

A Guide to Writing Your Capstone Proposal*

The clearer you can be at the beginning of your project the easier it will be next spring! ☺

Working Title:

What is your project: an overview? a review? a comparison? an analysis? an artistic production? a creative endeavor? Give your proposed project a clear, concise, descriptive working title.

Note: this is a working title! Keep your working title in mind as you develop each section of your project. Make sure the final title connects with the elements of the project.

Description:

Clearly and concisely tell your readers what your project is, keeping in mind that not all may be familiar with terminology that is unique to your field. Focus your project approach for your readers.

Background and rationale:

Tell your readers why you want to do the work you have proposed. What is the origin of your project? Does it come from

- your coursework?
- an earlier honors opportunity?
- an idea that you have always wanted to pursue?

Objectives of the project:

Objectives can guide you during the project and they can shape the results of your project. To help define your objectives, ask yourself:

- What do I want to understand about this topic that I don't understand now?
- What specific aspects about this topic do I want to learn?
- What do I want to know or be able to do when I complete this project?
- What is my research question?

Methods:

What will you do? How will you do it? List each of your methods individually. Be specific. Describe how you will achieve your objectives (see above). Methods include a description of what you will develop, design, utilize, create, analyze, collect, survey, observe.

Project Result:

The project result is the demonstration of your learning and can take a variety of forms. It can be a:

- creative project (an installation, presentation, or research portfolio)
- research project (a scholarly paper)

- community service project (a report, excursion, or research portfolio)
- internship/field research project (paper, report, or research portfolio)

Final Written Report:

A typical research paper or report might include

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Main body
 - Introduction
 - Literature review
 - Methodology
 - Findings and conclusions
- Bibliography
- Appendices

A creative project report would include much of the above but might be a research portfolio that documents the process as you develop your “voice” (what is your point of view with respect to the project?).

Time Line:

Use the assignment calculator at <http://www.lib.umn.edu/undergrad/> to help in planning your project schedule, using April 1 as your ending date. Be sure to include your Capstone presentation date in your time line (presentations generally occur during the last two weeks of April). Specificity is your friend!

*Adapted from the Program for Individualized Learning, College of Continuing Education.