



# Capstone Guidelines

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Academic Year

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## 1. Overview

A capstone course serves as the culmination of a student's academic experience, typically undertaken near the end of their program of study. It integrates and synthesizes the knowledge, skills, and competencies gained throughout the program, allowing students to demonstrate mastery of the subject matter and readiness for graduation or entry into their respective fields. At the end of the course, a comprehensive project of a minimum of 25 pages will be completed. The components of the project are:

1. **Introduction:** The introduction sets the stage for the capstone project by providing background information on the topic, stating the research question or problem statement, and outlining the objectives and scope of the project. It should capture the reader's interest and provide context for the subsequent sections.
2. **Background and Literature Review:** Prior to the literature review, the students must gain an understanding of the area where they identify a problem to be analyzed. The literature review demonstrates the student's understanding of existing research and scholarship related to the topic of the capstone project. It identifies key theories, concepts, and methodologies relevant to the research question and highlights gaps or areas for further exploration. The literature review serves as the theoretical foundation for the project.
3. **Data and Methodology:** The methodology section describes the research design, data collection methods, and analytical techniques used in the capstone project. It should justify the chosen approach and explain how it aligns with the research objectives. Depending on the nature of the project, the methodology may involve qualitative or quantitative methods, surveys, experiments, case studies, or other research techniques.
4. **Results and Analysis:** In this section, the student presents the findings of their research or analysis. Results may be presented in tables, charts, graphs, or narrative form, depending on the nature of the data and the research question. The results should be clearly organized, accurately reported, and relevant to the objectives of the capstone project. The analysis section interprets the results of the capstone project in the context of the research question and relevant literature. It examines the implications of the findings, discusses any limitations or constraints of the study, and suggests avenues for future research. The analysis should demonstrate critical thinking, analytical skills, and the ability to draw meaningful conclusions from the data.
5. **Conclusion:** The conclusion summarizes the key findings of the capstone project and reiterates their significance. It should address the research question or problem statement and reflect on the broader implications of the study. The conclusion may also highlight the contributions of the project to the field of study and suggest practical applications or recommendations.
6. **Limitations:** The limitations section outlines the capstone project's constraints, weaknesses, and restrictions. It will help the reader understand the project boundaries, scope, and potential shortcomings. Additionally, this section will help the reader understand what the capstone project aimed to achieve but could not cover. A well-written limitations section enhances the credibility and transparency of a capstone project by offering insights into various challenges the student faces. The result of a limitation is providing an opportunity for the student to enhance the project beyond capstone project submission by conducting additional research.
7. **Future Recommendations:** The future recommendations section discusses trends and applications based on the output and analysis of a capstone project. It highlights the areas worth exploring for future work and the application of the capstone project in an organization. This section tightly integrates with the findings obtained from the capstone project. The section also identifies and highlights key areas and emerging trends aligned with the capstone project. It provides a forward-looking perspective of the capstone project with the future industry trends.
8. **References:** The references section provides a list of all sources cited in the capstone project, following the APA style. It allows readers to locate and verify the sources used in the research, ensuring academic integrity and supporting further inquiry. To ensure the highest academic quality, a minimum of 10 references are required.
9. **Appendices:** Appendices contain supplementary material that is relevant to the capstone project but not essential to the main body of the report. This may include raw data, survey instruments, interview transcripts, or additional analyses. Appendices should be clearly labeled and organized for easy reference.

Overall, the components of a capstone project work together to demonstrate the student's mastery of the subject matter, research skills, critical thinking abilities, and ability to communicate findings effectively. Each component plays a crucial role in the development and presentation of a comprehensive and well-rounded capstone project.

This guide intended as a minimum framework for the capstone project: but should be viewed as a reference tool outlining common components of the capstone, suggested timelines, and expectations of the course.

## 2. Capstone Proposal

While the capstone project is the final deliverable of a capstone course, there are other milestones in the course that need to be met prior to the project. The first milestone is identifying the project and getting it approved by the course instructor. The second milestone is the capstone proposal that describes the problem to be analyzed, identifies the research questions and hypothesis, lists the project objectives, chooses the analytical method to be used, and ascertains data sources.

## 3. Completion Timeline

For a 15-week capstone course, the following timeline is recommended.

1<sup>st</sup> Milestone: Project Proposal, minimum 2 pages by Week 3

2<sup>nd</sup> Milestone: Background & Literature Review and Data & Methodology, minimum 10 pages by Week 5

3<sup>rd</sup> Milestone: Results & Analysis and Conclusion, minimum 10 pages by Week 13

4<sup>th</sup> Milestone: Final Capstone Paper, minimum 25 pages by Week 15

## 4. Formatting

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the project meets the quality expectations and adheres to the formatting and component requirements specified by program and the university. Improper formatting and/or not adhering to the University's requirements may result in a delay in graduation. Students are encouraged to use Writing, Research, and Media Center to ensure compliance with academic English and APA style.

The finalized project must use APA formatting and include, at minimum, all the following elements (unless specifically listed as optional):

- Title Page
- Introduction
- Background & Literature Review
- Data & Methodology
- Results and Analysis
- Conclusion
- Limitations
- Future Recommendations
- References
- Appendices (optional based upon the nature of your research)

General scholarly templates can be accessed through the Writing, Research, and Media Center website (<http://fxua.edu/wrmc>) and/or through your School. Errors or issues with formatting can cause delays in graduation.

The length of the capstone project will depend on the nature of the research being conducted. The body of a project at the Master's level is generally between 25-50 pages in length.

## **5. English Requirement**

Since the language of instruction at FXUA is English, all capstone projects must be written in English and follow the general conventions of academic English. Should a student wish to include items in a language other than English, the instructor should be consulted, and certified translations must be provided.

## **6. Proof of Academic Integrity**

All students are expected to run their capstone documents through TurnItIn prior to final submission. The final project should be provided to the instructor as a PDF or Word attachment with the final submission as part of its proof of academic integrity. Failure to submit a TurnItIn draft report could result in a delay of graduation. At their discretion, instructors or Program Chairs may choose to run the manuscript through TurnItIn again in addition to the student's submission.

Please consult the University's Use of Artificial Intelligence policy throughout the semester to maintain compliance with all applicable FXUA policies and procedures.

It is the student's responsibility to adhere to the high rigors of academic integrity throughout their work in all stages of the project and to adhere to all other university requirements.

## **7. Submission Requirements**

The completed capstone project must be submitted to the instructor in electronic format in Canvas, FXUA's learning management system along with all supporting files, such as codes, programs, scripts, etc.

## **8. Capstone Project Presentation**

Rigorous academic debate and probing are a fundamental part of the learning, teaching, and growing process at higher education institutions in the US. The capstone project presentation during the final week of the semester is an opportunity for the student to present, explain, and defend their work, and for the instructor to provide additional feedback to be incorporated into the final submission.

## **9. Quality Control**

For quality control, the Quality Assurance Team will audit capstone courses randomly to ensure the highest academic standards are met.

## **10. Tips**

Understand that conceptualizing, researching, and writing a capstone project is an iterative process, requiring continued work, development, and refinement of content and methodology. Remain in regular contact with your instructor and work closely with them throughout the experience!