



# MSCHE Site Visit Guide

QUEENS COLLEGE › MARCH 22-25, 2026

This guide provides information to the Queens College community about the upcoming Middle States Commission on Higher Education Site Visit associated with our Self-Study reaccreditation process. It contains general information about what to expect from the Site Visit, as well as more specific guidance for those directly participating.

## What is the MSCHE Site Visit?

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) is Queens College's institutional accreditor. As part of their eight-year evaluation cycle, MSCHE requires each institution to prepare a written Self-Study Report demonstrating how the institution meets their Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation. During the Site Visit, a team of peer evaluators from other institutions will engage with the QC community to validate the information presented in the Self-Study and gather additional insight. This is the final step in the reaccreditation process.



## When is the Site Visit?

The Queens College Site Visit takes place from March 22-25, 2026.

## Who participates in the MSCHE Site Visit?

The Site Visit is an opportunity for broad engagement with the campus community. MSCHE peer evaluators will meet with various groups, including administrators, faculty, staff, students, and community members. Participants for the focused sessions are selected based on their roles and expertise related to the MSCHE Standards.

## How was the Self-Study written?

QC's Self-Study process, which began in fall 2023, has been a highly collaborative effort involving stakeholders from across the institution. Under the direction of the provost, associate provost for institutional effectiveness, and the faculty liaison for evaluation and assessment, seven working groups aligned with the MSCHE Standards were formed. The working groups, comprised of faculty and staff, conducted a thorough evaluation of how QC meets the [Standards and Requirements of Affiliation](#). Their findings informed the development of the Self-Study Report. The final report, available on the QC website, is the product of extensive research, analysis, and community input.

# You've Been Invited to a Meeting with the Peer Reviewers.... Here's How to Prepare

The peer reviewers have dedicated numerous hours to studying, reading about, and researching our institution. Given their extensive preparation, it's important that we match their level of readiness.

So, what concrete steps can you take to ensure you're well-prepared? Here are a few key actions to focus on.

## Your meeting will focus on one of the MSCHE standards.

**Identify that standard (look at the calendar invitation) and then thoroughly read that chapter in the Self-Study Report** (linked below under [Resources to help you prepare](#)). Having a solid grasp of this content will allow you to engage in productive discussions with the visiting team. The peer reviewers will ask questions to confirm that what was written is actually happening.

It is also beneficial to understand the context of the entire report; in the following pages, we've summarized each chapter.

## You've been invited because of your expertise at the college.

**Take time to deeply reflect on your own unit or department.** Come prepared with strong examples relating to the self-study report and how your unit supports our institutional mission. The primary goal is to have a set of concrete, illustrative examples at your fingertips. That way, you'll be poised to provide pertinent information whenever the team raises questions.

## Resources to help you prepare:

- Queens College Self-Study Final Report
- MSCHE Standards for Accreditation
- Queens College Strategic Plan
- Queens College Mission Statement: *Our highest purpose is to prepare our students to serve as innovative leaders in a diverse world that they will make more equitable and inclusive.*

## Example Questions

Below are example questions the team may ask. These questions are meant to validate the information in the self-study report and to understand deeper context. The questions in your meeting will be focused on your area and on the standards that are addressed in that realm. Please use these example questions as a guide to brainstorm what questions they may ask you of your area. Having a script of questions and answers ready will best prepare you for your meeting.

- What assessment practices do you use to evaluate and improve your services/ programs?
- What changes have you implemented based on assessment and what impact have they had?
- The Self-Study mentions the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan. Can you elaborate on how these goals have been or are being implemented across campus?
- The Self-Study highlighted a persistent decline in student enrollment. What specific strategies are being considered to grow enrollment?
- How do departments use assessment results, especially disaggregated data, to improve student learning and close equity gaps?
- How are budget decisions linked to student success outcomes metrics?
- How do faculty, staff, and students perceive the effectiveness of shared governance structures like the Academic Senate and College P&B Committee?
- What mechanisms do you have in place to ensure continuous improvement beyond the accreditation cycle?

## Important Chapter Summaries

### Executive Summary (Standards I-VII)

The executive summary provides an overview of QC's mission, strategic plan, and institutional enrollment. Additional information is provided about the City University of New York system, the governance group which ensures QC's compliance with State and Federal rules and laws. QC's approach to the Self-Study is also included in this chapter.

### Mission and Goals (Standard I)

This chapter explores how Queens College's mission and goals are deeply embedded in its institutional ethos and daily operations, demonstrating strong alignment with MSCHE Standard I. The college's integration of its mission into academic planning, co-curricular programming, and governance, with values such as service, DEI, and innovative leadership guiding decision-making and assessment practices, is discussed. Institutional goals linked to student success and societal impact, as evidenced by strong alumni outcomes and targeted support for underrepresented groups, is highlighted, and the prioritization of continuous improvement through regular assessment cycles and strategic initiatives ensures the mission remains relevant and effective.

### RECOMMENDATION

Deepen and formalize the College's civic engagement identity by building on existing community partnerships and learning opportunities to pursue the elective Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement in the 2027 cycle.

### Ethics and Integrity (Standard II)

In this chapter, Queens College establishes its firm institutional commitment to ethics, integrity, and academic freedom. The text explains that the college maintains intellectual freedom through policies aligned with AAUP principles and CUNY governance, which serve to protect faculty, students, and researchers. To foster an inclusive and engaged environment, the institution utilizes regular climate surveys, wellness initiatives, and specialized programming such as Diversity Week.

The chapter further notes that the college ensures accountability through accessible grievance procedures and robust conflict-of-interest policies that comply with state and university standards. Finally, the chapter highlights a commitment to fair employment, citing transparent hiring and promotion practices that are supported by collective bargaining agreements and oversight from the Office of Compliance and Diversity.

### RECOMMENDATION

Create a framework to evaluate ongoing policies, processes, and practices that emphasizes the importance of an intentional periodic assessment schedule.

## Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience (Standard III)

Queens College's commitment to serving its students through rigorous, high-quality instruction delivered by a highly qualified professoriate is described in this chapter. The faculty tenure and promotion process, guided by clear policies and expectations, is discussed, along with the academic program review process. Students are provided with a supportive educational environment, including a world-class library, optional study abroad, and authentic research opportunities. Queens College is further strengthening its career and experiential learning opportunities through targeted leadership hires and associated restructuring of the student success portfolio, while Pathways, the general education curriculum, provides a uniform and consistent framework for foundational undergraduate learning. The college is currently undergoing a holistic review of its academic programming and a collegewide reevaluation of our course numbering architecture to enhance legibility and provide clarity across programs.

### RECOMMENDATION

Formalize institutional support for online learning by appointing dedicated leadership to establish a coherent guiding vision, centralize resources, and coordinate professional development to build on existing online offerings and position Queens College for strategic growth in digital education.

## Support of the Student Learning Experience (Standard IV)

Queens College demonstrates its commitment to student success through ethical recruitment, comprehensive support systems, and data-driven continuous improvement efforts. The college actively manages enrollment through a recently drafted Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan, evaluates prospective students holistically based on academic and non-academic factors, and maintains retention rates above the national average. Extensive student services are provided, including academic support (Learning Commons, Writing Center), career engagement, counseling, specialized programs (the Percy E. Sutton SEEK Program, ACE), and resources like the Knights' Table food pantry. Furthermore, the college prioritizes transfer student success through data disaggregation and strategic partnerships and conducts regular assessment of student support units to ensure equitable outcomes and continuous operational improvement.

### RECOMMENDATION

Coordinate and expand the focus on student success outcomes to all units on campus by publishing an annual "Student Success Impact Report" that showcases data-driven improvements, documents progress on equity initiatives, and demonstrates institutional accountability to internal and external stakeholders.

## Educational Effectiveness Assessment (Standard V)

Queens College fulfills Standard V by maintaining a robust and evolving culture of educational effectiveness assessment. The college has established structured processes, such as a seven-year academic program review cycle and an Academic Assessment Council, to ensure student learning outcomes are systematically evaluated across all departments. The chapter highlights that program learning objectives are clearly defined and aligned with institutional goals, using curriculum maps to demonstrate how specific courses support these outcomes.

Furthermore, the chapter describes the college's assessment practices as discipline-specific and multi-modal, incorporating both formative and summative approaches. Additionally, the institution uses disaggregated data to identify equity gaps and inform interventions for transfer students and underrepresented groups. Finally, the chapter outlines how the college integrates alumni outcomes and career data into its framework while making significant progress in faculty development and experiential learning.

### RECOMMENDATION

Strengthen campus engagement with Pathways by building on the General Education Council's momentum around assessment; ensuring alignment with the CUNYwide assessment of Pathways; aiming to foster deeper faculty and student understanding of the program goals; and establishing uniformity, consistency, and quality of Pathways offerings through regular assessment and updates.

## Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement (Standard VI)

This chapter describes how Queens College effectively aligns its planning, resources, and continuous improvement efforts to fulfill its mission of developing innovative and inclusive leaders. For example, the college maintains transparency through defined organizational structures and utilizes departmental goals and assessment plans that are directly tied to the institutional mission. Additionally, the college employs an inclusive, multi-stakeholder processes when managing its budget and strategic planning.

The chapter also highlights the institution's commitment to responsible fiscal management, citing independent audits and increased investments in instruction, staffing, and infrastructure modernization. Queens College ensures that resource allocation supports initiatives aligned with its strategic plan. This includes prioritizing student success through specialized programming, targeted mentorship, and significant support services designed for its diverse student body.

### RECOMMENDATION

Align budget allocations more tightly with student outcomes by incorporating student outcomes data, enrollment trends, and equity metrics into budgetary allocation processes, ensuring resources align with demonstrated student needs and institutional effectiveness goals.

## Governance, Leadership, and Administration (Standard VII)

Queens College fulfills Standard VII by maintaining a robust governance structure, qualified leadership, and a responsive administration that work together to support institutional goals. The chapter highlights a shared governance model that encourages active participation from faculty, students, administrators, and unions. It specifically mentions entities like the Academic Senate, the College P&B Committee, and the Student Association as the primary structures ensuring transparency, collaboration, and accountability within the institution.

The college's leadership is well-qualified and subject to regular evaluation, with the president and cabinet directing strategic planning and campuswide initiatives. Further, administrative effectiveness is bolstered by inclusive decision-making and periodic assessments. These efforts are aligned with key strategic plans, such as the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan and the Academic Renewal Initiative, to ensure all actions reflect the college's core priorities.

### RECOMMENDATION

Establish a formal, recurring assessment of the effectiveness of shared governance at Queens College that examines the functioning of governance structures and enhances community education about shared governance and its associated roles, processes, and pathways for meaningful participation.



## Suggestions for Productive Engagement

- Be open, honest, and proud of QC's achievements, but avoid negativity or speculation.
- Allow everyone a chance to contribute. The team wants to hear diverse perspectives.
- If a peer reviewer asks for additional documentation or evidence, let **Rebekah Chow** or **Christopher Hanusa** know right away.

## What did we hope to get out of this process?

The Self-Study presented an invaluable opportunity for institutional reflection, assessment, and improvement in support of QC's mission and strategic priorities. Beyond reaffirming our compliance with MSCHE Standards, our goals were to:

- Engage the QC community in an inclusive and transparent self-appraisal process that actively and deliberately involves members from all areas of the campus community.
- Facilitate open and inclusive campus discussions about the College's strengths and opportunities for improvement
- Encourage continuous improvement in the attainment of our institutional Mission and priorities.
- Compose a comprehensive document with a common vision and goals that can be used for future planning.
- Reaffirm that the College meets each of the seven MSCHE Standards for Accreditation and the Requirements of Affiliation, resulting in our reaccreditation.

## What comes next?

Following the Site Visit, the peer evaluators will provide a written report of their findings to MSCHE. The Commission will review the report and make a final accreditation decision, which we expect to receive in summer 2026.

## Do we HAVE to be accredited?

Yes, institutional accreditation is essential. MSCHE accreditation affirms that QC meets rigorous standards of educational quality. It also determines the University's eligibility to administer federal financial aid, which 91% of our students rely on. Maintaining our accredited status is vital to fulfilling our mission.



## One Final Note

We want to express our appreciation to each participant for the time and effort you will devote to this essential process. In these meetings, you serve as the voice of Queens College. We recognize that the energy and preparation you put into getting ready will contribute significantly to a successful site visit and, ultimately, our reaccreditation.