

6 MAXIMS TO LIVE BY FOR A SOLID SELF-STUDY PROCESS

Coordinate a successful self-study at your institution

Bringing people's powers together to fuel a self-study machine demands strategic planning, collaboration, commitment to continuous improvement, and a handful of gently worn truths. To make these helpful hints more memorable, we've organized them around well-known sayings. If you're working toward institutional or discipline-specific accreditation, scroll down to see six easy-to-remember guidelines for self-study success.



The early bird gets the worm.

Don't worry, your morning alarm doesn't need to change. But, keeping in mind that the average self-study will take anywhere from 6 to 24 months to complete, you'll want your institution to be working in the spirit of early deadlines. Planning to hold a retreat or solicit survey feedback from faculty, students, and alumni? Build in even more time.



Go back to the basics.

Treat your previous self-study as a guide. Since it's broken down by category and details your institution's mission, offerings, and processes, it can teach you about your college or university in a way that nothing else can — especially if it was successful!



Put a captain at the helm.

As with any other high-stakes project, your self-study requires professional oversight. This might look like bringing in professional project managers to lead your institution's operations team or creating a dedicated support network for the faculty and staff reviewing standards and criteria.



Lend an ear.

An effective self-study should not be centered around one perspective — and if it is, you're doing it wrong. While there may be just one group responsible for creating the original draft, your self-study should include input from multiple individuals and groups from across the program or institution.



Treat other people like you wish to be treated.

Keep in mind that this will be reviewed by other human beings just like you! Organize your self-study in a way that is intuitive, visually engaging, and as clear and succinct as possible. Imagine yourself on the receiving end of this package and format your self-study accordingly.



One step at a time.

To avoid becoming overwhelmed by the task ahead, carve out time at regular intervals to take stock of your institution's strengths. Use [the right tools](#) to capture data along the way so you can easily pull insights later. By taking a measured approach, your institution will build its self-study incrementally. Before you know it, you'll have crossed the finish line.



Discover how Watermark solutions can transform your institution's self-study process.

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Sources:

"Best Practices for a Successful Self-Study Process," The Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, gradschool.unc.edu; *Lighting the fire for accreditation readiness*, watermarkinsights.com