

City Semester Addendum

This applicant was a participant in the City Semester program. Information regarding the structure and goals of the City Semester program is explained below:

What is City Semester?

City Semester is a selective, pandisciplinary, and experiential semester program that focuses on fostering a sense of civic leadership through the immersive study of New York City. The work is project-based and organized around both individual and group assignments that draw from multiple subjects and the world beyond the classroom. The systems-based approach and skills-based learning methods complement the curriculum and mission of the Ethical Culture Fieldston School. We are proud of the current City Semester undergraduates (and alumni) at your institutions; many have credited their college success to the skills acquired through their participation in the program. Students apply for admission to City Semester, which is offered during both the fall and spring semesters.

Why move to narrative assessments in lieu of letter grades?

City Semester faculty aim to foster the development of lifelong learning skills, character traits, and other competencies essential for success in college, career, and life. Because the program transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries, the City Semester faculty opted to provide skill-based assessment rather than traditional letter grades. The group experience promotes growth in areas that cannot be reduced to numerical or letter grades. Given the pandisciplinary nature of the program, narrative assessments offer a more comprehensive and holistic grading system for City Semester students.

What are the goals of the City Semester narrative assessment?

City Semester values and helps develop the higher-order skills necessary for success in college. The goal of the narrative assessment is to convey a comprehensive understanding of the student, informed by multiple faculty perspectives. The core faculty collaborates to create a report that conveys a deeper, more authentic story about each student: who they are, what they have learned, how they have grown, what they love, and who they aspire to be. The City Semester transcript measures a student's growth primarily against their prior benchmarks rather than in comparison to other students, focusing on their personal goals as lifelong learners and the faculty's goals for them in the program.

How are students graded?

All participants receive a transcript that reflects the City Semester's multidisciplinary, skills-based nature. Students are evaluated in five distinct categories, measuring fundamental Apple Core Skills: Social Justice and Awareness, The Self in the City, Collaboration, Engagement/Resilience, and Systems Thinking/Critical Thinking. Using a comprehensive and holistic evaluation process, achievement is assessed in categories of *Discovering* (Approaching Expectations), *Practicing* (Meeting Expectations), and *Doing* (Exceeding Expectations).

For core academic course calculations, as well as NCAA Eligibility Center requirements, **City Semester students receive standard graduation credits (CR) for each discipline (English, History, Math, Science, Language, Ethics, Arts, and PE), listed as 'City Semester ____' on their transcript.**

Please do not hesitate to contact the Fieldston College Office with any questions about the City Semester program at collegeoffice@ecfs.org or 718-329-7243.