



MASTER OF ARTS

**GUIDELINES FOR CAPSTONE
PROJECTS**

2005 – 2006

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Introduction

This publication is designed to provide specific guidelines for MA students in completing the Capstone requirements for their degree. It reflects the fifth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2001). This publication is also designed as a resource to be used in MAPC 603 Graduate Seminar and in MAPC 688 Capstone Planning. This publication is the companion publication to *Guidelines for Academic papers (2006)* that was designed as a resource for MAPC 601 Graduate Research. Students will find both publications useful resources as they practice and improve academic writing skills throughout the coursework leading up to the Capstone Project.

The requirements set forth herein are based upon standardized guidelines developed by members of the editorial staff of the American Psychological Association (APA). Detailed examples and directions are found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2001).

In this publication, every effort was made to apply the style and format rules set forth. Please note the several exceptions:

1. For expediency, page numbers were centered at the bottom of the page to prevent conflict with the examples presented in Appendices B and C.
2. Bold is used for instructional purposes only. It cannot be used in APA.
3. Although third person is used in APA/formal writing format, second person pronouns are used in this publication to make it more user friendly.
4. Single spacing was used throughout to conserve space.

Types of Capstone Projects

The MA Degree offers several options for completion of the Capstone Project. This manual is organized to present pertinent information and requirements for each of the types of Capstone Projects. The types of capstone projects are as follows:

1. Thesis
2. Research Project
3. Applied Research Project
4. Creative Capstone Project
5. Internship Capstone Project

6. Service Capstone Project
7. Individualized Capstone Project

Thesis and Research Projects

Thesis

The thesis may be best described as an investigation of a significant academic theory, question, problem or hypothesis that results in a formal academic paper suitable for publishing in an academic journal. A thesis typically employs a descriptive, comparative, or experimental research designs. Additional details about design options are included below. The final written paper will be divided into five formal chapters as follows:

- Chapter 1 Introduction
- Chapter 2 Review of Literature
- Chapter 3 Method
- Chapter 4 Results
- Chapter 5 Discussion

Research Project

While a research project is similar to a thesis, it is focused on the study of a question, problem, and/or hypothesis, of a practical nature and it is often described as a field study. Topics suitable for a field study are often drawn from problems experienced in a professional or employment related setting. The results of a field study are typically applied to address issues found in organizational settings. A research project typically employs a descriptive, comparative, or experimental research designs. Additional details about design options are included below. The final written paper for a research project will include the same chapter headings as a thesis.

Applied Research Project

The applied project is a specific type of Research Project and may be best described as the creation, development, or improvement of a product (e.g., a curriculum, or a training manual) which has immediate applicability in the student's chosen employment/profession or which is related to a strong personal or professional objective of the student. The final written paper for an applied project will include the same chapter headings as a thesis.

Design Options for Thesis and Research Projects

Students may choose from a range of research designs. This section of the manual presents descriptions and examples for some of the more common general categories of research designs including: (a) the applied project, (b) the descriptive design, (c) the comparative design, and (d) the experimental design. Although it is beyond the scope of this manual to describe all possible types of research designs, you are not limited to the designs we have selected for inclusion here. Should your idea for a research project not immediately seem to fit one of these designs, we suggest that you consult with your Faculty Advisor.

Typically, your specific interests will lead you to a particular type of research endeavor. You may want to explore issues of a work-related or applied nature, combining theory and practice for a very specific application, or you may seek answers to questions of a broader nature, answers having some generality across a variety of situations. If you plan to continue graduate study at the doctoral level, you may want to consider doing work which allows you to develop the research skills which will be required at that level in your chosen emphasis area. As you develop your ideas for research, we encourage you to seek input from a variety of people (e.g., course consultants, subject matter experts, etc.). *Ultimately, you will want to discuss the design decision with your Faculty Advisor who will directly supervise your Research Project.* The sections which follow describe some of the more common research designs and should give you some idea about how to frame your particular research interest in an acceptable form.

Important Note: All students are expected to follow the MA style and format requirements that are detailed in this manual, regardless of the research design chosen.

Descriptive, Comparative, and Experimental Designs

The following discussion of descriptive, comparative, and experimental designs is taken from Chapter 2 in Hittleman and Simon (1997). Students who are interested in a more detailed discussion of these designs should refer to that source or a research methods text specific to their area of emphasis. Additional questions should be addressed to your Faculty Advisor in regard to the appropriateness of the research design that you select.

Descriptive Designs

Descriptive designs are used when the researcher's purpose is to accurately depict the status of one or more variables or to describe specific phenomena of human experience. Variables are characteristics of persons or things (e.g., weight, age, reaction time, reading speed, ideational fluency, number of students, etc.; Glass & Stanley, 1970). This type of design is employed in an attempt to answer the question "What exists?" or "How do phenomena appear?" The researcher may choose to use quantitative or qualitative methods to answer these questions.

Quantitative Descriptive Method

In the quantitative descriptive method, numerical values are assigned to the variables under study. Direct observation, tests, or surveys may be used to collect data. Such raw data may then be inspected to get a sense of the status of the variables. However, most researchers further analyze this raw data to determine measures of central tendency (i.e., mean or median) and measures of variability (e.g., standard deviation) which provide a more comprehensive description of the variables under study.

Qualitative Descriptive Method

In the qualitative descriptive method, it is required that the researcher collects and analyzes data in verbal/transcribed form rather than numerical form. This is done within the natural setting of the information through direct observation, personal interviews, and similar information gathering methods. Here, the researcher is more concerned with the process of an activity and seeks to identify coherent patterns within the research setting rather than only the outcomes from that activity. Instead of means and standard deviations and the verification of predicted relationships, the outcomes of this type of research are the generation of research questions and conjectures. Examples of qualitative methods are: (a) action research, (b) phenomenological research, (c) case study research, (d) ethnography, and (e) comparative historical inquiry. Data are collected through observation and participant observation (i.e., fieldwork), description, interviews, questionnaires, documents and published material, and the researcher's impressions and reactions.

Particularly in the psychology and counseling fields, the humanistic tradition has proposed alternative research approaches. Rather than adhering to the positivistic and behavioral methods of natural scientific research, the humanistic tradition has developed a *human science* approach

which primarily utilizes descriptive (i.e., phenomenology) and interpretive (i.e., hermeneutic) methods. Learners who work in a humanistic perspective may wish to design their Research Methods course by the investigation and practice of a hermeneutic/phenomenological inquiry. Texts that can be used to introduce a student to these approaches are McLeod's (2001), *Qualitative Research in Counseling and Psychotherapy*, and Van Manen's (1990), *Researching Lived Experience*.

Because these methods and styles of inquiry are quite diverse, confer with your Faculty Advisor about the appropriateness of your method in relation to the topic you plan to research.

Comparative Designs

Comparative designs are useful when the researcher wants to examine the descriptions of two or more variables and make decisions about their differences or relationships. As with descriptive designs, comparative designs may be quantitative or qualitative.

Quantitative Comparative Designs

Quantitative researchers calculate measures of central tendency (i.e., mean) and variability (i.e., standard deviation) just as they do in descriptive research, but these measures alone do not provide evidence of significant differences or relationships among the variables under study. Further statistical procedures must be used to answer these questions. The Chi square analysis is an example of a procedure often used to detect significant differences between or among groups, and the correlation is often used to determine whether two or more variables have a systematic relationship of occurrence.

Qualitative Comparative Designs

Qualitative researchers make verbal comparisons to explain similarities and differences between events or activities. As they are concerned with a verbal comparison and contrast of what they observe, they identify patterns, meanings, and definitions of the ongoing processes and meanings of various events, activities, and human interactions.

Experimental Designs

Experimental designs are used when the purpose of the research is to answer questions about causation. The researcher seeks to attribute the

change in one variable to the effect of one or more other variables. To do this, the researcher must first identify the independent (i.e., or influencing) variables and the dependent (i.e., or acted upon) variables. Researchers manipulate independent variables and look for the effects these manipulations have on the dependent variables. A controlled experiment is designed wherein hypotheses are stated, and an experimental treatment is administered to a representative sample of a target population. Data are collected by use of reliable and valid measurement instruments, and analysis and evaluation of that data are completed in light of the stated hypotheses. Experimental researchers often use a statistical procedure called the analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine whether differences between or among dependent variables can be attributed to one or a combination of independent variables.

Thesis and Research Project Content and Format

All thesis or applied research projects written in the MA program should follow this format. Students who choose a research design other than the thesis or applied research project will follow different content and format requirements as described in other sections of this manual. Final format decisions are always at the discretion of the course facilitator and your Faculty Advisor.

In the following discussion, the sections of a typical paper are presented. While the content and length of each section may vary depending on the type of research design used, the section titles and sequence of presentation will always be the same.

Preliminary Pages

These introductory pages include the elements listed below. Examples are provided in the noted appendices to this manual:

1. Title Page (see Appendix B),
2. Approval Page (see Appendix B),
3. Abstract (see Appendix C),
4. Table of Contents (see Appendix C), and
5. List of Tables/Figures (optional; see Appendix C).

Note: The following descriptions were extracted from the APA (2001) *Publication Manual*. For more complete descriptions, you may refer to pages 10-29 in that source.

Title Page

The title should be a concise statement of the main topic and should identify the actual variables or issues under investigation and the relationship between them (see APA, 2001, pp. 10-11). A good title should be fully explanatory when standing alone. Avoid words that serve no useful purpose. Do not use abbreviations in the title; spell out all terms. The title should be no longer than 12-15 words (see Appendix B for the required MLS program format).

Approval Page

The approval page includes the title, the name of the student, and approval signatures of the Faculty Advisor and the Degree Chair. An example of the required format is displayed in Appendix B.

Abstract

The abstract is a brief, comprehensive summary of the contents of your project, including the derived conclusions and implications (see Appendix C and APA, 2001, pp. 12-15). It allows the reader to attain a quick overview of the content and scope of your research. A good abstract is accurate, self-contained, concise and specific, non-evaluative, and coherent and readable. An appropriate length for the abstract is between 75-150 words, depending on the nature and complexity of the work.

Table of Contents

This piece is self-evident. An example of the required format is displayed in Appendix C of this manual. The List of Tables and List of Figures are optional depending on whether tables and/or figures were used in the Research Project.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In Chapter 1, Introduction, a description of the problem under study is presented. The intended research strategy is described. In this section of the Research Project, it is important to establish not only *what* problem you intend to study but also *why* it is important or relevant and *how* you intend to resolve the problem. Describe how your research is related to previous work in the area by briefly referring to the central arguments and/or available data which make your research important and timely. If you have developed hypotheses or research questions with regard to your research, this would be a good place to advance a formal statement and rationale for

each one. A good introduction leaves the reader with a clear picture of what is being done and why.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The purpose of Chapter 2, the Review of Literature, is to develop a comprehensive background for the problem under study. Whereas in the Introduction, you have briefly referred or provided an overview to the relevant arguments and data which caused you to be interested in this area of study, in the Review of Literature, you are expected to demonstrate familiarity with all relevant findings with regard to the problem under study. In a good Review of the Literature, you should avoid references with only tangential or general significance. Instead, pertinent findings, relevant methodological issues, and major conclusions are emphasized. In your evaluation of the materials you present, be careful to avoid personal opinion and treat controversial issues with objectivity. The goal is to demonstrate the logical continuity, that is, the existing evidence and reasoning, between previous work and your present work. Begin this Chapter with a clear statement of the problem which indicates the scope of the issues which you will address.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In Chapter 3, the Methodology section, you describe in detail how the Research Project will be conducted (i.e., the proposal) or was conducted in the final draft (i.e., the completed project). Such a description enables the reader to evaluate the appropriateness of your methods and the reliability and validity of your results. The information provided here should be sufficiently detailed to allow other researchers to replicate the study if they so desire.

In descriptive, comparative, and experimental designs, the Method section is where you describe the participants in your Research Project, the measurement apparatus, and the procedure in appropriately identified subsections (see APA, 2001, pp. 12-15, for more information on the content of these subsections). *If you are using an applied project design*, you would use this section to provide a detailed account of your procedures and the rationale for their selection. This is the place to describe the development of your Research Project.

Chapter 4: Results

For descriptive, comparative, and experimental designs, the Results section summarizes the data collected and the statistical treatment (i.e., if

quantitative methods were used). For both quantitative and qualitative projects, briefly state the main results or findings. The data are reported in sufficient detail to justify the conclusions. It is not appropriate to discuss the implications of the results here as they are presented in Chapter 5, Discussion. Report all relevant results, including those that run counter to your hypotheses. See the APA (2001) *Publication Manual*, pages 20-26, for directions for use of tables and figures to report the data and for the proper format to present the statistical analysis.

If you have developed an applied research project, Chapter 4 is the place for you to insert the completed piece of work. If you have developed a curriculum, seminar presentation, or other type of applied project, you will place it in this Chapter, and supporting materials will be placed in an appendix.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In descriptive, comparative, and experimental designs, the Discussion section is where you evaluate and interpret the results reported in Chapter 4, especially in regard to your hypotheses. Here, you are free to examine, interpret, and qualify the results, as well as draw inferences from them. If the Research Project was theory based, emphasize the theoretical consequences of the results and the validity of your conclusions. See the *APA Publication Manual* (2001, pp. 26-27) for further suggestions for this section in an experimental report.

If you have completed an applied research project, Chapter 5 is the place for you to evaluate what you have done. Does what you have produced satisfy the objectives you had at the outset? What might you do differently if you were to develop the project again? If you have recommendations for improvements or additional work that could be done, you might discuss them here.

In summary, you should be guided in Chapter 5, the Discussion section, by the following questions:

1. What have I contributed?
2. How has my Research Project helped to resolve the original problem?
3. What were the limitations to this Project?
4. What conclusions and/or theoretical implications can I draw from my Project?

References

After Chapter 5, a list of sources (i.e., citations) is provided prior to the Appendices. This list includes only those references cited in the text of your Research Project and is titled, References. If you, or your Faculty Advisor, prefer to list a broader spectrum of literature than that which is immediately relevant to your research, your list would be called a Bibliography. That you provide a listing of sources is required; whether you call that list References or Bibliography depends on the scope of the list. See pages 207-281 of the APA (2001) *Publication Manual* for examples of references in APA style.

Appendix/Appendices

If you have documentary materials which would be awkward to include in the text of your Research Project, you may include them in an appendix. Examples of such materials are: (a) questionnaires; (b) verbatim instructions to participants; (c) descriptions of instrumentation; (d) raw data; or (e) the Regis University form, Approval for Research Involving Human Subjects. You will want to consult with your Advisor in regard to materials which would be appropriate for an appendix to your Research Project. If you use an appendix, please remember to include the title in your Table of Contents (see Appendix C).

Creative Capstone Project

A creative project is a particularly useful vehicle for students in the arts and humanities. Such projects may include production of original literary or artistic products. A student who chooses to pursue a creative project must not only demonstrate mastery of the artistic medium that is the focus of the project but must also demonstrate mastery of appropriate applied research methodology.

Content and Format

All creative projects will include a significant discussion of the original problem that led to the development of the creative product. Students are also expected to demonstrate knowledge of what others have done or written that is similar or otherwise related to the chosen creative project. In addition a significant discussion about the resolution of that problem must also be included. The final written paper will be divided into three chapters as follows:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Creative Work
- Chapter 3: Discussion

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Introduction should discuss the original problem that led to the creation of the product of this project. The introduction should also include a discussion of historical/critical content describing the place of the creative piece within its field. The writer's familiarity with the basic concepts and terminology within the field are to be demonstrated here. Since the creative project is being done within an academic program and leads to an academic degree, this chapter should use documented historical and/or critical source material. As to the content or focus, this section might explore such areas as these:

- A. The relationship of the creative work to the author and audience
 - 1. The creative work as the expression of the author's biographical and/or autobiographical elements
 - 2. The creative work as a creative facsimile of life, developing more authorial distance from the work
 - 3. The creative work as a work of imagination, perhaps developing even greater distance both from the author and from the audience
- B. The mode(s) of expression in the work, such as realism, expressionism, impressionism, comedy, drama, farce, musical, humor, satire.
- C. The content of the creative work
 - 1. For drama, information about staging choices, settings, sets, actors, accompaniments, and character types and actors; for creative writing, such information as time, place, social stratus, character types
 - 2. The overall theme/purpose/effect to be achieved: action, static and dynamic characters, social criticism, tragic flaws, conflicts, and resolutions of conflicts
 - 3. Summary of the work, by acts or chapters or story; brief but helpful in setting up the reader's expectations and understanding of developing elements

Chapter 2: Creative Work

The creative work should be reproduced in a form appropriate for the project but in a form that is also suitable for its artistic expression (to be worked out between the student and the faculty advisor). In this section, there would be allowances made for any specialized formatting, etc., that is

required by the creative presentation. Certain artistic creations are best presented at a show, recital or other similar presentation. Such events are to be scheduled with permission of your Faculty Advisor and must be open to Regis students, faculty and staff. An expert in the medium to be presented will be asked to attend the event and provide an expert evaluation of the work presented. This evaluation will be presented to the student and the faculty advisor. Special requirements for the presentation of the creative work must be incorporated into the proposal. A description of the planning, execution and evaluation of the event is to be included in the final capstone paper.

Chapter 3: Discussion

The discussion will include an assessment of where the student places his or her creative work among such works done in the past; for instance, is it seen to be a realistic novel, a drawing room comedy, a Greek tragedy, a historical novel, an adventure film, etc. As appropriate, reference should be made to specific writers and works in the field. Also to be included is a discussion of what the author learned in the process of creating the work. This discussion should point out what the student learned about the field in his or her courses leading up to the project and what was learned in writing the final capstone paper. This discussion might focus on techniques, characterization, plotting, beginnings, middles, and ends - those areas on which the thesis creator would need to focus in planning and executing the creative work. Finally, a conclusion should be added that discusses future plans for this or other works.

Internship Capstone Project

Students who have chosen a specialization that will help them prepare for a new career may find an internship to be an integral part of their degree plan. Such degree plans may include the internship as a credit bearing individually designed course or may include the internship experience as a basis for their capstone project, in which case the internship is included as a part of MAPC 688 and MAPC 696. If the internship is to be the basis of a capstone project, the final written paper will describe how the internship demonstrates mastery of the student's specialization.

Internship Defined

An internship is defined as a volunteer or paid work experience in a for-profit or non-profit company. The purpose of an internship is to provide practical work experience in the field for which a MA student is preparing. The length of the internship may vary depending on the employer and the

position. However, the experience is expected to be significant and should engage the student for 150 hours or more.

Content and format

The final written paper will be divided into three chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Internship Experience

Chapter 3: Discussion

An internship based capstone project requires careful planning and execution. **Preliminary arrangements for internships should be accomplished before you enroll in MAPC 688.** Students should contact their faculty advisor to discuss the project you plan to undertake, including all the details of the planning you have accomplished or plan to accomplish. You should seek conceptual approval of your plans before developing a proposal. Should you need assistance in locating an organization in which you can make arrangements for an internship experience, please contact your faculty advisor for assistance. Your faculty Advisor may also be able to provide contacts and resources you will need to make internship arrangements. Once you have identified the organization with which you would like to work you should make contact with the contact person in that organization to discuss their needs. You should then be sure your faculty advisor is aware of your plans. Finally, prepare a detailed plan of action to submit to your faculty advisor for approval. **When you have conceptual approval from your faculty advisor you may begin your internship experience.** A minimum of 150 hours are required for the completion of your internship experience. You should plan to keep a daily journal that describes your experiences.

With approval of your faculty advisor you will begin your capstone project by preparing a proposal, consisting of Chapter 1 as described below. This product will be completed during your enrollment in MAPC 688 Capstone Planning. Chapter 2 Internship Project and Chapter 3 Discussion may be completed while you are completing your internship or after you have completed the internship. Chapters 2 and 3 are to be completed as part of the course requirements for MAPC 696 Capstone Project.

Chapter 1: Introduction (Proposal)

- The first section of this chapter is an introduction to your project. You should discuss your interests in working with the organization you have chosen and your own motivation to undertake an internship. In this section you should also provide details about the organization with

which you plan to work. You may also discuss the needs of the specific organization with which you plan to intern, and how can you contribute to this organization.

- The second section of this chapter is a complete description of the problem that led you to elect the internship project and how your planned experience will address that problem. A description of the learning experiences you hope to incorporate into your internship should follow. What is the purpose of your project? What do you hope to accomplish with this project? If there are products or services to be developed or provided by you, please describe them and the need for them. Conclude this section with a description of how these planned experiences will assist you as you pursue your career.
- The third section of this chapter is a review of relevant research that relates to the problem you are addressing in your internship and research that relates to the organization. This is the equivalent of a review of literature found in other projects. What have other researchers and/or writers already learned about the career you have elected to pursue? What credentials and qualifications are required? What is the best path to prepare yourself academically and experientially for the career you plan to undertake?
- The fourth section of this chapter is a complete, detailed description of how this project will be carried out from its inception to its conclusion. At a minimum, the student should plan to maintain a journal that records all activities and experiences to be a part of the experience. All other details of how the project will be accomplished are to be included in this section.
- The fifth section is to be a chapter summary, describing what is included in the chapter and setting the stage for the following chapter.

Chapter 2: Internship Project

- This chapter is the place to provide the reader with a complete and detailed description of your internship experience. You should begin with a review of the issues and problems that you hoped to address in this project and how you planned your experience. You may organize this chapter into sub sections that are appropriate to a clear, logical and well documented description of your experience. You may want to include a review and analysis of your journal. You will also want to include a complete description of the work you did in your internship and the value you derived from the work. If you developed a product or service for the organization or population you should include a complete description of what you did, including the document or other artifact in its entirety. Conclude this chapter with a chapter summary section.

Chapter 3: Discussion

- This chapter is the place to discuss what you learned from your internship project.
- The first section of this chapter should include an introduction and some reflection about the experience you had with this project. What were the unmet needs of the organization with which you interned? How was your project able to address the problem/need you discussed in Chapter 1? What were the most positive aspects of your experience? What were the least positive elements? What would you do differently if you were doing the project again?
- The second section of this chapter should include a detailed discussion of how this project allowed you to demonstrate your mastery of your MA specialization.
- A third section should discuss what you learned from your experience and how that learning has influenced your view of the future. What conclusions have you reached about how you were able to provide service to the target population? What would you have liked to do that you were not able to do? What unmet needs still exist? How can those needs be met in the future?
- Conclude Chapter 3 with a chapter summary section.

Service Capstone Project

A service based capstone project requires careful planning and execution. Students should contact their faculty advisor to discuss the project you plan to undertake, including all the details of the planning you have accomplished or plan to accomplish. You should seek conceptual approval of your plans before developing a proposal. Should you need assistance in locating an organization or underserved group with which to work you should request that your faculty advisor contact the SPS Service Learning office. Numerous opportunities have already been identified by that office. Once you have identified the group or organization with which you would like to work you should make contact with the organization or contact person to discuss their needs. You should then be sure your faculty advisor is aware of your intent. You should then prepare a detailed plan of action to submit to your faculty advisor for approval.

With approval of your faculty advisor you will begin your capstone project by preparing a proposal, consisting of Chapter 1 as described below. This product will be completed during your enrollment in MAPC 688 Capstone Planning. **Please do not begin your project until your proposal has**

been approved by your faculty advisor. Chapter 2 Service Project and Chapter 3 Discussion will be completed after you have completed the service project and during the time you are enrolled in MAPC 696 Capstone Project.

Chapter 1: Introduction (Proposal)

- The first section of this chapter is an introduction to your project. You should discuss your interests in working with underserved populations and your own motivation to undertake a service project. You should also discuss the particular group you have chosen and provide details about the group or organization with which you plan to work.
- The second section of this chapter is a complete description of the problem that led you to select the underserved population that your project will address. Why is this population important to you and what issues or problems that face this group are to be addressed in this project. What is the purpose of your project? What do you hope to accomplish with this project? If there are products or services to be developed by you, please describe them and the need for them.
- The third section of this chapter is a review of relevant research that relates to the problem and the underserved group you plan to serve. This is the equivalent of a review of literature for other projects. What have other researchers and/or writers already learned about serving the needs of the population you are addressing? What are the needs that have not been addressed? How can you contribute to this group or organization?
- The fourth section of this chapter is a complete, detailed description of how this project will be carried out from its inception to its conclusion. At a minimum, the student should plan to maintain a journal that records all activities and experiences to be a part of the experience. All other details of how the project will be accomplished are to be included in this section.
- The fifth section is to be a chapter summary, describing what is included in the chapter and setting the stage for the following chapter.

Chapter 2: Service Project

- This chapter is the place to provide the reader with a complete and detailed description of your service learning experience. You should begin with a review of the issues and problems that you hoped to address in this project and how you planned your experience. You may organize this chapter into sub sections that are appropriate to a clear, logical and well documented description of your experience. You may want to include a review and summary of your journal. If you worked directly with the underserved population you should provide a

complete detailed description of those experiences. If you developed a product or service for the organization or population you should include a complete description of what you did, including the document or other artifact in its entirety.

Chapter 3: Discussion

- This chapter is the place to discuss what you learned from your project and how you were able to provide a service or product for the target audience.
- The first section of this chapter should include an introduction and some reflection about the experience you had with this project. What were the unmet needs of this population or organization? How was your project able to address the problem/need you discussed in Chapter 1? What were the most positive aspects of your experience? What were the least positive elements? What would you do differently if you were doing the project again?
- The second section of this chapter should include a detailed discussion of how this project allowed you to demonstrate your mastery of your MA specialization.
- A third section should discuss what you learned from your experience and your view of the future. What conclusions have you reached about how you were able to provide service to the target population? What would you have liked to do that you were not able to do? What unmet needs still exist? How can those needs be met in the future?

Individualized Capstone Project

Students may choose a capstone project that does not necessarily fit into one of the previously described capstone project types. The Individualized Capstone Project must meet the following general guidelines to be approved.

A significant problem or issue must be described in detail. This discussion should define the relevance of the problem or issue in light of the student's field of study and in light of the student's learning goals. The discussion should include a clear definition of how the proposed individualized capstone project will demonstrate the student's mastery of their specialization. A detailed background of the problem must be presented, including a review of what experts, writers and scholars have said about the problem or issue being addressed.

The student may use content and format options that go beyond the limits imposed by other capstone types. However, these exceptions must be

clearly defined and approved by your faculty advisor as part of your proposal. A clear and coherent rationale must be presented to justify your proposal.

The student may also use methods that go beyond the limits imposed by other capstone types. These exceptions must also be clearly defined and approved by your faculty advisor as part of your proposal. A clear and coherent rationale must be presented to establish how alternative methods will accomplish the purpose of the project and how such methods will demonstrate student mastery of specialization.

A meeting with your faculty advisor early in your program is strongly recommended if you are considering an Individualized Capstone Project. Such discussion should begin when you enroll in MAPC 603 Graduate Seminar as one requirement for this course is to bring clearer definition to your capstone project.

Style and Format Requirements

Style and format requirements are described in a companion document titled "Guidelines for Academic Papers" that is available on the Master of Arts Web site or from your Faculty Advisor. Style and format requirements apply to all types of capstone projects.

Development of the Proposal

Conference with Faculty Advisor

A conference with your Faculty Advisor is required prior to enrollment in MAPC 688 Capstone Planning. This will provide an opportunity for you to discuss with your Advisor the ideas you are considering for your Research Project. The objective of this conference is to help you to sharpen your focus as you begin the proposal development process. Please review all the information you have about the planning of your capstone project from MAPC 603. Bring this information with you to your meeting with your Faculty Advisor.

The first step toward completion of the Thesis or Capstone Project is to develop a proposal and submit it to your Faculty Advisor for approval prior to investing a great amount of time and energy in the research. The purpose of this step should be obvious because a well considered research plan is absolutely essential to the success of the project. Utilizing the Capstone Planning course, we have developed a proposal format and a process for

development and approval which allow us to provide you with some guidance through the important early stages of your project. The following sections provide essential information.

MAPC 688 Capstone Planning

As a student in the MA, you have used a sound individualized planning process that included initial thinking about how your capstone project or thesis would be carried out. This planning process continued as you completed MAPC 603 Graduate Seminar. Graduate Seminar requirements included a refinement of your planning for a capstone project that would be a natural extension of the core and specialization courses in your degree plan. MAPC 601 Graduate Research included extensive study of research methodologies and how to analyze the results of research using those methodologies. This background prepares you well for planning your own capstone project.

Elements of the Thesis or Research Project Proposal

The following elements are required in a thesis or research project proposal

1. Title Page
2. Approval Page
3. Table of Contents
4. Chapter 1: Introduction
5. Chapter 2: Review of Literature
6. Chapter 3: Method
7. References, and
8. Appendix/Appendices (when appropriate).

The typical length for the proposal will be 40 or more pages as the first three chapters of the final paper are to be nearly complete. Generally, the proposal is written in the future tense; this is changed to past tense when your project is complete, with the exception of instances where you refer to the published work of others, in which case, you should use the past tense.

Elements of all Other Capstone Project Proposals

1. Title Page
2. Approval page
3. Table of Contents
4. Abstract

5. Introduction
6. Literature Review
7. Method
8. References
9. Appendix/Appendices (optional)

The title page and the table of contents page will use the same format as that required for all final written projects. A sample is provided in Appendix B. The proposal approval page provides a place for your MAPC 688 Capstone Planning course facilitator to record a response to your proposal. A space is also provided for a second reader, should a second reader be requested by your facilitator. A space is provided for your Faculty Advisor to use in approving your project. A form is provided in Appendix B.

The introduction will include a detailed discussion of the background of your project, including a description of the underlying problem that you plan to address. Here, you are expected to define the specific problem you are addressing, why it is important or relevant and how you intend to address the problem.

To fully develop the background of your project a discussion of what other experts, writers or scholars have said or written about your problem is needed. A review of literature is intended to provide this information. This section is expected to be nearly complete as it is presented in the proposal. Note that more details about the content of this section are described under the Content and Format sub-section for each type of capstone project as described above.

Method is a second major component of the proposal. This section is to include a thorough and detailed description of how you plan to proceed with your project and how the procedures will address the problem you have chosen.

- a. If you are proposing a Creative Capstone Project you will include a detailed discussion of how you will develop your artistic or creative product and its meaning in relation to your field of study.
- b. If you are proposing an Internship Capstone Project you will need to include a detailed account describing the need for the internship in relation to your own development and professional experience. In addition a description of the arrangements needed for securing an internship should be included.
- c. If you are proposing a Service Capstone project you will include a detailed description of your planned service project and its significance

- to your field of study. A discussion of how the project will be a platform for your final demonstration of mastery is expected.
- d. If you are proposing an Individualized Capstone project you will need to provide a detailed description of how your project is unique, how it is significant within your field of study and how you plan to proceed with both content and format. Exceptions to standard formats established for use in the MA program should be explained and justified.

Proposal Approval Process

The culminating activity in the Capstone Planning course is the development of the proposal. As you exit this course with your proposal in hand, you will already have had the benefit of your course facilitator's input and evaluation with regard to the proposal. Assuming that you ultimately make a decision to pursue this particular proposal for your thesis or capstone project, you will then forward your proposal to your advisor for review and approval.

Research Involving Human Subjects

All research protocols, in which the use of human subjects is proposed, must be submitted to the Human Subjects Review Committee of Regis University. See Appendix F for a sample Application for Review/Approval of Research Involving Human Subjects as well as guidelines and instructions for the review process. Research which involves no risk to the participant and does not deal with sensitive or personal aspects of the participant's behavior may be exempt from full review. Consult with your Faculty Advisor early in the development of your research if you have any questions about this requirement.

Completion of the Thesis or Capstone Project¹

Timeframe for Completion

Generally, students will complete the research proposal and have it approved shortly after they complete MAPC 688 Capstone Planning. Students should plan to enroll in MAPC 696 Capstone Project or MAPC 697A Thesis A followed by MAPC 697B thesis B, immediately following the completion of

¹ **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Remember to file a Graduation Application Form at the beginning of the semester in which you expect to complete graduation requirements. Failure to do so may delay your graduation date. Forms and instructions are available on the SPS Graduate Programs web site. Go to www.regis.edu/spsgrad.

Capstone Planning. The actual research and development, writing of initial and final drafts of the project, and approval of the final draft are activities reserved for Capstone Project or Thesis. Under normal circumstances, your objective should be to complete your capstone requirements and graduate at the end of that semester. This work will require your undivided attention and energy if you are to meet the deadlines for final approval and graduation clearance. Therefore, we recommend that you avoid crowding yourself. Inevitably, these processes will take longer than you expect, so allow plenty of time to finish.

Writing and Submitting Drafts

As the read/evaluate/submit/rewrite/resubmit sequence takes time, please submit your work well ahead of deadlines if possible. Even the best writers should plan on rewriting to some extent. Typically, your Advisor will see errors or weaknesses which you no longer see because you are too close to the writing, but please do not expect your Advisor to be your proofreader. To the extent that you thoroughly proof your own work (i.e., or have it proofed by a third party) and critique and rewrite on your own, prior to submission, you can minimize the amount of rewriting which may be required of you by your Faculty Advisor.

Good writers take pride in their work and seek critical feedback from their peers and mentors. Your Faculty Advisor will appreciate your extra effort to submit clean work. We like nothing better than to read written work which is conceptually clear and precisely expressed.

Regis University Guidelines for Publishing Capstone Projects

Requirements for electronic publishing of MA Thesis and Capstone Projects are located on the School for Professional Studies Graduate Programs web page. Log on at www.regis.edu/spsgrad .

REFERENCES

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- Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
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- Yin, R. (2001). *Case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

APPENDIX A

Changes in APA Publication Manual (2001)

Use of Italics

Instead of underlining titles of books and journals, heading levels 3, 4, and 5, and special terms used in text (i.e., the first time), based on the 2001 publication of APA, all of these materials are italicized now.

Citations in Reference List

For the hanging indent (i.e., the second and subsequent lines), indent to .5 inch, the default for a paragraph indent in word processors.

Format for Citations Used in References/Bibliography

Books

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Glass, G. V., & Stanley, J. C. (1970). *Statistical methods in education and psychology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Hittleman, D. R., & Simon, A. J. (1997). *Interpreting educational research* (2nd ed.). New York: Merrill.

Leedy, P. D. (1996). *Practical research: Planning and design* (6th ed.). New York: Macmillan.

Chapter in an Edited Book

Gullotta, T. P. (1996). Dysfunctional behavior: A cautionary statement. In G. M. Blau & T. P. Gullotta (Eds.), *Adolescent dysfunctional behavior: Causes, intervention, and prevention* (pp. 3-10). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Strong, R., Silver, H., & Robinson, A. (1995). What do students want (and what really motivates them)? In K. Ryan & K. Cooper (Eds.), *Kaleidoscope* (pp. 69-74). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

ERIC Report or US Government Publication

American Council of Education (ACE). (1994). *Computers, technology and disabilities*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 381 921)

Ingersoll, R. M. (1996). *National Center for Educational Statistics: National assessments of teacher quality* (Working Paper No. 96-24). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Government Printing Office.

Article from Scholarly Journal

Cordova, D., & Lepper, M. (1996). Intrinsic motivation and the process of learning: Beneficial effects of contextualization, personalization, and choice. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 88(4), 715-730.

Fischbach, G. D. (1992). Mind and brain. *Scientific American*, 267(3), 48-57.

Article from Newspaper/Magazine

Bowen, E. (1987, February 16). Can colleges teach thinking? Maybe not, suggests a new test measuring "reflective judgment." *Time*, p. 61.

Finley, B. (2000, June 14). CU prof wins 'genius' award: Boulder physicist Margaret Murnane \$500,000 richer over laser innovation. *The Denver Post*, p. B1, 8B.

New drug appears to sharply cut risk of death from heart failure. (1993, July 15). *The Washington Post*, p. A12.

Citations for Electronic Media (see pp. 268-281 in Publication Manual, 2001)

The material below is quoted, literally, from APA. Presented in this material are several types of the most frequently used citations. If your citation does not fit the format below, see the section in APA for the format

for other types of citations. Regardless of format, however, authors using and citing Internet sources should observe the following two guidelines.

1. Direct readers as closely as possible to the information being cited -- whenever possible, reference specific documents rather than home or menu pages.
2. Provide addresses that work.

At a minimum, a reference of an Internet source should provide a document title or description, a date (either the date of publication or update or the date of retrieval), and an address (in Internet terms, a uniform resource locator, or URL). Whenever possible, identify the authors of a document as well. The URL is the most critical element. (p. 269)

If you are using a word processing program, the easiest way to transcribe a URL correctly is to copy it directly from the address window in your browser and paste it into your paper (make sure the automatic hyphenation feature of your word processor is turned off). Do not insert a hyphen if you need to break a URL across lines; instead, break the URL after a slash or before a period. (pp. 270-271)

Internet Articles Based On a Print Source

If you have viewed the article only in its electronic form, you should add in brackets after the article title [Electronic version] as in the following fictitious example:

VandenBos, G., Knapp, S., & Doe, J. (2001). Role of reference elements in the selection of resources by psychology undergraduates [Electronic version]. *Journal of Bibliographic Research*, 5, 117-123.

If you are referencing an online article that you have reason to believe has been changed (e.g., the format differs from the print version or page numbers are not indicated) or that includes additional data or commentary, you will need to add the date you retrieved the document and the URL.

VandenBos, G., Knapp, S., & Doe, J. (2001). Role of reference elements in the selection of resources by psychology undergraduates [Electronic version]. *Journal of Bibliographic Research*, 5, 117-123. Retrieved October 12, 2001, from <http://jbr.org/articles.html>

Article in an Internet-Only Journal

Fredrickson, B. L. (2000, March 7). Cultivating positive emotions to optimize health and well-being. *Prevention & Treatment*, 3, Article 0001a. Retrieved November 20, 2000 from <http://journals.apa.org/prevention/volume3/pre003001a.html>

Stand-Alone Document, No Author Identified, No Date

GVU's 8th WWW user survey. (n.d.). Retrieved August 8, 2000, from http://www.cc.gatech.edu/gvu/user_surveys/survey-1997-10/

Technical Report Retrieved From University Web Site

Kruschke, J. K., & Bradley, A. L. (1995). *Extensions to the delta rule of associative learning* (Indiana University Cognitive Science Research Report No. 14). Retrieved October 21, 2000, from http://www.indiana.edu/~kruschke/deltarule_abstract.html

E-mail

E-mail sent from one individual to another should be cited as a personal communication (See section 3.102).

Electronic Copy of Journal Article, Three to Five Authors, Retrieved From a Database.

Borman, W. D., Hanson, M. A. Oppler, S. H., Pulakos, E. D., & White, L. A. (1993). Role of early supervisory experience in supervisor performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 443-449. Retrieved June 23, 2000, from PsycARTICLES database.

Daily Newspaper Article, Electronic Version Available By Search

Hilts, P. J. (1999, February 16). In forecasting their emotions, most people flunk out. *New York Times*. Retrieved November 21, 2000, from <http://www.nytimes.com>

APPENDIX B

Sample Title Page Format

3" from the top
of the page



TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT
ALL UPPER CASE

FOLLOW SPACING SHOWN AT LEFT MARGIN

by

Jane E. Doe

6.5" from the top
of the page



A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
Specialization:

8" from the top of
the page



REGIS UNIVERSITY
Month, Year

Sample Approval Page Format

3" from the top of
the page



TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT

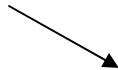
ALL UPPER CASE,

USE SPACING AT LEFT

by

Jane E. Doe

6" from the top of
the page



has been approved

Month, Year

7.5" from the top
of the page



APPROVED:

_____, Faculty Facilitator

_____, Faculty Advisor

APPENDIX C

ABSTRACT²

Title of the Research Project

This is a sample of how the body of the abstract should begin. The abstract is a brief, comprehensive summary of the contents of the Research Project you have prepared, including the derived conclusions and implications. It allows the reader to attain a quick overview of the content and scope of your research. A good abstract is accurate, self-contained, concise and specific, non-evaluative, and coherent and readable. An appropriate length for the abstract is between 75-150 words, depending on the nature and complexity of the work.

² **IMPORTANT NOTE:** For the Abstract, use lower case Roman numerals and start with page iii; the Title and Approval pages are pages i and ii, which are counted but not printed.

*TABLE OF CONTENTS*³

Chapter	Page
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Overview of the Problem	2
Purpose of the Project	3
List of Definitions	4
Chapter Summary.....	5
 As illustrated above, but not shown below, in each chapter there will be topics, one of which is the Chapter Summary, as well as subtopics.	
***REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	6
3. METHOD	24
4. RESULTS	28
5. DISCUSSION.....	35
REFERENCES	43
APPENDICES	
A. Title.....	46
B. Title.....
C. Title.....
and so forth.	

³ **IMPORTANT NOTE:** The Table of Contents starts with p. iv.

LIST OF TABLES⁴

1. Title..... ##
2. Title..... ##

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Title..... ##
2. Title..... ##

⁴ **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Each list, as shown above, is placed on a separate page. The need for these lists is dependent upon whether tables or figures are included in the Research Project. See pages 21 and 147-201 in the APA (2001) *Publication Manual* for detailed information on the use of tables and figures in text.

APPENDIX D

Sample Chapter Pages

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The following pages provide examples of text for a research project. Within the text, only chapters begin on new pages. The word, Chapter, and its number are centered and placed at 1.75 inches from the top of the page; this placement makes it clear to the reader that this is the first page of a new chapter or section. The top margin of 1.75 inches should be on the first page of each of the following sections: (a) Abstract, (b) Acknowledgments, (c) Table of Contents, (d) each chapter, and (e) the References.

Shown on these text pages are examples of: (a) paragraph indents; (b) headings; (c) page number placement; and (d) single spaced, block quotations. The following passage is an example of a single spaced, block quotation of 40 or more words:

The public seems periodically to express a desire for some new film genre. Whether this behavior can be explained is probably a moot point. What this does mean is that some groups of people are dissatisfied with the films available at their local theaters. (Moore, 1981, p. 42)

The text continues after the block quotation with one double space between the end of the quotation and the text.

The first lines of paragraphs are indented uniformly throughout the project (e.g., .5 inch).

At the end of a paragraph, before a new topic, use two blank lines (i.e., one triple space).

Major Topic

After the heading, the paragraph starts one double space below. In APA, there are five levels of headings. Used in this example of chapter pages are Level 1, title of chapter, and Level 2, as above, major topic. Examples of Levels 3, 4, and 5 follow.

Subtopic to Major Topic

In Level 3, if you use a subtopic heading, you should have two or more. If the major topic was Types of Special Needs students, the subtopics might be: (a) Learning Disabilities and (b) Behavior Disorders.

Subsection to a Subtopic

A subsection to a subtopic is considered Level 4. If Level 3 is Learning Disabilities, the subsections might be: (a) Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), and (b) Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Paragraph level. A Level 5 heading is placed at the beginning of a paragraph, only the first letter of the first word is capitalized (i.e., with the exception of proper nouns), and the heading ends with an underlined period. This heading might be used for treatment/ education plans for a student with ADD.

Note regarding page numbers ⁵

⁵ **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Page numbers for the Research Project must be placed in the upper right corner of the page; the only exception is the use of Lower Roman for the Abstract and the Table of Contents. For expediency, page numbers were centered at the bottom of the page for this manual.

APPENDIX E

MASTER OF ARTS

Approval Form for Capstone Project Proposal

NAME _____ DATE _____

MA SPECIALIZATION _____

TITLE OF CAPSTONE PROJECT _____

FACILITATOR

COMMENTS

NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

MAJOR REVISION ()

MINOR REVISION ()

APPROVE ()

SECOND READER (if needed)

COMMENTS

NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

MAJOR REVISION ()

MINOR REVISION ()

APPROVE ()

FACULTY ADVISOR

COMMENTS

NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

MAJOR REVISION ()

MINOR REVISION ()

APPROVE ()

APPENDIX F

Application for Review/Approval for Research Involving Human Subjects

TO: Human Subjects Review Committee, Regis University

Principal Investigator (Name): _____

Address: _____ Telephone #: _____

Faculty Advisor (if student): _____

Department: _____ Office #: _____

Program Director: _____

Project Title:

1. Are investigational drugs to be used?
Yes _____ No _____
2. Will you be using patients and/or the facilities of a health care agency as a part of this study?
Yes _____ No _____

If YES, after approval of your proposal by the members of this Committee, the proposal must be approved by the appropriate review board within that facility.

Attach to this form the supporting materials for Items 3-7.

3. Project description in relation to human subjects. Attach a brief summary of the problem to be investigated, the questions to be asked, the methods or instruments to be used, the subject population to be studied, and the method of subject selection and recruitment. Include sufficient detail, including examples of protocols and/or data collection instruments, in order that the members of the Committee can assess any potential hazards.
4. Risk/benefit assessment. Assess the risks and potential benefits of the investigation.

Guidelines for Research Involving Human Subjects

All research protocols in which the use of human subjects is proposed must be submitted to the Human Subjects Review Committee, Regis University. However, according to federal regulations, some research is exempt from full review. Generally, research that is conducted under the exempt review category involves no risk to the subject and does not deal with sensitive or personal aspects of the subject's behavior.

Research normally conducted in this review category includes survey and interview research involving normal educational practices, observational research and review of documents, pathological specimens, or records that are nonidentity specific (i.e., anonymous).

Instructions for Regular Review

Regular Review protocols are evaluated by the full Human Research Committee. Please attach to the cover sheet a summary of the project for review by the Committee. Please minimize technical language not readily understood by persons outside your discipline and include sufficient detail to enable the Committee to assess the potential hazards to subjects.

Examples of Projects Which Require Full Committee Review

1. Any research involving the use of vulnerable subjects. When vulnerable populations are being approached during recruitment for research, investigators should take special precautions to be sensitive to the subjects' privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality. A vulnerable subject is defined as follows:

Vulnerability refers to the risks that researchers request their subjects to undertake in relation to the ability of the subjects to make fully informed consent. Populations we routinely consider to be vulnerable include: children, prisoners, pregnant women, non-English speaking people, the mentally handicapped, those subjects engaged in illegal activities, people who are under medical treatment for an illness that is relevant to the risk they are being asked to assume by the research, and subjects who may risk retribution by a person with authority over them as a consequence of participation or nonparticipation in the study. This list should not be considered exhaustive or inflexible, since new research situations constantly arise.

2. Any research involving more than minimal risk, either mental or physical to the subject. Examples of protocols of this type may include surveys or questionnaires that solicit information regarding instances of child or sexual abuse suffered by the subject, criminal activities, and/or studies regarding eating disorders. Examples of studies that involve more than minimal physical risk to the subject include stress testing, drug and alcohol use by the subjects, and studies where subjects are asked to do more than moderate physical exercise that could result in injury to the subject. A comprehensive statement of potential risk/benefit ratio to the subject should be attached for consideration.