Capstone Project Client Information

What is a Capstone project?
A MURP Capstone is a real-world, client-based planning project. Students work with an organization or agency, designated as the client, to complete a project that is of significance and practical use to the organization. By the end of the semester, the student will produce a professional-quality project deliverable that addresses the client’s needs and conforms to the standards of graduate work. The student’s performance is evaluated by the Capstone course instructor and the client.

Students undertake their Capstone project during their last 15-week semester of the MURP program, at which point they have successfully completed their core courses in history and theory, planning methods, urban sustainability, urban development, and two client-oriented studio courses, as well as most of their electives. Students complete their Capstone project independently, but with the support of faculty. Large-scale projects may be undertaken by a small group of students, but each student must contribute a unique piece of the larger effort.

Goals
The primary goal of the Capstone course is to provide MURP students with an opportunity to integrate and synthesize what they have learned during their graduate school career, bringing their academic knowledge to bear on a practical problem for a real client. Capstone projects contribute to students’ professional training, offer organizations the opportunity to access MURP expertise, and strengthen the relationships between the Department of Planning and Design and organizations around the city, state, and region.

Client’s Role
The client’s role is to provide a high-quality project for the student, work with the student to clarify the project, and help the student identify appropriate research materials or contacts. In some cases, the student may propose a project to you, which you may accept or you may modify it with the student so that the project best meets your organization’s needs. In either case, the client should provide timely feedback on the student’s draft and final project, as well as provide a final evaluation of the student’s work. Clients will receive both hard and electronic copies of the student’s final project deliverables, and will be invited to attend an end-of-semester event at which all Capstone students will display a poster describing their project.

Project Parameters
The project should:
- be related to urban and/or regional planning;
- have a clearly defined issue or problem to be addressed;
- be of significance and practical use to your organization;
- have clear expectations for final deliverables
- be of sufficient scope and magnitude to challenge the student’s skills and provide a significant learning experience for them;
• be achievable during a 15-week semester, with the student devoting approximately 10-12 hours a week to it;
• be supported by a specific individual at the client organization, who will be available to answer the student’s questions, review a draft of the project, make necessary information available to the student, and provide a final evaluation of the student’s work;
• not be conducted as part of the student’s ongoing work responsibilities; and
• not be conducted for financial compensation.

Submitting a Capstone Project Proposal
If your organization could benefit from working with a MURP student and have a project that meets the guidelines above, please complete the application form. MURP faculty will review each proposed project and will contact you if we have any questions or concerns. All approved projects will be posted for MURP students’ review and consideration.

Students will submit a ballot to the MURP faculty on which they indicate the proposed Capstone project(s) they are interested in (and qualified to complete). After the faculty match students and projects, the student will contact you directly.

Please Note:
• We might receive more proposals than we can accommodate given the number of available students, or proposed projects may require particular skills or topical expertise that are not represented among students taking the course. Thus, we cannot guarantee that a proposed project will be chosen. However, projects can be reconsidered the following semester or potentially converted into a student internship.
• The final work produced by the Capstone student is owned by the Capstone client organization. However, the CU Denver Department of Planning and Design will publicly list the organization as a client, keep copies of all Capstone final projects for review by the MURP community and accreditation body, and include a brief project description in future Capstone promotional materials. Students will be allowed to use the work produced for their Capstone client in pursuit of their academic or professional careers.

Capstone Project Timeline
Students select their clients and determine the project scope prior to the start of the semester in which the student takes the Capstone course.

• October 1: Deadline for organizations interested in proposing a Capstone project to complete and submit the application form
• October 5-15: Students rank proposed projects.
• October 25: Student – project matches are announced to students. Students contact their project’s client directly.
• November 12: Proposal submission deadline for students who have worked directly with
a client to develop a Capstone project.

- **December:** Students write Capstone project prospectus.
- **January:** Students turn in project prospectus for review by faculty. Students meet with faculty and address any concerns about the proposed project. Final prospectus is approved by both faculty and client.
- **January:** Students begin work on Capstone project, acquiring any necessary information and access to resources from their client.
- **March:** Students submit the initial draft of their project to their client and faculty advisor for comment.
- **April:** Students submit the final draft of their project to their faculty advisor for comment.
- **May:** final project deliverable submitted to client and course instructor. All students present a poster of their project at an end-of-semester event.

**Questions?**
If you have questions about MURP Capstone projects, please contact:

Dr. Jennifer Steffel Johnson  
Associate Chair and Instructor  
Department of Planning and Design  
College of Architecture and Planning  
University of Colorado Denver  
303-315-0061  
Jennifer.SteffelJohnson@ucdenver.edu  
http://www.cap.ucdenver.edu/murp