

MA in Wellness and Lifestyle Management

Capstone Course HES 00.570

Guidelines and Requirements for Completion

Course Description

In this independent study course, students will work individually with a faculty advisor to complete a project that is relevant to their area of interest within health and wellness promotion and lifestyle management. The Capstone should address a need and/or have direct practical value to a community, which may include a worksite, organization, or geographical community. The project may also have a direct impact on the student's professional growth and development in the field.

The description is intentionally broad to allow each student the opportunity to work with an advisor and create a project that is tailored to his or her goals and interests. In general, the project must meet these criteria:

1. The project must involve an identifiable activity or set of activities with a clear endpoint/product.
2. The project must be substantive in nature and be worthy of three semester hours of graduate credit.
3. The student must take the leading role in designing, implementing and/or evaluating the project. While others may assist or contribute in some way, the project should represent the initiative and work of the student.
4. The project must contain a literature review. -All projects, not only formal research studies, must include a review of the professional literature published on that topic.
5. The project must enable the student to build on competencies and apply skills used in the academic program.

Steps of the Process

It is recommended that students, begin planning for the Capstone Experience SIX MONTHS in advance of starting the course. The Capstone Course is one of the final course options in the program and is to be completed after all of the other courses in the WLM curriculum.

The student may also want to do some preliminary planning and research so s/he can fully start the project once registered for the Capstone course. While it is important that the project be substantive and worthy of three graduate credits, it's equally important that the project be **feasible**, given the time and resources that are available to you. The Faculty Advisor will work with the student to help strike the balance of creating a project that is both challenging *and* realistic.

Remember that if the Capstone Project is not completed in the allotted course time of 8 weeks, the student will receive a grade of Incomplete until finished. There is no need to pay tuition again for this course.

1. The student should select an area of focus they are interested in and what project would most likely align with the area of focus from the list below. If the project requires cooperation with other people or groups, discuss the idea with them to see if they think it will be possible before the proposal is submitted. In addition, it is advised that the student visits the Rowan IRB website to determine if the project requires IRB approval and if so, the student should carefully review the process.
2. It is suggested that the student think about the need and/or direct impact of the project at this early stage and before submitting the proposal. The advisor will assist the student through this process but the project idea should come from a real need and this need should be clearly identified in your proposal.
3. Once the student decides on a project and a topic, the student will write a Capstone Proposal document (attached at the end of the document). The proposal is a significant part of the process and should reflect some preliminary thought and attention to detail.

Submit the proposal in the Advising Area Canvas shell and email Dr. Spencer at spencer@rowan.edu to let her know you have submitted it.

She will review it and provide you with feedback and direction.

4. Once the Capstone begins, the student will be expected to log on to Canvas and check the Capstone course for announcements and as a way to stay in touch with the advisor.

5. The student should plan to submit the Final Paper in week 7 of the course.

6. The last week of the course, Week 8, is when the student will make any final edits based on feedback from the advisor and submit a final version.

Options and Examples of Capstone Projects:

Below are examples of the kinds of projects students have completed in the past. New ideas are welcome! Please plan to have a conversation with Dr. Spencer (spencer@rowan.edu) to explore your ideas for this project.

1. *Systematic Review of the Literature* – Students conducting a systematic review will define a study question, create a strategy to identify appropriate literature, read and review the literature, extract the appropriate information from the literature, summarize the findings, present conclusions, and make recommendations based on the systematic review.
2. *Cultural Competency and Health Promotion Toolkit*: Students may want to explore or develop strategies to help reduce health disparities for specific populations. Students selecting this option will engage in a systematic review of the literature and use this literature to develop a Toolkit to be used in the field. This project option allows students to further enhance their knowledge and skills needed to work with multicultural populations. The student will select the population based on their individual interest.
3. *Program Implementation*. Students may find a program in existence that they wish to implement but with a different or specific population. Students selecting this option are not creating the program materials, but will implement them with a group of people and provide an evaluation of their outcomes and experience.

4. *Evaluation of an Existing Program or Evaluation of The Built Environment* – Students evaluating an existing program will provide a description of the program, explain the purpose of the evaluation, describe the methods and procedures used to evaluate the program, identify the logistics of carrying out the evaluation, and present the results of the evaluation. *Student may develop their own instrument or use an existing one. Student may also consider conducting an environmental evaluation. Students may want to select this option if they are interested in built environments effect on health. The built environment can be buildings, neighborhoods, stores, transportation etc. Assessing the built environment includes physical activity and nutrition environments and is particularly useful for students who are interested in heath policy.
5. *Manual/Lesson Plans* – Students creating a manual or curriculum for a health and wellness initiative will demonstrate the need for the manual/curriculum, create goals and objectives for the manual, create a table of contents, develop the content for the manual/curriculum broken into sections/proposed classes and describe how materials will be used and implemented. For this option, it is imperative that a need is first established. A “need” is established through a variety of different approaches such as; Needs Interest Survey, interviews, listening sessions etc.
6. *Health Communication and Social Media* -Students creating a website or blog will create a digital story about a health issue that demonstrates their work devoted to a specific topic and/or for a specific population. Creating a unique site and not simply replicate something else that is already in existence is crucial. The student will demonstrate their knowledge of social media’s role in health promotion and the platform will reflect the student’s attention to best practices.
7. *Traditional Research*: Some students may be interested in completing a traditional Research Thesis following the guidelines of the Graduate School. This is a good option for a student who is interested in pursuing a doctorate at some point or who wants to have a career that will involve designing and conducting research studies. If you are interested in this option, please visit the Graduate School webpage and download the Research Thesis guidelines. You will need to review these with your Faculty Advisor to ensure that you meet all of their criteria for your project to be considered a Research

Thesis by the University. Here is a link to the master's thesis guidelines of the University: [Master's Thesis Guidelines](#)

Once you have decided on a option and basic project plan, complete the Capstone Project Proposal sheet found at the end of this document and submit it in this Canvas shell. Please also email Dr. Spencer to let her know you have submitted it. Dr. Spencer will review your proposal, discuss it with you and recommend revisions.

Proposal Guidelines

Please follow this outline^[1-1] to describe your proposal in approximately 2- 3 pages. You need to provide enough detail to allow the Faculty Advisor to understand the scope of the project and what will be required to complete it, but you should NOT be doing extensive research or planning work until it is approved.

Cover Page: Your name, email address, telephone number and Projected date (i.e. module) for beginning the Capstone.

- I. Proposed Title
- II. Purpose of the Project: What is the goal/outcome of this project?
- III. Rationale for pursuing this project (i.e. why is it important-demonstrated by research) *There should be some mention of research pertaining to your topic although certainly not an entire literature review. Approximately three references from professional journals could be included.
- IV. Previous experience with this topic (such as training, certifications, prior^[1-1] study, work experience)
- V. Resources needed for this project including access to participants, facilities and materials
- VI. Method of completing project (i.e. what you plan to do, how you propose to meet the purpose/goal of the project)
- VII. Permission or Approval needed for this project

- Permission from supervisors, boards or committees.
- Permission from parents/guardians (if minors)
- Institutional Review Board approval

VIII. Project Timeline

- Timeline of activities to be completed PRIOR to registering
- Timeline of activities to be completed DURING the 8-week Capstone ~~SET~~ Project course

Institutional Review Board Training and Approval

All research conducted with human subjects must be approved by the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). This is a committee of faculty members who review research proposals by Rowan faculty and students to ensure that participants in the study are being treated with dignity, honesty and confidentiality. If you are collecting any data on participants for your research project, you will need to complete an IRB application form and have it approved by the IRB committee.

Your Faculty Advisor can help you with this process, but you should take the initiative to start it. It takes approximately one month for the IRB committee to review projects, so plan to have this step completed prior to beginning the Capstone Project.

In addition, each student and faculty member must complete a free, online training module, called CITI, on professional conduct for researchers. Again, this is something you should do PRIOR to starting the Capstone Project.

You can find both the IRB application form and a link to the Required IRB Training here: [Rowan IRB Web Page](#)

Elements of a Complete Final Paper

While every Capstone Project will be different, each student's Final Paper should contain the following items and follow the structure outlined below:

I. Title Page

- A. Descriptive and accurate title of project
- B. Name of student and Faculty Advisor
- C. Name of the degree program from which you are graduating
- D. Date of project completion

II. Abstract (approximately 150 words)

- A. Project Title
- B. Purpose (may be a research question or project goal)
- C. Methods/Strategy (may be a description of research methods or the overall strategy employed by the student to complete the project)
- D. Results/Outcome (may be a statistical analysis, qualitative data analysis, or description of the outcome or product employed by the student)
- E. Discussion (impact of the project)

III. Introduction

- A. Overview of the scope of the project as a whole
- B. Explanation and/or definition of key ideas and terms
- C. Purpose of the research or project

IV. Review of Literature

Note: this section is a synthesis of all of the published professional

literature on your topic. The goals of the Literature Review are to provide the reader with background knowledge of the project topic and demonstrate that you have developed an expertise in this topic area before implementing your project. The literature that you read and review will also guide you as you develop your project by providing relevant source material and examples for you to draw upon in your own work. You should divide the Literature Review into subsections by content area and reference each statement that you make and work that you cite using APA guidelines.

V. Methods^[11]_[SEP]

A. Description of the nature of the project (i.e. survey, program development, implementation or evaluation, curriculum development). Overview of the scope of the project as a whole
Explanation and/or definition of key ideas and terms

B. Description of the population impacted by project (i.e. study participants, program participants, recipients of curriculum or resource being developed).

C. Description of how data will be collected and analyzed (if applicable) .

D. Description of how resources and/or materials will be created, found or used (if^[11]_[SEP] applicable). If the student is using existing materials, there should be a brief discussion about the selection of the materials. If the student is creating new materials, there should be some discussion on strategies used to create the materials.

VI. Results

A. Description of the process and outcomes of the activities described in the Methods section.

B. Presentation of data collected if applicable

C. Description of data analysis if applicable

**If you created an online presentation, blog, webpage etc. , insert the

web address here.

****If you created a curriculum/lesson plans etc., insert See Appendix and attach documents. The plans should be professional and contain objectives, content, method of teaching and evaluation.**

VII. Discussion

- A. Response to the project purpose or question: How was the research question answered? How were project goals met? To what degree was the study purpose met?
- B. Implications of the outcome of the project
 1. What are the major implications of this project for the field of wellness and health promotion?
 2. How may they be used to influence the development or delivery of wellness programs or services?
 3. Could they influence policies?
 4. How will the results of this project influence you as a professional and practitioner? What might you do (or not do) as a result? How did this project shape your attitudes or intentions as a wellness practitioner?
 5. What were the limitations of this project or study? What should the reader be aware of as (s)he attempts to interpret or apply the results of this project?
 6. What might you, the student, have done differently if you did this project again? What recommendations do you have for other practitioners or researchers who are interested in exploring this topic?

VIII. Response to Personal Reflection

IX. References List in APA Style

Evaluation Criteria for Grading the Capstone Project

Project Purpose/Significance:

- The project is purposeful and beneficial toward improving the wellness and health of the community
- The project is clear, appropriate and comprehensive
- The development of the project is grounded in theory and models relevant to on health promotion

Quality of Project/Design:

- The project was original and compelling
- The project was interesting and insightful
- The project was sophisticated and professional
- The project is grounded in theory and best-practices.

Review of Literature:

- Exceptionally thorough and highly relevant
- Organized, Cohesive and Clear

Description of Conclusions and Recommendations:

- Clear and convincing
- Insightful and offers something that may not be obvious
- Careful consideration to possible recommendations and/or alternatives

Description of Limitations:

- Clear and convincing
- Offers strong, logical analysis of the limitations

Format of Project/Paper(Writing and Organization)

- Exceptional, well formatted, exceptionally well written and application of APA style

Personal Reflection Paper

The purpose is to reflect and critique your experience. This is to be completed at the end of your capstone and submitted in the Capstone Project Canvas shell.

Learning Implications

What have you learned about the field of wellness and lifestyle management as a profession?

What have you learned about your specific areas of interest and career path?

What skills/abilities were most important for your Capstone Experience? Why were these most important?

Critical Reflection

What skills and abilities did you develop during this process?

What skills and abilities are still in need of improvement?

What challenges did you face (personal and professional challenges) and how did you resolve them?

Critique

What were your expectations about your Capstone Experience? Did your perspective change during and after your experience? If so, how?

What advice would you give to a student beginning his/her Senior Capstone Experience?

What is your future direction now that you have completed this Capstone Experience?