Self-Study Preparation Visit to

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Dr. Paul Starkey, Vice President, Institutional Field Relations
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Why Accreditation?

• Accreditation is “review of the quality of higher education institutions and programs. In the United States, accreditation is a major way that students, families, government officials, and the press know that an institution or program provides a quality education.” Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)

• Accreditation is intended to support these goals:
  • strengthen and sustain higher education,
  • making it worthy of public confidence, and
  • minimizing the scope of external control.

• Accreditation demonstrates an institution’s commitment to continuous self-assessment and improvement.
The Regulatory Triad

- Recognize accreditors as reliable authorities on assessing the quality of education offered by schools
- Certify schools as eligible to participate in federal student aid programs
- Ensure that participating schools comply with laws, regulations, and policies governing federal student aid

Dept. of Education

Oversight triad
Roles and responsibilities

- Authorize schools to offer postsecondary education and respond to student complaints
- Establish, apply, and enforce standards that help ensure that the education offered by a school is of sufficient quality to achieve the objectives for which it is offered

States

Accrediting agencies

Source: GAO analysis of relevant federal laws and regulations. | GAO-18-5
What is MSCHE?
MSCHE Mission

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education assures students and the public of the educational quality 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.
## Mission, Vision, Values

### Mission

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) promotes educational excellence through innovation across diverse institutions.

### Vision

To be a prominent voice and champion in higher education to leverage accreditation for our member institutions and students.

### Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protecting the Future</th>
<th>Guiding for Good</th>
<th>Setting the Standard</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We ensure that member institutions meet rigorous and comprehensive standards to protect educational quality.</td>
<td>We fuel discovery and progress for our community and society as an independent voice in higher education.</td>
<td>We promote quality through honest reflection, institutional growth, and meaningful change.</td>
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These values guide our external and internal relationships where integrity, respect, and self-improvement promote personal and collective growth, creativity, collaboration, accountability, and fair and equitable treatment.
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Member and Candidate Institutions: 515+
States: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Florida
Territories: Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands
International institutions: 18
Some Statistics on MSCHE Institutions

Institutional Control

- Private (For-Profit): 4%
- Private (Non-Profit): 57%
- Public: 39%
Map of MSCHE Institutional Locations
Who is the Commission?

Member institutions
Commissioners
Peer evaluators
Staff
The Commission

27 elected members representing the Region

- Presidents
- Senior Administrators
- Faculty
- Public Members

Dedicated to Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement
Accreditation Cycle
Accreditation Review Cycle and Monitoring
For Institutions Seeking Grant of Accreditation or Reaffirmation

The MSCHE eight-year accreditation review cycle*

Self-Study Evaluation
On-Site Evaluation Visit

Ongoing Monitoring Activities
Annual Institutional Update (AIU)
Follow-Up Reports and Visits

Self-Study Evaluation
Preparation

Recommendations Responses
Supplemental Information Reports

*For a full description of the Accreditation Review Cycle and Monitoring Policy and Procedures, visit https://go.msche.org/Accreditation-Review-Cycle-and-Monitoring
In the accreditation process, institutions are expected to comply with...

- Standards for Accreditation
- Requirements of Affiliation
- Federal compliance requirements
- MSCHE policies and procedures
STANDARDS

Requirements of Affiliation

Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation

An institution of higher education is a community dedicated to students, to the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge, to the study and clarification of values, and to the advancement of the society it serves. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), through accreditation, mandates that its member institutions meet rigorous and comprehensive standards, which are addressed in the context of the mission of each institution and within the culture of ethical practices and institutional integrity expected of accredited institutions. In meeting the quality standards of MSCHE accreditation, institutions earn accredited status, and this permits them to state with confidence: “Our students are well-served; society is well-served.”

Download the Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation.
## Requirements of Affiliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Authorization to operate</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Institution is operational, with students actively enrolled in degree programs</td>
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<td>3. Has graduated at least one class before accreditation</td>
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<td>4. Communicates with MSCHE in English</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Compliance with government policies, regulations, and requirements</td>
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<td>6. Compliance with applicable Commission, interregional, and interinstitutional policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Mission statement and related goals</td>
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<td>8. Systematic evaluation of all programs</td>
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<td>9. Programs characterized by rigor, coherence, and assessment</td>
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<td>10. Integrated institutional planning</td>
</tr>
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<td>11. Resources adequate to support educational purposes/programs and to ensure financial stability</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Governance structure responsible for quality and integrity and accomplishment of mission</td>
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<td>13. Governing body adherence to a conflict of interest policy</td>
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<td>14. Governance and accurate institutional information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Core of faculty and/or other appropriate professionals</td>
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[https://www.msche.org/standards/]
Standards for Accreditation

Mission and Goals

Ethics and Integrity

Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

Support of the Student Experience

Educational Effectiveness assessment

Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

Governance, Leadership, and Administration
Federal Compliance and MSCHE Policies & Procedures

Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations

8 Areas: Compliance with Federal Regulation

- Student Identity Verification in Distance and Correspondence Education
- Transfer of Credit Policies and Articulation Agreements
- Title IV Program Responsibilities
- Institutional Record of Student Complaints
- Required Information for Students and the Public
- Standing with State and Other Accrediting Agencies
- Contractual Arrangements
- Assignment of Credit Hours

Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations
Self-Study Process
https://www.msche.org/accreditation/self-study-guide/

- Strategies for Overseeing the Self-Study Process before the Self-Study Report (Module 5, Section 1)
- Working Group Reports (Module 5, Section 2)
- Discussion(s) about Final Working Group Reports by the Steering Committee (Module 5, Section 3)
- Writing the Self-Study Report (Module 5, Section 4)
- Main Elements of the Self-Study Report (Module 5, Section 5)
- Keys to Success (Module 5, Section 6)
- Sample - (Interim) Final Working Group Report (Module 5, Section 7)
Self-Study Process
24-30 months

1. Self-Study Institute
2. Self-Study Design
3. Self-Study Preparation Visit
4. Inquiry and Analysis

- Team Chair’s Preliminary Visit
- Evaluation Team Visit
- Committee on Evaluation Reports
- Commission Meeting and Action
Engage in a meaningful Self-Study process, focusing on mission and related strategic goals and priorities.

Address the Commission’s *Standards for Accreditation* and *Requirements of Affiliation*.

Oversee the completion of a Compliance Report.

Process takes 2.5 years.
Institutional Priorities

- Make every student a priority
- Ensure alignment of resources leading to a financially sustainable institution
- Cultivate a campus culture that embraces diversity, equity and inclusion
- Promote the production of and dissemination of knowledge, providing a wide range of intellectual, social, and professional opportunities for students
### Self-Reported Institutional Priorities 2020-2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Achievement and Success</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Capacity/Sustainability</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Excellence</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Processes</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relevant and Dynamic Curriculum</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research and Scholarship</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Effectiveness</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Visits associated with Self-Study

1. Self-Study Preparation Visit

2. Team Chair’s Preliminary Visit

3. On-Site Evaluation Visit
Self-Study Evaluation Team Visit Dates

- Institutions must stay within their designated cohort.
- For the review to be discussed at the last Commission meeting of each academic year (June), the visit must occur prior to April 15.
- Coordinate visit dates with Team Chair and notify MSCHE staff.
- Once self-study dates are set, the dates cannot be changed without approval by MSCHE.
Evidence Inventory

- MSCHE will release a companion document to the new Standards, which will include guidance on required data (student achievement, policies and processes, assessment, financial, planning, etc.) to be submitted in the Evidence Inventory
- MSCHE staff will offer a webinar to provide guidance on organizing and populating the Evidence Inventory
  - Fall 2023 – for fall 2024 visits
  - Spring 2024 – for spring 2025 visits
- Note requirement to submit evidence in English
Visits to Branch Campuses and Additional Locations

• Visits to branch campuses and/or additional locations must occur prior to the On-Site Self-Study Evaluation Team Visit.

• Visits must include:
  • All branch campuses
  • At least one additional location (domestic and international), or one-third if the institution has 4 or more additional locations

• Visits involve interviews with constituencies at each location, in addition to a tour of the facilities.

• Teams will include their review of the branch campuses and additional locations in the Self-Study Team Report.
Types of Findings

- Significant Accomplishments, Significant Progress or Exemplary/Innovative Practices
- Collegial Advice
- Recommendations
- Requirements
Multi-Level Analysis

PEER EVALUATORS → COMMITTEE ON EVALUATION REPORTS → COMMISSION
Possible Commission Actions

- Reaffirmation of Accreditation
- Reaffirmation with Follow-up
- Non-Compliance

- Warning / Probation / Show Cause
- Monitoring Report / Small team visit
- Time limit
“The self-study process should be valuable to an institution, enabling it to demonstrate that it meets the Commission’s expectations and to gain insights that will serve the institution well for several years after the Self-Study Report and On-Site Evaluation Visit have been completed. Self-study demonstrates an institution’s commitment to continuous improvement and is used to strengthen and sustain the institution”

Institutional Areas of Improvement

- Assessment Processes
- Collegial Governance
- Curriculum
- Mission & Goals
- Policies & Procedures
- Diversity and Inclusion
- HR Outreach & Effectiveness
- BOT Best Practices
- Data
- Experiential & Co-Curricular Learning
- General Education Assessment
- Budgeting & Planning
- Strategic Enrollment Plan
- Advising
- Student Achievement
- Policy Review Process
- Unit Strategic Planning
- Web-Site
| **Linking Strategic Plan With Budgeting and Planning** |
|**Revising or Developing New Strategic Plan** |
|**Integrating Assessment Across Units** |
|**Improving Student Diversity and Culture of Inclusion** |
|**Enhancing Assessment of Student Achievement** |
|**Improving Communication Among Stakeholders** |
|**Improving Assessment of Student Services** |
|**Rewording or Redeveloping Institutional Mission Statement** |
|**Improve Internal Communication** |
|**Training in Curriculum and Assessment** |
We are all MSCHE

How can you participate?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff &amp; Administration</td>
<td>• Service on Steering Committee and/or Working Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Feedback: Open Meetings, Town Halls, Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>• Service on Steering Committee and/or Working Groups</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>• Service on Steering Committee and/or Working Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Feedback: Open Meetings, Town Halls, Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (Alumni, etc.)</td>
<td>• Service on Steering Committee and/or Working Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Feedback: Open Meetings, Town Halls, Surveys</td>
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</table>
An accredited institution of higher education

- has an appropriate **mission** (Standard I),
- lives it with **integrity** (Standard II),
- delivers an effective **student learning experience** (Standard III) and
- supports the overall **student experience**, both inside and outside of the classroom (Standard IV).

An accredited institution of higher education

- assesses its own **educational effectiveness** (Standard V),
- uses **planning and resources to ensure institutional improvement** (Standard VI) and
- is characterized by effective **governance, leadership, and administration** (Standard VII).

"Elevator Speech" During and After Re-Affirmation
Resources at MSCHE

Vice President Liaison
Dr. Paul Starkey
pstarkey@msche.org

Your Self-Study Leadership Team
Other Commission Staff
Your Team Chair

The MSCHE website:
www.msche.org