

ASSESSMENT PROCESSES HANDBOOK

BARTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ASSESSMENT PHILOSOPHY:

1. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Assessment ensures learning opportunities remain effective, meaningful, and aligned with Barton's Mission. Because student learning occurs across the entire College, assessment confirms that Barton is meeting its responsibilities and providing the learning environment students deserve.

Assessment strengthens the quality of Barton's programs and services. Grounded in the values expressed in the Mission, it uses multiple methods to understand student learning across the College. This work occurs continuously and provides information that informs decision making and reinforces Barton's culture of learning.

2. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Faculty and staff are continuously working to improve. They want to understand how students learn and how instruction can be strengthened. What faculty learn about their students affects how future students experience the course.

Documentation, often completed through thoughtful reflection, helps faculty and staff analyze their evidence of learning, understand patterns, and identify adjustments that will support students.

3. MISSION

Barton offers exceptional and affordable learning opportunities supporting student, community, and employee needs.

Assessment supports the Mission by helping the College understand student learning and use that information to guide continuous improvement.

4. A NOTE ON ACCREDITATION

Assessment at its core is about improving student learning. Barton engages in assessment because students deserve learning opportunities that are effective, meaningful, and continuously improving. Assessment is not a compliance exercise. It reflects Barton's commitment to learning and to the success of its students.

Barton is not committed to assessment simply because of an accreditation mandate. Rather, accreditation follows naturally from this commitment to student learning.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Assessment at Barton focuses on Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), the statements that describe what a student will know or be able to do when they complete a learning experience.

Student Learning Outcomes are the generic term used for learning outcomes at every level of the College and serve as the foundation of Barton's Assessment Framework.

Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) guide the institutional level, General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs) guide the general education curriculum, and Co-Curricular Learning Outcomes guide learning within co-curricular experiences. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) define program expectations, Course Outcomes and Competencies guide individual courses, and Classroom Learning Outcomes and Objectives support lesson-level instruction.

Together, these interconnected outcomes provide evidence that strengthens learning across the College and supports Barton's Mission.

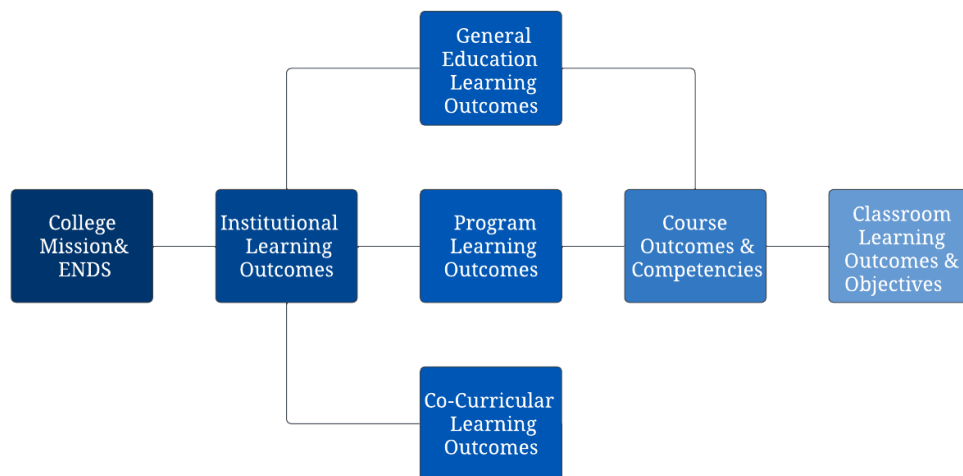
BENCHMARK DEFINITION

Student learning outcomes are compared to a benchmark; the minimum level of performance that indicates the outcome has been met. The specific benchmark is determined by the respective faculty, staff, or area. Barton traditionally uses a standard benchmark of 70% with an aspirational benchmark of 80%. These benchmarks align with the levels of performance used for institutional reporting.

Benchmarks help faculty and staff interpret the evidence and use the results to inform decisions that support student learning.

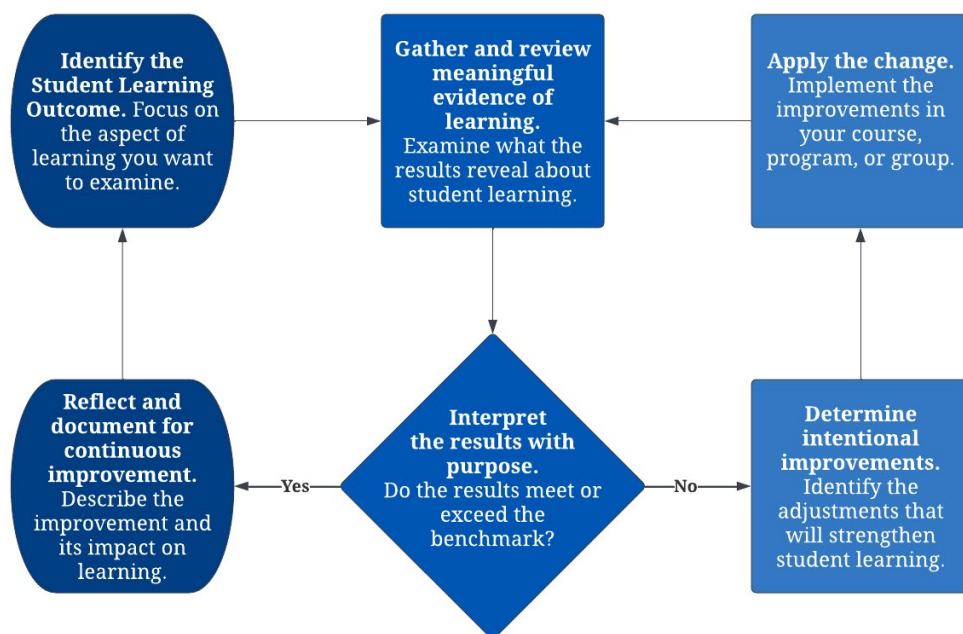
LEVELS OF ASSESSMENT

The levels of assessment begin with the Mission and follow a structure that connects each level of learning across the College. This structure allows Barton to understand student learning from the classroom to the institutional level.



ASSESSMENT PROCESS MAP

The Assessment Process Map shows how Barton assesses student learning outcomes at all levels of assessment. It illustrates the progression from identifying an outcome to interpreting results and determining whether improvements are needed. This map establishes the shared structure that guides assessment work across the College.



I. INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

Barton's Board of Trustees (BOT) defines END Statements that describe the broad skills students are expected to develop and the outcomes the College seeks to achieve. Institutional assessment focuses on the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), which serve as the College's interpretation of Board END 1: Fundamental Skills.

Evidence is drawn from existing assessments at the General Education, Program, and Co-Curricular levels to understand how students demonstrate the ILOs without creating separate tools. Program and institutional summaries use standardized benchmarks and longitudinal comparisons to support consistent interpretation across locations and modalities.

Institutional conclusions are based on patterns across General Education, Program, and Co-Curricular evidence rather than on any single source. This approach provides a collective institutional view of student learning and informs continuous improvement.

Barton's five Institutional Learning Outcomes are:

- Critical Thinking.
- Essential Skills.
- Integrity.
- Literacy.
- Citizenship.

These outcomes represent the broad abilities students develop throughout their Barton education.

1. USE, APPLY, AND DOCUMENT THE ASSESSMENT

Evidence aligned with the Institutional Learning Outcomes is collected and compiled for review. The Outcomes Assessment Committee examines the evidence to better understand how students are demonstrating the Institutional Learning Outcomes across the College. Through this review, the Committee identifies strengths, opportunities for improvement, and areas that may benefit from additional support or professional development.

2. CLOSE THE LOOP

The Coordinator of Assessment provides an annual report on the Institutional Learning Outcomes to the Board of Trustees. The Board reviews the results, asks questions to

deepen understanding, and affirms the College's progress toward student learning expectations. Highlights from this review are shared publicly in Barton's Community Report as part of an Assessment Spotlight, helping keep the community informed about student learning at Barton. This review guides the Outcomes Assessment Committee as it plans next steps for continued improvement in alignment with the Mission.

Barton also periodically prepares indirect assessment reports to address institutional questions, support strategic planning, accreditation activities, and other longitudinal review efforts. These reports draw upon indirect evidence sources relevant to the question being examined.

II. GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

General education assessment focuses on how students demonstrate academic skills across the general education curriculum. Barton's General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs) are institution-wide outcomes used to assess student learning within the general education curriculum. Each GELO is supported by specific, measurable competencies. These competencies guide curriculum design, course alignment, and assessment within general education and are documented and updated through Learning, Instruction, and Curriculum Committee (LICC) processes. GELOs provide a shared framework for understanding the academic skills students develop throughout Barton's general education coursework while maintaining flexibility across disciplines.

The general education domains include:

English and Communications, Mathematics and Statistics, Natural and Physical Sciences, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts and Humanities, and Technology, Performance and Personal Well-Being.

1. USE, APPLY, AND DOCUMENT THE ASSESSMENT

Faculty use established tools to collect and compile evidence related to the General Education Learning Outcomes. Evidence is aggregated across courses to better understand how students are demonstrating the knowledge and skills expected within the general education curriculum. This review helps identify strengths, opportunities for improvement, and areas that may benefit from further discussion, supporting instructional decisions and continuous improvement of the curriculum.

2. CLOSE THE LOOP

Because general education assessment is integrated into Barton's Instructional Review process, oversight of general education assessment resides within the Program Assessment Committee. The Committee reviews aggregated General Education Learning Outcomes data to determine next steps and guide future support and professional development efforts. The Coordinator of Assessment provides updates to internal leadership groups on general education assessment results. This review promotes continuous improvement and supports alignment with Barton's Mission and Institutional Learning Outcomes. Aggregated GELO results inform curriculum discussions, institutional planning, and the Instructional Review process.

III. CO-CURRICULAR ASSESSMENT

Co-Curricular Assessment examines learning that occurs through student organizations or clubs that support curricular or institutional outcomes. These experiences complement the curriculum and extend learning beyond the classroom.

Co-Curricular Groups are defined as follows:

Barton Community College's Co-Curricular Groups are student organizations or clubs designed to support curricular outcomes and objectives. These are separate from extracurricular activities, which are designed solely for social engagement or entertainment and do not have a curricular connection; performance groups, which are developed through credit-bearing courses and assessed through course and program assessment processes; and Student Services areas, including advisement, tutoring, career services, and similar activities that are assessed through Institutional Review processes.

Co-curricular experiences involve sustained engagement over time rather than one-time events and are intentionally designed to support student learning rather than solely promote participation or engagement.

Co-Curricular Learning Outcomes align directly to the Institutional Learning Outcomes, allowing learning that occurs through co-curricular experiences to contribute to Barton's broader understanding of student learning. The Co-Curricular Assessment Committee oversees this work within the Outcomes Assessment Committee to ensure institutional alignment.

1. USE, APPLY, AND DOCUMENT THE ASSESSMENT

Group Sponsors identify the outcomes for their group and determine how they will gather evidence of student learning. Evidence may be drawn from experiential tasks, presentations, performances, projects, reflections, or other meaningful activities.

Additional guidance for planning and documentation is available in the Co-Curricular Assessment Process Handbook.

Co-curricular participation varies from year to year, and some groups may have limited or no student involvement. When this occurs, sponsors are encouraged to share that information accurately so the College maintains a clear understanding of student engagement across all learning environments. The purpose of Co-Curricular Assessment is to support Barton's Mission by recognizing the meaningful learning opportunities sponsors create, regardless of the level of participation. This process highlights the role co-curricular experiences play in student learning and affirms the value of the time and care sponsors invest in their groups.

2. CLOSE THE LOOP

Each Co-Curricular Group documents its results and any adjustments made to improve learning. The Co-Curricular Assessment Committee compiles submitted reports and prepares an annual summary that illustrates co-curricular learning across the College. This summary contributes to Barton's understanding of learning in multiple contexts and supports continuous improvement across the institution.

IV. PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Program Assessment examines how well students achieve the skills and abilities defined by the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). It provides a holistic view of learning across a curriculum rather than within a single course. By bringing together evidence from courses throughout the program, faculty can interpret patterns across multiple sources and guide curricular and instructional decisions. This evidence helps faculty understand how program design, sequencing, and instructional practices support student learning.

Program Assessment is faculty-driven. Programs own their Program Learning Outcomes, the courses aligned to those outcomes, and the competencies within those courses. Program Assessment evidence is intended to inform interpretation, not prescribe specific actions. Faculty use these summaries during Instructional Review to identify appropriate next steps as content experts.

Program Assessment distinguishes between course-level and program-level improvement. A program-level improvement decision affects the overall design, sequencing, or expectations of the curriculum, such as revising a Program Learning Outcome or modifying the recommended course pathway.

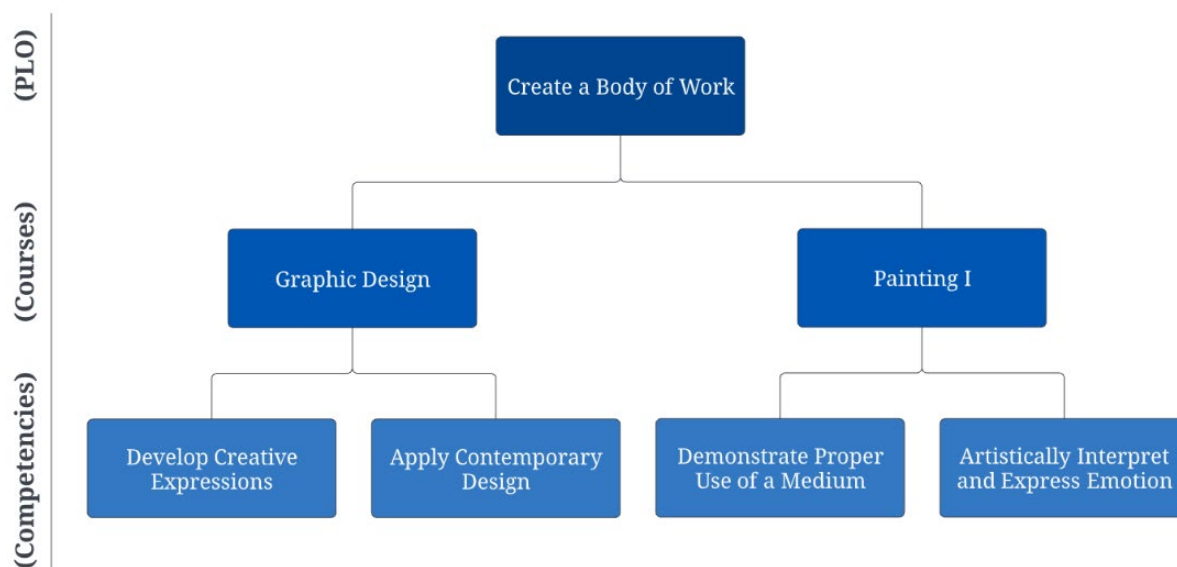
This work reinforces the quality and integrity of Barton’s programs and informs strategic planning, instructional quality, and continuous improvement across the College.

1. PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Program Learning Outcomes identify the core abilities students should possess upon completion of a program. Faculty determine, document, and periodically review the Program Learning Outcomes to ensure they remain aligned with program goals and curriculum expectations.

Programs map Program Learning Outcomes to course-level competencies so evidence from designated courses can be aggregated at the program level. This alignment supports meaningful evidence drawn across courses, locations, and modalities. Faculty work with the Program Assessment Committee as needed for support with mapping, tools, and report interpretation.

The Fine Arts Program demonstrates how course-level competencies connect to Program Learning Outcomes. A Program Learning Outcome may require students to create a body of work. Courses such as Graphic Design and Painting I support this outcome through competencies that contribute to a student’s ability to meet the stated expectation. This mapping shows how classroom learning contributes to Program Learning Outcomes and the broader goals of the program.



2. USE, APPLY, AND DOCUMENT THE ASSESSMENT

Program assessment evidence is collected each term from course competencies that have been mapped to Program Learning Outcomes. Evidence is aggregated across courses, locations, and modalities to provide a program-level view of learning that is used during Instructional Review.

Analyses summarize meaningful patterns, including trends over time and comparisons to Barton's benchmarks. These benchmarks are intended to support discussion rather than prescribe specific actions.

Program Assessment summaries highlight areas of interest and statistical patterns to help content experts interpret their evidence and identify appropriate next steps. Faculty remain responsible for selecting actions that will strengthen student learning.

Individual Program Assessment Reports are provided to programs to inform Instructional Review and local decision making. In addition, Barton prepares a collegewide Program Assessment Report that aggregates program results and documents longitudinal trends across the institution.

3. CLOSE THE LOOP

Program Assessment results feed directly into the biennial Instructional Review cycle. Faculty review trends, identify strengths and growth opportunities, and document measurable goals. Faculty also identify curriculum, sequencing, or instructional adjustments and any related budget requests needed to support student learning.

Instructional Review aligns Program Assessment with Barton's planning processes. Reviews follow a defined sequence of data collection, collaborative analysis, goal setting, submission, and follow-up reporting, and they are timed to inform budgeting and strategic planning. This cycle provides institutional assurance that program-level decisions are informed by evidence and that progress is monitored over time.

V. COURSE ASSESSMENT

Course Assessment focuses on summative, macro level evidence at the end of a course. It differs from Classroom Assessment, which examines formative, real-time learning during instruction. Summative evidence shows how well students achieved the Course Outcomes and Competencies after completing the full set of learning opportunities.

These outcomes contribute evidence to Program Learning Outcomes or General Education Learning Outcomes, depending on the role of the course within the curriculum. Together, this evidence contributes to Barton's understanding of learning across the curriculum.

Course Assessment helps faculty use summative evidence to improve future student learning.

Faculty assess all competencies in the syllabus throughout the course as a foundational instructional responsibility. Course Assessment does not replace that broader evaluation but instead documents one piece of the larger picture.

To support continuous improvement in a manageable way, faculty complete a spot check by documenting one course competency each term.

This documentation:

- Helps faculty pause and reflect on a specific part of the course.
- Keeps improvement goals visible from term to term.
- Supports memory across long teaching cycles, especially when a course is offered only occasionally.
- Provides a consistent snapshot of instructional improvement without creating unnecessary burden.

1. CHOOSE A STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME TO ASSESS

The Student Learning Outcomes can be found in the course syllabus, specifically the Course Competencies. For the spot check, faculty select one competency to document for the term. This documented competency provides a snapshot of macro learning without requiring identical artifacts across instructors.

2. CHOOSE AN ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUE

Summative Course Assessment uses end-of-course evidence such as:

- A final exam or project.
- A cumulative performance, recital, or production.
- A major written or oral presentation.
- A portfolio artifact or final body of work.

These techniques are used at the end of the course after students have had sufficient opportunities to learn the competency. Summative evidence is most useful when it clearly aligns with the competency being documented.

Although faculty select the summative assessment technique that best reflects the design of their course, collaboration with colleagues is strongly encouraged. Using shared assessments, or discussing common approaches to summative work, can help faculty interpret results more effectively and recognize the value of learning from one another.

3. USE, APPLY, AND DOCUMENT THE ASSESSMENT

Faculty document:

- The competency selected for the term.
- A brief description of the summative assessment used.
- Quantitative evidence showing how students performed on that competency.
- A short reflection on what the evidence suggests.
- The specific change they plan to make before teaching the course again.

This documentation is concise and focused on improvement. Individual assessment reflections are gathered to illustrate how faculty use assessment to strengthen teaching and improve student learning. Selected reflections are compiled into a report shared with faculty to highlight effective assessment practices and support continued growth across the College.

4. CLOSE THE LOOP

Faculty review the improvements made to their courses and collaborate with peer faculty to share strategies and learn from one another. These conversations support continued reflection and improvement across the College. The submitted course assessments are compiled annually by the Course Assessment Committee and posted on the College assessment website as evidence of Course Assessment at Barton.

VI. CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT

Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) measure student learning as it happens during the course. Classroom Assessment focuses on micro-level, formative evidence gathered during individual lessons or activities. It differs from Course Assessment, which examines summative evidence at the end of a course. Formative evidence helps faculty make instructional adjustments that support student learning in the moment.

Faculty use Classroom Assessment to understand how students are progressing toward the Learning Outcomes and Objectives that support the Course Competencies. Classroom Assessment does not replace Course Assessment. Instead, it provides ongoing insight that strengthens instruction and supports student learning throughout the course. Documentation is not required.

Classroom Assessment Techniques are considered an Assumed Practice at Barton.

They are embedded in Barton's culture of continuous improvement. Although documentation is no longer required, faculty are expected to use these techniques consistently as part of high-quality instruction. These techniques strengthen learning by helping faculty respond to student needs as they emerge.

1. CHOOSE A STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME TO ASSESS

Faculty determine the Learning Outcome or Objective for a given lesson or activity. This outcome or objective supports the Course Competencies and guides the interpretation of formative evidence.

2. CHOOSE AN ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUE

Faculty select a technique suited to the Learning Outcome or Objective. Classroom Assessment Techniques should provide timely information about student learning that can be used to guide instruction.

Faculty interested in exploring additional assessment techniques may access assessment resources, articles, and examples from recognized authors through the Learning Resource Center (LRC).

3. USE AND APPLY THE ASSESSMENT

Information gathered from Classroom Assessment Techniques is used to make immediate instructional adjustments designed to improve student learning. These adjustments are made as soon as possible so students receive timely support.

4. CLOSE THE LOOP

Faculty review their Classroom Assessment results and apply the insights gained to future lessons. Discussing results with colleagues can also provide opportunities to learn from one another and address potential issues. Classroom Assessment remains a consistent practice that supports high-quality instruction.

ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Oversight of the various levels of assessment is provided by faculty-led committees consistent with Barton's Assessment Framework. These committees operate within the Outcomes Assessment Committee (OAC) for institutional alignment while maintaining appropriate autonomy.

OAC provides coordination and alignment across Barton's Assessment Framework. Committees guide assessment processes at their respective levels, review submitted materials, and support faculty and staff in using assessment evidence to strengthen learning.

