Writing Certificate: Capstone Mentor Guide

The Magid Center for Undergraduate Writing is pleased to offer students in the Writing Certificate Program the unique experience of working one-on-one with UI faculty mentors to complete an independent writing project.

Any tenured, tenure-track, visiting, or adjunct professor/lecturer is eligible to mentor a capstone project, as are qualified community members. All mentors must be approved by the Associate Director of the Magid Center prior to the start of the term in which the work will be completed.

If you are receiving this handout, one of our students is interested in working with you on their project. In an effort to provide detailed information about the responsibilities of a mentor (and to share a little more about the Capstone experience as a whole) please read the following outline and direct any questions to Daniel Khalastchi, Associate Director of the Magid Center, by stopping into 21 Schaeffer Hall or calling the office at 319.384.1328.

About the Capstone Project:

- The Capstone Independent Writing Experience serves as the culminating project for students enrolled in the Writing Certificate Program at the University of Iowa.

- The Capstone project will result in a substantial portfolio of the student’s own writing. Past projects include screenplays, collections of poetry, policy reports, songs for rock and hip-hop albums, linked essays, graphic novels, and even professional handbooks for small businesses and nonprofit organizations. Students have also used their Capstone projects to help showcase their talents prior to entering the job market—students have edited and printed anthologies, designed websites, and even learned to record and disseminate podcasts—all with the goal of learning skills they know will benefit their future careers.

- As long as the final project is focused on writing (academic, professional, creative, or a combination), the content of the work is up to the individual student and the mentor.

- Students can enroll in the Capstone project for 1, 2, or 3 s.h.
  - 1 s.h. students must meet with their mentor at least four times during the semester.
  - 2 s.h. students must meet with their mentor at least six times during the semester.
  - 3 s.h. students must meet with their mentor at least eight times during the semester.

- Length, format, and other project specifics will be determined by the student and the mentor.
Faculty mentors and Capstone students must arrange and schedule their meeting times.

Faculty mentors submit grades via MAUI at the end of the term, evaluating the student based on the effort given throughout the semester. A grading rubric is attached at the end of this document to assist you in assessing your student’s project; it is also available as a PDF at http://magidcenter.uiowa.edu/certificate/capstone-forms.

Students and mentors may see samples of past Capstone projects by contacting Daniel Khalastchi in 21 Schaeffer Hall at daniel-khalastchi@uiowa.edu or 319.384.1328.

Students must have a faculty mentor for their project and must submit the Writing Capstone Proposal and Mentor Agreement form prior to registering for the course.

**Important Deadlines:**
General deadlines are below; semester-specific deadlines are available at http://magidcenter.uiowa.edu/certificate/capstone-forms.

- Student and faculty mentor must both sign the Capstone Proposal and Mentor Agreement form and submit it to 21 Schaeffer Hall by the Thursday of week 1 of the semester (or of the 12-week summer session).

- Faculty mentor must sign the Capstone Midterm Progress Report and the student must submit it (along with a working draft of their project) to 21 Schaeffer Hall by 4:30pm on the Friday during week 7 of the semester (or week 6 of the 12-week summer session).

- Faculty mentor must review and provide feedback on the first deposit of both the Capstone Project and its Introduction during week 12 of the semester (or week 9 of the 12-week summer session).

- Faculty mentor must review and evaluate the final deposit of both the Capstone Project and its Introduction, which students will submit to the mentor by the Friday before finals week. A second copy of the final deposit must be submitted electronically to the Magid Center by emailing it to magid-writing@uiowa.edu by 4:30pm the Friday before finals week. If the meaning of the project is intrinsically tied to its physical form, a hard copy may be submitted in 21 Schaeffer Hall instead.

- Faculty mentor will submit grades in MAUI by the appropriate deadline.
Expectations for Capstone Mentors and Students:

- Writing Capstone students will approach faculty mentors with a draft of their proposal, ready to explain their project, answer questions, and provide reasoning as to why they are requesting to work with the mentor.

- Students and faculty mentors will work together on scheduling meetings. Students who miss meetings without advance notice will see their grade negatively impacted.

- Students and faculty mentors will work together to define goals for individual meetings and set due dates for the upcoming term.

- Faculty mentors will provide insight and guidance throughout the term by reading and commenting on student work, answering questions, and suggesting external resources that might prove valuable to the overall project.

- Students will always submit work to be read/commented on by their faculty mentor at least 72 hours before their next meeting. Mentors are asked to present comments in a timely fashion. Students will submit work via email unless other arrangements have been agreed upon.

- Students will keep faculty mentors informed of major deadlines.

- Faculty and students will be able to contact Daniel Khalastchi, Associate Director of the Writing Certificate Program, by stopping into 21 Schaeffer Hall or calling the office at 319.384.1328 if there are any questions.

Thank you for your time, and we appreciate your consideration.
WRIT:4000 Grading Rubric

Capstone projects are unique and specific to each individual student. While the Magid Center believes in a given mentor’s ability to assess their own student’s work, a general set of guidelines for grading these projects is outlined below. Please keep them in mind as you prepare to calculate and submit your final grades.

Additionally, remember that the overall project assignment is defined by the following: students set and attend appropriate number of meetings, submit midterm draft and progress report by week 7, submit first deposit of complete project draft and introduction by week 12, submit final deposit of complete revised project draft and introduction by week 16, and actively engage with their work throughout the term.

As always, if there are any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact Associate Director Daniel Khalastchi at 319.384.1328 (daniel-khalastchi@uiowa.edu).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>A-Level Work</th>
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<th>C-Level Work</th>
<th>D-Level Work</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of Work (50%)</strong></td>
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<td>The writing is cohesive and clear. The work shows imagination and ingenuity, uses rich language that is free of major grammatical mistakes, and displays complexity of invention. The writing exceeds expectations.</td>
<td>The writing is mostly cohesive and clear. The work shows imagination and uses rich language, but has enough grammatical mistakes to be distracting. While the writing exceeds certain expectations, there are specific areas that still need improvement.</td>
<td>The writing is often unclear and/or unorganized. The work shows imagination, but has enough grammatical mistakes to make the project's intent difficult to decipher. The writing meets only the basic expectations.</td>
<td>The writing is unclear and unorganized. The work is unimaginative and has major grammatical mistakes evident throughout the project. The writing falls short of expectations.</td>
<td>The writing lacks basic clarity and cohesiveness, and/or the project is simply not completed. The work shows minimal effort. The writing has many major grammatical mistakes.</td>
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<td><strong>Participation and Engagement (30%)</strong></td>
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<td>The student attended all appointments and participated actively during each one-on-one meeting (missing no more than 1/3 of scheduled appointments).</td>
<td>The student participated in one-on-one meetings (missing no more than 1/3 of scheduled appointments).</td>
<td>The student did not actively participate in each one-on-one session (and/or missed 2/3 of scheduled appointments).</td>
<td>The student did not actively participate in conversations with their mentor (and/or missed more than 2/3)</td>
<td>The student did not meet with their mentor and was not invested in the project.</td>
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<td>Revision (20%)</td>
<td>The final draft of the project and its introduction reflect substantial and thoughtful revisions made throughout the term.</td>
<td>The final draft of the project and its introduction reflect some thoughtful revisions made throughout the term.</td>
<td>The final draft of the project and its introduction display cursory or superficial revisions made throughout the term.</td>
<td>The final draft of the project and its introduction show little or no evidence of revisions having been made to the work at all throughout the term.</td>
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meeting with their mentor, submitted work on time, remained invested in the project for the duration of the term, and kept their mentor appraised (in advance) if a change in schedule was necessary.

submitted work on time, and remained invested in the project for the duration of the term; the student kept their mentor appraised of necessary changes to their meeting schedule, but did so erratically or at the last minute.

submitted work late or irregularly, did not remain invested in the project for the duration of the term, and did not keep their mentor appraised of schedule changes.

of scheduled appointments), submitted work irregularly or not at all, was not invested in the project for the duration of the term, and was not in regular communication with their mentor.