



Preparing Your Capstone Project Proposal

To start your preparation for a Capstone project, consider whether your project will be based in

- An independent project in conjunction with a faculty member in your major
- A required Capstone/Senior Design/Senior Seminar course in your major
 - Students may use their work in the major-required capstone courses as the basis of their Honors Capstone, although students must push their major capstone past what is required in the course.

Students may complete Capstone projects within the following realms

- Academic research with a faculty member
- Applied research, typically associated with the production of a physical product
- Creative work, such as film, dance, fictional writing, and music

Preparing an Honors Research Capstone

For independent research projects, students must identify a faculty member to serve as their faculty mentor on the project, and students that have secured a faculty mentor before starting their Honors Capstone project have the greatest success. Faculty members should be experts on the research topic and be available to work with students across two semesters when the work is conducted.

When planning a research topic for your project, use the following considerations

- Have I gained substantial knowledge about this topic in my coursework?
- Can my faculty member advise me in this research topic?
- Do I have access to the materials or people necessary for this research?
- Do I know how to collect, create, and analyze information to answer my research question?
- Can I complete this research within the given time period?

The research problem should be stated in the form of a researchable question or hypothesis and then it is possible to operationalize the question or issue.

Sources of research questions:

- From class information
- From clinical experiences, labs, or observations
- From journal articles
- From prior research on the subject
- Shared interests with a faculty member in your major department

Your Honors Capstone Research topic:

- Should be stated objectively, clearly, concisely, simply.
- Should answer a question that is meaningful.
- Should ask a question that can be answered.

Tips for creating a high-quality Honors Capstone Project

- Look for ways to make your research question narrow and manageable. You are writing a high-quality undergraduate research paper, not a book, and you need to be able to cover your topic thoroughly in the timeframe you have. Keep in mind, too, that you've got to read the existing research on your topic. If your topic is too big, there will be more existing research than you have time to read.
- Be mindful that your research project must have an original element. It cannot be a reproduction of existing research or a literature research synthesis paper.
- Determine appropriate methodology for answering your question in conjunction with your faculty mentor. Where will your information likely come from? How much and what kind of data will you collect? How will you analyze it? If you will be doing statistical analysis, what kind of statistical analysis will you do? If you are doing any kind of research involving human subjects, even a survey, you will need Institutional Review Board approval. If you are administering a questionnaire, what are your questions?

Capstone Projects Associated with Major Course Work

For students using major capstone coursework as the basis of their capstone projects, considering the following.

- If the topic of the project in the course is unknown until that semester, then the student should register for both HON 4497 (Capstone proposal) and HON 4499 (in the same semester).
- If the student can develop their project idea the semester before the course, then the student should register for HON 4497 the semester before the major capstone course.

