

## **MA in Wellness and Lifestyle Management**

Capstone Course HLTH 37.570

Guidelines and Requirements for Completion

Updated May 2014

The MA in WLM program is offered through the College of Graduate and Continuing Education by the Health and Exercise Science Department at Rowan University in Glassboro, NJ

### **Course Description**

The catalog description of the Capstone Course/Experience (HLTH 37.570) is as follows:

In this independent study course, students will work individually with a faculty advisor to complete a project that is relevant to their area of interest within health promotion, wellness and lifestyle management.

The description is intentionally broad to allow each student the opportunity to work with an advisor and create a project that is tailored to his or her goals and interests. In general, the project must meet these criteria:

- 1.The project must be substantive in nature and be worthy of three semester hours of graduate credit.
- 2.The student must take the leading role in designing, implementing and/or evaluating the project. While others may assist or contribute in some way, the project should represent the initiative and work of the student.
- 3.The student must prepare a final paper representing the full scope of the project.
- 4.The student must prepare a Personal Reflection Paper.

## Steps of the Process

It is recommended that you, the student, begin planning for the Capstone Experience SIX MONTHS in advance of starting the course. You will take the Capstone course as the final course in your program after you have completed all of the other courses in the WLM curriculum.

You may also want to do some preliminary planning and research so that you can fully start your project once you register for the Capstone course. While it is important that the project be substantive and worthy of three graduate credits, it's equally important that the project be **feasible**, given the time and resources that are available to you. The Faculty Advisor will work with you to help you strike the balance of creating a project that is both challenging *and* realistic.

**Remember that if you don't complete your Capstone Project in the allotted course time of 8 weeks, you will receive a grade of Incomplete until you finish it. If you receive an Incomplete for the course, a final grade must be posted for the course prior to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive semester. If a final grade is not posted after 2 consecutive semesters, the Incomplete will automatically turn to a "F."**

1. Decide what you want to do as a project from the list below. If your project requires cooperation with other people or groups, discuss the idea with them to see if they think it will be possible.
2. Once you decide on a project and a topic, complete the Capstone Proposal **Form A** (all Forms are attached at the end of the document). Submit the proposal to Dr. Leslie Spencer at [spencer@rowan.edu](mailto:spencer@rowan.edu) and Dr. Stefanie Bloom at [blooms@rowan.edu](mailto:blooms@rowan.edu). Both Dr. Spencer and Dr. Bloom will review your proposal. Dr. Bloom will schedule a phone conference with you to discuss and recommend revisions. Once the proposal meets Dr. Bloom's approval, she will sign **Form B**.
3. Determine the groups and individuals from whom you will need permission and/or approval and begin obtaining it. You will need to work closely with your advisor to determine if there is a need for IRB

approval.

4. Begin the literature review process. All projects, not only formal research studies, must include a review of the professional literature published on that topic.
5. Depending upon your project, you may also choose to begin drafting or finding previously- published surveys, program materials or other resources you will need.
6. Once you register for the Capstone Project course, you will perform the bulk of work for the project. Please schedule a communication plan with your Faculty Advisor to keep the project moving forward and on track. You will want to have frequent contact with your Faculty Advisor.
7. As you complete the Project, you will submit all of your work on Canvas. This will allow you to create a Capstone Project Portfolio documenting all of your work at each stage of the process. PLEASE SAVE AND SUBMIT YOUR MATERIALS ALONG THE WAY SO THAT YOU HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED FOR YOUR PORTFOLIO.
8. The Faculty Advisor will assign the course grade for your Capstone Project course and will complete **Form C**.
9. The last step is to complete **Form D**. This is an evaluation of the Capstone Process. This form should also be submitted on Canvas.
10. Celebrate!!!!

**Options for Experience:**

The capstone project should reflect the synthesis of knowledge and reflect the practice and skills developed during the MA in Wellness and Lifestyle Management program. In addition, the Capstone allows the student the opportunity to further explore an area of interest to them that connects their learning to the community outside of the academic setting.

1. *Systematic Review of the Literature* – Students conducting a systematic review will define a study question, create a strategy to identify appropriate literature, read and review the literature, extract the appropriate information from the literature, summarize the findings, present conclusions, and make recommendations based on the systematic review.
2. *Grant Proposal/Program Planning*– Students writing a grant proposal/plan for a health initiative will identify the problem for which the grant/plan would be used, explain the significance, list the hypotheses/questions to be answered, review the literature associated with the problem, create goals and objectives, methods, create a time line and budget, and explain how the intervention would be evaluated. For example, assume you are a school nurse. You see the teachers in your school report high rates of stress, you believe this is impacting their performance and you are interested in addressing this issue. Your Project could consist of locating a funding source and follow the Request for Proposal (RFP) guidelines from the funding source. You would then submit the completed RFP as your project. For the purpose of completing Capstone, you would not need to submit the RFP to the potential funder. You must include the name of funding source and the RFP in your project
3. *Evaluation of an Existing Program* – Students evaluating an existing program will provide a description of the program, explain the purpose of the evaluation, describe the methods and procedures used to evaluate the program, identify the logistics of carrying out the evaluation, and present the results of the evaluation. You may develop your own instrument or use an existing one.
4. *Manual/Lesson Plans* – Students creating a manual or curriculum for a health and wellness initiative will demonstrate the need for the manual/curriculum, create goals and objectives for the manual, create a table of contents, develop the content for the manual/curriculum that is broken into sections/proposed classes and will also describe how materials will be used and implemented.
5. *Website/Blog*-Students creating a website or blog will create a digital story about a health issue that demonstrates their work

devoted to a specific topic and/or for a specific population. Creating a unique site and not simply replicating one that is already in existence is crucial. Your site should be sophisticated and utilize a variety of media, be interactive and contain the elements of a successful website. For example, you want to build a coalition in your community that will advocate for safer bike lanes and crosswalks as a way to increase physical activity and decrease the ever-growing obesity epidemic in your community. You could build your coalition through a website design. Your goal could be to influence or develop public policy around the issue at hand or to gain support from the community members to walk or ride bikes instead of driving cars. In essence, your project is about bringing healthy changes to your community by building a coalition and using a website as your platform for change.

6. *Program Implementation.* You may find a program in existence that you wish to implement and evaluate with a different or specific population. You are not creating the program materials, but you will implement them with a group of people and provide an evaluation of their outcomes and experience.
7. *Traditional Research:* Some students may be interested in completing a traditional Research Thesis following the guidelines of the Graduate School. This is a good option for a student who is interested in pursuing a doctorate at some point or who wants to have a career that will involve designing and conducting research studies. If you are interested in this option, please visit the Graduate School webpage and download the Research Thesis guidelines. You will need to review these with your Faculty Advisor to ensure that you meet all of their criteria for your project to be considered a Research Thesis by the University. Here is a link to the master's thesis guidelines of the University: [Master's Thesis Guidelines](#)

Once you have decided on an option and basic project plan, complete the Capstone Project Proposal sheet found at the end of this document and submit it via email to Drs. Leslie Spencer ([spencer@rowan.edu](mailto:spencer@rowan.edu)) and Stefanie Bloom ([blooms@rowan.edu](mailto:blooms@rowan.edu)). Drs. Spencer and Bloom will review your proposal, discuss it with you and recommend revisions. Once the proposal meets their approval, Dr. Bloom will then sign off on

your project with **Form B**.

### **Proposal Guidelines:**

Please complete the project proposal, **Form A**, and submit it to Drs. Spencer and Bloom **six months prior** to the start of your Capstone Project.

You must follow this outline and your proposal must describe your proposed project in **approximately 2- 3 pages**. You need to provide enough detail to allow the Faculty Advisor to understand the scope of the project and what will be required to complete it, but you should NOT be doing extensive research or planning work until it is approved.

*Cover Page:* Your name, email address, telephone number and projected date for beginning Capstone

- I. Proposed Title
- II. Purpose of the Project (goal of the project; objectives you plan to meet to enable you to reach the goal)
- III. Rationale for pursuing this project (i.e. why is it important-demonstrated by research.) (There should be some mention of research pertaining to your topic although certainly not an entire literature review at this point.)
- IV. Previous experience with this topic (such as training, certifications, prior study, work experience)
- V. Resources needed for this project, including access to participants, facilities and materials
- VI. Method of completing project (i.e. what you plan to do, how you propose to meet the purpose/goal of the project)
- VII. Permission or Approval needed for this project
  - Permission from supervisors, boards or committees.
  - Permission from parents/guardians (if minors)

- Institutional Review Board approval (please see next section to determine if this is needed for your project)

#### VIII. Project Timeline

- Timeline of activities to be completed PRIOR to registering
- Timeline of activities to be completed DURING the 8-week Capstone Project course

### **Institutional Review Board Training and Approval**

All research conducted with human subjects must be approved by the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). This is a committee of faculty members who review research proposals by Rowan faculty and students to ensure that participants in the study are being treated with dignity, honesty and confidentiality. If you are collecting data on participants for your research project AND YOU ARE PLANNING TO HAVE THE RESULTS PUBLISHED OR PRESENTED AT A CONFERENCE, you will need to complete an IRB application form and have it approved by the IRB committee. If you are NOT planning to publish or present your results formally, but will only share them internally at the site and with your Faculty Advisor, you will not need to complete an IRB review. See the chart at the end of this document to help you decide if you need an IRB review or not.

Your Faculty Advisor can help you with this process, but you should take the initiative to start it. It takes approximately one month for the IRB committee to review projects, so plan to have this step completed prior to beginning the Capstone Project.

In addition, each student and faculty member must complete a free, online training module on professional conduct for researchers. Again, this is something you should do PRIOR to starting the Capstone Project.

You can find both the IRB application form and a link to the Required IRB Training here: [IRB Website](#). Please note that Rowan now uses an electronic IRB submission process.

## Elements of a Complete Final Paper

While every Capstone Project will be different, each student's Final Paper should contain the following items and follow the structure outlined below. Your paper should be written in APA style, which is more inclusive than just citations. APA includes the style of your writing, your point of view, and sometimes your word choice. Your paper should mostly be written in 3<sup>rd</sup> person, although 1<sup>st</sup> person is required in some aspects of the paper such as the overview/purpose of your project and certain pieces of the discussion. In addition, you should write in the active voice and not the passive voice.

For further explanation and guidance on APA format, please visit the website <http://www.apastyle.org>.

### I. Title Page

- A. Descriptive and accurate title of project
- B. Name of student and Faculty Advisor
- C. Name of the degree program from which you are graduating
- D. Date of project completion

### II. Abstract (approximately 150 words)

- A. Project Title
- B. Purpose (may be a research question or project goal)
- C. Methods/Strategy (may be a description of research methods or the overall strategy employed by the student to complete the project)
- D. Results/Outcome (may be a statistical analysis, qualitative data analysis, or description of the outcome of the strategy employed by the student)



E. Discussion (impact of the project and why it was important)

### III. Introduction

- A. Overview of the scope of the project as a whole
- B. Explanation and/or definition of key ideas and terms
- C. Purpose of the research or project

### IV. Review of Literature

Note: this section is a synthesis of all of the published professional literature on your topic. The goals of the Literature Review are to provide the reader with background knowledge of the project topic and demonstrate that you have developed an expertise in this topic area before implementing your project. The literature that you read and review will also guide you as you develop your project by providing relevant source material and examples for you to draw upon in your own work. You should divide the Literature Review into subsections by content area and reference each statement that you make and work that you cite using APA guidelines.

### V. Methods

- A. Description of the nature of the project (i.e. survey, program development, implementation or evaluation, curriculum development). Overview of the scope of the project as a whole  
Explanation and/or definition of key ideas and terms
- B. Description of the population impacted by project (i.e. study participants, program participants, recipients of curriculum or resource being developed).
- C. Description of how data will be collected and analyzed (if applicable)
- D. Description of how resources and/or materials will be created, found or used (if applicable)

### VI. Results

- A. Description of the process and outcomes of the activities described in

the Methods section.

B. Presentation of data collected if applicable

C. Description of data analysis if applicable

\*\*If you created an online presentation, blog, webpage etc., insert the web address here.

\*\*If you created a curriculum/lesson plans etc., insert See Appendix and attach documents

## VII. Discussion

- A. Response to the project purpose or question: How was the research question answered? How were project goals met? To what degree was the study purpose met?
- B. Implications of the outcome of the project
  1. What are the major implications of this project for the field of wellness and health promotion?
  2. How may they be used to influence the development or delivery of wellness programs or services?
  3. Could they influence policies?
  4. How will the results of this project influence you as a professional and practitioner? What might you do (or not do) as a result? How did this project shape your attitudes or intentions as a wellness practitioner?
  5. What were the limitations of this project or study? What should the reader be aware of as (s)he attempts to interpret or apply the results of this project?
  6. What might you, the student, have done differently if you did this project again? What recommendations do you have for other practitioners or researchers who are interested in exploring this topic?

## VIII. References List in APA Style

## **Form A: Proposal Guidelines**

You must follow this outline and your proposal must describe your proposed project in **approximately 2- 3 pages**. You need to provide enough detail to allow the Faculty Advisor to understand the scope of the project and what will be required to complete it, but you should NOT be doing extensive research or planning work until it is approved.

**Cover Page:** Your name, email address, telephone number and projected date for beginning Capstone

- I. Proposed Title
- II. Purpose of the Project
- III. Rationale for pursuing this project (i.e. why is it important-demonstrated by research). There should be some mention of research pertaining to your topic although certainly not an entire literature review.
- IV. Previous experience with this topic (such as training, certifications, prior study, work experience)
- V. Resources needed for this project including access to participants, facilities and materials
- VI. Method of completing project (i.e. what you plan to do, how you propose to meet the purpose/goal of the project)
- VII. Permission or Approval needed for this project
- VIII. Permission from supervisors, boards or committees.
- IX. Permission from parents/guardians (if minors)
- X. Institutional Review Board approval \*\*\*Please see the checklist at the end of the document.
- XI. Project Timeline
- XII. Timeline of activities to be completed PRIOR to registering
- XIII. Timeline of activities to be completed DURING the 8-week

Capstone Project course

**FORM B: Capstone Approval Letter**

**Rowan University -MA Wellness and Lifestyle Management:**

(You may complete this form as a Word Document or attach information on a separate sheet.)

Student Name:

Banner ID #:

Expected Date to begin the Capstone Project :

E-mail:

Telephone Number:

Brief Review of Project:

I have worked with this student in discussing and planning this course and approve of the student's proposal. I agree that I will work with the student over the course of the Capstone as his or her advisor.

Faculty Advisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS:

Date

APPROVED  DENIED

Student Name:

Capstone Date:

**HLTH 37550 Capstone Course  
Form C-Evaluation for Capstone**

Project Purpose/Significance:

- The project is purposeful and beneficial toward improving the wellness and health of the community
- The project is clear, appropriate and comprehensive
- The development of the project is grounded in theory and models relevant to on health promotion

Comments:

Quality of Project/Design:

- The project was original and compelling
- The project was interesting
- The project was uninteresting and not original

Comments:

Review of Literature:

- Exceptionally thorough and highly relevant
- Generally thorough and appropriate
- Literature is marginally related to the problem or project

Comments:

Description of Conclusions and Recommendations:

- Clear and convincing
- Unclear and bear little relationship to findings

Comments:

Description of Limitations:

- Clear and convincing
- Unclear and bear little relationship to findings

Comments:

Format of Project/Paper (Writing and Organization)

- Exceptional, well formatted, exceptionally well written and application of APA style
- Good, well formatted, generally well written and APA style
- Below standard and needs improvement

Comments:

## **Form D: Personal Reflection Paper**

The purpose is to reflect and critique your experience. This is to be completed at the end of your capstone and uploaded into Canvas:  
*Assignment PRP*

### **Learning Implications**

Describe the experiences and areas in which you felt the most personal and professional growth. Why did you identify these areas? Be specific. Give examples.

What have you learned about the field of wellness and lifestyle management as a profession?

What have you learned about your specific areas of interest and career path?

What skills/abilities were most important for your Capstone Experience? Why were these most important?

What courses, internships, other experiential learning opportunities were helpful in completing this Capstone Experience? Why were these helpful?

What other courses, information, or experiential learning opportunities would have been helpful? Why would they have been helpful?

Did you feel academically and personally prepared? Explain.

### **Critical Reflection**

What skills and abilities did you develop during this process?

What skills and abilities are still in need of improvement?

What challenges did you face (personal and professional challenges) and how did you resolve them? -

What did you learn from resolving your challenges?

What impact has this Capstone Experience had on you personally and professionally?

In what ways do you plan to contribute to the of wellness and lifestyle management?

### **Critique**

Did your Capstone Experience meet your personal and professional expectations? Explain?

What were your expectations about your Capstone Experience? Did your perspective change during and after your experience? If so, how?

What advice would you give to a student beginning his/her Senior Capstone Experience?

### **Final Thoughts**

What is your future direction now that you have completed this Capstone Experience?

What are your final comments on the Capstone Experience as a whole?