



**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
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WASHINGTON DC 20350-3000

IN REPLY REFER TO  
NAVMC 1700.4  
M&RA (MF)  
01 Oct 2023

NAVMC 1700.4

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps  
To: Marine and Family Programs Division Staff and  
Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) Directors  
  
Subj: RESEARCH, EVALUATION, AND CERTIFICATION FOR MARINE CORPS  
COMMUNITY SERVICES (MCCS) MARINE AND FAMILY PROGRAMS  
AND SEMPER FIT AND RECREATION  
  
Ref: See enclosure (1)  
  
Encl: (1) References  
(2) Research, Evaluation, and Certification

1. Purpose. The overall goal of this NAVMC is to describe the research, evaluation, and certification processes developed in accordance with references (b), (d), and (q). The processes are applicable to Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) Marine and Family Programs and Semper Fit and Recreation Programs at both the Headquarters Marine and Family Programs Division (HQ MF) and installation levels.

2. Background

a. The processes increase efficiency and effectiveness of programs, inform resource allocation, and ensure high quality service delivery. Outcomes enable leaders to make data-based decisions and evaluate the impact of new and/or existing programs and services. Centralized coordination, review, and approval in accordance with references (a) through (r) is required to ensure overarching consistency and compliance with higher-level policy.

b. Research and Program Evaluation processes are described in Chapter 1 of enclosure (2) to this NAVMC. Marine Corps Family Programs Certification processes are described in Chapter 2 of enclosure (2) to this NAVMC.

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3. Information. HQ MF Program Assessment Branch maintains and updates information in this NAVMC as required.

4. Certification. This NAVMC is effective the date signed.

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References

- (a) Title X Chapter 88, Section 1782
- (b) DoD Instruction 1015.10 CH-1, "Military Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) Programs," May 6, 2011
- (c) DoD Instruction 1015.15 CH-1, "Establishment, Management, and Control of Nonappropriated Fund Instrumentalities and Financial Management of Supporting Resources," March 20, 2008
- (d) DoD Instruction 1342.22, "Military Family Readiness," August 5, 2021
- (e) SECNAV Instruction 1754.1B
- (f) MCO P1700.27B W/CH-1
- (g) CJCSI 3405.01
- (h) DoD Instruction 1100.13 CH-1, "DoD Surveys," March 31, 2017
- (i) DoD Instruction 8910.01, "DoD Implementation of the Paperwork Reduction Act," December 5, 2022
- (j) DoD Instruction 3216.02 CH-1, "Protection of Human Subjects and Adherence to Ethical Standards in DoD-Conducted and Supported Research," June 29, 2022
- (k) DoD Instruction 5400.11 CH-1, "DoD Privacy and Civil Liberties Programs," December 8, 2020
- (l) DoD Instruction 5400.16 CH-1, "DoD Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) Guidance," August 11, 2017
- (m) DoDM 8910.01 Vol 2 CH-3, "DoD Information Collections Manual: Procedures for DoD Public Information Collections," February 18, 2022
- (n) SECNAVIST 3900.39E CH-1
- (o) MCO 3900.18
- (p) MCO 5300.18
- (q) DoD Instruction 1010.10 CH-3, "Health Promotion and Disease Prevention," May 16, 2022
- (r) DoD Instruction 6400.09, "DoD Policy on Integrated Primary Prevention of Self-Directed Harm and Prohibited Abuse or Harm," September 11, 2020

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**Research, Evaluation, and Certification****Chapter 1****Research and Program Evaluation Process**

Ensuring programs are positioned to meet the needs of Marines and their families is of the highest importance. Research and program evaluations provide insight into important aspects of the Marine Corps lifestyle, address the needs associated with operational readiness, and inform evidence-based decisions to improve programs in accordance with reference (d).

Research and program evaluation is a collaborative process managed by HQ MF, National Research Section. The process begins with a Call for Studies to submit research studies or program evaluations for review and approval. Once approval is granted, the research study or program evaluation is conducted. Results from the research study or program evaluation are applied to the program to improve its contribution to resilience, readiness, and quality of life for Marines and their families.

1. Call for Studies. A structured process is in place to conduct program research studies and program evaluations, including use of data collection tools in accordance with references (a) through (r).

a. A formal Call for Studies is issued four times per calendar year to all program and prevention personnel proposing or submitting a research study, performing a program evaluation, and/or collecting any data pertaining to HQ MF and installation programs.

(1) The call to submit studies includes all project, survey, program evaluation, task, test, pilot study, experiment, investigation, study, clinical study, clinical investigation, clinical trial, evaluation, developmental effort, or similar undertaking.

(2) The Call for Studies is tasked quarterly via the formal tasking process and is delegated to HQ MF, MCICOM, Regional and Installation MCCS Directors. All studies are coordinated with program entities including embedded personnel.

(3) All studies must be reviewed and approved per references (a) through (r).

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b. Data Collection for Research and Program Evaluation Review and Approval

(1) Study and Data Collection Review. Proposed studies, program evaluations, and data collection efforts (i.e., surveys, focus groups, interviews, subject observations, experiments, etc.), must be submitted by the person conducting the study referred to as the Primary Investigator (PI). The PI also completes the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) Applicability Review Form and submits to HQ MF National Research Section for review and approval in response to formal delegation of the Call for Studies in accordance with references (a) through (r).

(a) Research studies are reviewed by HQ MF Research Subject Matter Experts (SME) to ensure scientific integrity in accordance with research policy requirements outlined in references (h) through (p).

1. HQ MF Research SMEs coordinate with the program managers to ensure the study falls within the scope of the program, aligns with other research projects, and does not duplicate other research efforts to reduce potential survey fatigue.

2. All HQ MF proposed research studies and program evaluations are reviewed and approved by the Marine and Family Programs Division Director.

(b) All research and program evaluations are submitted to the Deputy Commandant of Manpower and Reserve Affairs (DC M&RA), Survey Control Office (SCO), HRPP Official in accordance with references (h) through (p). When HRPP determines the study is human subjects research, the study will be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board in accordance with reference (j).

(c) All data collection instruments including surveys must be approved by the SCO and assigned a Survey Control Number in accordance with references (h) through (p) before they can be administered by the PI.

1. Customized Data Collection Instruments. Customized data collection instruments may include surveys, focus groups, interviews, subject observations, experiments, etc. The process for the development and approval of customized

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data collection instrument is established and implemented in accordance with references (h) through (p).

2. Standardized Surveys. A repository of standardized surveys and other HRPP approved data collection instruments assigned a Survey Control Number are maintained by some HQ MF Programs. Some programs also have a bank of survey questions endorsed for use by Installations and embedded staff.

a. Standardized survey instruments, survey item bank questions, and data collection protocols are available on request from the HQ MF program manager. Standardized survey instruments, survey item bank questions, and data collection protocols are updated and approved in accordance with reference (p).

b. Use of a pre-approved standardized data collection instruments does not negate the need to submit both the instrument and an HRPP Applicability Review Form to HRPP and the SCO for approval prior to conducting a research study or program evaluation in accordance with references (h) through (p) during an Official Call for Studies period.

(1) If an already approved data collection instrument is being used within the exact same context and circumstances authorized by HRPP and the SCO in the original application, it is not necessary to re-submit the survey for HRPP and SCO re-approval. The original Survey Control Number may be used. Note: the protocol must be followed exactly as written in the approved HRPP Applicability Review request with no changes made to the already approved data collection instrument in accordance with references (h) through (p).

(2) If any changes are made to the original instrument, or any new items are added or removed, the changes constitute a new instrument or survey, and it must be submitted, along with an HRPP Applicability Review Form, during one of the quarterly Call for Study submission periods to obtain HRPP approval and assignment of a Survey Control Number in accordance with references (h) through (p). Submissions must be made to HQ MF National Research Section.

(3) If questions from a survey bank are compiled into an instrument that does not already exist, or if questions from a survey bank are added to an already HRPP and SCO approved existing survey, it is a new instrument, and must

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be submitted, along with an HRPP Applicability Review Form, during one of the official Call for Study periods to obtain HRPP approval and assignment of a Survey Control Number in accordance with references (h) through (p). Submissions must be made to HQ MF National Research Section in accordance with reference (p).

(d) Collection of data spanning more than one Command must receive the approval of DC M&RA per references (h) through (p).

(e) HQ MF informs Program Managers and PIs of study status. Approval to conduct a research study, perform a program evaluation, or collect data is granted after HRPP approval and assignment of Survey Control Number from SCO is obtained.

1. HQ MF National Research Section provides oversight of HQ MF and installation program research and evaluation activities, including data collection to: ensure compliance with policy requirements and procedures outlined in Chapter 1 of this NAVMC and required by references (a) through (r); ensure consistency with identified study objectives; track study progress; and monitor outcomes. Outputs are catalogued and made available to all relevant stakeholders.

2. Oversight activities may include activities such as phased progress reviews and reviews of iterative findings.

2. Program Evaluation. Programs are identified and approved for evaluation via the Call for Studies process. Evaluations produce findings and recommendations to improve program performance and inform programmatic decisions in accordance with reference (d).

a. A program evaluation includes planning, data collection, analysis, findings, and recommendations presented in a final report. The evaluation may include a Working Group comprised of HQ MF and installation subject matter experts.

b. The Program Evaluation Final Report presents findings about the program and offers recommendations in areas such as policy, finances, staffing, utilization, customer feedback, and short/medium/long-term measures of effectiveness.

c. The evaluation findings and recommendations are shared with HQ MF leadership and local MCCS commands.



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## Chapter 2

### Marine Corps Family Programs Certification

MCCS provides standardized services across all installations to ensure high quality and consistent program requirements are delivered to Marines and families. Per reference (d), an internal certification process ensures the installations' family programs adhere to required service standards.

The certification process assesses the quality, effectiveness, utilization, durability, accessibility, and customer satisfaction of each program. Customer satisfaction and all other surveys are administered in accordance with Chapter 1 of this NAVMC. Through the certification process, the installations' program staff receive support, guidance, and training from HQ MF program managers (PM) and SMEs.

#### 1. Background

a. HQ MF Quality Management and Compliance (QM&C) established the Marine Corps Family Programs (MCFP) Certification process in 2016 to meet the Department of Defense requirement per reference (d) that family readiness services shall be accredited or certified using standards developed by a national accrediting body not less than once every four years.

b. MCFP Certification replaced the Council on Accreditation (COA) accreditation process that occurred at all installations from 2010 to 2015.

#### 2. Marine Corps Family Programs (MCFP) Certification Standards.

The internal certification standards provide guidance to the installation program staff on day-to-day service delivery and administration management expectations. The standards are rooted in both DoD and Marine Corps policy.

3. Headquarters Marine and Family Programs Division (HQ MF) Reviewers. PMs and program SMEs are augmented to HQ MF QM&C to review the installation's evidence and determine compliance of standards.

4. Marine Corps Family Programs (MCFP) Certification Cycle. MCFP Certification operates on a four-year cycle as depicted in Figure 1. Certification cycles vary for each installation depending on when COA accreditation expired and when the MCFP Certification process began.

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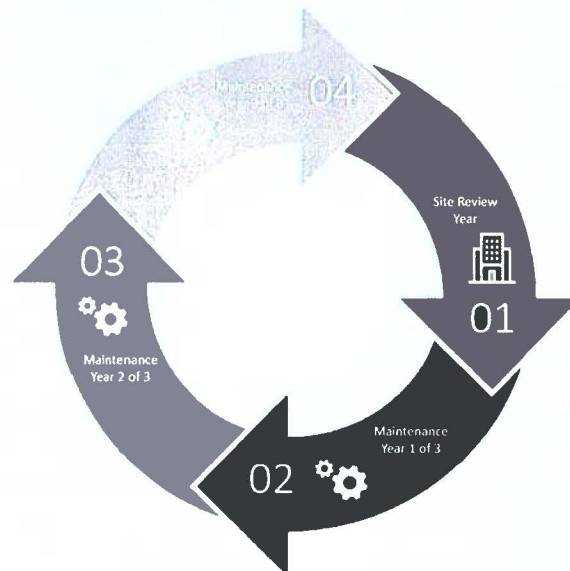


Figure 1 - Marine Corps Family Program Certification Cycle

a. Site-Review Year. The site-review year is always the first year of the cycle.

(1) Date Coordination. HQ MF QM&C coordinates site-review dates with installation Marine and Family Programs (M&FP) Directors during the fiscal year preceding the certification expiration date.

(2) Notification. The installations undergoing a site-review receive a formal notification via the Enterprise Tracking Management Software System (ETMS2) at the beginning of the fiscal year of the scheduled site-review. The notification includes the dates of the in-person portion of the site-review, HQ MF QM&C contact information, and the link to the MCFP Certification SharePoint site.

(3) Preparation. The installation receives guidance and assistance from HQ MF QM&C through a series of meetings and trainings beginning four to five months prior to the in-person review. Details of the internal certification process and the program resource guides are available on the MCFP Certification SharePoint, [https://usmc.sharepoint-mil.us/sites/dcmra\\_family\\_mfn/Pages/MFCertification.aspx](https://usmc.sharepoint-mil.us/sites/dcmra_family_mfn/Pages/MFCertification.aspx).

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(a) The installation provides a point of contact (POC) for HQ MF QM&C to communicate internal certification information and coordinate site-review logistics.

(b) The installation POC and program representatives are offered three to four check-in meetings with HQ MF QM&C prior to the site-review. A tentative calendar of due dates and meeting dates is provided at the initial kick off meeting.

(c) Installation program personnel utilize the program resource guides for certification. The program resource guides, including all current standards and evidence expectations, are located on the MCFP Certification SharePoint site.

(d) Evidence of compliance for all elements of each standard are demonstrated.

(e) All evidence is submitted electronically by the installation via the Online Certification Tracking System (OCTS). HQ MF QM&C provides the OCTS training to the installation personnel prior to the evidence upload period.

(4) Virtual Review. The virtual review starts the day immediately after the installations' evidence upload deadline and concludes the day before the on-site review begins.

(a) Installation program personnel submit additional information and/or evidence of compliance as requested by the HQ MF SMEs.

(b) Installations ensure client and customer records in case management systems are compliant with standards as these records are also reviewed.

(c) During the virtual review period, installation program personnel work with HQ MF SMEs to coordinate interviews and observation times. Interviews may be held telephonically or virtually prior to the on-site review.

(5) On-Site Review. The on-site review allows the HQ MF review team an opportunity to verify evidence, conduct interviews, and observe service delivery of the programs.

(a) The installation M&FP Director, the HQ MF certification POC, and program representatives receive an in-brief at the beginning of the on-site review.

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(b) All program personnel may be interviewed by a HQ MF SME. Both group interviews and individual interviews may be conducted.

(c) Delivery of services, program trainings, and customer interactions are observed to further assist HQ MF SMEs determine standard compliance.

(d) Teach and train opportunities are offered by HQ MF SMEs to the installation program staff.

(e) The installation M&FP Director, the HQ MF certification POC, and program representatives receive an informal out-brief from HQ MF QM&C on the final day of the on-site review.

(6) Executive Out-Brief. The Installation Commander, the MCCS Director, and the M&FP Director receive an executive out-brief from HQ MF QM&C via Microsoft Teams the week following the on-site review. HQ MF leadership also attend this brief.

(7) Reports and Corrective Actions

(a) The installation receives a detailed summary certification report via ETMS2 within three weeks of the site-review.

(b) Installation programs submit evidence of corrective action implementation via the OCTS within 90 business days from the date of the certification report. Installation Commanders are notified if the corrective action period extends beyond 90 business days.

(c) Installations taking longer than 120 business days to implement corrective actions do not achieve certification in the current cycle and remain uncertified until the next site-review.

(d) The installations receive the final certification report, certification achievement letter from the Marine and Family Programs Division Director, and a Memo of Compliance from the Department of Defense Office of Military Community and Family Policy after all program standards are compliant.

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b. Maintenance Years. Years two through four are the maintenance years for the installations' certifications. During this period, installations confirm continued compliance with all standards.

(1) Notifications. Installations in maintenance years receive a formal notification via ETMS2 at the beginning of the fiscal year. The notification includes the due date of the Annual Certification Sustainment Statement (ACSS) and a list of any additional evidence required.

(2) Annual Certification Sustainment Statements (ACSS). Installation programs conduct self-assessments on programs to determine the status of compliance with required standards. Each program submits a completed ACSS. The installation leadership reviews the completed program ACSSs prior to submission to HQ MF QM&C.

(3) Supporting Evidence. In addition to the completed ACSSs, installation programs submit the documents identified in the Supporting Evidence Submission List on the MCFP Certification SharePoint site.

(4) Additional Evidence. Installations in the first maintenance year are required to submit evidence of continued compliance for standards found non-compliant during the most recent site-review.

(5) Non-Certified Installations. Installations that did not achieve certification during site-review submit ACSSs, supporting evidence, and additional evidence annually until the next site-review.

