



A Student's Guide to Mid-Semester Assessment

Office of Student Services

An abstract graphic consisting of several overlapping, semi-transparent blue and grey geometric shapes, resembling a stylized building or a series of interconnected planes. The shapes are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and perspective.

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The Student's Guide to Mid-Semester Assessment was created by the Office of Student Services at MCNY.

If you need assistance with any of the information or learning strategies, please contact Student Services at 212-343-1234, ext. 5009.

Midterm or Mid-Semester Assessment?

There is a big difference between a midterm and a Mid-Semester Assessment.

Professors refer to exams given around the middle of the semester as **midterms**. These might be the first of two exams given during a semester (the other being a *final exam*) that include all course material covered to that point. Not every professor will require a midterm exam for their course. Specific course requirements can be found in your syllabus for each course.

A **Mid-Semester Assessment** is exactly what it sounds like, a message from your professor given at the mid-point of the semester to provide **feedback on your progress in class to date**. A Mid-Semester Assessment is ***not a final grade and will not affect your GPA. However, it is a very important assessment.***

Things to keep in mind:

- A Mid-Semester Assessment is an indicator to help you understand how you are doing in classes at the half-way point. The assessment is provided by your professor and can encourage the continuance of good work, and/or identify areas that need improvement.
- You can view your Mid-Semester Assessments by logging on to your Self-Service account. Students will be notified by email when the Mid-Semester Assessment period has started.
- There are a number of resources at MCNY, but when you want to discuss your progress in a course we recommend the first person you contact is the professor who is teaching that course.
- Because Mid-Semester Assessments are not final grades they cannot be appealed.
- Assessments are provided before the deadline to officially withdraw from classes to give students the opportunity to make an informed decision about withdrawing from one or more courses. **Students are highly encouraged to pursue all other options to successfully complete courses rather than withdraw. Meet with an Advisor in Student Services before you make any final decisions.**

Understanding Your Mid-Semester-Assessment

Professors will post Mid-Semester Assessments on Self-Service during the seventh and eighth weeks of the semester. To view your assessment, you will need to log on to Self-Service.

1. Go to: <https://selfservice.mcny.edu/>
2. Sign on using your assigned username and password.
3. Click on “Grades” in the top menu.
4. Click on “Mid-Semester Assessment” in the red sub-menu.

Example:

UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT GRADE REPORT MID-SEMESTER ASSESSMENT					
Mid-Semester Assessment					
Mid-Semester Assessments will be posted for undergraduate sections as they are entered by faculty members. Needs Improvement indicates an unsatisfactory performance. Comments for needs improvement marks will be provided.					
Summer 2014					
Course	Section	Instructor	Name	Assessment	Comments
MTH 231 SKI	MDA1	Ardovini, Joanne	Statistics for Group	Needs Improvement	Completion of Work
PSY 231 SEL	MHD1	Ardovini, Joanne	Social & Development	Satisfactory	
PSY 231 VAL	MDA1	Casanova, Saskias	Group Values, Norms	Satisfactory	
SOC 231 SYS	MDA1	Gray, Charles	Sociology of Groups	Satisfactory	
If any questions arise concerning your Mid-Semester Assessment marks, you are encouraged to speak with your instructor. Following that contact, you can get additional support from your Student Services advisor, the Learning Enhancement Center or Mentor Program.					

You will see a list of courses along with the Mid-Semester Assessment that your professor has posted. The Assessment will either be Satisfactory or Needs Improvement;

Satisfactory means that you are meeting the basic requirements of this course. This could mean anything from “just passing” to “doing great,” and everything in between. We encourage you to conduct your own Self-Assessment to estimate what your actual grade might be shaping up to be. There is more information about how to do this in the next section.

Needs Improvement means that you are not performing up to the standards for this course. Next to “Needs Improvement,” you will see general comments where your professor will have indicated the basic reason(s) why you have received this assessment. The reasons will include one or more of the following: Attendance, Completion of Work, or Quality of Work Completed. Your first step in the event that a needs improvement assessment is given, is to discuss it with your professor for the course. Take this opportunity to ask questions about your progress in the class and reasons for the mark. You may also complete the Self-Assessment and bring this to your meeting with your professor. Note that failure to attend classes will lead to an NI, and may lead to failing the course.

Remember this is not a final grade. If you are doing well, keep up the good work – you are almost home. If you received a “Needs Improvement” assessment, you now know that there is more work to be done. In either case, look for ways to improve. There are resources available to you if you need to seek help; these include:

- The Office of Student Services
- The Learning Enhancement Center
- The Mentors Program
- Student Success Coaches
- The Library

Self-Assessment

The first step towards improvement is determining where you stand in each course, and why you are not performing up to expectations. Take a minute to look at the syllabus from each course and review the grades you received in each assignment and exam. Look only at the assignments and exams that were due so far.

This might not give you a completely accurate projection, but it will likely be close enough for you to get a clear picture of what your grade would look like if you continued in this course without any changes. For a more accurate understanding of your current progress in a course, we recommend that you speak directly to your professor.

Example:

In the example course below there were: two essays, one quiz, and a midterm exam. The assignments, grades received, and possible points for each assignment/exam are listed. You can then use the basic formula to calculate what your grade is at that point in the semester.

Course Name: Introduction to Sociology

Course Grades:

Assignment	Points Received	Possible Points
Analysis Essay #1	25	30
Analysis Essay #2	20	30
Quiz #1	15	20
Midterm Exam	38	50
Total	(A) 98	(B) 130

Calculate your grade as a percentage using the formula below.



$$(A \div B) \times 100 = \underline{\quad ? \quad}$$

$$(98 \div 130) \times 100 = 75.4\%$$

Notes/Next Steps:

* I will study my notes for at least one hour every week so that I am better prepared for exams.

* I will join my classmates' study group.

* I will meet with a tutor for help with my writing.

* I will review my attendance in this class and attend every class.

Sample Self-Assessment Worksheets

Course Name: _____

Course Grades:

Assignment	Points Received	Possible Points
Total	(A)	(B)

Calculate your grade as a percentage using the formula below.



$$(A \div B) \times 100 = \underline{\quad ? \quad}$$

$$(\underline{\quad} \div \underline{\quad}) \times 100 = \underline{\quad} \%$$

Notes/Next Steps:

Course Name: _____

Course Grades:

Assignment	Points Received	Possible Points
Total	(A)	(B)

Calculate your grade as a percentage using the formula below.



$$(A \div B) \times 100 = \underline{\quad ? \quad}$$

$$(\underline{\quad} \div \underline{\quad}) \times 100 = \underline{\quad} \%$$

Notes/Next Steps:

Grade Point Average

A system of points is used to determine each student's Grade Point Average (GPA). The GPA is calculated as follows. The grade weight* for each grade is multiplied by credit hours of course, creating quality points. All quality points are added and the sum is then divided by the number of credits attempted, producing a GPA. At MCNY the GPA is rounded off to the third decimal place.

Calculating your GPA

A GPA is calculated in two ways:

1. The *Semester GPA* shows the average for all courses taken in a specific semester.
2. The *Cumulative GPA* is the average for all courses taken over all of a student's entire time at MCNY.

Example:

Course	Grade	Grade Weight	Multiplied by	# of Credits	Equals	Quality Points
<i>Developing Career Goals (CA)</i>	B	3	<i>times</i>	3	<i>equals</i>	9
<i>Principles of Business</i>	A	4	<i>times</i>	3	<i>equals</i>	12
<i>Computer Applications</i>	C	2	<i>times</i>	3	<i>equals</i>	6
<i>Human Biology</i>	B+	3.333	<i>times</i>	3	<i>equals</i>	9.999
<i>Critical Thinking and Writing</i>	A-	3.667	<i>times</i>	3	<i>equals</i>	11.001
				Total Credits Attempted: 15		Total Quality Points: 48

Calculate your GPA using the formula below.



$(\text{Total Quality Points} \div \text{Total Credits Attempted}) = \underline{\text{GPA}}$

Example: $(48 \div 15) = \underline{3.200}$

* Grade Weight – MCNY uses the following grading system:

Grade	Grade Weight
A	4.000
A-	3.667
B+	3.333
B	3.000
B-	2.667
C+	2.333
C	2.000
C-	1.667
D	1

Grade	Grade Weight
F (Failure)	0
I (Incomplete)*	0
EI (Extended Incomplete)*	0
W (Officially Withdrawn)	----
WP (Withdrawn With Penalty)	0
FWD (Unofficially Withdrawn/Failure)	0
FNS (No Show, Failure for the Course)	0

*Will not be calculated as part of GPA

Minimum Grade Point Average

- For undergraduate students (Associate and Bachelor's degrees), the minimum cumulative GPA required for graduation is 2.0.
- For graduate students (Master's degrees), the minimum cumulative GPA required for graduation is 3.0.

These are the *minimum* GPAs for graduation. To receive the full benefit of a college education, a student should always strive for higher grades and overall excellence.

Things to keep in mind:

- For a semester GPA, you only count the courses in one semester.
- For a cumulative GPA, you include all courses ever taken at MCNY.
- Incomplete grades ("I") are counted as zero quality points. When the Incomplete has been changed, the GPA will be recalculated.
- For an easier way to determine your GPA, you can use this online GPA calculator: <http://gpacalculator.net/college-gpa-calculator/>
- MCNY Grade Forgiveness Policy: If a student passes a failed course on the second attempt, the passing grade will be used to calculate the GPA. The original F will not be included in the calculation, but it will remain on the transcript and be counted toward attempted credits for financial aid eligibility.
- Incomplete Grades: Incomplete grades are given solely at the discretion of the professor. Students have until the completion date set by the professor, but no later than the 7th week of the following semester, to complete the coursework to satisfy the Incomplete. If the coursework is not submitted by the deadline, the grade becomes an F.
- A low GPA and/or repeated failure to complete credits attempted will affect eligibility to receive financial aid.

Why Is My GPA Important?

GPA matters! We'll say it again...GPA MATTERS. Why? There are several reasons and we will start with the most basic: the pursuit of knowledge and excellence. Earning a college degree at MCNY means that you have developed a well-rounded and strong body of knowledge in your chosen field. You are here to gain knowledge that you will use for the rest of your life. Having a degree says that you have satisfactorily completed the courses. Having a high GPA says that you have excelled.

Here are a few other reasons why it matters:

- Ability to receive **Financial Aid** is based on satisfactory academic progress toward your degree. Poor grades can result in a loss of financial aid, which may include grants, scholarships, and student loans.
- **Scholarships** are often based on academic performance, maintaining a high GPA may allow you to keep existing scholarships, or position you to apply for and receive them.

- Thinking about continuing for a **Master's degree**? To be accepted into a Master's degree program, at MCNY or another college, you will need to demonstrate that you can excel in advanced level course work. Most graduate schools require students to have completed their bachelor's degree with at least a B average (3.0).
- Careerbuilder.com reports that in a recent survey as many as 70 percent of **hiring managers screen job applications based on GPA**. In today's competitive job market, when all other factors are equal, potential employers are likely to choose the candidate with the high GPA.

Does Attendance Really Matter?

Although this seems obvious, we can state with absolute certainty that, yes, *attendance matters*.

Here are a few reasons why:

- Classroom time can include lectures, group discussions, student presentations, and question and answer sessions. All of these contribute to a more robust learning of the course material. Every time you miss a class, you miss the chance to learn something that you cannot find in your textbooks.
- Virtually every class at MCNY meets only once per week. If you miss one session, you have missed an entire week's worth of instruction.
- You have chosen to come to college to learn. Every absence is a missed opportunity to learn something new.
- Many professors will include "class participation" as part of your grade. You cannot participate if you are not there.

There are many **popular myths about attendance**. All of them are *false*. Let's look at a few.

- *"I'm allowed three absences."* The expectation is that you attend *every* session of *every* class. Some professors may give you leeway and start deducting points from your final grade after a certain number of absences, but that is strictly up to the professor. The bottom line is that every absence will affect your grade in some manner.
- *"If I bring a doctor's note, then I should be excused."* Even when you have a legitimate reason, you are still absent.
- *"I had an emergency, so the teacher has to excuse me."* Many of your professors may be empathetic and considerate whenever possible, however, there is no requirement that says your teacher *must* make an exception. Professors will also look at your track record in their classes; have you missed classes before the "emergency?"
- *"I can skip the first class because nothing happens during the first week."* This can be a major mistake. During the first week your professor will establish everything that will be happening in that class for the rest of the semester. Skipping the first week of classes is like building a house without a foundation – not a good idea.

Attendance counts for **online classes**, too!

- Treat an online class the same way you would with a class that is offered in a classroom in real time.
- Professors keep attendance for online classes, just as they do for traditional classes.

- You must log on and submit work on a regular basis.
- If you do not submit an assignment or post to the weekly discussion forum(s) in a timely manner, your professor may mark you as absent for that week.

Let's not forget about **arriving on time**. You are not only expected to show up for every class, you are expected to arrive on time and stay in the class until the professor has dismissed you.

- Arriving late and leaving early disrupts the flow of the class. It is a distraction and is disrespectful to your classmates and the professor.
- If you arrive late or leave early your professor can mark you as absent for that session.

Not Satisfied With Your Performance?

If you received a "Needs Improvement" assessment, or are not satisfied with your performance at the mid-point of the semester, we have a number of tips that you can follow to improve.

1. Meet with your professors!

- Discussing your work with your professors is often the best way to identify where you struggled and what you can do to improve in their course.
- When you meet with a professor, consider asking:
 - What is the Mid-Semester Assessment based on?
 - What strategies could help my understanding of the material?
 - Is there any work that I can submit to supplement what I have already done?
- Convey to your instructors how much you are committed to doing well.
- Explain that you want to improve; you just need some help getting there.
- Always maintain a professional demeanor with your instructors.

2. Contact an Advisor in Student Services to develop a Plan of Action for Student Success

- **Loretta Foy**, lfoy@mcny.edu, **Coordinator of Student Services, Bronx Campus**, Advisor for all undergraduate students at the Bronx Campus.
- **Bradley Hawk Keie**, bhawkkeie@mcny.edu, **Associate Director of Graduate and International Student Advisement**, Advisor for all Master's degree and International students.
- **Lisa Mulligan**, lmulligan@mcny.edu, **Coordinator of Student Life, and Advisor for Healthcare Systems Management and Emergency Management**
- **Marissa Sala**, msala@mcny.edu, **Assistant Director of Student Clinical Services** and Advisor for Human Services
- **Olena Wills**, owills@mcny.edu, **Coordinator of First Year Student Engagement** and Advisor for undergraduate Business and IT students

3. Obtain a Tutor

MCNY offer free tutoring services in several ways. The Learning Enhancement Center (LEC) offers one-on-one tutoring in writing and math. This includes: APA citation, research techniques, development of critical thinking skills, essay and CA development skills, and mathematical assistance at all levels. To schedule an appointment with a tutor, send an email to LEC@mcny.edu or by phone at 212-343-1234, ext. 2438.

You may also be able to receive free tutoring in specific subjects through the Mentors Office. Mentors are students who volunteer their time to support fellow students. To connect with a Mentor, email academicsupport@mcny.edu.

4. Take Action Now!!!

The longer you wait, the more difficult it will be to improve. Your professors and advisors are education professionals; they are your best resources to develop a plan and make an informed decision about your next steps.

Deciding When to Withdraw from a Course

Sometimes, you may want to withdraw from a class, ***but we strongly recommend keeping this as a last option.*** Your advisor can help you explore all options. If you absolutely must withdraw from one or more courses, it is important that you meet with a member of the Student Financial Services team to determine how this will affect your current and future financial aid.

Withdrawing from a course will also affect your overall progress in your course of study.

Once the Late Registration and Add/Drop period has ended (after the first week of the semester) you cannot **Drop** a course. You can only **Withdraw** from it.

What is the difference?

When you **Drop** a class, it is completely removed from your record, as if you never registered for it. At MCNY, the Add/Drop period ends when Late Registration also ends. This is usually immediately after the first week of classes. The Add/Drop period allows students to make changes to their schedules after they have registered. Once the Add/Drop period ends, the only way to change your schedule is to **Withdraw**.

A **Withdrawal** indicates that you started a course, but were unable to complete it. Depending on the withdrawal date, you will receive a grade of W or WP and be charged tuition for the course. W and/or WP do not affect your GPA but appear on your official transcript. The last day to withdraw from one or more courses is always posted on the College's academic calendar and usually occurs after the ninth week of the semester.

Because of the tuition liability and the potential financial aid implications, we always encourage students to explore alternative solutions before withdrawing. However, there are occasions when a failing a particular course is a certainty. In such cases, you will need to meet an advisor to complete the course withdrawal process.

Any final decision to Withdraw from one or more classes should be reviewed with Financial Aid and Bursar, to determine how an enrollment change will affect you aid and tuition balance!

You can contact both offices by email or by phone:

Bursar - 212-343-1234, ext. 5002, boffice@mcny.edu

Financial Aid - 212-343-1234, ext. 5004, fa@mcny.edu