

2021-2022
Outcomes Assessment Report
(Published Spring 2023)



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. 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 2021-2022, the total number of academic departments involved in course-level outcomes assessment was 25. Table 2 contains information about the outcomes assessment activities of these departments.

Table 2 – Course Outcomes Assessment Analysis, 2021-2022

Assessment Submissions	Number of Departments (%)
Documented consultations*	24/25 (96%)
Assessment Plan submitted (Columns 1-3)	25/25 (100%)
Assessment Report submitted (Columns 4-5)	25/25 (100%)
Results	Number of Items (%)
Outcomes process issues	11/96 (11%)
Criteria met, no further action	32/96 (33%)
Criteria met, action taken	19/96 (20%)
Criteria not met, no further action	1/96 (1%)
Criteria not met, action taken	33/96 (34%)
Total Assessments	96/96 (100%)**

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

** Percentage equals 100% when not rounded.

In 2021-2022, the completion rates of columns 1-5 remained constant, with 100% of departments completing the full outcomes assessment cycle for the third year in a row. Though there were still some outcomes process issues (11%), an improvement was seen over last year when 30% of planned course-level assessment activities were not completed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Faculty are encouraged to identify actions for improving student achievement of learning outcomes. Data indicate that 52 of the 96 course-level assessment results (54%) 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.

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

Business Administration—MGT111

In 2021-2022, the department assessed the outcome, “Enhance professional communication skills through oral and written interaction.” Success criteria was based on students’ ability to complete the career exploration, resume, cover letter, and LinkedIn profile assignments. While more than half of the students achieved the outcome, the assessment revealed opportunities for improvement. As a result, during the fall 2022 department meeting, faculty were encouraged to administer all of the career exploration assignments and also to assign enough points on the assignments for students to see the value in completing them.

Chemistry—CHM121

In order to assess the outcome, “Use quantitative analytical skills and statistical reasoning to interpret, solve and evaluate chemical problems,” an exam was administered to students and success was based on students’ ability to correctly answer questions mapped to the outcome. To improve success rates in this General Chemistry 1 course, a late start, Fundamentals of Chemistry (CHM110) course was created to capture students during the semester who were not fully prepared for CHM121. By recommending that students enroll in the fundamental pre-requisite course at the same time as the general course, students would have the opportunity to learn and practice the skills that are needed to master CHM121.

Communication Arts—THE212

During the spring 2022 semester, the Communication Arts department evaluated the outcome, “Understand the stage terms and “Lingo” of the theatre.” Students were asked to interpret and implement stage directions in scene blocking. Students were initially given a pre-test on stage directions and ultimately asked to perform stage directions in a video or live demonstration. Overall success rates from the pre-test to the post-test increased by 13%. It was determined that the course would be modified to include the lessons throughout the semester to reinforce learning of the outcome more regularly.

Philosophy—PHI115

During the 2021-2022 assessment cycle, the Philosophy department evaluated students’ ability to “Apply distinct ethical perspectives to real world issues.” To prepare for the assessment, faculty first completed curriculum maps and aligned student learning outcomes, as well as course activities and assignments, with those outcomes. Next, faculty reported average student grades on assignments for the outcomes assessed during the cycle. Data was aggregated and the criterion for success was achieved across all sections involved in the assessment. Faculty with the highest-scoring sections were invited to facilitate a workshop during the department retreat. The retreat also provided an opportunity for faculty to work through challenges and difficulties, which was helpful for instructors of lower-scoring sections.

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 2021-2022 academic year, 40 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, 2021-2022

Assessment Submissions	Number of Programs (%)
Documented consultations*	38/40 (95%)
Assessment Plan submitted (Columns 1-3)	40/40 (100%)
Assessment Report submitted (Columns 4-5)	40/40 (100%)
Results	Number of Items (%)
Outcomes process issues	6/295 (2%)
Criteria met, no further action	159/295 (54%)
Criteria met, action taken	75/295 (25%)
Criteria not met, no further action	7/295 (2%)
Criteria not met, action taken	48/295 (16%)
Total Assessments	295/295 (100%)**

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

** Percentage equals 100% when not rounded.

In 2021-2022, 100% of programs completed the full outcomes assessment cycle, an increase from the 98% completion rate achieved in 2020-2021 and 2019-2020. Data indicate that 123 of the 295 assessment results (42%) were used to improve course content, pedagogy, or assessment methods, similar to the last assessment cycle (41%). Following are samples of action plans that were created to improve student learning as a result of program-level assessment findings.

Certified Nursing Assistant Certificate

In order to evaluate students' ability to "Communicate effectively with patients, family, and staff," the Illinois Nurse Assistant Training Competency Evaluation tool was used with the 2021-2022 areas of focus on reporting on safe conditions and checking current documentation of residence status and care. Scores were collected and analyzed from various locations throughout Harper's district including dual-credit students enrolled at area high schools. While the criterion for success was achieved at most locations, the program administrators will continue to work with new faculty to ensure consistency in instruction and will also continue to expand simulation offerings.

Computer Information Systems—IT Computer Support

The Computer Information Systems Program assessed the outcome, “Install, configure, and troubleshoot networking devices, protocols, and servers” by administering a certification practice exam to Harper students, as well as dual-credit students from area high schools. The criterion for success was set at 70% of students will obtain a passing score (70%) on the certification practice exam and was met at all locations except for one of the three high school locations. It was determined that Harper’s main campus faculty will work with the high school to share best practices for teaching the outcome to improve student success.

Health Information Technology

In 2021-2022, Health Information Technology asked students to explain the proper use of three-character codes during a final exam question in HIT125. The question was used to evaluate student learning on the outcome, “Explain assignment of diagnostic and procedural codes and groupings in accordance with official guidelines,” and success rates were lower than expected. To improve students’ knowledge in this area, the concepts will be reinforced in week five of the course, with activities focused on conventions and/or basic coding guidelines. Additionally, a course assignment will be modified to include auditing examples. The outcome will be reassessed in the next assessment cycle.

Web Design and Development

Students’ abilities to “Code and publish standards-compliant, accessible Web documents using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript” were evaluated using the final project in the WEB200 course. It was found that while some students were successful in meeting the criterion for success on the project, more work needs to be done to improve student learning and successful completion of the project. Faculty noted that students appeared to understand concepts, but some ran out of time and were unable to complete the project for a passing grade. Additionally, changing the course from asynchronous to synchronous did not improve success rates. The program will continue evaluating the project in the next assessment cycle, and faculty will be meeting to discuss areas for improvement going forward.

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 2021-2022 are summarized below.

Diverse Perspectives and Cultures – Full-scale Assessment

In 2021-2022, the Learning Assessment Committee and the General Education Diverse Perspectives and Cultures Work Group assessed the Diverse Perspectives and Cultures outcome. The assessment was conducted with a random sample of class sections from courses mapped to the outcome, and the sampling technique focused on sections with a relatively high percentage of students with 45 or more credit hours earned. Faculty of selected sections were provided an assessment tool to administer to students. There were three scenario/research-based multiple-choice questions focused on diverse perspectives, diverse backgrounds, and diverse cultures, and students were asked to provide a written explanation as to why they chose each answer. A fourth question asked students whether they had covered certain topics related to diverse perspectives and cultures in other Harper courses. Assignments were collected and processed through the Outcomes Assessment Office.

The criterion for success was set at 80% of students will answer at least two of three questions correctly and assessment results were disaggregated to identify success rates of students by cumulative credit hours earned. The overall criterion for success was achieved, and students with 45 or more credit hours scored the highest (92.9%), when compared to the other earned credit

hours categories, as shown in Table 4. In all, 847 assessments were scored, and the high-level results are shown in the tables below.

Table 4 – Overall Spring 2022 Diverse Perspectives and Cultures Results by Earned Credit Hours

Earned Credit Hours	% Answering at least 2 of 3 Questions Correctly
0 - 15 (n=225)	85.6
16 - 30 (n=209)	91.3
31 - 44 (n=205)	92.3
45 or more (n=208)	92.9
All students (n=847)	90.0

When examining the results by question, student success rates were low in the category of diverse perspectives (55.0%) compared to the high student success rates in the categories of diverse backgrounds (90.0%) and diverse cultures (94.6%). The results by question are shown in table 5 below.

Table 5 – Overall Spring 2022 Diverse Perspectives and Cultures Results by Question

Earned Credit Hours	% Correct by Question		
	Q1 (Diverse Perspectives)	Q2 (Diverse Backgrounds)	Q3 (Diverse Cultures)
0 - 15 (n=225)	51.2	86.3	93.4
16 - 30 (n=209)	58.5	90.7	96.5
31 - 44 (n=250)	60.8	95.1	90.4
45 or more (n=208)	50.5	89.6	97.8
All students (n=847)	55.0	90.0	94.6

While the results of the [Spring 2021 Community College Survey of Student Engagement \(CCSSE\)](#) and the [Harper Follow Up Survey](#) revealed that a majority of students believe that they have an improved appreciation for diversity while attending Harper College, results of the assessment showed a need for improving students ability to appreciate those with “diverse perspectives.”

Please see [Diverse Perspectives and Cultures on the HIP](#) for more detailed results. Review of results and development of the improvement plan are scheduled for 2022-2023.

Quantitative Reasoning – Improvement Plan Development

After reviewing the [2020-2021 Quantitative Reasoning assessment results](#), and feedback gathered in fall 2021, the Work Group developed the [Quantitative Reasoning Improvement Plan](#) in spring 2022. The plan focuses on providing faculty development and also developing resources that will help faculty to create assignments and learning activities to positively impact students' quantitative reasoning skills.

The Learning Assessment Committee, General Education Quantitative Reasoning Work Group, and Outcomes Assessment Office will work to implement this plan throughout the 2022-2023 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' quantitative reasoning skills.

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

Information Literacy – Improvement Plan Implementation

In 2021-2022 the [Information Literacy Improvement Plan](#) was implemented. The plan focused on faculty development and communication of effective learning activities and assignments to help improve students' ability to effectively use credible resources and improve information literacy skills. The work group partnered with the Academy for Teaching Excellence and developed a Community of Practice (CoP) with an emphasis on the scholarship of teaching and learning information literacy as a skill and disposition. The CoP also conducted a survey with faculty to gather feedback on how they teach information literacy and what supports would help them teach the outcome more effectively.

Please see [Information Literacy on the HIP](#) for more detailed information.

Communication – Follow-up Assessment

In spring 2022, the General Education Communication Work Group conducted a follow-up assessment to the FY2019 large-scale assessment. For the follow-up assessment, faculty and courses that were part of the original assessment were asked to participate. Instructors of selected sections submitted student artifacts, that had been identified as the most intensive communication work in that class, which included papers, exams, journal entries, and presentations. Each assignment was then mapped to the rubric in order to ensure students' submissions were only assessed on the categories that were expected as part of the given course assignment. When analyzing the results of FY2022 compared to FY2019, students' scores improved in the categories of control and word choice/grammar but decreased in the areas of paragraphs/transitions and support/evidence. During both assessments, students scored highest in the category of mechanics. 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 Communication Work Group.

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

Critical Thinking

In 2021-2022, the Critical Thinking Work Group reviewed assessment results from the follow-up assessment that was conducted in spring 2021. The next full-scale General Education Critical Thinking Assessment will be conducted in spring 2023.

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

Student Support and Administrative Services Outcomes Assessment

During the 2021-2022 academic year, 39 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, Counseling Services, and Information Technology. Table 6 contains an analysis based on the outcomes assessment activities of these units.

Table 6 – Student Support and Administrative Services Outcomes Assessment Analysis, 2021-2022

Assessment Submissions	Number of Programs (%)
Documented consultations*	38/39 (97%)
Assessment Plan submitted (Columns 1-3)	39/39 (100%)
Assessment Report submitted (Columns 4-5)	38/39 (97%)
Results	Number of Items (%)
Outcomes process issues	5/98 (5%)
Criteria met, no further action	26/98 (27%)
Criteria met, action taken	39/98 (40%)
Criteria not met, no further action	5/98 (5%)
Criteria not met, action taken	23/98 (23%)
Total Assessments	98/98 (100%)

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

In 2021-2022, the completion rates of columns 1-5 remained constant, with 97% of units completing the full outcomes assessment cycle for the third year in a row. Among the non-instructional assessments for 2021-2022, 63% led to improvements in services, programs, or other operations, as areas all across the College sought ways to continue to support students during the COVID-19 pandemic in a hybrid environment. The Outcomes Assessment Office continues to support all non-instructional areas through online materials, assessment handbooks, drop-in sessions, and individual consultations on an as-needed basis. Following are samples of plans and actions taken as a result of assessment findings.

Academy for Teaching Excellence

One of the Academy's goals in 2021-2022 was to ensure programming was inclusive and representative of the faculty population by identifying participation gaps across academic divisions. The Academy began by reviewing disaggregated data from 2018-2021 and then reached out to divisions with the largest gaps to better understand the types of professional development that may be more relevant and engaging for faculty teaching in those areas. Based on feedback from the Career and Technical Programs Division, the Academy created an Essential Skills Module, as part of the Inclusive Teaching Program, to help support development of students' writing skills. Additionally, the Academy collaborated with faculty leaders in the Health Careers

Division and developed a Community of Practice for Interprofessional Learning that now hosts professional learning opportunities including events with speakers to develop awareness of the patient experience related to diverse gender identities, ability, and cultural backgrounds.

Center for New Students and Orientation

In 2021-2022, the Center for New Students and Orientation developed and implemented a New Student Convocation program to increase students' sense of belonging and engagement on Harper's campus. A survey was utilized to assess whether students felt more engaged after attending the Convocation, and baseline results revealed that 64% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more engaged after attending the event. To improve students' sense of belonging and engagement, the Center determined that the number of faculty and staff members participating would be increased at future Convocations. Earlier marketing strategies will also be used to better advertise the event. The item will be reassessed in the next assessment cycle.

Center for Student Veterans and Military-Connected Students

To assess the outcome, "Increase communication with student veterans," the Center for Student Veterans and Military-Connected Students developed and administered a survey. Questions focused on improving and increasing communications, and also gathering input regarding programming ideas and topics for the Professional, Academic, Service and Social Programming (Pass) Program. Results of the 2021-2022 survey indicated that 93% of students surveyed preferred email as a way to receive communication from the Center; 60% of respondents stated that they would participate in professional development workshops; and 40% of respondents expressed that they would participate in social events. To improve results, the Center is focusing on communication delivery and program development to better engage with student veterans.

Harper Wellness

In spring 2022, Harper Wellness focused on student and employee "Emotional Wellness: Learn to become more aware of, and accepting of, a wide range of feelings in self and others" and to "Learn techniques in stress management and mindfulness." The department planned and hosted a "Fresh Check Day" to help increase students' knowledge of the resources available on campus and conducted a survey to measure effectiveness of the event. Although survey participation was low, in total, 72% of student survey respondents were much more aware of the mental health resources available to them. Future events will be planned, and survey completion will be encouraged.

Other Assessment Efforts at Harper College

In addition to the assessment processes and outcomes analyses described above, the College continued its assessment efforts in 2021-2022 through:

- The 13th Annual Assessment Conference and Share Fair, held on September 24, 2021. Held virtually for the second time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this professional development event featured Flower Darby, who presented the keynote address, “Practical Strategies for Improving Engagement and Equitable Learning Online.” Other sessions included the faculty workshop, “Deeper Dive: Effective Assessment Approaches Online” and the “Panel and Discussion: Learning Remotely Together.” More than 100 faculty and staff members attended the Conference.
- Continuation of the information-literacy based Community of Practice (CoP). The “Teaching Information Literacy at Harper” CoP collaborated to collect, discuss, and share best practices in teaching information literacy. The book, “Faculty-Librarian Collaborations: Integrating the Information Literacy Framework into Disciplinary Courses” was also read and discussed among members to explore integrating best practices into lesson plans and curriculums.
- Collaboration between the Outcomes Assessment Office and chairs and coordinators to update the General Education Curriculum Map. Courses are mapped to Harper’s five General Education Learning Outcomes at the levels of Introduced, (The outcome is occasionally touched on and minimally addressed); Reinforced (The outcome is substantially addressed in course content); Practiced (There are multiple opportunities for practicing and applying the knowledge and skills framed by this outcome); and Not Relevant. The General Education Curriculum Map is used when courses are selected for General Education assessment activities.
- 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.
- Continuation of virtual drop-in sessions. The Outcomes Assessment Office conducted 58 virtual drop-in sessions to offer continued support of assessment activities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Sessions included assistance for courses, programs, student support and administrative areas, and Harper’s general education outcomes assessment activities.
- Outcomes Assessment Office support of faculty and staff assessment efforts, including individual consultations, working emails, recognition, and the use of assessment guides and online support materials.