This course supports the assessments for DKT2. The course represents 3 competency units.

Introduction

Congratulations on completing your Written Capstone Project!

This job aid presents a series of activities that will walk you through what is required of you for the oral defense of your professional project. Your oral defense consists of a formal presentation and answering questions about your Capstone. The oral defense is conducted via a teleconference webinar with the Capstone Facilitator/Evaluator. In preparation you are required to prepare a multimedia presentation (e.g., PowerPoint, Keynote, Google Doc, Open Office, etc.) that outlines your project. In the presentation, you will describe the research project that you have undertaken. You should tie it to the literature review, as well as detail the problem you investigated, state and answer your research questions, describe the methodology you used, present the data you collected, describe the results of your data analysis, summarize your conclusions, and describe strengths and weaknesses of your project. The actual task prompts can be seen below. Consult your assigned Capstone Evaluator if you have any questions or concerns.

You will be assigned a Capstone Facilitator/Evaluator when you have been actually enrolled in the Capstone. Please plan on working with your assigned Capstone Facilitator/Evaluator to complete and pass the final Written Capstone before scheduling your Oral Capstone Defense. You will probably be able to successfully present your Oral Capstone if you complete and pass the Written Capstone by the 15th of your final month. However, this can only be accomplished if you submit and pass all of the Oral Capstone-related tasks and have a dry run scheduled (with webcam) by the 25th of the month. Requests for the Oral Capstone Defense appointment cannot be accommodated unless these criteria have been met.

The Capstone requires that you write academically at the graduate level, adhering to APA and articulation standards. Your Capstone is the culminating project of your degree program. Once your Capstone project is archived, its artifacts will become viewable to other students, faculty, administrators, and accreditors. Thus, you should make sure it represents your best work. Even though APA will not be as central to developing a multimedia presentation and its oral defense, still you should remember to use APA citations and formatting as much as possible as you prepare these items.

First Steps

Once you complete you Capstone Written Report, your Capstone Facilitator/Evaluator will contact you to set up a time to discuss the requirements of the Capstone Oral Defense. At that time, you can ask about the presentation length, date, and time. Prior to that phone call, read through this job aid and this task so you have an idea of what to expect. You may also seek guidance from the Graduate Nursing Capstone Community Facilitator.

Preparing the Multimedia Presentation
The oral defense PowerPoint presentation of your Capstone project should be comprised of 20 to 25 slides. Align your slides as closely as possible to the evaluation rubric. Initially, it would be appropriate to present an overview of your research project. Explain the process that you went through to develop your topic and research questions. Contextual factors related to your sample selection and research environment would be appropriate. Discuss your methodology, data-gathering process and analysis. Other elements to include could focus on obstacles you encountered as part of the Capstone process and strategies that you used to overcome them. Include the ways you addressed validity and reliability. Format your slides consistently. The principle of less is more applies to the content of your slides. Content should be limited to significant bulleted items that will be expanded upon during your discussion. The use of images including charts, graphs, and tables can be effective tools during the discussion of your findings. The entire oral defense should take less than an hour. The presentation of the slideshow is typically completed within 45 minutes. The remaining 15 minutes consists of Capstone Facilitator/Evaluator observations and questions and your responses to those questions.

Task Instructions
Prepare a multimedia presentation (e.g., PowerPoint, Keynote) of talking points about your project (suggested length of 20-25 slides and approximately 45 minutes) by doing the following:

A. Present an overview of your Capstone Project.
B. Explain the process you went through to develop your project.
   1. Discuss why you chose your project.
   2. Explain how your project fits in to the existing body of knowledge for your field.
C. Discuss the methods and outcomes of your project by doing the following:
   1. Outline any special strategies or methodologies you used.
   2. Summarize your results and conclusions.
D. Discuss the challenges you faced in completing this project.
   1. Outline any issues or obstacles you encountered.
   2. Explain the strategies you used to address these challenges.
      a. Evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies in allowing you to complete your project.
      b. Predict how you could apply these strategies to other projects you develop.
E. Discuss the weaknesses of your project.
   1. Explain how you identified these weaknesses.
   2. Explain what revisions you could make to the project to address these weaknesses in the future.
F. Discuss the strengths of your project.
   1. Explain how you identified these strengths.
   2. Predict how you could apply these strengths to other projects you develop.
G. Provide recommendations for future study in your field.
H. Discuss how you can apply what you learned from your Capstone project in your professional work environment.
I. Complete the Capstone Waiver and Release Form.

Oral Capstone Defense
Before you work with your Capstone Evaluator to schedule times for a dry run and then to present your oral defense, you are required to have a web camera. Such cameras are usually included in laptop computers, or you may have already purchased one that will suffice. The dry run will determine if there are technical problems. If you do not own a web camera, you can request that a loaner camera be shipped to you by submitting the Capstone Oral Defense Webcam Loan form. For additional support with ordering, please contact the Assessment Delivery Department at assessmentdel@wgu.edu or 1-888-287-0310.

Contact your Capstone Evaluator with available times for your “dry run.” This should take about 20 minutes. At the dry run your evaluator will make sure your equipment is working, conduct a recording of the Introduction, and share with you basic operations of the webinar platform for your actual defense to run smoothly.

At the dry run (or shortly thereafter) you will schedule the full Capstone Oral Defense. You should plan that the session will take from 45 minutes to one hour. It will be conducted as a webinar, using Adobe Connect, so you may consider if there are others who would like to observe the session. For example, your mentor may want to attend; colleagues, or fellow students, may also wish to attend. These individuals will be spectators and are not expected to participate in the defense. Coordinate with your Capstone Evaluator in sending out invitations and setting up the Adobe Connect session. The Capstone Evaluator may want to receive your multimedia presentation in advance to upload it into Adobe, or she or he may simply give you “presentation” rights to run it from your own computer.

Now that you have the multimedia presentation ready, it can guide you in organizing your discussion of the capstone and its presentation. Rehearse the oral defense presentation, and time it to be less than 30 minutes long. This will allow time for a session introduction by the Capstone Evaluator and for you to respond to questions afterwards. Your Capstone Oral Defense will be recorded, if you agree, to be viewed in the Capstone Archive. So, anticipate that the Capstone Evaluator will begin the session telling you not to mention specific individuals, locations, or organizational names during the defense and will ask your permission for the recording. This “Introduction” needs to be recorded with you present on web camera for identity verification, whether or not you agree to have your Capstone archived.

Being prepared will make the presentation a positive and rewarding experience. You can confidently share all aspects of your project to an appreciative audience. Expect that the Capstone Evaluator will ask questions, but mainly to probe into areas of interest and to help you demonstrate the competencies of your degree program.

The Capstone Archives

Western Governors University (WGU) has developed Capstone Archives to display final Capstone written work and presentations. When WGU archives your final Capstone documents, these documents will be made available to current students, future students, mentors, evaluators, and accreditors 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 Capstone Waiver and Release Form at the conclusion of your Capstone Oral Defense Task. By participating, your
scholarship and effort at WGU will be recognized, and you will have the satisfaction of contributing to the advancement of WGU and its students.

Since your final Capstone Project will be shared with the WGU academic community, you should make sure it represents your best work—rigorous scholarship, research, and pedagogy. 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 Capstone Release Form, you agree to voluntarily remove confidential information. This includes not only your own personal details and contact information, but also information identifying co-workers, organizations, and their contact information.

Here is further information about how your final Capstone documents are protected in the Capstone Archives.

You will want to go to the Model Capstone Archive to see examples of competent student work in your own program that represent some variety in the way students approach project requirements. Some of the materials are artifacts produced along the way to the final Capstone materials so you can see what is involved during the process you are about to undertake.

You can also search the Comprehensive Capstone Archive to examine the final artifacts from Capstones across the University that may be in research topics in which you are interested. Please beware that many of these did not follow the model outlined in this course of study.

Feedback

If you have any feedback on this Job Aid, please send it to Dr. Tori Canillas-Dufau at tcanillas@wgu.edu.