

Marine Corps University Press Publishing Policies

Functional Lead: President, Marine Corps University

Division: Marine Corps University Press

Responsible Office: Director

Reference: (a) 10 U.S.C. § 7478

(b) Best Practices for Peer Review, Association of University Presses

(c) Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing, Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)

(d) Turnitin's Plagiarism Spectrum

1. Purpose. The purpose of this chapter is to define the publishing policies for the Marine Corps University Press and its imprints—Marine Corps History Division and Marine Corps University.

2. Background. Established in 2008 as an open access academic publisher, Marine Corps University Press (MCUP) recognizes the importance of an open dialogue between scholars, policy makers, analysts, and military leaders and of crossing civilian-military boundaries to advance knowledge and solve problems. To that end, MCUP focuses on scholarly books and academic journals that provide a forum for interdisciplinary discussion of national security and international relations issues and how they impact the Department of Defense, the Department of the Navy, and the U.S. Marine Corps directly and indirectly. While the press does not operate on a revenue basis, MCUP must be creative, entrepreneurial, focused, and far-sighted to anticipate the current and future needs of Marine Corps University, History Division, and the broader DOD community in a rapidly evolving industry and respond with vision and commitment. MCUP has been an introductory member in the Association of University Presses since 2016.

3. Policy

a. Intellectual Freedom. The freedom to publish is a fundamental element of the basic right to freedom of expression. Freedom is a prerequisite for a university press to thrive, and it represents an essential part of a democratic society based on a *knowledge* economy. Part of MCUP's mission is to protect and promote the author's freedom to publish their original intellectual property. We rely on these works to circulate information, ideas, beliefs, and opinions that further the conversation on advanced military studies generally and the Department of Defense and its military services. MCUP defends its right to publish and distribute these works with complete autonomy, even when it presents controversial viewpoints that are supported by evidence, provided that it respects all legal rights that may be attached to the work and the country of origin. Further, MCUP defends itself against internal or external influence whereby administrators, faculty, board members, or public officials may attempt to pressure the publication of certain works or topics to appease personal or professional aims that may go against the mission or ethical standards of the press and its staff, which are also upheld by the Association of University Presses, the professional scholarly publishing association of which MCUP is a member. The press director makes the final decision on all works to be published under any MCUP imprint without fear of retribution or reprisal for them or their staff.

b. Code of Conduct and Ethics. MCUP has a clear mission that informs everything we do: to create world-class academic resources and to make them freely available across the world. We share Marine Corp University’s uncompromising standards and belief in the transformative power of education to inspire progress and innovation in the professional military education environment. It is therefore critical that our partners—internal and external—exhibit high ethical standards and principles. Our core practices revolve around activities that ensure the rigor of the scholarly publication process, the reputation of the author, and the status of the press. Actions that do not fall within those constraints will be acted on by the director and their staff, including allegations of personal or professional misconduct, plagiarism, conflicts of interest, validity and reproducibility of data, ethical misconduct, misappropriation of intellectual property, etc.

c. Inclusion and Diversity. MCUP embraces diversity and inclusion as core values that support our goal of providing an intellectually stimulating publishing environment where multiple perspectives coexist to foster innovation and vigorous discussion. For our purposes, diversity describes a community with varied ideas, worldviews, and personal characteristics, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, age, socioeconomic status, national origin, geographical region, sexual orientation, disability, religion, and life experiences. As such, our hiring practices, content acquisitions, and the very language we use in our publications will ensure that all are welcome and can see themselves in our work. Part of our diversity initiatives include the use of nonbiased and inclusive language, enabling MCUP to communicate effectively to diverse, global audiences.

d. Plagiarism. MCUP bases its publishing standards and best practices on those established by its industry association, the Association of University Presses, and industry leaders, such as the Committee on Publishing Ethics (COPE). COPE defines plagiarism as “the unreferenced use of others’ published and unpublished ideas including research grant applications to submission under new authorship of a complex paper, sometimes in a different language. It may occur at any stage of planning, research, writing, or publication; it applies to print and electronic versions.” MCUP will use Turnitin to identify potential instances of plagiarism and will not consider any work for publication if, in the judgment of the Director, it includes any plagiarism.

e. Peer Review. Peer review is essential to MCUP advancing its mission and disseminating scholarship. Peer review is the process by which the acquisitions editor or director requests formal evaluations from respected subject matter experts about a particular work’s contribution to scholarship, teaching, and public debate prior to publication. These formal evaluations, or reader reports, are a crucial prepublication step to determine the merits of proposed projects. The peer review process provides feedback that is both stringent and fair, demonstrates how an author can strengthen a work in progress, and adds value to the work, informing the deliberations of press staff prior to publication. Regardless of the rank or affiliation of an author, their work will undergo the full double-blind peer review process as specified by the best practices for scholarly publishing.

4. Procedures

a. The director of MCUP establishes procedures for ensuring that publishing policies are met prior to publication.

b. Conduct and Ethics.

(1) Editors are responsible for transparency in their actions. They accomplish this task by ensuring that their work meets the needs of the press, the readers, and the authors. In addition, they act to ensure the veracity and quality of the content through every step of the editing process. Their work serves to enhance the authors' voices without compromising their freedom of expression. The editors' work also supports the integrity of the academic record and ensures that neither internal nor external bias can cloud or compromise the press's standards. Finally, they will be open to corrections, clarifications, retractions, and apologies should the need arise (see below).

(2) Should an editor suspect misconduct (see above), in either a published or unpublished author's work, they have a duty to report and act on that information. All such instances will be documented by the editor and reported to the director for further action, including possible administrative action, contacting the parent institution, etc.

(a) Peer review manipulation:

- i. Suspend peer review process.
- ii. Verify peer reviewer at organization.
- iii. Check their publication/employment record.
- iv. Contact the peer reviewer and ask about current project review.
- v. If everything appears accurate, thank the peer reviewer and continue process.
- vi. If still suspicious, contact the person who suggested the peer reviewer and ask for more information.
- vii. Discuss situation with author and plan to invite additional reviews.

(b) If something suspicious is reported post-publication, follow the above steps. Depending on results, let publication run as-is or consider publishing corrections, retractions, or notes of concern.

- i. Communicate with author regarding the complaint.

ii. If response is unsatisfactory, contact relevant employers, colleagues, or some appropriate body (perhaps a regulatory body or governing body) to investigate.

iii. Depending on response from regulatory body or third parties, contact the author to alert them of either continuation or suspension of their project.

(c) Plagiarism. If suspicion of plagiarism arises later in the publishing process, such as during the peer review process or after publication:

i. Thank the person and indicate that an investigation will be completed.

ii. Review similarity report in Turnitin to evaluate the degree of copying.

iii. If clear plagiarism, contact the author in writing about the complaint and the documentary evidence of plagiarism.

a. Author responds that it was an honest error. Respond in writing that the submission must be rejected and is given one warning. The press has the discretion to preclude authors from future publishing opportunities if subsequent issues occur.

b. Author fails to respond. Contact the author's institution expressing concerns. If necessary, report to governing body. Pull project from consideration.

c. Complaints and Debate. Sound criticism of a published work should be published unless the press has convincing reasons why it cannot be. Authors of the article or book in question should have the opportunity to respond to each complaint. If a complaint is lodged, the following steps will be taken:

(1) Editor evaluates whether the claims include specific and detailed evidence to support their assertions. Editor reaches out to a subject matter expert for a blind review if necessary.

(a) If claims are not specific, editor requests more information, as they cannot act without more details supported by evidence. If the complainant continues to be vague in their response, the editor explains that they cannot pursue the matter any further.

(b) Once additional detail is provided, editor continues with investigation.

(2) If the editor's investigation of the matter finds the complaint to be true, the editor takes action to mitigate the negative impact to the author, the readers, and the press by posting a correction or retraction on all platforms, possibly reprinting the title in question, and informing the original complainant of findings.

(3) If the complainant continues to argue against the original work, the editor suggests that they submit a rebuttal as an article or monograph that must be peer reviewed and accepted for publication.

(4) If a complaint is made via social media or some other public forum, editor follows the steps above, ensuring that they respond via the same media within 24 hours of the post if possible. Editors should communicate the nature of the complaint to the author and allow them to provide a response. Depending on the nature of the complaint and response, editors should consider posting an explanation, correction, or retraction via the same outlet, including links to lengthier resolution on the publication site if necessary.

Related Policies:

Academic Integrity

Academic Freedom and Non-attribution

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