

Graduation and Detachment

Functional Lead: VPAA

Division: Academic Support Division (ASD)

Responsible Office: Registrar

Reference: (a) DoD SAAMS

1. Purpose. The purpose of this chapter is to define roles and responsibilities regarding graduation ceremonies and guidance regarding early detachment from the assigned academic program.

2. Background. As MCU operates on a variety of calendars and administers academic programs of varying length, graduation events and student detachment 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 Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) exercises oversight of Commencement requirements (OPR).

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

b. Detachment

(1) General considerations

(a) MCU's goal is that, to the extent possible, all academic and administrative requirements are accomplished prior to the applicable graduation ceremony/commencement exercise so that students are detached upon graduation from MCU and execute their follow-on orders or return to their parent command directly. Exceptions to policy must be cleared in advance as directed below. Any student remaining after graduation reports to student services for accountability.

(b) International Military Students (IMS) will detach per the dates established in their Invitational Travel Orders (ITOs). MCU does not have authority to amend ITOs. That authority lies with the Security Cooperation Office in the IMS native country. Requests for extension of detaching dates after graduation will not normally be endorsed favorably. Directors will ensure that all IMS detaching requirements are met prior to IMS departure. For all educational programs aboard the MCU main campus, detachment of IMS will be coordinated via the Student Services Office Regional IMS Officer.

(c) Civilian interagency students' assignment to MCU terminates immediately after program graduation. Civilian students who received access tokens from MCU will return the token to the Student Services office prior to graduation. Requests for civilian interagency students to extend their assignment to MCU beyond graduation will be referred to VPAA for determination, and will not be approved without the express consent of the parent agency.

(2) Enlisted PME. Except as prescribed for IMS, the Director, CEME is delegated authority to administer student detachment from all CEME educational programs, to include early detachment.

(3) Officer PME

(a) Distance PME (DEP) programs. Generally, students enrolled in DEPs are not attached or detached to MCU in a permanent or temporary duty status. The exception is students enrolled in the Blended Seminar Programs (BSP) during applicable resident periods. Except as prescribed for IMS at Quantico, the Director, CDET is delegated authority to administer student detachment from the BSPs.

(b) Resident Officer PME programs. Except as prescribed for IMS, the Directors or resident officer PME programs are delegated authority to administer student detachment from their programs subject to the following limitations:

i. Early Graduation and Detaching Requirements. The President, MCU is the approval authority for early graduation.

ii. 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, VPAA will coordinate with J-7 for approval to grant joint PME credit.

iii. 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.

iv. Late detaching. U.S. military students will not request orders that require a detach date after 1 July without permission from the Vice President for Business Affairs. Students who remain attached to MCU after graduation are subject to assignment as needed to support MCU mission requirements.

4. Procedures

a. Commencement Exercise

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

(2) The uniform is normally the Marine Corps Service "A" with ribbons and badges or service equivalent and dark business suit/attire for civilian students.

(3) Depending on venue, the exercise 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 welcome 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 the exercise.

b. Early or Late Detachment

(1) Early detachment. Students in receipt of orders who desire a detachment date

prior to scheduled graduation for personal and/or family reasons may submit a written request, via the school Director and Vice President for Academic Affairs, to the President, MCU. The request will include, at a minimum:

- (a) Requested detach date.
- (b) Explanation why the early detach date is necessary.
- (c) Required reporting date to follow on unit.

(d) Acknowledgment that approval of an earlier detaching date may result in failure to meet PME completion requirements or require additional and/or alternate coursework prior to detaching in order to satisfy PME completion requirements.

(2) Late detachment. Students who desire a detachment date after 1 July may submit a written request to the Vice President for Business Affairs via the program Director and Director of Administrative Services. The request will indicate the reason for the request and acknowledge the students' understanding that they are eligible to be assigned duties in support of MCU mission accomplishment until detaching.

Related Policies and Forms:

Academic Year Calendar
Diplomas and Certificates
Records and Transcripts

Promulgated: 30 Sep 2021

Last Reviewed: 30 Sep 2021

Last Update to Procedures: 30 Sep 2021