Behavioral and Social Sciences Intervention
Capstone Project for the AM Degree

Guidelines for Development and Submission

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AM DEGREE OVERVIEW
The Master’s Degree program in Behavioral and Social Sciences Intervention (BSSI) is an eight-unit, terminal degree program, in which students selecting the AM degree are required to complete a Capstone project. The Capstone project is an applied intervention endeavor for students whose graduate training interests are oriented toward professional skills development for eventual practical work developing, implementing, and evaluating health-behavior interventions for community-based, healthcare, corporate, state, public health, or non-governmental organizations. Students may decide whether to pursue the ScM or the AM degree options after they are admitted into the BSSI graduate program.

CAPSTONE OVERVIEW
The Capstone project is a requirement for graduation for AM students in the BSSI Master’s Degree Program. The Capstone is a major project or experience that represents the culmination of the AM degree and is an opportunity for students to apply the knowledge they acquire through BSSI Master’s course work to a project of their own interest. The goal of the Capstone is for students to synthesize, integrate, and apply the skills and competencies they have acquired, to a public health problem of their choosing.

The Capstone project serves as an opportunity for Master’s students to implement a personalized learning experience and demonstrate the program’s core competencies in behavioral and social sciences intervention. The Capstone is typically completed in the last two semesters of the Degree program, and is done under the direct supervision of both a Capstone Advisor, who must be a BSS faculty member, and an Onsite Supervisor. The Capstone advisor may be the student’s primary academic advisor, but students may identify another faculty member to supervise the Capstone.

Although the Capstone may take many forms of applied learning and engagement, it always includes a Practicum, a Product, and a Paper.

THE PRACTICUM
During the Practicum phase of the Capstone, students conduct a substantial period of work in a field setting, with a community or private-sector organization, health service provider, or policy agency, gaining hands-on experience applying behavioral and social sciences interventions in a real-world setting. The overarching principle for determining suitability of a Capstone project is whether it provides students the opportunity to demonstrate the core competencies acquired in the BSSI Master’s degree program through application of skills to a public health problem. Students must complete 140 hours of field experience in total. 8-12 hours per week over 12-16 weeks is recommended. Students may work no more than 20 hours per week. Accounting of hours worked is the responsibility of the student. The Onsite
Supervisor must sign-off on the student’s Capstone Log-Sheet (Appendix B). The topic and format of the Practicum is flexible and is developed through discussions between the student, the Capstone advisor, and the Onsite Supervisor. A list of local agencies that have indicated their willingness to partner with BSSI AM students can be found in Appendix D.

**THE PRODUCT**

In addition to the Practicum, the Capstone project also requires a Product, or deliverable, with practical relevance to the field setting. The Product must be decided on by the student in consultation with the Onsite Advisor, and meet the approval of the Capstone Advisor. Examples of Capstone Products include a survey, health education curricula, marketing materials, or website development. Ideally, the Capstone Product will benefit both students and their hosting organizations, extending the real-world experience by requiring students to make a tangible contribution to the work of their hosting organization.

**THE PAPER**

The final requirement for completion of the Capstone is the written component. The Capstone Paper is expected to demonstrate clear and professional writing skills and, in addition to describing the student’s Practicum experience, will place that experience, or agency, or intervention, in a broader Public Health context by elucidating three avenues of Public Health consideration— intervention Development, Implementation, and Evaluation— as they apply to the student’s particular Capstone project.

For example, if a student works with an agency at the Development stage of an intervention project, the Capstone paper should describe how that invention might actually be Implemented, including logistical challenges and areas of opportunity. The paper would then go on to describe a plan for Evaluating the intervention. If a student’s Practicum involves the actual Implementation of an intervention, their Capstone paper should further examine the endeavor’s Development and then discuss how the intervention might be Evaluated.

While there are no formal guidelines on the length of the paper, it is expected that the paper will be up to 20 pages, not including references, tables, and figures. The paper must include an executive summary (approximately 300 words) and appendices (e.g., program materials, photographs, or curricula). Generally the Capstone Paper is expected to include:

(i) Background, including a brief literature review and/or description of the work of the collaborating agency; the target population; theories/frameworks; and the public health issue addressed,
(ii) Project description, including information about the Practicum format, goals, and objectives, and anticipated outcomes;

(iii) Summary of project’s findings and/or experience implementing the project,

(iv) Conclusion, which should (a) provide recommendations to future program providers and public health practitioners working on this topic, and (b) reflect on how the project demonstrates mastery of relevant BSS core competencies.

### SUMMARY OF STEPS TO COMPLETE AND DOCUMENT THE CAPSTONE

#### Step 1: Identify a Capstone Topic
In consultation with your primary academic advisor, identify at least one broad area of interest, or as many as three areas, and for each interest area, at least three specific organizations and faculty members with whom you might partner on your project.

You may use course work or projects conducted in your degree classes as the basis for a Capstone project. Students may use their work from any PHP project-oriented course as a basis for their Capstone project, but the original work must be built on and expanded for the Capstone project. Building on a project from a course may be helpful because it provides additional structure and support. If a project from a course is used as a starting point for the Capstone, the previous work must be placed in the list of references, and the Capstone advisor will need a copy of the student’s original paper.

#### Step 2: Identify a Capstone Advisor
Start by identifying faculty members whose research interests and expertise are in the topic area and/or methodology that you wish to pursue, and who might be available to advise the project. Your faculty advisor, who may serve as your Capstone advisor, is a good initial resource for discussing your areas of interest and for referring you to other faculty members whose expertise matches the type of project you wish to pursue.

#### Step 3: Identify the Capstone Project
Meet with your Capstone advisor to discuss your interest area/s, and the organizations you have identified as potential partners for your project. Describe the progress you have made contacting these groups and what further steps may be needed to arrive at a Capstone Prospectus. Discuss an overall timeline for completing the various sections of your Practicum, Product, and Paper.
Step 4: Submit the Capstone Project Prospectus
Submission of the Capstone Project Prospectus should occur during the semester prior to the completion of the project. The Prospectus must include the names of your Capstone Advisor and Onsite Supervisor, a working title, identification of the organization with whom you will work, the number of hours required onsite, a description of your anticipated Product, and a summary of the project itself, including a timeline and a discussion of the project's overall aims and your expectations (see Appendix A). The Prospectus will be reviewed by the BSS Curriculum Committee, who may make suggestions or require changes to the project, its methodology, or scope. A copy of the Project Prospectus, signed and approved by the BSS Graduate Program Director and your Capstone Advisor, must be submitted to the BSS Administrator.

Step 6: Conduct the Capstone Practicum
The Practicum’s Onsite Supervisor is expected to supervise work on the Practicum and the Capstone Product. AM students must complete 140 hours of field experience in total. 8-12 hours per week over 12-16 weeks is recommended. Accounting of hours worked is the responsibility of the student. The Onsite Supervisor must sign-off on the student’s Capstone Log-Sheet (Appendix B). Completion of the Capstone Practicum, and the required Product and Paper, usually necessitates work on all elements simultaneously. It is therefore recommended that you reflect on your experiences DURING the course of your Practicum, perhaps keeping a daily or weekly Capstone journal.

Step 7: Submit Log-Sheet, Product, and Final Paper Outline to Capstone Advisor
Please return your completed Capstone Log-Sheet to your Capstone Advisor, along with your completed Capstone Product, and Paper outline. The final outline of your Capstone paper should include all the sections of your paper. Your Capstone advisor should make suggestions and provide guidance on your paper’s structure and format.

Step 8: Submit First Draft of Capstone Paper
An important item on your Capstone timeline will be the submission of the first draft of your Capstone paper for review by your Capstone advisor. The deadline for submitting the first draft to your Capstone advisor should be about five weeks before the final deadline for submission of the approved paper. This time allows for revisions to occur in preparation for the final draft submission. Communicating with your Capstone advisor about your progress is critical during this phase. This is the time to discuss any issues or concerns that you are encountering as you progress with your work.
Step 9: Submit Final Draft of Paper to Capstone Advisor for Approval
This submission will be reviewed by your capstone advisor for any final edits and recommendations to be made for final approval and submission by May 1 (in order to participate in the May commencement ceremony).

Step 10: Submit Capstone Paper to Department Chair
The Capstone Product along with both an electronic and hard copy of the final draft of the advisor-approved Capstone Paper, accompanied by a completed Capstone Project Completion Form, will be submitted to the BSS Department Chair by 5:00 pm on May 1 in order to participate in commencement activities.

CAPSTONE COMPLETION CHECK LIST

☐ Identify Capstone Topic
☐ Identify Capstone Advisor
☐ Identify the Capstone Project and Community Partner
☐ Submit Capstone Prospectus
☐ Conduct the Capstone Practicum
☐ Submit Log-sheet, Product, and final Paper outline to Capstone Advisor
☐ Submit first draft of Paper to Capstone Advisor
☐ Submit final draft of Paper to Capstone Advisor
☐ Submit final Paper and Product, accompanied by a completed Capstone Project Completion Form, for approval by the BSS Department Chair

EXAMPLES OF CAPSTONE PROJECTS
Example I: The student works with New Urban Arts, a community-based organization in downtown Providence that empowers adolescents and young people to develop artistic and other creative skills that they can practice throughout their lives. The student partners with New Urban Arts to explore how inner-city adolescents can use art to advance adolescent-appropriate messages promoting abstinence or risk reduction from alcohol and substance use. The student identifies appropriate intervention models of behavioral change and risk reduction, and works with youth at the agency to guide and motivate them on strategies for using art to disseminate behavior change messages to their peers. The Capstone Product is an art show, photographed or videotaped by the student for documentation, in which youth display their work and describe how art can be an empowering modality for communicating health promotion messages in youth communities. The Capstone paper includes a description of the project’s development,
its implementation, and an evaluation that considers how the project might be improved upon, or applied to a larger or different population.

**Example II:** A student participates in an experience with architecture or landscape design faculty and students at RISD who are redesigning downtown Providence so that physically active transport is more common. The student attends the weekly studios for the RISD course. The Capstone Product is a survey that explores issues of walking and cycling downtown and on the East Side of Providence (safety, crime, sidewalks, street lights, frequency of pedestrians, presence of police, etc). The student administers the survey to help guide the process of the RISD redesign project, so that public health factors are considered when implementing change to the physical environment. The Capstone paper includes a description of the project’s development, its implementation, and an evaluation that considers how the project might be improved upon, or applied to a different environment.

The Capstone project would involve the evaluation/monitoring of an existing and ongoing public health program, such as process evaluation, monitoring of outputs and outcomes, impact assessment, and/or cost analysis.

**Example III:** A student works with AIDS Project Rhode Island to preparing a culturally appropriate community outreach and media strategy to increase HIV testing among African American men in Providence. The Paper would describe the local epidemiology, describe the outreach and media strategies (including theoretical bases for these strategies), describe approaches to maximize cultural sensitivity and community relevance of HIV testing and health promotion messages, and describe an implementation and evaluation model to optimize the impact of the outreach and media strategies on the target population. The Capstone Product would involve the development of outreach protocols (including identification of sites for community engagement, identification of community stakeholders to assist in message dissemination, and development of health communication strategies for engaging community members in HIV testing and prevention activities) and actual materials (e.g., posters, flyers, electronic media/websites, scripts for public service announcements).
APPENDIX A: BSSI Capstone Prospectus

BSSI AM students must submit this completed Prospectus to their Capstone advisor, Onsite Supervisor, and finally, the BSS Graduate Program Director for final approval. Please attach to this form a discussion of the Capstone’s overall aims, your expectations, and a timeline for completion of the Practicum, the Product, and the drafts of your Capstone Paper. This Prospectus will be reviewed by the BSS Curriculum Committee, who may make suggestions or require changes to the project, its methodology, or scope.

The Capstone Prospectus must be approved by the Capstone advisor and Onsite Supervisor, as well as by the BSSI Graduate Program Director

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<th>Collaborating Agency</th>
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<th>Anticipated Onsite Work Schedule</th>
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<th>Student Signature</th>
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Capstone Advisor

Name

Mailing Address

City State Zip

Email address

I have read and approve this Prospectus and I agree to serve as the Capstone advisor for this project.

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Onsite Supervisor

Name

Mailing Address

City State Zip

Email address

I have read and approve this Prospectus and I agree to serve as the Onsite Supervisor for this project.

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BSSI Graduate Program Director

This Master of Behavioral and Social Sciences Intervention Capstone Prospectus has been approved.

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APPENDIX B: BSSI Capstone Log-Sheet

The Practicum’s Onsite Supervisor is expected to supervise work on the Capstone Practicum and creation of the Capstone Product. AM students must complete 140 hours of field experience in total. 8-12 hours per week over 12-16 weeks is recommended. Students may work no more than 20 hours per week. Accounting of hours worked is the responsibility of the student. The Onsite Supervisor must sign-off on the student’s Log-Sheet. Please return completed Log-Sheet to your Capstone Advisor, along with your completed Capstone Product, and Paper outline.

Name of Student:  
Name of agency:  
Name of Onsite Supervisor:

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<th>Date/s</th>
<th>No. of Hours Worked</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Supervisor Signature</th>
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APPENDIX C: Capstone Project Completion Form

This form must be filled out and submitted by BSSI AM candidates who wish to be credited with completing a Capstone project by May 1.

Student’s name: __________________________________ Banner ID: ____________

Capstone project title, a brief description of the Capstone Product, and a 5 –12 word description of your Practicum:

I verify that the project described has been satisfactorily completed and that the student has met the standards of intellectual content and effort required of a Capstone Project in Behavioral and Social Sciences Intervention.

Capstone Advisor (type or print name here): ___________________________________

Signature: __________________________ Date: __________

Onsite Supervisor (type or print name here): ___________________________________

Signature: __________________________ Date: __________

Signature, BSS Graduate Program Director: __________________________ Date: __________

Please submit this form when signed to the BSS Department Chair. In order to participate in Commencement activities, this completed form, along with a copy of the Capstone Paper, must be submitted to the BSS Department Chair no later than May 1.
APPENDIX D: Capstone Partners

The following organizations have indicated their willingness to partner with BSSI Master’s students’ Capstone Projects. This list is far from exhaustive. Students are encouraged to reach out to local agencies whose missions closely align with their own research interests.

The African Alliance of Rhode Island (AARI) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of Africans living in the State of Rhode Island. AARI seeks to promote and celebrate African culture while tackling the challenges facing African communities in Rhode Island.
Julius Kolawole, President jokolawole@gmail.com
570 Broad St. Providence, RI 02907  401.331.5535
info@africanallianceri.org
www.africanallianceri.org

The American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry promotes high quality evidence-based screening, assessment, and treatment for substance use and co-occurring mental disorders and translates and disseminates evidence-based research to clinical practice and public policy. The AAAP provides evidence-based addiction education to health care trainees and health professionals to enhance patient care and promote recovery, educates the public, and influences public policy for the safe and humane treatment of those with substance use disorders.
Kathryn Cates-Wessel, Executive Director, kcw@aaap.org
400 Massasoit Avenue, Suite 307, 2nd Floor East Providence, RI 02914 401.524.3076
information@aaap.org
www.aaap.org

Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics, Hasbro Children's/Rhode Island Hospital offers opportunities for qualified students to work with Hospital fellows.
Pamela C. High, MD, Director, PHigh@lifespan.org 401.444-5440
593 Eddy St. Providence, RI 02903
For a full list of Hospital fellowship programs that may provide Capstone experiences please see www.hasbrochildrenshospital.org/services/education/fellowship-programs/

Family Service of Rhode Island, Inc., is a non-profit organization that builds social service partnerships that respond creatively to the unmet needs of individuals, families, and the community so that people are able to live independently, advocate for themselves, and better their own lives.
Stephen Hug, hugst@familyserviceri.org
Marilyn Newman (head of human resources oversees interns), newmanma@familyserviceri.org
Shannon Cassidy, Clinical Administrator, cassidysh@familyserviceri.org
P.O. Box 6688  Providence, RI 02940-6688  401.331.1350 or 401.294.6138.
www.familyserviceri.org
The **New HOPE Time Exchange** is a movement of individuals and groups dedicated to exchanging with each other, building community, and creating a healthy and sustainable world for future generations and our environment.

Lisa Conlan Lewis, New HOPE Time Exchange, Founder, Family Support Partner Pilot Program Director  
Parent Support Network of Rhode Island  
1395 Atwood Avenue, Suite 114  Johnston, RI  02919  401-467-6855 ext. 306  
lisaconlan2@aol.com  
www.newhopetimeexchange.org

**The Parent Support Network** is an organization of families supporting families with children, youth, and young adults who experience or are at risk for serious behavioral, emotional, and/or mental health challenges. PSN seeks to strengthen and preserve families and reduce family isolation by promoting positive mental health and well-being, and building a culturally and linguistically competent system of care, through advocacy, education, training, and increased public awareness.

1395 Atwood Avenue Suite 114 Johnston, RI 02919  401.467.6855  
c.ciano@psnri.org  
www.psnri.org

**The Providence Center** serves adults, adolescents, and children affected by psychiatric illness, emotional problems, and addictions by providing treatment and supportive services within a community setting.

528 North Main St. Providence, RI 02904  401.528.0123  
Kristle Gagne, Senior Marketing Communications Specialist, kgagne@provctr.org  
Owen Heleen, Chief Strategy Officer  
Deb O’Brien, Chief Operating Officer, dobrien@provctr.org  
www.providencecenter.org/

The vision of the **Rhode Island Breastfeeding Coalition** is that all babies in Rhode Island will be breastfed and breastfeeding will be accepted as the norm for infant feeding in Rhode Island.

Denise Fenick BS, RN, IBCLC Chair  fenick@gmail.com  
26.5 Orchard St. Pawtucket, RI 02860  401.742.5665  
www.ribreastfeeding.org

**RI Communities for Addiction Recovery Efforts (RICARES) Inc.** is a grassroots alliance of people in recovery, their families, friends, and concerned members of the community, whose goal is to advocate for, and improve the public perception about, those in recovery from substance use disorders.

Ian Knowles iknowles@ricares.org  
243 Main St. Pawtucket, RI  02860  401.475.2960  
Info@RICARES.org  
http://ricares.org
The mission of the **Center for Southeast Asians (CSEA)** is to promote the prosperity, heritage, and leadership of Southeast Asians in Rhode Island
270 Elmwood Avenue Providence, RI 02907  401.274.8811
info@cseari.org
www.cseari.org/wp

The following organizations may also be appropriate Capstone partners. Students are encouraged to reach out to local agencies whose missions closely align with their own research interests.

**The Alliance for Better Long Term Care** promotes the quality of life and care of residents of nursing homes and other long-term care institutions. The Alliance provides information and support to family members and residents. In addition, this grassroots agency works to support a more caring industry and to educate health care providers and staff as well as society to be more sensitive and compassionate to nursing home residents.
http://alliancebltc.com/  401-785-3340

**Caritas, Inc.** treats substance abusers and their families through residential and outpatient programs. Their goal is to guide those entrusted to our care toward a life free of substance dependency, that each might live with a renewed positive sense of self, confident in their ability to be self-sufficient, productive members of society.
166 Pawtucket Ave. Pawtucket, RI 02860 401.722.4644
http://caritasri.com/

**The Coalition for Transportation Choices (CTC)** calls for a 21st century transportation system that enhances our economy and provides all Rhode Islanders with healthy transportation choices.
www.rictc.net/

**The Kent Center**'s mission is to improve the quality of life for men, women, children and families facing behavioral health challenges through a wide range of mental health, substance abuse, and trauma-informed programs.
2756 Post Road - Ste 104 Warwick, RI 02886-3003   401.691.6000
http://thekentcenter.org

**Progreso Latino, Inc.** is a multi-service, non-profit, community based organization located in Central Falls. Progreso Latino’s mission is to empower the Latino community by providing the knowledge, skills, training, continuum of services and opportunities for self-sufficiency, human development, prosperity, and a flourishing community.
626 Broad St. Central Falls, RI 02863  401.728.5920
http://progresolatino.org/
Rhode Island Parent Information Network assists individuals, parents, families and children to achieve their goals for health, educational, and socio-economic well-being by providing information, education, training, support and advocacy for person/family centered care and systems change.
1210 Pontiac Ave. Cranston, RI 02920  401.270.0101
www.ripin.org/index.html

Shape Up RI is a statewide exercise and weight loss challenge founded in 2005 by Dr. Rajiv Kumar, based on his belief that the solution to healthy living lies in the power of teamwork and peer support. This grassroots health campaign encourages Rhode Islanders to pursue healthy lifestyles through increased physical activity and better nutrition.
www.shapeupri.org

St. Mary’s Home for Children is dedicated to helping children who have been affected by violence in their homes or communities and/or who have behavioral health issues. Their vision is to provide the opportunity for each child in their care to become a healthy adult, capable of healthy relationships.
420 Fruit Hill Ave. North Providence, RI 02911-2647  401.353.3900
www.smhfc.org

State of Rhode Island, Department of Health
http://www.health.state.ri.us/contactus/phonelist/index.php