

## Middle States Accreditation FAQ's

1. *What is "Middle States"?* "Middle States" is shorthand for the [Middle States Commission on Higher Education](#) (MSCHE), an institutional accreditor recognized by the U.S. [Department of Education](#). MSCHE is a non-governmental membership association that accredits over 500 colleges & universities. Prior to July 2020, MSCHE was referred to as a "regional" accreditor. However, federal regulatory changes in that year eliminated the traditional geographical boundaries that limited MSCHE accreditation to institutions within that specified region.
2. *What is accreditation?* Accreditation is an assurance to the public that an academic institution meets acceptable levels of performance on established standards, requirements, and policies. The MSCHE accreditation process includes institutional self-reflection on how it meets these obligations, peer review, and evaluation of compliance with several federal and other regulatory elements. Although a voluntary practice, holding institutional accreditation by a federally recognized accreditor is a requirement for higher education institutions seeking to access federal student financial aid and other funding under Title IV of the Higher Education Act. Accreditation is also a typical prerequisite for transfer of academic credit between institutions.
3. *How long has The University of Scranton been accredited?* The University has held accreditation through Middle States since 1927. Our accreditation was most recently reaffirmed in 2019.
4. *Why is accreditation important?* In addition to being an indicator of institutional quality, maintaining institutional accreditation is necessary for institutions to gain access to Title IV federal financial aid funding. Title IV is part of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (as amended), the law that regulates many aspects of U.S. higher education activities. A number of the practices and policies in place with MSCHE flow from this legislation.

Institutional accreditation is also often a baseline criterion for transferring credit from one institution to another. Many employers look for degrees from accredited institutions, and some will only offer educational benefits to employees if they are seeking education through an accredited institution. State governments

information about these accreditations, their cycles, standards, and processes, contact the Dean's Office within each college.

5. *What is the accreditation process? How do we achieve accreditation, and how do we maintain it?*

Once an institution achieves initial accreditation through a robust candidacy process, accreditation status is determined at key points in the accreditation cycle. This cycle is a generally an eight to ten-year period beginning and ending with a comprehensive self-study, a mid-point review, annual reporting, and sometimes through other interim progress reports as required by the accreditor. Within Middle States, institutions engage in self-study every eight years<sup>1</sup>, and submits annual reporting each spring that includes standard data and information elements, along with

Once the self-study

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