

MPH Capstone Project PBHL 7800

All students must complete a capstone project. It must be completed at or near the end of the program of study, as it is a culminating experience of their MPH program. The student should complete the capstone project in one semester (3 credit hours). Faculty and Graduate Coordinators must approve the Capstone Proposal by signing the *Capstone Project Proposal Form* (Options A and B) or the *Master's Thesis Enrollment Form* (Option C). Students cannot work in pairs in any of the options. The capstone project has two components: a written document and a poster presentation. The capstone project may take several forms, such as professional report, a publishable journal article, or a thesis.

Students may enroll in a class in which the capstone paper is completed via independent study. The student is responsible for completing the capstone via the instructions included in this document. The student will submit the final paper no later than 3 weeks prior to the last day of class.

Students must submit copies of the final report to the responsible faculty member(s) and to the MPH Program Coordinator. Also submit an electronic copy to the MPH Program Coordinator on CD or via your jump drive. Save the file as a PDF as follows:

LAST NAME-Year-CONCENTRATION AREA-TitleWords. pdf

For example:

SMITH-2000-HPB-SmokingCessation.pdf

Students are required to present their capstone papers in the form of a poster presentation. This poster session is designed to allow students to showcase their major findings in an organized, articulate, and creative manner. All graduating MPH students will display their poster during an allotted time at the end of each semester; the student will be available to answer any questions attendees may have regarding their research or methods. A formal oral presentation is NOT required. Faculty and fellow classmates are invited to attend. Although the exact time will be defined each semester, the preferred time is during the reading day (after classes end and before exams start). The poster presentation is a requirement for graduation.

Written Document

To complete the written document, students can choose one of three options: A) professional report, B) publishable article, or C) master's thesis.

Option A – Capstone Paper (PBHL 7800)

Students can choose to write a professional report that integrates different aspects of the MPH core and area of specialization courses with the evaluation of a public health problem or issue. Students may also use a major project completed during internship to serve as the basis for the capstone paper. In general, most capstone papers will follow the outline described below. **However, the final outline will be determined by the primary reader and the student.**

Suggested outline

- Cover page
- Index
- Introduction and objectives (1 page)
- Site description and mission
- Analysis of the problem
 - ✓ Epidemiology
 - ✓ Objectives for the Nation
 - ✓ Risk and protective factors
 - ✓ Theories about the problem
 - ✓ Consequences
- Analysis of the solutions
 - ✓ Intervention strategies
 - ✓ Efficacy of intervention strategies
- Development of a public health agenda
 - ✓ Action priorities
 - ✓ Justification of actions
- Summary and conclusions
- References

General guidelines

Students who complete the capstone project as an independent study must comply with the following guidelines:

1. Proposal. The student, in collaboration with two faculty members (one primary reader and one secondary reader), will write a proposal for the capstone project. The student must complete the *Capstone Project Proposal Form*. The faculty members and the MPH Graduate Coordinator must record their approval of the proposal in the *Capstone Project Proposal Form*. At least one of the two readers must be from the department of the students' area of concentration, and at least one must be a Graduate Faculty. The primary reader must be from the students' department of concentration, and may or may not be a member of the graduate faculty.

2. Deadline for approval. The *Capstone Project Proposal Form* must be approved before the student enrolls in PBHL 7800.
3. Deadline for submission of final report. The student will submit the final copy of the Capstone Project at least 3 weeks before the end of the last day of class to the readers. Readers will have 2 weeks to grade the proposal and provide feedback. The student should incorporate faculty members' feedback into the final poster session.
4. Rubric. If he/she so chooses, the primary reviewer is responsible for providing a rubric to the student at the beginning of the semester which will guide how the reviewer grades the document.
5. Final document. The student must submit two printed copies of the final document, one for the primary reader and one for the secondary reader. Additionally, the student must provide at least one electronic copy of the document on a CD to the MPH Program Coordinator. Faculty members may request additional copies.
6. Grading. The final document is graded S/U. To approve the final project, both readers must grade it as satisfactory. The student will attach a signature page to the front of the hardcopy document and solicit the signatures from both readers. The student will then submit the final hardcopy report, with signature page, to the MPH Program Coordinator.

Option B – Publishable Article (PBHL 7800)

Students can choose to write a journal article, which has been submitted or is ready to be submitted to a scholarly journal. The content of the article, whether it is research or practice, must be related to the work completed during and internship project or to their research with one of the faculty members.

General guidelines

1. The student, in collaboration with two faculty members (one primary reader and one secondary reader), will write a proposal for the publishable journal article. The student must complete the *Capstone Project Proposal Form*. At least one of the two readers must be from the students' department of concentration, and at least one must be a Graduate Faculty.
2. The faculty members and the MPH Graduate Coordinator must record their approval of the proposal in the *Capstone Project Proposal Form*.
3. The final document must comply with the following guidelines:
 - The manuscript must be prepared in the style of the scientific journal.
 - The student must be the first author of the article. The names of all authors, in the order submitted to the journal, and the name of the journal (with volume, page numbers, and date if known) must be given as a footnote to the title on the first page of the manuscript.
 - Evidence of permission to use articles (e.g., graphs, figures) that have been published or accepted for publication must be included. The

student is responsible for securing copyright releases prior to submitting the article for publication.

- The final report should be at least 15 pages long (excluding cover page, index page, graphs, figures, tables, and references). Very short journal articles (e.g., teaching techniques of the *Journal of School Health*) should be accompanied by an additional review of the literature.
- 4. The manuscript, whether submitted or not, must be approved as publishable quality manuscript by two faculty members (a primary and a secondary reviewer).
- 5. Final document. The student must submit two printed copies of the final manuscript, one for the primary reader and one for the secondary reader. Additionally, the student must provide at least one electronic copy of the document on a CD to the MPH Program Coordinator. Faculty members may request additional copies.
- 6. Grading. The final document is graded S/U. To approve the final project, both readers must grade it as satisfactory

Note: Some faculty members recommend that students who write an article using data from a faculty member's research sign a contract form stating the length of time expected (generally 12 months after the manuscript is approved) for submission of the article for publication as first authors. After that time has expired, if the article has not been submitted or has been rejected, the faculty member can revise and submit that article as first author and the student will become the second author. Additionally, the faculty member who provided the data should be involved in the revision and approval of the final document.

Option C – Master's Thesis (XXX 7300)

The thesis is a research study in a professional area of interest. A minimum of 3 hours in a research course is required. Graded S/U. Completion of a thesis is under the direction of the Major Professor and an Advisory Committee. This option follows the same rules and regulations as the M.A. Master's Thesis, which are described below.

1. An Advisory Committee should be selected and approved prior to the submission of the Program of Study. The Major Professor and at least one other member of the committee must be appointed (regular or provisional status) to the Graduate Faculty.
2. The Advisory Committee will meet with the student and approve the proposed project prior to the student's enrollment in the research hours.
3. Approval must be recorded on the *Master's Thesis Enrollment Form*, which is then submitted along with a 300-word abstract and the *Approval of Research Involving Human Subjects Form* (if appropriate) to the MPH Graduate Coordinator. This approval must be obtained prior to enrolling in a 7300 or Master's Research course.
4. The thesis must be submitted to the Advisory Committee. Upon approval of the thesis, the Advisory Committee will conduct the oral examination on the thesis.

5. Students are expected to follow the University Guidelines and Procedures for writing and submitting Thesis & Dissertations and the latest edition of the American Psychological Association manual. Students can choose between a traditional format and a journal article format.
6. Before copies are made, the student must submit a copy of the thesis to the Graduate School for format approval.
7. The Graduate School requires electronic submission of the thesis, while the Department requires two bound copies (one for the Department and one for the Major Professor) and one electronic copy on a CD.
8. Final clearance for graduation must be completed through the Graduate School.

Poster Presentation

All graduating students—who have passed their Capstone Project—must present their Capstone Projects at the MPH Poster Session during the official UGA Reading Day of their final semester (fall, spring, or summer). The poster session is not graded, but participation is required for graduation. The Dean's office houses a poster printer which prints posters to the size of 42" paper. Directions on the use of the poster printer can be found in a supporting document, "Poster Printing Tips".

APPENDIX 1 – EXAMPLE OF RUBRIC

Master's of Public Health (M.P.H.) Capstone Project Rubric (Option A)

Name of Student: _____

Semester: _____ Date submitted: _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS:

Format: The capstone paper should be typed using double spacing (except references) and left margin justification. Page numbers must be added in bottom right. The final report should be approximately **XX** pages long (excluding cover page, index page, graphs, figures, tables, and references).

References: References should follow the APA style. Reference list should be typed using single spacing and in alphabetical order. Include only the references cited in your paper. Include at least **XX** references.

STANDARD	REVIEWER'S COMMENTS
<u>Completeness</u> (all components were included) <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Cover page▪ Index▪ Introduction: Described the problem and objectives of the paper (1-2 paragraphs)▪ Site description and mission▪ Analysis of the problem<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Epidemiology✓ Objectives for the Nation✓ Risk and protective factors✓ Theories about the problem✓ Consequences▪ Analysis of the solutions<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Intervention strategies✓ Efficacy of intervention strategies▪ Development of a public health agenda<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Action priorities✓ Justification of actions▪ Summary and Conclusions▪ References	
<u>Correctness</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ No errors in content	
<u>Depth of response</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Presented clear, good analysis of the problem▪ Demonstrated a good integration of learning▪ Comprehended material▪ Explained concepts in own words▪ Conclusions were clearly based on the review of literature	
<u>Writing and organization</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The writing is focused and well-organized, with effective use of leading sentences, transitions	

<p>between sentences, and word choices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation are minimal, and they do not interfere with understanding.▪ Paper is clearly organized using titles and subtitles that match the index.	
<p>References</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Included at least XX references▪ Included peer-reviewed, scientific references or referenced chapters from relevant books▪ Used APA style correctly	

Please submit the final grade by: XXX

Name of Reviewer: _____

Final Grade: _____ Date submitted: _____

Appendix 2- Example of Signature Page for Final Grading

**Title of Project
Name
Date (semester, year)
Course Number (PBHL 7800)**

I hereby certify that student XXX has passed the capstone requirement.

Primary Reviewer Signature

Secondary Reviewer Signature