

SENIOR YEAR AWAY?

Students who plan to study abroad (or to participate in off-campus internships or other experiences) during their senior year should consider completing the Capstone Experience in their junior year.

Such students should meet with a Commonwealth College advisor as early as possible to discuss their plans and make appropriate arrangements.

GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION

To graduate "with distinction," Commonwealth College students must submit their CE manuscripts and any artifacts to Commonwealth College for forwarding to the University Archives.

DOCUMENTATION

Upon completion of all research, students must document their results in either a thesis or project manuscript.

Manuscripts must be typed and artifacts labeled according to the guidelines outlined on our website at:

www.comcol.umass.edu/cedocumentation

General guidelines for the manuscripts are noted below; formats may vary slightly in content or length per discipline (e.g., scientific research vs. creative endeavors).

Thesis Manuscripts

1. Title Page
2. Abstract (2 copies)
3. Introduction and review of the literature of previous researchers
4. Methodology or critical approach
5. Presentation and discussion of research results
6. Conclusions and implications for future study
7. Bibliography
8. Appendix (optional)

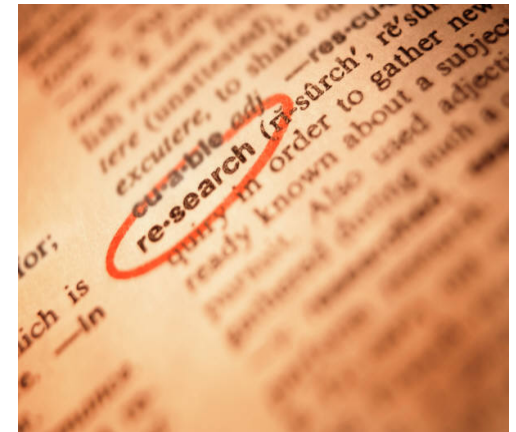
Project Manuscripts

1. Title Page
2. Abstract (2 copies)
3. Minimally two of these:
 - o Contextual Information, e.g., a literature review or a discussion of theoretical or artistic influences
 - o Process Information, e.g., what did you wish to achieve? How did you set out to achieve the goals?
 - o Reflections, e.g., what did you learn or contribute? What changes would you make in hindsight? Implications or suggestions for the future?
4. Appendix (optional)

A project manuscript must accompany all project artifacts (including written artifacts not in thesis form). The manuscript's length and scope are determined by the Capstone instructor/committee but it must be minimally in the 5-10 page range.

Artifact examples include collections of poetry, slides/videotapes/CDs of creative work, case studies, engineering plans, etc.

Commonwealth College Capstone Experience



Getting Started

- Independent Capstones
- Course Capstones



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Further Assistance

- Commonwealth College Advisors: advisor@comcol.umass.edu or 545-2483
- Departmental Honors Coordinators: www.comcol.umass.edu/dhcoordinators
- Resources for Researchers: www.comol.umass.edu/researchliteracy
- Graduation Credentials Information: www.comcol.umass.edu/gradcredentials



THE CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

The Capstone Experience (CE) is designed to provide all Commonwealth College students with the opportunity to integrate their undergraduate experiences as well as prepare for their careers — professional or academic — and lives as informed citizens.

The Capstone Experience expectations are high. Whether the intended end product is a traditional thesis or project, all Capstone Experiences

- Are 6 or more credits
- Begin with creative inquiry and systematic research
- Include documentation of substantive scholarly endeavor
- Culminate in an oral defense or other form of public presentation

CAPSTONE OPTIONS

Students may choose to pursue the Capstone Experience as a

- Self-initiated, Independent Capstone or
- A faculty-initiated, special-topic Course Capstone

Independent Capstones

Self-initiated Independent Capstones afford students the opportunity to

- Pursue independent research on an issue or problem of special interest to them
- Choose their own faculty mentors to serve on the Capstone guidance committee
- Produce a thesis or project as a result of their scholarly, scientific, or creative work
- Present their work in an oral defense or other public forum

Course Capstones

Faculty-initiated Course Capstones afford students the opportunity to

- Develop and share their research in a seminar setting
- Collaborate with classmates
- Produce an individual or group thesis or project as a result of their scholarly, scientific, or creative work
- Present their work to classmates in lieu of an oral defense

REGISTRATION

Most Capstone Experiences are registered with a “499” course number. Registration steps vary according to the CE option selected.

Independent Capstones

1. The student drafts a research proposal which addresses:
 - a. What will be studied (topic)
 - b. How it will be undertaken
 - c. Faculty expectations regarding the work and end product
 - d. A meeting schedule with the guidance committee
 - e. A timeline of interim and final deadlines
2. The student submits an Independent Capstone Contract form, with the research proposal attached, to the Commonwealth College office during pre-registration.
3. Commonwealth College registers the student in the course after review and approval of the contract & proposal

Course Capstones

Students should

1. Review Course Capstones in the on-line Honors Course Guide: www.comcol.umass.edu/honorscourseguide (select the “CE Courses” box)
2. Follow the course description instructions to obtain instructor permission or register directly on SPIRE.

Through their Capstone Experiences, all Commonwealth College students conduct in-depth research and produce either a project accompanied by a manuscript, or a traditional thesis. For specific documentation & credential requirements, read the Commonwealth College website sections below.

- Capstone Experience requirements: www.comcol.umass.edu/capstone
- Capstone Experience Proposal: www.comcol.umass.edu/ceproposal
- Capstone Experience Forms: www.comcol.umass.edu/forms