

The Graduate Thriving Quotient™

The Graduate Thriving Quotient™ is a reliable ($\alpha = .85$), valid instrument that was developed to measure the academic, social, and psychological aspects of graduate students' experience that are most predictive of academic success, institutional fit, satisfaction with their graduate program, and ultimately graduation. The 21 items on the Graduate TQ cluster onto five scales:

- **Engaged Learning** – ($\alpha = .90$) A measure of the degree to which students are meaningfully processing what happens in class and energized by what they are learning. Sample item: "I feel energized by the ideas I am learning in most of my classes."
- **Academic Determination** – ($\alpha = .80$) A measure of students' goal-directedness, investment of effort, and regulation of their own learning and use of time. Sample item: "I am confident I will reach my educational goals."
- **Positive Perspective** – ($\alpha = .74$) A measure of students' optimism and explanatory style. Sample item: "I look for the best in situations, even when things seem hopeless."
- **Social Connectedness** – ($\alpha = .83$) A measure of students' involvement in healthy relationships and social support networks, whether on or off campus. Sample item: "I feel like my friends really care about me."
- **Diverse Citizenship** – ($\alpha = .79$) A measure of students' desire to make a difference in the community around them, as well as their openness to differences in others. Sample item: "I value interacting with people whose viewpoints are different from my own."

Examining thriving among graduate students developed out of a desire to understand student success more holistically than previous higher education research that had focused solely on student retention. Dr. Laurie Schreiner developed the Thriving Quotient™ (TQ) using concepts from positive psychology (i.e., flourishing) and Bean and Eaton's (2000) retention model to introduce the term *thriving* to "describe the experiences of college students who are fully engaged intellectually, socially, and emotionally" (Schreiner, 2010, p. 4). Thriving is not about personality traits, but rather describes malleable qualities within a student, meaning that institutions can teach students to thrive. Years of research has documented specific experiences that serve as significant pathways to student thriving; these pathways are also measured in the online survey:

Sense of Community – ($\alpha = .77$) A measure of student belonging, ownership, and sense of mattering within their graduate program, as well as the university as a whole. Sample item: "I feel like I belong here."

Institutional Integrity – ($\alpha = .89$) A measure of the degree to which students perceive their graduate program and the institution as a whole to be “delivering on its promises.” Sample item: “This institution was accurately portrayed during the admissions process.”

Faculty Sensitivity to Diverse Learners – ($\alpha = .88$) A measure of students’ perceptions of faculty inclusion of multiple perspectives in their curriculum and pedagogy, as well as their sensitivity to the needs of diverse learners. Sample item: “How satisfied are you with the degree to which your instructors include diverse perspectives in the curriculum?”

Satisfaction with Faculty Interactions – ($\alpha = .79$) A measure of students’ satisfaction with how often they interact with faculty as well as quality of those interactions. Sample item: “How satisfied are you with the quality of the interactions you have had with your instructors so far this year?”

In addition to these predictive pathways, the instrument assesses students’ satisfaction with learning, advising, peer interactions, their living situation, mental and physical health, and overall satisfaction with their graduate school experience. The Grad TQ also measures the degree to which students feel their program is a good fit for them, as well as demographic characteristics such as gender, age, race/ethnicity, marital status, parental status, household income, generation status, undergraduate GPA, type of program, hours per week they work, and whether the institution was their first choice at enrollment.

The following report contains your institution’s comparisons to the CCCU norms for graduate students, which are based on the mean and standard deviation of responses from 1,169 graduate students who completed the Graduate TQ as a part of the CCCU’s Collaborative Assessment Project in the Fall of 2024.

GRADUATE STUDENT THRIVING QUOTIENT - FALL 2024

Bethel University

ALL ITEMS ARE SCORED ON A 6-POINT SCALE. *INDICATES A STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE FROM THE NORMS.

Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following: (1=Strongly disagree, 6=Strongly agree)	CCCU Norms (N=1,169)		Your Institution (N=265)	
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
ITEM				
<i>Thriving Quotient</i>				
Engaged Learning Scale	5.23	0.86	5.29	0.79
1. I feel as though I am learning things in my classes that are worthwhile to me as a person.	5.37	0.92	5.45	0.82
2. I can usually find ways of applying what I'm learning in class to something else in my life.	5.33	0.87	5.38	0.82
3. I find myself thinking about what I'm learning in class even when I'm not in class.	5.14	1.04	5.19	1.03
4. I feel energized by the ideas I'm learning in most of my classes.	5.07	1.07	5.15	1.01
Academic Determination Scale	5.12	0.64	5.17	0.59
5. I find a way to get everything done for classes that I need to do in a given week.	5.20	0.90	5.24	0.91
6. Once I start a project, I stick with it until I am finished.	5.16	0.89	5.24	0.83
7. I know how to apply my strengths to achieve academic success.	5.24	0.85	5.24	0.85
8. I am good at juggling all the demands of life.	4.64	1.04	4.64	1.03
9. Other people would say I'm a hard worker.	5.37	0.74	5.47*	0.66

Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following: (1=Strongly disagree, 6=Strongly agree)	CCCU Norms (N=1,169)		Your Institution (N=265)	
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
Social Connectedness Scale <i>(note: items are reverse scored as indicated so that higher scores indicate higher levels of social connectedness)</i>	3.92	1.24	3.93	1.14
10. Other people seem to make friends more easily than I do. (R)	3.69	1.53	3.83	1.47
11. I don't have as many close friends as I wish I had. (R)	3.78	1.56	3.86	1.49
12. I often feel lonely because I have few close friends with whom to share my concerns. (R)	4.23	1.53	4.31	1.49
13. It's hard to make friends in this program. (R)	4.01	1.43	3.78*	1.37
Diverse Citizenship Scale	5.25	0.54	5.25	0.52
14. I spend time making a difference in other people's lives.	5.21	0.83	5.30	0.76
15. I know I can make a difference in my community.	5.31	0.75	5.24	0.81
16. I value interacting with people whose viewpoints are different from my own.	5.07	0.79	4.98*	0.75
17. It's important for me to make a contribution to my community.	5.26	0.81	5.29	0.77
18. It is important to become aware of the perspectives of individuals from different backgrounds.	5.59	0.58	5.59	0.60
19. My knowledge or opinions have been influenced or changed by becoming more aware of the perspectives of individuals from different backgrounds.	5.08	0.90	5.12	0.87
Positive Perspective Scale	4.90	0.85	4.89	0.81
20. My perspective on life is that I tend to see the glass as "half full" rather than "half empty."	4.81	1.03	4.82	0.98
21. I look for the best in situations, even when things seem hopeless.	5.00	0.89	4.97*	0.86
THRIVING QUOTIENT MEAN SCORE	4.93	0.52	4.96	0.51
STUDENTS' SELF-REPORTED ASSESSMENT OF THEIR THRIVING	4.24	1.17	4.35	1.05

ITEM	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
<i>Psychological Sense of Community Scale</i>	4.98	0.83	4.92	0.79
22. I feel like I belong in this program.	5.23	1.00	5.28	0.97
23. Being a student in this program fills an important need in my life.	5.10	0.98	5.05	0.95
24. I feel proud of the college or university I have chosen to attend.	5.12	1.09	5.27*	0.93
25. There is a strong sense of community among the students in this program.	4.45	1.26	4.05*	1.30
<i>Spirituality Scale</i>	5.26	1.03	5.43*	0.88
26. My spiritual or religious beliefs provide me with a sense of strength when life is difficult.	5.36	1.01	5.47	0.87
27. My spiritual or religious beliefs give meaning and purpose to my life.	5.31	1.07	5.47*	0.89
28. My spiritual or religious beliefs are the foundation of my approach to life.	5.13	1.22	5.38*	1.03
<i>Institutional Integrity Scale</i>	4.98	1.05	5.17*	0.82
29. My experiences at this institution so far have met my expectations.	4.89	1.19	5.06*	1.10
30. The institution was accurately portrayed during the admissions process.	4.92	1.17	5.10*	0.99
31. Overall, the actions of faculty, staff, and administrators at this institution are consistent with the mission of the institution.	5.14	1.10	5.35*	0.86
<i>Friend and Family Support</i>				
32. My close friends encourage me to continue attending this school.	5.14	1.02	5.18	0.96
33. My family encourages me to complete my graduate degree.	5.44	0.90	5.40	0.93
34. I regularly talk to my family about what I am learning in my graduate program.	4.80	1.30	4.85	1.24
<i>Outcome Measures:</i>				
35. I am confident that the amount of money I'm paying for graduate school is worth it in the long run.	4.64	1.28	4.85*	1.10
36. I intend to complete my graduate degree from this institution.	5.66	0.69	5.73*	0.53
37. Given my current goals, this graduate program is a good fit for me.	5.40	0.88	5.47	0.78
38. If I had to do it over again, I would choose a different institution.	4.59	1.54	4.93*	1.30
39. I enjoy being a graduate student here.	5.26	1.01	5.39*	0.83

LEVELS OF SATISFACTION

Please rate your satisfaction with each of the following: (1 = very dissatisfied to 6 = very satisfied)	CCCU Norms		Your Institution	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
40. The amount you are learning in your classes.	5.10	0.99	5.21*	0.82
41. The amount of contact you have had with your professors this year.	5.06	1.03	5.04	0.99
42. The interaction you have had with your faculty advisor this year.	4.77	1.25	4.89	1.12
43. The quality of the interaction you have had with faculty in this program so far this year.	5.06	1.05	5.11	0.96
44. Professors' sensitivity to the needs of diverse students.	5.02	1.05	5.12	0.85
45. The degree to which your instructors include diverse perspectives in the curriculum.	5.07	1.01	5.16	0.85
46. Professors' encouragement for students to contribute different perspectives in class discussions.	5.14	1.01	5.18	0.92
47. The level of compassion your instructors have shown this year as you have faced challenges.	5.18	1.02	5.35*	0.82
48. The level of service provided by university staff.	5.04	1.07	5.23*	0.88
49. The kinds of interaction you have with other students in your program this year.	5.00	1.00	4.83*	1.04
50. The interactions you have had this year with students of different ethnic backgrounds.	4.95	1.00	4.83*	0.95
51. Your current living situation.	5.07	1.06	5.18	0.96
52. Your current physical health.	4.56	1.23	4.58	1.17
53. Your current mental health.	4.58	1.21	4.63	1.23
54. The amount of money you personally have to pay to attend graduate school here.	4.01	1.50	4.28*	1.38
55. Your overall experiences at this university.	5.09	1.04	5.22*	0.90

CCCU SPIRITUAL LIFE ITEMS

(Items are on a 6-point scale, with 1 indicating “never” and 6 indicating “very frequently”) <i>Any significant difference from the norms is denoted with an asterisk</i>	CCCU NORMS (N = 1,131)		YOUR INSTITUTION (N = 248)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
CCCU Spiritual Life Scale	4.65	1.15	4.87	1.01
I have experienced spiritual growth at this college.	4.70	1.26	4.89	1.15
My college helps me integrate my faith into my life.	4.82	1.23	5.09	1.00
My college has helped me explore my faith.	4.61	1.32	4.94	1.14
My college peers have positively impacted my faith.	4.37	1.35	4.50*	1.27
The faculty and staff at my college have positively impacted my faith.	4.75	1.22	4.94	1.10

IMPACT OF GRADUATE SCHOOL ON RELATIONSHIPS

Impact on:	Significantly Negative		Moderately Negative		Somewhat Negative		Somewhat Positive		Moderately Positive		Significantly Positive	
	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst
Spouse/partner	3.2	4.3	5.5	4.8	20.4	21.8	24.4	25.5	23.3	25.5	23.3	18.1
Children	2.9	0.7	4.7	5.5	21.8	22.8	24.7	26.2	20.7	25.5	25.2	19.3
Other family members	2.0	0.9	3.3	2.8	17.8	18.4	30.6	34.4	24.6	28.8	21.7	14.6
Friends	2.5	1.4	4.6	5.4	18.9	19.8	26.1	26.1	25.9	30.2	21.9	17.1
Co-workers	1.5	0.5	3.1	2.5	10.4	7.9	31.5	35.5	28.6	31.5	25.0	22.2
Boss or supervisor	2.3	1.5	2.4	1.5	9.1	5.6	32.1	37.6	27.8	29.4	26.3	24.4

DEMOGRAPHIC ITEMS

Item	Percent		Item	Percent	
Gender	CCCU	Inst	Number of Children	CCCU	Inst
Female/Woman	70.6	68.5	None	47.5	42.6
Male/Man	26.5	29.5	1-2	28.6	25.6
Other (if institution included that option)	0.3	0	3-4	19.9	27.3
Prefer not to respond	2.7	2.1	Five or more	4.0	4.5
Sexual Orientation (if institution included the item)			Race/Ethnicity		
Straight (heterosexual)	91.5	93.8	African American/Black	7.7	7.1
Gay/Lesbian	0.8	0.4	Native American/Alaska Native	2.3	1.7
Bisexual	2.6	0.8	Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander/ Hawaiian Native	8.2	3.3
Another sexual orientation	1.4	2.5	White/European	53.7	76.7
Prefer not to respond	3.8	2.5	Latino/a or Hispanic	18.4	4.2
			Multiethnic	2.8	1.7
Marital Status			Other	3.2	1.7
Never married	37.7	30.0	Prefer Not to Respond	3.7	3.8
Married	54.1	62.1			
Separated	0.7	0.4	Household Income		
Divorced	6.7	7.0	Less than \$30,000 per year	21.6	13.3
Widowed	0.7	0.4	\$30,000 - \$59,999 per year	24.1	20.6
			\$60,000 - \$89,999 per year	19.9	18.0
Percent who are Veterans	4.4	3.3	\$90,000 - \$119,999 per year	15.2	19.3
			\$120,000 and over	19.1	28.8
Percent who are international students	10.6	3.3			

Age	CCCU	Institution	Program	CCCU	Institution
20 or younger	0.3	0	Architecture	0.4	0
21-30	39.2	31.3	Arts and Humanities	2.5	1.7
31-40	22.5	23.0	Business	13.7	7.9
41-50	24.4	28.4	Education	27.0	28.5
51-60	10.7	14.0	Engineering	0.7	0
Over 60	2.9	3.3	Health Sciences	6.8	9.5
			Math and Computer Science	1.0	0
Has Conducted Research with Faculty	20.3	10.7	Public Administration and Services	0.5	0.8
			Social and Behavioral Sciences	21.5	15.3
Percent in Dissertation Phase	12.1	10.3	Theology	14.1	24.8
			Other	11.9	11.6
Works in a job related to their major field	59.0	64.3			

Program Delivery							
Face to face in the classroom on the main campus of my university		Face-to-face in the classroom at a regional center or off-campus site		Combination online and face-to-face		Online	
CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst
26.3	11.9	5.2	3.3	21.7	18.9	6.3	62.1

Percentage of Degree Complete							
less than 25%		25-50%		51-75%		more than 75%	
CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst
28.6	24.4	21.3	20.7	20.1	19.8	30.1	35.1

TYPE OF GRADUATE PROGRAM

Graduate Credential Program		Master's Degree		Combined credential/ master's program		PhD		Professional Doctoral Program (EdD, PsyD, JD, DPT, DNP, etc.)		Combined master's/ doctoral program		Post-doctoral program or Non-degree-seeking	
CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst
11.2	7.0	70.6	71.1	4.6	1.7	2.6	2.5	9.3	15.7	0.3	0.4	0.9	1.7

Undergraduate Grades

Mostly A's		Mostly A's and B's		Mostly B's		Mostly B's and C's		Mostly C's		Below a C Average	
CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst
53.5	57.7	32.4	25.7	7.1	6.2	5.8	9.1	0.7	0.8	0.5	0.4

NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED PER WEEK ON AVERAGE

None		Less than 10 hours/wk		10-20 hours/wk		21-30 hours/wk		31-40 hours/wk		More than 40 hours/wk	
CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst
17.4	12.4	5.3	3,3	9.8	7.1	9.9	6.6	28.4	36.5	29.2	34.0

How Confident Are You That the Area of Study You have Chosen is a Good Fit For You?

Very Unsure		Unsure		Somewhat Unsure		Somewhat Sure		Sure		Very Sure	
CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst
0.6	1.2	1.1	0.8	2.2	0.4	6.8	7.4	29.4	29.8	59.9	60.3

Considering the financial aid you've received and the money you and your family have, how much difficulty have you had so far in paying for your school expenses?

No Difficulty		A Little Difficulty		Some Difficulty		A Fair Amount of Difficulty		Great Difficulty	
CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst
26.2	35.8	22.5	24.6	25.5	23.8	15.0	10.4	10.7	5.4

To what extent do you think you are thriving as a college student this semester?
 (Thriving is defined as getting the most out of your college experience, so that you are intellectually, socially, and psychologically engaged and enjoying your graduate school experience.)

Not even surviving		Barely surviving		Surviving		Somewhat thriving		Thriving most of the time		Consistently thriving	
CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	CCCU	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst	CCCU	Inst
0.9	0	7.6	5.0	18.9	16.7	24.3	28.0	36.2	38.9	12.1	11.3

STUDENT COMMENTS

What has happened this semester that has led to your perception of whether you are thriving or not?

Student comments are copied verbatim in a separate file, with no editing.

Target Populations

The Thriving Quotient can help identify areas where target demographic groups may differ in their college experience. All CCCU institutions receive disaggregated results by race.

Racial Differences

If your institution did not have at least 30 students in a particular racial/ethnic group, the responses of all students of color were combined and compared to those of white students. The red box indicates the scores of students of color were lower than those of white students, while the green box indicates the scores of your students of color were higher than those who identified as white.

Statistically Significant Racial Differences

Item	Students of Color (n=47)	White Students (n=184)
Positive Perspective Scale	5.29	4.77
My perspective on life is that I tend to see the glass as 'half full' rather than 'half empty.'	5.21	4.68
I look for the best in situations, even when things seem hopeless.	5.36	4.86
I feel proud of the college or university I have chosen to attend.	5.54	5.20
I enjoy being a graduate student here.	5.60	5.35
Sat: Your current living situation.	4.87	5.26

PREDICTIVE MODEL

Due to a sample size less than 300, we could not create a predictive model of thriving for your students. We recommend that you begin to address your findings by examining the areas where your students scored significantly higher than the national norms, as these are areas of institutional strength you can capitalize on to address areas of concern. Then focus on the areas where your students scored significantly lower than the national norms and where student comments indicate areas that warrant attention.

In the total national sample, the major predictors of the variation in **graduate student** thriving were as follows:

- **Sense of community in their program/department**—At the graduate level, sense of community happens within students' program or department, not as much within the institution as a whole. Sense of community has four components: (1) **membership** – a sense of belonging (which is strongly tied to engaged learning in the classroom, as well); (2) **ownership** – having a voice, feeling that one matters and has a contribution to make; (3) **relationship** – positive emotional connections with others, opportunities to celebrate with one another, and frequently cross paths with one another; and (4) **partnership** – synergy, and working together on issues bigger than any single person could accomplish. Enhancing a sense of community within a graduate program begins with orienting students to graduate-level work and specifically to the degree program, so that they feel connected to their peers and to faculty within the program and are confident they can meet the demands of the program. Retreat formats are often effective orientation strategies. Other ways of enhancing a sense of community within a program include using a cohort model, implementing a student advisory board, and examining the physical structure of the classrooms and areas where students interact to determine whether there are attractive gathering places for students and faculty to interact, as well as places for students from particular cultural backgrounds to feel at home. Creating student-faculty research teams and hosting large-scale events that bring the graduate students in the program together can also enhance their sense of community within the program.
- **Faculty Sensitivity to Diverse Learners** – This scale has the second largest total effects on graduate student thriving. The scale measures the extent to which faculty incorporate diverse perspectives in their curriculum, encourage multiple perspectives in class discussions, and are sensitive to the needs of diverse learners. It affects not only thriving, but students' satisfaction with learning, their sense of belonging in the program, and their perceptions of institutional integrity. We recommend providing faculty development opportunities that focus on engaging learners through culturally-relevant and inclusive pedagogy, as well as encouraging faculty to interact with students through mentoring, research partnerships, and informal social activities.

- **Institutional Integrity** -- One of the major contributors to a sense of community and an indirect contributor to graduate student thriving is students' perceptions of institutional integrity: meeting students' expectations, portraying the institution accurately during the admissions process (especially important for students of color and low-income students), and ensuring the daily actions of faculty, staff, and administrators are congruent with the mission of the institution. When students feel the institution is delivering on its promises, they are significantly more likely to feel they belong there. If they have negative perceptions of institutional integrity, they are not only less likely to thrive, but are also less likely to feel that the program is a good fit for them or to enjoy being a student there, and they are not as likely to say they would choose the institution again if they had it to do over.
- **Staff Satisfaction** – When graduate students perceive that they are receiving excellent service from university staff, it indirectly affects their thriving because it increases their perceptions of institutional integrity and belonging in the program. Focus groups of graduate students indicate that the important elements of excellent service include timely responses to emails and phone calls, hours of operation that are convenient for working professionals, warm responsiveness in personal interactions, and an ability to provide the assistance needed in a timely manner without giving students the run-around.
- **Family Support** – This scale measures the extent to which graduate students' family members are supportive of their enrollment in a graduate program, as well as the extent to which students are regularly talking with family members about what they are learning in their program. Family support directly affects graduate student thriving. Including discussions during orientation of how to involve family members in the graduate school journey and how to manage an appropriate balance of work, family, and school responsibilities can help graduate students garner appropriate support from their families.
- **Advising Satisfaction** – When graduate students have positive interactions with their faculty advisors, they are more likely to thrive. Satisfaction with advising leads to more positive perceptions of institutional integrity, as well as to greater satisfaction with learning. Ensuring that each graduate student is assigned a faculty advisor upon entry to the program and that the advisor regularly connects with students can increase the likelihood of satisfaction with this experience.
- Students' satisfaction with their current **mental health**-- those who are experiencing mental health struggles find it challenging to thrive. Advisors who are attentive to mental health issues and can make appropriate referrals to counseling services at the institution that are available to graduate students can be helpful.

- **Spirituality** – defined as students’ sense of meaning and purpose and the extent to which their spiritual or religious beliefs are a source of strength during difficult times and a lens through which they see the world and make decisions. Faculty who are sensitive to differing faith traditions in classroom discussion and course syllabi can be helpful.