



NORCO
COLLEGE

Assessment Handbook

Developed by the
Norco Assessment Committee
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Why Assessment Matters

Purpose of Assessment

At Norco College, assessment is a process that allows us to answer fundamental questions about teaching, learning, and support. Assessment is not merely the act of grading or assigning scores; rather, it is a systematic, cyclical, intentional, and reflective practice designed to evaluate the quality of our courses, programs, and services.

Assessment involves collecting information to convey whether the courses, programs, services, and activities we provide have the desired impact on student learning. Moving beyond individual student evaluation, assessment identifies patterns of learning to allow us to make decisions based on empirical evidence rather than intuition.

Norco College engages in ongoing assessment to ensure students are developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for successful course and program completion, transfer, workforce readiness, and life beyond the classroom. The purpose of assessment is to continuously improve educational quality by closing gaps between what we intend for students to learn and what they actually learn.

Benefits of Assessment

Assessment is required for continued accreditation through the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). Aligning to accreditation Standards is not about simply checking a box; it is about demonstrating Norco College's commitment to institutional effectiveness by:

- Identifying and regularly assessing learning outcomes for all courses and programs (I.B.1, 1.B.2).
- Reviewing meaningfully disaggregated data to evaluate progress and inform improvements (I.B.3, I.B.6).
- Discussing and reflecting on assessment results, designing data-informed interventions, and documenting the dialogue as evidence (I.B.4, I.B.2).

Beyond accreditation, the primary value of assessment lies in its ability to foster a culture of continuous improvement and equity at Norco College. The core benefit of assessment is its power to improve teaching, learning, and support through evidence. Through an ongoing, systematic process of outcomes data collection, analysis, and application we can:

- **Enhance student learning** by establishing clear outcomes to set expectations for students, helping them understand what they will gain from a course, program, or service.
- **Improve teaching, curriculum, and services** by using assessment results to determine what is working and what is not, allowing us to refine teaching methods, update curriculum, develop new instructional strategies, or improve activities.
- **Close equity gaps** by making inequities visible through disaggregating assessment data to determine disproportionate impacts on specific student populations. Identifying equity gaps allows us to design targeted interventions to ensure teaching practices are effective for all students.
- **Inform planning and decision making** by using assessment results to provide the necessary evidence and justification for requesting additional positions and resources through the program review process to strengthen programs and services aligned with the college mission, vision, and core commitments.

Appropriate Use of Assessment Results

Assessment results are intended to support inquiry and improvements to teaching, learning, and services, with a focus on closing equity gaps. Assessment data should inform collaborative discussion and guide actions that strengthen student learning and success (Table 1).

Outcomes assessment is not controlled scientific research. Student learning is influenced by many factors beyond the control of any single college employee, including prior preparation, course modality, scheduling, student responsibilities outside of school, and broader institutional or social conditions. Because these variables cannot be isolated, assessment results should not be used to attribute student achievement to an individual employee, course section, program, or service.

Assessment is most effective when individuals can engage with results openly and honestly. If assessment results were used in ways that create fear of negative consequences, employees may feel pressure to alter results, disengage from the process, or avoid experimenting with new teaching strategies or service approaches. Maintaining assessment as a safe space for inquiry and improvement encourages authentic reflection, meaningful dialogue, and innovation that ultimately benefits students.

Consistent with faculty contract language, full-time faculty are expected to participate in assessment¹, but assessment results are not included in the scope of the review during the

¹ 2021 – 2024 Faculty Association Agreement, XI.B.1, Faculty Expectations, p. 46.

faculty evaluation process¹. Participation in assessment is not required for part-time faculty and cannot be used as a basis for evaluation or employment/re-employment² decisions. However, part-time faculty can be compensated for optional discipline-directed assessment activities per academic year³.

Table 1. Guidelines for How Assessment Results Should and Should Not Be Used

Assessment Purpose	Appropriate Uses of Assessment Results	Inappropriate Uses of Assessment Results
Improving Student Learning	✓ Identify specifically where students may be experiencing learning challenges within courses, programs, or individual outcomes.	✗ Use assessment data to evaluate or judge individual faculty performance. 1. Assessment results are NOT part of the scope of review in the faculty evaluation process. 2. Assessment results CANNOT be considered during employment/re-employment decisions.
Faculty Dialogue & Reflection	✓ Support collaborative discussions among faculty within a discipline about student learning and instructional strategies.	✗ Attribute student outcomes to a single instructor or section. 1. Assessment results are NOT part of the scope of review in the faculty evaluation process. 2. Assessment results CANNOT be considered during employment/re-employment decisions.
Equity-Focused Inquiry	✓ Examine disaggregated data to identify equity gaps and determine where targeted interventions may help students succeed.	✗ Draw conclusions about student groups without examining context or supporting evidence.
Curriculum & Instructional Improvement	✓ Pinpoint specific course outcomes or areas of curriculum where adjustments may improve learning.	✗ Require broad course or program redesign without understanding where learning gaps originate.
Evidence-Based Decision Making	✓ Use shared assessment evidence to inform decisions about pedagogy, curriculum, and program improvement.	✗ Use assessment results to rank instructors, courses, or departments.
Program & Course Alignment	✓ Coordinate improvements across courses or sections using discipline-level evidence and discussion.	✗ Treat assessment as a compliance activity rather than a process for improvement.

¹ 2021 – 2024 Faculty Association Agreement, XI.D, Evaluation Procedures, p. 48-58.

² 2021 – 20224 Faculty Association Agreement, X.D.3, For Associate Faculty, p. 56.

³ 2021 – 20224 Faculty Association Agreement, X.Q.5, Associate Faculty, p.28.

Outcomes Assessment Framework

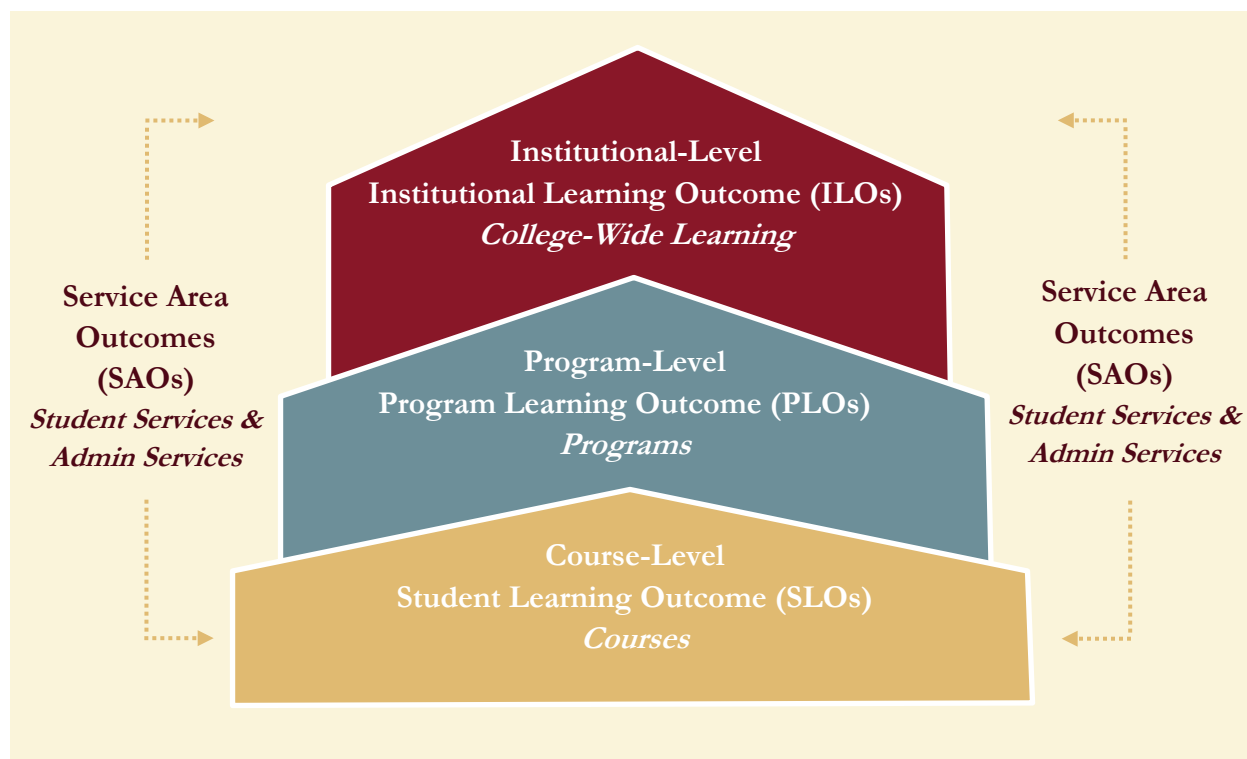


Figure 1. Norco College Outcomes Assessment Framework

Outcomes at Norco College are structured to reflect learning and effectiveness at multiple levels. Course-Level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) describe the knowledge and skills students develop within individual courses. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) build on course-level learning and reflect what students should know and be able to do upon completion of a degree or certificate program. Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) represent the broad knowledge, skills, and dispositions students develop through their overall educational experience at the College.

In addition to student learning outcomes, the College evaluates the effectiveness of programs and services through Service Area Outcomes (SAOs). While SLOs, PLOs, and ILOs assess student learning, SAOs measure the impact of services, programs, and operational functions that support student success and the overall student experience. Together, these outcomes provide a framework (Figure 1) for assessing learning and supporting continuous improvement in teaching, curriculum, and institutional effectiveness.

What Needs to be Assessed

Course Level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Course-Level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) describe what students should know, be able to do, and demonstrate as a result of completing a course. SLOs are clear, observable, and measurable statements that reflect the knowledge, skills, and higher-order thinking abilities students are expected to gain, integrate, and apply through a learning experience. Course-level SLO assessment evaluates the extent to which students achieve these intended learning outcomes.

The SLOs for each course are documented in the Course Outline of Record (COR) in [CurriQūnet](#). Course SLOs should also appear on the course syllabus, and faculty are encouraged to discuss them with students at the beginning of the course so that expectations for learning are clear. When appropriate, faculty may also share assessment results with students, particularly when assessment results connected to specific assignments or learning activities are visible to students.

Through the systematic review of student work aligned with specific SLOs, faculty can identify patterns in student learning, strengths in instruction, and areas where students may benefit from additional support or different learning approaches. SLO assessment examines overall learning across sections or over time and informs faculty dialogue about curriculum, pedagogy, and course design. This process supports continuous improvement in teaching and learning and helps ensure that courses effectively contribute to Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs).

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) describe what students should know, be able to do, and demonstrate upon completion of a degree or certificate program. PLOs reflect the cumulative knowledge, skills, and abilities students develop across the curriculum as they progress through a program of study. Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) assessment evaluates the extent to which students achieve these intended outcomes and demonstrate mastery of program-level learning.

PLOs are documented in CurriQūnet and included in the [College Catalog](#) as part of the program curriculum. Program outcomes are typically mapped to courses within the program where learning is introduced, reinforced, and demonstrated. PLOs are often assessed in courses required for completion of the degree or certificate and are frequently aligned with culminating or capstone assignments that measure students' higher-order and integrative learning.

Because mastery of course-level outcomes does not necessarily indicate competency at the program level, PLO assessment helps faculty understand how well students integrate and apply learning across multiple courses over time. The results of PLO assessment inform faculty dialogue about curriculum alignment, program design, and student learning across the program. This process supports continuous improvement in teaching and learning and helps ensure that degree and certificate programs effectively achieve their intended outcomes.

Institution Level Student Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) represent the broad knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes that students are expected to develop through their overall educational experience at Norco College. These outcomes extend beyond individual courses or programs and reflect the shared educational goals of the institution that support the college mission. Institutional Learning Outcomes assessment evaluates the extent to which students demonstrate these broad competencies as a result of their cumulative learning experiences at the College.

ILOs are documented in the [College Catalog](#) and aligned with General Education Student Learning Outcomes (GELOs) and also intersect with career technical education competencies. Because they represent institution-wide learning goals, ILOs are assessed on a broader, cross-disciplinary scale than course- or program-level outcomes. Assessment may draw on multiple sources of evidence across programs and disciplines to evaluate how effectively the institution supports student learning and development.

The results of ILO assessment inform college-wide dialogue about student learning, curriculum alignment, and institutional priorities. This process supports continuous improvement in teaching, learning, and institutional effectiveness, and helps ensure that Norco College graduates develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for student success, workforce readiness, and lifelong learning.

Service Area Outcomes (SAOs)

Service Area Outcomes (SAOs) describe the impact of programs, services, or operational functions on students, employees, or the community. SAOs focus on what individuals receive, experience, or are able to do as a result of interacting with a service area, ensuring that students have the tools, resources, and support needed to succeed in college. Service Area Outcome assessment evaluates the extent to which services effectively support student success and meet the needs of those they serve.

SAOs are developed and assessed by classified professionals, faculty, and administrators in service and administrative areas such as Admissions and Records, Financial Aid, Counseling,

Transfer Services, Library, and Tutorial Services. These outcomes may describe improvements in student experiences, access to services, or the effectiveness and efficiency of operational processes and are aligned with college goals, objectives, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Service areas assess SAOs regularly and report results through established institutional planning and evaluation processes, including Program Review. Assessments may include surveys, usage data, service metrics, or other forms of evidence that help evaluate the effectiveness of programs and services across the College.

The results of SAO assessment inform dialogue about service delivery, resource allocation, and operational improvements. This process supports continuous improvement in the services that contribute to student success and helps ensure that institutional resources and support structures effectively meet the needs of the college community.

How Outcomes Align

Outcomes work together to provide evidence of how effectively courses, programs, services, and institutional activities support student learning, achievement, and success. Course-Level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) contribute to Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), which in turn support Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). Service Area Outcomes (SAOs) assess the effectiveness of the programs, services, and operational functions that support the student experience and institutional goals.

Mapping outcomes across these levels helps clarify how courses, programs, and services contribute to broader college priorities and continuous improvement efforts. Assessment is most effective when faculty, classified professionals, and administrators collaboratively engage in reviewing results, identifying areas for improvement, and using evidence to strengthen student learning and institutional effectiveness.

Writing or Reviewing Outcomes

What Makes an Effective Outcome

Effective outcomes clearly describe what students, prospective students, community members, or employees should know, be able to do, experience, or demonstrate as a result of a course, program, service, or institutional experience. Outcomes should focus on meaningful learning or impact rather than on instructional activities, assigned tasks, or the delivery of services. Well-written outcomes are clear, easy to understand, focused on the student or user experience, measurable and observable, and aligned with the goals and mission of the course, program, service area, or institution.

Course Level Student Learning Outcome Example (Communication Studies)

Effectively and ethically construct a speech using credible evidence in support of a guiding thesis.

Why It Works:

- ✓ Clearly describes what students should be able to demonstrate
- ✓ Focuses on meaningful learning and applied communication skills
- ✓ Uses observable and measurable action language (i.e., “construct,” “use,” “support”)
- ✓ Emphasizes demonstrated competency rather than instructional activities or assignments alone
- ✓ Is written in clear, easy-to-understand language

Program Learning Outcome Example (Biology)

Apply knowledge of biological concepts to formulate questions and hypotheses for research and demonstrate ability to find, read, understand, and critically evaluate scientific papers.

Why It Works:

- ✓ Focuses on what students can demonstrate
- ✓ Emphasizes meaningful, transferable skills
- ✓ Uses measurable action verbs (i.e., “apply,” “formulate,” “evaluate”)
- ✓ Reflects cumulative program-level learning
- ✓ Incorporates scientific literacy and research competency
- ✓ Written in relatively clear and understandable language

Institution Level Outcome Example (Information Competency and Technology Literacy)

Students will be able to use technology to locate, organize, and evaluate information. They will be able to locate relevant information, judge the reliability of sources, and evaluate the evidence contained in those sources as they construct arguments, make decisions, and solve problems.

Why It Works:

- ✓ Clearly describes what students should be able to do by emphasizing information literacy, digital literacy, critical evaluation, and problem solving
- ✓ Focuses on meaningful and transferable skills that students can apply across academic, professional, and personal contexts

- ✓ Uses measurable and observable action verbs such as “locate,” “organize,” “evaluate,” “judge,” and “construct”
- ✓ Centers on demonstrated student abilities rather than instructional activities or specific assignments
- ✓ Is written in language that is clear and easy to understand while still reflecting higher-order thinking skills
- ✓ Emphasizes the application of evidence and information to real-world tasks such as constructing arguments, making decisions, and solving problems
- ✓ Is broad enough to be assessed across disciplines and programs while remaining specific enough to support meaningful assessment and improvement discussions

Service Area Outcome Example (Library)

Faculty, students, and community users who attend a library event will be able to identify at least one way the experience contributed to their academic success, professional development, or personal well-being.

Why It Works

- ✓ Focuses on the impact of the experience rather than simply describing the event or service
- ✓ Clearly identifies the intended audience (i.e., faculty, students, and community users)
- ✓ Emphasizes meaningful outcomes related to academic success, professional growth, and personal well-being
- ✓ Uses language that is clear, easy to understand, and user-centered
- ✓ Includes observable and measurable elements that can be assessed through surveys, reflections, or evaluations
- ✓ Encourages assessment of participant experiences and perceived value rather than attendance
- ✓ Supports meaningful dialogue about how programs and events contribute to student success and community well-being
- ✓ Provides actionable information that can be used to improve future programming and services

The Assessment Cycle

Assessment Cycle Diagram

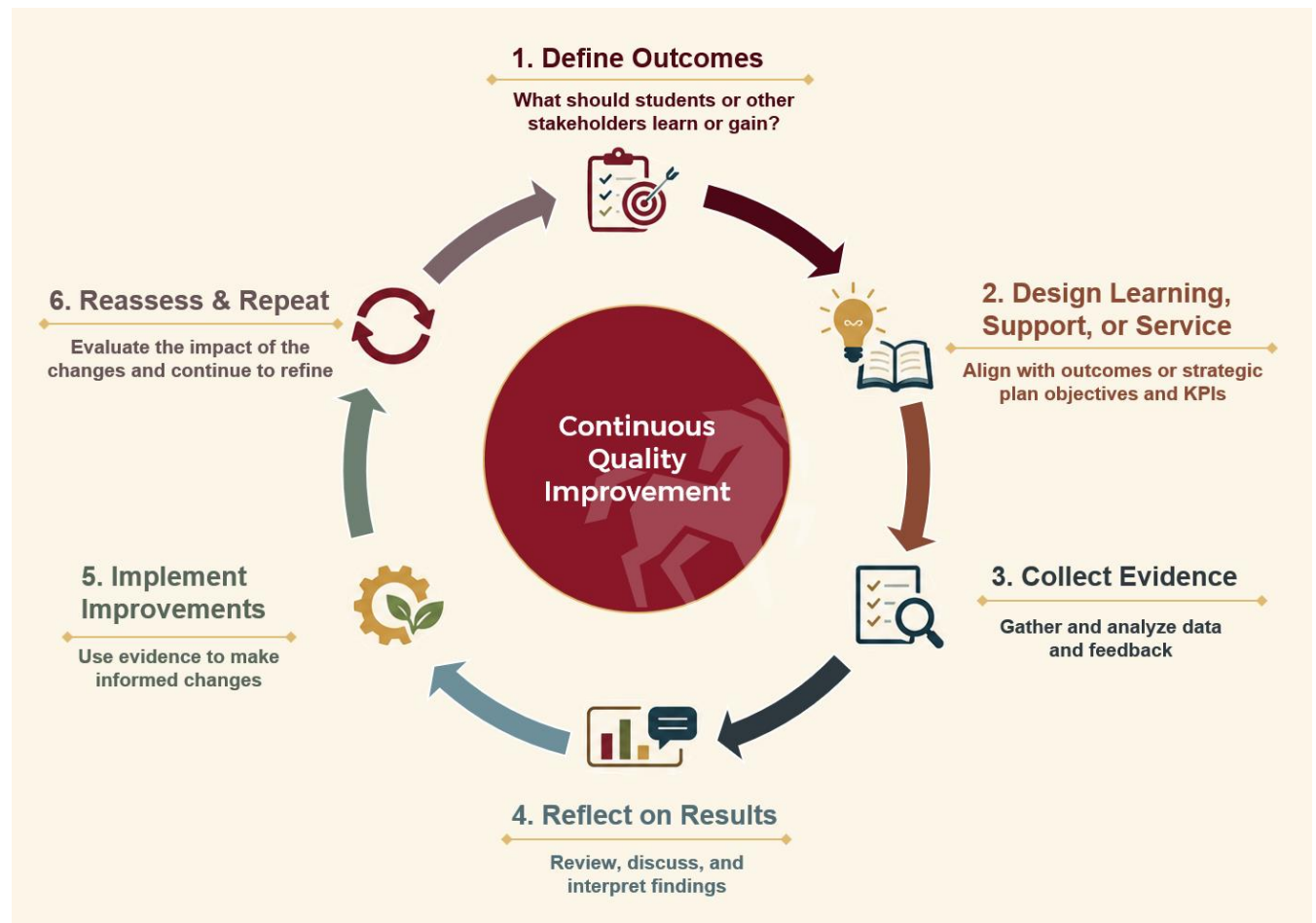


Figure 2. Norco College Assessment Cycle for instruction, student services, and administrative areas

Assessment Cycle Description

The assessment cycle (Figure 2) is a continuous process used by instruction, student services, and administrative areas to understand how well students are learning and supported at the College. The cycle consists of the following six steps.

1. **Define Outcomes:** Clearly state what students or other stakeholders should learn or gain from a course, program, or service.
⇒ Focuses instruction and services on outcomes that matter most to student success.
2. **Design Learning, Support, or Service:** Align teaching strategies and services to outcomes or strategic plan objectives and KPIs.

- ⇒ Encourages intentional, student-centered pedagogy and service delivery.
- 3. **Collect Evidence:** Use assignments, projects, surveys, or service data to understand student learning, support, and service experience.
 - ⇒ Provides meaningful insight into what is working and where improvements are needed.
- 4. **Reflect on Results:** Review evidence to identify strengths, challenges, and equity gaps.
 - ⇒ Promotes employee dialogue about improving teaching, support, and services.
- 5. **Implement Improvements:** Make informed changes to instruction, curriculum, learning support, or services.
 - ⇒ Translates assessment into action to enhance the student learning experience.
- 6. **Reassess and Repeat:** Evaluate the impact of changes and refine practices over time.
 - ⇒ Sustains continuous improvement responsive to evolving student needs.

Assessment Methods

Direct Assessment Methods

Direct assessment methods require a first-hand review of actual work, performance, or demonstrated skill to evaluate the degree of “mastery” of an intended outcome.

Direct assessment methods are preferred and considered more robust because they provide observable and measurable evidence of learning, allow for the consistent application of criteria and rubrics, and more directly measure the achievement of learning outcomes.

Common direct methods of assessment include (see Appendix B for examples):

- Rubrics/Evaluation Criteria
- Demonstrations of skills
- Pre-/Post-Assessments
- Projects or Culminating Work
- Observation
- Review of Completed Work
- Real-World/Applied Activities
- Tracking Demonstrated Competencies

Indirect Assessment Methods

Indirect assessment methods rely on students’ reflections, perceptions, and self-reported experiences about what they have learned, including their thoughts, attitudes, and opinions.

While indirect assessment can provide valuable insight into students’ learning experiences, confidence, and engagement, this method does not independently verify whether students can apply knowledge or demonstrate specific skills and competencies. For that reason, indirect assessment should be used to complement direct assessment.

Common indirect methods of assessment include (see Appendix C for examples):

- Interviews/Conversations
- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Reflections
- Participation Data
- Self-Reported Learning
- Satisfaction/Experience Feedback
- Engagement Activities

Tips for Choosing a Method That Fits Your Needs

1. **Start with the outcome:** Carefully read the outcome to identify what students, employees, or participants should know, be able to do, experience, or demonstrate.
2. **Choose a method that matches the type of outcome:** Select assessment methods that align with the intended result. For example, demonstrated skills may be assessed through rubrics, projects, observations, or completed tasks, while perceptions, experiences, or satisfaction may be assessed through surveys, reflections, interviews, or focus groups.
3. **Use direct and indirect methods together when appropriate:** Direct methods evaluate actual work, performance, or demonstrated competencies, while indirect methods provide insight into perceptions, experiences, confidence, or engagement. Using both can provide a more complete understanding of effectiveness and impact.
4. **Develop clear criteria for evaluation:** Rubrics, checklists, scoring guides, or defined benchmarks can help clarify expectations and support more consistent evaluation of outcomes.
5. **Select methods that are practical and meaningful:** Choose assessment approaches that are manageable, provide useful information, and align with the work already occurring in instruction, student services, or administrative areas.
6. **Use results to support improvement:** Assessment methods should generate information that can inform dialogue, guide planning, identify strengths and gaps, and support continuous improvement in courses, programs, services, and institutional processes.

Interpreting Assessment Results

Where to Find Your Assessment Data

Canvas

Once you have imported your outcomes, linked your outcomes to an assignment, and entered your assessment results using the rubric, your section-level data can be viewed in your [Learning Mastery Gradebook](#).

Nuventive

Assessment data from the Canvas *Learning Mastery Gradebook* is automatically transferred to Nuventive weekly:

1. Course-level and program-level data can be viewed in [Nuventive](#) by selecting Assessment from the left-side menu and then *Assessment Observations*. The *Norco College Outcomes Dashboards* are available in data views on the right-hand side.
2. Assessment dashboard data can be filtered by term, discipline, course, modality, outcome type, outcome, Canvas ID, declared major, gender, age group, and race/ethnicity.
3. Canvas ID allows you to exclusively view your own assessment data by requesting and entering your unique Canvas grader ID number.

What the Data is Telling You

1. ***Learning Mastery Gradebook*** in Canvas shows the course average on a scale of 0-4 for each learning outcome and each student's score for each learning outcome.
2. ***Outcome Mastery*** in Nuventive shows the percentage of students who have achieved mastery (i.e., ≥ 2) for all outcomes that have been measured by your discipline.
3. ***Outcome Mastery Over Time*** in Nuventive shows the percentage of students who have achieved mastery of a learning outcomes by term for comparison over time.
4. ***Outcome Mastery by Demographics*** in Nuventive shows the percentage of students who have achieved mastery disaggregated by gender, age group, and race/ethnicity.
5. ***Outcome Mastery by Declared Major*** in Nuventive shows the percentage of students who have achieved mastery by declared major.
6. ***Outcome Mastery by Declared Major and Outcome*** in Nuventive shows the percentage of students who have achieved mastery for the course level outcomes within a particular declared major.

Looking For Patterns, Not Perfection

1. Norco College has established a benchmark aiming for 70% of students achieving mastery in each outcome.
2. The more variables you use to filter the data, the fewer observations you will have for each outcome. Hover over the bars in the charts to see the number of assessments and student counts. The smaller the number, the less reliable and representative the results may be, so use caution when drawing conclusions from small sample sizes.
3. Filter by demographic variables related to age group, gender, and race/ethnicity under the *Outcome Mastery by Demographics* tab to identify any equity gaps.
4. Disciplines should not expect to see 100% mastery of outcomes for students; rather, analysis should focus on where student achievement can be improved and for whom.

General Reflection Prompts

The following questions may be helpful to facilitate conversation about assessment data:

- What first stands out to you in the data/results?
- What strengths or successes do you notice?
- What opportunities for improvement do you observe?
- Were any results unexpected?
- What factors may have contributed to these results?
- What changes or next steps could improve outcomes moving forward?

Equity-Minded Reflection Prompts

Consider asking the following questions when analyzing assessment data using an equity lens:

- Are there differences mastery achievement across student groups (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, age, modality, or first-generation status)?
- What institutional, structural, instructional, or environmental factors may be contributing to differences in outcomes, and how might they be addressed?
- Do course materials, examples, and learning activities reflect and value diverse student backgrounds and experiences?
- Do students have equitable access to course materials, technology, support services, and other resources needed for success?
- Are there patterns in the data that suggest certain student groups may be disproportionately impacted by barriers or gaps in support?
- What changes to curriculum, pedagogy, services, communication, or support structures could improve outcomes for disproportionately impacted groups?

Improvement Plans

Identifying Actions Based on Assessment Results

Actions should be targeted to address outcomes results that most need improvement:

- Not all courses, programs, services, or outcomes will require changes or formal improvement plans.
- Assessment results should be interpreted thoughtfully and in context, particularly when sample sizes are small or results vary across groups or settings.
- Different courses, programs, services, outcomes, or student populations may require different strategies or approaches.
- Improvement efforts should be realistic, achievable, and aligned with the outcomes, goals, objectives, and/or KPIs of the course, program, or service/administrative area.
- Plans should identify what changes will be made, who will be responsible, what resources or support may be needed, and when changes will be implemented and reassessed. If additional resources are needed assessment results should inform program review requests.
- Assessment discussions should use an equity-minded, non-deficit minded approach that focuses on improving learning, experiences, services, and practices.

Examples of strategies or actions for improvement for instruction, student services, and administrative areas are provided in Appendix D.

What Counts as “Closing the Loop”

The assessment cycle (Figure 2) is considered “closed” when implemented changes are reassessed to evaluate their impact on outcomes and determine whether improvements were effective. Assessment is an ongoing process of defining outcomes, collecting evidence, reflecting on results, implementing improvements, and reassessing outcomes to support continuous quality improvement in instruction, services, programs, and institutional practices.

As the College’s assessment processes and systems continue to evolve, including streamlined opportunities for continuous data collection and analysis, the institution is moving beyond periodic assessment toward a culture of ongoing assessment that more consistently monitors the achievement of outcomes and supports timely, data-informed improvement efforts.

When Should You Assess

The schedule for assessing outcomes for courses, programs, and services is determined by the discipline, service area, or administrative unit. Assessment schedules should be submitted to

the Norco College Assessment Committee Co-Chairs, and reviewed and updated as needed as part of the Annual Update for program review.

Each outcome must be assessed *at least* once during each Program Review cycle. For example, if a course has three student learning outcomes, each SLO must be assessed once within the program review cycle before the start of the next cycle.

Ideally, each outcome should be reassessed within the Program Review cycle after an improvement plan has been implemented to evaluate the effectiveness of the changes.

Support and Help

Who to Contact

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[Norco College Assessment Committee](#)

Appendix A

Assessment Glossary

For a more detailed and comprehensive list, please see the [ASCCC SLO Glossary](#). Below are some terms frequently used at Norco College.

Term	Definition
Assessment (Same as Learning Assessment)	The regular and ongoing process of collecting information that will tell us whether the programs, services, activities, and experiences we provide have the desired impact on student learning. Learning outcomes help us identify knowledge and skill sets that students learn as a result of our courses, programs, and services.
Assessment Cycle	A continuous process used by instruction, student services, and administrative areas to understand how well students are learning and supported at the College. The cycle consists of the following six steps: 1. Define Outcomes; 2. Design Learning, Support, or Service; 3. Collect Evidence; 4. Reflect on Results; 5. Implement Improvements; and 6. Reassess and Repeat
Bloom's Taxonomy	Divides learning into three domains: Cognitive, Affective (attitudes and values), and Psychomotor (athletic skill, laboratory skills, and so on) (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2000). Cognitive skills are organized into a hierarchy of six categories: Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze, Evaluate, and Create. Many people still refer to the original names of these categories: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Evaluation, and Synthesis (Bloom, 1956).
Closing the Loop (Same as Continuous Quality Improvement)	The use of assessment results to improve student learning, through collegial dialogue informed by the results of outcomes assessment. It is part of the continuous cycle of collecting and evaluating assessment results, using evaluations to identify actions that will improve students' experiences and learning, implementing those actions, and then returning back to collecting assessment results.
Competencies and Proficiencies	Terms used to describe learning goals or objectives, typically used to describe skills rather than knowledge or attitudes.

Competency-Based Programs	A set of learning activities designed to help students achieve and demonstrate the program's learning goals. Students' progress through the program is not by completing courses but by completing the learning activities.
Continuous Quality Improvement	The use of assessment results to improve student learning, through collegial dialogue informed by the results of outcomes assessment. It is part of the continuous cycle of collecting and evaluating assessment results, using evaluations to identify actions that will improve students' experiences and learning, implementing those actions, and then returning back to collecting assessment results.
Course-Level Student Learning Outcome (SLO)	Course-Level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) describe what students should know, be able to do, and demonstrate as a result of completing a course. SLOs are clear, observable, and measurable statements that reflect the knowledge, skills, and higher-order thinking abilities students are expected to gain, integrate, and apply through a learning experience.
Curriculum Alignment	Ensuring that your course, program, or general education curriculum is designed to give every student enough opportunity to achieve its key learning goals.
Curriculum Map	A chart identifying the key learning goals addressed in each of the curriculum's key elements or learning activities.
Direct Assessment	The use of actual student work (e.g. essays, quizzes, exams, etc.) to measure mastery or achievement of outcomes.
Equity-Mindedness	The perspective or mode of thinking exhibited by practitioners who call attention to patterns of inequity in student outcomes. These practitioners are willing to take personal and institutional responsibility for the success of their students and critically reassess their own practices. It also requires that practitioners are race-conscious and aware of the social and historical context of exclusionary practices in American Higher Education.
Equity Gap	Statistically significant differences in the average level of outcome mastery achieved by student subgroups (e.g., 80% of female students attain mastery of a given SLO while only 50% of male students reach mastery on the same outcome).
Formative Assessment	Evaluation tools that identify misconceptions, struggles, and learning gaps along the way and assess how to close those gaps.

Full-time Equivalent Student (FTES)	The total number of full-time equivalent students enrolled. Includes non-residents unless otherwise noted.
Hard skills	Career-specific skills required for a specific occupation.
Improvement Plan	A pedagogical strategy developed to enhance student performance. Improvement plans should establish goals, specify the steps that will be taken to meet those objectives, and detail how effectiveness will be measured.
Indirect Assessment	The use of qualitative tools (e.g. interviews, focus groups, surveys, etc.) to measure students' own perceptions (i.e. attitudes, opinions, thoughts) regarding learning.
Institutional Learning Goals	Learning goals that every student at a college, regardless of program, is expected to achieve by graduation.
Institutional Learning Outcome (ILO)	An Institutional Learning Outcome (ILO) represents the broad knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes that students are expected to develop through their overall educational experience at Norco College. These outcomes extend beyond individual courses or programs and reflect the shared educational goals of the institution that support the college mission.
Learning Assessment	The regular and ongoing process of collecting information that will tell us whether the programs, services, activities, and experiences we provide have the desired impact on student learning. Learning outcomes help us identify knowledge and skill sets that students learn as a result of our courses, programs, and services.
Learning Objectives	Describes detailed aspects of learning goals or tasks to be accomplished.
Learning Outcomes	A statement or set of statements that indicate what a student/learner should be able to do/know at the end of the learning event. Different from grades that may include many other factors, learning outcomes are specifically focused on gains in knowledge/skills. Learning Outcomes apply to course level, program level, and institution level.
Program Learning Outcome (PLO)	A Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) describes what students should know, be able to do, and demonstrate upon completion of a degree or certificate program. PLOs reflect the cumulative knowledge, skills, and abilities students develop across the curriculum as they progress through a program of study.
Service Area Outcome (SAO)	A Service Area Outcome (SAO) describes the impact of programs, services, or operational functions on students, employees, or the community. SAOs focus on what

	individuals receive, experience, or are able to do as a result of interacting with a service area, ensuring that students have the tools, resources, and support needed to succeed in college.
Soft skills	The generalizable, transferrable skills that are applicable to a wide range of careers and are often required to advance beyond a specific position.

Appendix B

Direct Assessment Methods

Direct Methods	Instruction	Student Services	Administrative Areas
Rubrics / Evaluation Criteria	Scoring essays, speeches, projects, or lab work	Evaluating education plans, résumés, or workshop activities	Evaluating planning documents, trainings, or completed processes
Demonstrations of Skills	Presentations, performances, labs, or clinical skills	Demonstrating use of student systems or completion of onboarding tasks	Demonstrating use of software, procedures, or operational processes
Pre-/Post-Assessments	Knowledge checks before and after instruction	Assessing understanding before and after orientations or workshops	Assessing learning before and after employee trainings
Projects or Culminating Work	Capstone projects, portfolios, or research papers	Completed transfer plans, career plans, or student success activities	Completed strategic plans, reports, or institutional projects
Observation	Observing participation, collaboration, or applied skills	Observing advising interactions, peer mentoring, or leadership activities	Observing workflow processes, customer service, or training participation
Review of Completed Work	Reviewing assignments, exams, or portfolios	Reviewing completed forms, applications, or student plans	Reviewing reports, dashboards, or operational documents
Real-World / Applied Activities	Case studies, simulations, internships, or labs	Mock interviews, onboarding activities, or resource navigation exercises	Simulations, compliance exercises, or applied planning activities
Tracking Demonstrated Competencies	Demonstration of course or program skills	Demonstration of financial literacy, educational planning, or technology use	Demonstration of data use, policy understanding, or process implementation

Appendix C

Indirect Assessment Methods

Indirect Methods	Instruction	Student Services	Administrative Areas
Surveys	Course feedback surveys, self-assessments, or reflections on learning	Student satisfaction surveys, workshop feedback, or service evaluations	Employee feedback surveys or campus climate surveys
Interviews / Conversations	Office hours discussions or student interviews about learning experiences	Counseling conversations, intake interviews, or follow-up meetings	Staff interviews, feedback meetings, or stakeholder conversations
Focus Groups	Discussions about course experiences or program effectiveness	Student focus groups about services or campus experiences	Employee or stakeholder focus groups about processes or services
Reflections	Student reflections on assignments, learning, or growth	Reflections on workshops, leadership activities, or support programs	Reflections on trainings, initiatives, or institutional processes
Participation Data	Participation in class activities, tutoring, or supplemental instruction	Attendance at workshops, orientations, events, or student activities	Participation in trainings, committees, or campus initiatives
Self-Reported Learning	Students reporting confidence or perceived growth in skills	Students reporting increased understanding of resources or processes	Employees reporting increased understanding after trainings or initiatives
Satisfaction / Experience Feedback	Feedback about course engagement or instructional practices	Feedback about services, accessibility, or student experiences	Feedback about operational effectiveness or support services
Engagement Activities	Student involvement in discussions, clubs, or research activities	Participation in leadership programs, outreach, or civic engagement	Participation in planning activities, professional development, or campus events

Appendix D

Examples of Actions for Improvement Based on Assessment Results

Strategies/Actions	Instruction	Student Services	Administrative Areas
Revise or Improve Existing Practices	Revise lectures, assignments, learning activities, or assessment methods	Revise workshops, orientations, communication methods, or service delivery processes	Revise operational processes, workflows, forms, procedures, or communication practices
Provide Additional Support Resources	Add supplemental materials in Canvas such as videos, sample assignments, study guides, or articles	Expand tutoring, textbook loans, laptop programs, basic needs support, or referral services	Provide additional guides, training materials, FAQs, or support documentation
Increase Access and Flexibility	Provide multiple assessment options or flexible learning opportunities	Offer online, in-person, drop-in, or appointment-based services	Expand virtual services, self-service tools, or flexible access to processes and resources
Use Technology to Improve Effectiveness	Integrate instructional technology tools	Expand access to technology resources such as laptops, scanners, printers, or online support	Implement technology solutions, dashboards, or automated workflows
Strengthen Communication	Provide more timely or targeted student feedback	Improve outreach, follow-up communication, or guidance	Improve communication with college, district, or community stakeholders
Increase Student Engagement and Support	Refer students to tutoring, counseling, library, or other support services	Increase student engagement opportunities, peer support, or resource awareness	Improve collaboration across departments or increase employee engagement in institutional processes
Expand Training or Professional Development	Participate in professional development related to pedagogy, equity, or technology	Provide staff training on student support strategies, equity-minded practices, or technology use	Provide training on systems, processes, compliance, customer service, or data-informed decision making
Improve Equity and Accessibility	Review course materials and assessments for accessibility and cultural relevance	Expand access to services, resources, and supports for disproportionately impacted groups	Review institutional practices, policies, or communication for equity and accessibility barriers
Evaluate and Reassess Changes	Reassess outcomes after instructional changes are implemented	Monitor student usage, satisfaction, and outcomes after service improvements	Review operational effectiveness and reassess processes after changes are implemented