

2022-2023
Outcomes Assessment Report
(Published Spring 2024)



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 2022-2023, 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, 2022-2023

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	7/110 (6%)
Criteria met, no further action	29/110 (26%)
Criteria met, action taken	33/110 (30%)
Criteria not met, no further action	1/110 (1%)
Criteria not met, action taken	40/110 (36%)
Total Assessments	110/110 (100%)**

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

** Percentage equals 100% when not rounded.

In 2022-2023, the completion rates of columns 1-5 remained constant, with 100% of departments completing the full outcomes assessment cycle for the fourth sequential year. Additionally, the percentage of outcomes process issues decreased to 6%, an improvement from last year when 11% of planned course-level assessment activities were not conducted.

Faculty are encouraged to identify actions for improving student achievement of learning outcomes. Data indicate that 73 of the 110 course-level assessment results (66%) led to improvements in course content, pedagogy, or assessment methods, a considerable increase over last year (54%). 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.

Anthropology/Sociology—SOC101

In 2022-2023, the Sociology department assessed the outcome, “Demonstrate an ability to think sociologically and to engage in complex and critical reasoning” by administering an assessment at the end of the semester. Success was based on students’ ability to correctly answer questions mapped to the outcome. While the criterion for success was met, the department will develop new questions that will be more clearly tied to the outcome. A pilot pretest will be administered in fall 2023 to evaluate the effectiveness of the questions. And the new assessment form, which will be comprised of both a pretest and a post test, will be implemented in spring 2024. The revamped questions will also meet the criteria for Harper’s World Cultures and Diversity Outcomes.

Biology—BIO160

In order to assess the outcome, “Identify both microscopic and gross anatomy of the following body systems: integumentary, skeletal, muscular, nervous, cardiovascular, lymphatic, respiratory, digestive, urinary, male and female reproductive, and endocrine,” students were asked two questions on the first lecture exam that mapped to the outcome. While more than half of the students achieved the outcome, the assessment revealed opportunities for improvement. As a result, faculty will encourage students to make use of additional study aides including tutoring services, the anatomy study room, and supplemental instructors.

English—ENG101

During 2022-2023, the English faculty members scored students’ final essays based on a revised rubric to collect baseline data and identify specific areas on the rubric where students are scoring lower. The work was conducted to measure the outcome, “Use critical thinking skills in reading and writing, prose, i.e., knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.” In order for a student to successfully manifest critical thinking skills they had to place in the "competent" or "proficient" categories. Results revealed that students scored better in the areas of “knowledge, comprehension, and application” but struggled more with "analysis, synthesis, and evaluation." With this data, faculty and staff created a Summer/Fall 2023 workshop entirely for English Department faculty members, including full-time, part-time, and dual-credit instructors, to model various assignments and skills.

History—HIS111

During the 2022-2023 assessment cycle, the History department evaluated students’ ability to “Reason effectively and evaluate factual material in their true perspectives through the interpretative analysis of the American past.” To prepare students for the main assessment, formative assessments were conducted throughout the first four weeks of the spring 2023 semester. Then, an essay question that focused on the evaluation and comprehension of historical content and the use of historical evidence was given to students during week five. The criterion for success was met and after the faculty discussion, the analysis revealed that the mini assessments conducted prior to the main assessment helped better prepare students, as a 2% increase in student success was achieved compared to the prior year.

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 2022-2023 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, 2022-2023

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	2/213 (1%)
Criteria met, no further action	108/213 (51%)
Criteria met, action taken	49/213 (23%)
Criteria not met, no further action	3/213 (1%)
Criteria not met, action taken	51/213 (24%)
Total Assessments	213/213³ (100%)**

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

** Percentage equals 100% when not rounded.

In 2022-2023, 100% of programs completed the full outcomes assessment cycle for the second consecutive year. Data indicate that 100 of the 213 assessment results (47%) were used to improve course content, pedagogy, or assessment methods, a moderate increase over the last assessment cycle (42%). Following are samples of action plans that were created to improve student learning as a result of program-level assessment findings.

Business Administration—Management

In order to evaluate students' ability to "Demonstrate rational and informed decision making that supports the company goals based on relevant data," students were asked to complete five case reviews in MyManagementLab/Connect for the MGT 291 Strategic Management course and success rates were lower than expected. To improve students' skills in this area, faculty will provide more guidance on how to complete case studies. A case study video will be created and shared with students after they complete their first case study, with a focus on critical thinking.

³The total number of assessments decreased to 213 in 2022-2023, opposed to 295 during the last assessment cycle, as student learning outcomes and standards were streamlined for one area no longer pursuing accreditation.

Dental Hygiene

Students' abilities to "Demonstrate cultural sensitivity and the interpersonal and communication skills required for effective functioning with diverse population groups and other members of the health care team" was evaluated through a Pre-Post Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension assessment. The expectation was that 100% of students would rate their intercultural communication apprehension between 32 and 52, a moderate level of intercultural communication apprehension. The students' average score increased from 30.8 in the pre-assessment to 34.9 in the post-assessment. The results showed that students have improved their understanding of their apprehension when communicating across cultures. The program will complete a final report for the 2022-2023 academic year in fall 2023.

Early Childhood Education

The Early Childhood Education Program assessed the outcome, "Collaborates with diverse families and community organizations to support children's healthy development and learning" by administering a Culturally Responsive Practitioner paper in ECE252. The goal was for 70% of students to receive a rating of "Meets or Exceeds Expectations" and 76% of students met or exceeded expectations for this project. While the criterion for success was met, this large-scale project will be broken into smaller pieces with additional video supports provided to increase student success.

Manufacturing Technology

In 2022-2023, the Manufacturing Technology department administered the third-party Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) exam, and the results were used to demonstrate students' ability to "Recognize and maintain a safe manufacturing workplace." Students were enrolled in online only or blended courses and the criterion for success was for 75% of students to pass the MSSC exam on their first attempt. Exam results showed that students were close to meeting the goal; however, to improve first attempt pass rates, the program decided to phase out online only sections of the course and offer blended and in-person only courses moving forward. The program believes more time for live question and answer sessions, as well as live demonstrations, will help improve students' knowledge and skills.

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 2022-2023 are summarized below.

Critical Thinking – Full-scale Assessment

In 2022-2023, the Learning Assessment Committee and the General Education Critical Thinking Work Group assessed the Critical Thinking outcome. The assessment was conducted with a random sample of class sections from courses mapped to the outcome, and the sampling technique also focused on sections with a relatively high percentage of students with 45 or more credit hours earned. Faculty members of selected sections administered the assessment by presenting students with seven multiple choice questions of various scenarios related to “developing arguments,” “making decisions,” and “evaluating outcomes.” Faculty were asked to embed these questions in an assignment, quiz, or an exam, and submit student work to the Outcomes Assessment Office.

The criterion for success was set at 70% of students scoring 5 of 7 questions correctly, (71.4%). Results show that as students accumulate credit hours, their performance improves. For example, 36.8% of students with 1-15 credit hours earned achieved a 71.4% or higher, whereas 48.5% of students carrying 45 or more credit hours achieved a score of 71.4% or higher. In all, 914 assessments were collected and scored, and the results are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4 – Overall Spring 2023 Critical Thinking Results by Earned Credit Hours

Earned Credit Hours	% Answering at least 5 of 7 Questions Correctly
1 - 15 (n=38)	36.8
16 - 30 (n=100)	43.0
31 - 44 (n=156)	44.2
45 or more (n=620)	48.5
All students (n=914)	43.1

Table 5 shows the percentage of students who answered each question correctly in the categories of “developing arguments,” “making decisions,” and “evaluating outcomes.” Students seemed to struggle with some questions more than others and further discussion on the assessment tool and questions will be continued. Findings will be used to inform development of the critical thinking improvement plan.

Table 5 – Overall Spring 2023 Critical Thinking Results by Question

Spring 2023	% Correct by Question						
	Develop Arguments		Make Decisions			Evaluate Outcomes	
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
(N=914)	41.7	92.5	77.1	50.7	35.1	62.5	72.3

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 learned to think critically and analytically while attending Harper College, results of the assessment showed a need for improving students ability with this outcome.

Please see [Critical Thinking on the HIP](#) for more detailed results. Review of results and development of the improvement plan are scheduled for 2023-2024.

Diverse Perspectives and Cultures – Improvement Plan Development

After reviewing the [2021-2022 Diverse Perspectives and Cultures assessment results](#), and feedback gathered in fall 2022, the Work Group developed the [Diverse Perspectives and Cultures Improvement Plan](#) in spring 2023. The plan focuses on exploring options for an assessment tool to be used in future assessments as well as reviewing resources for faculty related to diverse perspectives and cultures. Members of the Learning Assessment Committee will also review and

discuss assessment results along with the improvement plan with the General Education Advisory Committee.

The Learning Assessment Committee, General Education Diverse Perspectives and Cultures Work Group, and Outcomes Assessment Office will work to implement this plan throughout the 2023-2024 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' diverse perspectives and cultures skills.

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

Quantitative Reasoning – Improvement Plan Implementation

In 2022-2023 the [Quantitative Reasoning Improvement Plan](#) was implemented. The plan focused on incorporating a professional development opportunity at the 15th Annual Assessment Conference and Share Fair which included discussions around best practices, ways to reduce equity gaps, and the current assessment tool.

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

Information Literacy – Follow-up Assessment

In spring 2023, the General Education Information Literacy Work Group conducted a follow-up assessment to the FY2020 large-scale assessment. For the follow-up assessment, courses that were part of the original assessment were asked to participate. Instructors of selected sections submitted student artifacts, identified as the most rigorous writing assignment in that class, which included a minimum of three citations. Assignments were evaluated using a standardized rubric, and when analyzing the results of FY2023 compared to FY2020, students' scores improved in all categories of the rubric. The assessment in FY2020 occurred during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have contributed to the lack of student success for that assessment. In FY2023, students scored highest in the areas of "sources support the topic" and "credibility of sources selected" and lower in the categories of "accuracy of the citations in text" and "accuracy of citations in the bibliographic reference page." 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 by the Information Literacy Work Group.

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

Communication

In 2022-2023, the Communication Work Group reviewed assessment results from the follow-up assessment that was conducted in spring 2022. The next full-scale General Education Critical Thinking Assessment will be conducted in spring 2024.

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

Student Support and Administrative Services Outcomes Assessment

During the 2022-2023 academic year, 39 total student support and administrative units took part in the outcomes assessment process. Units from across non-academic divisions participated, such as Access and Disability Services, Event Management, and Student Involvement. Table 6 contains an analysis based on the outcomes assessment activities of these units.

Table 6 – Student Support and Administrative Services Outcomes Assessment Analysis, 2022-2023

Assessment Submissions	Number of Programs (%)
Documented consultations*	37/39 (95%)
Assessment Plan submitted (Columns 1-3)	38/39 (97%)
Assessment Report submitted (Columns 4-5)	38/39 (97%)
Results	Number of Items (%)
Outcomes process issues	3/91 (3%)
Criteria met, no further action	14/91 (15%)
Criteria met, action taken	51/91 (56%)
Criteria not met, no further action	1/91 (1%)
Criteria not met, action taken	22/91 (24%)
Total Assessments	91/91 (100%)**

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

** Percentage equals 100% when not rounded.

In 2022-2023, the completion rates of columns 1-5 remained constant, with 97% of units completing the full outcomes assessment cycle for the fourth year in a row. Among the non-instructional assessments for 2022-2023, 80% led to improvements in services, programs, or other operations, as areas all across the College sought ways to continue to support students. The Outcomes Assessment Office continues to support 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.

Academic Advising

One of the Academic Advising department's goals in 2022-2023 was to provide a differentiated care model to students with low, moderate, or high likelihoods of not persisting. The goal was to provide the right support depending on student needs. Students with lower risk received eight touchpoints from their advisor, while students with a moderate risk received 10 touchpoints, and those with the most risk received 12 touchpoints each semester. Going forward, the Advising department will identify additional campus partners beyond their office who can participate in outreach efforts during the semester and continue to revise and enhance the communication plan with students depending on needs.

Communications

In an effort to help employees feel informed and able to support the College's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, the Communications department set a goal in 2022-2023 to develop and/or organize at least 12 articles and events featuring the College's DEI initiatives and stakeholders. The goal was achieved, and the department will continue to use the number of articles and events as a measurement for keeping employees informed and will continue to look for new communication strategies to support the College's DEI initiatives.

Educational Foundation

In 2022-2023, the Educational Foundation offered students an opportunity to engage with the community through the Corporate Student Mentoring program. This provided students an opportunity to develop/improve their Career Readiness Competencies established by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, (NACE), also referred to as the NACE essential skills. Students initially completed a self-evaluation assessing themselves on the eight competencies. The top three competencies and areas for growth were then shared with mentors, and mentors were given resources and teaching activities to initiate discussions with students to be used over time. Following the minimum of three 30-minute virtual meetings, students took a post-test in which they again assessed their essential skills. Students assessed themselves as more proficient (improvement ranged from 1.28% to 10.94% vs. pre-test scores) in all eight categories at the end of the mentoring program. The Foundation will continue to offer this program and use feedback from mentors and mentees to make adjustments where needed.

Student Financial Assistance

In order to improve the financial literacy of Harper students, the Student Financial Assistance department conducted a "Game of Life" activity where students had the opportunity to learn about budgeting, personal finances, and real-life expenses. The students were given a post-survey and asked what areas they learned more about as a result of the activity. In total, 63% of students responded that they learned more about balancing a budget, more than half of the students reported that they learned how to make financial decisions, and 95% of students stated that they would recommend the Game of Life activity to a friend. In total, 160 students completed the survey. The department will continue to offer this activity and will enhance the program based on student input.

Other Assessment Efforts at Harper College

In addition to the assessment processes and outcomes analyses described above, the College continued its assessment efforts in 2022-2023 through:

- The 14th Annual Assessment Conference and Share Fair, held on September 30, 2022. This professional development event featured Dr. Natasha Jankowski, Senior Fellow from the Strada Education Network, who presented the keynote address, “Reset to Re-engage: Assessment for Community Building.” Other sessions included “Specifications Grading as Equitable Teaching Practice” and a faculty workshop, “Assignment Design for Student Learning and Success.” More than 60 faculty and staff members attended the Conference.
- Supported the transition to the new platform of the Nuventive assessment management system. Identified plausible enhancements to the system and collaborated with Nuventive personnel to implement recommendations and solutions to improve user interface. Trained assessment personnel through one-on-one meetings and virtual drop-in sessions.
- Development and facilitation of a professional development session on Curriculum Mapping. A presentation and poster were created to illustrate best practices for mapping courses to program outcomes as well as general education learning outcomes.
- The Outcomes Assessment Office hosted an assessment table during the “You Have Questions! We Have Answers and Pie!” Orientation Week session in fall 2022. 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.
- 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 2022.
- 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 29 virtual drop-in sessions to assist with completion of the assessment cycle. 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.