

Capstone Overview

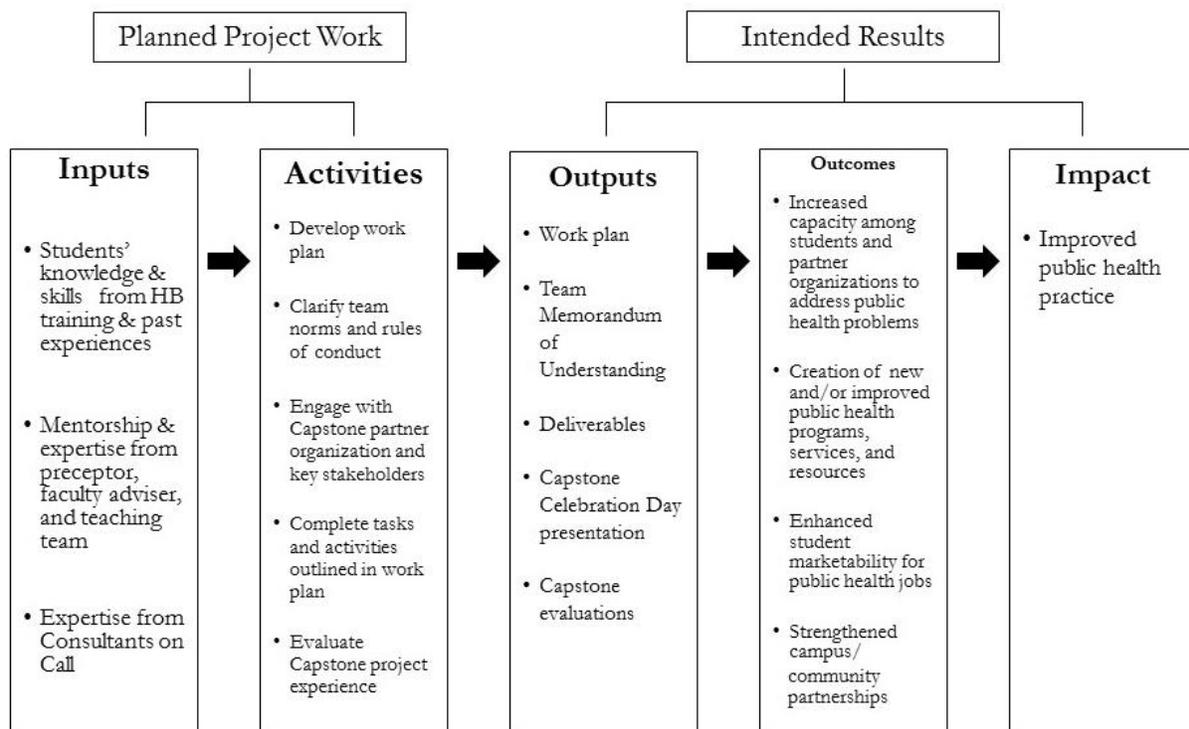
Department of Health Behavior
UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health

The Health Behavior Capstone Course

Capstone (HBEH 746/992) is a year-long, group-based, mentored service-learning course that is the culminating experience of the HB MPH curriculum. We expect this critical learning experience to increase students' and organizations' capacity to address public health problems; result in new or improved public health programs, services, and resources; enhance student marketability; and strengthen campus-community partnerships. The Capstone course has two components: project work and class sessions.

Capstone Project Work

The scope of the Capstone project work is defined by our partner organizations. This approach prioritizes their specific needs and gives our students an opportunity to do applied public health work on a range of topics in a variety of settings with diverse populations. Over an academic year (August-April), each team of four to six MPH students works with a partner organization and its stakeholders to produce a set of deliverables (i.e., tangible products) that serve one overarching goal and enhance the partner organization's mission. A preceptor at the partner organization plans, designs, and supervises the Capstone project work. Each team is assigned a HB faculty adviser who provides technical expertise and support. The Capstone Teaching Team (i.e., course instructor and teaching assistants) oversees all of the project work and provides structures, guidance, and support to increase the effectiveness of the Capstone project work. The visual below illustrates the planned project work and its intended results.



Capstone Class Sessions

Capstone class sessions are opportunities for students to prepare for, reflect upon, cross-share about, and present their Capstone project experiences.

Frequently Asked Questions

What types of organizations can host a Capstone team?

Any organization within a one-hour drive of Chapel Hill, North Carolina that is working to address public health issue can host a Capstone team. The following organizations have hosted Capstone teams:

Alexander YMCA	NC Latina BEAUTY
American Social Health Association	North Carolina Central University Women's Center
Amigas Latinas Motivando el Alma	North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence
The Art Therapy Institute	North Carolina Comprehensive Cancer Program
Boys on Track	North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition
Carolina Campus Community Garden	Orange County Department on Aging
Center for Community Self-Help and Self-Help Credit Union	Orange County Emergency Medicine Services
Cervical Cancer-Free NC	Orange County Health Department
Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools	Orange County Rape Crisis Center
Chatham County Public Health Department	Orange County Solid Waste Management
Chatham Habitat for Humanity	Planned Parenthood of Central North Carolina
Community Backyard	PORCH, Inc.
Community Transformation Grant	PREVENT Research Project
Counter Tobacco	Project IMPACT Research Project
Duke University Substance Abuse & Health Promotion Center	SpiritHouse, Inc.
Durham County Department of Public Health	Toxic Free, NC
El Pueblo, Inc.	UCLA Art and Global Health Center
Frank Porter Graham Bilingüe	UNC Center for Environmental Health and Susceptibility
Interfaith Food Shuttle	UNC Community Campus Partnership
IntraHealth, Inc.	UNC Counseling and Wellness Services
NC BEAUTY Research Project	UNC Department of Surgery
NC Cancer Hospital Comprehensive Cancer Support Program	UNC Family Medicine
NC Division of Public Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Branch	UNC Worksite Wellness
NC Division of Public Health, Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch	United Way of NC
NC Falls Prevention Coalition	

What are the elements of an effective Capstone partnership?

Effective Capstone partnerships meet the following criteria:

1. The Capstone partnership balances service to the partner organization and learning opportunities for the students.
2. The Capstone partnership agrees upon goals, measurable outcomes, and roles and responsibilities.
3. Principles and processes for the Capstone partnership are established with the input and agreement from all partners, especially for decision-making and conflict resolution.
4. Capstone partners make clear and open communication an ongoing priority by striving to understand each other's needs and self-interests, and developing a common language.
5. The Capstone partnership values multiple kinds of knowledge and life experiences.

6. The relationship between participants in the Capstone partnership is characterized by mutual trust, respect, genuineness, and commitment.
7. The Capstone partnership builds upon identified strengths and assets, but also works to address needs and increase capacity of all partners.
8. Capstone partnerships consider the nature of the environment within which they exist as a principle of their design, evaluation, and sustainability.
9. There is feedback among all stakeholders in the Capstone partnership, with the goal of continuously improving the partnership and its outcomes.
10. The Capstone partnership balances power among partners and enables resources among partners to be shared.
11. Participants share the benefits of the Capstone partnership's accomplishments.
12. There is a clear plan for ending or sustaining the Capstone partnership and project work at the end of the academic year.

What conditions promote Capstone project success?

Capstone projects are most successful when:

- There is a clearly defined goal for the project work;
- The project work is informed by and is responsive to project stakeholders, including the project's priority population;
- Leadership at the Capstone partner organization fully supports the Capstone project and provides the resources necessary to carry out the project work;
- Deliverables have clear purposes, are interrelated, and serve the overall project goal;
- The timeline for the project work allows for a period of formative research (including an orientation to the partner organization);
- Students have an opportunity to interact with the priority population associated with the project work;
- The project work allows students to apply and develop a wide range of skills that will increase their marketability as public health practitioners; and
- The preceptor has dedicated time, expertise, and interest to mentor graduate students.

What can Capstone partner organizations expect from a Capstone team?

Each Capstone student is expected to spend approximately nine hours per week working on Capstone, including both class and project work. Students are responsible for:

- Following the steps and producing the work outlined in the Capstone project work plan;
- Keeping all mentors informed of project progress;
- Applying the knowledge and skills gained through their HB MPH training to the Capstone project work;
- Incorporating mentor feedback and taking a participatory approach to the development of the deliverables;
- Producing high-quality work that is useful to the Capstone partner organization and its stakeholders; and
- Maintaining professional and ethical behavior.

Preceptors should NOT expect students to be “extra” or replacement staff or research assistants, nor are they to provide purely administrative support.

What types of deliverables do Capstone teams produce?

Each Capstone team typically produces four to six major deliverables. Below is a list of the types of deliverables that have been produced by past Capstone teams:

- Assessment Tools
- Community Assessment Reports
- Curricula
- Dissemination Plans
- Evaluation Plans
- Evaluation Tools
- Evidence Tables
- Focus Group Guides
- Formative Research Findings Reports
- Funding Guides
- Grant Proposals
- Health Communication Campaign Materials
- Health Communication Plans
- Intervention Materials
- Interview Guides
- IRB Applications
- Literature Reviews
- Manuscripts
- Message Testing Reports
- Photovoice Projects
- Policies and Procedures Manuals
- Policy Briefs
- Policy Recommendations
- Presentation Materials
- Program Plans
- Sustainability Plans
- Training Workshop Materials
- Video Storyboards

Can a Capstone team do international work?

Capstone teams can work with agencies that do international public health work; however, HB does not have the resources to support student travel as part of their Capstone project work. Moreover, our academic structure does not lend itself well to extended international travel that results in absence from classes.

Is there a fee associated with engaging a Capstone team?

No. HB does not charge for the services its students, faculty, and staff provide during this mentored field experience. Annually, our Capstone students provide approximately \$255,000 of in-kind service¹ to our partner organizations.

What are the roles and responsibilities of a preceptor?

Preceptors plan, design, and supervise the Capstone project work. They should expect to spend two to three hours per week, on average, guiding the Capstone project work. Preceptor responsibilities include:

- Establishing an appropriate and feasible scope of work that is directly aligned with the partner organization's needs and provides a valuable learning experience for students;
- Facilitating the work of the team by orienting students to the people, resources, and norms that influence project work;
- Meeting and communicating with students on a regular basis;
- Providing specific, timely feedback to students about their quality of work and professionalism;
- Helping the team to problem-solve;
- Modeling professional, ethical behavior; and
- Identifying a suitable replacement if unable to continue in the role of a preceptor.

¹ Calculation based on: 45 students/year x 9 hours of Capstone work/week/student x 30 weeks/year x \$20.96 (graduate assistant hourly rate) = \$254,664.

How can my organization apply for a Capstone team?

To apply for a Capstone team, please follow this process:

1. Read this overview and frequently asked questions document in full.
2. Schedule a phone call or meeting with Meg Landfried (landfried@unc.edu; 919-966-0057), Capstone course instructor, by **January 23, 2017** to discuss your ideas for a Capstone project.
3. Fill out a Health Behavior Capstone Project Proposal form (available [here](#)). Please save your completed proposal as a Microsoft Word document using the following naming convention: Organization Name_HB Capstone Proposal 2017-2018.
4. Collect a letter of support from your organization's leadership. The letter of support should explain how the Capstone project goal will enhance your organization's mission and demonstrate commitment to the resources and support (including staff time) needed to carry out the project work.
5. Email your completed proposal form and a letter of support to Meg Landfried (landfried@unc.edu) by **February 3, 2017**.

How are the Capstone projects selected?

Submitted proposals are reviewed by a committee of faculty and current Capstone students. Proposals are scored based on the following criteria:

- *Project Feasibility:* The project work will occur within an hour's drive of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The proposed timeline for the project work is appropriate and fits within the academic calendar. There is adequate time for students to familiarize themselves with the subject matter through formative research.
- *Deliverables:* Proposed deliverables have clear purposes and steps, are interrelated, and connect to overall project goal. The breadth and depth of deliverables is appropriate for four to six students over two academic semesters. Deliverables allow for acquisition knowledge and skills that will enhance students' marketability as public health practitioners.
- *Mentorship and Organizational Capacity:* The preceptor is known to have, or demonstrates they have time, expertise, and interest in mentoring MPH students. The partner organization is known to have, or demonstrates, capacity to support and provide necessary resources for a team of four to six students.
- *Engagement:* Project work is informed by and responsive to project stakeholders. Students will have an opportunity to interact with the priority population(s) associated with the project work.

Organizations whose proposals receive the highest scores are invited to present their proposals to students at Capstone Pitch Day, an annual event on March 3 from 1:00-4:00 p.m. when potential preceptors have the opportunity to let students know about their proposed projects through brief presentations followed by a question and answer session. After Capstone Pitch Day, students rank their top five choices for Capstone projects. The Capstone Teaching Team and MPH program director then conduct a matching process among the projects, students, and faculty advisers. Prospective organizations will be notified whether their projects have been selected to receive a Capstone Team in early April.

If my organization applies for a Capstone team, are we certain to get one?

Given the varied interests and expertise of our students, there is no guarantee that a proposal will be selected in any given year. If your project is not selected, either at the proposal review stage or through student rankings, you may be encouraged to apply in a future year or to reconsider the scope of your project proposal to take advantage of other field training opportunities in HB (e.g., the [practicum](#)).

What is the timeline for the 2017-2018 Capstone projects?

The Capstone solicitation, selection, and matching process will occur between December 2016 and April 2017. Capstone teams are expected to meet once before the 2017 summer break to outline a work plan. Capstone project

work will officially begin in September 2017 and will continue while classes are in session until April 2018. The Capstone project work will culminate with Capstone Celebration Day in late April 2018.

Date	Task	Who's Responsible
December 2016-January 2017	Solicit potential Capstone projects	Capstone Teaching Team
January – February 2017	Collect Capstone project proposals	Capstone Teaching Team
January – February 2017	Review and rank Capstone project proposals	Capstone Project Selection Committee
February 2017	Select projects to be “pitched” to students in March	Capstone Project Selection Committee
March 3, 2017 from 1:00-4:00 p.m.	Present project proposal at Capstone Pitch Day	Selected Preceptors
March 2017	Rank top 5 choices for Capstone projects	Students
March 2017	Facilitate matching process between students, Capstone projects, and faculty advisers	Capstone Teaching Team
March 31, 2017	Announce 2017-2018 Capstone projects, preceptors, student teams, and faculty advisers	Capstone Teaching Team
May 2017	Initial Capstone team meetings	Students, Preceptors, Faculty Advisers
June 2, 2017	Submit signed draft work plan	Students
Late August or early September 2017	Attend Capstone Orientation	Students, Preceptors, Faculty Advisers
Late August or early September 2017	Orient students to Capstone partner organization	Preceptors
September 2017	Finalize fall work plan	Students, Preceptors, Faculty Advisers
January 2018	Update work plan	Students, Preceptors, Faculty Advisers
April 2018	Turn in completed deliverables, present results of Capstone work at Capstone Celebration Day	Students

Whom should I contact if I have any other questions?

The contacts for Capstone are:

Meg Landfried, Course Instructor

landfried@unc.edu

(919) 966-0057

Liz Chen, Capstone Teaching Assistant

lizcchen@live.unc.edu

Beth Moracco, MPH Program Director

moracco@email.unc.edu

(919) 966-5542