

Middle States Reaccreditation Site Visit Guide

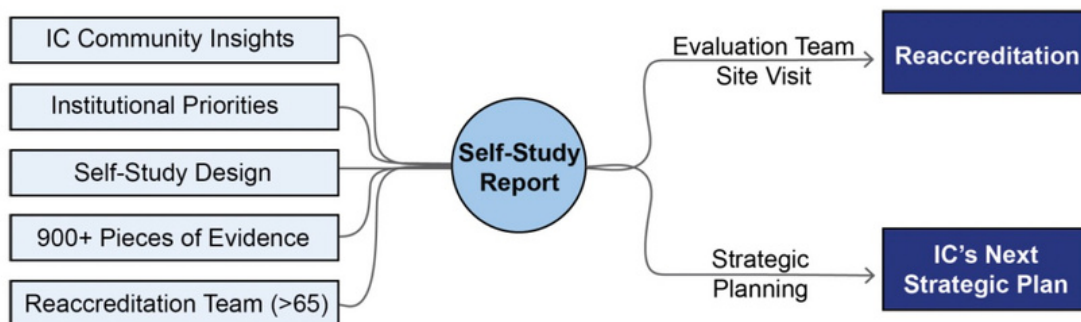
This resource offers the Ithaca College community key information to prepare for the upcoming site visit by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), March 29 – April 1, 2026. It outlines what to expect during the visit and provides specific guidance for those who will engage directly with the MSCHE evaluation team while they are on campus. Our goal is to ensure everyone feels confident, informed, and ready to showcase the incredible work happening across our community.

What is the MSCHE Site Visit?

The MSCHE site visit represents the culmination of over three years of work by the Ithaca College Middle States Reaccreditation Team (Steering Committee, our seven Standards Working Groups, and many faculty, staff, and students across the IC community). As part of the eight-year accreditation cycle, we drafted a comprehensive self-study report that demonstrates how Ithaca College meets each of the seven standards, provides evidence of compliance, and candidly identifies areas for institutional improvement. The visiting team—composed of peer reviewers from other institutions—will review the self-study, meet with members of our community, and seek clarification on the information we have provided.

What do we hope to get out of this process?

From the outset, we approached this process not as a checklist to maintain our accreditation status, but as an opportunity to reflect honestly on our progress since the last review, to tell our story - its triumphs and its challenges - and to use those insights as a thoughtful bridge to our next strategic plan. Our story is not perfect, but it is an authentic reflection of a vibrant, resilient community deeply committed to educating and supporting our students.



Who participates in the MSCHE Site Visit?

The Site Visit Team will provide a list of individuals and groups they wish to meet with, based on campus roles and information in the self-study. They will also hold open forums for all community members. Although most meetings will be scheduled and announced in advance, the team may request additional conversations or data while on campus. Any such request should be treated as a **top priority**.

How was the Self-Study Report written?

The Middle States reaccreditation process represented an opportunity for our community to reflect on, refine, and renew our commitment to our mission and to student success. After completing the assessment phase of the study, our dedicated Working Group chairs led the drafting of chapters, which underwent multiple rounds of review by the Steering Committee, the Middle States Leadership Team, and senior leadership. Each stage strengthened the report, ensured that claims were evidence based, and provided an honest evaluation of the institution. The first full draft was reviewed by our editor to confirm consistency and a unified voice, then shared with the Ithaca College community at the start of the fall 2025 semester. The feedback we received was invaluable. Community insights guided additional refinements that ultimately shaped the final report—truly a collective effort reflecting the care, dedication, and spirit of our campus community.

The Self-Study process demonstrates how Ithaca College:

- meets the Commission's Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation;
- engaged in an inclusive and transparent self-appraisal process that actively sought participation from all campus stakeholders;
- focuses on assessing and improving institutional policies and procedures in support of students, the mission, and institutional priorities;
- identifies current and emerging practices that strengthen an effective and equitable educational experience for all students; and
- serves as an important and meaningful bridge to the college's next strategic plan.

What comes next?

After the site visit, our team will receive a written report and have the opportunity to submit a response. The report and our response will then be presented to MSCHE at its next Board meeting, where the Commission will make a final determination regarding our accreditation. We expect to receive written notification of their decision in late fall.

Information for Participants

We are grateful for the time that each participant has and will invest in this process. We know that the time and energy you spend preparing for these meetings will pay dividends in a successful site visit, and ultimately, reaccreditation process.

Being prepared starts with being informed. The site visit team will arrive having spent many hours learning about Ithaca College—reading, researching, and analyzing our work—so we should be equally ready. A few key steps can help you prepare:

- **Read the Self-Study Report.** Focus especially on the chapters connected to your area of expertise, as these will anchor your conversations with the visiting team.
- **Reflect on your unit.** Consider how your area serves students and advances IC's mission. What are strengths, ongoing initiatives, and opportunities for growth?
- **Think about how you assess your work.** Both quantitative and qualitative measures are valuable.
- **Identify data-informed improvements or changes you have made or are planning.**

Additional evidence needed?

If a team member requests additional evidence, please email middlestateteam@ithaca.edu describing the evidence that was requested, as well as information about the request, including what meeting it was in, who requested, and a short description of why it was requested, if you know it. All additional evidence must be uploaded to a special portal, so please do not share it with the team members yourself.

Tips For Success when meeting with Evaluation Team members

- **Review the standards and the Self-Study.**
- **Come prepared;** rely on clear examples and direct knowledge of your unit.
- **Balance** present realities with future goals, keep the focus on continuous improvement.
- **Be honest and professional;** avoid unnecessary negativity but be genuine.
- **Expect clarifying questions;** the team's role is to confirm and understand.
- **Stay attentive;** minimize distractions and device use.
- **Be transparent;** if you don't know an answer, say so, and direct the team to the appropriate person.
- **Be inclusive;** it is in our best interest that they hear from as many voices as possible.
- **Stay flexible;** schedules may shift, meetings may run long or end early, and that is perfectly normal.