This course supports the assessment for the IT Capstone in which there are two tasks:

- Task 1 – Capstone Release Forms
- Task 2 – Formal Report

The course covers 1 competency and represents 4 competency units.

Introduction

Overview
The capstone project is your final performance assessment. In it you demonstrate your ability to integrate and synthesize competencies from domains across your degree program. The foundation of the capstone is the solution of a real problem. With the permission of their employers, some candidates have used work-related projects as the basis for their capstones. The project has four phases. Some phases will take longer than others, and part of your job here is to produce realistic time estimates.

You have previously developed a proposal for your capstone project when you worked on the technical writing assessment. Now you will complete the project, finalize the report, and prepare the other documentation. **If you have not yet completed the Technical Writing course, do not proceed with the Software Development Capstone course.**

Depending on your project, you could finish quickly or over a span of several weeks. If you are importing a project from your work, it may be that only a week or two of tweaking is needed to bring it into step with capstone project requirements. If you are working from scratch, you may need the full eight to nine weeks. Under no circumstances should you undertake, from scratch, a project that you expect to take longer than nine weeks to execute prior to writing the capstone report. Keep in mind that the capstone report requires that, as you proceed with the project, you maintain the supporting material for the requirements in an organized way. The extra effort needed to do that now will save time later.

Watch the following video for an introduction to this course:

*Note: To download this video, right-click the following link and choose "Save as...":* [download video](#).

Competencies

This course provides guidance to help you demonstrate the following 1 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.
Writing your Capstone Report

Explore the links on the left in order to access all of the resources and direction you need to prepare your Capstone Report.

Helpful Resources for Completing This Course

Capstone Template
Please access this From Proposal to Capstone document to help you build your final capstone report.

APA Formatting With Purdue OWL
Successful completion of this course requires an understanding and application of proper APA formatting. Please review the Purdue OWL APA Formatting and Style Guide for formatting guidelines and solutions for a range of citation types. If you find yourself in need of additional information on APA formatting, you are welcome to purchase a copy of the most recent edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association at your own expense.

WGU Writing Center
If you need help with any part of the writing or revision process, contact the Center for Writing Excellence (CWE). Whatever your needs—writing anxiety, grammar, general college writing concerns, or even ESL language-related writing issues—the CWE is available to help you. The CWE offers personalized individual sessions and weekly group webinars. For an appointment, please e-mail writingcenter@wgu.edu.

WGU Library
The WGU Library is available online to WGU students 24 hours a day.

For more information about using the WGU Library, view the following videos on The WGU Channel:

- WGU: Accessing the Library
- WGU Library: Finding Articles, Books, & E-Reserves

The Capstone Archives

Western Governors University has established the Capstone Archive for students to examine capstone projects to aid them in preparation of this culminating degree task. WGU has taken great care to ensure that safeguards are in place to secure the academic authenticity and prohibit the exposure of sensitive information within these examples, and you must adhere to WGU’s code of conduct to not copy others’ work. These two Archives will be of most value to you in developing your capstone: the Model Capstone Archive and the Capstone Excellence Archive.

The Model Capstone Archive contains a few solid examples of student work in each of the current capstone models upon which students can pattern their work. Besides final documents, it often contains preliminary exhibits such as project plans, proposals, permission forms, contextual material, and so forth.
The Capstone Excellence Archive contains a growing number of capstones from each College that were selected as exemplars of excellence in various degree areas because they represent top work in their expression of ingenuity, exhibition of mastery, or creation of exceptional value to others. These exemplars only contain final documents, mainly of current capstone models. If you would like to have your capstone selected for this award please speak with your Capstone Course Instructor.

Completing Your Capstone

Executing Your Proposal

In the Technical Writing course, you constructed a proposal for the capstone project. Now it is time to carry out your proposal. It is rare that projects go exactly according to plan. Keep an eye on the execution so you can make note of any departures; you can learn a great deal from what does not go as planned. Review the plan with any parties who have a stake in it; you may find a need to revise it.

Execute the plan you devised in the Technical Writing course.

1. Obtain new permission to proceed with any part of the project related to your employment.
2. Execute the plan, revised or original.
3. Make explicit revisions to the plan.
4. Keep accurate notes on the process:
   • What changes were made to the plan, and why?
   • What went better than planned?
   • What was more difficult than expected?
   • Was there anything that was not possible to complete?
5. Justify departures from standard practice (e.g., If you could not construct a flowchart in its standard format, why not?).
6. Keep your mentor and the course instructor apprised of anything that you consider significant in the execution of your plan.

Collating Deliverables

Prepare the planned deliverables and documentation as they occur in the course of execution.

- Obtain your employer’s permission to include any deliverables or documents that arise from your employment, even if the project itself does not.
- Include project documentation for use by others (e.g., user manuals or software documentation). These may not need to adhere to APA format.
- Use appropriate software to construct visuals.
- Use appropriate software to construct documentation.
- Properly label all visuals (exhibits, tables, figures, etc.).

Writing Phase

This phase could go quickly or take up to a month to complete; if a project imported from your employment only needs minor changes to align with capstone project requirements, you may only need a week or two for writing. You should not need more than four weeks for writing.
Write Capstone Report Introduction

The capstone report introduction (suggested length of five to eight pages) is an overview of the project. Discuss the actual development, summarize the rationale, outline the systems analysis of your project, and review other work done in the same area (literature review). Some of this will represent a restatement of work that has already been done, but much of it will be new content, written to reflect the fact that your project is done.

The introduction should open with a description of your project, followed by a summary of the actual project development. To put your project into a larger context, you will restate the review of other work (literature review) from your capstone proposal with an expansion called for from the actual development of the project. Finally, the introduction closes with a discussion of the project’s rationale and the systems analysis you performed to arrive at the deliverables.

Review Capstone Project Goals and Objectives Section

Review the goals and objectives (suggested length of three to five pages), describing each in detail. Explain how you did or did not achieve them. Goals and objectives are not always technical in nature. Some of them will reflect the business or organizational unit goals.

Organize this section by individual goal and objective. For each goal and objective, explain how your project succeeded or failed. Your list of goals and objectives will come from your capstone proposal, although you may add to the list if your project identified unanticipated goals and objectives.

Discuss Capstone Project Plan and Timelines

Review your experience (suggested length of three to five pages) in using your project plan to develop the capstone project. You will provide a plausible explanation of why you did or did not meet stated timelines.

Organize this part in one of two ways: (1) list the milestones consecutively, and describe why they were or were not met; or (2) organize this section by deliverable, with a discussion of how each was or was not provided on time.

Discuss Project Development

Provide a credible and supported explanation (suggested length of three to five pages) of what the project accomplished. Discuss problems encountered, modifications made to the project plan, and reasons for those modifications. Also, address unanticipated requirements. Finally, discuss actual and potential effects of your project, developing a set of conclusions about the project’s success and effectiveness.

Project Assembly

Depending on the project, assembling your work into a presentable package should not take
more than two weeks, even if you began from scratch. Add to that a week for evaluation, and you should be all done by week 18.

Coversheet
The cover sheet should contain the following information:

- project name
- your name
- your degree program
- your mentor's name

The template that you used for your Technical Writing Assessment (Capstone Proposal) includes the coversheet template with the required fields to be filled in.

Additional Document Preparation
Prepare any other documents that are required (e.g., table of contents, bibliography, references, appendices) to complete your capstone report. You will likely have developed each section of your report as separate documents. However, other sections may need preparation before you can pull all of them together. Virtually all word-processing software will generate a table of contents if you have used named styles in your document.

Other sections that may need preparation include the bibliography of works cited in your capstone proposal and any appendices that your proposal requires.

Putting it all Together

- At this point, your work is perhaps a collection of individual parts. Put all of your project parts together as the template indicates. List files from other programs as appendices to submit for grading.
- Review all sections of the capstone report for language, APA format, etc.
- Make sure that you have a backup of the final report, including all attachments.
- Compile everything into a ZIP file and submit your Capstone Report task in Taskstream.
- In the event that your capstone project is deficient, you will get it back with feedback for revision. Otherwise, your Degree Plan receives a "Pass."