

COLLEGE OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

HONORS CAPSTONE/THESES GUIDELINES

Honors capstone or thesis projects completed within the College of Health and Human Services auspices can take many forms. Despite disciplinary differences, there are some common denominators and expectations of all Honors Capstones within the College:

Originality. Capstones are the product of a student's original research or creative activity. Students complete them to generate new knowledge, discover new insights, and push their creative boundaries.

Honors Capstones support students' post-baccalaureate success. Many students in this college pursue graduate or professional work. The Honors Capstone can be an important tool in helping them not only to determine their interest in graduate school but also to gain access to it. At the same time, an Honors Capstone does not have to be designed exclusively as a calling card for graduate school. Capstones that support a wide range of post-baccalaureate possibilities are equally welcome. The Capstone should be a bridge to the next stage of a student's academic or professional career.

Advanced work. With the above in mind, the Honors Capstone is conceived of as the student's most advanced work to date, the culmination of the student's major rather than an early step completed along the way.

Greater disciplinary understanding and ability. The Honors Capstone demonstrates a student's potential to transition from typical undergraduate standards to a more advanced stage of content depth and methodology, either graduate- or professional-level work. It pushes the student beyond the ordinary expectations, offering the opportunity for sustained reflection and study.

Independent labor. Although the Honors Capstone is a mentored and vetted experience, it is an independent project that should demonstrate a student's curiosity and initiative. Honors students are held to a higher degree of personal responsibility.

Faculty mentorship. Although they work independently, Honors students need careful mentoring throughout their Capstone projects by research active faculty members within the major who have expertise in the student's topic. These faculty members should be current in the field, professionally networked, and productive. Each department devises its own system for Capstone advising. There are many possible models and should be carefully matched to each department or program's resources.

Written component. All Honors Capstones involve a written component. Good writing skills are essential for all college graduates, and Honors students should have an edge by being even more adept in written communication skills.

Research skills. All Honors Capstones involve some level of research. Honors students should demonstrate the capacity to seek out and locate external information independently and to relate it to their own work.