Capstone Project Guidelines for Graduate Level
School of Public and International Affairs

Introduction and Basic Concepts

The capstone project is the culminating assessment of candidates for the Master of Public Administration/Master of Diplomacy and International Affairs degrees. The Capstone project comes at the end of the program as a final touch, providing students with an opportunity to apply everything learned from course work, internships, summer programs and past job experience toward completing a comprehensive report on assigned topic. Its purpose is to confirm the competencies of above-mentioned degree-seeking candidates with emphasis on research and planning. This is done in a real-world agency setting where participants can apply concepts and techniques learned over the course of their academic study. This project takes the students into the practical work of collective research with the final product giving them an opportunity of working in a group, feeling the interdependence of project contributors on the quality of everyone are input. To enroll and take the Capstone project, the students should be in their final semester, having completed all required courses.

Students will be awarded 18 ECTS for a successfully completed capstone project. Capstone I (6ECTS) + Capstone II (12 ECTS).

Participants will work in the groups consisting of **three** students.

Capstone projects are **not**:
- Internships
- Theses
- Descriptive reports of an agency or organization.

Capstone projects can be "service learning". For instance, participants might work with park cleaning crews or low-level elements of an organization to observe and report on their work lives. The participant might be embedded into work crews, but their research role will be disclosed as an ethical matter.

Academic Aims and Learning Outcomes:

Working on a team project, students are expected to:
- Understand the assignment and objectives of the project.
- Apply appropriate methods and strategies to collect relevant data and information.
- Increase and apply knowledge surrounding the project topic.
- Gain understanding of how organizations work and expand professional networks.
- Manage roles and responsibilities among team members to produce optimal results.

- Manage appropriate communication with mentor, including periodic and interim reports
- Prepare and deliver a professional product (report, brochure, manual) within an agreed timeframe and on deadline.
- Prepare and deliver a formal presentation at the end of the semester to an audience, consisting of students and faculty.

Final product of the capstone course:
The final product of the capstone project is a report prepared for the potential client such as ministries, agencies, NGOs, local branches of international organizations, private companies and corporations.

Commitments and professionalism
As the Capstone project involves working with a real organization on a real issue, the class environment will emphasize professionalism. The following recommendations should be seriously taken into consideration:

- Deadlines are firm. Unless arranged in advance, any drafts or deliverables are due by email prior to consultation sessions, as specified.
- All work will emphasize good writing, formatting, attention to detail and mistake-free work. Work submitted should be free of typos, incorrect grammar and other avoidable errors. All work should be self-edited and proofread before submission.
- If you miss a meeting, it is your responsibility to get a report from your team. If you work and expect to miss several consultation sessions, or are not able to fully participate in teamwork, you perhaps should not take this course this semester.
- To be in this project and to be on a team, each person must commit to this significant time. Your team should schedule and hold a regular meeting outside of class. In addition, there will be periods, particularly toward the end of the semester, when you will need to devote large blocks of time to the project.
- Working on a team can be difficult. Ideally you will get along with the other members of your team. But that may not always be true. Recognize that this is a professional, rather than a personal relationship. If you are not getting along with a team member, try to use the opportunity to problem solve. If it gets to the point that it is disrupting the project work, bring it to attention of your supervisor.

Readings: Readings may be assigned specific to your project and sector. However, for the most part you will be doing your own reading as necessary to brief yourself on the project background.

Final Presentations: All teams are required to compile, rehearse and present their project work before their university community. The presentation will take the form of an "oral defense," in which a panel of faculty and practitioners will interrogate students on their process and conclusions.

Assessment/ Evaluation
Final product quality will mean success of each one of the group members.
The following levels for assessment are envisaged:
- self-assessment – each member of the group fills in the appropriate questionnaire
- students conduct mutual anonym assessment of each other
- academic board assessment of the report and each one of the group members
- client assessment of the report

Capstone supervision
Students should complete this requirement under the supervision of two supervisors: a faculty member and a representative of the partner organization.
There are three key stakeholders involved in capstone projects:
- The primary stakeholder is the participant, whose role is to manage and ultimately produce a project result.
- The second key stakeholder is the agency overseer, who is to support the project with expert direction and access to resources required to complete the project.
- The third stakeholder is the faculty member, who provides academic support and evaluates the project outcome.

Project Logistics
The Coordinator of the Graduate Programs provides a logistical support as an initial contact point between partner organizations and capstone teams, helping to match the topics and organizational needs as well as organizing the final presentation of the project.

Approval of capstone topic
The capstone team must obtain approval of the capstone topic from academic supervisor. The students will then submit to the Coordinator of the Graduate Programs 'Capstone Topic Approval Form' signed by academic supervisor.

Capstone project evaluation and final presentation
The grades Pass (P) and Fail (F) are used for Capstone project.
The final grade is calculated in the following way: 80 % of the grade given by the faculty supervisor and 20% of the grade given by the representative of the partner organization. At the end of the semester, the supervisors will submit a signed 'Evaluation Form' for the capstone project with written comments.
The group grade is worth 30%, and the individual grade is worth 70% of a student's final grade.
The final presentation should take place no later than final two to three weeks of students' last semester.

Capstone Paper length and format

The capstone paper should be between 4000 and 7000 words (by individual) including footnotes but excluding bibliography, unless otherwise agreed upon with the supervisor. It is required that

students use Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* and *The Chicago Manual of Style* as technical guides.

Students must adhere to the following standards and format:
- The capstone paper must be submitted in English.
- The capstone paper must be typed on standard sized paper. The left margin should be 32 mm – 39 mm (1.25 - 1.5 inches). Top, bottom and right-hand margins should be 25mm (1.1 inches).
- Students must use 12-point font size and Times New Roman or Arial typeface. Students may use 14 or 16-point type to identify chapters, sections and sub-sections.
- The capstone paper should be double-spaced. Quotations longer than two lines should be single spaced and indented from other text. Footnotes and the bibliography should be single-spaced.
- The capstone paper must have clearly divided chapters or sections. Students will use a new page at the beginning of each new chapter or section.
- The pages of the capstone paper must be numbered consecutively and centered at the bottom of the page.

Contents of the Capstone Paper

The project paper should contain the following sections in the following order:
- Title page
- Approval page
- Statement of authenticity
- Abstract page
- Table of contents
- Text: An introduction, the chapters or sections forming the body of the paper and a conclusion
- Appendices
- Bibliography and/or references
- Vita (optional)

Title page
The title page should include the following information centered on the page:
- the name of the University
- the graduate program
- the award for which the capstone is submitted (i.e. the Master of Arts in Diplomacy and International Affairs)
- the title and subtitle
- the students' full names which should be the same as shown on the cover page, the approval page and the name required on your diploma
- the contact address (contact e-mail)
- the city and date of submission

This page should be neither numbered nor counted (see Appendix 1).

Approval page

The approval page names the supervision committee members and the Dean of the School. This page is neither numbered nor counted (see Appendix 2).

Statement of authenticity page
The authenticity statement asserts that the paper is the work of the students and that all sources are appropriately cited. This page is neither numbered nor counted (see Appendix 3).

Copyright statement
In submitting their final capstone project paper, students should sign a copyright page. With this signature, the student authorizes the ADA University to record, maintain and ensure proper access to the student's work.

Abstract
An abstract will summarize the research as well as the principal points to be raised in the paper. The abstract should include a short explanation of why the students chose the topic, what the students hope to accomplish, the methodology used, and the conclusion. The abstract should be headed with the title of the research topic, the students' full names, the degree for which the capstone paper is submitted and the year of submission. A set of five keywords or key phrases should be included at the end of the abstract for indexing and cataloging purposes.

Table of contents
The Table of Contents must contain the following sections with page numbers: introduction, chapters and/or sections and sub-sections, a list of tables, a list of figures, appendices, and bibliography.

Text of capstone paper
 The body of the text must clearly indicate chapters, sections, and sub-sections. Each chapter, or section, must begin on a new page.

Footnotes
The authors must consistently follow the citation format regarding in-text citations, footnotes and bibliography.

Bibliography
The bibliography must fully and accurately include all sources used.

Vita (optional)
The vita includes the academic and professional background of the students: full birthdate, educational institutions attended, diplomas obtained, professional positions held, and scholastic and professional honors. Exclude the degree currently pursued.

The Deadlines:

- The Information Session will be held on the first week of the last semester. During the information session students will get acquainted with the rules, guidelines, deadlines, and the list of preliminary organizations;
- The list of organizations and topics is sent by the ***second week of the last semester;***
- The students form their groups and decide on the organization they want to work with by the ***end of the second week of last semester;***
- Students should submit the Capstone Topic Approval Form (see Appendix 4) no later than ***the third week of last semester***
- The final presentation of the project should be held no later than ***final two or three weeks of the last semester.***

Appendix 1. Example of title page

ADA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
MASTER OF ARTS IN DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

CAPSTONE PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

New Security Threats in Caspian Basin Region

Gunay Mammadova

Contact e-mail gmammadova@ada.edu.az

Baku, April 25th, 2011

ADA UNIVERSITY

PROGRAM
STUDENTS' NAMES/SURNAMES

APPROVED:

Faculty Supervisor: _____

Organization Supervisor: _____

 Dean of the School: _____

Date: _____

STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

I have read ADA University's policy on plagiarism and certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the content of this paper, entitled (insert title here), is all my own work and does not contain any unacknowledged work.

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Date:_____

Capstone Topic Approval Form

Students' Names/Surnames: _____

_____

_____

Program: _____

Capstone Project Topic: _____

_____

Professional Supervisor: _____
                              Name/Surname

Professional Supervisor's contact details

 Email:
 Phone number:

 Approved by

 **Academic
 Supervisor:** _____   _____
                  Name/Surname   Signature

Date: _____
                                                        DD/MM/YY