



Department of Health Behavior Capstone Overview

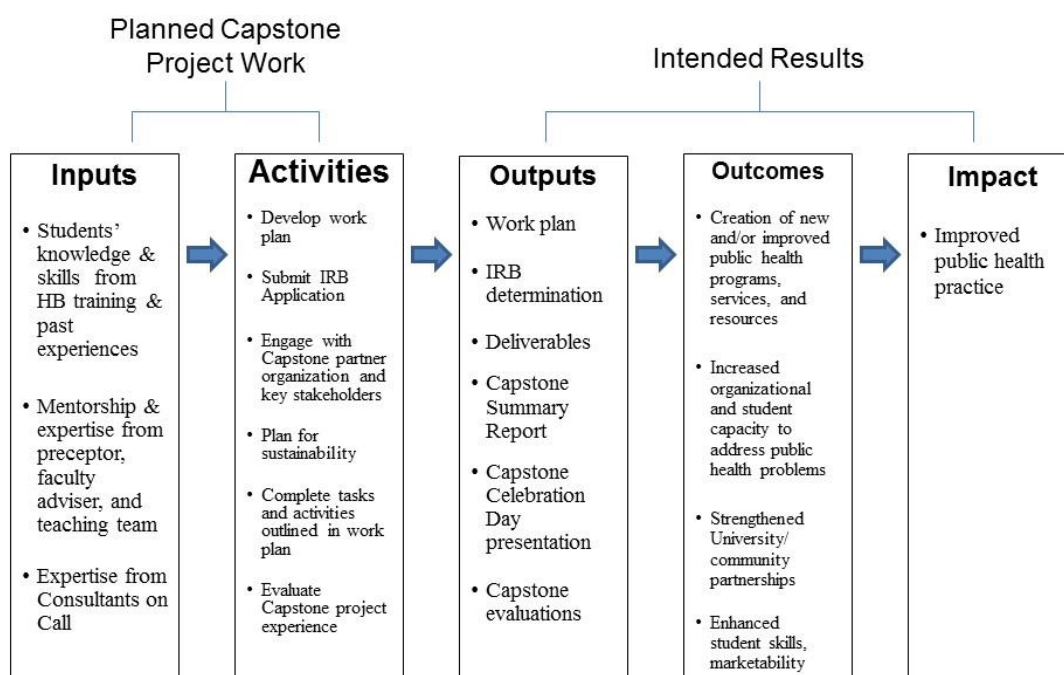
Academic Year 2015-2016



Capstone Overview

Capstone is a group-based, mentored, field training experience that serves as the master’s thesis substitute for Master of Public Health (MPH) students in Department of Health Behavior (HB) at the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health. Over the course of 2 semesters (8 months), teams of 4-6 second-year HB MPH students carry out various activities that culminate in a set of tangible products, or *deliverables*, for a local agency, community-based organization, or other group working on public health-related issues. The scope of the Capstone project work is defined by our partner organizations. This approach prioritizes our partners’ varying needs and gives our students an opportunity to do applied public health work in a variety of settings with diverse populations on a range of topics. The figure below illustrates the planned Capstone project work and its intended results.

Capstone Logic Model



Each student team applies their learning from their HB training and past experiences to their Capstone project work. Teams are mentored by an individual (i.e., *preceptor*) at the Capstone partner organization, a HB faculty adviser, and the Capstone course instructor and teaching assistants (i.e., *Capstone teaching team*). Each Capstone team works with the partner organization and its stakeholders on a series of activities, which are outlined in a *work plan*, to produce Capstone project deliverables. Capstone project work findings and impacts are described in a summary report. The Capstone experience culminates in late April with “*Capstone Celebration Day*,” an event where all of the student teams publicly present their Capstone project results and impacts. The Capstone project work is monitored via regular evaluations. We expect this critical learning experience to result in new or improved public health programs, services, and resources; increased organizational and student capacity, strengthened University/community partnerships; and enhanced student skills and marketability. The overall goal of Capstone is to improve public health practice.

Capstone Frequently Asked Questions

What makes a good Capstone project?

Appropriate Capstone projects have a clearly defined scope of work that is feasible for 4-6 students to complete in 8 months. Capstone projects are most successful when:

- The project work is informed by and is responsive to project stakeholders;
- Deliverables are interrelated and serve an overall project goal;
- Capstone project work allows students to develop a wide range of skills (e.g., community assessment; intervention design, selection, development, adaptation; monitoring and evaluation; proposal development; policy advocacy; sustainability planning; etc.);
- The Capstone partner organization has adequate resources (i.e., dedicated staff time, materials, space, etc.) to support the Capstone project work; and
- The Capstone project preceptor has the time, expertise, and interest to mentor MPH students.

What types of deliverables do Capstone teams produce?

The mentored activities that students work on for Capstone result in tangible products for the Capstone partner organization. Each Capstone team typically produces 4-6 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.

What is the timeline for the 2015-2016 Capstone projects?

Date	Task	Who's Responsible
December 2014	Solicit potential Capstone projects	Capstone Teaching Team
January – February 2015	Collect Capstone project proposals	Capstone Teaching Team
January – February 2015	Review and rank Capstone project proposals	Capstone Teaching Team
February 2015	Select projects to be “pitched” to students in March	Capstone Teaching Team, HB Faculty
March 2015	Capstone Pitch Day	Preceptors
March 2015	Rank top 5 choices for Capstone projects	Students
March 2015	Facilitate matching process between students, Capstone projects, and faculty advisers	Capstone Teaching Team
April 2015	Announce final Capstone projects, preceptors, student teams, and faculty advisers	Capstone Teaching Team
May 2015	Initial Capstone team meeting	Students, Preceptors, Faculty Advisers
By August 2015	Draft Capstone work plans	Preceptors, Students
September 2015	Capstone Orientation	Students, Preceptors, Faculty Advisers, Capstone Teaching Team
September 2015	Finalize fall work plan	Students, Preceptors, Faculty Advisers, Capstone Teaching Team
January 2016	Update work plan	Students, Preceptors
April 2016	Capstone deliverables completed	Students
April 2016	Capstone Celebration Day	Students, Preceptors, Faculty Advisers, Capstone Teaching Team

Who comprises a Capstone team?

Capstone teams are comprised of 4-6 second-year HB MPH students, a preceptor, and a HB faculty adviser. The Capstone teams are supported by:

- *The Capstone Teaching Team*: Capstone Course Instructor, Meg Landfried, and teaching assistants
- *Consultants on Call*: faculty, adjuncts, doctoral students, alumni, and other community partners who provide technical expertise to a Capstone team.

A complete list of the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in the Capstone is included in Appendix A.

How many hours per week should a preceptor expect to spend working with a Capstone team?

Preceptors should expect to spend 3-4 hours per week, on average, supervising and mentoring Capstone project work and their Capstone teams. The mentorship provided by the preceptor includes tasks such as outlining plans for Capstone project work, giving constructive feedback on the work produced by the Capstone students, providing guidance on strategies for accomplishing the Capstone project work, meeting with the

Capstone students, and helping the team to problem-solve. Refer to Appendix A for more details regarding the preceptor role.

How are HB faculty involved with Capstone?

At least one HB faculty member is assigned to each Capstone team. Capstone faculty advisers spend 1-2 hours per week, on average, working with the student team. Faculty advisers provide technical expertise and support such as advising on the appropriateness and feasibility of the proposed scope of work, directing students to resources, and providing constructive feedback on deliverables. They are required to meet with the students and preceptor at least 3 times per semester. Other faculty may serve as *Consultants on Call* and provide short-term help with specific Capstone project deliverables. See Appendix A for more details regarding the faculty advisor role.

What can preceptors expect from the Capstone students?

Capstone preceptors can count on students to provide energy, time, and a commitment to the Capstone project work; a range of experience and expertise; and deliverables that advance the Capstone partner organization's mission. Preceptors should NOT expect students to be "extra" or replacement staff or research assistants, nor are they to be purely administrative/assistant support.

Is there a fee associated with engaging a Capstone team?

No. The HB Department does not charge for the services its students, faculty, and staff provide during this mentored field experience.

How does my organization apply for a Capstone team?

You must submit a completed *HB Capstone Project Proposal Form* in order to be considered for a Capstone team. The form is due by Monday, **February 16, 2015** at 5:00pm and should be emailed to Meg Landfried (landfried@unc.edu).

How are the Capstone projects selected?

Submitted proposals are first reviewed for appropriateness and feasibility and are then ranked based on the following criteria:

1. Scope of work: evidence of the appropriateness, relevance, and feasibility of the proposed Capstone project work.
2. Engagement: evidence of the opportunities for Capstone project work to involve project stakeholders.
3. Mentorship: evidence of the preceptor's time, experience, and interest to mentor a team of MPH students.

Prospective Capstone preceptors from the top-ranking project proposals will be invited to *Capstone Pitch Day*, an annual event in March when potential preceptors have the opportunity to let students know about their proposed projects through brief presentations. After Capstone Pitch Day, students rank their top 5 choices for Capstone projects. Then, the Capstone teaching team conducts a matching process among the projects, students, and faculty advisers. Applicants will be notified whether their projects have been chosen 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, you may be encouraged to apply in a future year or to reconsider the scope of your project proposal in light of other field placement opportunities in HB (e.g., the practicum and independent studies).

Whom should I contact if I have any other questions?

Please contact Meg Landfried (landfried@unc.edu or 919.966.0057) if you have any questions about Capstone.

Capstone Roles & Responsibilities

This document describes the general roles and responsibilities for students, preceptors, faculty advisers, and the Capstone teaching team. Once teams have been matched with Capstone projects, specific work plans will be drawn up so that these responsibilities are more explicit.

The **student team** carries out the plans outlined by the preceptor and provides and/or coordinates the skills and effort necessary for producing the deliverables. They are responsible for:

- Applying the skills they have acquired through their Health Behavior training and past experiences to their Capstone projects
- 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
- Managing all of the internal processes associated with the Capstone project work including equitable distribution of work, decision-making, conflict management, etc.
- Exhibiting professional and ethical behavior
- Being familiar with department policies and procedures as they relate to Capstone

The **preceptor** plans, designs, and supervises the Capstone project work. (S)he is responsible for:

- Outlining a plan for the Capstone project work
- Facilitating the work of the team by continuously orienting students to the people, resources, and norms that influence project work
- Connecting students to project stakeholders
- Modeling professional, ethical behavior
- Providing specific, timely feedback to students about their quality of work and professionalism
- Maintaining regular communication with students
- Attending Capstone Celebration Day
- Identifying a suitable replacement to serve in the role of preceptor if unable to continue as a preceptor or unable to fulfill any of these specific responsibilities.

The **faculty adviser** provides technical expertise and ensures that the Capstone project work meets department quality standards. (S)he is responsible for:

- Ensuring that students' work meets the level of quality expected
- Providing intellectual and technical expertise
- Responding to student inquiries
- Directing students to resources
- Providing specific, timely feedback to students about their quality of work and professionalism
- Attending Capstone Celebration Day

Appendix A

The **Capstone teaching team** oversees and manages all of the Capstone projects. They are responsible for:

- Establishing Capstone program infrastructure
- Communicating Capstone program guidelines and expectations
- Promoting consistency across the Capstone projects' depth, scope, and quality
- Providing guidance on Capstone processes
- Facilitating feedback among Capstone parties