

Accreditation Update

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning (OIESP)

January 2024

York College is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). “The MSCHE is an institutional accreditor recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE). As an institutional accreditor, MSCHE requires evaluation of all aspects of the institution holistically, including modality of instruction, and everything done in the name of the institution, including all academic programs and services, fall within their scope of accreditation¹”. This accreditation update aims to inform the community about the Commission’s most recent action on November 3, 2023, which required York College to submit a **Supplemental Information Report (SIR)** focused on institutional six-year graduation rates by December 13, 2023. It is important to note that the supplemental information report does **not** denote non-compliance. The College remains fully accredited. The following is an excerpt from the notification received in November:

For the 2023 collection year, the Commission has analyzed the results for student achievement and annual reporting – FTE. The data collected from your institution suggests concerns with the following:

- **Student Achievement:** *Graduation Rates calculated at the institutional level by credential level.*
 - *Four-Year Institution: The Graduation Rate at 150% of the normal time available through the most recent AIU report is below 40%.*

*Therefore, the **York College of the City University of New York** should respond to this request for information in a supplemental information report (SIR) by **December 13, 2023**, providing (1) graduation rates for the last two years (Standard IV) and (2) narrative analysis and evidence of the actions the institution has planned or has taken to address these concerns (Standard IV).*

The SIR was submitted to the commission on December 12, 2023 via the MSCHE Institutional Portal.

MSCHE Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation Processes

MSCHE has ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes as defined in its Accreditation Review Cycle and Monitoring Policy. There is an eight-year cycle of evaluation that consists of a self-study report and an on-site evaluation visit focused on compliance with the seven standards and requirements of affiliations. In addition, monitoring activities consist of the Annual Institutional Update (AIU), follow-up reports and visits, and out of cycle monitoring activities. The AIU completed each year serves to provide the Commission with updates to key institutional characteristics (contacts, locations, Carnegie classification, etc.), student enrollment, financial, and “student success” metrics such as graduation rates. As a result of the last AIU submission in 2023 and the new MSCHE process, the Commission requested a Supplemental Information Report focused on the six-year graduation rate as it remains below the MSCHE-identified threshold of 40%. Please note, York’s 6-year graduation rate has never reached 40%, however as a result of this new MSCHE process, the College has been asked to provide additional information as to the actions that York has recently taken to address the graduation rates.

¹ Source: Middle States Commission on Higher Education, <https://msche.org/accreditation>

While the College is committed to elevating its graduation rates, York's current 6-year graduation rate of 33.3% is consistent with, or a small improvement on, prior years' rates:

York College 6-Year Graduation Rates for First-time Full-time Students by Entering Year					
2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
29.4%	30.2%	34.9%	31.6%	33.4%	33.3%

Summary of York's SIR Submission

Contextualized within the context of York College's strategic plan, CUNY's Strategic Roadmap, and York's Strategic Enrollment Management Plan, and in compliance with MSCHE's strict guidelines, the SIR consisted of a 15-page narrative followed by appendices. Student Achievement data including the six-year graduation rates, analysis of student outcomes for cohorts entering 2012-2016, four-year graduation rates, one-semester and one-year retention rates, trends in performance in Gateway Math and English, completion of 30 credits or more, and non-returning student survey results, etc. were provided in the 5-page introduction. A substantive narrative and analysis chapter discussed the recent initiatives undertaken to improve graduation rates, such as: engaging with the National Institution for Student Success (NISS); implementing the Accelerate, Complete, and Engage (ACE) program; creating a First Year Experience and Mentoring program; introducing and then expanding the One York Welcome Center; refining Academic Advisement by introducing an Academic Recovery Program; developing an Early Warning System (to be implemented in spring 2024); implementing CircleIn and Cogenerative Dialogs; and fortifying various student support services (Counseling Center, Center for Students with Disabilities, Ombudsperson). Financial support initiatives were also detailed. The report concluded with a summary of the initiatives and data suggesting that these initiatives are intended to improve the student experience and thus improve retention and graduation rates. In addition, the conclusion noted:

"In the coming year, York will focus on the implementation of the NISS Playbook, which will provide proven strategies to reduce barriers to student success. York College is making progress and is recognizing areas of opportunity as we continue our work to operationalize our strategic plan and achieve desired targets" (SIR 2023).

The complete SIR report is available on the College's Institutional Accreditation [webpage](#). In preparation for future MSCHE monitoring and evaluation processes, including the Self-Study process that commences in Fall 2024, the OIESP strongly encourages York College faculty and staff to a) Carefully review the Commission's Standards and Evidence Expectations; b) Note evidence related to their services, departments and units; c) Begin collecting documentation and data, if not already available.

- [Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation, 14th edition](#)
- [Evidence Expectations by Standard Guidelines](#)

Tentative MSCHE Evaluation Timeline

Next Self-Study Evaluation: 2026-2027

- Phase I: Plan & Prepare (AY 2024 - 2025) MSCHE Self-Study Institute: Fall 2024
- Phase II: Collect, Analyze, and Draft (AY 2025 - 2026)
- Phase III: Write the Report (Spring 2026 - Fall 2026)
- Phase IV: Refine the Report (AY 2026 - 2027)
- Phase V: Evaluation Site Visit: Spring 2027

Have questions?

Contact Dr. Lori Hoeffner, Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) & AVP Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Strategic Planning at lhoeffner@york.cuny.edu