Students completing a Capstone will demonstrate their ability to think critically about public health issues, to analyze a problem, design, develop, and implement solutions, and demonstrate learning in both written form and oral presentation.

Course Objective: This course is designed for MPH students to complete their Culminating Experience for integrative learning. The goal of the Capstone is to demonstrate their ability to synthesize and integrate their knowledge of the MPH foundational core and concentration competencies. Students (in consultation with faculty) will select foundational core and concentration-specific competencies appropriate to their educational and professional goals. The Capstone integrative learning experience may take many forms, such as a practice-based or research-based project.

Final Product: Regardless of form, students are required to produce a high-quality written product that is appropriate for their educational and professional objectives. Written products may include the following: research paper/manuscript, program evaluation report, grant proposal, training manual, policy statement, legislative testimony with accompanying supporting research, etc. Ideally, the written product is developed and delivered in a manner that is useful to external stakeholders.

Capstone and Thesis Faculty Committee and Advisor:

MPH students completing a Capstone or Thesis must form a committee with at least two members to guide the student the preparation, conduct, and completion of the Capstone/Thesis document. The committee should consist of:

- **One Committee Chair**, must be faculty from MPH Program in student’s concentration
- **At least one Committee Member**, may be faculty from MPH Program or UC adjunct/affiliate (e.g., CCHMC, NIOSH, EPA, and other community partners)
- Additional Committee Members are not required but allowed as appropriate (e.g., local agency partner, health department employees, in-country partner, etc.)

*Primary Advisor* - Among the Committee Members, one must serve as the student’s **Primary Advisor**. This may be the Committee Chair or a Member more directly overseeing the student’s Capstone/Thesis project. The Primary Advisor is will work closely with the student to complete the project.

*Evaluation* – All students will be evaluated by two committee members (CE Reader #1 and #2). The **Committee Chair** (CE Reader #1) and the **Primary Advisor** (CE Reader #2) will evaluate the Capstone paper and student performance using a standardized rubric to determine the final course grade. If the Committee Chair and the Primary Advisor are the same person, the second Committee Member will complete the evaluation.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Faculty Advisor and Committee:

- Once a faculty member agrees to be the student’s Primary Advisor (PA) for the Capstone/Thesis, (s)he must work with the student to complete a proposal for a project that meets the requirements outlined in the Capstone instructions and syllabus. A template for the Capstone Proposal can be found on Blackboard.
- The PA must ensure that the student’s proposal adheres to the expectation that the student shall exhibit proficiency in the MPH Competencies. A document that does not address the significance of the student's topic to the Public Health agenda does not meet the CEPH requirements for a comprehensive and robust Culminating Experience (Capstone).
- The MPH Core Competencies can be found in the MPH Program Handbook and on Blackboard, and should be consulted during the proposal’s development.
- In addition to the Capstone proposal, the student and PA should discuss the expected Capstone format and grading rubric for the document. A sample rubric can be found on Blackboard.
The Capstone Proposal must be signed by the Capstone Committee Chair. The student is responsible for submitting the proposal via Blackboard for documentation and approval.

The PA and the student are expected to adhere to the established deadlines for submission of all deliverables, including document drafts, draft feedback, presentation, and the final document and signature page. It is recommended that the PA and student establish these deadlines during the drafting of the student’s Capstone Proposal. MPH deadlines are sent to the students at the beginning of the semester.

The Capstone Syllabus outlines required submission dates that all students are required to follow. If the student and PA make alternative submission dates, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all MPH deadlines are met.

### MPH required dates for Capstone/Thesis Submission:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning of semester</td>
<td>Submit Capstone form and signed proposal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 weeks before classes end</td>
<td>Students must submit first draft to Committee for review and feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 weeks before classes end</td>
<td>Committee returns to student for final revisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 week before classes end</td>
<td>Students must submit final documents and grading rubric to CE Readers #1 and #2 for final evaluation and grading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capstone Presentation Seminar Day (always on last day of classes prior to exam week)</td>
<td>Student must attend seminar, give Capstone presentation and upload slides, final paper, and completed grading rubric with signature to Blackboard. The signed CE rubric indicates to the Program that all requirements have been met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last day of semester</td>
<td>Student must submit a hard copy of Capstone with signature page to the Capstone Director (Dr. Charles Doarn).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each Primary Advisor and Committee may have deadlines that they set and communicate to students. These dates may precede those outlined above, but should not be later. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that no additional deadlines apply. If no additional requirements are communicated to the student by the Committee, the student should comply with those outlined above.

Additional graduation requirements and dates can be found at [http://www.uc.edu/registrar/calendars.html](http://www.uc.edu/registrar/calendars.html) and for graduate Thesis submission: [https://grad.uc.edu/student-life/etd.html](https://grad.uc.edu/student-life/etd.html).

**Evaluation of an MPH Capstone and Thesis:**

- It is imperative that the student receives adequate and timely feedback for all Capstone drafts BEFORE the final weeks of the semester. Therefore, continued communication with students is expected of the Committee.

- The Committee Members are responsible for reading and evaluating the student’s final paper using the Capstone Evaluation Rubric. The Committee Members will also make a recommendation of a final grade for the course, which the Capstone Director will weigh heavily in determining the student’s final grade.

- If a situation arises where the student is not able to complete the Capstone on time, the student may work with the PA and Capstone Director to determine whether an No Grade (NG) or Incomplete (I) grade is possible. The process for fulfilling requirements for removal of I/NG grades will be discussed on a case by case basis.

- The final Capstone Paper is due to the Committee Members no later than THREE days prior to the date for that semester’s MPH Presentation Seminar Day. This should give the student and PA time to have all documents signed and submitted to the faculty and MPH Program by the final deadline.

***Committee Members and Students may contact the Capstone Director at [Charles.Doarn@uc.edu](mailto:Charles.Doarn@uc.edu) with any problems or concerns.***

MPH Program • Division of Public Health Sciences • Dep. of Environmental Health Sciences • University of Cincinnati