

CSI Self-Study Updates

If you would like to learn more about Middle States Accreditation at CSI, please visit the following site: www.csi.cuny.edu/middle-states. You can also read the [CSI Self-Study Updates](#).

What has been done since the last CSI Self-Study Update?

- The Working Groups have reached out to CSI departments and offices to gather evidence that will document how CSI's policies and practices are in compliance with the Standards. They are also engaged in drafting a narrative in support of this work.

In their analysis of evidence, Working Groups are identifying policies and practices that highlight areas of excellence as well as areas that need improvement. During the Steering Committee meetings, the areas that need improvement are discussed and the Self-Study co-chairs document these areas to begin addressing them.

- The Verification of Compliance (VOC) Working Group was formed. The VOC is a document that focuses on how we are in compliance with specific federal regulations. The VOC Working Group will have its kick-off meeting on Wednesday, December 16 to begin this work.

What's next?

December 2020 – Working Groups submit a draft narrative at the end of the semester.

January-February 2021 - The drafts are compiled into one Self-Study document.

March 2021 – The Self-Study draft is submitted to the College Community and CUNY Central for comment.

April-May 2021 – Revisions are made to the Self-Study incorporating feedback received.

August 2021 – The final Self-Study draft is submitted to the Middle States Evaluation Team Chair.

Fall 2021 – Prepare and host for Middle States Evaluation Team Chair Visit.

How can I get involved?

There are multiple ways you can participate in the Self-Study process.

- Become familiar with the Middle States Standards, the Self-Study Institutional Priorities of CSI, and the Self-Study Intended Outcomes for CSI.
- Assist with the collection of evidence to document how the College is in compliance with the Middle States Standards.
- Participate as a member of a Working Group.
- Provide feedback on drafts submitted to the College community.
- Attend Self-Study events.

If you would like to provide comments or more actively participate in the Self-Study, please contact the Steering Committee at CSISelfStudy@csi.cuny.edu.

CSI Insights

A major part of the Middle States Self-Study relies on various forms of periodic assessment. In this issue of **CSI Insights**, we focus on evidence gathered for Standard V, Educational Effectiveness Assessment. Each academic year, academic departments assess their programs to measure student learning outcomes and assist with curricular change. Highlighted below are two programs, Biology-BS, and English-MS, where the departments implemented changes based on the assessment data collected.

Biology BS

From 2014-2019, the Biology department used assessment at several levels to revise its curriculum. First, surging rates of course substitutions revealed that our schedules of course offerings were inadequate to allow efficient progress through our complex system of Tracks, each with very specific sets of required courses. Second, analysis of our curriculum map against our BS program goals revealed misalignments in course sequencing, for example Bio205-General Physiology's role as a prerequisite for almost all upper level courses, regardless of their learning goals. This inference prompted program-level assessment via analysis of learning outcomes in two individual downstream courses (BIO213-Vertebrate Zoology and BIO322-Evolution), which confirmed the existence of obstacles for student success. Students were taking Evolution in their last two semesters because the curriculum forced them through General Physiology and Genetics (Bio 312) first. We recognized Evolution as a foundational course that should reinforce goals introduced in General Biology II, relating to evolution, biodiversity, and organismal biology, allowing these to be mastered via electives such as Vertebrate Zoology. By extension, we recognized that not only Evolution, but also three other formerly 300-level courses (Genetics, Cell Biology, and Ecology), along with General Physiology, should function in reinforcement and be accessible to our students directly out of General Biology, at the 200-level. Although inspired by pedagogical analysis, these changes are also solutions to the logistical problems posed by the old Tracks, and finally, they allow several formerly 200-level electives to serve as vehicles for student mastery of our program goals, as re-focused 300-level courses, each building on one or more of our five foundational courses.

English-MA

Following an assessment in 2015, the English department instituted several changes in its MA program: a revamped curriculum and new exit requirement; a fast-track admissions program for graduating majors with high GPAs; and a Master of Arts and Writing Program (MAWP) enabling qualified students to teach in the undergraduate Writing Program and receive mentorship from faculty members. After assessing student preparedness for rigorous graduate work, the department developed a Methods of Graduate Study course (ENG 690). This is designed to give students the intellectual foundations to write an MA thesis, which they must complete under the guidance of a faculty advisor. Curricular changes in the MA program now align it with comparable programs at other CUNY campuses and colleges around the country. Since 2016, enrollment in the program has increased from a low of 8 to a high of 49.