to:

1. Arrange JOPG activities and how to synchronise them with the Battle Rhythm.
2. Manage different personalities to form a successful planning team.
3. Consider main requirements for the different planning phases.
4. Utilise different critical thinking techniques to facilitate operational level planning.

5.3.12 Joint Targeting

The aim of the elective is to provide students with fundamentals of Joint Targeting process in operational level campaign planning process.

Education Method

- The elective consists of in-class lectures, group works and discussions.
- BALTDEFCOL faculty members/Instructors from National & NATO Entities.

The main topics that are covered during this elective are introduction to Joint Targeting, Joint targeting at the Operational (Joint) level, Joint targeting process (synchronisation), and Target preparation (analysis)

Learning outcomes

At the end of the elective, students should be able to:

1. Recall Joint targeting fundamentals.
2. Describe the Joint targeting cycle.
3. Explain Joint targeting synchronisation process (WG&Boards).
4. Produce initial target folder.

5.3.13 Strategic Foresight and Backcasting

The aim of this elective is to equip students with a comprehensive understanding of strategic foresight concepts and methodologies within defence contexts.

Participants will delve into the practical application of strategic foresight in envisioning and back-casting future scenarios, enabling them to generate strategic policy recommendations for high-level defence stakeholders. The module seeks to foster critical thinking and analytical skills, preparing participants to navigate the complexities of future defence landscapes.

Educational Method

- Online and on-site lectures combined with plenary discussions.
- Back casting exercise run by UK DCDC (Development Concepts and Doctrine Centre) experts: syndicate work on scenario development.
- Minimum requirement of 12 students (4 working groups).
- Exercise phases: 1) Scenario feasibility analysis, 2) Back casting method: how would scenarios materialise, 3) Policy recommendations on how to prevent negative developments and stimulate positive developments.

The main topics that are covered during this elective are concepts and methods of strategic foresight, its historical and contemporary applications, potential trends developments in various domains and technologies, and developments in Russia, China, NATO, and the EU.

Learning outcomes

At the end of the elective, students should be able to:

1. Understand the strategic foresight concept, theories, and their comprehensive application in defence contexts.
2. Apply critical analytical skills to assess the implications of strategic foresight within defence planning, considering global trends and regional perspectives.
3. Apply knowledge of practical foresight methodologies to analyse and envision future scenarios fostering a more dynamic and strategic mindset.
4. Compile and present policy recommendations based on future scenarios, targeting high-level stakeholders.

5.3.14 The Russian Threat

The aim of the elective is to analyse the contemporary Russian state and Russian society, especially regarding regional and international security challenges stemming from Russian revisionism and aggression.

This elective will engage students at both the theoretical and empirical levels of analysing the Russian threat to the Euro-Atlantic community.

Educational Method

- Lectures.
- Group discussions and teamwork.
- Article presentations and peer reviews.
- SYNAs.

The main topics of this elective are Domestic Dynamics, Elites and Decision-making, Imperial Legacies, Security and Defence Policy, Non-linear Warfare, Russia and the West, Russia and the Rest, Scenarios of the Future.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the elective, students should be able to:

1. Consider the kinds of power that Russia wields in regional and wider international relations in comparison with its ambitions.
2. Explain Russia's security strategy, including towards the Baltic states, from the collapse of the Soviet Union until today.
3. Examine whether Russia can be changed or reformed from the outside in a predictable and stable way.
4. Investigate methods for deterring Russia in the post-Soviet space or its self-declared areas of special interest.

Assessment of Electives

Assignment	Assessment
All Elective (EL) 2 assignments are based on individual participation/engagement and contribution to syndicate/team/ group work throughout the elective (ICGW) but may vary. Additionally, the assessment is based on:	Summative Graded Pass/Fail, Pass with Distinction
E 2.1 Contribution and engagement throughout the elective; including NATO JADL courseware, classroom, and syndicate activities.NA	
E 2.2 Test (open book) (pass level 70%) 30% participation in syndicate work and discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contribution to group work and activities • participation in lectures and debates • quality of individual briefings NATO certificate for successful accomplishment of NATO Intermediate StratCom Course (STC-ST-25529).	
E 2.3 Students assigned a case study from ROC manual for analysis and presentation on day 5.	
E 2.4 At the end of this elective each student will receive an individual report on their performance based on two components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presentation and explanation of their individual assignment topics, and • contribution to the classwork, discussion, and teamwork. 	
E 2.5 The completion of the JADL online courses (20%). Participant’s activity during plenary sessions and discussions (40%). Participant’s contribution to work in small groups with the following presentations of its results (40%).	
E 2.6 ICGW and group presentations	
E 2.7 ICGW and two group presentations (50% each)	
E 2.8 ICGW with seminar presentations	
E 2.9 ICGW	
E 2.10 Written certification examination	
E 2.11 Contribution and active engagement throughout the elective.	
E 2.12 Contribution and active engagement throughout the elective.	
E 2.13 Individual participation/engagement and contribution to syndicate work throughout the elective; presentation of syndicate work results.	
E 2.14 Article presentation and participation (Qualitative Feedback).	
Credits: 2 ECTS	

Section 6 – Student Assessment System

6.1 Introduction

Assessment is a continuous process intended to support the student's progress throughout the HCSC and to enable the College to report to sending states on his or her performance. The Course Director is ultimately accountable for student evaluation. The Senior Mentor, Department Directors, and Module Coordinators assist the Course Director in assessing students. The following form of assessment is utilised at the Baltic Defence College for the HCSC:

	Purpose	Form	Sequence
Diagnostic	To assess what students already know and/or the difficulties that they might have that may limit their engagement with new learning.	Ungraded narrative feedback	Before a module or course
Formative	To provide feedback to students during an educational activity or module. To achieve this, students may be given the opportunity to complete tasks during modules to assist with their learning, which will always result in feedback.	Ungraded narrative feedback	During a module or course
Summative	To determine whether students have met the prescribed aim and learning outcomes for modules. To achieve this, students are required to complete at least one summative activity – an assignment, sometimes consisting of various components – for each module.	Graded (anonymous or non-anonymous assessment resulting in Pass/Pass with Distinction/Fail).	At the end of a module or course

To pass a module, a student must pass the assignments and assessments according to the requirements set by the module coordinator. A student receiving a failing grade in one or more summative assessments will not graduate from the HCSC but will receive a '*Letter of Attendance*' instead.

6.2 Assessment Procedure

The student assessment system procedure consists of two parts. First, all modules, except the Introductory Module, include an assignment that will be formally assessed through a process known as summative assessment. The assessment, together with feedback, is intended to assist the students' development throughout the course and will not be made available to sending states. Summative assessments are intended to formally assess the performance and knowledge of students in relation to the learning outcomes for the different HCSC modules.

Second, student performance during all course activities will be monitored and evaluated, and the results will be used to create a report that will be sent to both the student and his or her sending state. This type of evaluation is conducted through counselling conducted by the Course Director and, at the end of HCSC, through a written Performance Review. The Course Director will monitor the student's progress and performance throughout the HCSC and will provide them with informal feedback when appropriate:

1. **Course Director's Counselling** will be scheduled for two individual counselling sessions for each student, the first during Module 3 and the second at the end of Module 6.

2. **Diploma and Diploma Supplement** both will be provided to the student prior to graduation from the course.
3. **Performance Review (Annex B):** This document will be sent to the student's nominating authority when completed. This review sets out the evaluation areas and criteria used to describe the range of competencies the Course Director will consider in evaluating student performance.

6.3 Assessment of Academic Ability

The Baltic Defence College uses an assessment system that is compliant with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). However, the implementation of the assessment system and use of the grading depends on each course's requirements and the length of courses.

Summative assessments will be administered for each HCSC module to formally assess the performance and knowledge of students with respect to the modular learning outcomes. HCSC students will receive a summative assessment of their assignments using pass/fail criteria only. In case of exceptional performance, the student may receive a Pass with Distinction. The type of assessment used in each Module is decided during the course planning process to ensure the best way to assess the achievement of the learning outcomes and evaluate students' performance.

Each Module coordinator will define a more detailed matrix for all summative assessments in the HCSC assignments. The students will be given the grading matrices before the commencement of each module.

The following grading scheme will be applied for the summative assessments, using **Fail/Pass/Pass with Distinction**:

Grade	Level of achievement
Pass with Distinction	The student displays an outstanding grasp of the subject matter and a very broad level of achievement of learning outcomes.
Pass	The student has met most of the module aims by displaying a satisfactory grasp of the subject matter and attaining learning outcomes at a satisfactory level.
Fail	The student has failed to meet the module aim due to an inadequate grasp of the subject matter, and acquired knowledge and skills are below the minimum level.

6.4 Reassessment and Student Appeals

In some cases, a student might earn a **Fail** for an assignment. If this happens, they will be afforded one opportunity to undertake a reassessment. After failing the assignment during the reassessment process, an Academic Board will be convened to formulate recommendations for the Commandant. Based on the recommendation of the Academic Board, the Commandant will inform the sending/sponsoring nations of further actions.

If students are dissatisfied with the assessment of a summative assignment, they have the right to appeal their grade but only if they can provide evidence showing why they believe they have been treated irregularly or unfairly. The criteria for appealing and the process of appeal are outlined in the academic regulations of the Baltic Defence College.

6.5 Misconduct

In the event of academic or personal misconduct, students may be expelled from the HCSC and returned to their home country in accordance with procedures approved by the Framework Nations and set out in the BALTDEFCOL Regulations.

There are three levels of warning if a student's overall course performance does not meet the required level:

Level 1 – Course Director’s Dialogue: when the Course Director is concerned that a student is not making satisfactory progress or contributing insufficiently to the course, he or she will discuss this with the Commandant and the Senior National Representative (SNR) (if appointed). The Course Director will inform the student that progress is below standard and requires swift improvement and that the Commandant and SNR have been notified.

Level 2 – Course Director’s Report: should performance not improve, a Student Report will be compiled by the Course Director and read to the student, who will sign it as a matter of acknowledgement, not agreement. At this stage, the Course Director will inform the Commandant and SNR again.

Level 3 – Commandant: if progress continues to be unsatisfactory, the Commandant may decide to recommend to the sending state that the student be removed from the HCSC.

6.6 Graduation Documents

Upon completion of the course, each HCSC student will receive a Diploma, a Diploma Supplement, and a Performance Review (see Annex C). Only the Performance Review is submitted to the official authorities or the employer of the student.

6.7 Academic Awards

The HCSC has established two academic awards for students:

1. The Commandant’s Award
2. The Academic Writing Award

Those two exceptional students will be recognised with academic awards during the Graduation Ceremony.

The Commandant’s Award

The Commandant’s Award recognises the student who has demonstrated the best overall creativity, insight, rigour, leadership, and comradeship. This particular student will have excelled outstanding academically in all summative and formative assignments while showing exceptional leadership and comradeship throughout the course. They will have also enriched the educational experiences of their colleagues, contributed extensively to the course, and reflected the values and expectations of the Baltic Defence College.

The Course Director will nominate a student worthy of consideration for the award in close coordination with the Dean, Senior Mentor and Module Coordinators.

Academic Writing Award

The student who receives the highest grade of the HCSC for their 'Research Paper in Strategic Studies' will receive an academic award and will have their paper published in the journal '*Ad Securitatem*', which is published after graduation.

Section 7 – Course Evaluation Process

7.1 General

Curriculum development is a continual process that includes the review of the current course programme, planning and authorship of new or revised material, approval of changes, and the production and distribution of the course material.

The Baltic Defence College constantly endeavours to improve its curriculum by making it more effective, relevant, agile, and responsive to new challenges.

An evaluation system is used to develop the course further. This system involves students, faculty, the management group, and others involved in the delivery of education.

7.2 Course Feedback System

Both students and Module Coordinators evaluate the HCSC regularly. The Course Evaluation System consists of four separate parts: Weekly Feedback, Module Feedback, Course Feedback, and After Action Evaluation.

Weekly Feedback

Weekly Feedback collects assessments of the faculty and guest speakers. The primary purpose is to facilitate professional development and continuous improvement of the faculty members and to ensure that specified quality standards are met. As a result, it also serves as evidence and input for the selection and invitation process of the guest speakers.

Module Feedback

The objective of Module Feedback is to acquire timely feedback from students and from the faculty on each module to monitor the learning process, make any necessary adjustments to the ongoing course, and gather data for overall evaluation. For modules lasting several weeks, Module Feedback may be required every week rather than at the end of the module.

Course Feedback

The objectives of Course Feedback are to obtain students' and Faculty members' overall assessment of the course and to receive recommendations on the areas that need improvement and more attention in the future. Student Course Feedback, which takes place at the end of the HCSC, consists of individual feedback submitted by every student and subsequent discussion and preparation of a joint briefing by the students.

After Action Evaluation

The objective of the After Action Evaluation is to gain students' views about the HCSC a short time after graduation, particularly regarding how their participation met the requirements of their current position.

ANNEX A | Abbreviations

ACT	Allied Command Transformation
BALTDEFCOL	Baltic Defence College
BDST	Baltic Defence Study Trip
CSC	Civil Servants Course
CH	Contact Hours
Credits	Credit Points are assigned based on ECTS
DLMS	Department of Leadership and Management Studies
DMS	Department of Military Studies
DPS	Department of Political and Security Studies
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
ETOC	Education and Training Opportunities Catalogue
EU	European Union
EST	Estonia
IST	International Study Trip
HCSC	Higher Command Studies Course
ICGW	Individual Contribution to Group Work
ISD	Individual Study Day
IPT	Individual Preparation Time
JCGSC	Joint Command and General Staff Course
LVA	Latvia
LTU	Lithuania
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
PME	Professional Military Education
SNR	Senior National Representative
STRATCOM	Strategic Communications

ANNEX B | Performance Review

Personal Qualities
Leadership, professionalism, and integrity
Criteria: Does the student display leadership skills? Does he or she demonstrate the ability to command and exert authority, confidence, and determination? Does he or she know how to encourage others who may be subordinate in status? Does the student conduct himself or herself appropriately, and is his or her appearance keeping with professional protocol? Does the student behave ethically, both as a team player and as a leader? Can he or she communicate with tact and discretion?
Openness and participation
Criteria: Is the student open to transformation and new ideas? Does the student contribute to group activities, such as syndicates and discussions? Does he or she provide an 'added value' to any activity, as well as to the course itself?
Academic Capacities
Creativity and rigour
Criteria: Is the student a creative, critical thinker? Does he or she actively seek to generate new ideas? Is the student's work neat and rigorous?
Insight and expertise
Criteria: Does the student have the necessary insight to evaluate and analyse information? Has he or she actively sought to develop good institutional and strategic knowledge?

Student's Comments

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Student

Course Director

Date

ANNEX C | Curriculum Flow

MODULE FLOW FOR HCSC 2025																																							
January	JGSC / CSC													JGSC / CSC																									
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	INPROC	M0							M1											
February	JGSC / CSC													JGSC / CSC																									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	M1	ISD	M2	ISD	M2	ISD					
March	JGSC / CSC													JGSC / CSC																									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	M2	RUSSIA CONFER	INTERNATIONAL STUDY TRIP	ELECTIVE 2	M3	ISD	M3	ISD
April	JGSC / CSC													JGSC / CSC																									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	M3	M4	M4	ISD	M5	ISD	M5	M5	
May	JGSC / CSC													JGSC / CSC																									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	ISD	M6	M6	M6	ISD	RPP	M7	BALTIC DEFENCE STUDY TRIP
June	JGSC / CSC													JGSC / CSC																									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	M7	M7	OUTPROC	AAR	GRAD															
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">DPPS</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">CD</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">DLMS</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ELECTIVE</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">DMS</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ISD - Individual Study Day</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">AAR - After Action Review</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">GRAD - Graduation</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">RPP - Research Project Presentation</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">JGSC - Joint Command and General Staff Course</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">CSC - Civil Servants Course</div> </div>																																							

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