



Founded in 1885

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, INC.

Commission on Independent Schools

Self-Study Workshop Booklet

Daniel J. Ferris

Director of Accreditation and School Improvement [**dferris@neasc.org**](mailto:dferris@neasc.org)

James C. Mooney

Deputy Director for Accreditation and School Improvement [**jmooney@neasc.org**](mailto:jmooney@neasc.org)

Beth A. Hamilton

Associate Director for Accreditation and School Improvement [**bhamilton@neasc.org**](mailto:bhamilton@neasc.org)

September 2021 Version

Contents

| | |
|--|------|
| Pre-Workshop Self-Assessment | P. 3 |
| Questions for the Self-Study Coordinator | P. 4 |
| Self-Study Key Dates/Checklist | P. 5 |
| Committee Information | P. 6 |
| Self-Study Workshop Scenarios | P. 7 |
| Self-Study Coordinator Checklist | P. 8 |

Pre-Workshop Self-Assessment

As a school group, take a few minutes to discuss where you are in the self-study process.

How are you feeling with regard to where you are in the process?

At this point, what kind of shape is your school in with regard to the process?

What do you need? Think in broad terms – but also try to be specific as to what you need at this moment in the process and what you anticipate needing as time goes on.

What questions/concerns do you have right now?

What do you hope to gain/learn from today's workshop?

Other thoughts/issues?

Questions for the Self-Study Coordinator

| Your Mandate | School Priorities/Focus | Personnel Focus |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Who expects what from you as the Self-Study Coordinator? What are you responsible for accomplishing?</p> | <p>What are the “big picture” issues?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current plans? • Current challenges? • Known “wish lists”? | <p>Who are the most influential members of the school community? Who are the positive leaders?</p> |
| <p>What authority/capacity have you been given by the Head of School?</p> | <p>What are the “elephants” in the room?</p> | <p>Who are the able writers? Who are the techies?</p> |
| <p>Who will have the final word on editing the Self-Study?</p> | <p>Which standards will require special focus? Are there sequencing concerns?</p> | <p>Who can you count on to support you in accomplishing the work of the Self-Study?</p> |
| <p>What logistical and other help is available to you?</p> | <p>Are there gaps in readiness to begin the Self-Study? What advance work needs to be done?</p> | <p>What are the best matches between priority standards and available personnel?</p> |

Self-Study Key Dates/Checklist

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| <u>Initial Contact</u> | Date: _____ |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|

| | |
|--|-------------|
| <u>Surveys</u> | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Links distributed to all constituencies | Date: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Data uploaded to the Portal | Date: _____ |

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| <u>Foundation Visit</u> | Date: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Study Report submitted 6 weeks prior | Date: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Draft to Coordinator | Date: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> All required materials uploaded to the Portal | Date: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Required financials uploaded to confidential NEASC site | Date: _____ |

| | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <u>Program Visit</u> | Dates: from _____ to _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Study Report submitted 6 weeks prior | Date: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drafts to Coordinator | Date: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> All required materials uploaded to Portal | Date: _____ |

Committee Information

| Standards Committees | Committee Chair | Notes |
|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Admissions | | |
| 2. Governance | | |
| 3. Resources | | |
| 4. Adult Community | | |
| 5. Health & Safety | | |
| 6. Proprietary | | |
| 7. Mission | | |
| 8. Student Needs | | |
| 9. Program | | |
| 10. Professional Development | | |
| 11. Community | | |
| 12. Residential | | |
| 13. Homestay | | |
| 14. Strategic Planning | | |

Self-Study Workshop Scenarios

Scenario #1: Faculty Resistance

A NEASC staff member made a presentation to the faculty about the accreditation process, the role of faculty members, and the need to document the process through the writing of the Self-Study. At a subsequent faculty meeting, you provide a schedule of meetings and tentative committee assignments. One of the more senior classroom teachers, known to be cantankerous, announces stridently that she is too busy to participate in this process, her course load is full, and she already serves on the Discipline Committee.

As the Self-Study Coordinator, how do you respond? Are there other members of the school community who should play a role in responding to this teacher? Is there anything that could have been done in advance to avoid this public confrontation?

Scenario #2: Overstepping Editor

The Chair of the Standard 8 Committee (Commitment to Inspiration and Support Characterizes the Approach to Each Student) comes to you to complain. His committee worked diligently and thoughtfully on the research, the discussion of issues, and the writing of their report. Their report was submitted three weeks ago to the Steering Committee. The final draft of the Self-Study Report was just made available for faculty review as a Google Doc, and the Standard 8 Committee members were stunned to find that their report was substantially altered, and their recommendations were eliminated. The Committee members are angry and asking why they were asked to go through the process if their work was not honored.

As the Self-Study Coordinator, how do you respond? What are the issues and how could this situation have been avoided?

Scenario #3: Strong Personality

The Program Standards Committees have been meeting, researching, and discussing for weeks. The Standard 12 Committee (Commitment to Meeting the Needs of Each Student Drives the Residential Program) is comprised of six faculty members, including the charismatic and strong-willed Director of Residential Life. When the first draft of this standard is submitted to the Steering Committee, it is glowing with accolades and praise but with no real suggestions or recommendations for improvement. You know that the dorms are staffed by the youngest and least experienced faculty, that international students have complained about feeling left-out, and that there has been grumbling among the parents about the lack of weekend activities for the seven-day boarders.

What are the issues and where do you start to address these issues? What role does the Steering Committee play and what might they have done in the planning stages to avoid this issue?

Self-Study Coordinator(s) Checklist

1. Preparation for the Self-Study

- In consultation with the Head of School and NEASC Liaison, decide on dates for the Initial Contact and both the Foundation and Program Standards Visits
- Login information and instructions for the online portal will be sent to the Head of School and the Self-Study Coordinator(s)
- Meet with the Head of School to determine arrangements for the Visiting Committee accommodations and meals
- Arrange for the Visiting Committee to have an area to work both at the school and the hotel, include refreshments and any materials requested by the Chair
- Self-Study materials are available on the NEASC [website](#)
- Register for a Self-Study Workshop [here](#)
- Meet with the Head of School to plan the calendar of professional days to work on the Self-Study, decide on the Steering Committee membership, and review the list of active evaluators for the school
- Register new Self-Study Coordinators for a workshop and advise NEASC staff regarding those available to participate on Visiting Committees during the two seasons prior to hosting the decennial visit
- Schedule NEASC staff presentation at the school and meeting with the Steering Committee
- Plan for a discussion and review of the Mission Statement
- Arrange with NEASC for the survey links to be created, data collected, and data shared with all Foundation and Program Committees

2. Self-Study Foundation Standards

- Following the NEASC staff presentation, work with the Steering Committee to confirm committee assignments and set timeline for the necessary work
- Monitor progress of Foundation Standards committees
- Arrange for all required documentation to be collected, uploaded or placed in files for Visiting Committee
- Submit completed report (Foundation Standards 1-6) six weeks prior to the Foundation Visit

3. Self-Study Program Standards

- Survey faculty on preferences for Program Standards committees
- Set committee assignments, create a timeline for completion of the work
- Monitor progress of Program Standards work and compilation of all required documentation
- Submit completed report six weeks prior to the Program Visit

4. Sharing of Report and Final Preparations

- Share with all constituencies the results of the reports
- Plan for the follow-up