



Counselor Education Department

**CAPSTONE PROJECT  
MANUAL**

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## INTRODUCTION TO CAPSTONE

### Catalogue Description:

The completion of a major capstone paper, written in collaboration with the student's assigned project supervisor, serves as a transition from the role of student to that of professional. Through the Capstone Project students will fuse classroom learning, academic research, and school or community practice into a finished work that they will present in a formal venue. This project serves as an opportunity for students to create their own unique contribution to the field of Counselor Education, which they can bring with them and implement, if they wish, into their professional settings.

### Capstone Project Objectives:

The purpose of the Capstone Project is to:

- 1) Provide the student who is nearing completion of their graduate studies in the Counselor Education Department (CED) with the opportunity to conduct research and/or a scholarly literature review on a contemporary topic in counseling or related area that is of particular interest to them.
- 2) Provide the student with a learning experience that is individualized and supervised by a CED faculty member who has specific expertise and/or interest in the area of study selected for research by the Capstone Project student and the project supervisor.
- 3) Provide the student with an integrated learning experience in which coursework taken throughout their program of study (e.g. research and writing coursework, theories and techniques of counseling coursework, etc.) is synthesized and culminates in the completion of a final project that demonstrates graduate level research, writing, and scholarship skills.
- 4) Provide the student with a public venue for presenting their final Capstone Project. It is hoped the student will gain a sense of confidence and comfort with presenting their professional work in public.
- 5) Provide the student with an opportunity to demonstrate their professionalism in terms of:
  - a. their ability to work collaboratively with their project supervisor
  - b. their ability to complete their Capstone Project in a timely manner
  - c. their ability to complete graduate level research and present their finding in a professional manner
  - d. their ability to utilize technology in the research and presentation of their Capstone Project
  - e. their ability to develop, write, and present research finding following current APA guidelines.

### Required Text:

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

## CAPSTONE REQUIREMENTS

### When to Enroll

CE 695 – Capstone Project (<http://www.winona.edu/counseloreducation/comps.htm>) is taken concurrent with CE 680 – Counseling Practicum or CE 690 – Internship. The focus of this course is the completion of the student’s portfolio that is intended to synthesize knowledge, skills, and practice gained throughout the counselor preparation program. With the support and guidance of their Capstone faculty supervisor, the student prepares and presents their *Capstone Writing Project* to Counselor Education Department faculty and students on a date scheduled by the Counselor Education Department.

The *Capstone Writing Project* (a 15 to 35 page paper) addresses a professional issue or problem the student has a particular interest in and may take a variety of forms, including a thesis. All projects must follow writing and reference style guidelines outlined in the *current edition of the Publications Manual of the American Psychological Association* ([http://www.vanguard.edu/faculty/ddegelman/index.aspx?doc\\_id=796](http://www.vanguard.edu/faculty/ddegelman/index.aspx?doc_id=796)).

### Capstone Project Supervisors

The Capstone faculty supervisor is selected by the Counselor Education Department to best meet student needs based on area of interest. Students must inform the Counselor Education Administrative Assistant of intent to enroll in Capstone and area of interest the semester before the student’s intent to enroll in Capstone so that supervisor assignments can be made.

**Note:** Students must meet Capstone Project requirements specified by their faculty supervisor. The faculty supervisor forwards a final grade to the WSU Registrar’s Office.

### Thesis vs. Capstone Project

Counselor Education Department students may elect to complete a *Master’s Thesis Paper*, (CE 699 **Master’s Thesis**) which is an extensive research project requiring the use of scientific methods and procedures. The major difference between a Thesis and a Capstone Project is the method of inquiry. In a Thesis Project, students would propose a research study in which data would be collected, analyzed, and reported in the final project. Students would be required to submit a proposal to the Institutional Review Board for permission to conduct research involving human subjects. The Capstone Project is primarily a thorough literature review addressing the problem or issue of the student’s choosing, followed by a discussion describing the unique contribution that the student intends to make the addressing the problem or issue in his/her professional endeavors. Often the Capstone Project includes specific curriculum (included as appendices) or offers materials that can be used in implementing the proposed method of addressing the problem or issue.

**NOTE:** Any research involving human subjects requires approval by the Winona State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) <http://www.winona.edu/faculty/1172.asp> . Contact your advisor for information.

The candidate's faculty supervisor and an oral examination committee must approve the *Master's Thesis Paper*. This is an opportunity for the student interested in pursuing a Ph.D. program to conduct independent research employing scientific methods and procedures in the area of the student's field of concentration. Forms for thesis binding may be downloaded from <http://www.winona.edu/graduatestudy/downloadsStu.html> .

## TOWARDS COMPLETION OF THE CAPSTONE PROJECT

Students should begin thinking about the Capstone Project early in their course of study. While students only enroll for Capstone Project for one semester, the project ideally should be a work in progress leading up to enrollment in and completion of the Capstone Project.

### Before Enrolling in CE 695: Capstone Project:

Students must inform the Counselor Education Administrative Assistant of intent to enroll in Capstone and area of interest the semester before the student's intent to enroll in Capstone so that supervisor assignments can be made. Students may contact Casey Pronchinske at [casey.pronchinske@winona.edu](mailto:casey.pronchinske@winona.edu) or call 507-457-5335 with intent to enroll.

A specific meeting date will be assigned by CED faculty in the weeks before the semester a student is enrolled in Capstone. In this meeting, students will meet with their faculty supervisor, review the requirements of completing the Capstone Project, and discuss expectations and objectives of completing the project.

### Planning for completion of the Capstone Project:

The following deadline schedule (with specific dates to be sent to you directly via email for a respective semester) is to be adhered to by students completing the Capstone Project.

#### Semester Completion Dates:

Toward beginning of Sept/January	<i>Topic along with project outline or brief project proposal</i>
Toward middle of Oct/February	<i>Rough draft of lit review</i>
Toward middle of Nov/March	<i>Rough draft of paper</i>
Toward middle of Nov/April	<i>Final draft of paper</i>
Beginning of December/May	<i>Final edits and advisor approval</i>
Wednesday of Graduation Week	<i>Capstone Presentation Day, Wednesday 5-8 p.m. Winona Campus Location – TBA Rochester Campus Location - TBA</i>

## FORMATTING THE CAPSTONE PAPER

Students should follow the current APA guidelines in formatting the Capstone Project. Certain exceptions to APA formatting which are specific to the Capstone Project are outlined in the Capstone Project Template located at the following link which accompanies this document.

Please note that while the general Capstone Project guidelines are suggested here, the student's faculty supervisor must approve all formatting before the final approval of the Capstone Project.

**Capstone Projects generally include the following:**

- Title page
- Capstone Project Approval Page (only necessary if required by advisor)
- Abstract
- Table of Contents
- Introduction (including purpose of project, rationale, and/or goals and objectives of project)
- Review of Literature
- Methodology (process for addressing the issue or basic research design used for data collection)
- Results (included only if the student completed a research-based study)
- Conclusion or Discussion
- References
- Bibliography (included only if the student wants to provide the reader with additional resources that may be of interest or value, but were not referenced in the paper)
- Author's Note (included if the student wants to make a personal statement about the project and/or process used in the preparation of the project, or if there are any disclaimers the student wishes to make about the project)
- Refer to Appendix A and to the following link for APA 6<sup>th</sup> Edition formatting <https://apastyle.apa.org/learn/index>

## CAPSTONE GRADING PROCEDURES

Students will *not* receive full credit if signatures are missing or if work is turned in late. Students are responsible for initiating contact with their Capstone supervisor for final approval.

### **Breakdown of Capstone Project Grading Procedures:**

Capstone Writing Project: 90% (grade determined by supervisor)

Oral Presentation: 10% (grade determined by Capstone Project Presentation Facilitator)

Because the Capstone Writing Project is an indication of your ability to synthesize material on a graduate level, and will be on display for anyone to access through the CE web site as a professional document, only grades of A or B will be acceptable. Your supervisor is to notify the 695 instructor of record of your grade and discuss the grade with you at the time he or she signs for the completion of the final copy.

### **Criteria for grading the Capstone Writing Project:**

- graduate level writing [clear wording; correct spelling, grammar, sentence structure];
- organization;
- APA style for abstract, citations, headings, and references; and
- focus/relevance/contribution to the advancement of the profession.

### **Criteria for grading the Oral Presentation:**

- organization and clarity of oral presentation
- professional delivery
  - presentation style
  - professional dress
  - aids to learning



## PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

The presentation day for Capstone Projects is the last Saturday before Finals week. This information will be distributed via email and in-class announcements to all CE students, graduates, and area professionals who may wish to attend (CE 601 students are required to attend, there usually are a small number of guests, and students are encouraged to invite family and friends to be there on this important occasion).

### Important Reminders:

1. **Handouts:** if students plan to have handouts, they should bring enough copies for all the Capstone students at the site, plus an additional 10 copies for other students and guests.
2. **Turning in the completed paper:** The completed Capstone paper is to be forwarded to your faculty supervisor by the Capstone Project Supervisor via email as a Word attachment by presentation day. Because the CE Department makes arrangements for electronically posting the Capstones, the CED needs the electronic copy from the student – DO NOT turn in a hard copy of your Capstone.
3. **Margins for the paper:** All margins (top, bottom, left, right): 1 inch.
4. All students should send their PowerPoint or Internet link (e.g. Prezi, Google) to your Capstone advisor prior to Presentation night in order to have all presentations uploaded and ready to go. Please arrive at 4:45pm on presentation night.
5. PLAN for no more than a 20 minute presentation, including questions and answers.

### Presentation Suggestions from Students:

1. Practice beforehand, so that you speak clearly and slowly within time allowed.
2. Have overheads or Power Points that are LARGE and READABLE (at least 24 font, and in **bold** print; color helps, too).
3. Distribute a handout of at least one page (with your name and findings).
4. LOOK at the audience.
5. Personalize your work, whenever possible.
6. Actively involve the audience in some way, if possible.
7. Dress professionally.

**RUBRIC FOR CE 695 CAPSTONE PRESENTATION**

Criteria Score	EXCELLENT 20-18 points	GOOD 17-15 points	FAIR 13-10 points	POOR Below 10 points
<b>PROFESSIONAL DELIVERY STYLE</b> ___/5	___ Presentation follows time limits: <b>no more than a 20 minute presentation, including questions and answers--</b> without prompts. ___ Presenter speaks clearly and slowly within time allowed. ___ Personalized style. Ex. Student AVOIDS READING VERBATIM FROM PRESNETATION SLIDES. ___ Actively engages/involves the audience. ___ Dresses professionally.	___ Presentation follows time limits--with prompts. ___ Presenter speaks clearly but not concisely. ___ Personalized style inconsistent. ___ Somewhat engages/involves the audience. ___ Dresses professionally.	___ Presentation does not follow time limits. ___ Presenter lacks clarity, problems with pace. ___ Personalized style lacking. ___ Minimally engages/involves the audience. ___ Dresses unprofessionally.	___ Presentation does not follow time limits; student does not respond to prompts. ___ Presenter speaks unclearly and/or too quickly. ___ Does not personalize style. ___ Does not engage/involve the audience. ___ Dresses unprofessionally.
<b>LEARNING MATERIALS</b> ___/5	___ Presenter uses PowerPoint slides or similar materials to guide the presentation are used, and makes the slides a focal point of presentation. ___ Learning materials are easy to follow. Ex. Power Points that are LARGE and READABLE (at least 24 font, and in bold print; color helps, too). Citations/references included in learning materials. ___ Distributes a handout of at least one page (with your name and findings).	___ Presenter uses PowerPoint slides or similar materials to guide the presentation are used and available to class and instructor, but does not make the slides a focal point of presentation. ___ Learning materials are fairly easy to follow, but lack clarity and conciseness. Citations/references included in learning materials. ___ Distributes a handout of at least one page (with your name and findings).	___ Presenter uses PowerPoint slides or similar materials to guide the presentation are used, but not available for class and instructor, and Slides are used but not a major focus of the presentation. ___ Learning materials are difficult to follow; no handouts made/distributed, and citations/references not included in learning materials. ___ No handout is included.	___ Presenter does not use PowerPoint or something similar at all to guide the presentation. ___ No handout is included.
<b>ORGANIZATION AND CLARITY</b> ___/5	___ Content is clear, well-organized, and easy to follow.	___ Content is mostly clear, mostly well-organized, and somewhat easy to follow.	___ Content is unclear and there is a general organization of information, and is difficult to follow.	___ Content is unclear, disorganized, and audience is unable to follow.
<b>DEPTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF CONTENT</b> ___/5	___ Presentation focuses on a specific topic/case. ___ Presenter adds significant depth and detail to the topic and is applicable to counseling students & profession.	___ Presentation focuses on a specific topic/case. ___ Presenter adds some depth and detail to the topic, and is applicable to counseling students & profession.	___ Presentation focuses on a specific topic/case. ___ Presenter does not add depth and detail to the topic, and is not applicable to counseling students & profession.	___ Presentation is not focused and not aligned with topic. ___ Content is underdeveloped.

1. TOTAL SCORE: \_\_\_ / 20

# Appendix A

## APA Style and Writing Hints

## APA STYLE HINTS

**Please use the following resource, in addition to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6<sup>th</sup> ed.**

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/>

## HELPFUL WRITING HINTS

### Title

Centered on a line on the upper half of the page and broken up, if necessary, at a meaningful point.

### Citations and general style guidelines

- Refer to authors by last name only and do not mention the titles of their works (except in the References section).
- If you have not read a source, do not list it in your References section. In the body of the paper refer to the source you did read (secondary source) and indicate that the primary source was cited in the secondary source.
- Do not use “the current study” or “the present study” to refer to someone else’s work.
- Do not indicate what researchers thought, felt, believed or said. Use instead reported, have shown, and replicated.
- Avoid long quotations and frequent brief quotations.
- Do not refer to yourself as “we” and do not call the reader “you.”
- Start every paragraph with a topic sentence and never write one-sentence paragraphs.
- Do not write “he” when you mean “he or she.”
- Do not leave prefixes hanging loose from words.
- The plural of these singular words datum, criterion, phenomenon, stimulus, and hypothesis are data, criteria, phenomena, stimuli and hypotheses.
- Introduce abbreviations in parentheses and use the abbreviations rather than the full term thereafter.
- Use past tense to describe research findings – your own and those covered in your literature review.
- Racial and ethnic group labels are proper nouns. Capitalize them.

### Wordiness and Redundancy

- Avoid using more words than you need (based on the fact that = because), and try not to say the same thing twice (could be perhaps because = could be because). Eliminate all unnecessary words. Some examples:

- The results revealed that...Omit the entire phrase and start your sentence with the word that would come next.
- The obtained data showed = The data showed.
- Participants for the study were = Participants were
- Due to the facts that = because
- The reason is because = The reason is
- A total of eight participants = Eight participants
- ...has been previously found = has been found
- In his study, Smith reported = Smith reported
- Distinctly different. Choose one word or the other

### **Informal Language and Slang**

- The tone of technical writing is not conversational or informal.
- Contractions are illegal. Use apostrophes only to indicate possession.
- Use while in its temporal sense only. If you can't substitute simultaneously, consider although or whereas.

### **Latin Abbreviations**

- Et al. stands for et alia, which means "and other things." Et is not an abbreviation and does not require a period after it. Al. is an abbreviation, and does require a period.
- I.e. stands for id est, the Latin phrase meaning "that is." Both letters are legitimate abbreviations, and so they both take periods. Use this abbreviation within the parentheses. The English phrase "that is" goes outside the parentheses. In either case, follow with a comma.
- E.g. stands for exempli gratia, the Latin phrase meaning "for example." Both letters are abbreviations and both require periods. Also, as above, if you use the phrase inside parentheses, use the Latin abbreviation, and outside the parentheses use the English equivalent. Either way, follow it with a comma.

### **Alphabetizing the Reference Section**

Alphabetize according to the last name of the author who is listed first in each source. Keep the following in mind:

- Do not rearrange the order of authorship of any given article or chapter. If the article lists the authors as Smith, R. T., & Jones, A. L., do not list them as Jones followed by Smith.
- Works by the same author are listed by year of publication, with the earliest first.
- If you have the same author listed first with different coauthors for different articles, arrange them alphabetically within the listing for that author, according to the second author of each entry. List Smith, R. T., & Jones, A. L. before Smith, R. T., & Marks, B. J.
- If an author appears as a single author of one source and the first coauthor of another, list the single-author source first and then the one with the coauthor. List Smith, R. T. before Smith, R. T., & Jones, A. L.

**Abbreviations**

Acceptable abbreviations in the reference list for parts of books and other publications include

chap.	chapter
ed.	edition
Rev. ed.	revised edition
2 <sup>nd</sup> ed.	second edition
Ed (Eds.)	Editor (Editors)
Trans.	Translator(s)
n..d..	no date
p. (pp.)	page (pages)
Vol.	Volume (as in Vol. 4)
vols.	volumes (as in 4 vols)
No.	Number
Pt.	Part
Tech. Rep.	Technical Report
Suppl.	Supplement

### References

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Degelman, D., & Harris, M. L. (2000). APA style essentials. Retrieved August 27, 2001, from Vanguard University, Department of Psychology.

Szuchman, L. T. (2002). *Writing With Style: APA Style for Counseling*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.