



## **Anchor Plan Student Learning Outcome 5**

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Analyze evidence or data to solve problems, to reach informed conclusions or make sound judgements or arguments.

### **Assessment Schedule**

Senior students identified by departments are assessed each year.

A report of assessment results is prepared every two years in the summers of odd years.

assessments are used for students at the Muskegon location.

### **Assessment Target**

Eighty percent of seniors are at or above proficiency in the Analytical and Synthetic skills components of the assessment.

### **Assessment Sample and Process**

#### **Assessment sample**

The assessment is administered by the Frost Center for Data and Research under the direction of the Director of Assessment and Accreditation and the Director of General Education. It is administered in partnership with academic departments that identify the seniors to be assessed.

Students who are identified by their departments in the Summer, Fall, and Spring semesters reOrring semesters

analysis by gender, cohort, cocurricular activities, and other variables that identify commonality or differences in student proficiency. The Director of Assessment and Accreditation and the Director of General Education lead this process. Faculty members are

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A report of results is collaboratively prepared by the Director of Assessment and Accreditation and the Director of General Education. The report is provided in the Fall Semester of each odd year to the General Education Council, the Assessment Committee,

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Assessment data, reports, and other documentation and correspondence related to the assessment of Anchor Plan Outcome 5 are maintained by the Director of Assessment and Accreditation within the shared data storage of the Frost Center for Data and Research.

### **Review of Results**

Following a review of results from the Outcome 5 assessment, the General Education Council shares its recommendations for improvement in student learning with the Assessment Committee and **WKH 'HDQV¶ &RXQFLO**

to demonstrate two central aspects of critical thinking: Analytical and Synthetic skills.

For the Analytical dimension, students may be asked to (1) analyze argument structure, which can include identifying features such as conclusions and their supports, functions of specific elements in an argument, or appeals to emotion; (2) evaluate argument structure, which can include identifying unstated assumptions or flaws in reasoning; (3) evaluate evidence and its use, which can include evaluating the evidence within a larger context (e.g., identifying additional information that might be useful in evaluating the argument), evaluating the relevance of evidence offered for a proposed conclusion, or evaluating the strength of evidence offered for a proposed conclusion by identifying information that would strengthen or weaken the argument or its conclusion.

For the Synthetic dimension, students may be asked to (1) develop valid (i.e., structurally strong) or sound (i.e., valid and evidentially strong) arguments by selecting information or statements that would constitute or contribute to such arguments for a given position; (2) demonstrate understanding of the implications or consequences of information and argumentation by drawing or recognizing conclusions, extrapolating implications, or recognizing or generating explanations for phenomena that are described.

In many cases, a single question may assess multiple analytical or synthetic skills. In addition, some questions may, as part of assessing analytical or synthetic skills, also assess skills in evaluating claims or drawing conclusions pertaining to causation or explanation. Some may assess skills in quantitative contexts, broadly defined, such as statistical issues involving sampling.

## Format of the Examination

The Higher Critical Thinking test features three types of tasks

Critical Thinking Sets each present a series of selected-response questions based on a shared multi-part stimulus that reflects real-world, authentic issues. The stimuli include such information: a list of facts that may be supplemented by a graph or table, along with two or more arguments and/or statements of opinion related both to one another and to the provided facts.

Supplementing the Critical Thinking Sets in each test are short arguments or informational passages

## Knowledge and Skills Required

The knowledge and skills assessed in the Higher Critical Thinking examination follow. The numbers in parentheses indicate the approximate percentages of exam questions in those dimensions.

## Synthetic Skills (50%)

- x Understand implications and consequences. Students are able to identify implications and consequences that go beyond the original argument. For example, they are able to:
  - o Draw or recognize deductive or supported conclusions when a conclusion is not explicitly stated in an argument or collection of evidence
  - o Identify what further consequences are supported or deductively implied by an argument or collection of evidence
  - o Conceive of or recognize alternative explanations (i.e., circumstances that, if they obtained, would