

Graduation

Functional Lead: Operations Officer
Division: Vice President of Operations
Responsible Office: Operations Officer

Reference: (a) DoD SAAMS

1. Purpose. The purpose of this chapter is to define roles and responsibilities regarding graduation ceremonies from the assigned academic program.
2. Background. As Marine Corps University (MCU) operates on a variety of calendars and administers academic programs of varying length, graduation events are necessarily decentralized. That said, as the certification of professional military education (PME) requirements, including joint PME, and degree granting authority belong to the President, MCU, clarity is needed to ensure all requirements are met prior to students being certified as having met PME outcomes and / or receive a conferred degree.
3. Policy

- a. Graduation Ceremonies/Commencement Exercise

(1) Enlisted PME programs. The Director, College of Military Education (CEME) is delegated authority to plan, coordinate, and conduct graduation ceremonies for CEME educational programs.

(2) Resident and non-resident Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS) programs. The Director, EWS, in conjunction with the Director, College of Distance Education and Training (CDET), is delegated authority to plan, coordinate, and conduct the graduation ceremony for EWS resident and Quantico region distance education graduates. The EWS graduation ceremony is normally the second Thursday in May.

(3) MCU Commencement. Marine Corps War College, School of Advanced Warfighting, and resident and Quantico regional distance Command and Staff College will participate in the MCU Commencement Exercise. The annual MCU commencement exercise is normally held on the Wednesday of the first full week following the Memorial Day holiday weekend. Attendance and participation are mandatory for all resident students, unless otherwise directed. A mandatory rehearsal will normally be scheduled for the afternoon prior to the exercise.

(a) The Provost exercises oversight of Commencement requirements (OPR).

(b) The Vice President for Operations and Plans (VPOP) serves as coordinating authority (OCR).

- b. Early or Delayed Graduation

(1) Early Graduation. The President, MCU is the approval authority for early graduation.

a. School Directors will review and recommend disposition of early graduation requests, to specifically include whether the student has met, or can meet, requirements for receiving PME credit by the proposed detaching date. For students in joint PME programs, the Provost will coordinate with J-7 for approval to grant joint PME credit.

b. Students will not request follow-on orders from their service assignment branches that require a detach date prior to the scheduled date of graduation. Students in receipt of orders that require a detach date prior to the scheduled date of graduation in order to comply with a mandatory reporting date will immediately report this to their school Director via the faculty advisor or Deputy Director. Students who receive inquiries from external units about the possibility of early graduation will refer the requestor to the MCU Registrar and report this to their faculty advisor.

(2) Delayed Graduation. Should conditions require a break in the regular academic year that would prevent an educational program from meeting all requirements for graduation due to pandemic, government shutdown, or other external event outside the control of MCU, school directors should request an extension of the academic year and delayed graduation date to President, MCU, via the Provost and Vice President for Business Affairs as soon as the need is recognized. Every possible measure will be taken to complete all graduation requirements in time for a normal graduation.

4. Procedures

a. Commencement

(1) VPOP, as OCR, will schedule and conduct coordination meetings as needed, and publish a letter of instruction for commencement.

(2) The uniform is normally the Marine Corps Dress Blue White Bravos with ribbons and badges or service equivalent and dark business suit/attire for civilian students. No covers will be worn.

(3) Depending on venue, commencement will normally will involve all schools and consist of a faculty procession, entrance of the official party, commencement remarks by the invited guest of honor, conferring of master's degrees, and presentation of diplomas by school, or may be combination of plenary participation for commencement remarks and separate school diploma presentation ceremonies.

(4) For the purposes of faculty procession, faculty are defined as those faculty assigned to the educational programs participating in the exercise, MCU Academic Chairs and Scholars, and faculty from the Leadership Communications Skills Center.

(5) Families are welcomed and encouraged to attend; students will be provided invitations for use and guidance on identifying any distinguished guests (flag and general officers, foreign dignitaries, etc.) prior to commencement.

Related Policies and Forms:

Academic Year Calendar
Diplomas and Certificates
Records and Transcripts
Detachment Policy
Disenrollment Policy

Promulgated: 30 Sep 2021

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