



This course supports the assessment for Management and Leadership Capstone. The course covers 1 competency and represents 4 competency units.

Introduction

Overview

Welcome to the Master in Management and Leadership (MSML) Capstone course! This is your culminating experience in your master degree program, and provides you the opportunity to demonstrate the various competencies you have developed.

Getting Started

This course affords you the ability to synthesize prior learning to help a business solve a current challenge within their organization. There are four tasks within the course. You will rely upon your previous competencies, critical thinking skills, and experiences to complete the tasks. This course differs from your previous courses in several ways. Since it is an integration of previous courses, you will want to review your notes, portfolio projects, and assessments from those courses as you complete your capstone activities. You may also want to use the textbooks and courseware from prior courses as you perform the capstone project. Additional videos, multimedia presentations, and supplemental material are available to help you prepare for each task -- you will find these in the Course Search. Competency will be demonstrated by the successful completion of four performance tasks.

Competencies

This course provides guidance to help you demonstrate the following competency:

- **Competency 981.1.1: Capstone**

The graduate integrates and synthesizes competencies from across the degree program and thereby demonstrates the ability to participate in and contribute value to the chosen professional field.

Course Instructor Assistance

As you prepare to demonstrate competency in this subject, remember that course instructors stand ready to help you reach your educational goals. As subject matter experts, mentors enjoy and take pride in helping students become reflective learners, problem solvers, and critical thinkers. Course instructors are excited to hear from you and eager to work with you.

Successful students report that working with a course instructor is the key to their success. Course instructors are able to share tips on approaches, tools, and skills that can help you apply the content you're studying. They also provide guidance in assessment preparation strategies and troubleshoot areas of deficiency. Even if things don't work out on your first try, course instructors act as a support system to guide you through the revision process. You should expect to work with course instructors for the duration of your coursework, and you are encouraged to contact them as soon as you read through this course. Course instructors are fully committed to your success!



Students in the Master of Sciences in Management and Leadership program may use this email account if they have questions or concerns regarding the capstone portion of their degree program. Email: MSMLCapstone@wgu.edu

Preparing for Success

The information in this section is provided to detail the resources available for you to use as you complete this course.

Learning Resources

The learning resources listed in this section may be referenced to complete the activities in this course. For many resources, WGU has provided automatic access through the course. However, you may need to enroll manually in or independently acquire other resources. Read the full instructions provided to ensure that you have access to all of your resources in a timely manner.

Previously Used Resources

You can access any of the learning resources that you've used throughout your MSML program. You may be prompted to log in to the WGU student portal to access the resources.

Cengage MindTap

Managing Organizations and Leading People, including:

- [Daft, R.L. \(2014\). *Management*. South-Western, Cengage Learning. ISBN: 9781285068657](#)

Human Resource Management, including:

- [Phillips, J. M., & Gully, S. M. \(2014\). *Human resource management \(1st Ed.\)*. Cengage. ISBN-13: 9781111533557](#)

Management Communication, including:

- [Guffey, M. E. & Loewy, D. \(2014\). *Business communication: Process & product \(8th ed.\)*. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning. ISBN: 9781285094069](#)

Cengage CourseMate

Becoming an Effective Leader, including:

- [DuBrin, A. J., \(2013\). *Leadership: Research findings, practice, and skills*, 7th Edition. Mason, OH: Cengage Learning. ISBN: 9781133435228](#)

FranklinCovey

- [The 4 Imperatives of Great Leaders](#)
- [Paradigms](#)
- [Organizational Trust: Building a High-Trust Organization](#)



- [Land One at a Time](#)
- [Clarifying Your Team's Purpose and Strategy](#)
- [Contribution: Define Your Own Great Purpose at Work](#)
- [Unleashing Your Team's Talent](#)
- [Light the Fire](#)
- [Self-Trust: Increasing Your Credibility and Influence at Work](#)
- [Circle of Influence](#)
- [Blind Spots](#)
- [The Diversity Advantage: Leveraging Differences at Work for Great Results](#)
- [Mauritius: Build a Great Team by Leveraging Diversity](#)
- [The Nature of Synergy](#)
- [It's Not About the Nail](#)
- [Organizational Trust](#)
- [Win-Win Thinking: Create Mutually Beneficial Relationships](#)
- [Empathetic Listening](#)
- [Malice in Dallas](#)
- [Street Hawkers](#)
- [7-Habits Signature: The 7-Habits Jump Start: 4-7](#)
- [WIG Session: Create an Accountability System](#)
- [Win-Win Agreements: Steps to Effective Performance Management](#)
- [Everest: Reaching the Summit as a Team](#)
- [Your Money-Making Model](#)
- [Preventive Policing: Prevent Crises Before They Arise](#)
- [Goal!](#)
- [Your Best Moment](#)
- [Whirlwind](#)
- [Store 334](#)
- [Lead Measures](#)

VitalSource

- [Thompson, A., Peteraf, M., Gamble, J., & Strickland III, A. J. \(2018\). *Crafting and executing strategy* \(21st ed.\). McGraw-Hill Education. ISBN: 978-1-259-73278-2](#)
- [Trevino, L.K., & Nelson, K.A. \(2014\). *Managing business ethics: Straight talk about how to do it right* \(6th ed.\). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. ISBN: 9781118801697](#)

McGraw-Hill Connect

- [Crafting and Executing Strategy: The Quest for Competitive Advantage](#)

Ebook Central E-Books

The following textbooks are available to you as e-texts within this course. You will be directly linked to the specific readings required within the activities that follow.

- [Bogardus, A. \(2012\). *PHR/SPHR—Professional in human resources certification study*](#)



[guide \(4th ed.\) Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. ISBN: 9781118289174.](#)

EBL e-books can be downloaded to your computer or mobile device. Follow the [instructions](#) to download your e-books for offline access.

Note: These e-texts are available to you as part of your program tuition and fees, but you may purchase hard copies at your own expense through a retailer of your choice. If you choose to do so, please use the ISBN listed to ensure that you receive the correct edition.

MindEdge

- [Data Driven Decision Making](#)
- [Change Management and Innovation](#)

WileyPlus with ORION

Contemporary Business, including:

- [Boone, L.E., & Kurtz, D.L. \(2013\). *Contemporary business* \(15th ed.\). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. ISBN: 9781118544266.](#)

Additional Preparation

Final Video Presentation

Task two in the capstone requires a recorded video presentation of your work. You will be using the Panopto video recording system. As part of the task requirements, you will submit your recording for evaluation. Instructions for using this system are included in the course.

The Capstone Excellence Archive

Your final Capstone project should be a project that you will be proud to exhibit in your portfolio. Exemplary work is also eligible for annual Capstone awards selected from projects from all graduates. Western Governors University (WGU) has developed Capstone archives to display final Capstone written work and presentations. When WGU archives your final Capstone documents, these will be made available to current students, mentors, and evaluators after you have graduated. You will be able to determine whether you wish to participate in the Capstone Archive by completing a copy of the **Student Capstone Waiver and Release Form** upon completion of your Capstone. The **Student Capstone Waiver and Release Form** can be found as a file attachment in Taskstream. By participating, your scholarship and effort at the University will be recognized, and you will have the satisfaction of contributing to the advancement of WGU and its students.

Since your final Capstone project may be shared with the WGU academic community, you will want to make sure that this represents your best work and displays rigorous scholarship and practical application of competencies. WGU has taken great care to ensure that safeguards are in place to guard the academic authenticity and the exposure of sensitive information. When



you submit the **Student Capstone Waiver and Release Form**, you agree to remove voluntarily confidential information. This means your own personal details and contact information and information identifying co-workers, organizations, and their contact information.

The Capstone archives may be accessed via your student portal. It is linked under: **Student Support > Assessment Services > Performance Assessments**. You will find both MSML and MBA consulting reports. The requirements are similar and you may use either versions of the report to understand the scope of the project and the level of details required.

Pacing and Topics

This outline suggests a weekly structure to pace your completion for completing your capstone within your last term. It is provided as a suggestion and does not represent a mandatory schedule. Follow the pacing guide carefully to complete the course in the suggested timeframe.

For additional questions, please email MSMLCapstone@wgu.edu.

Week 1

- Complete the MSML Problem Statement Form
- Submit the MSML Problem Statement Form to MSMLCapstone@wgu.edu

Week 2

- Complete and submit Task 1: Proposal with the following forms:
 - MSML Problem Statement Form
 - Student Capstone Waiver and Release Form
 - Human Subject Quiz
 - MSML Capstone Client Verification Form

Week 3

- Begin working with your client for Task 2: Business Report

Weeks 4 and 5

- Continue work with client to develop long-term recommendations that meet the client's needs
- Schedule time with the Writing Center (optional)

Week 6

- Complete and submit Task 2: Business Report

Week 7

- Complete and submit Task 3: Oral Presentation



Week 8

- Complete and submit Task 4: Individual Development Plan
- Final Steps

Note: If you are working with an outside organization (not your employer), if your client requires an Affiliation Agreement, or your project requires an Institution Review Board approval, you may need to plan for additional time. Access to contacts and information may not be as readily available.

Course Instructor Live Calendar

For a calendar of live events, please refer to the Course Instructor Live Calendar.

- [Live Event Calendar](#)

Capstone Overview

This course is designed to prepare you for the MSML Capstone, a performance assessment which requires you to apply competencies from throughout the MSML program by resolving a real-world business challenge using demonstrated leadership capabilities. The capstone is comprised of four tasks.

In your capstone project, you will apply competencies from throughout the MSML program by resolving a real-world business challenge from a leadership perspective. You will demonstrate your competencies while crafting a solution to help your client achieve strategic leadership goals.

MSML Task 1: Proposal

Identify a business challenge that impacts the success of an organization and apply management and leadership theories from the MSML program.

Task 1 must pass evaluation before you begin Task 2. In these tasks, you will demonstrate the ability to analyze and access a business challenge from a leadership perspective in order to help your client achieve strategic leadership goals.

For the purpose of these tasks, a business challenge or goal is an existing problem or opportunity that impacts the success of the overall organization. The challenge or goal should be broad enough that you will be able to apply competencies in management and leadership theories from across the MSML program. It will also need to incorporate at least three of the areas of leadership responsibility listed on the Problem Statement Form.

You will first need to select a client and then start a log to track the amount of time spent with the client. You may choose your current place of employment, a local business, a non-profit, or any operating organization (e.g., government, school district, hospital, online business). Since this is a consulting project, you may not use a business where you have a majority ownership. Contact your potential client—either virtually, on the phone, or in person—to discuss the client's business leadership challenge or goal, and formulate a written statement that describes the challenge or goal in detail.



Identifying a Client

Read the requirements for Tasks 1 and 2. You will need to identify a current business need in an organization. The problem must be large enough that it impacts at least three areas of leadership responsibility in the organization. In analyzing and resolving the problem, you will want to incorporate as many aspects of your MSML program as appropriate. Additionally, you should be able to meet with the organization in order to truly assess its needs and present your finished proposal. Here are some suggestions for getting your creative juices flowing:

Businesses

- current employer
- local company
- family or friend business
- business you frequent often
- online business

Organizations/Nonprofits

- hospitals
- schools
- government offices
- churches
- community groups

Really, the sky is the limit. If it is an operating organization of any type, you can work with it personally; if the business problem is large enough for this final project and the business has been in operation for at least one year; it will probably work.

Identifying a Business Problem

Schedule an appointment to meet with your client. Work together to develop a problem statement for a current problem in the business. Look at the organization holistically and examine the problem from multiple positions to determine the most probable cause. The problem also needs to either be affected by or impact three areas of responsibility indicated on the problem statement form. Refer to the Areas of Responsibility document linked into the Problem Statement Form for a list of acceptable areas to use in the paper.

Client Verification Form (CVF)

You are required to submit a completed **MSML Capstone Client Verification Form** with Task 1. Your Task 1 attempt will fail if the completed and signed CVF is not submitted. If Task 1 is not passed, Task 2 cannot be submitted. This is a legal document and is the only form or document



in which you are required to use your client's real name.

It is the policy of WGU that student capstone projects should not be based upon, and should not include, any proprietary or classified information or material belonging to your employer or any other organization (restricted information) without appropriate authorization.

Students are required to submit the **MSML Capstone Client Verification Form** from this organization as a separate attachment when submitting Task 1. The **MSML Capstone Client Verification Form** provides a template for a letter that you will send to your employer or sponsoring organization, along with the required form that needs to be submitted. The client verification form is a legal document and must include the client's legal name. The form can be found in Taskstream as a file attachment for Task 1.

The **MSML Capstone Client Verification Form** is available in PDF and Word formats. The PDF requires an electronic signature while the Word format requires a hand signature. You may use either form. You may either scan the Word document after you have signed it and then submit it or take a photo with your phone and upload a jpeg of the document to Task 1.

Note: Failure to submit the appropriate documentation, along with your capstone work, will result in a returned submission.

Problem Statement Form and Approval

When you have identified the problem that you are trying to solve, you will fill out the **MSML Problem Statement Form** to document your proposed problem for submittal. This form can be found as a file attachment with the Task 1 instructions in Taskstream. This will help ensure that the problem or need fits the requirements for the capstone project. When the form is complete and you are ready to submit for approval, please email your **MSML Problem Statement Form** to MSMLCapstone@wgu.edu. Within three business days after the business date you submit the Problem Statement form, you will receive an email indicating approval or requiring revisions prior to approval. If needed, course instructors may request a phone conference. You must submit the course-mentor-approved problem statement with your Task 1 submission.

Capstone Waiver Release Form

The **Student Capstone Waiver and Release Form** is the third form required with Task 1 submission. This form will indicate your approval to share your capstone in WGU's archive. The **Student Capstone Waiver and Release Form** can be found as a file attachment for Task 1 in Taskstream. The publish, or do not publish, approval on the **Student Capstone Waiver and Release Form** should align with the client's permission to publish, or not publish as noted in the capstone waiver.

The **Student Capstone Waiver Release Form** is available in PDF and Word formats. The PDF requires an electronic signature. The Word format requires a hand signature. You may either scan the Word document after you have signed it and then submit it or take a photo with your phone and upload a jpeg of the document to Task 1. You may use either form. You will



complete the following activities as part of Task 1:

- complete the **MSML Problem Statement Form**
- submit the **MSML Problem Statement Form** to the course instructors at msmlcapstone@wgu.edu for review
- submit the **MSML Problem Statement Form** indicating course instructor approval
- submit a completed **Student Capstone Waiver and Release Form**
- submit a completed and signed **MSML Capstone Client Verification Form**
- submit the completed **Human Subject Quiz**

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 981.1.1: Capstone**

The graduate integrates and synthesizes competencies from across the degree program and thereby demonstrates the ability to participate in and contribute value to the chosen professional field.

Complete: MSML Capstone Task 1

Complete the following task in Taskstream:

- MSML Capstone Proposal: Task 1

For additional guidance for this task, please refer to the [Task 1](#) tips document.

For details about this performance assessment, see the "Assessment" tab in this course.

MSML Task 2: Business Report

In this task, you will use your passed proposal from Task 1 and work closely with someone in your chosen organization to resolve the business challenge or goal. This individual will become your client. You will work closely with your client by meeting on a regular basis as you develop long-term recommendations that meet the client's needs. You will consult with your client as needed to clarify and guide your work. You will also conduct a final client meeting to present your findings and recommendations.

You will complete the following activities as part of Task 2:

- develop a formal written business report in which you provide recommendations that holistically address the business challenge or goal
- develop an executive summary highlighting the salient points of the business report
- analyze obstacles and root causes
- develop recommendations
- develop an action plan
- create a visual timeline
- provide a log of time spent with the client
- support your work with at least three citations and references



Visual Timeline

Estimating how long it will take to implement a recommendation is crucial for any proposal for clients. Meet with your client to determine needs and a realistic timeline for implementation.

Create a timeline to implement your recommendation. You could use a program like Microsoft Project to create a chart, but a simple table will do as well.

Add your timeline recommendation to Task 2.

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 981.1.1: Capstone**

The graduate integrates and synthesizes competencies from across the degree program and thereby demonstrates the ability to participate in and contribute value to the chosen professional field.

Complete: MSML Capstone Task 2

Carefully read all the requirements for Task 2 and complete the following task in Taskstream:

- MSML Capstone Business Report: Task 2

For additional guidance in this task, please refer to the [Task 2](#) tips document.

For details about this performance assessment, see the "Assessment" tab in this course.

MSML Task 3: Oral Presentation

Business managers and leaders are frequently required to present information in a variety of settings. Professional presentations are critical to your success. For this task, you will prepare a recorded video with a multimedia presentation. You will summarize how you applied competencies learned throughout the MSML program to your client's business challenge. You will explain how these competencies will help you succeed in your chosen career and summarize your plans for continued professional development.

You will complete the following activities as part of Task 3:

- prepare a digitally recorded multimedia video presentation
- discuss core competencies from your MSML program
- analyze your Task 2 experience through applied competencies, strengths, obstacles, and relevance to your profession
- discuss your personal professional development in terms of lessons learned and professional goals

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 981.1.1: Capstone**



The graduate integrates and synthesizes competencies from across the degree program and thereby demonstrates the ability to participate in and contribute value to the chosen professional field.

Practice: Using Panopto

You will be using the Panopto video recording system. As part of the task requirements, you will submit your recording URL for evaluation.

Note: If you have not referred for the performance assessment to gain access to your tasks, you will not be able to utilize Panopto to record your video. The video recorder button will not display, and you will not have access to the correct course folders. Please refer for the assessment prior to attempting to use Panopto.

Panopto instructions and resources are located in the "File Attachments" and "Web Links" sections of the task directions. Contact [WGU E-Care](#) for additional support if you have any questions or concerns associated with using Panopto.

When you are ready to use Panopto, go to the following website, log in using your WGU student portal credentials, and download/install the recorder:

- [Panopto](#)

After you have installed Panopto, you should practice recording yourself giving your presentation until you are confident with your skills using the tool.

Complete: MSML Capstone Task 3

Carefully read all the requirements for Task 3 and complete the following task in Taskstream:

- MSML Capstone Oral Presentation: Task 3

For additional guidance in this task, please refer to the [Task 3](#) tips document.

For details about this performance assessment, see the "Assessment" tab in this course.

MSML Task 4: Individual Development Plan

In this task you will create an individual development plan. An individual development plan invites you to think holistically about the strengths you are developing and how these strengths might be applied, represented, and offered in service to your aspirations in the career field. You will demonstrate the competencies you have studied to comprehend and explain your personal strengths and present evidence of these strengths in a positive light for potential employers.

Now is the time to reflect on the capstone simulation, project, and MSML curriculum. Consider the following:

- how the artifacts and portfolio items that you will compile demonstrate your leadership and management abilities



- how you used this knowledge and these skills to develop a solution to a business challenge or need
- how you have grown and changed through experiences in your MSML program
- the essential core competencies that you have developed throughout your journey
- areas that may not be strengths yet and how you can continue in your professional development to supplement these skills

You will complete the following activities as part of Task 4:

- write a biographical sketch
- explain your leadership philosophy
- summarize the outlook of work in your chosen career field
- create or update your professional résumé
- provide three exhibits that will comprise your professional portfolio

This topic addresses the following competency:

- **Competency 981.1.1: Capstone**

The graduate integrates and synthesizes competencies from across the degree program and thereby demonstrates the ability to participate in and contribute value to the chosen professional field.

This topic highlights the following objectives:

- The graduate evaluates theories of leadership as they relate to personal leadership style.
- The graduate selects appropriate leadership strategies to enhance motivation, development and achievement of others.
- The graduate communicates effectively, both in writing and speaking, within an organizational setting.
- The graduate identifies the strategic process and the execution of a strategic plan.

Complete: MSML Capstone Task 4

Complete the following task in Taskstream:

- MSML Capstone Individual Development Plan: Task 4

For additional guidance in this task, please refer to the [Task 4](#) tips document.

For details about this performance assessment, see the "Assessment" tab in this course.

Final Steps

Congratulations on completing the activities in this course!