

Graduate 6-Credit Applied Capstone Guidelines

These guidelines are intended for graduate students looking to register into a 6-credit Applied Capstone Project, as opposed to a thesis or internship, to complete their capstone requirements.

What is an Applied Capstone Project?

An **Applied Capstone Project** is the bridge between the academic components of a master program and how that knowledge can be applied in a real-world setting. Students wishing to complete a capstone project will use the similar research methodologies as those who complete a thesis, but instead of applying their findings to conclusions that contribute to scholarly literature, they use part of the academic research to explain, justify, and critically reflect on the practical choices they made during their project. The applied project may answer questions of practical importance for a professional audience.

Examples Include (but are not limited to):

- Training manual
- A policy platform
- Advocacy plan
- Website
- Business proposal
- Workshop or seminar
- Business report
- Podcast
- Audio or video project
- Fashion show
- Volunteer training program
- NGO or non-profit development
- Communications Campaign
- Marketing strategy

The Components of an Applied Capstone Project:

The applied capstone project has two main components:

- The project itself (a deliverable) where the length and format are to be determined with the advisor. The size of the project should be feasible and must fit in the timeframe allotted to complete an applied capstone project with AUP.
- A written report of at least 20 to 25 pages in length. The written portion is both a pre-planning and post-reflective report that includes details about the topic, the suggested central question or problem, research, methodologies, and closing ideas. Students should be able to clearly show how the applied capstone project connects with the academic elements (theory, knowledge, and skills) obtained from their master program and be able to clearly outline the theoretical components related to the project.

Suggested arrangement:

- 10 pages pre-project plan with research on the topic, justification of choices made for the project.

- 10 pages reflective portion that discusses the choices, the challenges, successes, weaknesses of the outcome, etc.
- Finally, students are to have a public presentation for their work which would need to be organized with the student's project advisor, second reader, and program director.

Planning for an Applied Capstone Project:

- Students are required to take the **Thesis Seminar (GR 5099)** in the semester prior to registering their applied capstone project. Taking the thesis seminar will help students understand the methodology behind effective research and assist them in creating an outline/abstract for their applied capstone project proposal.
- Before sticking with a topic, it is important the student understands what resources, materials, and time might be needed to conduct proper research and create their project.
- When a topic is finally decided, choose an advisor who specializes or is knowledgeable on the selected topic. This may mean someone other than your advisor or program director, perhaps a professor outside of your program.
- Resources from within an organization or workplace, such as employees, footage, or documents, may require special approval. It is the responsibility of the student to verify.

Steps of the Application and Approval of a Student's Applied Capstone Project

The application for an applied capstone project **is due by the end of add/drop week** of the semester that the student wishes to register into.

1. Preparing to Apply

- a. Student takes the thesis seminar.
 - i. A topic is selected, and the student prepares their proposal.
- b. The proposal is sent to the student's intended project advisor.
 - i. Project advisor agrees to advise the student.
OR
 - ii. Student must search for another advisor that might be better suited for overseeing their project.

2. Application documents:

- a. A title **under 50 characters long.**
- b. A 700–750-word outline/abstract.
- c. The student must have a clear statement of the issue that will be addressed in their project, or a statement of what the goal of their project will be.
- d. A working bibliography of at least 20 sources
AND
- e. A list of potential resources/sources that the student intends to use.
- f. A detailed timeline, approved by project advisor, showing the stages in which the project will advance over the course of the semester, to the final submission deadline.
- g. Student then submits their application for Applied Capstone Project: [Applied Capstone Project Application Form](#)

The application will be reviewed and if all parties agree, with final approval from the provost, the student will be manually registered for **GR 5096 Applied Capstone Project** (6 credits).

Important Deadlines:

- End of drop/add week within each semester is the deadline for applications.
 - Late applications must be submitted prior to mid-semester and are approved in exceptional circumstances. The student would need to provide all application documents per the usual procedure.
- December 1st (Fall semester) is the deadline for final submission or extension.
- April 15th (Spring semester) is the deadline for final submission or extension.
- July 5th (Summer semester) is the deadline for final submission or extension.

The Role of Advisors & Program Director

- **Advisors** provide active support at all levels of the applied capstone project. From application to final submission, the advisor is responsible to assist their advisee in the progression and completion of their project. Advisors should schedule check-in meetings with their advisee as they see fit to ensure that the student is making sufficient progress on their project. Advisees can contact their advisor at any point for assistance on their project. Finally, advisors are present for the public presentation, will write the final grade report, and issue a final grade along with the second reader.
- **Program Directors** are contacted for the initial approval of the applied capstone project application and may be involved in cases where the student has an urgent need or is in a situation that requires attention from the program director. Program directors are present for the public presentation and sign off on the final grade report.

Second Readers/Evaluators

Once the student has completed their project, a second person must be selected to read and evaluate the project and report. This person must be declared while filing the Ready to Submit Form: [Graduate Capstone Thesis & Applied Project Ready to Submit Form - Formstack](#) form due at the time of final submission. Second readers may be external, though this requires additional approval. Please see the Applied Capstone Project Policy for more information on second readers.

Requirements & Formatting of Applied Capstone Project Report:

WRITTEN REPORT LAYOUT AND SPECIFICATIONS

- i. Written in English
- ii. A4 paper format
- iii. 1" margins top, bottom, left, and right
- iv. Calibri, Helvetica, or Times New Roman font size 11-12
- v. Line spacing of 1.5. Do NOT add extra spaces between paragraphs.
- vi. Add page numbers to the footer of the document.
- vii. Save in PDF format.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of the Applied Project, students will be able to:

1. Use critical and creative thinking to research, develop and produce original work on a topic in their discipline.

For more details on critical thinking: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/study-hub/learning-resources/critical>

2. Develop and implement a creative project integrating knowledge and skills from their courses.

3. Critically reflect upon the creative process drawing upon theory from their courses. These include ethical, social, political, environmental, etc., implications.

4. Collaborate with others to accomplish goals for a professional outcome.

5. Articulate the value of their work, its position within its respective context and the skills it demonstrates.