

Preparing for the Accreditation Visit  
Institutional Self-Study  
Monroe Community College



**Self-Study for the  
Middle States Commission on Higher Education**

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# Introduction

## **Q1. What is the Middle States Commission on Higher Education?**

According to the Middle States website, “The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) is a global institutional accreditor recognized by the United States Secretary of Education since 1952. As an accreditor and member of the regulatory triad, MSCHE assures students and the public of the educational quality for its over 500 institutions of higher education. The Commission’s accreditation process ensures institutional accountability, self-appraisal, improvement, and innovation through peer review and the rigorous application of standards within the context of institutional mission.”

## **Q2. Why is accreditation important?**

“The United States Department of Education (USDE) recognizes accrediting agencies deemed authorities on the quality of higher education. Under the Higher Education Act’s (HEA’s) federal student aid programs, accrediting agencies recognized by USDE must meet the Department’s regulatory criteria. MSCHE is a Title IV gatekeeper and is a link to federal programs, and institutions access Title IV through MSCHE accreditation.”

## **Q3. The Middle States Evaluation team, who are they?**

The Middle State evaluation team is made up of 6-7 individuals who have expertise with specific areas in the education field. Evaluators are commonly, Presidents of a college, Provost’s, Vice Presidents of any field, Institutional Research and Assessment professionals, or faculty. Evaluators will work at an institution that is accredited by Middle States and go through intense training before being placed on an on-site team.

## **Q4. What question(s) will they be asking?**

As the Middle State review team reads the self-study document, they will be trying to find evidence that the institution is meeting the accreditation requirements outlined in the, “Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation.” These standards outline what is expected of all college that have or are seeking accreditation through Middle States. If a reviewer does not find evidence in the self-study, they may ask about the process in question. For example, if a reviewer does not see clear evidence of student learning assessment, they may ask how the college measures student learning in the classroom and how these results are used. The process is the same for all standards, and the questions will focus on gaining a better understanding of a process or establishing a process that was not in the self-study.

## **Q5. Who will the MSCHE committee meet with?**

Those meeting with MSCHE have been contacted and schedules have been setup. There will be open forums for all employees and students to attend.

## **Q6. Where can I review the self-study?**

The most recent version of the [self-study](https://www.monroecc.edu/middle-states-reaccreditation/) is located on the [MCC website for Middle States Reaccreditation](https://www.monroecc.edu/middle-states-reaccreditation/) (<https://www.monroecc.edu/middle-states-reaccreditation/>).

**Q7. I keep hearing about continuous improvement. What does this mean?**

Continuous improvement is a process where assessment is continuous.

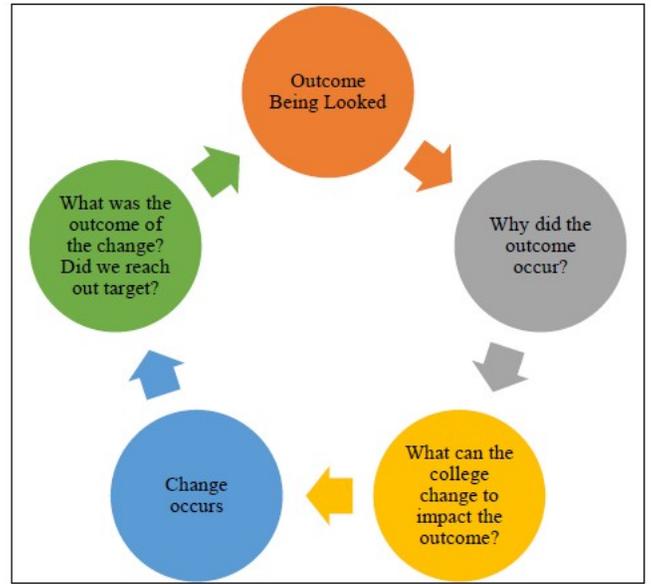
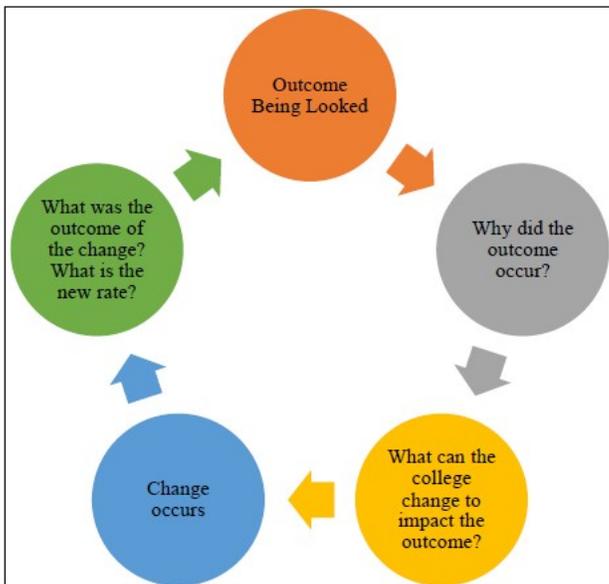
1. First, an outcome such as graduation rate is selected.
2. Second, why is the graduation rate the rate it is?
3. Third, what process can be changed in order to impact the graduation rate? Example: Increase graduation rates.
4. Fourth, the college implements a change.
5. Fifth, what impact did the change have on the graduation rate?
6. Sixth, the process starts over and the college continuously tries to improve graduation rates.

The difference between continuous improvement and a traditional improvement plan, is that in the continuous improvement plan, the college is always examining and trying to reach a higher goal, an improvement plan is trying to hit a set goal.

*Continuous Improvement Plan*

vs

*Traditional Improvement Plan*



# MSCHE Executive Summary

Since the last self-study, MCC has advanced student success, equity, and institutional effectiveness through targeted reforms. Participation in the Unlocking Opportunities Initiative and full implementation of Guided Pathways have improved credential access and gateway course outcomes. Structural reorganizations and the integration of Student and Academic Services have streamlined operations and enhanced support. The development of an Academic Master Plan, Strategic Enrollment Plan, and other frameworks aligned with *Vision2027* ensure cohesive direction, resource optimization, and equitable outcomes. These efforts reflect MCC's commitment to data-informed planning and continuous improvement.

## **Standard I**

MCC meets Standard I through a mission-driven, inclusive planning process anchored in *Vision2027*. The Strategic Plan articulates core values and measurable goals across student success, workforce readiness, and institutional effectiveness. Planning is collaborative and transparent, with progress tracked to ensure alignment with MCC's transformative educational mission.

## **Standard II**

Ethics, integrity, and transparency are embedded in MCC's policies and practices. The College upholds academic freedom and inclusive governance; supports underserved populations through diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives; and ensures fair employment and grievance procedures.

## **Standard III**

MCC meets Standard III by offering rigorous, coherent academic programs with aligned learning outcomes and high-impact practices. Faculty are qualified and supported through professional development and scholarly engagement. Students benefit from clear program information, robust academic supports, and equitable access to resources. Continuous assessment informs curricular improvements and enhances learning across all modalities.

## **Standard IV**

Student support at MCC is comprehensive and equity-focused. Ethical admissions, proactive advising, and holistic services promote access and completion. Guided Pathways, transfer credit policies, and career-readiness initiatives—including co-ops and internships—advance student outcomes.

## **Standard V**

MCC's faculty-led assessment system ensures alignment with program and institutional goals. Learning outcomes are mapped and reviewed across credit and non-credit programs. Disaggregated data inform curricular revisions and strategic initiatives. Collaborative structures and transparent reporting sustain a culture of educational effectiveness and equity.

## **Standard VI**

Planning and resource management at MCC are integrated and mission-driven. Institutional goals are linked to resource allocation through *Vision2027* and the Institutional Effectiveness framework. Transparent, inclusive processes engage stakeholders and guide continuous improvement. MCC maintains sustainable financial, human, and technological resources, with strategic investments evaluated for impact and accessibility.

## **Standard VII**

MCC's governance structure supports collaborative, transparent leadership. The Board of Trustees, President, and shared governance bodies ensure accountability and strategic alignment. Leadership roles are clearly defined and regularly assessed. Stakeholder engagement and campus climate assessments foster continuous improvement, reinforcing MCC's commitment to mission-aligned governance.

## *Standard I*

MCC meets Standard I through a mission-driven, inclusive planning process anchored in Vision2027. The Strategic Plan articulates core values and measurable goals across student success, workforce readiness, and institutional effectiveness. Planning is collaborative and transparent, with progress tracked to ensure alignment with MCC's transformative educational mission.

### **Possible Question(s):**

Question(s) will be created as the Middle States evaluator assigned to this standard reads the self-study. Examples of questions that could be asked are:

- When was the last time the college's Strategic Plan was updated?
- What process was used to create the current Strategic Plan?
- How did the college involve itself and external agencies in the creation of the Strategic Plan?
- How does the college measure its progress towards the Strategic Plan targets?
- How does MCC determine resource allocation to programs on campus?
- What is the unfunded request processes (UFR)?

### **Highlight(s):**

MCC continually assesses its Mission Statement and Strategic Plan to ensure they align with the institution's evolving goals, emerging challenges, and the changing needs of its students, faculty, and community. This ongoing process reflects MCC's commitment to adaptability, accountability, and excellence in providing relevant and forward-thinking educational opportunities (Criteria 1g and 4).

The institution has a well-established, transparent, and collaborative planning process that is consistently applied and integrated across various departments. This long-standing process of strategic planning is supported by the procedures outlined in the Institutional Effectiveness Handbook. Regular and ongoing communication ensures that all stakeholders are informed and engaged throughout planning processes, while extensive outreach efforts are made both internally and externally to promote inclusivity and transparency (Criteria 1d and 1f).

The College demonstrates strong institutional support for scholarly inquiry and creative activity through dedicated faculty development programs, national recognitions, and student-centered initiatives that foster intellectual growth and innovative practice across all levels of the academic community. Its engagement with the League for Innovation and consistent student participation in regional research conferences further affirm the breadth and depth of its commitment (Criterion 1e).

## *Standard II*

Ethics, integrity, and transparency are embedded in MCC's policies and practices. The College upholds academic freedom and inclusive governance; supports underserved populations through diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives; and ensures fair employment and grievance procedures.

### **Possible Question(s):**

- How does the college track emerging student trends?
- How does the college use data on student trends to ensure equitable outcomes for all students?
- Does the college have a documented grievance process and where are the procedures located?
- How do we monitor student satisfaction at MCC, and how are the results used?
- What is the IDEA council? Do you have examples of how it functions?
- How do we track student and employee complaints?
- Example of services at the main campus and downtown campus, are they equivalent?

### **Highlight(s):**

MCC demonstrates a strong and sustained commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion by embedding DEI principles across its institutional priorities, through various planning efforts, and student success strategies. Through intentional programming, inclusive policies, and equity-driven innovation, MCC fosters a learning environment where all individuals are valued, supported, and empowered to thrive (Criterion 2, 7a).

College demonstrates a strong commitment to fairness and impartiality through clearly defined policies and procedures that ensure equitable treatment of all students, faculty, and staff. These policies are regularly reviewed and communicated transparently, fostering an inclusive campus environment where decisions related to admissions, hiring, academic standards, and student conduct are consistently applied without bias. MCC's dedication to procedural fairness supports trust, accountability, and a culture of respect across the institution. (Criteria 3, 4, 5).

Monroe Community College is committed to supporting students facing financial barriers by providing comprehensive financial aid services, scholarships, and personalized guidance. These resources help ensure equitable access to education and promote student retention and success (Criterion 7b).

### *Standard III*

MCC meets Standard III by offering rigorous, coherent academic programs with aligned learning outcomes and high-impact practices. Faculty are qualified and supported through professional development and scholarly engagement. Students benefit from clear program information, robust academic supports, and equitable access to resources. Continuous assessment informs curricular improvements and enhances learning across all modalities.

#### **Possible Question(s):**

- How are credit hours assigned to courses?
- How is the master schedule created? How do we ensure the courses needed by students to graduate are being offered?
- How does the college conduct program review? Please explain the process from the beginning to the end.
- How do you create curriculum maps?
- How was the master plan created? How do you monitor your progress on the goals in the plan?

#### **Highlight(s):**

MCC offers a diverse array of degree programs intentionally designed to align with workforce demand and academic progression. Each program demonstrates thoughtful curriculum planning, emphasizing coherent learning outcomes, discipline-specific rigor, and clearly defined pathways for transfer or employment—reflecting the institution’s commitment to accessible, high-quality education. MCC offers diverse, structured academic and career programs that integrate general education with discipline-specific outcomes, supporting personalized pathways for transfer, employment, and lifelong learning. (Criterion 1)

The College employs qualified faculty who are consistently supported through structured onboarding, ongoing professional development opportunities, and collaborative teaching initiatives. These institutional efforts cultivate a culture of academic excellence, promote continuous improvement in pedagogy, and reinforce a shared commitment to student learning and success. (Criterion 2)

MCC ensures robust academic support through learning centers, tutoring services, technology access, and library resources—designed to meet diverse student needs. These supports are integrated into the academic experience and monitored for effectiveness, reinforcing student success, retention, and timely degree completion. (Criterion 4)

## *Standard IV*

Student support at MCC is comprehensive and equity-focused. Ethical admissions, proactive advising, and holistic services promote access and completion. Guided Pathways, transfer credit policies, and career-readiness initiatives—including co-ops and internships—advance student outcomes.

### **Possible Question(s):**

- Please explain the advising process currently in place.
- How have you made changes to the advising process in response to data related to student success?
- How does the college evaluate the effectiveness of third-party providers? Please provide example healthcare related sites and non-healthcare sites.
- How do you track students who transfer to a four-year college?
- What is the SUNY seamless transfer requirement?
- Have there been any updates to the SEM plan? How is the plan updated and used on campus?
- How do you conduct divisional assessments? What is the process and how are the results used?

### **Highlight(s):**

The College demonstrates a strong commitment to evaluating and refining placement methods for gateway English and mathematics courses. By implementing evidence-based approaches—including multiple measures and corequisite support—the College fosters equitable access and timely progression while maintaining academic rigor. (Criterion 1b)

The proactive tracking and analysis of post-completion outcomes enables Monroe Community College to strategically align academic programming with workforce needs and transfer opportunities. By leveraging labor market data, employer feedback, and transfer institution partnerships, the College fosters evidence-based planning and supports equitable student advancement beyond graduation. (Criterion 1d)

MCC upholds robust policies and practices to ensure the safe and secure maintenance of student information. Through ongoing compliance with federal and state regulations, strategic IT safeguards, and institutional training protocols, the College demonstrates a sustained commitment to data privacy, integrity, and responsible stewardship across all operational areas. (Criterion 3)

The MCC Association plays a vital role in enhancing the student experience by providing essential services, programming, and support beyond the classroom. Through its stewardship of auxiliary operations—such as campus dining, childcare, bookstore services, and student engagement initiatives—the Association contributes meaningfully to student success and institutional vitality. Its alignment with MCC's mission underscores a shared commitment to equity, access, and holistic support. (Criterion 4).

## *Standard V*

MCC's faculty-led assessment system ensures alignment with program and institutional goals. Learning outcomes are mapped and reviewed across credit and non-credit programs. Disaggregated data inform curricular revisions and strategic initiatives. Collaborative structures and transparent reporting sustain a culture of educational effectiveness and equity.

### **Possible Question(s):**

- How does the college use course evaluations to improve student learning?
- How are course learning outcomes evaluated? Do you have examples of how the results were used to improve student learning?
- How is the college using ePortfolio? Can you please provide examples?

### **Highlight(s):**

MCC maintains a consistent, collaborative assessment process across credit and non-credit programs, supported by discipline-specific expertise and institutional infrastructure. (Criterion 2)

Assessment results are systematically used to inform continuous improvement, with disaggregated data driving targeted strategies to enhance student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness. (Criteria 2 and 3)

## *Standard VI*

Planning and resource management at MCC are integrated and mission-driven. Institutional goals are linked to resource allocation through Vision2027 and the Institutional Effectiveness framework. Transparent, inclusive processes engage stakeholders and guide continuous improvement. MCC maintains sustainable financial, human, and technological resources, with strategic investments evaluated for impact and accessibility.

### **Possible Question(s):**

- There has been a significant change in the advising model. How are you measuring the impact of this change and if it has been effective? How will you measure if the change was successful?
- What is the college doing to reach out to students who may be delinquent on their student loans?
- What is the budget planning process at MCC? Can you walk us through an example?
- How are you assessing your strategic plan? Have any changes come from the assessment?

### **Highlight(s):**

MCC maintains a comprehensive, mission-driven planning process that links institutional and unit-level goals to resource allocation through its Strategic Plan and Integrated Planning and Assessment Model. This process is strengthened by broad, inclusive participation from faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders through forums, surveys, and governance meetings, ensuring that institutional priorities are consistently embedded in transparent and collaborative decision-making. (Criterion 2-5, 9)

MCC effectively leverages external grant funding—such as ARPA resources supporting EMT and paramedic training—to expand access, address workforce needs, and align resource use with institutional priorities and community impact. These efforts are supported by strong collaboration with the MCC Foundation, which plays a key role in securing and managing external resources to advance the College’s mission. (Criterion 7) MCC has received unmodified audit opinions with no management letters or findings for over a decade, reflecting strong internal controls and a culture of fiscal responsibility. (Criterion 8)

The College’s Institutional Compliance and Internal Audit Office supports institutional improvement through systematic departmental audits, policy education, and partnerships with external agencies, reinforcing MCC’s culture of accountability and continuous improvement. (Criterion 12)

## *Standard VII*

MCC's governance structure supports collaborative, transparent leadership. The Board of Trustees, President, and shared governance bodies ensure accountability and strategic alignment. Leadership roles are clearly defined and regularly assessed. Stakeholder engagement and campus climate assessments foster continuous improvement, reinforcing MCC's commitment to mission-aligned governance.

### **Possible Question(s):**

- Assessments provided in the self-study are current, what evidence do you have of past assessments?
- How has this assessment been used to enhance the college? What changes were made in response to the assessments?

### **Highlight(s):**

MCC demonstrates a strong institutional commitment to shared governance through active and consistent administrative engagement with faculty, staff, and students. The administration supports shared decision-making by participating in Faculty Senate and Student Government Association meetings, involving campus stakeholders in strategic and academic planning committees, and maintaining open lines of communication through regular town halls, office hours, and informal forums. These practices foster transparency, trust, and inclusive collaboration across all areas of the College. (Criterion 4)

MCC has a strong and committed Faculty Senate. This recommending body is well-organized and has clearly defined responsibilities documented in its consistently updated bylaws and resolutions. The Faculty Senate is included in important decisions that have an impact on college faculty and staff. (Criterion 1, 4a)

MCC has an active and involved Board of Trustees, members of whom participate in relevant state and national organizations. The current board chair is a board member of the Association of Community College Trustees and the New York Community College Trustees organization. (Criterion 2)

# Middle State 101 – Quick Guide

Middle State is a college wide assessment of how the college operates.

Needed to receive federal title IV aid and for students to be able to transfer credits to another institution.

Re-accreditation is not a “gotcha” exercise, it is to ensure the college is meeting the high educational expectations of the accreditation body.

Middle States guidelines outline what is expected from the colleges, not how they are to achieve this. For example, rigorous academic assessment is expected but the assessment process itself. Having a process in place and using the results to ensure/improve student learning is the expectation. This is **Continuous Improvement!**

The mock visit, chair visit, and full team visit will focus on making sure we are meeting the standards set forth by Middle States. What evidence have we provided, can we clearly articulate how the college operates, is the college financially stable, etc.

## **Example questions/areas of interest:**

- How does the college advise students, what is the advising process?
- How is financial aid distributed? Are we in compliance with federal and state reporting requirements?
- Does MCC have a mission statement that has been approved by leadership and the BOT?
- How does MCC evaluate student learning in the classroom?
- How do all of the various plans tie into and influence one another? This is integrated planning.
- How has the college changed since the last accreditation visit in order to meet changing student needs?
- What is the colleges hiring practice(s)? How does the college make staffing decisions?

# Evaluation Template

## Standard (Number Here): Standard Name

*An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher educational expectations.*

In the team's judgment, the institution [*appears to meet / does not appear to meet*] this standard.

This judgment is based on a review of the self-study report, evidence, and interviews with institutional constituencies to clarify information and verify compliance during the self-study evaluation team visit.

### *Summary of Findings*

Provide a brief summary or bulleted points that reflect, collectively, on the institution's compliance with the standard and its corresponding criteria. The summary should reference evidence verified during the review process.

1. Item 1
2. Item 2
3. Etc.

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**Collegial Advice** (Where appropriate, team members might consider including a limited number of non-binding suggestions for improvement as they relate to this standard. If no collegial advice is offered, delete this bullet/paragraph.)

**Team Recommendation(s)** (Institutional action(s) needed for the institution to continue to meet this standard. The team may address the standard as a whole or any criterion for the standard under review. Provide a succinct narrative relating to each recommendation, and clearly identify what the institution needs to address using references to the criteria of the standard and/or evidence expectations necessary to remain in compliance. If no recommendations are made by the team, write "None".)

**Requirement(s)** (If institution does not appear to meet this standard, the team must identify institutional actions needed to achieve compliance with the standard. Provide a succinct narrative relating to each requirement, and clearly identify what the institution needs to address using references to the criteria of the standard and/or evidence expectations necessary to come into compliance. If no requirements are made by the team, write "None".)

**Recognition of Accomplishments, Progress, or Exemplary/Innovative Practices** (Recognize noteworthy accomplishments, progress and exemplary or innovative practices as they relate to this standard.)