MSMHA Capstone Overview

On behalf of the Mentoring Committee

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Purpose of the capstone project

- Contribution to the Field of Anatomical Sciences
  - Novel discovery
  - Deliverables: Educational resources, models, databases, etc…
  - Validation studies
  - Hypothesis-driven scientific work/research
Guidelines for Selecting Capstone Projects

- Technology and imaging focus are encouraged but are not required
- Not limited to human anatomical studies
- Scope of the project should fit within the program timeline (approx. 12 months)
- Should meet one’s interest and career goals
- Team-based projects are possible but, each student must work on an individual piece that meets all capstone requirements

** Note: All products of Capstone are properties of the University of Colorado
Examples of On-Going Capstone Projects

- Developing a novel, interactive virtual histology laboratory
- Segmentation of atypical mitochondria in mouse taste cells
- Validation of suprazygomatic maxillary nerve block approach
- 3D modeling of taste bud cells from single block-face SEM data
How do I start?

- **I already have an idea/project**
  - Identify a mentor (seek assistance from academic advisor)

- **I have no idea/project**
  - Identify mentors: seminar presenters/MSMHA core faculty/networking

**First-Year**

**Complete capstone agreement form (no later than May 16th)**

- Start working on prelim proposal (Due End of May)
Approaching a Potential Capstone Mentor

- Make an email/phone request for an appointment
- Meet in person to discuss your desire to work with the mentor
  - Be prepared to discuss details
  - Be aware of some background on the project of interest
- Approach the seminar speaker after the talk to arrange a meeting
- Be mindful of potential mentor’s busy schedule
  - Avoid last minute requests/paperwork
- When unsure or can’t establish contact on your own, seek help from the academic advisor
Preliminary Proposal (Due End of May)

- **Purpose:**
  - Ensuring students are on track

- **Template**
  - Title, name, project site, mentor
  - Personal statement
  - Background & rationale
  - Objectives & specific aims
  - Methods
  - Reference

- **Evaluation**
  - Academic advisor
Great! My prelim proposal looks good to my advisor! Now what?

- **Final Proposal (Due no later than July 1st):**
  - Evaluation of feasibility and scope
  - Quality assurance (appropriate graduate level)

- **Template**
  - Title, name, project site, mentor
  - Personal statement
  - Background & rationale
  - Specific aims
  - Methods
  - Detailed timeline & projected credit hours per semester
  - Budget
  - Reference

- **Decision & Notification:** no later than mid-July
  - The review form

- **Enroll in Capstone Course beginning August 4th**
- **Start working on Capstone Project on August 25th**
Possible outcomes of final proposal review

- Approved

- Approved with revision
  - Submit revised proposal & cover letter to the mentoring committee chair within 2 weeks
  - If necessary, the mentoring committee may call a meeting with advisor, mentor and the student

- Not approved
  - The mentoring committee will call a meeting with advisor, mentor and the student
Year 2 Timeline

- **Fall Semester:**
  - Make progress adherent to the timeline
  - Regular communication with capstone mentor
  - Monthly communication with academic advisor
  - At mandatory advisory meeting, complete progress report form (mid-November)
    - Identify examination committee members

- Take advantage of elective courses including independent study
  - Be proactive in identifying courses that would enhance your capstone project
Year 2 Timeline

- Spring Semester
  - Make progress adherent to the timeline
  - Complete Intent to Graduate Form no later than February 9th
  - Complete Application for Admission to Candidacy no later than March 2nd
  - At mandatory advisory meeting, complete progress report form (mid-March)
  - Complete Request for Graduate Examination 2 weeks before the presentation
  - Capstone presentation & the final capstone report in the week of April 20th
  - Submission of revised final capstone report no later than May 11th
  - Graduation: May 22nd

http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/Graduate-School/student-services/academic-resources/Pages/MasterSstudentservices.aspx
Capstone Presentation

- Platform presentation
- Week of April 20th – Graduate School Deadline
Capstone Grading

- IP-grading policy
  - On-going nature of Capstone
  - IP grade for Capstone course
  - Final letter grade determined at completion of the project
    - IP replaced with the final grade for all capstone credits

- Grades will be based on
  - Final presentation
  - Final report
Responsibilities

**Student**
- PROACTIVE in identifying project & mentor
- Prompt & open communication with mentor & advisor
- Take ownership of the project & timeline
- Professional conduct
- Seek opportunities for publication and/or presentation
- Engage in problem solving

**Capstone Mentor**
- Oversee the capstone project from conception to completion
- Prompt and open communication with advisor & student
- Abide by the mentor-mentee agreement form
- Provide supervision, training necessary for the capstone project

**Academic Advisor**
- Prompt & open communication with student & mentor
- Liaison among student, mentor & the program
- First line of communication with potential conflicts
FAQs

- It’s the beginning of May and I have no leads for a project and/or a mentor! What should I do?
  - Talk with your academic advisor

- What should I do if my final proposal comes back with Revision Request?
  - Work with your capstone mentor and academic advisor
  - Address the review comments/suggestions systematically
  - Adhere to mentoring committee’s directions

- What happens if my final proposal is not approved?
  - Refer to the reviewer comments & discuss options with academic advisor
FAQs

- What should I do if my capstone proposal is not progressing according to my timeline?
  - Talk with your academic advisor as soon as possible

- What happens if I miss the final proposal deadline?
  - Final capstone grade and graduation date may be affected (at discretion of the mentoring committee)
  - If you know that you will miss the deadline due to extenuating circumstance, notify the mentoring committee chair ASAP

- What happens if I miss any of the graduate school deadlines?
  - Graduation may be delayed
FAQs

- What should I do if I want to change the project and/or mentor?
  - Talk with your academic advisor as soon as possible
  - This is likely to affect graduation date and may need to enroll in more than 8 capstone credits

- What happens if the mentor I want to work with is also my academic advisor?
  - Notify the mentoring committee for new academic advisor assignment
FAQs

- How many capstone credits should I enroll in each semester?
  - Flexible – talk with capstone mentor & advisor
  - Should approximate work-load (1 cred = ~45 hrs)

- Should I enroll in capstone course during summer after 1st year?
  - Flexible (implications with financial aid)
FAQs

- What if I can’t/don’t want to enroll in courses during summer, but still work on capstone related things?
  - Flexible – communicate with academic advisor & mentor to ensure summer work is counted toward credit hours in the subsequent semester

- What if I don’t want/need to graduate in two years
  - Fine: you have total of 5 years to complete the program
  - Communicate with your academic advisor to arrange new timeline

- Can I submit my capstone related documents before the deadline?
  - Yes, please!
FAQs

▪ What if I want/need to leave the program after completion of the first year?
  ▪ As long as you have not enrolled in capstone, no IP grade (or subsequent replacement letter grade) will show on transcript

▪ Can I submit my capstone related documents before the deadline?
  ▪ Yes, please!
Any other questions?