

## Brescia University QEP Summary

Critical Thinking: Think Like a Bearcat

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Brescia's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), entitled "Think Like a Bearcat," connects and strengthens the University's efforts to improve the critical thinking skills of our students. The goal of Brescia's QEP reads:

- As part of the University's efforts, the QEP will work to improve student critical thinking skills.

Furthermore, the QEP Development Committee formulated the following student learning outcomes aligned with the QEP goal and based on the definition of critical thinking adapted from the AAC&U VALUE Rubric.

- Brescia University students will demonstrate improvement in their ability to:
  - explain issues,
  - evaluate and use information,
  - recognize the influence of contexts and assumptions,
  - develop positions that reflect diverse perspectives,
  - and draw and justify logical conclusions and outcomes.

The implementation of the University's QEP on critical thinking (CT) builds, in a great measure, on Brescia's existing initiatives and resources, while expanding them in an alignment with the intended QEP goals.

Put succinctly, faculty will develop and introduce a CT assignment in specific 100-, 200-, 300-, and 400-level courses across the General Education Requirements (GER), staggering them over time, based on the natural academic progression of student cohorts and intentional distribution among academic disciplines. These courses will follow a set schedule, with critical thinking assignments developed in three to four courses each semester through the duration of the QEP. Faculty will receive ongoing training in pedagogy related to CT, development of CT assignments and grading rubrics, and consistency in grading and assessment.

For the student learning outcomes, the QEP will use the internal measure, namely, scores on the established VALUE rubric for each critical thinking activity. For multiple sections of one course, faculty will be trained on consistent use of the rubric in grading, while the consistency in grading will be verified by random samples of assignments graded by other faculty teaching sections of the same course. The QEP Implementation Committee will oversee this assessment process. Time series aggregate scores in 100- and 200-level GER courses, then 300-, and later 400-level capstone courses will be used to assess the improvement of student critical thinking (CT) skills.

For the external measure, the University will administer the ETS HEIghten test to freshmen and seniors in Year 1, academic year (AY) 2018–2019, to establish the baseline data before the CT activities begin in Year 2, AY 2019–2020. Furthermore, the baseline data will be verified with another round of the ETS HEIghten test in Fall 2020. The HEIghten test will be administered again to juniors and seniors in Year 5, AY 2022–2023, to measure the growth of critical thinking skills in Fall 2019 and Fall 2020 cohorts.