

Trade Study

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A **Trade Study** is a study that identifies a preferred solution among a list of qualified solutions. The trade study will examine these solutions against criteria such as; cost, schedule, [performance](#), weight, system configuration, complexity, the use of [Commercial Off-The-Shelf \(COTS\)](#), and many others. Trade Studies are performed throughout an acquisition program from concept development thru system design. In systems engineering, they're primarily used to determine operational and system level requirements.

Trade studies are used in support of decision making throughout the life cycle of a program. Trade studies are conducted among operational capabilities, functional, and performance requirements, design alternatives and their related manufacturing, testing, and support processes; program schedule; and life-cycle cost to systematically examine alternatives. Once alternatives have been identified, a trade study team applies a set of decision criteria to analyze the alternatives. These criteria are 'traded' to determine which alternative is optimal and to be recommended.

Source: [Trade Study](#)

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