MPH-PHP&M Capstone Project Guidelines
University of Kentucky College of Public Health
Department of Health Management & Policy
Updated Spring 2016

To be successful in the MPH degree program and the profession, students must complete an independent project and demonstrate excellence in oral and written communication skills. The Capstone Project provides the student an opportunity to integrate coursework and field experience into a single applied project that demonstrates proficiency. The project must be a well-reasoned contribution in a discipline of public health in the student’s chosen field of concentration(s) and should reflect specific in-depth interests and career goals of the student. Previous capstone projects are electronically archived at UKnowledge and searchable via http://uknowledge.uky.edu/.

Guidelines

1. Students should register for the PHP&M section of CPH 647 (Research Methods for Public Health) during their last Fall semester. CPH 647 has been designed to support the research design aspect of the capstone project.

2. Students should register for the PHP&M section of CPH 608 (Public Health Capstone) during their last Spring semester. CPH 608 has been designed to provide project management and feedback for the capstone project.

3. All students must complete basic Human Subjects Training (accessible online via www.citiprogram.org, login in via SSO—University of Kentucky, use your UK Link Blue username and password, and select the “Group 2: Social/Behavioral Investigators and Key Personnel”). This must be completed before the second week of CPH 608 (and may need to be completed earlier to facilitate IRB review of study protocols).

4. Each student will have a committee comprised of a minimum of three faculty members. All members must be members of the UK Graduate Faculty (see http://www.research.uky.edu/gs/FacultyandStaff/faculty_directory.html for directory; all should be members of the College of Public Health, Program Code = PRM). Among these three faculty members, you will have either a single committee chair or two committee co-chairs. Either your chair or one of your co-chairs must be both a full member of the UK Graduate Faculty. At least two should have their primary faculty appointment in the Department of Health Management & Policy. Decisions regarding committee membership should be made collaboratively between the CPH 608 instructor (or committee chair) and the student.

5. The topic and format of each capstone project must be approved by your committee. Projects typically fall into one of three designs: (A) Empirical Research; (B) Policy Analysis; or (C) Case Study. Students should use the College’s “Proposed Capstone Project Description/Approval Form” to communicate their project idea. Formulating an acceptable capstone project is often an iterative process and students are cautioned to allow for adequate time for review and revisions. It is often most efficient to initially seek feedback from your committee chair (or committee member who has the most experience with your proposed methodology) and then present other committee members with proposals have been approved by the committee chair.

6. Students must maintain active student status and should register for the zero hour CPH 748 (Research) course if all other courses are complete. CPH 748 is a controlled enrollment course – contact Ms. Laverne Carter (lrcarte@uky.edu) for assistance.
Timeline Requirements

Students are responsible for meeting all deadlines. Many of these deadlines are Graduate School deadlines and cannot be adjusted.

1. Students must apply to the Graduate School (online via myUK) for degree. For a May 2016 degree the deadline is Feb 20, 2016. For an August 2016 degree the deadline is June 20, 2016. For a December 2016 degree the deadline is September 20, 2016.

2. Students must schedule their final exam (online at http://www.research.uky.edu/gs/CurrentStudents/masters_forms.html) a minimum of two weeks before their proposed defense date. The last day to defend for a May 2016 degree is April 21, 2016 (and the last day for an August 2016 degree is July 21, 2016; the last day for a December 2016 degree is Dec 1, 2016). Completion of this form requires the following information: defense time and date, defense location, and all committee members. Exams should not be scheduled until a complete capstone report (draft) is given to the committee chair.

It is strongly recommended that students utilize project management skills to develop a timeline for project completion. Some suggested tasks (and associated due dates for Spring 2016 defenses) include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submit signed Proposed Capstone Project Description/Approval Form</td>
<td>First week February</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft Introduction Section (to committee)</td>
<td>Third week February</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft Methods Section (to committee)</td>
<td>Fourth week February</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft Results Section (to committee)</td>
<td>Second/Third week of March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft Capstone Report (to committee)</td>
<td>First week April (or two weeks before defense)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Draft Capstone Report (to committee)</td>
<td>One week before defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>By April 21, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit Final Capstone Report (e-copy to Ms. Andrea Perkins and committee chair) and signed Electronic Master’s Capstone Approval Form</td>
<td>By 10 days after defense</td>
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Project Designs

Projects typically fall into one of three designs. These are described briefly below. In consultation with their committee chair, students will need to develop specific expectations for their capstone project.

A. Empirical Research
An empirical research project includes analysis of either primary or secondary data designed to address research hypothesis (and/or research questions). While the expectations of project scale and degree of thoroughness is less than for a thesis, appropriate methods, valid interpretation, and presentation of study limitations are required. Note that collecting your own data (e.g., primary data) is time intensive and students proposing those projects should prepare to take an additional semester to for completion.

B. Policy Analysis
A policy analysis examines a current or proposed policy, and may look at the actual or potential impact of the policy. Policy analyses often require students to examine secondary data to determine the impact of an existing policy, or use existing literature to project the potential impact of a proposed policy. A policy analysis may also require qualitative data gathering and analysis. Policy analyses rely strongly on the published literature, and students should be prepared to perform extensive literature reviews.

C. Case Study
A hallmark of the case study approach is its focus on understanding issues in real-life contexts. Based on research questions, the appropriateness of either a single or multiple case study approach should be determined and defended. The selection of the case(s) and issues of data saturation are also critical. Guided by an extensive literature review, students should use established frameworks or theories for designing data collection, data analysis, or both. These projects require systematic data collection often via mixed methods using existing data, records, observation, interviews, and/or surveys.

Manuscript Guidelines

1. Most capstone reports are 20-25 pages, not including tables, figures or appendices.
2. The manuscript must be double spaced and with a margin of at least one inch on each side.
3. Use 12 point font (however tables and footnotes may be smaller if necessary).
4. Insert page numbers starting after the Title Page (and Table of Contents).
5. All Figures and Tables must be numbered and referenced in the text. If possible insert the Figures and Tables into the text body.
6. All Appendices must be labelled and referenced in the text.
7. Correctly and consistently use an established citation style. Include a complete list of references.
8. Use the Title Page format provided in CPH 608.
9. The manuscript may include the following sections:
   A) Title Page
   B) Table of Contents
   C) Abstract or Executive Summary
   D) Introduction
   E) Methods
   F) Results
   G) Discussion and Recommendations
   H) References
   I) Tables and Figures
   J) Appendices
Proposed Capstone Project Description/Approval Form
Master of Public Health Degree

Student Name __________________________ ID Number________________________

Title of Proposed Capstone Project:

Primary Objective:

Secondary Objective (if applicable):

Proposed Methodology:

Source of Data (if applicable):

Anticipated Value to Public Health Practice:

__________________________  ________________________
Committee Chair            Signature

__________________________  ________________________
Committee Member           Signature

__________________________  ________________________
Committee Member           Signature

__________________________  ________________________
Student Signature          Date

*Please note at least two committee members (including the chair or co-chair) must be members of the Graduate Faculty, and at least one of the two must be a Full member of the Graduate Faculty. It is expected that at least two members of the committee will be from the student's program/department.