Student Complaint Policy

Functional Lead: VPAA
Division: ASD
Responsible Office: Registrar

Reference: (a) Principle 12.4 SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation
(b) Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation
(c) MCO 1700.23G Request Mast Procedures
(d) MCO 5354.1E Marine Corps Prohibited Activities and Conduct Prevention and Response Policy
(e) MCO 1752.5C Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program

1. Purpose. This policy provides a fair and equitable process for resolving student complaints.

2. Background. Per references (a) and (b), Marine Corps University (MCU) must publish procedures for receiving and maintaining written student complaints. This formal student complaint process augments the right of students to request mast (using the procedures outlined in reference (c)) to the President, MCU.

3. Policy

a. Complaints. A complaint is defined as an actual or supposed circumstance that adversely affects the grades, status, or rights of a student. Complaints are broadly defined as informal and formal.

(1) Informal. Before making written complaints, students are encouraged to seek resolution by discussing them informally with the faculty advisor, instructor, or course director who is most associated with the matter. MCU personnel are expected to deal with the matter in an open and professional manner and take reasonable and prompt action to try to resolve it informally. A student who is uncertain about how to seek informal resolution of a concern is encouraged to seek advice from the Director of Student Services or equivalent at his or her college or school.

(2) Formal. If an issue cannot be resolved informally, a student may make a formal complaint. Formal complaints must be submitted in writing on the prescribed form (see form listed below). If the complaint involves a member of the student's chain of command (e.g. the faculty advisor or the Dean), then the student may submit the complaint form directly to the Chief of Staff, MCU.

b. Deans and Directors will ensure fair treatment and a timely resolution of complaints.

c. Complaints and their resolution will be reported to the MCU registrar, who will maintain a log book and copies of the complaints (for a period of 10 years).

d. Exceptions. This policy does not apply to the following:

(1) Student Code of Conduct issues or matters pertaining to legal proceedings occurring under the guidelines of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

(2) Complaints of discrimination based on race, national origin, sex (including sexual harassment), disability, or age. These types of complaints are covered under the Marine Corps' Equal Opportunity Policy in reference (d).

(3) Complaints involving sexual assault should not be reported via the student complaint process, but will follow the procedures outlined in reference (e).

e. Request Mast and Article 138 (Military). Processes and rights described in this policy do not replace or supersede the Request Mast Policy, Uniform Code of Military Justice Article 138 (Grievance against a Commanding Officer), or any procedures provided for action under the UCMJ. This complaint policy does not replace any disciplinary or administrative actions provided for in other DOD directives, or instructions published at the Training and Education Command (TECOM). This policy addresses complaint-handling provisions that meet federal and accreditation requirements. Reference (c) delineates the procedures that will be used by Marines and Sailors to request mast, should they desire to do so. International military students and U.S. sister service students assigned to Marine Corps University will be afforded the same procedures to directly seek assistance from, or communicate grievances to, their commanding officers as established in the reference (c).

4. Procedures

a. The student will complete the Student Complaint/Grievance Application found below, which is also available on the MCU website. The written complaint must be submitted within one month of the occurrence of the action or matter in question. On a case-by-case basis, formal complaints may be accepted beyond the one-month timeframe.

b. The completed Student Complaint/Grievance Application will be submitted to the deputy director or, if the complaint involves a student's chain of command, the MCU Chief of Staff. The deputy director (or, Chief of Staff, as appropriate) must meet with the student within three working days of receipt of the written complaint. At this point, the educational program director will inform the MCU Registrar that a formal complaint has been registered.

c. The educational program director will maintain a file of all documentation in relation to the consideration of the complaint and must assure that any staff member named in the complaint receives a copy as soon as possible. These records will be maintained in the registrar's office for a period of ten years. Redacted records will be available for review for any accreditation or regulatory purposes.

d. The Registrar will record the complaint in the MCU Student Complaint Log.

e. If the student is dissatisfied with the resolution proposed by the deputy director, the formal complaint is forwarded to the educational program director within five working days of the

conclusion of Step I (Step II in the student complaint form). The educational program director must meet with the student within three working days of receipt of the written complaint. If the issue involves the awarding of a grade, the decision of the educational program director will be final.

f. If the student is dissatisfied with the resolution proposed by the educational program director, the formal complaint is forwarded to the Chief of Staff, MCU (Step III in student complaint form). This action may be taken if the student disagrees with the decision of the educational program director or alleges serious abuse of discretionary authority. If at all possible, the Chief of Staff will address the complaint within ten working days.

g. The Registrar will record the resolution in the MCU Student Complaint Log.

Related Policies and Forms:
Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
Faculty Grievance Policy
Student Complaint/Grievance Form
Student Rights and Responsibilities
President, MCU Combined Policy Statement

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