

# Graduate 6-Credit Applied Capstone Guidelines ([GR 5096](#))

These guidelines are intended for graduate students who want to complete their capstone requirements by registering for a 6-credit Applied Capstone Project instead of a thesis or internship.

## What is an Applied Capstone Project?

An **Applied Capstone Project** is the bridge between the academic components of a master's program and how that knowledge can be applied in a real-world setting. Students wishing to complete a capstone project will use similar research methodologies as those who complete a thesis. Still, 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 choices they made during their project. The applied project may answer questions of importance for a professional audience.

## 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 by the project advisor. The project size should be feasible and fit in the timeframe allotted to complete an applied capstone project with AUP.
- A written report of at least 50 pages in length. The written portion is an account of the project and its findings and a post-reflective report that includes details about the topic, the suggested central question or problem, research, methodologies, references, 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's program and be able to outline the theoretical components related to the project.
- Finally, students can consider having a public presentation for their work in consultation with their project advisor. This would need to be organized with the student's project advisor, second reader, and program director. Peers and faculty are welcome to attend the presentation.

## Planning for an Applied Capstone Project:

- Students are required to take the **Thesis Seminar (GR 5099 or PO 5099)** or **Consulting Methods (BA 5019)** before registering their applied capstone project. Taking the thesis seminar or any other methods course 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 that 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, approach a project advisor who specializes or is knowledgeable on the selected topic.

- Resources within an organization or workplace, such as employees, footage, or documents, may require special approval. The student is responsible for verifying.

## 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 the add/drop week of the semester that the student wishes to register.**

### 1. Preparing to Apply

- Student takes the thesis seminar.
  - A topic is selected, and the student prepares their proposal.
- The proposal is sent to the student's intended project advisor.
  - The project advisor and program director review the proposal.
  - The project advisor agrees to advise the student.

OR

- Students must search for another advisor better suited for overseeing their project.

### 2. Application documents:

- A title **under 50 characters long.**
- A 700–750-word outline/abstract.
- 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
- A working bibliography that sufficiently and adequately represents the project **AND:** a list of potential resources/sources the student intends to use.
- A detailed timeline approved by the project advisor, showing the stages in which the project will advance over the semester to the final submission deadline.
- 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 the **GR 5096 Applied Capstone Project** (6 credits).

### Important Deadlines:

#### Application

- End of drop/add week within each semester is the application deadline.
  - Late applications must be submitted before mid-semester and are approved in exceptional circumstances. The student would need to provide all application documents per the usual procedure.

#### Submission

- December 1<sup>st</sup> (Fall semester) is the deadline for final submission or extension.
- April 15<sup>th</sup> (Spring semester) is the deadline for final submission or extension.
- July 5<sup>th</sup> (Summer semester) is the deadline for final submission or extension.

## The Role of Project Advisors & Program Director

- **Project Advisors** provide active support at all levels of the applied capstone project. From application to final submission, the project advisor is responsible for assisting their advisee in the progression and completion of their project. Project Advisors should schedule check-in meetings with their advisees as they see fit to ensure that the students are making sufficient progress on their projects. Advisees can contact their project advisor at any point for assistance on their project. Finally, project advisors are present for the public presentation, will write the final grade report, and issue a final grade with the second reader.
- **Program Directors** are contacted for the initial approval of the applied capstone project application. They 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**

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, which is 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

- Written in English
- A4 paper format
- 1” margins on top, bottom, left, and right
- Calibri, Helvetica, or Times New Roman font size 11-12
- Line spacing of 1.5. Do NOT add extra spaces between paragraphs.
- Add page numbers to the footer of the document.
- 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.
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 implications for ethical, social, political, environmental, etc.
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.

## **Optional Resources:**

For presentations including slides: suggested guidelines for professional presentations:

<https://virtualspeech.com/blog/designing-presentation-slides>

Student reference for critical thinking: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/study-hub/learning-resources/critical>