Your competence will be assessed as you complete the IT Management Capstone Project performance assessment for this course. This course is 4 CUs and may take up to 8 weeks to complete.

**Introduction**

**Overview**
Welcome to the Undergraduate Business Capstone Course! In today’s business environment, there is a real need for strong managers who have a grasp of the various aspects of business planning, and know how to communicate an effective business plan.

This course is your culminating experience in your business degree program. You have an opportunity to synthesize your learning from all your business coursework.

**Capstone Pre-requisites**

It is highly recommended that you begin your capstone after you have completed all of your other coursework. It is required that the capstone be in your last term. If you have been inaccurately placed in this capstone course, please contact your program mentor for additional assistance.

**Capstone Overview**
The Undergraduate Business Capstone requires you to create a business plan for a hypothetical company, assigned by your degree program. For this performance assessment, you will be required to demonstrate the integration and synthesis of competencies in all domains required for your degree program. In conjunction with your personal experience and background, you have developed many competencies as you have moved through the various assessments in your degree program. Now is your opportunity to demonstrate your mastery of these competencies in the culminating capstone assessment.

**Getting Started**
For an overview of the capstone task expectations, watch the Getting Started video in the Course Tips. In this course, you will create an executive and company summary, a market analysis, a market strategy, an implementation strategy, financial statements, and a financial report.

Within each topic, you will review the available learning resources and watch a corresponding video to help you prepare to write each section of your capstone. Additional videos, cohorts, and live sessions are available to help you prepare for each section. Use the Course Chatter to read responses to questions that you may have and to ask questions about your course requirements. To demonstrate competency you will complete a performance assessment. Your final deliverable will be a business plan for a hypothetical start-up company.

**Cohorts Sign up**
Cohorts provide additional structure and support for the challenging aspects of this course. In a cohort you receive specific homework assignments and meet online with mentors and students regularly to discuss the challenging topics.

Watch the following introduction for this course:

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, course instructors enjoy and take pride in helping students become reflective learners, problem solvers, and critical thinkers. Course instructors are excited to hear from you and are 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 begin. Course instructors are fully committed to your success!

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 are required 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 or acquire other resources independently. Read the full instructions provided to ensure that you have access to all of your resources in a timely manner.

Automatically Enrolled Resources

You can access the learning resources listed in this section by clicking on the links provided throughout the course. You may be prompted to log in to the WGU student portal to access the resources. Additionally, you can access any of the learning resources that you have used
VitalSource E-Texts
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.


*Note: These e-texts are available to you as part of your program tuition and fees, but you may purchase a hard copy at your own expense through VitalSource or a retailer of your choice. If you choose to do so, please use the ISBN listed to ensure that you receive the correct edition. The following sites provide instruction on how to create a VitalSource account, use features such as downloading your e-texts for offline use, and purchase a print-on-demand option, if available.*

- VitalSource Navigational Video
- Print-On-Demand Option

Additional Preparations
There are many different learning tools available to you within your course in addition to the learning resources already discussed. Take the time to familiarize yourself with them and determine how best to fit them into your learning process.

Download the business plan and financial plan templates. You are required to utilize the provided "Business Plan Template" and "Financial Plan Template" in creating your business plan. These templates are located in the "File Attachments" section of the Taskstream Capstone Instructions. If the provided WGU templates are not utilized for your completed and submitted work, your work will automatically be returned to you without being evaluated.

Topics and Pacing
The topics and pacing guide suggests a weekly structure to pace your completion of learning activities and assessments. It is provided as a suggestion and does not represent a mandatory schedule. Follow the topics and pacing carefully to complete the course in the suggested timeframe.

Week 1:

- Complete Section B of the Assessment
  - Preparing for Success
  - Selecting Your Hypothetical Company
  - Complete Title Page and Table of Contents
  - Concepts of a Company Summary
  - Write a Company Summary

Week 2:
Selecting Your Hypothetical Company

In this section, you will determine a hypothetical company for your capstone business plan. This will give you an opportunity to think through the process of a company start-up as an entrepreneur—the process of beginning your own business. While some of the issues to consider may vary from industry to industry, the concepts you will work with here are applicable to any business you might be interested in establishing as you move through your career.

The capstone requires you to write a business plan for a hypothetical company. The business plan scenario is assigned by your degree program, as found in the "Select Your Hypothetical Company" section.
Company” topic in this course. As you select a hypothetical company for your capstone business plan, you will need to ensure that the company you have chosen meets the requirements outlined for your degree program.

**Select Your Hypothetical Company**

When you have completed this section, you will have selected a hypothetical company for your capstone business plan that meets the requirements outlined for your degree program.

Selecting a hypothetical company is the essential first step in preparing your capstone business plan. Once you have successfully selected a hypothetical company for your capstone business, you will write a business plan for your company. Writing a business plan will not only provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate the competencies you have mastered through the completion of your degree program at WGU, but also provide a real-world setting that will enable you to be a more well-rounded, contributing employee in your current and future organizations.

**Selecting Your Hypothetical Company**

Develop a business plan for a start-up company that sells computer services, equipment, or software. You can select the type of product(s) that the company will offer. The product(s) can be a real product or a potential product.

*Note: All students are expected to follow the subject guidelines above. If, however, a student is in a position to create a business plan for a potentially "real" company or enterprise that he/she may be involved in or plans to be involved in, an exception to the subject guidelines above may be allowed. To discuss this possibility, contact the Capstone course instructors. Approval of an exception must be given by the Capstone course instructors prior to starting on the capstone.*

**Title Page and Table of Contents**

You will complete a title page and table of contents for your capstone business plan utilizing the required business plan template (pages 1 and 2 respectively).

**Complete a Title Page and Table of Contents**

Once you have selected a hypothetical company for your capstone assessment, you will start by creating a title page for your capstone business plan. Next, you will create a table of contents. This is your opportunity to ensure the organization of your business plan will allow the reader to follow and identify the various sections of your business plan. After your project is complete, you will go back to the table of contents and update the fields (i.e., page numbers and sections) to match your project. You will need to ensure that your final project contains each of the required business plan sections outlined in Taskstream.

**Title Page**

Craft a title page for your hypothetical company.

**Company Summary, Part I**

The activities for this section will help prepare you to write the company summary for your capstone business plan.
Concepts of a Company Summary

One of the first executive decisions business owners have to make is determining what type of legal form will best meet the needs of their new organization. As you develop the company summary for your hypothetical business plan, you will provide an explanation of which legal form you have chosen and why it is most appropriate for your organization. This exercise will help you build upon the business law competencies you have developed thus far, as well as gain a greater appreciation for the vital role these concepts play in our everyday world.

Choosing the Right Business

View the recorded video:

- Section B: Company Summary

Read the following from the **Successful Business Plan: Secrets & Strategies** text:

- Chapter 1: "The Successful Business" pages 1—11
- Chapter 5: "Company Description" pages 67—83

For additional review of the possible legal entities, please view the following website:

- Legal Forms of Business

Company Summary, Part II

The activities for this section will result in you writing your final company summary for your capstone business plan.

Write a Company Summary

Now is your opportunity to demonstrate the competence you have developed as you write a company summary for your business plan. Employees who have the ability to gather relevant information and succinctly provide an articulate summary of that information can be an asset to any organization.

Application: Company Summary

Now that you have completed your study of the concepts necessary to develop a company summary for a business plan, it is time to write your own company summary for your capstone business plan.

Complete the following section in Taskstream:

- Section B: Company Summary

For details about Section B, see the **Assessment** tab in this course.

Market Analysis, Part I

The activities for this section will help you prepare to write the market analysis for your capstone
business plan.

**Concepts of a Market Analysis**

As suggested in chapters 2, 6, 7 and 8 in the Successful Business Plan: Secrets & Strategies text, businesses should provide a personal connection to its customers. When you sell products or services, you sell to one person at a time. Most customers like being treated like individuals, rather than members of a group. This is why the most successful restaurants have an owner or maître d’ who remembers your name and asks about your family or your interests whenever you visit their business. Your market analysis will outline how you plan on providing that connection with your customers on an individual basis, as well as provide you with a relevant opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of these critical marketing concepts.

**Writing your Marketing Plan**

View the recorded video:

- **Section C: Market Analysis**

Read the following chapter from the *Successful Business Plan: Secrets & Strategies* text:

- **Chapter 2: "Getting Your Plan Started"** pages 17—32
- **Chapter 6: "Industry Analysis and Trends"** pages 85—100
- **Chapter 7: "Target Market"** pages 103—120
- **Chapter 8: "The Competition"** pages 121—137

**Market Analysis, Part II**

The activities for this section will result in you writing your final market analysis for your capstone business plan.

The market analysis section of a business plan demonstrates that the owner of the company has knowledge of its potential customers.

**Write Market Analysis**

Now is your opportunity to demonstrate the competence you have developed in applying the concepts of marketing analysis to a real-world business situation. This is just the type of application you will encounter today in businesses of every size and shape.

**Application: Market Analysis**

Now that you have completed your study of the concepts necessary to develop a market analysis for a business plan, it is time to write your own market analysis for your capstone business plan.

Complete the following section in Taskstream:

- **Section C: Market Analysis**

For details about Section C, see the **Assessment** tab in this course.
In addition, you may find the following links on marketing concepts helpful as you work through creating your market analysis:

- The Marketing Mix and the 4 Ps
- The Marketing Mix

**Market Strategy, Part I**

The activities for this section will help you prepare to write the market strategy for your capstone business plan.

The market strategy section of a business plan is an integral component of a business plan. It defines how the organization will successfully engage customers, prospects, and competitors in the market arena.

**Concepts of a Market Strategy**

Each year there are hundreds of innovative product ideas that fail in the marketplace. Oftentimes that failure is a result of a faulty marketing and sales strategy, or maybe not having any type of strategy in place at all. This is your opportunity to develop not only your understanding of this topic, but also your competence in applying these marketing principles to an actual business setting.

**Industry Analysis and Trends**

**Market Strategy, Part II**

The activities for this section will result in you writing your final market strategy for your capstone business plan.

The market strategy section of a business plan is an integral component of a business plan, defining how the organization will successfully engage customers, prospects, and competitors in the market arena.

**Write Market Strategy**

Through the completion of previous assessments in your degree program, you became acquainted with key marketing concepts. You now have the opportunity to demonstrate the marketing competencies you previously acquired as you utilize these concepts in helping you construct an effective marketing strategy for your hypothetical company.

**Application: Market Strategy**

Now that you have completed your study of the concepts necessary to develop a market strategy for a business plan, it is time to write your own market strategy for your capstone business plan.

Complete the following section in Taskstream:

- Section D: Market Strategy
For details about Section D, see the Assessment tab in this course.
Implementation Strategy

The activities for this section will help you prepare to write the implementation strategy for your capstone business plan.

Concepts of an Implementation Strategy

If you could start your own business, what type of business would it be? Many of us have thought at one time or another how exciting it would be to be a business owner and promote a product or service of our own. Taking the first steps of making these initial ideas become a reality includes developing a business plan outlining your strategy for your potential business. One of the vital factors of a business plan in a real-world setting is the implementation strategy, more specifically how you plan on actually launching your business.

The Plan to Launch your Business

View the recorded video:

- Section E: Implementation Strategy

Read the following from the Successful Business Plan: Secrets & Strategies text:

- Chapter 15: "Development, Milestones, and Exit Plan" pages 265—281

Write Implementation Strategy

Now it is your opportunity to demonstrate the competence you have gained by developing a real-world strategy outlining how you plan on making the idea of your hypothetical company come to fruition. Often times, business owners do not think through to this part of their business strategy and are too general in their goals. To ensure the launch of your company is as successful as possible, you will need to provide detailed dates and goals for implementation. This is just the type of application you will encounter today in new businesses of every size and shape.

Application: Implementation Strategy

Now that you have completed your study of the concepts necessary to develop an implementation strategy for a business plan, it is time to write your own implementation strategy for your capstone business plan.

Complete the following section in Taskstream:

- Section E: Implementation Strategy

For details about Section E, see the Assessment tab in this course.

Financial Statements and Projections, Part I

The activities for this section will help you prepare to write the financial statements and projections for your capstone business plan.
The financial analysis is the most concrete, practical part of the business plan, and is the section that potential investors are the most interested in reading. In this section, you will translate your ideas into figures and demonstrate both your practical planning skills and the potential profitability of your business. You will calculate and develop the financial statements and projections for the first year of business.

**Concepts of Financial Statements and Projections**
What do you analyze when looking at a potential investment? You may assess how sound the investment appears to be or what past returns on a particular investment have been. Although there is a certain level of risk associated with any investment, potential investors for a new business need to be supplied with financial statements that provide them with an accurate financial snapshot so they can decide whether your business will succeed and, in turn, be worth their investment. This is your opportunity to develop not only your understanding of financial statements and projections, but also your competence in applying these principles to a variety of business settings, including your own career and employment.

**The Financials**

View the recorded videos:

- Section F1: Financial Statements & Projections
- Section F2: Financial Statements & Projections

In addition, you have the option to view the following videos:

- Accounting 101: The Income Statement
- Accounting 101: The Balance Sheet

Read the following from the *Successful Business Plan: Secrets & Strategies* text:

- Chapter 16: "The Financials" pages 283—326

Pay particular attention to how you can determine your profit and loss forecast.

**Financial Statements and Projections, Part II**

The activities for this section will result in you completing your final financial statements and projections for your capstone business plan.

The financial analysis is the most concrete, practical part of the business plan, and is the section that potential investors are the most interested in reading. In this section, you will translate your ideas into figures and demonstrate both your practical planning skills and the potential profitability of your business. You will calculate and develop the financial statements and projections for the first year of business.

**Write Financial Statements and Projections**

Through the completion of previous assessments in your degree program, you were exposed to financial statements and the important role they play in providing critical information for stakeholders. Now you have the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge you have acquired
by developing the financial statements and projections for the first year of business for your own hypothetical company.

Application: Financial Statements and Projections

Now that you have completed your study of the concepts necessary to develop the financial statements and projections for a business plan, it is time to develop your own financial statements and projections for your capstone business plan.

You will need to utilize the required "Business Plan Financial Template" for this section.

Complete the following section in Taskstream:

- Section F: Financial Statements and Projections

For details about Section F, see the Assessment tab in this course.

Financial Report, Part I

Congratulations on completing the activities in this course! This section will guide you through the assessment process.

Concepts of Financial Reports

Just look at the news today and you will see the importance of accurate financial reports for potential investors. The keystone of a business plan is the financial report provided for investors. This is your opportunity to develop not only your understanding of financial reports, but also your competence in applying these principles to a variety of business settings.

Providing Financial Reports to Investors

Read the following from the Successful Business Plan: Secrets & Strategies text:

- Chapter 16: "The Financials" page 283—326

Potential Sources of Money to Start or Expand Your Small Business

Read the following from the Successful Business Plan: Secrets & Strategies text:

- Chapter 19: "Looking for Money" pages 347—366

Review the following concept and complete the Assumption Sheet on page 268:

- "Assumptions"

Review the following article discussing assumptions:

- Establishing Reasonable Planning Assumptions

Financial Report, Part II
The activities for this section will result in you completing your final financial report for your capstone business plan.

**Write Financial Report**

In the real world, financial reports for start-up companies are constructed by making assumptions based on certain premises. Financial reports play a vital role in the future of a company. It is now time for you to develop a financial report for your hypothetical company based on the assumptions you have gathered. This is your opportunity to demonstrate the competence you have gained as you develop an accurate financial report for your hypothetical company.

View the recorded video:

- [Section G: Financial Report](#)

**Application: Financial Report**

Now that you have completed your study of the concepts necessary to develop the financial report for a business plan, it is time to develop your own financial report for your capstone business plan.

Complete the following section in Taskstream:

- Section G: Financial Report

For details about Section G, see the **Assessment** tab in this course.

**Executive Summary**

The activities for this section will assist you in writing the executive summary for your capstone business plan.

An executive summary is a brief synopsis at the beginning of a business plan that highlights the key facts, issues, and conclusions. This summary is the doorway to the rest of the business plan. It is highly recommended to write the executive summary last so you have a clearer idea of what your plan contains.

**Write an Executive Summary**

What persuades a potential investor to actually read a business plan? Most investors require a written business plan before even considering a business proposal. An executive summary is often what potential investors read first. If it effectively provides a succinct overview of the key facts, issues, and conclusions, it will encourage an investor to read the business plan in its entirety.

Now is your opportunity to demonstrate the real-world competence you have developed by creating an executive summary that presents that you have an understanding of your business in our current economic environment, the key issues your company will face, and how you plan to ultimately be successful.

**The Successful Business Plan**
View the recorded video:

- **Section A: Executive Summary**

Read the following from the *Successful Business Plan: Secrets & Strategies* text:

- **Chapter 4: “Executive Summary”** pages 53—66
- **Chapter 5: “Company Description”** pages 67—83

**Application: Executive Summary**

Now that you have completed your study of concepts necessary to understand in order to develop an executive summary, you will write your own executive summary for your capstone business plan.

Complete the following section in Taskstream:

- Section A: Executive Summary

For details about Section A, see the Assessment tab in this course.

**Final Steps**

Congratulations on completing the activities in this course! This section will guide you through the assessment process.

**Assessment Information**

The activities in this course have prepared you to complete the IT Management Capstone Project performance assessment. If you have not already completed the assessment, you will do so now.

**Review of Major Points**

As you prepare to complete your capstone business plan and this course, you have had the opportunity to demonstrate your mastery of competencies gained through your entire degree program at WGU. During your career and varied work experiences you may come to an opportunity that would allow you to become an entrepreneur and begin and form your own business.

The competencies you have developed through this course provide you with the knowledge and skills to do just that: review, analyze, and implement the steps and decision points essential to any start-up company. This competence has been demonstrated as you have completed each of the following sections of the capstone business plan:

- Title Page and Table of Contents
- Executive Summary
- Company Summary
- Market Analysis
- Market Strategy
Finalize your Document

Review your completed business plan carefully in conjunction with the scoring rubric located in Taskstream to ensure you have covered each of the required sections. Remember each of the required business plan sections must be bolded and labeled as they are in the outline and rubric so that each section can be clearly identified by the grader (i.e., A1. Executive Summary-Introduction).

- Review and organize required sections of your capstone business plan.
- Run spell check and remove all green/red lines from the document.
- Check your formatting to make sure that you have used the same format throughout the document.
- Read the finalized business plan closely to ensure your sentences are clear and concise.
- If you used references, make sure that you cite them using APA style.

Accessing Performance Assessment

Navigate to the “Assessment” tab to access the performance assessment.