

# Colorado Mesa University Capstone Guidelines



## I. INTRODUCTION

This manual provides guidelines to aid in the written portion of the capstone project at Colorado Mesa University that will be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies and CMU Tomlinson Library. It addresses technical aspects of writing documents such as the abstract, bibliography and title page. It also outlines required forms and signatures.

## II. PROCESS

### A. STYLE MANUAL REQUIREMENTS

Graduate students doing a capstone project should follow the style manual approved by their department. Manuals currently approved by graduate departments are available in Tomlinson Library. The document should conform to both the chosen style manual and the *CMU Capstone Guidelines*. If there are differences, students should follow the guidelines in this document.

Style manuals approved by the graduate departments are:

APA: American Psychological Association Style

AMA: American Medical Association Style

1. Business                    APA
2. Health Sciences        APA
3. Teacher Education    APA
4. Kinesiology            AMA or APA

### B. RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN OR ANIMAL SUBJECTS

If the research being conducted for a capstone project involves either human or animal subjects, federal law requires that the project be reviewed and approved – in advance – by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human subjects or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for animal subjects. Detailed information about the form and applications, training programs, federal legislation, and IRB/IACUC materials can be found at the University's Sponsored Programs website:

<http://www.coloradomesa.edu/irsp/sponsored-programs/index.html>. Students will receive a letter granting approval or indicating that approval is not needed. A sample letter appears as Appendix A.

### **C. PLAGIARISM**

All sources must be cited whenever use is made of the material of others, even if the use is limited and copyright permission is not necessary. Direct use of the work of others without citing the source is plagiarism. The University approved definition of plagiarism can be found in the *CMU Catalog*:

*Plagiarism is the act of appropriating the written, artistic, or musical composition of another, or portions thereof; or the ideas, language, or symbols of same and passing them off as the product of one's own mind. Plagiarism includes not only the exact duplication of another's work but also the lifting of substantial or essential portion thereof.*

Graduate students writing a capstone project are required to sign the Non-Plagiarism Affirmation when the work is submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies. A copy of this form appears as Appendix B.

### **III. FORMAT REQUIREMENTS**

#### **A. Types Styles and Fonts**

1. Type style and font must be consistent throughout the capstone documentation
2. Script type may not be used
3. Any unusual type style should be approved in advance by the Director of Graduate Studies or the department
4. Recommended fonts:
  - a. Sans Serif: Arial 12
  - b. Serif: Times New Roman 12

#### **B. Margins**

1. All margins must be 1" (top, sides, and bottom)
2. The right margin is ragged (not justified)

#### **C. Pagination**

1. Page numbers should be centered at the bottom of the page approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the edge of the page and within the margin
2. Only the Reference pages need page numbers
3. Pages are numbered with Arabic numerals

#### **D. Spacing and Indention**

1. Double-space
  - a. Body of abstract
  - b. Between entries in the references list
2. Single-space bibliography entries
3. Indent first line of paragraph  $\frac{1}{2}$ "

#### **IV. ORGANIZATION**

##### **A. Title Page**

1. A sample page appears as Appendix C
2. Bold type is not used
3. No abbreviations or punctuation should be used
4. The title is in all capital letters, centered 2" from the top of the page
5. A title more than 4 ½" is divided into multiple lines, double-spaced and in inverted pyramid form
6. "Submitted by" block contains the word "by" on one line and the student's name on the second line. It is centered on the page approximately eight double-spaced lines from the first line of the title and is double-spaced
7. "Degree and graduating term" block is approximately seven double-spaced lines from the student name. It contains the following seven lines:
  - a. A capstone project
  - b. submitted in partial fulfillment
  - c. of the requirements for the degree of
  - d. [name of degree] in the Department of [name of department]
  - e. Colorado Mesa University
  - f. Grand Junction, Colorado
  - g. [graduating term and year]

##### **B. Committee Approval Page**

1. A Sample Committee Approval page appears as Appendix D.
2. A Committee Approval page is required.
3. Advisor and committee member names are indented approximately ½" from the left margin.
4. Titles before or after the names of advisor and committee members are not permitted (examples – Dr., Professor, Ph.D.).
5. Elements of the page:
  - a. Title of capstone project
    - i. Centered 2" from top of page
    - ii. All capital letters
    - iii. Single-spaced if more than one line required
  - b. Name of student as it appears on the title page
  - c. Required statement
  - d. Approval signatures, printed names and departments of advisor, committee members, department head and Director of Graduate Studies with dates approved

##### **C. Abstract**

1. Sample abstract page appears as Appendix E.
2. The abstract is a brief statement of the essence of the capstone project and should emphasize the results and conclusion of the research.
3. The acceptable length of the abstract is 150-300 words.

4. Bold print is not used.
5. The heading "ABSTRACT" is in all capital letters centered 2" from the top of the page.
6. Three blank lines single-spaced must be between the heading and the title.
7. The title must be in all capital letters and centered.
8. The title must match the title on the Title Page.
9. Three blank lines single-spaced must be between the title and the text.
10. The text of the abstract must be double-spaced with paragraph indentions.

**D. References**

1. A sample page appears as Appendix F.
2. The heading "REFERENCES" is in all capital letters centered 2" from the top of the page.
3. Three blank lines single-spaced must be between the heading and the first entry.
4. Entries are aligned flush with the left margin.
5. Entry spacing should follow that of the approved style manual for the discipline.
6. The style should follow that of the approved style manual for the discipline.

**V. CAPSTONE PROJECT DOCUMENTATION**

**A. A record of the graduate capstone project will be submitted to the CMU Archives at Tomlinson Library.**

**B. Required elements to be submitted to the Library:**

1. Title page
2. Committee Approval page
3. Abstract
4. Bibliography of references consulted
5. IRB/IACUC letter (if necessary)

**C. Electronic Copy:**

1. Capstone documentation must be converted to PDF format.
2. The PDF is submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies who will deliver it to the Library.

**VI. APPENDICES TO THIS DOCUMENT**

- A. IRB Sample Letter
- B. Non-Plagiarism Affirmation
- C. Sample Title Page
- D. Sample Committee Approval Page
- E. Sample Abstract Page
- F. References

**Appendix A: Sample Letter From IRB:**

TO: Person Doing Research

FROM: Chris Belcher  
Grant Compliance Specialist

SUBJECT: IRB Approval – Expedited

DATE: February 29, 2017

SUBJECT: **Protocol 18-007: Measuring the thoughts of people**

The Colorado Mesa University Institutional Review Board (IRB) also known as the Human Subjects Committee has approved the above study. This project is deemed expedited in accordance with 45 CFR 46.110. No further IRB review is necessary unless modifications to the protocol related to human research subjects are proposed.

**IRB Number:** 18-007 This number is the protocol number that should be used in all correspondence with the IRB regarding this study.

**Expedited Start Date: April 1, 2017**

**Expedited End Date: April 1, 2018**

**Consent Form:** If you are using a consent form, all research subjects must use the approved and stamped consent form. You are responsible for maintaining signed consent forms for each research subject for a period of at least three years after study completion.

**Mandatory Reporting to the IRB:** The principal investigator must report, within five business days, any serious problem, adverse effect, or outcome that occurs with frequency or degree of severity greater than that anticipated. In addition, the principal investigator must report any event or series of events that prompt the temporary or permanent suspension of a research project involving human subjects or any deviations from the approved protocol.

**Amendments/Modification:** All amendments/modifications of protocols involving human subjects must have prior IRB approval, except those involving the prevention of immediate harm to a subject. Amendments/modifications for the prevention of immediate harm to a subject must be reported within 24 hours to the IRB.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 248-1485.

## Appendix B: Non-Plagiarism Affirmation

### NON-PLAGIARISM AFFIRMATION

EACH GRADUATE STUDENT MUST SIGN THE STATEMENT BELOW AFFIRMING THAT HE OR SHE HAS NOT BEEN GUILTY OF PLAGIARISM IN PREPARING HIS OR HER CAPSTONE PROJECT.

*Plagiarism is the act of appropriating the written, artistic, or musical composition of another, or portions thereof; or the ideas, language, or symbols of same and passing them off as the product of one's own mind. Plagiarism includes not only the exact duplication of another's work but also the lifting of substantial or essential portion thereof.*

I understand that if plagiarism is subsequently discovered in the preparation of this document, Colorado Mesa University, may, after a hearing, take appropriate action against me including possible revocation of my graduate degree. Academic Dishonesty sanctions are outlined in *The Maverick Guide* page 16. <http://coloradomesa.edu/student-services/documents/MaverickGuide.pdf>

I, \_\_\_\_\_, a candidate for the degree of \_\_\_\_\_, affirm that I have NOT engaged in plagiarism.

PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix C: Sample Title Page**

[TITLE OF CAPSTONE PROJECT]

[ALL CAPS]

By

Joseph R. Maverick

A capstone project

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

[name of degree] in the Department of [name of department]

Colorado Mesa University

Grand Junction, Colorado

[Term, Year]

**Appendix D: Sample Committee Approval Page**

[TITLE OF CAPSTONE PROJECT]  
[ALL CAPS]

[student's name as it appears on the title page]

The final copy of this capstone project has been examined by the signatories, and we find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards of scholarly work in the Department of [name of department]. It has, therefore, been approved as meeting the requirements for the Degree of [name of degree].

APPROVED:

Capstone Advisor:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
[Advisor's name, Department]

Committee Chair:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
[Committee member name, Department]

ACCEPTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
[Name, title]

ACCEPTED BY THE DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
[Name, title]



## Appendix E: Sample Abstract Page

### ABSTRACT

TITLE IN CAPITAL LETTERS, CENTERED AND DOUBLE-SPACED

IF MORE THAN ONE LINE

The title of the abstract must match the title on the title page exactly. Letters must be capitalized and, if more than 4½” in inverted pyramid form.

The abstract is a summary of the research and includes the purpose of the project, pertinent findings, and significance of the paper. As a brief overview, an abstract gives the reader concise information that conveys the importance of the research.

The word “ABSTRACT” is centered 2” from the top of the page above the title. The body of the abstract is double-spaced. There are three single spaces between the heading and the title, and between the title and the body of the abstract.

## Appendix F: Sample Reference Page

### REFERENCES

Bauslaugh, G. (2016). *The right to die: The courageous Canadians who gave us the right to a dignified death*. Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd.

Dietze, T.R., Rose, F.F., & Moore, T.A. (2016). Maternal variables associated with physiologic stress and perinatal complications in preterm infants. *Journal of Neonatal – Perinatal Medicine*, 9(3), 271-277.

<http://doi:10.3233/NPM-16915134>

Double-spaced to follow APA (2018). Follow spacing guidelines of your selected style manual.