

2023-2024
Outcomes Assessment Report
(Published Spring 2025)



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 2023-2024, 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, 2023-2024

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	5/92 (5%)
Criteria met, no further action	28/92 (30%)
Criteria met, action taken	34/92 (37%)
Criteria not met, action taken	25/92 (27%)
Total Assessments	92/92 (100%)**

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

** Percentage equals 100% when not rounded.

In 2023-2024, the completion rates of columns 1-5 remained constant, with 100% of departments completing the full outcomes assessment cycle for the fifth sequential year. Additionally, the percentage of outcomes process issues (5%) was similar to last year, when 6% of planned course-level assessment activities were not conducted.

Faculty are encouraged to identify actions for improving student achievement of learning outcomes. Data indicated that 59 of the 92 course-level assessment results (64%) led to improvements in course content, pedagogy, or assessment methods, a slight decrease compared to last year (64%). 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.

Communication Arts—SPE101

In 2023-2024, the Communication Arts department assessed the outcome, “Perform multiple presentations to increase poise and confidence when speaking in front of audiences.” Students were asked to perform in campus spaces with other students to help build confidence speaking in public, and the goal was to increase success rates of students who take online sections by 10% from FY2023 to FY2024. While the criterion for success was not met, the success rates increased by 3% during this time period. The department will continue to provide more direction for students to increase success rates, such as offering more live sessions and clearer communication with students on expectations.

English—ENG101

To assess the outcome, “Use critical thinking skills in reading and writing, prose, i.e., knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation,” faculty members created Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT) assignments and students were asked in a survey if these assignments helped them better understand the instructions for completing the work. More than 80% of survey respondents reported that the TILT instructions helped them understand the purpose and values of the assignment, including the skills they should develop by completing the assignment. The criteria for success was met, and the department will continue to create TILT instructions, which will be shared with other faculty looking to develop TILT assignments.

Chemistry—CHM100

During 2023-2024, the Chemistry department assessed the outcome, “Use quantitative analytical skills to interpret, evaluate, and solve problems.” Students were asked specific questions on an exam that mapped to the outcome, and the criteria for success was that 50% of students would correctly answer the question. While the results showed that more than 60% of students answered the questions correctly, the department will continue working to improve these results by engaging students in activities in a newly created laboratory, that allows students to better understand intermolecular forces and the roles they play in hydrophobic/hydrophilic interactions with solutions. Through these laboratory activities, students should be able to better understand the questions on the exam related to the outcome and concepts.

Health Science Core—HSC112

To evaluate students’ ability to “Define common and lesser known suffixes, combining forms, and word roots,” 22 questions on a 100-question exam were asked that mapped to the outcome. The criterion for success was that dual-credit section students would average 80% or higher on answering the questions correctly. The criterion for success was met, and as a result, some adjustments in pedagogy have been permanently implemented for 2024-2025, including, continuing to provide dual-credit instructors with teaching exercises to reinforce meanings of word parts in contextual medical language and permanently remove extraneous anatomy and physiology (content not tied to learning outcomes) from all course-section curriculum for 2024-2025, to be replaced with root word and spelling/pronunciation content.

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 2023-2024 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, 2023-2024

Assessment Submissions	Number of Programs (%)
Documented consultations*	39/40 (98%)
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	8/236 (3%)
Criteria met, no further action	102/236 (43%)
Criteria met, action taken	79/236 (33%)
Criteria not met, action taken	47/236 (20%)
Total Assessments	236/236 (100%)**

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

** Percentage equals 100% when not rounded.

In 2023-2024, 100% of programs completed the full outcomes assessment cycle for the third consecutive year. Data indicate that 126 of the 236 assessment results (53%) were used to improve course content, pedagogy, or assessment methods, a moderate increase over the last assessment cycle (47%). Following are samples of action plans that were created to improve student learning as a result of program-level assessment findings.

Diagnostic Medical Sonography

In 2023-2024, the Diagnostic Medical Sonography program assessed the outcome “The graduate recognizes abnormal sonographic findings.” Students completed a case study interpretation exam, and the goal was to have 90% of students score a 75% or higher on the exam administered in two different courses. Criteria was not met in one of the courses but was met in the other. Based on these results, image interpretation will receive greater focus in the course where the criteria was not met and the outcome will be reassessed next cycle in both courses.

Maintenance Technology

To assess the outcome “Read and interpret basic blueprints, shop drawings and electrical schematics,” students were given a final exam that contained common questions for each section of the MNT235 course and the criteria for success was that all students answering the common questions would score a 75% or higher. Although the criteria for success was met, data indicated that students in classes that have more hands-on labs are doing better than those that do not. Therefore, the program will work to increase the number of hands-on labs in all sections.

Paraprofessional Educator

In 2023-2024, the outcome, “Develop critical and creative thinking skills to become an effective decision maker and problem solver” was assessed. Students were asked to complete an IEP project and were required to provide evidence in support of their decisions with the project. The criteria for success was that 80% of the students in all sections of EDU219 would score a 3 or higher on the rubric category “Evidence used to support answers.” While the criteria for success was met (81% of students scored a 3 or higher), the department will continue to implement actions to improve student learning. This includes updated assignment guidelines that will be posted to the departmental Blackboard site and creating a list of strategies for success for students to refer to.

Radiologic Technology

Students’ abilities to “Communicate with a diverse population” was evaluated through a Spanish oral test assessment. The expectation was that the student average would be greater than or equal to 85%. A benchmark for this expectation was set in 2019 and the 2023-2024 results were 14% higher than the original benchmark. Results revealed that the first-year students find the Spanish tutoring useful in performing radiographic procedures and results are high since most of the first-year students have taken Spanish or are native Spanish speakers. The second-year students tutor the first-year students which provides a collaborative environment for both classes, as well as a mentoring program.

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 2023-2024 are summarized below.

Communication – Full-scale Assessment

In 2023-2024, the Learning Assessment Committee and the Communication Work Group assessed the Communication 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 members of selected sections then submitted student artifacts that they identified as the most intensive communication work in that class, which included papers, exams, journals, and presentations. Each assignment was then mapped to the rubric in order to ensure students were assessed only on categories that were expected as part of the given course assignment. In all, 750 assessments were collected.

The criteria for success was set at 70% of students scoring a 3 or higher on a 4-point rubric, individual items and overall. Table 4 shows the percentage of students meeting the criteria for each of the learning outcomes categories and overall, by the number of credit hours earned. Students with 31-44 and 45+ credit hours earned scored in the ninetieth percentile for the categories of “word choice/grammar” and “mechanics.”

Table 4 – Overall Spring 2024 Results by Learning Outcome Category and Earned Credit Hours*

Learning Outcome Category	% Scoring 3 or higher			
	0-15 (n=27)**	16-30 (n=95)**	31-44 (n=128)**	45+ (n=495)**
Organization	88.9	89.5	82.8	89.5
Paragraphs/Transitions	85.2	87.4	75.8	84.0
Control	96.3	88.4	85.2	88.9
Support/Evidence	92.6	91.6	82.8	85.5
Word Choice/Grammar	81.5	86.3	94.5	91.9
Mechanics	85.2	89.5	95.3	92.7
Overall	74.1	76.8	75.0	78.8

*Students that did not report the number of credit hours earned are not included in Table 2.

**Not all artifacts were assessed on all six criteria.

As shown in Table 5, overall, students scored higher on all categories of the rubric for the spring 2024 assessment when compared to the 2019 and 2022 results.

Table 5 – Results by Learning Outcome Category: Three-Year Comparison (2019, 2022, 2024)

Learning Outcome Category	% Scoring 3 or higher		
	FY2019* Primary (N=891)**	Spring 2022 Follow-Up (N=788)**	Spring 2024 Primary (N=750)**
Organization	65.0	65.4	88.4
Paragraphs/Transitions	73.7	69.9	83.1
Control	68.9	75.3	88.4
Support/Evidence	73.5	69.3	86.0
Word Choice/Grammar	64.2	76.3	91.3
Mechanics	78.8	79.8	92.5
Overall	63.4	64.8	77.6

While the results of the [Spring 2024 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 speak clearly and effectively, as well as write clearly and effectively while attending Harper College, results of the assessment also showed an improvement in students' ability with this outcome.

Please see [Communication on the HIP](#) for more detailed results. Review of results and development of the improvement plan are scheduled for 2024-2025.

Critical Thinking – Improvement Plan Development

After reviewing the [2022-2023 Critical Thinking assessment results](#), and feedback gathered in fall 2023, the Work Group developed the [Critical Thinking Improvement Plan](#) in spring 2024. The plan includes activities such as conducting a survey of faculty on how they measure critical thinking in the classroom, asking specifically how they evaluate the three outcomes: develop arguments, evaluate outcomes, and make decisions. The information gathered from this survey will assist the Work Group in investigating other ways of assessing the outcome, including possibly utilizing student artifacts and developing a rubric for assessment.

The Learning Assessment Committee, General Education Critical Thinking Work Group, and Outcomes Assessment Office will work to implement this plan throughout the 2024-2025 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' critical thinking skills.

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

Diverse Perspectives and Cultures – Improvement Plan Implementation

In 2023-2024 the [Diverse Perspectives and Cultures Improvement Plan](#) was implemented. The plan focused on activities such as developing materials related to this outcome to be shared in the New Faculty Course and partnering with the Equity Literacy Project to develop professional development opportunities to increase and expand knowledge of terminology related to diverse perspectives and cultures.

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

Quantitative Reasoning – Follow-up Assessment

In spring 2024, the General Education Quantitative Reasoning Work Group conducted a follow-up assessment to the FY2021 large-scale assessment. For the follow-up assessment, courses that were part of the original assessment were asked to participate. The same quantitative rubric was used to score student work in three areas: graph reading; table reading and evaluation; and number sense. The assessment tool consisted of six multiple-choice questions and faculty were asked to administer the assessment and submit their work to the Outcomes Assessment Office. When looking at the breakdown of questions comparing 2021 and 2024 results for students with 45+ credit hours, students' performance decreased on questions related to graph reading and table reading and evaluation but decreased significantly in 2024 on Q1 on 'graph reading'. However, overall, students performed better in 2024 for the last question (Q6) on number sense. Prior to the next assessment of this outcome, further analysis of this data will need to 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 Quantitative Reasoning Work Group.

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

Information Literacy

In 2023-2024, the Information Literacy Group reviewed assessment results from the follow-up assessment that was conducted in spring 2023. The next full-scale General Education Information Literacy assessment will be conducted in spring 2025.

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

Student Support and Administrative Services Outcomes Assessment

During the 2023-2024 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 Advising Services, Community Education, and the Job Placement Resource Center. Table 6 contains an analysis based on the outcomes assessment activities of these units.

Table 6 – Student Support and Administrative Services Outcomes Assessment Analysis, 2023-2024

Assessment Submissions	Number of Programs (%)
Documented consultations*	37/39 (95%)
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	8/97 (8%)
Criteria met, no further action	11/97 (11%)
Criteria met, action taken	60/97 (62%)
Criteria not met, no further action	1/97 (1%)
Criteria not met, action taken	17/97 (18%)
Total Assessments	97/97 (100%)**

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

** Percentage equals 100% when not rounded.

In 2023-2024, the completion rates of columns 1-5 remained constant, with 97% of units completing the full outcomes assessment cycle for the fifth year in a row. Among the non-instructional assessments for 2023-2024, 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 Support Center

One of the Academic Support Center's goals in 2023-2024 was to ensure that students would be satisfied with services provided. The department increased outreach through classroom visits, presentations, and tours. Through these efforts, the department has increased outreach by over 10% with over 65 classroom visits, presentations, and events. Going forward, the Academic Support Center will continue more intentional outreach and marketing to faculty and staff to promote services and continue to increase visits.

Admissions Outreach

For 2023-2024, the Admissions Outreach department set a goal to ensure that visitors to their department would experience good to excellent customer service. In order to gauge the student experience, a weekly survey was sent for feedback and improve operations as needed. The criteria for success was that 94% of students who engage with the Admissions Outreach department in person or virtually will rate their experience as "good" or "outstanding" and survey results showed that 88% of students rated their experience as such. These results are being used to inform customer service training for the team. Also, the department will work to be more consistent with sending the survey on time, as there were some instances of the survey not being distributed right after their visit and students' views could be skewed by interactions with other employees at the college.

Hawks Care

In an effort to increase awareness of Hawks Care Resource Center services for both faculty and staff, an Educational Campaign was conducted across campus using ipsative and criterion-referenced assessments. During 2023-2024, Hawks Care presented in-person, virtually or by recorded video to seven academic divisions (estimated at 550 faculty and staff) and eight offices/programs/departments (estimated at 100 staff). Hawks Care plans to continue the education campaign with a focus on student groups and classes for 2024-2025. It is evident an education campaign is necessary to dispel misinformation across campus, even to divisions/offices/programs/departments previously presented to.

Student Engagement

One of the goals for Student Engagement in 2023-2024 was to improve students' essential skills in communication, critical thinking, career and self-development, and teamwork. Students who are involved in student clubs and organizations were asked to self-assess whether their experience in clubs or organizations has increased their skills in the outcomes. Overall, results showed that many students reported that they increased their skills in being able to think critically and analytically; speak clearly and effectively; work effectively with others; and develop career goals and leadership skills. These results will help guide the direction of student leader trainings, as well as club support, to enhance the overall personal and professional growth of students and their experience within student clubs and organizations.

Other Assessment Efforts at Harper College

In addition to the assessment processes and outcomes analyses described above, the College continued its assessment efforts in 2023-2024 through:

- The 15th Annual Assessment Conference and Share Fair, held on September 29, 2023. This professional development event featured Dr. Divya Bheda, Senior Fellow, American Association of Colleges and Universities, who presented the keynote address, “Building Responsiveness and Serving Our Students: For Integrity, Efficacy, and Equity.” Other sessions included a panel discussion, “Assessing Student Learning in the Age of Artificial Intelligence” and a faculty workshop, “From Theory to Action: Transforming and Liberating Assessment Practice.” In total, 100 faculty, staff, and student EpiCC Coaches attended the Conference.
- Supported assessment personnel during the data migration period of the Nuventive assessment management system. Identified pragmatic enhancements to the system and collaborated with Nuventive personnel to implement recommendations and solutions to improve user experience. Created user guides for the new platform.
- The Outcomes Assessment Office, in conjunction with the Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Division, hosted a table at the Orientation Week Fall Marketplace in August 2023. Showcased Harper’s upcoming assessment activities and discussed evidence of student learning with colleagues.
- 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 2023.
- 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.
- Transition to individualized training sessions. The Outcomes Assessment Office conducted more than 40 one-on-one and small group training 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.