

## Student Responsibilities for Capstone Internship Project

There are three key components of every capstone project: individuality, creativity and rigor. Embedded in your project should be systematic collection and analysis of data and thoughtful reflection applied to process. Every capstone must meet the three objectives of improving the student's:

- ✓ Understanding and application of the scientific process,
- ✓ Skills in the analysis and interpretation of relevant scientific information, and
- ✓ Proficiency in communicating scientific information.

### Process

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Students are responsible for securing a work experience (paid or unpaid) directly related to the field of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences and aligned with their area of professional interest. (Students should also take the Written Final Exam at least two semesters before they anticipate graduating.)

- **Research possible internship opportunities.** What bodies of knowledge do you want to apply or expand? What experiences do you want to have on your resume after your internship?
- **Identify your preferences.** Do you have a geographic preference? Do you have a disciplinary preference? Do you have a seasonal preference? Do you want to work full or part-time?
- **Conduct an information search** about the company(ies) or organization(s) that you have identified that may have internship opportunities.
- **Perfect your materials** (resume, introductory letter, application (if necessary), references, and establish your goals and objectives).
- **Tap your network.** Make your approach and secure a position. (Should be identified by the time you have completed 20 hours of coursework.)
- **Conduct a preliminary literature review based upon the type of work or work-related issues.** Understand the principles and theories that underpin the work you will do.
- **Develop the GIAF** in conjunction with the sponsoring organization and align with NRES expectations. What are the organization's needs? What are their objectives? What roles do they see you playing? What are your academic goals and objectives? What is your timeline? (Most internship experiences span more than one semester).
- **Enroll in capstone credit** (1 coursework hour = 60+ hours of on-the-job experience). Students may take 3 – 8 hours of capstone credit, but not more than 4 hours in any one

semester. Students will not be allowed to register for capstone credit until their proposal has been approved by the Director of the Online Program.

- **Provide evidence of progress via the Open Learning Site** - Submit monthly updates about the work you are doing and the goals for the upcoming month. Set reasonable goals (overarching and immediate) and try to meet them.
- **Communicate by submitting Periodic Reports** (one for each 30 hours of on-the-job experience). Reports should be reflective and analytical in nature. Reports should attempt to connect the experience to the principles, theories and approaches you learned about in classes.
- **Draft the Final Paper** and in accordance with the NRES and Graduate College guidelines. Allow ample time for multiple revisions based on recommendations from the internship coordinator and your committee.
- **Conduct oral presentation** on capstone project (in person or virtually).
- **Meet Graduate College deadlines** for depositing approved capstone paper (consistent with the semester you intend to graduate).

## **Communication**

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- **Consultation with Academic Advisor, Research Director, and committee members**
  - At mutually agreed upon intervals
  - Be open to advice and constructive criticism
  - Be pro-active when additional questions/concerns come up
  - Send copies of important items/agenda to discuss
  - Send post-conference summary and follow-up agreements
- **Be patient.** Allow for adequate response time between when you submit a draft and when you expect an answer. (For lengthy documents, it may take two or more weeks to receive feedback).
- **Strict adherence to scientific ethics** and regard for copyright policies and intellectual property.

## Resources

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### Degree

- **Milestones and Procedures for Non-Thesis Students** found in the latest edition of the **NRES Graduate Student Handbook**:  
<http://nres.illinois.edu/graduate/handbook>
- **Final Steps Document**:
  - **Independent Research** :  
[https://nres.illinois.edu/sites/nres.illinois.edu/files/Steps to Completing the Capstone Individual Research Project.pdf](https://nres.illinois.edu/sites/nres.illinois.edu/files/Steps%20to%20Completing%20the%20Capstone%20Individual%20Research%20Project.pdf)
  - **Internship**:  
[http://nres.illinois.edu/sites/nres.illinois.edu/files/Steps to Completing the Capstone Internship Project.pdf](http://nres.illinois.edu/sites/nres.illinois.edu/files/Steps%20to%20Completing%20the%20Capstone%20Internship%20Project.pdf)
- **Flow Charts for Project**:
  - **Independent Research**:  
[http://nres.illinois.edu/sites/nres.illinois.edu/files/1-page Flowchart 501-503.pdf](http://nres.illinois.edu/sites/nres.illinois.edu/files/1-page%20Flowchart%20501-503.pdf)
  - **Internship**:  
[http://nres.illinois.edu/sites/nres.illinois.edu/files/1-page Flowchart 505.pdf](http://nres.illinois.edu/sites/nres.illinois.edu/files/1-page%20Flowchart%20505.pdf)
- **Goal Setting and Accomplishments – Compass 2 g Open Learning Site**:  
<https://compass2g.illinois.edu/webapps/blackboard/content/listContentEditable.jsp?contentid=10982791&courseid=136611>
- **List of Faculty Available to Serve as Research Directors**:  
[https://uofi.app.box.com/files/0/f/2717195584/1/f\\_29279542081](https://uofi.app.box.com/files/0/f/2717195584/1/f_29279542081)

### Research

- **Improve Your Research Strategies**:  
<http://guides.library.illinois.edu/researchstrategiesh>
- **Graduate Research Funds**:  
<http://nres.illinois.edu/graduate/funding-your-research>
- **Illinois Review Board**:  
<http://irb.illinois.edu>
- **Illinois Institute of Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)**:  
<http://research.illinois.edu/regulatory-compliance-safety/iacuc>
- **Remote Desktop**:  
<https://acf-s.aces.illinois.edu/remote/>

- **A Beginner's Guide to Data Management:**  
<http://guides.library.illinois.edu/introdata>
- **Sample Research Projects:**  
<http://nres.illinois.edu/online-program/sample-individual-research-projects>
- **Statistical Analysis Assistance:**  
<https://publish.illinois.edu/statcomuiuc/>

### Writing

- **Guidelines for Writing the Research Proposal:**  
<http://nres.illinois.edu/online-program/research-proposal>
- **Graduate College Guidelines for Final Paper:**  
<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/thesis/format>
- **Avoiding Plagiarism:**  
<http://www.library.illinois.edu/ugl/howdoi/plagiarism.html>
- **Citation Guidelines:**  
[http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocAPARefrences\\_Journal.html](http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocAPARefrences_Journal.html)
- **Citation Management Software:**  
<http://guides.library.illinois.edu/citationmgmtoverview>
- **Grammar Review Software:**  
<http://grammarly.com/edu/signup>  
Enter your name, email ([netid@illinois.edu](mailto:netid@illinois.edu)), and preferred password. Click "Sign up".  
Check your email (Inbox and Spam) for an activation email. Your account is now set up.

### Skills Workshops

- **Database Tutorials:**  
[https://www.uillinois.edu/cio/resources\\_and\\_tools/lynda.com/](https://www.uillinois.edu/cio/resources_and_tools/lynda.com/)
- **Savvy Researcher Workshops and Lib Guides:**  
<http://guides.library.illinois.edu/>