the submission is expressed in such general terms that no other response is applicable. For example, if the DRB disagrees with the applicant as to the relevance of matters set forth in the submission, the DRB normally will set forth the nature of the disagreement under the guidance in §865.112 of this subpart with respect to decisional issues, or it will reject the applicant's position on the basis of §865.111(f)(1) or §865.111(f)(2). If the applicant's submission is so general that none of those provisions is applicable, then the DRB may state that it cannot respond because the item is not specific.

§865.112 Decisional issues.

(a) The decisional document shall discuss the issues that provide a basis for the decision whether there should be a change in the character of or reason for discharge. In order to enhance clarity, the DRB should not address matters other than issues relied upon in the decision or raised by the applicant.

(b) *Partial Change.* When the decision changes a discharge but does not provide the applicant with the full change in discharge requested, the decisional document shall address both the issues upon which change is granted and the issues upon which the DRB denies the full change requested.

(c) *Relationship of Issue To Character of or Reason for Discharge.* Generally, the decisional document should specify whether a decisional issue applies to the character of or reason for discharge (or both), but it is not required to do so.

(d) *Relationship of an Issue To Propriety or Equity.* (1) If an applicant identifies an issue as pertaining to both propriety and equity, the DRB will consider it under both standards.

(2) If an applicant identifies an issue as pertaining to the propriety of the discharge (for example, by citing a propriety standard or otherwise claiming that a change in discharge is required as a matter of law), the DRB shall consider the issue solely as a matter of propriety. Except as provided in §865.112(d)(4), the DRB is not required to consider such an issue under the equity standards.

(3) If the applicant's issue contends that the DRB is required as a matter of law to follow a prior decision by setting forth an issue of propriety from the prior decision and decribing its relationship to the applicant's case, the issue shall be considered under the propriety standards and addressed under §865.112(e) or §865.112(f).

(4) If the applicant's issue sets forth principles of equity contained in a prior DRB decision, describes the relationship to the applicant's case, and contends that the DRB is required as a matter of law to follow the prior case, the decisional document shall note that the DRB is not bound by its discretionary decisions in prior cases under the standards in §865.120 of this subpart. However, the principles cited by the applicant, and the description of the relationship of the principles to the applicant's case, shall be considered under the equity standards and addressed under §865.112(h) or §865.112(i).

(5) If the applicant's issue cannot be identified as a matter of propriety or equity, the DRB shall address it as an issue of equity.

(e) *Change of discharge: Issues of propriety.* If a change in the discharge is warranted under the propriety standards the decisional document shall state that conclusion and list the errors or expressly retroactive changes in policy that provide a basis for the conclusion. The decisional document shall cite the facts in the record that demonstrate the relevance of the error or change in policy to the applicant's case. If the change in discharge does not constitute the full change requested by the applicant, the reasons for not granting the full change shall be addressed.

(f) *Denial of the full change requested: Issues of propriety.* If the decision rejects the applicant's position on an issue of propriety, or if it is otherwise decided on the basis of an issue of propriety that the full change in discharge requested by the applicant is not warranted, the decisional document shall note that conclusion. The decisional document shall list reasons for its conclusion on each issue of propriety under the following guidance:

(1) If a reason is based in whole or in part upon a part, statute, constitutional provision, judicial determination, or other source of law, the DRB shall cite the pertinent source of law and the facts in the record that demonstrate the relevance of the source of law to the particular circumstances in the case.

(2) If a reason is based in whole or in part on a determination as to the occurrence or nonoccurrence of an event or circumstance, including a factor required by applicable Air Force regulations to be considered for determination of the character of and reason for the applicant's discharge, the DRB shall make a finding of fact for each such event or circumstance.

(i) For each such finding, the decisional document shall list the specific source of the information relied upon. This may include the presumption of regularity in appropriate cases. If the information is listed in the service record section of the decisional document, a citation is not required.

(ii) If a finding of fact is made after consideration of contradictory evidence in the record (including information cited by the applicant or otherwise identified by members of the DRB), the decisional document shall set forth the conflicting evidence, and explain why the information relied upon was more persuasive than the information that was rejected. If the presumption of regularity is cited as the basis for rejecting such information, the decisional document shall explain why the contradictory evidence was insufficient to overcome the presumption. In an appropriate case, the explanation as to why the contradictory evidence was insufficient to overcome the presumption of regularity may consist of a statement that the applicant failed to provide sufficient corroborating evidence, or that the DRB did not find the applicant's testimony to be sufficiently credible to overcome the presumption.

(3) If the DRB disagrees with the position of the applicant on an issue of propriety, the following guidance applies in addition to the guidance in § 842.112(f) (1) and (2).

(i) The DRB may reject the applicant's position by explaining why it disagrees with the principles set forth in the applicant's issue (including principles derived from cases cited by the applicant).

(ii) The DRB may reject the applicant's position by explaining why the principles set forth in the applicant's issue (including principles derived from cases cited by the applicant) are not relevant to the applicant's case.

(iii) The DRB may reject an applicant's position by stating that the applicant's issue of propriety is not a matter upon which the DRB grants a change in discharge, and by providing an explanation for this position. When the applicant indicates that the issue is to be considered in conjunction with one or more other specified issues, the explanation will address all such specified issues.

(iv) The DRB may reject the applicant's position on the grounds that other specified factors in the case preclude granting relief, regardless of whether the DRB agreed with the applicant's position.

(v) If the applicant takes the position that the discharge must be changed because of an alleged error in a record associated with the discharge, and the record has not been corrected by the organization with primary responsibility for corrective action, respond that it will presume the validity of the record in the absence of such corrective action. If the organization empowered to correct the record is within the Department of the Air Force, the DRB should provide the applicant with a brief description of the procedures for requesting correction of the record. If the DRB on its own motion cites this issue as a decisional issue on the basis of equity, it shall address the issue as such.

(vi) When an applicant's issue contains a general allegation that a certain course of action violated his or her constitutional rights, respond in appropriate cases by noting that the action was consistent with statutory or regulatory authority, and by citing the presumption of constitutionality that attaches to statutes and regulations. If, on the other hand, the applicant makes a specific challenge to the constitutionality of the action by challenging

the application of a statute or regulation is a particular set of circumstances, it is not sufficient to respond solely by citing the presumption of constitutionality of the statute or regulation when the applicant is not challenging the constitutionality of the statute or regulation. Instead, the response must address the specific circumstances of the case.

(g) *Denial of the full change in discharge requested when propriety is not at issue.* If the applicant has not submitted an issue of propriety and the DRB has not otherwise relied upon an issue of propriety to change the discharge, the decisional document shall contain a statement to that effect. The DRB is not required to provide any further discussion as to the propriety of the discharge.

(h) *Change of discharge: Issues of equity.* If the DRB concludes that a change in the discharge is warranted under equity standards the decisional document shall list each issue of equity upon which this conclusion is based. The DRB shall cite the facts in the record that demonstrate the relevance of the issue to the applicant's case. If the change in discharge does not constitute the full change requested by the applicant, the reasons for not giving the full change requested shall be discussed.

(i) *Denial of the full change requested: Issues of equity.* If the DRB rejects the applicant's position on an issue of equity, or if the decision otherwise provides less than the full change in discharge requested by the applicant, the decisional document shall note that conclusion. The DRB shall list reasons for its conclusions on each issue of equity in accordance with the following:

(1) If a reason is based in whole or in part upon a part, statute, constitutional provision, judicial determination, or other source of law, the DRB shall cite the pertinent source of law and the facts in the record that demonstrate the relevance of the source of law to the exercise of discretion on the issue of equity in the applicant's case.

(2) If a reason is based in whole or in part on a determination as to the occurrence or nonoccurrence of an event or circumstance, including a factor required by applicable Air Force regulations to be considered for determination of the character of and reason for the applicant's discharge, the DRB shall make a finding of fact for each such event or circumstance.

(i) For each such finding, the decisional document shall list the specific source of the information relied upon. This may include the presumption of regularity in appropriate cases. If the information is listed in the service record section of the decisional document, a citation is not required.

(ii) If a finding of fact is made after consideration of contradictory evidence in the record (including information cited by the applicant or otherwise identified by members of the DRB), the decisional document shall set forth the conflicting evidence, and explain why the information relied upon was more persuasive than the information that was rejected. If the presumption of regularity is cited as the basis for rejecting such information, the decisional document shall explain why the contradictory evidence was insufficient to overcome the presumption. In an appropriate case, the explanation as to why the contradictory evidence was insufficient to overcome the presumption of regularity may consist of a statement that the applicant failed to provide sufficient corroborating evidence, or that the DRB did not find the applicant's testimony to be sufficiently credible to overcome the presumption.

(3) If the DRB disagrees with the position of the applicant on an issue of equity, the following guidance applies in addition to the guidance in § 865.112(i) (1) and (2):

(i) The DRB may reject the applicant's position by explaining why it disagrees with the principles set forth in the applicant's issue (including principles derived from cases cited by the applicant).

(ii) The DRB may reject the applicant's position by explaining why the principles set forth in the applicant's issue (including principles derived from cases cited by the applicant) are not relevant to the applicant's case.

(iii) The DRB may reject an applicant's position by explaining why the applicant's issue is not a matter upon which the DRB grants a change in discharge as a matter of equity. When the

applicant indicates that the issue is to be considered in conjunction with other specified issues, the explanation will address all such issues.

(iv) The DRB may reject the applicant's position on the grounds that other specified factors in the case preclude granting relief, regardless of whether the DRB agreed with the applicant's position.

(v) If the applicant takes the position that the discharge should be changed as a matter of equity because of an alleged error in a record associated with the discharge, and the record has not been corrected by the organization with primary responsibility for corrective action, the DRB may respond that it will presume the validity of the record in the absence of such corrective action. However, the DRB will consider whether it should exercise its equitable powers to change the discharge on the basis of the alleged error. If it declines to do so, the DRB shall explain why the applicant's position did not provide a sufficient basis for the change in the discharge requested by the applicant.

(4) When the DRB concludes that aggravating factors outweigh mitigating factors, the DRB must set forth reasons such as the seriousness of the offense, specific circumstances surrounding the offense, number of offenses, lack of mitigating circumstances, or similar factors. The DRB is not required, however, to explain why it relied on any such factors unless the applicability or weight of such factors are expressly raised as an issue by the applicant.

(5) If the applicant has not submitted any issues and the DRB has not otherwise relied upon an issue of equity for a change in discharge, the decisional document shall contain a statement to that effect, and shall note that the major factors upon which the discharge was based are set forth in the service record portion of the decisional document.

§ 865.113 Recommendations by the Director of the Personnel Council and Secretarial Review Authority.

(a) The Director of the Personnel Council may forward cases for consideration by the Secretarial Reviewing Authority (SRA) under rules established by the Secretary of the Air Force.

(b) The following categories of dicharge review requests are subject to the review of the Secretary of the Air Force or the Secretary's designee.

(1) Cases in which a minority of the DRB panel requests their submitted opinions be forwarded for consideration (refer to § 865.110(h)).

(2) Cases when required in order to provide information to the Secretary on specific aspects of the discharge review function which are of interest to the Secretary.

(3) Any case which the Director, Air Force Personnel Council believes is of significant interest to the Secretary.

(c) The Secretarial Reviewing Authority is the Secretary of the Air Force or the official to whom he has delegated this authority. The SRA may review the types of cases described above before issuance of the final notification of a decision. Those cases forwarded for review by the SRA shall be considered under the standards set forth in § 865.121 and DOD Directive 1332.28.

(d) There is no requirement that the Director of the Personnel Council submit a recommendation when a case is forwarded to the SRA. If a recommendation is submitted, however, it should be in accordance with the guidelines described below.

(e) Format for Recommendation. If a recommendation is provided, it shall contain the Director's views whether there should be a change in the character of or reason for discharge (or both). If the Director recommends such a change, the particular change to be made shall be specified. The recommendation shall set forth the Director's position on decisional issues submitted by the applicant in accordance with the following:

(1) Adoption of the DRB's Decisional document. The recommendation may state that the Director has adopted the decisional document prepared by the majority. The Director shall ensure that the decisional document meets the requirements of this regulation.

(2) Adoption of the Specific Statements From the Majority. If the Director adopts the views of the majority only in part, the recommendation shall