

# Capstone Project Handbook

## Table of Contents

- 1. Introduction**
  - 2. Capstone Project: Description & Overview**
    - 2.1 Learning Objectives*
    - 2.2 Learning Outcomes*
    - 2.3 Differential Values*
    - 2.4 Linguistic Style*
  - 3. Capstone Project: Types of Business Challenge**
    - 3.1 The Business Challenge*
  - 4. Capstone Project Process**
    - 4.1 Stage 1 Capstone Project Kick off & 2 Business Challenges*
    - 4.2 Stage 2 Team Creation and Team Leader Definition*
    - 4.3 Stage 3 Empowering Mentoring session with the Program Director*
    - 4.4 Stage 4 Capstone Project Proposal submission*
    - 4.5 Stage 5 Capstone Project Mentor appointed*
    - 4.6 Stage 6 Mentoring Sessions*
    - 4.7 Stage 7 Capstone Project Submission*
    - 4.8 Stage 8 Capstone Project Presentation to the Capstone Evaluation Committee*
    - 4.9 Mandatory Presentation Guidelines*
    - 4.10 Presentation Delivery*
  - 5. Capstone Project Structure Recommendation**
  - 6. Formal aspects of the written work to consider**
  - 7. Capstone Project Evaluation Criteria**
    - 7.1 Evaluation criteria: Written part*
    - 7.2 Evaluation criteria: Verbal presentation*
  - 8. Learning Resources**
  - 9. Capstone Project Attempt Policy**
  - 10. Bibliography**
    - 10.1. Recommended General Bibliography*
  - 11. Referencing**
    - 11.1 Creating a Reference List*
  - 12. Conclusion**
- ## Appendices
- 1. Appendix A: Sample Format of a Capstone Project Proposal**
  - 2. Appendix B: Sample Format of a Capstone Project Proposal Type: Business Plan**
  - 3. Appendix C: Capstone Project Cover Page**
  - 4. Appendix D: Capstone Project Evaluation**

## 1. Introduction

This handbook provides information on policies, steps and processes to guide students and professors through the successful completion of the final group assessment of the master program, which is the Capstone Project. The final capstone project is a **compulsory** component of all master programs and it provides an opportunity for students to integrate knowledge and different types of skills and competencies gained in their studies throughout their intake. It is carried out as a **team work** which is evaluated according to the highest academic standards and which gives students a team experience that approximates future work environment. The Capstone Project consists of the elaboration in groups of a full business project by analyzing and providing solution to a real or fictive business challenge, by fully integrated contents and business areas that has been learned. Although the business challenges will be different depending on the master program, the academic expectations for the capstone projects for all the masters are the same, regardless of the business challenge and are the following:

- Mastery of an appropriate set of material and knowledge
- Understanding of the major steps of the research design and approach or decision analysis (evaluation of management alternatives) and the successful application of these steps to a business challenge
- Demonstrate critical thinking about the business problem and the application of appropriate analytical techniques in solving that problem
- Gain experience in both writing a business project or management report and give a verbal presentation on the process and results of project

## 2. Capstone Project: Description & Overview

The Capstone Project is a teamwork-based project with a scope to develop a management/business report or business project (Ex: marketing, HR plan, business plan, marketing & sales plan) with a clear *Action Plan* for implementation, that solves a business problem or works on an opportunity of an existing or fictitious company in a particular industry.

All teams will work independently guided from the initial phase of the project by the Program Director and/or **designated Mentors** together with Managers/Industry experts (if involved).

Students will be given different company realities/challenges and knowledge areas (as per their master program) upon which they should build their capstone project.

The capstone project gives excellent opportunity for students to apply the theory into practice and to apply the knowledge learned into their daily businesses and professional tasks and activities. Each project requires both, individual analysis and reporting as well as interdisciplinary analysis conducted by the group.

The format of the Capstone project differs from a thesis largely because it is an interdisciplinary team effort resulting in a jointly authored document.

The Program Director or the designated Mentor (if involved) guides all teams from the initial phase of the project.

### 2.1. Learning Objectives

- Students will acquire the skills to search and organize information and data assimilated in the process of business challenge exploration;
- Students will develop critical thinking skills when analyzing, discussing, elaborating and presenting the business challenge;
- Students will practice formulation, development, and assessment claims and concepts learned. Review pertinent literature or materials that form the background of the business challenge as selected in consultation with the Program Director;
- Each team will design, develop and produce a plan for the project in the appropriate multi-disciplinary context based on the chosen business challenge that should be also presented verbally in an effective, clear and structured manner;
- Communicate effectively and cross culturally within a team and with the Program Director;
- Support, motivate and provide critical feedback to peers as they pursue these same objectives.

## 2.2. Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of the capstone project, students will be able to:

- Evaluate a business problem, find an appropriate strategy and solution and implement it;
- Manage the work effectively in an international team, accomplishing the given individual tasks within the timeframe given;
- Develop time and stress management skills as well as problem solving skills;
- Define clear goals and measurable objectives;
- Develop personally and professionally;
- Build and manage a network of contacts;
- Develop research skills;
- Develop public speaking skills;
- Apply knowledge into practice;
- Develop competitive and leadership spirit.

## 2.3. Differential Values

- Possibility to work on a real business challenge deriving from:
  - The company in which students are employed;
  - A family business;
  - A company challenge provided by the Program Director;
- A chance to network with professionals from the field;
- Do realistic research of the market & industry;
- Work in multicultural teams with students from more than 150 countries, which gives the possibility for:
  - Cultural growth & Collaborative Leadership;
  - Overcoming cultural barriers;
  - Becoming liberal minded;
  - Embrace diversity;
  - Communicate Cross Culturally;
  - Becoming knowledgeable.

## 2.4. Linguistic Style

The Capstone project written part but also the verbal presentation must be developed and delivered in English language. The teams should maintain the scientific language therefore personal opinions, I, or We are to be avoided. In order to express recommendations or personal opinions phrases such as ‘according to the company’s evaluation report’, or ‘it can be summarized by’, based on the analysis and data, etc. The English must be correct and linguistically appropriate. Students should use the industry specific terminology learned during the program as well an automatic spellchecker, double-check punctuation and make sure that the text is grammatically correct.

The table of contents must have a clear and consistent structure.

## 3. Capstone Project: Types of Business Challenge

To all teams of all the masters will be proposed 2 Business Challenges in line with the industry by the Program Director and/or Industry managers or professionals upon which teams should build their capstone. Depending on the master, teams will have different options as described below in Figure 1. Regardless of what option teams will choose, the capstone must consist of a research and actual application of the knowledge into a business project following the process of idea generation, strategy/solution proposal, screening and approval.

**Figure 1. Options for the Capstone Project Challenge**

<b>Full time formula Master Programs 2 Options:</b>	<b>Option 1:</b> Business Plan
	<b>Option 2:</b> 2 Business Challenges in line with the Industry, proposed by the Program Director and/or Industry professionals. <i>Examples of capstone project delivery: HR plan/ Marketing &amp; Communications Plan, Sales plan etc.</i>
<b>Specialized formula Master programs 2 Options:</b>	<b>Option 1:</b> Business Challenge from companies where students work, proposed by the students
	<b>Option 2:</b> 2 Business Challenges in line with the Industry, proposed by the Program Director and/or industry professionals. <i>Examples of capstone project delivery: HR plan/ Marketing &amp; Communications Plan, Sales plan etc.</i>
<b>International MBA Full time 3 Options:</b>	<b>Option 1:</b> Business Plan
	<b>Option 2:</b> Business Challenge from companies where students work, proposed by the students
	<b>Option 3:</b> 1 Business Challenge in line with the industry, proposed by the Program Director and/or industry professionals. <i>Examples of capstone project delivery: Marketing plan, financial business analysis, Sales plan etc</i>

### 3.1 The Business Challenge

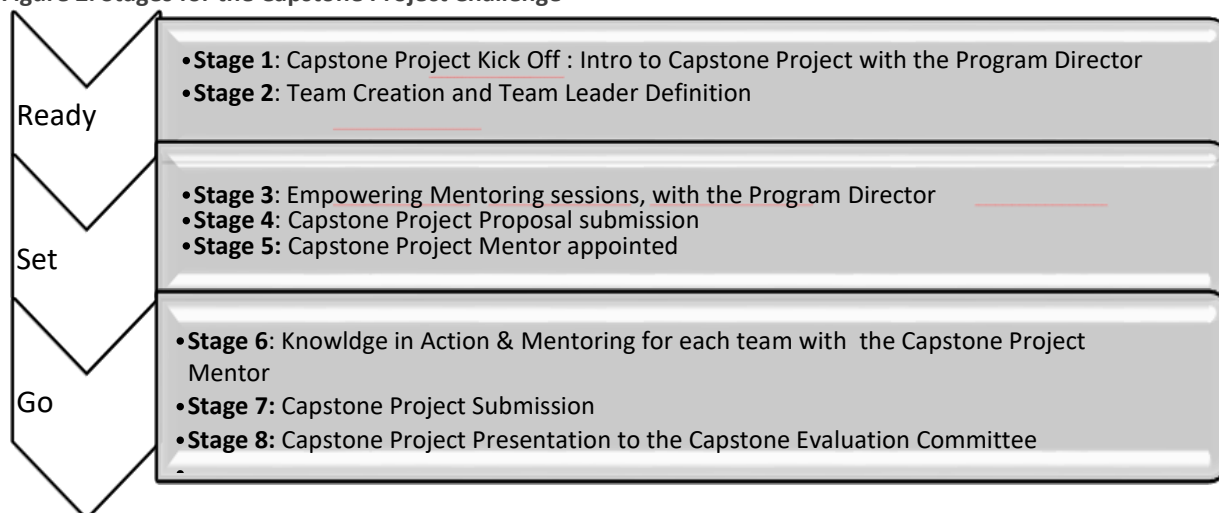
The Business Challenge, which is offered by the Program Director and reflects a real or a fictive business scenario of a company, will offer to the students the opportunity to:

- Develop a new idea for a particular business unit, system, product line, service etc.;
- Create a business development plan of an existing company or of a new one;
- Design a specific plan (marketing plan, business plan, HR plan, marketing & sales plan, etc.) for a particular unit or business concept;
- Define a business strategy for a business segment;
- Do particular business analysis and/or market/competitors research;
- Offer solution to particular company's department challenges.

## 4. Capstone Project Process

The Capstone Project Process is consisted of 8 different stages each one corresponding to a different phase of the project process. Students are mentored and supervised in all of the 8 stages by the Program Director (or the designated Mentors). Each stage listed below in Figure 2, is propaedeutic to complete the next stage.

Figure 2. Stages for the Capstone Project Challenge



### 4.1 Stage 1: Capstone Project Kick off & 2 Business Challenges

The preparation of the capstone project starts with an Introductory session by the Program Director. The two business challenges will be presented including the requirements, expectations, technical aspects that should be considered and other requirements that should be met for a successful completion of the project. In this session, the Program Director explains as well the 8 stages of the process. After this introductory session, teams select and decide the business challenge on which they build their capstone project and start drafting a capstone project proposal that has to be submitted on the Blackboard platform by the group.

### 4.2 Stage 2: Team Creation and Team Leader Definition

After the Introductory Session, students should create their teams as per their preferences, and assign a team leader. Groups must be composed from 3 to 5 people. Any exceptional situation must be communicated and evaluated by the Academic department. The Program Coordinator will communicate the deadline for the team creation after the introductory session. Students should report the leader of the team together with the team members to the Program Director & Program Coordinator and only the leaders can contact the Program Director for any questions, feedback or clarification via email, during the capstone project process. Once the teams have been set up, they will be guided during the process by the Program Director or a designated Mentor (if involved).

### 4.3 Stage 3: Empowering Mentoring session with the Program Director

At this stage there will be a second live session together with the Program Director. This empowering mentoring session will be a Q&A occasion for students to receive feedbacks from the Program director regarding their project ideas. After this session teams will be ready to start to develop their Capstone Proposal. At this stage students do a research for the company's business challenge, problem or opportunity they have identified, they gather information, conduct (if needed) interviews with managers/employees of the companies, do critical thinking analysis to be able to set objectives, create strategies and develop the project.

#### 4.4 Stage 4: Capstone Project Proposal submission

The Capstone Project Proposal is essential part of the project work. It is an informative piece of writing that reflects all the aspects of the capstone project. An important aspect of our program is to train students to be leaders and innovators; Program Director's input is welcome but students ultimately drive the shape of the final project work. Thus, the proposal is an important step in the master's project process. It should be properly structured and should outline the essential information regarding the proposed project. The Project Proposal should contain a clear statement of the business challenge/idea/problem, goals and objectives, introduction (background, justification and rationale), a brief literature review, materials and methods that will be used, work plan, budget (if applicable) and references. The capstone project proposal should also contain a team member's specific action plan of the work and specific tasks that will be completed by each team member within a given period. The overall aim of the capstone project proposal is to produce a good action plan and develop a strategy to address the business challenge in a systematic manner.

The Capstone Project Proposal for any type of projects (except for a type of project: Business plan) should be no more than 2-pages document (*Template provided in Appendix A*) and should be created by all team's members. The proposal will have to be uploaded on Blackboard for the program Director evaluation.

#### 4.5 Stage 5: Capstone Project Mentor appointed

After submission on Blackboard of the Capstone Project Proposal the Program Director will proceed to evaluate the proposal. According to Program Director decision a Mentor will be appointed to each group according to the proposal presented. The Program Director can be a Mentor himself (in this case he will be the mentor appointed). This will be defined in a dedicated live session with the Program Director.

#### 4.6 Stage 6: Mentoring Sessions

Each team will be guided by a designated Mentor (if involved) or from the Program Director himself. During these hours mentoring sessions each team will be guided and supported in the development of the project by the Mentor/Program Director who will provide useful suggestions and monitor the progress of the team. The Teams discuss their capstone proposals (written document) verbally and discuss their strategy, methodology and objectives with the Program Director/Mentor. In this live review they discuss with the Program Director/Mentor on the draft initial parts developed and written by the teams so that they are assured that they are on the right track and ready for the next stage. In this stage, students can contact **via email**, the Program Director or Mentor (if involved) for advices, clarification or guidance before their final submission of the capstone project on the Blackboard.

#### 4.7 Stage 7: Capstone Project Submission

Arrived at this stage students put all the knowledge they have gained for the business challenge, from their analysis and research into action and all the feedback received, by creating and developing the written project and action plan of work, inserting all the research, information, goals and objectives, analytical analysis, strategies, solutions, estimations, budget (if applicable) evaluation, recommendations & conclusion. At the end of this stage, students should submit a **final version** of the capstone on the Blackboard Platform for grading by the Program Director or the Capstone Project Mentor (if involved). All students must respect and stick to the deadline given for the written part submission of the capstone project. The deadline is stated in the Capstone Project Calendar and also will be visible on the Blackboard platform under the section created specifically for the Capstone project. The Capstone Project written part should be submitted within the deadline given, on the Blackboard platform by clicking on the label "Capstone Project submission" within the section entitled "Capstone Project". After the submission, the written part of the project will be evaluated by the Program Director.



#### 4.8 Stage 8: Capstone Project Presentation to the Capstone Evaluation Committee

Stage 8 is the last stage of the Capstone project preparation. After the submission of the written document on the Blackboard platform, all teams should prepare a power point presentation and prepare themselves to present verbally the capstone project in front of the Program Director and if applicable Industry Professionals/managers and Mentor (if involved). The presentation should be prepared in a power point format and contain the essential information for every section and stage of preparation of their capstone project. Teams can use their creativity when preparing the presentation and use different supporting tools to best present the project. Students who miss their presentation will need to work out an alternative presentation time within the capstone project attempt policy. Failure to present the project, could delay students Master completion. The capstone project presentation will have to be uploaded on Blackboard in the dedicated section. The program coordinator will communicate to the groups the final presentation date. All the teams will present verbally the project (each member presents) in front of the Capstone Project Evaluation Committee. Students can decide to present online or on campus (this will have to be agreed with the program director, program coordinator and mentor if involved). The oral presentation will last 30 minutes (20 minutes plus 10 minutes Q&A).

#### 4.9 Mandatory presentation guidelines:

- The presentation must be prepared in a power point format.
- The slides should be clear (not blurry), tidy (not messy/not overloaded) and visible/legible (use a suitable font and size).
- The slides must be concise (short points/phrases/usage of bullet points)
- It is good to use diagrams (figures/images, graphics, flowcharts, etc) in order to cut down explanations as well as to aid the explanations. The images should be visible even to those who are seated at the back of the classroom.
- The presentation should have a clear and logical structure of the content.

##### **Recommended structure:**

- 2 slides, Introduction to the Project
- 6 slides, Main body (Identification of the business challenge, strategies, solutions and methodology used)
- 1 slide, Final overall conclusion
- 1 slide, Future Recommendations for the company/business

Students who present on campus must send their power point presentation to the Program Coordinator's email contact, 2 days before the date of their presentation.

- All team members must present and the presentation should last no more than **20 minutes + 10 minutes** for immediate feedback comments by the Program Director.
- In case of particular requests in regards to the physical presence for the verbal presentation, students must inform their Program Coordinator via email, at least 1 month before the presentation. The other students can present either on line via the Blackboard platform or on campus in Rome.

#### 4.10 Presentation Delivery & Question and Answer session

The explanations/findings should be convincing and the contents should be well organized. All team members should have a specific part/slide to present in a confident way and be well prepared. The delivery should proceed with a good pace, so that the Program Director is able to listen and follow the presentation. The presentation has to be done in English.

Assessment of student's performance during the Question & Answer Session:

All team members should be able to:

- Answer questions accurately and with sufficient details.
- Answer questions coherently and confidently.
- Answer basic/fundamental questions within the areas/scopes of the project.
- Demonstrate good communication skills and be able to relate the answers to examples, slides, data, etc.



## 5. Capstone Project Structure Recommendation

The Capstone project structure may contain many sections and some recommended sections are outlined below. The structure can be adjusted or modified as per the type of project, business challenge requirements etc.

### Preliminary Pages:

- Cover page *(as per the template in Appendix C)*
- Confidentiality Clause *(If the final project contains confidential data a confidentiality clause can be added. The clause can be as it follows: " The final project contains confidential data of Company Name. This work may only be available to the Masters' Program Director. Any publication or duplication – even in part – is prohibited. An inspection of this work by third parties requires the express permission of the author and the company (company name).*
- Table of contents *(The table of contents should provide an overview of the document including chapters and subsections even reference material. The suggestion is to create a preliminary table of contents to establish a clear guideline for the author to follow)*
- List of figures & tables *(If required a list of figures lists all the illustrations, maps, charts and graphs that are included in the document in a chronological manner. All figures should be consecutively numbered and included as a separate reference list).*
- Abbreviations and Symbols *(An abbreviation list should provide an overview of the abbreviations used throughout the document).*

### Body of the document

**1. Introduction** - *This section focuses on the background and overview of the project and business challenge. A good introduction should include a clear statement of the nature of the project and its rationale where the business problem and its significance are justified. The limitations of the capstone project can also be briefly discussed and the structure of the project can be outlined. The aims and objectives (main and specific objectives) of the project must be stated clearly at the end of this part.*

**2. Executive Summary** *The executive summary provides a short and concise overview of the final project. The executive summary contains a brief description of the overall structure and procedure of the document. By reading the executive summary the main ideas become self-evident.*

- Company's Vision
- Company's Mission
- Business Problem/Challenge definition
- Target
- Company's Business's Needs
- Competitive advantage
- Technological level
- Financing
- Opportunities for development, expansion, strategies, solutions. Ideas etc
- Risks
- Company and / or management team.

**3. Literature review/Theoretical Framework/Resources available** *This section presents the underlying theoretical framework and resources available of the project. Thus, team should describe the work that has already been done, being critical where necessary. Summarize the main facts and conclusions of the previous studies and analysis, synthesizing to produce main themes, directions, contradictions, etc.*

**4. Materials and Methodology** *This section deals with the experimental phase of the project and the methods used to create a strategy or solution that solves the business challenge. Teams should indicate all the data gathered, techniques used (test, observations, interviews, check list, audio/video taping, photographs, internal evaluation reports of the company, web site, etc.), data analysis/interpretation techniques, materials which will lead to the creation of the strategy.*

**5. Results, Solution, and Discussion** *This section should contain the team observations, measurements taken and/or strategy and solution. Teams should state the significance of the obtained results in relation to the original aims and objectives and to the previously presented information when the business challenges was proposed to them. Team should clearly state their strategy and proposed solution to the business challenges supported by facts, methodology and rationale.*

**6. Conclusion and recommendations** *The major conclusions must be clearly stated in this section. Ideas or suggestions for future work may be presented based on the findings of the investigation that has been performed. A future outlook can also be included.*

**7. References** *A complete and accurate list of references must be provided. Teams should check for the compatibility between the reference cited in the text and the references given in the list.*

**8. Annexes/Appendices:** *Any materials that do not fit into the main chapters can be included in the appendices. For example, survey questionnaires, compilation of survey data, source code of a program, etc can be placed in the form of an appendix/annex.*

## 6. Formal aspects of the written work to consider

The formal aspects of the written work are those below:

### 6.1. Main formal requisites

All Capstone projects must be correctly presented with the following information (using the templates available on Blackboard):

- Project title
- Team members name and surname and leader, Program Director's and Mentor (if involved) name and surname
- Master Program
- Completion date

In addition, the title of the project in English will have to appear as such in the header of all of the pages encompassing the written work. All works, regardless of their contents, MUST include the following information:

1. **Cover page:** With the above-mentioned presentation details included
2. **Executive summary:** Executive Summary: Must contain a maximum of 250 words.
3. **Keywords:** On the same page as the executive summary, five key words should be presented.

**Table of contents:** Must contain all sections and subsections encompassing the written work (up to three breakdown levels). The index should also specify the list of annexes, if any are included

**Introduction:** The introduction should be structured in two parts: the personal part, in which the students will explain the reasons why they have chosen to work on that specific business challenge; and the scientific part, in which they will introduce the project topic, the conceptual framework (if applicable), the work's personal, professional, academic, scientific and / or social relevance (if applicable), and the methodology used.

**Main Body:** The main body must follow the structuring established, and the requirements as indicated in the business challenge that is proposed. The main body should consist of as many sections and subsections as is sufficient, up to three list levels and in an adequate proportion where the business challenge is analyzed, discussed and an appropriate strategy and solution is presented based on a solid analysis and research.

**Conclusions:** The conclusions will have to be coherent with an introduction and a main body.

**Bibliography and Sitography:** At the end of the capstone project, the complete list of sources must be included, whatever their type or origin, which have been used in the execution of the same. The bibliography should be restricted to the sources cited in the work, should be referenced, both within the body of the capstone project and in the bibliography, making use of the Harvard Referencing Style.

**Annexes:** Any materials that do not fit into the main chapters can be included in the appendices. For example, survey questionnaires, compilation of survey data, source code of a program, etc

## 6.2. Other formal requirements

Size, number of pages and font

- Body of work: Arial or Georgia 11, Normal.
- Titles: Arial or Georgia 15, Bold.
- Subtitles: Arial or Georgia 12, Bold.
- Footnotes: Arial or Georgia 10, Normal.

**Minimum of 20 pages + Bibliography and maximum of 30 pages + Bibliography**

Margins and spaces:

- Left: 3 cm.
- Right: 2 cm.
- Top: 2 cm.
- Bottom: 2 cm.
- Interlinear space: 1.5 spaces.
- Space between paragraphs: 2 spaces.

Alignment: Justified.

Paginated: At the bottom, to the right.

## 7. Capstone Project Evaluation Criteria

All team members are responsible for the project as a whole, not just their own portion of the project. The Capstone project grade reflects input from **two different project's parts** (See Appendix D) and the final grade for each team member is composed as **an average** of the 2 project's parts which are the following:

1. Evaluation for the overall written part of the project – **Team work** – graded by the Program Director/Project Mentor if involved
  2. Evaluation for the overall verbal presentation – **Individual** - graded by the Evaluation Committee
- Final grade: average of the written part and oral presentation grade.

### 7.1 Evaluation Criteria: Written part

The evaluation criteria of the written part refer to the project as a whole, created by the whole team.

The assessed components are the following:

- Clear objectives, introduction, executive summary (*Specific and measurable objectives, clear and clear and constructive background of the business challenge in line with the objectives*)
- Content (*A clear and supported by facts and data description of the business challenge, solutions proposed & strategies*)
- Depth (*The level of the research conduct for the project, for the solutions provided for the challenge*)
- Structure (*The written part must have a clear structure Introduction, Main body (business challenge identification, ideas assessments, research and analysis, strategies/solutions creation)*)
- Style including Referencing (*The overall referencing and the style of referencing within the document. The referencing should be as per the Harvard Referencing Style*)
- Conclusion & Recommendations (*Clear conclusion, specific and in line with the objectives. At least 2 future recommendation to be provided for the business*)

See **Appendix D** for more details and explanation on the grading criteria.

## 7.2 Evaluation Criteria: Verbal presentation

The evaluation criteria of the verbal presentation refer to each team member. The teams present as a team but are graded individually. Each member must present the part agreed together within the team. Each team member must present during the verbal presentation. The assessed components for the verbal presentation for the team and each team members, are the following:

- Presence
- Language skills
- Organization
- Mastery of the subject
- Visual aid
- Overall impression

See **Appendix D** for more details and explanation on the grading criteria.

## 8. Learning Resources

All materials regarding the capstone project preparation (Handbook, presentations from sessions given by the Program Director, Evaluation Criteria sheets, Business challenges presentation, etc.) will be available on the Blackboard platform under the section of the student's master program, within the section entitled "Capstone Project". For any doubts or questions in this regard, students can contact the Program Coordinator of the master program.

## 9. Capstone Project Attempt Policy

Type of Assessment	Timing	Reattempt policy	Plagiarism
<b>Capstone Written Part</b>	The deadline to submit the Capstone on the Blackboard is shown on the Didactic Calendar.	Failure or lack of submission of the whole team of the Capstone Project within the required deadline will have to be communicate to the Academic Department. Only upon approval by the Academic Office this can be rescheduled.	If Plagiarism is detected, the student is required to resubmit the written part within 20 days. There is a penalty with the grade being reduced by 25%
<b>Capstone Project Presentation</b>	The deadline to present the Capstone is shown on the Didactic Calendar.	Failure or lack of submission of the whole team of the Capstone Project will have to be communicate to the Academic Department. Only upon approval by the Academic Office this can be rescheduled and agreed with the Program Director.	

## 10. Bibliography

The bibliography includes all the sources used for the capstone project. The sources are listed in an ascending alphabetical order. The bibliography uses the same front and spacing as the main text.

### 10.1 Recommended General Bibliography

- BLANK, Steve; DORF, Bob. The Startup Owner's Manual: The Step-by-Step Guide for Building a Great Company. K&S Ranch, 2014.
- WALLING, Rob. Start Small, Stay Small: A Developer's Guide to Launching a Startup. The Numa Group, LLC (June 8, 2010).
- MARTINEZ ABASCAL, Eduardo. Finance for Managers. MC Graw Hill.
- OSTERWALDER, Alexander. Business Model Generation: A Handbook for Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers John Wiley & Sons Ltd
- Hawker, C.J. Effective Presentations - A Must. Angew. Chem. Int. Ed. 2013, Available from: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/anie.201209795/pdf>
- Ken Hanson: Technical and scientific writing: <http://kmh-lanl.hansonhub.com/techwriting.html>
- Mayfield Handbook of Technical and Scientific Writing: <http://www.mhhe.com/mayfieldpub/tsw/toc.htm>
- LERNER, Cliff. Explosive Growth: A Few Things I Learned While Growing My Startup To 100 Million Users & Losing \$78 Million. Clifford Ventures Corporation (November 7, 2017).
- BLANK, Steve. The Four Steps to the Epiphany. Cafepress.com; 2nd edition (July 17, 2013).
- JANZER, Anne. Subscription Marketing: Strategies for Nurturing Customers in a World of Churn. Cuesta Park Consulting; 2 edition (March 24, 2017).
- DHOLAKIA, Utpal. How to Price Effectively: A Guide for Managers and Entrepreneurs; Utpal Dholakia (July 5, 2017).
- FRODSHAM, David; LIECHTENSTEIN, Heinrich. Getting between the Balance Sheets: the four things every entrepreneur should know about finance. Palgrave
- FELD, Brad; MENDELSON, Jason, Be smarter than your lawyer and venture capitalist. Brad Feld, Jason Mendelson. John Wiley and Sons.

## 11. Referencing

For referencing different sources and materials, students should apply and refer to the Harvard Referencing system. Each time students are referencing a source in their capstone project should include the reference within the text and in a separate reference list at the end of the capstone project.

When referencing within the text of the capstone project, students need to include:

- ▶ The author's family name or organization
- ▶ The year of publication
- ▶ The page numbers

### When using a direct quote:

"Whereas the owner's corporation is comprised of all the owners in a strata scheme, the executive committee consists of between one and nine elected owners or owners' nominees." (Ilkin 2009, p91).

### If using just a person's idea or finding:

Smith (2008) discovered that conflict can come from many sources. (there is no need to use a page number in this example as you are not quoting Smith but reporting on her findings).

### If using a document from your organization:

Note the name of your organization, the date the document was created, and who was responsible for creating that document.

## 11.1 Creating A Reference List

### 1. For Books

surname, initials (year), title of book, publisher, place of publication.

e.g. Fallbright, A. and Khan, G. (2001), *Competing Strategies*, Outhouse Press, Rochester, NJ.

### 2. For book chapters

surname, initials (year), "chapter title", editor's surname, initials, title of book, publisher, place of publication, pages.

e.g. Bessley, M. and Wilson, P. (1999), "Marketing for the Production Manager" in Levicki, J. (ed.), *Taking the Blinks off Managers*, Broom Relm, London, pp. 29-33.

### 3. For journal articles

surname, initials (year), "title of article", journal name in full, volume, issue number, pages.

e.g. Greenwald, E. (2000), "Empowered to serve", *Management Decision*, vol. 33 no. 5, pp. 6-10.

### 4. For electronic sources

With websites it is important to give a viable link and also the date accessed.

- Anon (2004) One third of Sky viewers press red button. Carat, [http://www.carat.co.uk/whats\\_new\\_item.asp?ID=66](http://www.carat.co.uk/whats_new_item.asp?ID=66) [Accessed on 15 March 2004]
- Neff, J. (2004) P&G marketing chief critiques the advertising industry. AdAge, [www.adage.com](http://www.adage.com) [Subscription required to access site]

### Notes:

- If you have cited more than one item by a specific author they should be listed chronologically (earliest first), then by letter (1993a, 1993b) if more than one item has been published during a specific year.
- The word following a colon should be lower case unless it is a real name.
- If there are more than three authors use et al after the first author.
- To refer to pages, p24 is page 24, pp206-8 refers to pages 206 to 208.

## 12. Conclusion

If there are any matters that are not discussed or covered within the Capstone Project Handbook, they need to be referred to the Program Coordinator of the master via email or on campus, or to the Didactic team, for further information and clarification.

## Appendix A I Sample Format of a Capstone Project Proposal

**1. Project Title:** should be brief and descriptive.

**2. Institutional Affiliation:** the institution/company or organization that carry out the business challenge on which the capstone project will be build.

**3. Team members & Team leader:** Name and email contact of the leader

**3.1 Program Director & Program Coordinator:** Name, and contact details

**3.2 External Supervisor/Manager/Expert (if applicable):** Name, affiliation and contact details

**4. Introduction:** This section is an executive summary of the proposed work, which provides an overview and a clear statement of the business challenge. The Introduction can further be divided into two sub sections.

**4.1 Background:** This section presents and summarizes the business challenge/problem or an opportunity that will be solved on work upon and the approach to be used to solve that problem or work on that opportunity. The background should properly describe the conceptual and theoretical basis of the proposed project linked to the material that has been covered during the master. Relevant references and previous work must be cited in order to support the proposed study.

**4.2 Rationale and Justification:** In this part, teams should explain why the chosen business challenge is interesting and relevant for them to work on and what their contribution will be. The benefits or the findings of the proposed study (any novel ideas and/or contributions) and the future directions are also briefly discussed and stated in this section.

**4.2.1. Methodology:** The methodology should correspond to problem/challenge and the available material or resources for analysis and research. Teams can briefly describe which theoretical and analytical concepts based they are going to employ to create a strategy, find solutions to the problem, etc.

**5. Specific Objectives:** Specific objectives should be defined relevant to the overall objective and should be achievable within the given timeframe. Specific objectives are measurable (outcome-based) activities to achieve the overall objective of the project. The objectives must be in line and should be defined based upon the initial business challenge's requirements proposed by the Program Director.

**6. Action plan to achieve objectives:** This section summarizes steps taken by each of the team members to achieve the stated objectives of the project, that together lead to their accomplishment.

Activity	Person Responsible	Time duration (in weeks)															
		Month 1				Month 2				Month 3				Month 4			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Literature/Material Review																	
Preparation of the Project Proposal																	
Interviews																	
Final project submission																	
Verbal presentation preparation																	

**7. Outline:** The expected structure of the capstone project.

**8. References/Bibliography/Resources available/Interviews, Reports/Databases/Websites:**

Teams should list the most important papers/books, reports, web sites etc, they are going to use (specify at least 3 relevant references) or any interviews on line or face to face with experts, managers, employees.

**9. Annexes:** Any relevant graphs, questionnaires, diagrams, etc can be provided as annexes.



## Appendix B I Sample Format of a Capstone Project Proposal Type: Business plan

- 1. Project Title:** should be brief and descriptive.
- 2. Institutional Affiliation:** the institution/company or organization that carry out the business challenge on which the capstone project will be build.
- 3. Team members & Team leader:** Name and email contact of the leader
- 3.1 Program Director & Program Coordinator:** Name, and contact details
- 3.2 External Supervisor/Manager/Expert (if applicable):** Name, affiliation and contact details
- 4. Business Plan Summary –** The business summary should be no longer than a page and should focus on why the business is going to be successful. The part should briefly summarise more detailed answers provided throughout the body of the Business plan.
  - The Business
  - The Market
  - The Future
  - The Finances
- 5. The Business –** In this part, students should list briefly details regarding the business as given below.
  - Business premises
  - Organisation chart
  - Management & ownership
  - Key personnel
  - Products/services
  - Innovation
  - Legal considerations
  - Operations
  - Sustainability plan
- 6. The Market –** The part focused on the market should provide a brief overview of the market in which the business operates or will operate.
  - Market research
  - Market targets
  - Environmental/industry analysis
  - The customers
  - S.W.O.T. analysis
  - The competitors
  - Advertising & sales
- 8. The Finances –** Briefly outline how much profit is intended the business to make in a particular timeframe. How much money will be needed up-front? How the funds will be gain etc.
  - Key objectives & financial review
- 7. Action plan to achieve objectives:** This section summarises steps taken by each of the team members to achieve the stated objectives of the project, that together lead to their accomplishment.

Activity	Person Responsible	Time duration (in weeks)															
		Month 1				Month 2				Month 3				Month 4			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Literature/Material Review																	
Preparation of the Project Proposal																	
Interviews																	
Final project submission																	
Verbal presentation preparation																	

### 8. References/Bibliography/Resources available/Interviews, Reports/Databases/Websites:

Teams should list the most important papers/books, reports, web sites etc, they are going to use (specify at least 3 relevant references) or any interviews on line or face to face with experts, managers, employees.

### 9. Annexes: Any relevant graphs, questionnaires, diagrams, etc can be provided as annexes.

**Appendix C I Capstone Project Cover Page**

## Master in (indicate the master)

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Intake, Year: (indicate year and intake (March or October),  
for example: March, 2022)

### Capstone project by:

(Indicate all team's members' names and surnames)

## TITLE

*Subtitle (if existing)*

*Rome, date of submission*

## Appendix D I Capstone Project Evaluation

### CAPSTONE PROJECT - EVALUATION

Student's name and surname:

Team members name and surname:

Title of the Capstone Project– Business challenge:

Business challenge type:

EVALUATION FOR THR WRITTEN PART – TEAM WORK		
Assessed Component	Allocation of Marks	Mark
Introduction, Executive summary & Objectives	0 - 2	
Content	0 - 8	
Depth	0 - 5	
Structure	0 - 5	
Style including Referencing	0 - 5	
Conclusion & Recommendations	0 - 5	
<b>TOTAL</b>	30 (L – cum laude)	
EVALUATION FOR THE VERBAL PRESENTATION – INDIVIDUAL WORK		
Assessed Component	Allocation of Marks	Mark
Presence	0 - 2	
Language Skills	0 - 8	
Organization	0 - 5	
Mastery of the subject	0 - 5	
Visual aids	0 - 5	
Overall impression	0 - 5	
<b>TOTAL</b>	30 (L – cum laude)	
Total Final Grade		
Written Part – Team Work	30 (L – cum laude)	
Verbal Presentation – Individual Work	30 (L – cum laude)	
<b>TOTAL FINAL GRADE</b>	<b>30 (L – cum laude)</b>	

### Written Feedback Comments:

Introduction \_\_\_\_\_

Content \_\_\_\_\_

Depth \_\_\_\_\_

Structure \_\_\_\_\_

Style/Referencing \_\_\_\_\_

Conclusion & Recommendations \_\_\_\_\_

**GRADING CRITERIA – WRITTEN PART (INDIVIDUAL & TEAM WORK)**

	<b>A - Excellent (30 cum laude- 29)</b>	<b>B- Very Good (28- 26)</b>	<b>C- Good (25- 23)</b>	<b>D - Satisfactory: (22-20)</b>	<b>E - Sufficient (19-18)</b>	<b>F/FX – Failure (below 18)</b>
<b>Content</b>	Outstanding knowledge and understanding of the project and an imaginative sense of its relevance across a range of issues, and context. Independent and creative, and demonstrates clear thinking; ability to analyse and critically evaluate material.	Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the project, across a broad spectrum, combined with an ability to evaluate, analyse and reflect on key issues.	A suitable knowledge and understanding of the project within defined industries. The key issues have been identified but not applied in any meaningful way.	Adequate understanding and use of course and other relevant material; mostly descriptive, but with some grasp of key course themes and issues and a capacity to discuss these in context.	A basic knowledge of the material that has been copied from the textbook. The key themes have not yet been grasped and there has been little understanding of the context of the material in a real world application.	Very limited knowledge and understanding and the issues involved.
<b>Depth and Examples</b>	A sensitive awareness of conflicting arguments and ideas and of their provenance. Clear grasp of implications. Relevant and excellent examples.	Well organised use of most of the major points with an ability to draw upon them creatively and critically; awareness of conflicting arguments and ideas and attempt to address them in context. Very good examples.	Most of the major points have been answered with models but only basic awareness of the material and how it can be applied in the real world – Mostly examples from own experience or the textbook.	Some of the points have been identified and there has been little or no reflection of the material has taken place from industry experience but rather a reflection of the textbook examples. Some limited examples have been identified	Some very basic attempt to address the conflicting arguments and ideas from the course, some signs of an attempt to take an evaluative, analytical and critical stance; some inappropriate use of concepts, with only limited evidence of independent thinking. Few examples	Lack of awareness of conflicting arguments and ideas. Lack of examples.
<b>Structure</b>	Comprehensive material gathered that is unmistakably organized with a clear, logical flow of argument; good sign-posting throughout.	Understand and clear framework with well-reasoned arguments and evidence of careful thought.	The material has been structured to answer the questions with some evidence of knowledge application.	Framework is apparent with an introduction, argument and conclusion, but the logical flow and coherence is not always consistent and may be difficult to follow.	Although there is a limited framework, there is little or no coherence with thought process and the arguments are fundamentally flawed.	Little or no evidence of planned structure and organisation.
<b>Style</b>	A comprehensive use of the written language; theory is fluently drawn in to illuminate and evidence the arguments.	A fluent use of written language; theory is appropriately integrated and correctly presented.	A good use of written language, with some basic understanding of the theory with a mostly correct presentation.	Adequate use of written language; meaning is conveyed, although not always clearly; theory used, but not be very well integrated or appropriately used.	An inadequate use of the written language, with often the meaning being lost, there is basic theory used and sometimes wrongly applied.	Meaning is very hard to follow due to confusing use of language. No understanding of theory nor an understanding how to apply the material.

## GRADING CRITERIA – VERBAL TEAM PRESENTATION

	Excellent				Fail	
	5	4	3	2	1	0
<b>PRESENCE</b>	5	4	3	2	1	0
- body language & eye contact						
- contact with the public						
- poise						
- physical organization						
<b>LANGUAGE SKILLS</b>	5	4	3	2	1	0
- correct usage						
- appropriate vocabulary and grammar						
- understandable (rhythm, intonation, accent)						
- spoken loud enough to hear easily						
<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	5	4	3	2	1	0
- clear objectives						
- logical structure						
- signposting						
<b>MASTERY OF THE SUBJECT</b>	5	4	3	2	1	0
- pertinence						
- depth of commentary						
- spoken, not read						
- able to answer questions						
<b>VISUAL AIDS</b>	5	4	3	2	1	0
- transparencies, slides						
- handouts						
- audio, video, etc.						
<b>OVERALL IMPRESSION</b>	5	4	3	2	1	0
- very interesting / very boring						
- pleasant / unpleasant to listen to						
- very good / poor communication						

**TOTAL SCORE 30/**