



Montgomery College Accreditation Initiatives: **The 2013 Periodic Review Report**

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of accreditation?

Accreditation is the means of self-regulation and peer review adopted by the educational community. The accrediting process is intended to strengthen and sustain the quality and integrity of higher education. Middle States accreditation is an expression of confidence in an institution's mission and goals, its performance, and its resources.

What is the Middle States Commission on Higher Education?

The [Middle States Commission on Higher Education](#) is the unit of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools that accredits degree-granting colleges and universities in the Middle States region, which includes Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and several locations internationally.

The Commission is a voluntary, non-governmental, membership association that defines, maintains, and promotes educational excellence across institutions with diverse missions, student populations, and resources. It examines each institution as a whole, rather than specific programs within institutions.

What is the Middle States Periodic Review Report?

The Periodic Review Report (PRR) is submitted five years after an institution's self-study and evaluation team visit. For Montgomery College, the due date is June 2013. As a retrospective, current, and prospective analysis of an institution, the PRR provides significant institutional progress and planning information to the Commission on Higher Education and assists the Commission in determining whether the institution remains in compliance with accreditation standards.

How does the Periodic Review Report fit into Montgomery College's ongoing accreditation?

To ensure the highest level of excellence possible for our students, the college embarked on a process of self-evaluation as part of the 10-year cycle or reaccreditation required by the

Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The last “full” evaluation is referred to as the Middle States Self-Study Report and was completed in 2008.

How long does the process take?

On average, 18 months from initiation of the process to submission of the report are needed.

What are the goals and objectives of the Periodic Review Report?

The Middle States Periodic Review Report is intended to achieve the following goals and objectives:

- 1) To help institutions gauge their progress in achieving their own goals and objectives
- 2) To enable the Commission to assess the current status, as well as the future prospects, of institutions, within the framework of the Commission’s accreditation standards
- 3) To fulfill the Commission’s accountability to the public, the academic community at large, and its member institutions
- 4) To assess the impact of significant major developments, changes, or challenges subsequent to the last evaluation
- 5) To assess the institution’s response to recommendations resulting from the previous evaluation
- 6) To review the institution’s enrollment trends, financial status, and enrollment and financial projections
- 7) To determine the current status of the implementation of plans for the assessment of institutional effectiveness and the assessment of student learning outcomes (accreditation standards 7 and 14)
- 8) To assess the extent to which linked institutional planning and budgeting processes are in place

What are the parts of the Periodic Review Report?

Periodic Review Reports generally require approximately 50 pages comprised of 6 sections:

- 1) An executive summary, including a brief overview of the institution and a summary of major changes and developments since 2008 accreditation.
- 2) A summary description of the institution’s response to recommendations (but not suggestions) from the previous team report and institutional self-study. There will be no summary *per se* for the College since we did not receive any recommendations from 2008 Self-Study Accreditation.
- 3) A brief narrative identifying the institution’s major challenges and/or current opportunities.
- 4) An analysis of enrollment and finance projections for the period covered by the institution’s strategic plan, but not less than the current and two future years, including assumptions on which those projections are based, and related to enrollment and fiscal trends from the three previous years. Supporting documentation must include the

audited financial statements and accompanying management letters or their equivalents covering the three previous years.

- 5) Evidence of sustained and organized processes to assess institutional effectiveness and student learning, and evidence that the results of such processes are being used to improve programs and services and to inform planning and resource allocation decisions.
- 6) Evidence that linked institutional planning and budgeting processes are in place.

Can the College's compliance with MSCHE standards be called into question on the basis of the PRR alone?

In a word, yes. The reviewers may recommend any of the following Commission actions:

- To reaffirm accreditation with general suggestions for institutional improvement.
- To reaffirm accreditation with general suggestions for institutional improvement, with a request that the institution address specific issues in the decennial self-study.
- To reaffirm accreditation and to request a progress letter documenting progress in specific areas as the reviewers have concerns regarding compliance with one or more standards.
- To reaffirm accreditation and to request a monitoring report which may be followed by a visit.
- To find that the institution is not to be in compliance with one or more standards accompanied by one or more requirements
- To warn the institution that its accreditation may be in jeopardy and to request a monitoring report which will be followed by a visit.
- A visit will follow submission of the monitoring report.
- To direct a prompt staff visit to discuss Commission expectations because the reviewers do not have sufficient information to determine if the institution is in compliance.
- To postpone a decision on accreditation, and to request a supplemental information report which may be followed by a visit.

How does the PRR differ from the Self-Study and the decennial review?

MSCHE is careful to note that the PRR is not a mini-Self-Study. It is intended to assure continuing compliance with the standards in a brief (50 pages) report with accompanying documentation. The components of the PRR are noted above. Unlike the decennial Self-Study, the PRR is not a systematic examination of the College's compliance with each of the 14 standards in the *Characteristics of Excellence*. The PRR reviewers do not visit campus and make their recommendations solely upon the written documentation presented to them along with the report.