

AVL Analysis Interface Module (AIM) Manual

Ed Alyanak and Ryan Durscher
AFRL/RQVC

November 28, 2025

0.1 Introduction	1
0.1.1 AVL AIM Overview	1
0.1.2 Geometry Requirements and Assumptions	1
0.1.2.1 Airfoils in ESP	1
0.1.2.2 AVL Geometry File	2
0.1.3 Examples	2
0.2 AVL AIM Examples	2
0.3 AIM Attributes	5
0.4 AVL Operation Constraints	6
0.5 AIM Units	7
0.5.1 JSON String Dictionary	7
0.6 AIM Inputs	7
0.7 AIM Execution	9
0.8 AIM Outputs	9
0.9 Vortex Lattice Surface	13
0.9.1 Single Value String	14
0.10 Vortex Lattice Control Surface	14
0.10.1 Single Value String	15
Index	17

0.1 Introduction

0.1.1 AVL AIM Overview

The use of lower-dimensional design tools is clearly desirable in a multidisciplinary/multi-fidelity aero design optimization setting. This is the crux of the Computational Aircraft Prototype Syntheses (CAPS) program. In many ways describing geometry appropriate for AVL (the Athena Vortex Lattice) code is more cumbersome than higher fidelity codes that require an Outer Mold Line. The goal is to make a CAPS AIM (Analysis Input Module) that directly feeds input to AVL and extracts the output quantities of interest from AVL's execution. This needs to be consistent with a build description that is hierarchical and multi-fidelity. That is, the build description that generates the geometric data at this level can be further enhanced to produce the complete OML of the aircraft design under consideration. As for the geometric description, AVL requires airfoil section data specified at the appropriate locations that describe the *skeleton* of the aircraft. These sections when *lofted* as groups and finally *unioned* together builds the OML. Clearly, intercepting the state of the geometry before these higher-level operations are applied provides the data appropriate for AVL. This naturally constructs a hierarchical geometric view where a design can progress into higher fidelities and feedback can be achieved where we can go back to this level of description when need be.

An outline of the AIM's inputs and outputs are provided in [AIM Inputs](#) and [AIM Outputs](#), respectively.

Details on the use of units are outlined in [AIM Units](#).

Geometric attribution that the AIM makes use is provided in [AIM Attributes](#).

The AVL AIM can automatically execute avl, with details provided in [AIM Execution](#).

To populate output data the AIM expects files, "capsTotalForce.txt", "capsStripForce.txt", "capsStatbilityDeriv.txt", "capsBodyAxisDeriv.txt", and "capsHingeMoment.txt" to exist after running AVL (see [AIM Outputs](#) for additional information).

0.1.2 Geometry Requirements and Assumptions

The AVL coordinate system assumption (X – downstream, Y – out the right wing, Z – up) needs to be followed.

0.1.2.1 Airfoils in ESP

Within **OpenCSM** there are a number of airfoil generation UDPs (User Defined Primitives). These include NACA 4 series, a more general NACA 4/5/6 series generator, Sobieczky's PARSEC parameterization and Kulfan's CST parameterization. All of these UDPs generate **EGADS** *FaceBodies* where the *Face*'s underlying *Surface* is planar and the bounds of the *Face* is a closed set of *Edges* whose underlying *Curves* contain the airfoil shape.

Important Airfoil Geometry Assumptions

- There must be a *Node* that represents the *Leading Edge* point
- For a sharp trailing edge, there must be a *Nodes* at the *Trailing Edge*
- For a blunt trailing edge, the airfoil curve may be open, or closed by a single *Edge* connecting the upper/lower *Nodes*
- For a *FaceBody*, the airfoil coordinates traverse counter-clockwise around the *Face* normal. The **OpenCSM** *REORDER* operation may be used to flip the *Face* normal.
- For a *WireBody*, the airfoil coordinates traverse in the order of the loop

Note: Additional spurious *Nodes* on the upper and lower *Edges* of the airfoil are acceptable.

0.1.2.2 AVL Geometry File

The AVL Surface Sections with airfoils are automatically generated from a set of *FaceBodies* with the same caps↔Group attributes, and the geometric details extracted from the geometry. Attempts are made to orient and sort *FaceBody*, but users are encouraged to check the airfoil orientation in the AVL input file when setting up a new problem. The *FaceBody* must contain at least two edges and two nodes, but may contain any number of *Edges* otherwise. If the *FaceBody* contains more nodes, the node with the smallest *x* value is used to define the leading edge, the node with the largest *x* defines the trailing edge. The airfoil may have a single *Edge* that defines a straight blunt trailing edge. **Xle**, **Yle**, and **Zle**, are taken from the *Node* associated with the *Leading Edge*. The **Chord** is computed by getting the distance between the LE and TE (if there is a blunt trailing *Edge* in the *FaceBody* the TE point is considered the mid-position on that *Edge*). **Ainc** is computed by registering the chordal direction of the *FaceBody* against the X-Z plane. The airfoil shapes are generated by sampling the normalized *Curves* and put directly in the input file via the **AIRFOIL** keyword, or put in separate airfoil files if the *AirfoilFiles* (see [AIM Inputs](#)) input is set to True.

It should be noted that general construction in either **OpenCSM** or even **EGADS** will be supported as long as the topology described above is used. But care should be taken when constructing the airfoil shape so that a discontinuity (i.e., simply C^0) is not generated at the *Node* representing the *Leading Edge*. This can be done by fitting a spline through the entire shape as one and then intersecting the single *Edge* to place the LE *Node*.

AVL surfaces are also able to be constructed from a sequence of LINE *WireBodies*. However, the bodies must be constructed in order and are not sorted by the AIM, unless the optional sortVec surface input is specified. This method is useful for creating cruciform fuselages or nacelles.

The rest of the information and options required to fill out the AVL geometry input file (**xxx.avl**) will be found in the attributes attached to the *FaceBody* itself. The conventions used will be described in the next section.

Also note that this first implementation is not intended to provide complete control over AVL. In particular, there is no mention above of the **DESIGN** AVL keywords.

0.1.3 Examples

An example problem using the AVL AIM may be found at [AVL AIM Examples](#), which contains example *.csm input files and pyCAPS scripts designed to make use of the AVL AIM. These example scripts make extensive use of the [AIM Attributes](#), [AIM Inputs](#), and [AIM Outputs](#).

0.2 AVL AIM Examples

This example contains a set of *.csm and pyCAPS (*.py) inputs that uses the AVL AIM. A user should have knowledge on the generation of parametric geometry in Engineering Sketch Pad (ESP) before attempting to integrate with any AIM. Specifically, this example makes use of Design Parameters, Set Parameters, User Defined Primitive (UDP) and attributes in ESP.

The follow code details the process in a *.csm file that generates three airfoil sections to create a wing. Note to execute in serveESP a dictionary file must be included "serveESP \$ESP_ROOT/CAPSexamples/csmData/avl↔Wing.csm"

The CSM script generates Bodies which are designed to be used by specific AIMs. The AIMs that the Body is designed for is communicated to the CAPS framework via the capsAIM string attribute. This is a semicolon-separated string with the list of AIM names. Thus, the CSM author can give a clear indication to which AIMs should use the Body. In this example, the list contains only the avlAIM:

```
attribute capsAIM      $avlAIM;flightstreamAIM
```

Next we will define the design parameters to define the wing cross section and planform.

```
despmtr   thick      0.12      frac of local chord
despmtr   camber     0.04      frac of local chord
despmtr   area       10.0      Planform area of the full span wing
despmtr   aspect     6.00      Span^2/Area
despmtr   taper      0.60      TipChord/RootChord
despmtr   sweep      20.0      1/4 Chord Sweep
despmtr   washout    -5.00      deg (negative is down at tip)
despmtr   dihedral   4.00      deg
```

The design parameters will then be used to set parameters for use internally to create geometry.

```
set       span       sqrt(aspect*area)
set       croot      2*area/span/(1+taper)
set       ctip       croot*taper
set       dxtip      (croot-ctip)/4+span/2*tand(sweep)
set       dztip      span/2*tand(dihedral)
```

Finally, the airfoils are created using the User Defined Primitive (UDP) naca. The inputs used for this example to the UDP are Thickness and Camber. Cross sections are in the X-Y plane and are rotated to the X-Z plane. Reference quantities must exist on any body, otherwise AVL defaults to 1.0 for Area, Span, Chord and 0.0 for X,Y,Z moment

References

```
# left tip
udprim    naca        Thickness thick      Camber   camber
attribute capsGroup   $Wing
attribute capsReferenceArea area
attribute capsReferenceSpan span
attribute capsReferenceChord croot
attribute capsReferenceX croot/4
attribute capsReferenceY 0
attribute capsReferenceZ 0
scale     ctip
rotatex   90         0         0
rotatey   washout    0         ctip/4
translate dxtip      -span/2    dztip

# root
udprim    naca        Thickness thick      Camber   camber
attribute capsGroup   $Wing
rotatex   90         0         0
scale     croot

# right tip
udprim    naca        Thickness thick      Camber   camber
attribute capsGroup   $Wing
scale     ctip
rotatex   90         0         0
rotatey   washout    0         ctip/4
translate dxtip      span/2     dztip
```

An example pyCAPS script that uses the above csm file to run AVL is as follows.

First the pyCAPS and os module needs to be imported.

```
import pyCAPS
import os
```

Next the *.csm file is loaded and design parameter is changed - area in the geometry. Any despmtr from the avl↔Wing.csm file is available inside the pyCAPS script. They are: thick, camber, area, aspect, taper, sweep, washout, dihedral...

```
geometryScript = os.path.join("../csmData","avlWing.csm")
myProblem = pyCAPS.Problem(problemName=workDir,
                           capsFile=geometryScript,
                           outLevel=args.outLevel)

myProblem.geometry.despmtr.area = 10.0
```

The AVL AIM is then loaded with:

```
myAnalysis = myProblem.analysis.create(aim = "avlAIM", name = "avl")
```

After the AIM is loaded the Mach number and angle of attack are set, though all [AIM Inputs](#) are available.

```
myAnalysis.input.Mach = 0.5
myAnalysis.input.Alpha = 1.0
myAnalysis.input.Beta = 0.0

wing = {"groupName"      : "Wing", # Notice Wing is the value for the capsGroup attribute
        "numChord"       : 8,
        "spaceChord"     : 1.0,
        "numSpanTotal"   : 24}

myAnalysis.input.AVL_Surface = {"Wing": wing}
```

Once all the inputs have been set, outputs can be directly requested. The avl analysis will be automatically executed just-in-time ([AIM Execution](#)).

Any of the AIM's output variables ([AIM Outputs](#)) are readily available; for example,

```
print ("CXtot ", myAnalysis.output["CXtot" ].value)
print ("CYtot ", myAnalysis.output["CYtot" ].value)
print ("CZtot ", myAnalysis.output["CZtot" ].value)
print ("Cltot ", myAnalysis.output["Cltot" ].value)
print ("Cmtot ", myAnalysis.output["Cmtot" ].value)
print ("Cntot ", myAnalysis.output["Cntot" ].value)
print ("Cl'tot ", myAnalysis.output["Cl'tot" ].value)
print ("Cn'tot ", myAnalysis.output["Cn'tot" ].value)
print ("CLtot ", myAnalysis.output["CLtot" ].value)
print ("CDtot ", myAnalysis.output["CDtot" ].value)
print ("CDvis ", myAnalysis.output["CDvis" ].value)
print ("CLff ", myAnalysis.output["CLff" ].value)
print ("CYff ", myAnalysis.output["CYff" ].value)
print ("CDind ", myAnalysis.output["CDind" ].value)
print ("CDff ", myAnalysis.output["CDff" ].value)
print ("e      ", myAnalysis.output["e"      ].value)
```

results in

```
CXtot    0.00061
CYtot    -0.0
CZtot    -0.30129
Cltot    -0.0
Cmtot    -0.19449
Cntot    -0.0
Cl'tot   -0.0
Cn'tot   -0.0
CLtot    0.30126
CDtot    0.00465
CDvis    0.0
CLff     0.30096
CYff     -0.0
CDind    0.0046467
CDff     0.0049692
e         0.967
```

Additionally, besides making a call to the AIM outputs, sensitivity values may be obtained in the following manner,

```
#sensitivity = myAnalysis.output["CLtot"].deriv("Alpha")
```

The avlAIM supports the control surface modeling functionality inside AVL. Trailing edge control surfaces can be added to the above example by making use of the `vlmControlName` attribute (see [AIM Attributes](#) regarding the attribution specifics). To add a **RightFlap** and **LeftFlap** to the previous example *.csm file the naca UDP entries are augmented with the following attributes.

```
# left tip
udprim    naca      Thickness thick      Camber      camber
attribute vlmControl_LeftFlap 80 # Hinge line is at 80% of the chord (control surface between hinge and
      trailing edge)
...

# root
udprim    naca      Thickness thick      Camber      camber
attribute vlmControl_LeftFlap 80 # Hinge line is at 80% of the chord (control surface between hinge and
      trailing edge)
attribute vlmControl_RightFlap 80 # Hinge line is at 80% of the chord (control surface between hinge and
      trailing edge)
...

# right tip
udprim    naca      Thickness thick      Camber      camber
attribute vlmControl_RightFlap 80 # Hinge line is at 80% of the chord (control surface between hinge and
      trailing edge)
...
```

Note how the root airfoil contains two attributes for both the left and right flaps.

In the pyCAPS script the [AIM Inputs](#), **AVL_Control**, must be defined.

```
flap = {"controlGain"      : 0.5,
        "deflectionAngle" : 10.0}

myAnalysis.input.AVL_Control = {"LeftFlap": flap, "RightFlap": flap}
```

Notice how the information defined in the **flap** variable is assigned to the `vlmControlName` portion of the attributes added to the *.csm file.

0.3 AIM Attributes

The following list of attributes drives the AVL geometric definition. Each *FaceBody* which relates to AVL **Sections** will be marked up in an appropriate manner to drive the input file construction. Many attributes are required and those that are optional are marked so in the description:

- **capsReferenceArea** This attribute may exist on any *Body*. Its value will be used as the SREF entry in the AVL input.
- **capsReferenceChord** This attribute may exist on any *Body*. Its value will be used as the CREF entry in the AVL input.
- **capsReferenceSpan** This attribute may exist on any *Body*. Its value will be used as the BREF entry in the AVL input.
- **capsReferenceX** [Optional: Default 0.0] This attribute may exist on any *Body*. Its value will be used as the Xref entry in the AVL input.
- **capsReferenceY** [Optional: Default 0.0] This attribute may exist on any *Body*. Its value will be used as the Yref entry in the AVL input.
- **capsReferenceZ** [Optional: Default 0.0] This attribute may exist on any *Body*. Its value will be used as the Zref entry in the AVL input.
- **capsGroup** This string attribute labels the *FaceBody* as to which AVL Surface the section is assigned. This should be something like: *Main_Wing*, *Horizontal_Tail*, etc. This informs the AVL AIM to collect all *FaceBodies* that match this attribute into a single AVL Surface.
Note: If a capsGroup contains only one section then the section is treated as a slender body, and only the numChord and spaceChord in the "AVL_Surface" ([Vortex Lattice Surface](#)) input will be used.
- **vlmControl"Name"** This string attribute attaches a control surface to the *FaceBody*. The hinge location is defined as the double value between 0 or 1.0. The range as percentage from 0 to 100 will also work. The name of the control surface is the string information after vlmControl (or vlmControl_). For Example, to define a control surface named Aileron the following are identical (*attribute vlmControlAileron 0.8* or *attribute vlmControl_Aileron 80*) . Multiple *vlmControl* attributes, with different names, can be defined on a single *FaceBody*.

By default control surfaces with percentages less than 0.5 (< 50%) are leading edge slats (with the control surface is between leading edge and hinge location), while values greater than or equal to 0.5 (>= 50%) are considered trailing edge flaps (with the control surface between the hinge location and trailing edge). This behavior may be overwritten with the "AVL_Control" (see [AIM Inputs](#)) input keyword "leOrTe" (see [Vortex Lattice Control Surface](#) for additional details).

- For leOrTe = 0, the control surface is always between the leading edge and the hinge line.
- For leOrTe = 1, the control surface is always between the trailing edge and the hinge line.

- **vlmNumSpan** This attribute may be set on any given airfoil cross-section to overwrite the number of spanwise horseshoe vortices placed on the surface (globally set - see keyword "numSpanPerSection" and "numSpanTotal" in [Vortex Lattice Surface](#)) between two sections. Note, that the AIM internally sorts the sections in ascending y (or z) order, so care should be taken to select the correct section for the desired intent.

Note: The attribute **avlNumSpan** has been deprecated in favor of **vlmNumSpan**

- **vlmSspace** This attribute may be set on any given airfoil cross-section in the range [-1 .. 1] specify the spanwise distribution function.

- **vlmNumChord** This attribute may be set on any given airfoil cross-section to overwrite the number of chordwise horseshoe vortices placed on the surface (globally set - see keyword "numChord" in [Vortex Lattice Surface](#)).
vlmNumChord must be the same if set on multiple sections of a surface.
- **vlmCspace** This attribute may be set on any given airfoil cross-section in the range [-1 .. 1] specify the chordwise distribution function.
vlmCspace must be the same if set on multiple sections of a surface.
- **vlmCDCL** The CD-CL polar is based on a simple interpolation. Must be a list of 6 [CL1, CD1, CL2, CD2, CL3, CD3] entries. See AVL documentation for more details.

0.4 AVL Operation Constraints

Structure for the AVL operation constraints tuple = ("Name of Variable", "Constraint"). "Name of Variable" is variable to be constrained and must be one of:

- "A" or "Alpha"
- "B" or "Beta"
- "R" or "Roll rate"
- "P" or "Pitch rate"
- "Y" or "Yaw rate"
- "Control surface name"

The "Constraint" must be a JSON String dictionary key/value pair (e.g. "Constraint" = {"Alpha": 10.0}). "Constraint" must be one of:

- "A" or "Alpha"
- "B" or "Beta"
- "R" or "pb/2V"
- "P" or "qc/2V"
- "Y" or "rb/2V"
- "C" or "CL"
- "S" or "CY"
- "RM" or "Cl roll mom"
- "PM" or "Cm pitch mom"
- "YM" or "Cn yaw mom"
- "Control surface name"

An example of trimmed flight would be

```
avl.input.AVL_Operation = {"Alpha" : {"CL":1.6},
                           "Beta"  : {"CY":0.1},
                           "Aileron": {"Cl":0.0},
                           "Elevator": {"Cm":0.0},
                           "Rudder" : {"Cn":0.0}
}
```

Note: these constraints may override the inputs

Alpha, CL, Beta, RollRate, PitchRate, YawRate, and AVL_Control deflectionAngle

0.5 AIM Units

A unit system may be optionally specified during AIM instance initiation.

- If no unit system is used, AIM inputs, which otherwise would require units, will be assumed unit consistent.
- If a unit system is provided, all AIM input values which have associated units must be specified as well. A unit system may be specified via a JSON string dictionary for example:
unitSystem = '{"mass": "kg", "length": "m", "time": "s", "temperature": "K"}'
or
unitSystem = '{"mass": "slug", "length": "in", "time": "s", "temperature": "R"}'

0.5.1 JSON String Dictionary

The key arguments of the dictionary are described in the following:

- **mass = "None"**
Mass units - e.g. "kilogram", "kg", "slug", ...
- **length = "None"**
Length units - e.g. "meter", "m", "inch", "in", "ft", "mile", ...
- **time = "None"**
Time units - e.g. "second", "s", "minute", ...
- **temperature = "None"**
Temperature units - e.g. "Kelvin", "K", "degC", ...

0.6 AIM Inputs

The following list outlines the AVL inputs along with their default value available through the AIM interface.

- **Mach = 0.0**
Mach number.
- **Alpha = NULL**
Angle of attack [degree]. Either CL or Alpha must be defined but not both.
- **Beta = 0.0**
Sideslip angle [degree].
- **RollRate = 0.0**
Non-dimensional roll rate.
- **PitchRate = 0.0**
Non-dimensional pitch rate.
- **YawRate = 0.0**
Non-dimensional yaw rate.

- **CDp = 0.0**

A fixed value of profile drag to be added to all simulations.

- **CLAF = NULL (double)**

This scales the effective dcl/da of the section airfoil as follows:

$$dcl/da = 2 \pi (1 + CLaf t/c)$$

where t/c is the airfoil's thickness/chord ratio. The intent is to better represent the lift characteristics of thick airfoils, which typically have greater dcl/da values than thin airfoils.

A good 2D potential flow theory estimate for CLaf is 0.77.

In practice, viscous effects will reduce the 0.77 factor to something less. Wind tunnel airfoil data or viscous airfoil calculations should be consulted before choosing a suitable CLaf value.

This option is applied to all surface, and also be specified for individual surfaces using [AVL_Surface Vortex Lattice Surface](#).

- **AVL_Surface = NULL**

See [Vortex Lattice Surface](#) for additional details.

- **AVL_Control = NULL**

See [Vortex Lattice Control Surface](#) for additional details.

- **AVL_Operation = NULL**

See [AVL Operation Constraints](#) for additional details.

- **CL = NULL**

Coefficient of Lift. AVL will solve for Angle of Attack. Either CL or Alpha must be defined but not both.

- **AirfoilFiles = False**

If true, write airfoils to separate files. Otherwise airfoils are included in the .avl geometry file.

- **Moment_Center = NULL, [0.0, 0.0, 0.0]**

Array values correspond to the Xref, Yref, and Zref variables. Alternatively, the geometry (body) attributes "capsReferenceX", "capsReferenceY", and "capsReferenceZ" may be used to specify the X-, Y-, and Z-reference centers, respectively (note: values set through the AIM input will supersede the attribution values).

- **MassProp = NULL**

Mass properties used for eigen value analysis Structure for the mass property tuple = ("Name", "Value"). The "Name" of the mass component used for documenting the xxx.mass file.

The Value is a JSON dictionary requires units, which depends whether unitSystem is specified (see [AIM Units](#))

If unitSystem is not specified:

The value is a JSON dictionary with values with mass, CG, and moments of inertia information (e.g. "Value" = {"mass": mass, "CG": [x,y,z], "massInertia": [Ixx, Iyy, Izz, Ixy, Ixz, Iyz]})

and the values must be in units of kg, m, and $kg \cdot m^2$

The geometry must also be in units of m (without a capsLength attribute)

If a unitSystem is specified:

The value is a JSON dictionary with values with unit pairs for mass, CG, and moments of inertia information (e.g. "Value" = {"mass": [mass,"kg"], "CG": [[x,y,z],"m"], "massInertia": [[Ixx, Iyy, Izz, Ixy, Ixz, Iyz], "kg*m2"]})

The geometry must have a capsLength attribute, and the unitSystem must use units recognized by AVL.

The components Ixy, Ixz, and Iyz are optional may be omitted.

- **MassPropLink = NULL**

Mass properties linked from structural analysis for eigen value analysis Must be in units of kg, m, and $kg \cdot m^2$ if unitSystem (see [AIM Units](#)) is not specified.

- **Gravity = NULL**

Magnitude of the gravitational force used for Eigen value analysis. Must be in units of m/s^2 if unitSystem (see [AIM Units](#)) is not specified.

- **Density = NULL**
Air density used for Eigen value analysis. Must be in units of kg/m^3 if unitSystem (see [AIM Units](#)) is not specified.
- **Velocity = NULL**
Velocity used for Eigen value analysis. Must be in units of m/s if unitSystem (see [AIM Units](#)) is not specified.
- **EigenValues = true**
If true, compute EigenValues when Gravity, Density, Velocity, and Mass properties are specified.

0.7 AIM Execution

If auto execution is enabled when creating an AVL AIM, the AIM will execute avl just-in-time with the command line:
`avl caps < avlInput.txt > avlOutput.txt`

where preAnalysis generated the two files: 1) "avlInput.txt" which contains the input information and control sequence for AVL to execute and 2) "caps.avl" which contains the geometry to be analyzed.

The analysis can be also be explicitly executed with caps_execute in the C-API or via Analysis.runAnalysis in the pyCAPS API.

Calling preAnalysis and postAnalysis is NOT allowed when auto execution is enabled.

Auto execution can also be disabled when creating an AVL AIM object. In this mode, caps_execute and Analysis.runAnalysis can be used to run the analysis, or avl can be executed by calling preAnalysis, system call, and postAnalysis as demonstrated below with a pyCAPS example:

```
print ("\n\preAnalysis.....")
avl.preAnalysis()

print ("\n\nRunning.....")
avl.system("avl caps < avlInput.txt > avlOutput.txt"); # Run via system call

print ("\n\npostAnalysis.....")
avl.postAnalysis()
```

0.8 AIM Outputs

Optional outputs that echo the inputs. These are parsed from the resulting output and can be used as a sanity check.

- **Alpha** = Angle of attack.
- **Beta** = Sideslip angle.
- **Mach** = Mach number.
- **pb/2V** = Non-dimensional roll rate.
- **qc/2V** = Non-dimensional pitch rate.
- **rb/2V** = Non-dimensional yaw rate.
- **p'b/2V** = Non-dimensional roll acceleration.
- **r'b/2V** = Non-dimensional yaw acceleration.

Forces and moments:

- **CXtot** = X-component of total force in body axis
- **CYtot** = Y-component of total force in body axis
- **CZtot** = Z-component of total force in body axis
- **Cltot** = X-component of moment in body axis
- **Cmtot** = Y-component of moment in body axis
- **Cntot** = Z-component of moment in body axis
- **Cl'tot** = x-component of moment in stability axis
- **Cn'tot** = z-component of moment in stability axis
- **CLtot** = total lift in stability axis
- **CDtot** = total drag in stability axis
- **CDvis** = viscous drag component
- **CLff** = trefftz plane lift force
- **CYff** = trefftz plane side force
- **CDind** = induced drag force
- **CDff** = trefftz plane drag force
- **e** = Oswald Efficiency

Stability-axis derivatives - Alpha:

- **CLa** = z' force, CL, with respect to alpha.
- **CYa** = y force, CY, with respect to alpha.
- **Cl'a** = x' moment, Cl', with respect to alpha.
- **Cma** = y moment, Cm, with respect to alpha.
- **Cn'a** = z' moment, Cn', with respect to alpha.

Stability-axis derivatives - Beta:

- **CLb** = z' force, CL, with respect to beta.
- **CYb** = y force, CY, with respect to beta.
- **Cl'b** = x' moment, Cl', with respect to beta.
- **Cmb** = y moment, Cm, with respect to beta.
- **Cn'b** = z' moment, Cn', with respect to beta.

Stability-axis derivatives - Roll rate, p':

- **CLp'** = z' force, CL, with respect to roll rate, p'.
- **CYp'** = y force, CY, with respect to roll rate, p'.
- **Cl'p'** = x' moment, Cl', with respect to roll rate, p'.

- **Cmp'** = y moment, Cm, with respect to roll rate, p'.
- **Cn'p'** = z' moment, Cn', with respect to roll rate, p'.

Stability-axis derivatives - Pitch rate, q':

- **CLq'** = z' force, CL, with respect to pitch rate, q'.
- **CYq'** = y force, CY, with respect to pitch rate, q'.
- **Cl'q'** = x' moment, Cl', with respect to pitch rate, q'.
- **Cmq'** = y moment, Cm, with respect to pitch rate, q'.
- **Cn'q'** = z' moment, Cn', with respect to pitch rate, q'.

Stability-axis derivatives - Yaw rate, r':

- **CLr'** = z' force, CL, with respect to yaw rate, r'.
- **CYr'** = y force, CY, with respect to yaw rate, r'.
- **Cl'r'** = x' moment, Cl', with respect to yaw rate, r'.
- **Cmr'** = y moment, Cm, with respect to yaw rate, r'.
- **Cn'r'** = z' moment, Cn', with respect to yaw rate, r'.

Body-axis derivatives - Axial velocity, u:

- **CXu** = x force, CX, with respect to axial velocity, u.
- **CYu** = y force, CY, with respect to axial velocity, u.
- **CZu** = z force, CZ, with respect to axial velocity, u.
- **Clu** = x moment, Cl, with respect to axial velocity, u.
- **Cmu** = y moment, Cm, with respect to axial velocity, u.
- **Cnu** = z moment, Cn, with respect to axial velocity, u.

Body-axis derivatives - Sideslip velocity, v:

- **CXv** = x force, CX, with respect to sideslip velocity, v.
- **CYv** = y force, CY, with respect to sideslip velocity, v.
- **CZv** = z force, CZ, with respect to sideslip velocity, v.
- **Clv** = x moment, Cl, with respect to sideslip velocity, v.
- **Cmv** = y moment, Cm, with respect to sideslip velocity, v.
- **Cnv** = z moment, Cn, with respect to sideslip velocity, v.

Body-axis derivatives - Normal velocity, w:

- **CXw** = x force, CX, with respect to normal velocity, w.

- **CYw** = y force, CY, with respect to normal velocity, w.
- **CZw** = z force, CZ, with respect to normal velocity, w.
- **Clw** = x moment, Cl, with respect to normal velocity, w.
- **Cmw** = y moment, Cm, with respect to normal velocity, w.
- **Cnw** = z moment, Cn, with respect to normal velocity, w.

Body-axis derivatives - Roll rate, p:

- **CXp** = x force, CX, with respect to roll rate, p.
- **CYp** = y force, CY, with respect to roll rate, p.
- **CZp** = z force, CZ, with respect to roll rate, p.
- **Clp** = x moment, Cl, with respect to roll rate, p.
- **Cmp** = y moment, Cm, with respect to roll rate, p.
- **Cnp** = z moment, Cn, with respect to roll rate, p.

Body-axis derivatives - Pitch rate, q:

- **CXq** = x force, CX, with respect to pitch rate, q.
- **CYq** = y force, CY, with respect to pitch rate, q.
- **CZq** = z force, CZ, with respect to pitch rate, q.
- **Clq** = x moment, Cl, with respect to pitch rate, q.
- **Cmq** = y moment, Cm, with respect to pitch rate, q.
- **Cnq** = z moment, Cn, with respect to pitch rate, q.

Body-axis derivatives - Yaw rate, r:

- **CXr** = x force, CX, with respect to yaw rate, r.
- **CYr** = y force, CY, with respect to yaw rate, r.
- **CZr** = z force, CZ, with respect to yaw rate, r.
- **Clr** = x moment, Cl, with respect to yaw rate, r.
- **Cmr** = y moment, Cm, with respect to yaw rate, r.
- **Cnr** = z moment, Cn, with respect to yaw rate, r.

Geometric output:

- **Xnp** = Neutral Point
 - **Xcg** = x CG location
 - **Ycg** = y CG location
 - **Zcg** = z CG location
- Note: CG location calculation requires mass properties

Controls:

- **ControlStability** = a (or an array of) tuple(s) with a structure of ("Control Surface Name", "JSON Dictionary") for all control surfaces in the stability axis frame. The JSON dictionary has the form = {"CLtot":value,"CYtot":↔:value,"Cl'tot":value,"Cmtot":value,"Cn'tot":value}
- **ControlBody** = a (or an array of) tuple(s) with a structure of ("Control Surface Name", "JSON Dictionary") for all control surfaces in the body axis frame. The JSON dictionary has the form = {"CXtot":value,"CYtot":↔:value,"CZtot":value,"Cl'tot":value,"Cmtot":value,"Cn'tot":value}
- **ControlDeflection** = a (or an array of) tuple(s) with a structure of ("Control Surface Name", "Deflection")
- **HingeMoment** = a (or an array of) tuple(s) with a structure of ("Control Surface Name", "HingeMoment")
- **StripForces** = a (or an array of) tuple(s) with a structure of ("Surface Name", "JSON Dictionary") for all surfaces. The JSON dictionary has the form = {"cl":[value0,value1,value2],"cd":[value0,value1,value2]...}
- **StripShearMoments** = a (or an array of) tuple(s) with a structure of ("Surface Name", "JSON Dictionary") for all surfaces. The JSON dictionary has the form = {"2Y/Bref":[value0,value1,value2],"Vz/(q*Sref)"↔:[value0,value1,value2]...}
- **EigenValues** = a (or an array of) tuple(s) with a structure of ("case #", "Array of eigen values"). The array of eigen values is of the form = [[real0,imaginary0],[real0,imaginary0],...]

0.9 Vortex Lattice Surface

Structure for the Vortex Lattice Surface tuple = ("Name of Surface", "Value"). "Name of surface defines the name of the surface in which the data should be applied. The "Value" can either be a JSON String dictionary (see Section \ref jsonStringVLMsurface) or a single string keyword string (see Section \ref keyStringVLMsurface). @section jsonStringVLMsurface JSON String Dictionary If "Value" is a JSON string dictionary (eg. "Value" = {"numChord": 5, "spaceChord": 1.0, "numSpan": 10, "spaceSpan": 0.5}) the following keywords (= default values) may be used:

- **groupName = "(no default)"**
Single or list of *capsGroup* names used to define the surface (e.g. "Name1" or ["Name1","Name2",...]). If no groupName variable is provided an attempted will be made to use the tuple name instead;
- **noKeyword = "(no default)"**
"No" type. Options: NOWAKE, NOALBE, NOLOAD.
- **numChord = 10**
The number of chordwise horseshoe vortices placed on the surface. Note: The chordwise count may be overridden using the *vlmNumChord* BODY attribute on a section.
- **spaceChord = 1.0**
The chordwise vortex spacing parameter.
The spacing may be overridden using the *vlmCspace* BODY attribute on a section.
- **numSpanTotal = 0**
Total number of spanwise horseshoe vortices placed on the surface. The vortices are 'evenly' distributed across sections to minimize jumps in spacings. numSpanPerSection must be zero if this is set.
Note: The local spanwise count may be overridden using the *vlmNumSpan* BODY attribute on a section.

- **numSpanPerSection = 0**

The number of spanwise horseshoe vortices placed on each section the surface. The total number of spanwise vortices are $(\text{numSection}-1) \times \text{numSpanPerSection}$. The vortices are 'evenly' distributed across sections to minimize jumps in spacings. numSpanTotal must be zero if this is set.

Note: The local spanwise count may be overridden using the *vlmNumSpan* BODY attribute on a section.

- **yMirror = False**

Mirror surface about the y-direction.

- **component = 0**

A positive number allows multiple input SURFACES to be grouped together into a composite virtual surface. Application examples are:

- A wing component made up of a wing SURFACE and a winglet SURFACE
- A T-tail component made up of horizontal and vertical tail SURFACES.

- **CLaf = 0.0**

This scales the effective dcl/da of the section airfoil as follows:

$$dcl/da = 2 \pi (1 + CLaf \ t/c)$$

where t/c is the airfoil's thickness/chord ratio.

- **CDCL = [CL1, CD1, CL2, CD2, CL3, CD3]**

The CD-CL polar is based on a simple interpolation. See AVL documentation for more details.

- **sortVec = [0.0, 0.0, 0.0]**

Vector for sorting airfoil sections.

By default, section normals are used for sorting.

However, for LINE sections, a sorting direction is necessary if sorting is desired.

0.9.1 Single Value String

If "Value" is a single string the following options maybe used:

- (NONE Currently)

0.10 Vortex Lattice Control Surface

Structure for the Vortex Lattice Control Surface tuple = ("Name of Control Surface", "Value"). "Name of control surface defines the name of the control surface in which the data should be applied. The "Value" must be a JSON String dictionary (see Section \ref jsonStringVLMSection). @section jsonStringVLMSection JSON String Dictionary If "Value" is a JSON string dictionary (e.g. "Value" = {"deflectionAngle": 10.0}) the following keywords (= default values) may be used:

- **deflectionAngle = 0.0**

Deflection angle of the control surface.

- **leOrTe = (no default)**

Is the control surface at the leading or trailing edge?

- For leOrTe = 0, the control surface is always between the leading edge and the hinge line.
- For leOrTe = 1, the control surface is always between the trailing edge and the hinge line.

The default behavior when leOrTe is not specified: If the hinge location percentage along the airfoil chord is < 50% a leading edge slat is assumed, while >= 50% indicates a trailing edge flap.

- **controlGain = 1.0**

Control deflection gain, units: degrees deflection / control variable

- **hingeLine = [0.0 0.0 0.0]**

Alternative vector giving hinge axis about which surface rotates

- **deflectionDup = 0**

Sign of deflection for duplicated surface

0.10.1 Single Value String

If "Value" is a single string, the following options maybe used:

- (NONE Currently)

Index

AIM Attributes, [5](#)
AIM Execution, [9](#)
AIM Inputs, [7](#)
AIM Outputs, [9](#)
AIM Units, [7](#)
AVL AIM Examples, [2](#)
AVL Operation Constraints, [6](#)

Introduction, [1](#)

Vortex Lattice Control Surface, [14](#)
Vortex Lattice Surface, [13](#)