

Capstone Project Guidelines

The *Capstone Project* provides an opportunity for students to engage in high-level work focusing on an area of specialization within the profession. Capstone projects (CP) will be inquiry and practice-centered, and will draw upon areas of interest to the student. All Capstones aim to bridge theory and practice and are aimed to have an impact on the professional life of students whether they work in classrooms, studios or community spaces.

Students will identify the topics for their *Capstone Project* during their course work. Capstone projects often take their inspiration from projects, papers, and experiences related to course work in the degree program. However, to ascertain students' abilities for independent work and their capacity for self-directed inquiry, capstone projects must demonstrate in what ways individual graduate students have researched, developed, and extended, or applied the ideas and strategies under investigation.

Capstone Projects encourage the application of knowledge gained on teaching and learning throughout the Masters of Music Education program. Additionally, the Capstone Project should demonstrate the depth and extent of knowledge of students. Capstone projects may take a variety of formats (e.g., video, web, traditional text, media) of scholarly work. These may be, but are not limited to, the investigation of practices and educational ideas, the development of curricular materials, or teaching approaches.

A successful *Capstone Project* shall:

- 1) Illuminate and bring new insight to an area of the music education field;
- 2) Demonstrate a depth and breadth of knowledge and the application of this knowledge to scholarship and/or practice;
- 3) Present a clearly articulated investigative framework, while situating projects within established academic practices and/or ideas;
- 4) Offer inquiry-based argumentation for educational/curricular change and adaptation where conceptual propositions are tied to in-the-world realities.

General Guidelines

In consultation with faculty, students will select a topic and submit a proposal to the Department of Music Education. Upon acceptance, students may proceed with their *Capstone Project*. Proposals must be submitted to the department no later than two weeks into the semester in which the capstone is to be completed. To gain **proposal approval**, students will submit a **5-page outline** of their projects as delineated below. All capstone projects require a substantive final and polished format and will be archived by the Department of Music Education upon completion.

Proposals

A *Capstone Project Proposal* should contain the following:

- 1) *Introduction* – Explains the interest in the topic and situates the project in a scholarly and/or practical context.

- 2) *Goals and Process* – Describes the goals and purpose of the project. The section will detail the activities that will take place during the project, including who will be involved, and the role the student will play.
- 3) *Final Product and Timeframe* – Outlines the timeline for the project. This section will also detail the final format of the project and how it will be presented.

Format of Capstone Projects

A *Capstone Project* should encompass the following *minimum* parameters:

- A capstone project may take several forms and often yields the production of materials for teaching, learning, research, or for a variety of applications within the field.
- Each capstone project must show: (a) depth and breadth of scholarly understanding, and (b) the application of this understanding to practice.
- A condition of the capstone project is that students demonstrate the ability to gather materials, review current literature, and to examine sufficient background material to inform the development of original work.
- To this end, the capstone projects should be though in two parts:
 - 1) A narrative-focused segment that describes and reflects upon the process, as well as a literature review sufficient to provide a scholarly contextualization of the project.
 - a) Length will vary but a good expectation for this section would be 20 to 25 pages; inclusive of references
 - 2) A practice-oriented segment where original and collected materials will be collected.
 - a) Multimedia and web-based formats are highly encouraged in this segment of the capstone.
 - b) Materials should be ‘sharable’ and aimed at impacting an area of work within music education.