

Course Code: 9337

CAPSTONE PROJECT GUIDELINES

MANUAL FOR BS (ECONOMICS)



ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY

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CAPSTONE PROJECT GUIDELINES

MANUAL FOR BS (ECONOMICS)

(CODE 9337)



**Department of Economics
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD**

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Year of Printing 2025

Layout Setting Muhammad Zia Ullah

Incharge Printing Dr. Sarmad Iqbal

Printer..... Allama Iqbal Open University

Publisher Allama Iqbal Open University,
Islamabad

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INTRODUCTION

A capstone project is a multifaceted academic experience typically required for students during the final year of an academic program. It is a comprehensive and interdisciplinary project that often requires students to apply the knowledge and skills acquired throughout their academic careers to solve real-world problems or issues.

Capstone projects come in all shapes and sizes, including research papers, case studies, creative works, capstone projects, and field placement projects. They are designed to challenge students to think critically, solve complex problems, and demonstrate their readiness for work in their field. Capstone projects are often a highlight of a student's academic career and can provide valuable experience and skills for their future endeavours.

Types of Capstone Projects

Capstone projects are an essential part of many academic programs. They can vary from program to program and take shape depending on the specific discipline and project goals.

Research Paper/Major Project Course

A research paper or major project course is a comprehensive capstone that aims to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to conduct research and produce a high-quality research paper or major project. These typically include various topics such as research methodology, literature review, data collection, and analysis, as well as writing and presentation skills.

The course typically begins with an introduction to research methodology, including the different research types, research design, and ethical considerations. Students are taught how to conduct a literature review, which involves identifying and analysing relevant literature on the topic of their research. Data collection and analysis are also a focus in this type of capstone project, with students demonstrating mastery in learning how to collect and analyse data and showcasing various methods such as surveys, interviews, and even experiments. They are also taught how to use statistical software, such as SPSS and EViews, to analyse data and conclude.

It's also standard for these courses to focus on writing and presentation skills, with students learning how to write a clear, concise, and well-structured research paper or project relating to their major or focus. They are taught how to use proper citation and referencing techniques, as well as how to present their findings professionally and engagingly.

Completing a capstone research paper or major project course is crucial for students to acquire the skills and expertise needed to conduct research and present their findings in a comprehensive manner. It serves as a culminating showcase of their academic achievements.

Portfolio-Building Course

It is designed to help individuals create a professional portfolio that showcases their skills and accomplishments. The course covers key points such as identifying your target audience, selecting a suitable format for your portfolio, creating a solid visual design, and selecting the best pieces to include.

These courses are designed to showcase the creativity and ingenuity of the student. Additionally, a portfolio-building course provides guidance on writing compelling descriptions and captions for each focus piece included. It also offers tips for presenting your portfolio to the necessary stakeholders, like professors, advisors, and even prospective employers. By the end of the course, participants should have a polished portfolio that can be used to showcase their work to potential employers or clients.

Group Project Course

A group project course is designed to allow students to work collaboratively on a project that requires them to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired in their respective fields of study. The course covers key points such as project planning, team building, communication, problem-solving, and project management. Students are expected to work in teams to identify a problem, develop and execute a project plan, and clearly present their findings. A group project course also emphasises the importance of effective communication within the team and with external stakeholders. Through this course, students develop critical thinking, leadership, and teamwork skills essential for success in their future careers.

What Is the Goal of a Capstone Project?

A capstone project aims to demonstrate a student's mastery of a particular subject or field of study. It is typically a culminating project that integrates and applies the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course of a degree program. The project may involve research, analysis, problem-solving, and creative work, and it should demonstrate the student's ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and work independently. The ultimate aim of a capstone project is to produce high-quality, original work that contributes to the student's academic and professional development.

What Programs Usually Require Capstones?

Capstones are usually required in programs that involve hands-on learning and the practical application of skills. These programs typically include engineering, computer science, business, healthcare, education, and social sciences. Capstones require students to demonstrate their mastery of the subject matter through a comprehensive project or presentation. Capstones are often required in graduate programs as a way to exhibit a student's research and analytical skills.

How to Choose a Capstone Topic

After dedicating time and effort to your academic program, the following requirement is to select a unique interest topic that will embody all the knowledge and academic growth attained throughout your studies. How do you choose a capstone topic? What determines what kind of topic is most suitable?

- Identify your interests and passions: Choose a topic that you are passionate about and interested in. This will make the research process more enjoyable and engaging, not only for the student but also for the audience.
- Consider your career goals: Examine your future career goals and choose a topic that aligns with them. This will help you gain relevant skills and knowledge that will be useful in your future career.
- Research current trends and issues: Look for current trends and issues in your field of study and choose a topic that addresses them. This will make your capstone project more relevant and impactful.
- Consult with your advisor: Consult with your capstone advisor to get their input and guidance on choosing a topic. They can provide valuable insights and help you narrow down your options.
- Consider the scope and feasibility: Choose a topic that is manageable in terms of scope and feasibility. Make sure you have access to the necessary resources, equipment, and data to complete your project successfully.
- Brainstorm and refine your ideas: Brainstorm a list of potential topics and then refine them based on your interests, career goals, and feasibility. Choose a topic that you are excited about and can confidently expound upon

Role and Responsibility of the Student

Students are expected to:

- i. Conduct independent research or fieldwork
- ii. Adhere to ethical research standards and academic integrity
- iii. Maintain regular contact with the assigned supervisor
- iv. Submit work as per deadlines and guidelines
- v. Demonstrate seriousness, originality, and academic discipline

Focus of Work

The Capstone Project should be focused and practical. Students must:

- i. Define a clear problem statement based on practical issues in the real-life scenario
- ii. Support analysis with theory and evidence
- iii. Demonstrate application of research methods and data interpretation
- iv. Provide concrete findings and actionable recommendations
- v. Maintain an academic tone with professional formatting

Pre-Project Readings

Before initiating the project, students must review relevant literature and resources such as:

- i. Academic journals
- ii. Business reports and financial statements
- iii. Industry-specific publications
- iv. Regulatory and policy documents
- v. Govt. policies and regulations

Project Work Plan (Suggested Timeline)

Time	Activities
Weeks 1–2	Topic selection, supervisor approval, literature review
Weeks 3–4	Research design, data collection tools, and proposal writing
Weeks 5–6	Data collection (survey/interview/secondary data)
Weeks 7–8	Data analysis, preparation of charts/tables
Weeks 9–10	Drafting chapters and submitting for supervisor feedback
Weeks 11–12	Final editing, proofreading, and submission

Guidelines for Writing a Capstone Project Report

- **Page:** A4 size
- **Font:** Times New Roman
- **Spacing:** 1.5 line spacing
- **Margins:** 3 cm on all sides
- **Justification:** Fully justified
- **Paragraphs:** Use blank lines between paragraphs and sections
- **Headings:** Use hierarchical heading formatting (Heading 1, 2, etc.)
- **Word Count:** 6,000 to 8,000 words (excluding annexures)
- **Page Numbers:** Roman numerals (i, ii...) for preliminary pages, Arabic (1, 2...) from Chapter 1
- **Spelling/Grammar:** Use MS Word grammar/spell check

Format of Capstone Project Report

- i. Title Page
- ii. Supervisor's Certificate
- iii. Acknowledgements
- iv. Table of Contents
- v. List of Tables & Figures
- vi. Executive Summary
- vii. Chapter 1: Introduction
- viii. Chapter 2: Literature Review
- ix. Chapter 3: Research Methodology
- x. Chapter 4: Data Analysis & Findings
- xi. Chapter 5: Conclusions & Recommendations
- xii. References (APA or Harvard style)
- xiii. Annexures

Contents of the Report (Minimum Requirements)

- i. **Introduction (500–700 words):** Problem background, objectives, scope
- ii. **Literature Review (800–1000 words):** Theoretical base, past studies
- iii. **Methodology (600–800 words):** Research type, tools, sampling, data collection
- iv. **Data Analysis (1500–2000 words):** Quantitative/qualitative analysis, tables, interpretation
- v. **Conclusion & Recommendations (600–800 words):** Findings, suggestions, policy implications

General Rules Regarding Capstone Project

1. Every student enrolled in the capstone project must complete it within the allocated semester under the supervision of a faculty member.
2. The responsibility to propose a suitable topic lies with the student. The department will approve or suggest changes to the topic.
3. Upon topic approval, the department will assign a faculty supervisor who will guide the student throughout the project.
4. An online orientation session (minimum 2 hours) will be arranged at the start of the semester to guide students about objectives, structure, ethics, and report writing of the Capstone Project.
5. Students must follow ethical standards and avoid plagiarism. Projects with over 20% similarity (Turnitin or equivalent) may be rejected or penalised.
6. At the end of the semester, the final capstone project must be submitted in electronic format via LMS for grading.
7. The Department will assign an Evaluator to assess each Capstone Project. The final grade will depend on:
 - Quality of report

- Originality and depth of analysis
 - Relevance of recommendations
 - Adherence to structure and format
8. Total Marks of Project Report: 100, and the pass marks are 50.
 9. Evaluation may be conducted by the supervisor, or tutors may be assigned for evaluation, not exceeding 50 students per evaluator.
 10. The University holds no financial liability related to any field visits or data collection undertaken by the student.

Title of Your Capstone Project Here (bold, centre aligned)

by

Name.....

ID No.....

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
Bachelor of Science (BS) Degree in Economics**

**Department of Economics
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad
Year**

SIGNATURE PAGE

This capstone project paper has been examined and approved.

Review Committee:

(Name typed below line)

(Name typed below line)

Approved:

Head of the Department of Economics

Dated: _____

ABSTRACT

Include a concise abstract of this document. The page is collated within the document immediately following the signature page.

Abstracts should be about 100-200 words in length and Times New Roman, 12 points. Consult the APA manual for some tips regarding the qualities of a good abstract. Pay close attention to grammar and spelling; papers with misspellings and typographical errors will be returned, as will abstracts that do not follow the format as illustrated in this document.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many students like to acknowledge people who have significantly contributed to their graduate education on this page and are welcome to do so. Remember, however, that acknowledgements are not part of the scholarly work.

Acknowledgements and its page number are not listed in the Table of Contents.

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Quantitative Data Analysis Match-up Table

Table 2: Pre- and Post-Student Teaching Ratings on the Nine Standards

Table 3: Group Means on Pre- and Post-Student Teaching Surveys

Notes:

A capstone project will generally not have a List of Tables page.

If you've constructed more than one table and plan to place them in the body of your paper, include a list of them here. List the table number, name, and page on which the table can be found (example above).

See the current APA manual for samples and formatting requirements.

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Flow Chart
Figure 2: Detail of an Experimental Lab.....
Figure 3: Diagram of a Classroom

Notes:

A capstone project will generally not have a List of Figures page.

If you've constructed more than one figure and plan to place them in the body of your paper, include a list of them here. List the figure number, name, and page on which the figure can be found (see above).

See the current APA manual for samples and formatting requirements.

Chapter I: Introduction

Purpose/Goals of the Project

The statement of the purpose/goals of the Project should include the overall reason or goals for completing the project. The author will explain the purpose of the project and the goals he or she hopes to accomplish through it.

Importance of Capstone Project

Discuss – An explanation of how a project will help the author to achieve the stated purpose and goals. Emphasise practical outcomes or products that will result.

Connection to Standards

Discuss – Connect the purpose and goals to a set of standards that guide the profession. How will your project serve to assist you in meeting an established set of standards? Select standards in consultation with your advisor.

Examples of standards include the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) standards, the MN Core Skills for Teachers of Special Education, MN Standards of Effective Teaching, National Board for Professional Teaching (NBPT) Standards, The MN Core Leadership Competencies for Minnesota Administrative Licenses, or the Educational Leadership Constituents Council (ELCC) standards for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Introduction

The format of each heading and sub-heading depends on its level according to the current APA manual.

Next Heading

The format of each heading and sub-heading depends on its level according to the current APA manual.

Next Heading

Add as many headings as needed.

Summary

Write the chapter summary here.

Chapter III: Report / Analysis

This section should contain a brief explanation of the setup and method followed in the Capstone Project. The supported material will be furnished in the appendices to this document.

Chapter IV: Conclusion and Recommendations

Again, start with an introduction. You might reiterate the purpose or problem that you addressed.

Conclusions

This is the main section of the essay, and can be broken into subheadings if desired. Summarise what you did and what you learned by connecting your project experiences to your purpose, goals, and standards.

Recommendations

Recommend some further research, work, or a change in practice.

REFERENCES

Make sure that everything you cite in text is also in the reference list and vice versa. Below are examples of a journal and a book entry. Consult the current APA manual for additional examples. **Notice that entries use a hanging indent set at ½ inch, are single-spaced, and have a blank line between each entry.**

Clough, M. (1992). Research is required reading. *The Science Teacher*, 59(7), 36-39.

Cochran-Smith, M. (2001). Higher standards for prospective teachers. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52(3), 179-181.

Appendix A:

Place materials into an appendix if they would be distracting to include it right in the body of your document. Each appendix begins on a new page. Format the material in the appendix in the same or a similar format as used in the original document. For example, if a permission letter to the parents is part of the appendix, it should be formatted the same as the original letter, etc. See the current APA manual for specifics.

Appendix B:

Place materials into an appendix if they would be distracting to include it right in the body of your document. Each appendix begins on a new page.