

## Procedures for Proposing and Writing a Capstone Project

### Choosing a Capstone Project

Students who choose a capstone project must select one of two options to fulfill the course requirements.

#### Option 1

Core courses	9 credits
Emphasis courses	6 credits
Elective courses	18 credits
Total credits	33 credits

and

Capstone Project	3 credits
Total credits	36 credits

#### Option 2

Core courses	9 credits
Emphasis courses	6 credits
Elective courses	15 credits
Total credits	30 credits

and

Capstone Project or Thesis	6 credits
Total credits	36 credits

#### **Note the following requirements.**

- Students must have completed or currently be enrolled in all required courses prior to making the formal application for a capstone project.
- Students must have completed at least 27 credits prior to making a formal application for a capstone project.
- Students must pay the tuition for all 3 or 6 credits of the capstone project prior to its start.
- Students have up to 12 months to complete the capstone project. If after 12 months the project is not finished, students must register and pay tuition for a 1-credit continuing project course. This registration and tuition charge continues each subsequent term (fall, spring, summer) until the project is completed or the student drops out of the program.

### **Step 1: Applying for a Capstone Project**

Note: For a detailed description of each project type, the Capstone Project Descriptions are found in the next section.

- The student works with his/her advisor to secure two additional graduate faculty members who agree to serve on the capstone committee.
- Complete the *Application for Capstone Project* and submit it with the appropriate payment to the Director of Graduate Studies. The application is found on the MLC website ([www.mlc-wels.edu/go/grad](http://www.mlc-wels.edu/go/grad)).
- The Director of Graduate Studies will respond via email with approval.

### **Step 2: Writing the Proposal**

Write the proposal following the guidelines for the type of project below and the standards of the *Publication Manual* (current edition) of the American Psychological Association (APA) for style and format. After the proposal is written, your advisor and committee members must give approval to the proposal.

#### **Field Project – 3 credits**

A field project allows the student to investigate an educational issue or implement a strategy that has meaning within the student's local educational context. The student uses a research-informed approach

for decision-making, program development, or evaluation. There are many ways this project can be created and implemented, so consultation with the advisor is recommended before proceeding.

A field project proposal will be a five to seven page paper that will communicate your plans to the advisor and committee members. The following outline may guide the proposal:

I. INTRODUCTION

- Identify the Issue
- Importance of the project
- State the project purpose or goal

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

- A reporting of the literature that frames the issues and suggests possible research designs or solutions.

III. DESIGN

- Describe the procedure you will use to investigate the problem, make a decision, develop your program, or implement the solution
- Describe the subjects or participants
- Outline a plan to assess the effectiveness of your project

IV. REFERENCES

V. APPENDICES

**Curriculum Development – 6 credits**

A curriculum development project creates a cohesive plan of instruction that addresses a curricular goal for the school or classroom. The curriculum plan should encompass classroom instruction in a given subject area for at least one semester or involve the entire school for at least one instructional unit. The curriculum should demonstrate a link between research findings, instruction, and student outcomes. Once created, the curriculum should be implemented and its effectiveness evaluated.

The curriculum development project proposal will be a five to seven page paper that communicates the goals and plans to achieve those goals to the advisor and committee members. The following outline may guide the proposal:

I. INTRODUCTION

- Identify the purpose of the project or the problem it seeks to address
- Give evidence of the problem or importance of the project
- State the project goal

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

- A reporting of the literature that frames the problem the curriculum is addressing, gives evidence of other attempts to address this educational issue, research on the effectiveness of such attempts, and educational theory or practice that serves as a rationale for the curriculum design and methods of instructions and assessment.

III. DESIGN

- Describe the procedure for development of the project
- Describe how the curriculum will be implemented

- Outline an assessment or evaluation of the curriculum's effectiveness
- Convey your plan for assessing the data you collect from the assessment plan
- Describe any limitations your study may have

#### IV. REFERENCES

#### V. APPENDICES

### **Internship – 3 credits or 6 credits**

An internship allows a graduate student to receive hands-on opportunities to experience the application of classroom learning in an authentic setting. The student serves under a Master Teacher who has been approved by the student's advisor. The difference between three credits and six credits is the length of time spent in the internship. A three credit internship is half days for one semester or full days during summer. A six credit internship is full days for one semester.

The internship proposal will be a five to seven page paper that communicates the purposes and arrangements of the internship to the advisor and committee members. The following outline may guide the proposal:

#### I. INTRODUCTION

- Purpose / goals of the internship
- Importance of the internship
- Connection to standards

#### II. LITERATURE REVIEW

- A reporting of the literature that relates to the purposes or goals of the internship, specific conditions in the proposed settings, methods or approaches used in the proposed settings, and theories or practices that will be utilized or evaluated as a major part of the experience.

#### III. DESIGN

- Arrangements of the internship
- Connections to the purpose / goals
- Assessment / reflection plans

#### IV. REFERENCES

#### V. APPENDICES

### **Thesis – 6 credits**

A thesis is a systemic approach to investigating an educational problem that has application for the educational community in general. The thesis proposes an educational problem, a research question or questions, and a design that allows for empirical investigation. The findings are analyzed and reported once the investigation is completed.

The thesis proposal will be vary in length depending on the study, but it will specify to the advisor and committee the research problem, question, design, methods of data collection and analysis. The following outline may guide the proposal:

#### I. INTRODUCTION

- Statement of the problem

- Significance of the proposed study
  - Research question(s) and/or hypothesis
  - Definition of terms
  - Assumptions and limitations of the study
- II. LITERATURE REVIEW
- The reporting of the literature that frames the problem, research question, variables, research designs or methods and interpretation.
- III. METHODOLOGY
- Subjects
  - Measures
  - Procedures
  - Data analysis
  - Limitations of the design
- IV. REFERENCES
- V. APPENDICES
- Data gathering instruments (surveys, tests, interview questions)
  - Informed consent / permission forms

### **Step 3: Submitting the Proposal**

Following acceptance from your committee, the proposal must be submitted along with the application for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to the Director of Graduate Studies. Approval from the Director of Graduate Studies and the IRB must be received before the project is begun.

### **Step 4: Completing a Capstone Project**

- a. The student's advisor works closely with the student to ensure graduate-level standards are met.
- b. The student's committee reviews the student's project. This review may begin during the project and is always done upon completion of the project.
- c. Upon completion of the project, the student meets with the committee for an hour-long defense of the project. This meeting may be on-campus or may be arranged electronically.
- d. Official copies of the completed and approved capstone project will be printed and housed in the campus library. An electronic copy will be available through the MLC library website.
- e. Printing of capstone projects is handled by the Director of Graduate Studies. The cost for printing a hard-cover capstone project book for the MLC library is covered by the student.