

**Dietetic Technician Program  
Seven-Semester Program Graduation Rate**

*Prepared by the Office of Research  
Teaming to Serve Research Needs of the College  
January 11, 2008*

## Introduction

As a part of its continuous improvement efforts related to program review and reaccreditation, the Dietetic Technician program (DIT) at Harper College was interested in monitoring the graduation rate of its students. Due to the program's requirements for reaccreditation, student graduation rates were evaluated based on the proportion of students graduating within seven semesters of starting the program.

DIT students were identified based on having successfully passed DIT150 (Dietetic Clinical Laboratory) in Fall FY03 or later (note that DIT150 was only offered in Spring semesters for the time period under investigation here). Harper's Regent system was used to build a database of these students, and to identify which of them had graduated with a Dietetic Technician degree or a Dietary Manager certificate.

This report is organized into an Introduction, a Results and Discussion section that presents the results of the analysis, and a Summary section.

## Results and Discussion

From Spring FY03 to the present, a total of 48 students successfully completed DIT150 (i.e., passed the course with a grade of C or better). Table 1 shows the number of students completing DIT150 in each semester it was offered.

**Table 1: Students Completing DIT150 by Semester**

Semester	Number of Students
Spring FY03	10
Spring FY04	8
Spring FY05	10
Spring FY06	11
Spring FY07	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>

Table 2 shows the grades earned by these students. In addition to the 48 students shown, two additional students had completed DIT150 unsuccessfully (with grades of D and W). As we can see in Table 2, students are typically successful in their DIT150 course.

**Table 2: Grades Earned in DIT150**

Grade	N	%
A	27	56.3%
B	13	27.1%
C	8	16.7%

Table 3 shows the demographic characteristics of students who successfully completed DIT150 from Spring FY03 to the present. The majority of students (67%) were white. Asians were the largest minority group, representing 15 percent of the DIT150 students. A very large majority (92%) were female. Most (56%) were age 25 and older, although a substantial minority (40%) were young adults age 19 to 24.

**Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of DIT150 Students**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<i>Race</i>		
Asian/Pacific Islander	7	14.6%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0	0.0%
Black	2	4.2%
Hispanic	4	8.3%
White	32	66.7%
International	1	2.1%
Other/Unknown	2	4.2%
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	44	91.7%
Male	4	8.3%
<i>Age Group</i>		
18 and under	2	4.2%
19 to 24	19	39.6%
25 and older	27	56.3%

Graduation rates were evaluated for students who had taken DIT150 at least seven semesters ago, not counting summer semesters. Seven semesters have elapsed for 18 of the 48 students who had successfully completed DIT150 since Spring FY03. In Table 1, these are the 18 students who had completed DIT150 in Spring FY03 or Spring FY04. The seven-semester graduation rates are shown below in Table 4. Note that the goals for the accreditation process relate to the Dietetic Technician AAS degree; the Dietary Manager certificate is shown as a basis for comparison.

**Table 4: Seven-Semester Graduation Rates for DIT**

<b>Degree/Certificate Name</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Number of Graduates</b>	<b>Graduation Rate</b>
Dietary Manager (certificate)	18	9	50.0%
Dietetic Technician (AAS)	18	13	72.2%

As we see in Table 4, the seven-semester graduation rate for the Dietetic Technician AAS degree is slightly below the goal of 75 percent. However, the graduation rate is close enough to the goal to give confidence that the goal is achievable in future years. It may be useful to note that, of the thirteen students who earned an AAS, nine of them (69%) also earned the certificate.

There were no differences in graduation rate based on student demographic characteristics. However, graduation rate was significantly related to the grades that

students earned in DIT150 ( $\chi^2=8.45$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Among the students earning A grades, the graduation rate was 92 percent. For students earning B grades, the graduation rate was 50 percent. Neither of the students earning C grades earned a degree or certificate within seven semesters. Note that most students (12 of 18) earned As; two students earned Bs and two students earned Cs. The relationship between grades and graduation rate suggests that one way to raise the graduation rate may be to continue to work with students to give them the tools needed to be successful in their courses.

## Summary

The DIT program was interested in evaluating its seven-semester graduation rate as one of the metrics for its program review and reaccreditation. A total of 18 students had successfully completed DIT150 (completion of DIT150 was chosen to represent a student's "entry" into the program) in Spring of FY03 and FY04. Of these 18 students, 13 had received the Dietetic Technician AAS degree within seven semesters, corresponding to a graduation rate of 72.2 percent. Among these 13 graduates, the majority (69%) had also received the Dietary Manager certificate.

There were no differences in graduation rate based on student demographics (race, gender, and age group). However, students who earned an A in DIT150 were more likely to graduate within seven semesters than students earning a B or a C. As the program develops action plans to increase graduation rate, continued support of student success in their classes may be one path to an increased graduation rate.