

Curriculum Review Process

Functional Lead: VPAA

Division: ASD

Responsible Office: Education Officer

Reference: (a) MCO 1553.4B Professional Military Education

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

(c) SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation

1. Purpose. To provide guidance on the University's curricular content and review processes as they relate to policies and procedures contained in MCO 1553.4 (Professional Military Education) and policies of the Process for Accreditation of Joint Education (PAJE) and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). This policy also provides direction for maintaining the relevance of the Marine Corps PME Continuum as a standard representation of the PME requirements and curricula for the educational programs of officer and enlisted Marines.

2. Background. As an accredited institution of higher learning, faculty have primary responsibility for the development of course curricula. However, as a PME institution, it is incumbent upon MCU to ensure that its programs support the educational requirements of the Marine Corps. Clear delineation of roles and responsibilities for the development of curriculum, student learning outcomes, program outcomes, and review thereof is essential to ensuring curricula remains accurate, current, and relevant.

3. Policy

a. Definitions

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

(2) Program Outcome. A broad statement of a complex and multifaceted outcome intended for graduates to learn as a result of completing an educational program.

(3) Student Learning Outcome. A concise statement that describes what students are expected to learn as a result of completing a program or course of instruction. The statement begins with an action verb that indicates the desired level of learning (in accordance with accepted educational taxonomies) and corresponding type of assessment. The action verb is followed by an explanation of the specific subject matter to be learned. The assessment measure(s) associated with each Student Learning Outcome form the basis for student feedback and grading. Directors will publish policy that more specifically addresses student assessment, feedback, and grading within their respective educational program.

(4) Educational Objective. A concise statement that describes what students are expected to learn as a result of an individual class or lesson within an educational program or course.

Educational objectives are the subordinate elements that must collectively be learned to accomplish the broader expectations of a Student Learning Outcome. The statement begins with an action verb that indicates the desired level of learning (in accordance with accepted educational taxonomies) and corresponding type of assessment. The action verb is followed by an explanation of the specific subject matter to be learned.

(5) Educational Program. A combination of courses for the successful mastery of which a student is awarded complete credit and receives a completion diploma or certificate. Officer and Enlisted PME programs may be described as “schools” or “colleges” (e.g., Expeditionary Warfare School, Marine Corps War College). The curricula of MCU Educational Programs are designed to achieve approved Program Outcomes.

(6) Lesson. An individual class, assignment, or other student activity, the aggregation of which comprise the curricula for a course. Typically, each lesson is focused on the achievement of a specific Educational Objective or Objectives.

(7) 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 (e.g., MCWAR's "War, Strategy, and Policy" course).

b. The Curriculum Review Process consists of four major components: 1) Officer and Enlisted PME Continua development; 2) Course Content Review Board (Program Level); 3) Annual Assessment of Institutional Academic Outcomes; and 4) Curriculum Review Board (University Level). For quality assurance, the President, MCU may also prefer to conduct other types of curriculum review, such as a zero-based curriculum review, for all PME programs, which could alter the following process and procedures.

(1) PME Continua development is addressed in the Continuum of Learning policy

(2) Course Content Review Boards (CCRBs) are under the purview of educational program directors. At a minimum, 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.

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

(4) Curriculum Review Boards (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 Student Learning Outcomes and Program Outcomes 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 PAJE and 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.

(b) Membership:

- i. President, MCU, Chair.
- ii. Executive Vice President/Chief of Staff
- iii. Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs
- iv. Directors and Deans, MCWAR, SAW, CSC, CDET, EWS, CEME, CRSS
- v. Chair, Faculty Council
- vi. Director, Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning (IRAP)
- vii. Director, Academic Support Division (ASD)

(c) Briefs. Educational program directors or their designees will brief the following regarding their respective programs in the format prescribed:

- i. Mission Statement: highlighting any proposed changes.
- ii. Program Outcomes: highlighting any proposed changes.
- iii. Student Learning Outcomes, to include their mapping to the appropriate PME Continuum Learning Areas: highlighting any proposed changes.
- iv. Assessment Overview: general information regarding the type and frequency of measures used to assess program outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes.
- v. Curriculum Design/Overview: a graphic description of the overall design and flow of the curriculum.
- v. Course Description: an overview of each of the courses that comprise the curriculum.
- vi. Credit Hours: the calculated credit hours for each course and total for the program.

vii. Major Changes to the Curriculum: a summary of the proposed changes to the curriculum for approval by the President, MCU. By definition, the elimination of an existing or addition of a new course constitutes a major change, as does the increase or decrease of 2 or more credit hours for an existing course.

viii. Treatment of identified President's Special Areas of Emphasis.

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

i. Once approved, Directors may not modify mission statements, program outcomes, or student learning outcomes without a subsequent CRB. Directors may request that the President, MCU conduct an "off-cycle" CRB if deemed necessary to address needed changes prior to regularly scheduled review.

ii. Directors may modify the other CRB content areas subject to the following: significant changes to the assessment plan will include review and advice from the Director, IRAP; changes to Course names, descriptions, and credit hours will be coordinated in advance with the Director, Educational Technology and the MCU Registrar in order to ensure they are accurately reflected in educational software and student records.

4. Procedures

a. CRBs occur in 2 sessions. The first session, in April each AY, will review program mission, program outcomes, student learning outcomes, and continuum mapping. The second session, in May of each AY, will review the remaining items indicated by the policy above.

b. VPAA will approve and provide the briefing templates for each session.

c. Educational program directors will ensure that their briefing materials are provided to the Director, ASD at least five working days prior to the convening date of the CRB.

d. Director, ASD will develop the record of proceedings; VPAA will approve them.

Related Policies and Forms:

Continuum of Learning

Institutional Effectiveness

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Last Update to Procedures: 21 Sep 2020