

2019-2020
Outcomes Assessment Report
(Published Spring 2021)



Harper College

GoForward[®]

Overview

Outcomes assessment at Harper College is the process of collecting, analyzing, and using data about student learning to focus institutional efforts on improving student achievement and the learning experience. Learning assessment at Harper is based on the following principles:

- The most effective assessment processes are faculty driven.
- Assessment is an ongoing process that leads to change and improvement.
- Assessment is never perfect.
- Academic freedom can be maintained while engaged in assessment.
- Assessment is not a task solely performed as a requirement of accrediting agencies; the reason for assessment is improvement.
- Assessment is not linked to faculty evaluation and results will not be used punitively.
- The use of data to support change leads to the most meaningful improvements.
- Course-embedded assessment is the most effective authentic method of conducting assessment.
- Assessment raises as many questions as it answers.
- Assessment focuses the attention of the College on continuous quality improvement.

The Nichols five-column model of assessment has been adopted by Harper College. This model organizes the assessment process by guiding programs and departments through the process of developing an assessment plan, collecting evidence of student learning, communicating results, and developing data-based action plans focused on continuous improvement. The five columns represent the following:

- Identifying the program or department mission (Column 1)
- Defining outcomes (Column 2)
- Selecting assessment measures and establishing the criteria for success (Column 3)
- Implementing assessments and collecting data (Column 4)
- Using assessment results to improve student learning or department quality (Column 5)

Academic course-level and program-level assessment, as well as student support and administrative services assessment follow an annual cycle in which the assessment plan is developed during the fall semester, the assessment is conducted during the spring semester, assessment results are entered in summer, and improvement plans are completed through department discussions the following fall semester (see Table 1).

Outcomes Assessment at Harper

The department chair or program coordinator is customarily responsible for ensuring the annual assessment process is followed. In some cases, the dean may appoint a faculty designee other than the chair or coordinator to oversee the assessment process within the department. All faculty members within a department are expected to participate in the assessment process as defined by the department's assessment plan.

Table 1 – Annual Outcomes Assessment Process

PLAN ✓ Columns 1-3 Enter Mission Statement, Student Learning Outcomes, Assessment Methods and Criteria for Success	October to December	Create assessment plan based on discussion with faculty and dean. Submit assessment plan in Nuventive ¹ (Columns 1-3). Assessment plan includes mission statement, learning outcomes, assessment methods, and criteria for success. Plan for assessment shared with the faculty. (Columns 1-3)
IMPLEMENT ✓ Collect assessment data	January to May	Implement assessment plan and collect data.
ANALYZE ✓ Column 4 Enter Results	May to August	Analyze assessment data to identify trends, areas for improvement, and initiatives to improve student learning. Enter results into Nuventive in preparation for the beginning of the fall semester. (Column 4)
IMPROVE ✓ Discuss findings with appropriate constituents ✓ Column 5 Enter Use of Results	August to early October	Discuss results among department faculty during Orientation Week. Meet with Dean to review findings and initiatives from previous cycle and discuss interventions and resources needed to initiate changes. Based on conversations with department faculty and dean, enter use of results (Column 5) in Nuventive. Assessment report completed (Columns 1-5). Begin planning for current academic year's assessment.
CLOSE THE LOOP ✓ Initiate changes defined above ✓ Begin new assessment cycle (Plan)	October	New assessment cycle begins. (See "Plan" above.) Incorporate revisions from last year.

¹ Nuventive is Harper's assessment management system, formerly known as TracDat. For more information, please visit Assessing Our Students on the HIP.

Course-Level Outcomes Assessment

Academic departments without AAS degrees or certificates of 30 hours or more participate in the course-level assessment process.² In 2019-2020, the total number of academic departments involved in course-level outcomes assessment was 26. Table 2 contains information about the outcomes assessment activities of these departments.

Table 2 – Course Outcomes Assessment Analysis, 2019-2020

Assessment Submissions	Number of Departments (%)
Documented consultations*	24/26 (92%)
Assessment Plan submitted (Columns 1-3)	26/26 (100%)
Assessment Report submitted (Columns 4-5)	26/26 (100%)
Results	Number of Items (%)
Outcomes process issues	21/118 (18%)
Criteria met, no further action	36/118 (31%)
Criteria met, action taken	30/118 (25%)
Criteria not met, no further action	2/118 (2%)
Criteria not met, action taken	29/118 (25%)
Total Assessments	118/118 (100%)

*Includes meetings, working e-mails, and working phone calls.

Of the 26 departments engaging in course-level assessment, all 26 areas (100%) completed the full outcomes assessment cycle in 2019-2020, an increase from 96% in 2018-2019 and 2017-2018. Though, it is important to note that 21 of the 118 individual assessment items (18%) were not conducted due to the Covid-19 pandemic, when classroom activities shifted abruptly to online, and lab activities were canceled, compared to only one outcomes process issue in the previous year.

Faculty are encouraged to identify actions for improving student achievement of learning outcomes. Data indicate that 59 of the 118 course-level assessment results (50%) led to improvements in course content, pedagogy, or assessment methods. Following are samples of action plans that were created to improve student learning as a result of course-level assessment findings.

Economics—ECO211

In 2019-2020, the department assessed the outcome, “Demonstrate the ability to use graphical models.” Questions selected for the assessment addressed not only the core content of the subject,

²Some departments conducted formal assessments at both the program and the course level: Accounting, Business Administration, Computer Information Systems, and Law Enforcement and Justice Administration.

but also critical thinking, calculation-based graph, and basic math skills. While in most sections, the class average was greater than 80% on the final assessment, it has been a concern that students are struggling to read the graph and math-based questions. The department is collecting suggestions from faculty to help the students better perform in such cases. It was agreed that adding more hands-on activities during class would increase student engagement and improve students' learning of microeconomics.

Physical Sciences—ST112

In order to assess the outcome, "Explain natural astronomical phenomena such as the rising and setting of stars, seasons, lunar phases, and eclipses," students were asked to answer three multiple choice exam questions that were common to all classes. Overall, class averages on the questions revealed opportunities for improvement. As a result, faculty will work together to try a variety of new, interactive lunar phase labs and activities to teach the material. The outcome will be reassessed to improve student learning of these astronomical concepts.

Kinesiology—CHW101

During the spring semester, the Kinesiology department measured students' confidence levels related to home visits. A survey was conducted to collect baseline data and asked students to rate their level of confidence in working with clients in their home. Although the majority of students were confident or very confident, 24% of students rated their confidence levels as "little confidence" or "no confidence at all." The department is redesigning both the online and face-to-face lesson components in this blended course to increase students' confidence levels when working with clients in their home.

Psychology—PSY101

The Psychology department evaluated students' familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology by administering a ten-item assessment on biological concepts. Although the criterion for success was met the previous year, in 2019-2020, students were not successful in maintaining the benchmark. Because the assessment was given during the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and the transition from classroom to all online teaching, instructors will be asked to develop online resources specifically related to the outcome. The instrument will continue to be used and student success rates will be compared over time.

Career Program Outcomes Assessment

Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees, various certificate programs, developmental math, and English as a Second Language are involved in academic program outcomes assessment activities. During the 2019-2020 academic year, 41 total academic programs/departments were involved in program-level outcomes assessment. Table 3 contains an analysis based on the outcomes assessment activities of these programs/departments.

Table 3 – Program Outcomes Assessment Analysis, 2019-2020

Assessment Submissions	Number of Programs (%)
Documented consultations*	38/41 (93%)
Assessment Plan submitted (Columns 1-3)	40/41 (98%)
Assessment Report submitted (Columns 4-5)	40/41 (98%)
Results	Number of Items (%)
Outcomes process issues	17/319 (5%)
Criteria met, no further action	157/319 (49%)
Criteria met, action taken	84/319 (26%)
Criteria not met, no further action	1/319 (0%)
Criteria not met, action taken	60/319 (19%)
Total Assessments	319/319 (100%)

* Includes meetings, working e-mails, and working phone calls.

In 2019-2020, 98% of programs completed the full outcomes assessment cycle, similar to last year's completion rate when 97% of the programs completed the full outcomes assessment cycle. The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted a considerable number of program assessment activities, as 17 of the 319 items were not conducted, compared to six items (5%) in the previous year. Data indicate that 144 of the 319 assessment results (45%) were used to improve course content, pedagogy, or assessment methods, a decrease of 5% from 2018-2019, although 6% higher than 2017-2018. Following are samples of action plans that were created to improve student learning as a result of program-level assessment findings.

Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning and Refrigeration (HVAC/R)

The department evaluated the outcome, "Gather data and information on HVAC equipment, components and controls" by assessing students' ability to complete the task, "Observing the Operating Characteristics of Refrigeration Systems with Common Faults" laboratory assignment. Assessment findings revealed that a large percentage of students were able to achieve success on this component due to protocols that were already in place prior to the pandemic; prerecorded lectures allowed students the flexibility to review materials independently and multiple times. Additionally, students were given an extension to complete laboratory assignments, under strict

safety guidelines, in the summer and following fall semesters – a key decision that allowed students to achieve the required skills to be successful in the workplace. It is important to note that not all students were able to persist during the Covid-19 pandemic, as many students did not have access to technology and/or the computer skills needed to successfully continue.

Paraprofessional Educator

The Paraprofessional program measured success rates on a student's ability to develop critical and creative thinking skills to become an effective decision maker and problem solver. While students met the benchmark of justifying their opinions, students did not meet the benchmark of using evidence to support their opinions. The focus of the next round of outcomes assessment will be on use of evidence to support opinions. It is important to note that the EDU 201 assessment was administered before the rapid transition to online instruction due to the Covid-19 pandemic, while the EDU 219 assessment was administered after the rapid transition to online instruction. This may have impacted the results of the assessment. Faculty members are engaging in discussions about how to help students meet this outcome in both face-to-face and online instructional modalities.

Physical Therapist Assistant

To evaluate the outcome, "Students will utilize the college's employment resources to locate gainful employment," the Physical Therapist Assistant program quantified students' use of support services, including career counseling. Though it was found that all students utilized student support services in 2019-2020 in creating a resume and completing a mock interview to prepare for their job search, the program will continue to work with Harper's Job Placement Resource Center (JPRC) to have students complete a reviewed resume and virtual interview. Furthermore, after meeting with the JPRC, the department is adding supplementary assignments including in-class or virtual JPRC presentations regarding interviewing and resume writing skills to enhance the students' knowledge of student support services and career counseling.

Supply Chain Management

Students' ability to understand the linkages of supply chain functions across various departments of an organization was evaluated using a case study to be completed as a team. It was found that most students were successful in completing a supply chain case study that includes baseline metrics for customer service, inventory management, procurement, logistics, and operations. Because of the high success rates of this case study, the program is developing a cumulative final exam to be used in 2021 that will ensure that each student is individually achieving the outcomes for this part of the course.

General Education Outcomes Assessment Activities

Harper College's five General Education Learning Outcomes are achieved as a result of successful completion of the general education requirements for any degree program. These five outcomes and their definitions are listed below:

- Communication: Communicate information and concepts in oral and written formats.
- Critical Thinking: Use evidence to develop arguments, make decisions, and evaluate outcomes.
- Diverse Perspectives and Cultures: Examine diverse perspectives and cultures as they relate to the individual, the community, and the global society.
- Information Literacy: Apply a variety of credible sources to support a given topic.
- Quantitative Reasoning: Use quantitative analytical skills to interpret and evaluate problems.

Harper conducts general education assessment annually. The Learning Assessment Committee and its Work Groups lead the assessment, and faculty members across the College measure the outcome within their courses. At least one General Education learning outcome is assessed each year according to a rotating schedule. Once a primary assessment has been conducted for an outcome in the first fiscal year, the next year the results are reviewed, and an improvement plan is developed. In the third fiscal year of the cycle, the improvement plan is implemented and in the fourth fiscal year, a follow-up assessment is conducted. The fifth year is a time when the outcome is reviewed and revised if needed. The activities that occurred for each outcome in the fiscal year 2019-2020 are summarized below.

Information Literacy – Full-scale Assessment

In 2019-2020, the Learning Assessment Committee and the General Education Information Literacy Work Group assessed the information literacy outcome. The assessment was conducted with a random sample of class sections from courses mapped to the Information Literacy general education outcome. The sampling technique also focused on sections with a relatively high percentage of students with 45 or more credit hours earned. Faculty of selected sections then submitted student artifacts, papers that required a minimum of three formal citations, that had been identified as the most intensive information literacy work in that class. Assignments were collected and processed through the Outcomes Assessment Office.

Members of the committee and work group attended norming sessions and then scored the assessments in four categories. Scoring was based on a 4-point scale (4=excellent, 3=good, 2=fair, and 1=poor). In total, 371 assessments were scored, and each assessment was read by two or three scorers. Results of the assessment revealed that the majority of students showed significant room for improvement in all four areas. Students scored the highest in the categories of “accuracy of the citations in text” and “accuracy of the citations in the bibliographic reference page” while scoring the lowest in the areas of “sources support the topic” and “credibility of sources selected.” Overall results of the assessment are reported in Table 4.

Table 4 – Overall Spring 2020 Information Literacy Results

	Mean	% scoring 3 or higher
Sources support the topic	1.7	15.4
Credibility of sources selected	1.9	17.5
Accuracy of the citations in text	2.4	33.4
Accuracy of the citations in the bibliographic reference page	2.3	33.7
Overall (N = 371)	2.1	9.9*

* Percentage of students scoring 3 or higher in all four components.

The assessment results were disaggregated to identify success rates of students by cumulative credit hours earned. Findings revealed that students who completed between 16-30 credit hours and students who completed 45 or more credit hours had higher success rates than students who had earned between 1-15 credit hours and 31-34 credit hours. The results are reported in Table 5.

Table 5 – Spring 2020 Results by Cumulative Credit Hour Earned

% scoring 3 or higher	1-15	16-30	31-34	45+
	(N = 23)	(N = 78)	(N = 106)	(N = 164)
Sources support the topic	13.0	17.9	12.3	16.5
Credibility of sources selected	8.7	17.9	16.0	19.5
Accuracy of the citations in text	26.1	39.7	29.2	34.1
Accuracy of the citations in the bibliographic reference page	34.8	37.2	29.2	34.8

While the results of the [Spring 2018 Community College Survey of Student Engagement \(CCSSE\)](#) and the [Harper Follow Up Survey](#) revealed that a majority of students believe that they learned to use credible sources to support a topic, results of the assessment showed a need for improving students capabilities in information literacy, particularly in the categories of “credibility of sources selected” and “sources support the topic.”

Please see [Information Literacy on the HIP](#) for more detailed results. Review of results and development of the improvement plan are scheduled for 2020-2021.

Communications – Improvement Plan Development

After reviewing the [2018-2019 Communications assessment results](#), and feedback gathered in fall 2019, the Work Group developed the [Communications Improvement Plan](#) in spring 2020. The plan focuses on faculty development and communication of effective learning activities and assignments, and attitudes about students and learning that positively impact students' communication skills.

The Learning Assessment Committee, General Education Communications Work Group, and Outcomes Assessment Office will work jointly to implement this plan throughout the 2020-2021 academic year. These groups will partner with the Academy for Teaching Excellence for faculty development initiatives, as well as other campus stakeholders in an effort to improve students' communication skills.

Please see [Communications on the HIP](#) for more detailed results.

Critical Thinking – Improvement Plan Implementation

In 2019-2020 the [Critical Thinking Improvement Plan](#) was implemented. Much of the plan focused on exploring and developing impactful faculty beliefs and perceptions about students and the teaching and learning of critical thinking. The work group partnered with the Academy for Teaching Excellence and developed a “best practices repository” for critical thinking learning activities and assignments, available to all Harper faculty and accessible through the Academy website. Lastly, there were faculty development opportunities around infusing Critical Thinking topics into courses, as well as helping students make connections across a variety of topic areas.

Please see [Critical Thinking on the HIP](#) for more detailed information.

Diverse Perspectives and Cultures – Follow-up Assessment

In spring 2020, the General Education Diverse Perspectives and Cultures Work Group conducted a follow-up assessment to the 2017 large-scale assessment. For the 2020 follow-up assessment, the Work Group used an instrument and rubric that was similar to the instrument and rubric used in 2017 and faculty who were part of the large-scale assessment were asked to participate. Based on the results of 2020, improvement was shown in the categories related to assumptions/biases and skills, but a decrease was seen in the category of knowledge/use of evidence. The assessment also included a student feedback question, “To what extent have you addressed/discussed questions similar to the ones on this survey in your classes at Harper?” For the 2020 follow-up assessment, the percentage of students that responded in the categories of extensively discussed, discussed in multiple courses, and very little discussion increased, while the percentage of students that responded in the categories of never discussed and discussed in a specific course decreased. Prior to conducting the next full-scale assessment of this outcome, further analysis of this data will be evaluated to incorporate next steps for student improvement. These results will be used to inform

the next assessment of this learning outcome and will be addressed in the Diverse Perspectives Work Group.

Please see [Diverse Perspectives on the HIP](#) for more detailed information.

Quantitative Reasoning

In 2019-2020, the Quantitative Reasoning Work Group reviewed assessment results from the follow-up assessment that was conducted in spring 2019. The next full-scale General Education Quantitative Reasoning Assessment will be conducted in spring 2021.

More information on the Quantitative Reasoning assessment and improvement resources can be found on the [Quantitative Reasoning General Education HIP page](#).

Student Support and Administrative Services Outcomes Assessment

During the 2019-2020 academic year, 31 total student support and administrative units took part in the outcomes assessment process. Units from across all non-academic divisions participated, such as the Academic Support Center, the Early Childhood Laboratory School, and Institutional Research. Table 6 contains an analysis based on the outcomes assessment activities of these units.

Table 6 – Student Support and Administrative Services Outcomes Assessment Analysis, 2019-2020

Assessment Submissions	Number of Programs (%)
Programs unable to assess due to transition in leadership and Covid-19 pandemic	1* (this program not included in data)
Documented consultations**	26/32 (81%)
Assessment Plan submitted (Columns 1-3)	32/32 (100%)
Assessment Report submitted (Columns 4-5)	31/32 (97%)
Re` sults	Number of Items (%)
Outcomes process issues	10/105 (10%)
Criteria met, no further action	8/105 (8%)
Criteria met, action taken	56/105 (53%)
Criteria not met, no further action	6/105 (6%)
Criteria not met, action taken	25/105 (24%)
Total Assessments	105/105 (100%)* **

* Harper Police

** Includes meetings, working e-mails, and working phone calls.

***Percentages equal 100% when not rounded.

In 2019-2020, 97% of units completed the full assessment cycle, an increase from last year's completion rate when 94% of units completed the full outcomes assessment cycle. The Student Support and Administrative Services assessment process has been in place for many years at the College, and many departments have integrated these processes into their regular workflow. Thus, many departments complete their assessment work without requiring consultation with the Outcomes Assessment Office. However, Outcomes Assessment continues to support all non-instructional areas through online materials, assessment handbooks, drop-in sessions, and individual consultations on an as-needed basis.

Among the non-instructional assessments for 2019-2020, 77% led to improvements in services, programs or other operations, an 19% increase from 2018-2019, as areas all across the College sought ways to continue to support students during the Covid-19 pandemic in a remote environment. Following are samples of plans and actions taken as a result of assessment findings.

Academic Advising and Counseling Center

One of the goals of the Academic Advising and Counseling Center for 2019-2020 was to increase advisor seen rates for new, first time in college, degree-seeking students who enter the College with a 'moderate' fall-to-spring persistence prediction score. Though the department saw an increase in advisor seen rates, they will continue to evaluate strategies for encouraging students in vulnerable populations to meet with an advisor. The fall-to-spring persistence differential among those who see an advisor and those that do not is largest among the 'moderately' predicted group of students.

Access and Disability Services

In 2019-2020, the Access and Disability Services department worked collaboratively with faculty members in assessing the academic programs' essential skills and creating/revising an essential skills documents that utilized inclusive vocabularies. Their goal was to review at least five essential skills documents at the end of the FY2020. The department exceeded this goal and reviewed seven essential skills documents from the Career/Technical Program and provided recommendations for non-discriminatory and inclusive language to be included in the document. Additional documents will be reviewed in FY2021.

Athletic Programs/WHP Facilities

The Athletics Program focused on persistence rates of athletes for 2019-2020. They evaluated the persistence rate of first time, full-time student athletes enrolled in fall 2018 who then continued to be enrolled in the fall of 2019. In all, 69.9% of the student athletes who started in fall 2018 returned in the fall of 2019, a persistence rate 2.1% higher than non-athletes. Additionally, 90.8% of the student athletes that started in the fall 2019 were retained in spring 2020 compared to 84.2% of non-athletes. The Athletics department will continue to develop and implement student athlete success strategies, including the development a Student Athlete Advisory Council to help improve the student experience in athletics at Harper.

Business Office

In 2019-2020, the Business Office implemented registration/financial aid/payment processes and procedures for future Harper Promise Program students. The goal was to refine processes and procedures for the Promise Program and attempt to find efficiencies when multiple cohorts are attending. The first year had two cohorts running at the same time. The large volume was a test of many manual processes. Additionally, some requirements were relaxed for students due to the Covid-19 pandemic, increasing the workload of staff. The department found that some Promise Program requirements were not completed, even when the students were offered additional time due to the pandemic. Because of this, due dates will be adhered to in the future. There were many manual adjustments based on add/drop/change of courses so the timing of disbursements will continue to be evaluated.

Other Assessment Efforts at Harper College

In addition to the assessment processes and outcomes analyses described above, the College continued its assessment efforts in 2019-2020 through:

- The 11th Annual Assessment Conference and Share Fair, held on September 27, 2019. This professional development event featured Dr. Tina Bhargava, who presented, “Preserving Students’ “Mental Bandwidth” to Increase Equity in Success” along with a faculty workshop on aligning Bandwidth Demands with Learning Outcomes. Other breakout sessions included “Action Research Lessons Learned,” “Assessment Doesn’t Work? Says Who?” and “Using Blackboard Collaborate Ultra to Record Student Presentations: Opportunities for Enhanced Assessment.”
- The Outcomes Assessment Office hosted an assessment table during the “You Have Questions! We Have Answers, Pie, and Prizes!” Orientation Week session in fall 2019. Discussed Harper’s assessment activities and evidence of student learning with Harper colleagues through use of a poster presentation and HIP pages and provided handouts.
- The Learning Assessment Committee offered a session, “Are Our Students Learning What We Say They Should be Learning?” in fall 2019, focused on how well students communicate, how to help improve students’ critical thinking skills, and whether students’ quantitative reasoning skills improved.
- The Student Learning blog, which provides biweekly updates to faculty and staff regarding student success and learning assessment. The blog is posted on the Academy for Teaching Excellence website and in its newsletters.
- General Education Learning Outcomes student communication. Outcomes Assessment increased students’ knowledge of Harper’s five General Education Learning Outcomes by hosting interactive activities during Hullabaloo in fall 2019.
- Outcomes Assessment Office support of faculty and staff assessment efforts, including individual consultations, workshops, drop-in sessions, and development and updates to assessment guides and online support materials.