

Curriculum Review Process

Functional Lead: Provost

Division: Academic Support Division

Responsible Office: Education Officer

Reference: (a) DODI 1322.35, Military Education, Vol 1, 26 Apr 2022

(b) MCO 1553.4B Professional Military Education

(c) CJCSI 1800.01F, Officer Professional Military Education Policy, 15 May 2020

(d) CJCSI 1805.01C, Enlisted Professional Military Education Policy, 1 Nov 2021

(e) SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation 2024 Edition

1. Purpose. To provide guidance on Marine Corps University's (MCU) University's curricular content and review process to ensure that it relates to policies and procedures contained in the references and incorporates the educational priorities of the Marine Corps and higher authority. This policy also provides direction for implementing the directed task to maintain a professional military education (PME) continuum and to ensure its relevance to the professional development of officers and enlisted Marines.

2. Background. As an accredited institution of higher learning, faculty are responsible for the development of course curricula. Nevertheless, as a PME institution, it is incumbent upon MCU to ensure that its programs support the educational requirements of the Marine Corps and the Joint Force, to include the review and maintenance of the officer and enlisted PME continuums, first defined and published in 2010. Clear delineation of roles and responsibilities for the review and development of PME continuums, curriculum, student learning outcomes (SLOs), program learning outcomes (PLOs), and program missions is essential to ensuring curriculum remains accurate, current, and relevant.

3. Policy

a. Roles

(1) The President, MCU, based on higher level guidance, the advice of the Provost, and the recommendations of program directors, approves the PME learning areas and continuums, educational program mission, and program learning outcomes (PLOs) and SLOs, and provides direction regarding course content priorities for each PME program at the University, both resident and non-resident.

(2) The Provost is the MCU CAO and primary advisor to the President on all educational and academic matters. The Provost directs and oversees the educational program review process.

(3) Program directors, based on President, MCU and higher-level guidance, assessment results, and service requirements, and with the advice of the Provost, relevant subject matter experts (SMEs), program dean (or equivalent) and faculty:

(a) make recommendations as appropriate for changes to program mission, PLOs, SLOs, and the PME continuum;

(b) ensure that program and course design meet institutional and joint PME accreditation standards, as applicable, and conform to best practices in higher education in all cases;

(c) ensure, in accordance with higher level direction and guidance and the service's needs, that course content is accurate, current, and relevant.

(4) program Deans / CAOs assess program missions, program and SLOs; institutional and joint PME accreditation standards, as applicable; best practices in higher education; the design, development, and delivery of program curriculum; and assessment of student performance to advise program directors on needed changes.

(5) program faculty design, develop, and deliver curricula that are current, accurate, and relevant to the professional development of the students, and assess student academic performance.

(6) the Director, Academic Support Division (ASD), under the direction of the Provost, provides educational support to program directors, deans, and faculty, and coordinates the MCU Curriculum Review Board (CRB).

(7) the Director, Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning (IRAP), under the direction of the Vice President for Operations and Plans (VPOP), provides assessment support to program directors, deans, and faculty.

b. Definitions

(1) PME continuums. The Marine Corps Officer and Enlisted PME continuums were originally defined and published in 2011. The MCU President approved the original continuum and designated them foundational to curriculum development for both resident and distance learning programs. Supplemented by the Marine Corps Professional Reading Program and classified according to Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating), the Marine Corps Officer and Enlisted PME continuum reflect the range of enduring PLOs and dynamic SLOs expected of MCU graduates at all levels.

(2) Learning Area. A logical classification of course content according to subject matter areas or overarching themes.

(a) Approved Officer PME (OPME) learning areas are: Leadership; Warfighting; Joint, Interagency, and Multinational Operations; Regional and Cultural Studies; Communication Studies; and Critical and Creative Thinking. (b) Approved Enlisted PME (EPME) learning areas are: Leadership and Ethics; Warfighting; Communication Studies; Critical Thinking and Innovation; Regional and Cultural Studies; and Joint, Interagency, and Multinational Studies.

(3) Educational Program. A combination of courses for the successful mastery of which a student is awarded completion credit and receives a completion diploma or certificate. Officer and enlisted PME programs may be described as “course,” or “school,” or “college” (e.g., Corporals Course, Expeditionary Warfare School, Marine Corps War College). The curriculum of MCU educational programs are designed to achieve approved PLOs.

(4) Program Learning Outcome. A broad statement of a complex and multifaceted outcome intended for graduates to learn from completing an educational program. PLOs will map to approved learning areas as applicable to the mission and scope of the program (i.e., not every educational program is required to have a PLO for each learning area).

(5) Course. A combination of lessons in a defined subject area for which students receive a final grade based on an achievement of approved student learning outcomes (SLO) (e.g., MCWAR’s “Warfighting and Economics” course).

(6) SLO. A concise statement that describes what students are expected to learn after completing a program or course/s of instruction. The statement begins with an action verb that indicates the desired level of learning (in accordance with the revised Bloom’s taxonomy) and corresponding type of assessment. The action verb is followed by an explanation of the specific subject matter the student must learn. The assessment measure(s) associated with each SLO form the basis for student feedback and grading per the MCU policy on Student Assessment and Feedback (as augmented by program assessment and feedback policy, if any). SLOs will map to the program learning outcomes and approved continuing learning areas along the revised taxonomy learning levels.

(7) Lesson. An individual class, assignment, or other student activity, the aggregation of which comprise the curriculum for a course. Typically, each lesson is focused on the achievement of a specific educational objective or objectives and is described in a published lesson card.

(8) Educational Objective. A concise statement that describes what students are expected to learn from an individual class or lesson within an educational program or course. Educational objectives are the subordinate elements that students must collectively learn to accomplish the broader expectations of an SLO. The statement begins with an action verb that indicates the desired level of learning (per accepted educational taxonomies) and is followed by an explanation of the specific subject matter students must learn.

c. The curriculum review process consists of four major components: 1) officer and enlisted PME continuum development; 2) program level course content review boards (CCRBs); 3) annual assessment of institutional academic outcomes; and 4) curriculum review boards (CRBs). For quality assurance, the President, MCU may direct other types of program or curriculum review for all PME programs, which could alter the following process and procedures.

(1) PME continuum development

(a) Officer PME. The Provost oversees the review and maintenance of the Officer PME continuum in conjunction with the academic deans/chief academic officers (CAOs) of Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS), Command and Staff College (CSC), School of Advanced Warfighting (SAW), Marine Corps War College (MCWAR), and the College of Distance Education and Training (CDET) to ensure compatibility across the resident and distance officer PME continuum. This group reviews and recommends defined Learning Areas for PME curricula and validates the continuity of SLOs across PME programs.

(b) Enlisted PME. The Provost oversees the review and maintenance of the Enlisted PME continuum in conjunction with the academic deans/CAOs of the College of Military Education (CEME), Marine Corps Senior Enlisted Academy (MCSEA), Lejeune Leadership Institute (LLI), and the College of Distance Education and Training (CDET) to ensure compatibility across the resident and distance enlisted PME continuum. This group reviews and recommends defined Learning Areas for PME curricula and validates the continuity of SLOs across PME programs.

(c) The Director, ASD will develop the OPME continuum from the PLO and SLO mapping, address discrepancies with the academic deans, and publish the continuum when approved by the President, MCU.

(d) The Director, CEME/MCSEA will develop the EPME continuum from the PLO and SLO mapping and publish the continuum when the President, MCU approves it.

(e) Educational program directors will use the appropriate continuum as the basis for ensuring that program curricula are rank appropriate.

(f) Approval. The President, MCU is the approval authority for the officer and enlisted continuum.

(g) The Provost will ensure that the PME continuum are reviewed biennially, and updated as needed, as a precursor to the OPME and EPME program review boards.

(2) CCRBs

(a) Program directors have wide latitude in determining the scheduling and conduct of CCRBs. At a minimum, however, directors will conduct a CCRB for each program course annually to ensure course content is current, accurate, relevant, and consistent with the appropriate PME continuum and service and joint guidance.

(b) Directors will document CCRB results; such documentation will reflect the course assessment data and any other factors (e.g., changes in doctrine, higher guidance, Fleet input and feedback, faculty recommendations, etc.) used as the basis for changes.

(3) Assessment requirements are addressed in the assessment policy.

(4) CRB. The CRB is the formal University oversight mechanism to direct long-range strategic planning, coordination, and approval of academic programs, and to evaluate the integration and progression of academic curricula within the PME continuum. Course content and assessment data related to the achievement of established PLOs and SLOs are reviewed biennially to ensure a progressive, systematic building-block approach is utilized throughout resident and distance education curriculum development. Additionally, curricula are evaluated for adherence to mandated PME requirements, the needs of the Marine Corps, and the accreditation policies of the Process for Accreditation of Joint Education (PAJE) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), as well as to ensure correlation between the various educational programs and academic rigor. Specific responsibilities and requirements of the conduct of the CRB are outlined below.

(a) CRBs will be convened biennially for each academic program. Officer PME programs CRBs will occur in even-numbered years and enlisted PME programs in odd-numbered years, unless otherwise directed. CRBs are scheduled in two parts with Part 1 in March of each academic year and Part 2 in May.

(b) Membership and programs reviewed:

	Member	Role
All CRBs	President, MCU	Chair
	Provost, CoS, VPs	Academic and Administrative Oversight
	SgtMaj, EDCOM/MCU	Senior Enlisted Advisor
	Directors of ASD and IRAP	Administrative SMEs
	Chair, Faculty Council	Faculty representative
	Invited SMEs	As needed
OPME CRBs	Directors and Deans/CAOs, MCWAR, SAW, CSC, CDET, EWS, LLI	Program Briefers (resident and distant) CLS, ILS, Advanced ILS, TLS, RSSC, SPC, BGSOC, EEP
EPME CRBs	Directors and Deans/CAOs, CEME, MCSEA, CDET, LLI	Program Briefers (resident and distant) LCpls Smr, Cpls Crs, Sgts Sch, Career Sch, Advanced Sch, 1stSgts Crs, SEBSP, SgtMaj Symp, SELOC, Expanded EEP
<i>OPME/EPME directors/deans are optional attendees at their counterparts' CRB</i>		

(c) Briefs. Educational program directors or their designees will brief the following intended approach to program administration for the two academic years following the CRB regarding their respective programs in the format prescribed.

(d) CRB Part 1 Brief will include:

i. Mission Statement, PLOs, and SLOs: approval for proposed changes, if any, and the basis for no change or the proposed changes (e.g., higher guidance, previous two years of assessment, etc.).

ii. Approval for proposed PLO and SLO mapping to approved PME continuum learning areas and taxonomy, highlighting how proposed changes compare to the current approved continuum map.

(e) CRB Part 2 Brief will include:

i. Assessment Plan Overview: review and confirmation of general information regarding the type and frequency of measures used to assess POs and SLOs.

ii. Program Design/Overview: review and confirmation of a graphic description of the overall design and flow of course sequence for use in the MCU command brief and accreditation reporting requirements.

iii. Course Description: review and confirmation of a written description of each of the courses that comprise the program suitable for inclusion in the MCU catalog and for use in articulating credit with external institutions.

iv. Credit Hours: review and confirmation of the calculated credit hours for each course and total for the program.

v. Major Changes to the Curriculum: review and confirmation of a summary of the proposed major changes to the curriculum. Major changes include the elimination of an existing or addition of a new course and the increase or decrease of two or more credit hours for an existing course.

vi. Review and confirmation of curriculum treatment of identified Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) special areas of emphasis (SAE), if/as applicable and/or President, MCU priority areas.

(f) Decisions. The President, MCU is the approval authority for CRB matters.

i. Once approved, Directors may not modify mission statements, PLOs, or SLOs without a subsequent CRB. Directors may request that the President, MCU conduct an “off-cycle” CRB if deemed necessary prior to regularly scheduled review.

ii. Based on assessment and CCRB results, higher guidance, etc., Directors may, and should, modify the assessment plan and program course design and descriptions, and make changes to the curriculum as needed. Significant changes to the assessment plan will include review and advice from the Director, IRAP to ensure Department of Defense (DoD) and joint PME (JPME) mandated outcomes-based education criteria are met. Program directors or designated representatives will coordinate in advance with the Director, Educational Technology and the MCU Registrar changes to course names, descriptions, and credit hours to ensure they are accurately reflected in educational software and the MCU Course Catalog, and accurately reflected and transcribed in student records.

4. Procedures

a. Learning Areas. The Provost will schedule reviews of the PME continuum learning areas as needed and present proposed changes to the President, MCU for approval ahead of the biennial CRBs.

b. CRBs

(1) CRB Part 1 will review program mission, PLOs, SLOs, and continuum mapping.

(2) CRB Part 2 will include Assessment Plan overview, program course design graphic, Course description, course credit hours, summary of major changes, and treatment of CJCS SAEs and President, MCU priority subject areas, as applicable.

(3) President's priority subject areas. President priority areas may include subjects identified by the President him or herself, but the primary intent is to identify externally derived priorities for which data calls or reports are anticipated, to assess the treatment of such topics across educational programs. The Provost, in conjunction with the program deans/CAOs, will develop a proposed priority subject area list for the President's approval in advance of the CRB. Additional attendees will be invited as necessary to address SAE and/or President, MCU priorities.

(4) The Director, ASD will approve and provide the briefing templates for each session.

(5) Educational program directors will ensure that their briefing materials are provided to the Director, ASD at least two weeks prior to the convening date of the CRB.

(6) Director, ASD will develop the record of proceedings; the Provost will approve them.

Related Policies and Forms:

Institutional Effectiveness
Computation of Credit Hours
Student Assessment and Feedback

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