

Fulbright University Vietnam

Economics

Capstone Handbook

As of AY 2025-2026

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1. General Information

Descriptions

A capstone project represents the culmination of a student's learning journey, showcasing their mastery of the core outcomes and competencies of the Economics curriculum in a cohesive and meaningful manner. The student is expected to produce independent research that addresses a gap in the existing literature using economic tools. An Economics Capstone can take only the form of a written thesis.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Students who complete the Capstone will be able to:

CLO1. **Review** literature, **identify** the gap in knowledge, and **formulate** a precise research question.

CLO2. **Choose**, **justify**, and **implement** the appropriate methodology to answer the research question.

CLO3. **Communicate** and **interpret** the results of the analysis.

Mapping to Major Learning Outcomes (MLOs)

	MLO1	MLO2	MLO3	MLO4
CLO1	x			x
CLO2	x		x	
CLO3	x			

1.1. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible to apply for the capstone in Economics, you must meet the following criteria:

- Major GPA: 3.0
- Expected to have completed at least ONE 300-level course by the end of the Spring semester before Capstone I.

Before students apply for a Capstone, they should **declare** their major, **maintain** good academic standing, and **discuss** their Capstone project with their prospective advisor.

Capstone applicants will be assessed by the major faculty based on the eligibility criteria and the quality of the proposal.

Projects for which there is no current faculty expertise may not be approved.

For the most up-to-date listing of full-time faculty in Economics and their expertise, please refer to [Full-time Economics Faculty and Expertise](#).

1.2. Allocation of advisor process

Capstone applicants will be asked for their first choice of primary and secondary advisors, and successful applicants will be assigned an advisor from the Economics department. The allocation of advisors will depend on a variety of factors, including fair distribution of faculty advising, appropriate areas of expertise, and submitted preferences.

1.3. Advising process

The primary advisor will be your first point of contact and the primary reviewer of your work in progress, and as such, will be the person with whom you meet most frequently. The primary advisor should hold expertise relevant to your project. Expertise does not need to be regional or topical – an advisor may have a strong grounding in the theory or methodological approaches of the capstone rather than a specific research background in that topic.

The secondary advisor can offer you additional feedback where necessary and may represent a disciplinary field outside of Economics (if your project is interdisciplinary). In cases when the primary advisor is unable to continue, the secondary advisor will assume their role.

You should plan to meet with your primary advisor at least once a month, if not more often. **You are expected to be proactive in organizing these meetings with your advisors and to follow up on the meetings' actionable items.** The capstone places responsibility on you to be organized and to be responsible in regular communications and submission of work-in-progression to your primary advisor. **Failure to do this might lead to a "Fail".**

REMEMBER:

- ✓ Respect your advisor's working hours
- ✓ Correspond professionally and courteously
- ✓ Use Fulbright email instead of social media platforms
- ✓ Be prepared at meetings (with materials, questions) and use your time efficiently
- ✓ You are responsible for setting up the meetings (and showing up on time!)

OTHER EXPECTATIONS:

- You cannot change your capstone's topic and format without consulting your advisors and getting their approval
- We expect you to demonstrate and maintain clear communication, a steady work ethic, a capacity for self-organization, and balanced management of your capstone workload with your other coursework
- Try to keep up with your timeline
- Manage your expectations in terms of what you can accomplish

1.5. Capstone I

In Capstone I you will commence research and refine your project proposal and plan. Depending on the project, this will likely include development of a comprehensive bibliography and literature review focusing on background context.

Capstone I will be assessed by a combination of your active participation in the advising processes and end-of-term submission. The end-of-term submission will demonstrate successful progress towards the final capstone submission, and satisfactory completion.

What you might be expected to submit for Capstone I:

End-of-term submission may be one or a combination of some of the following:

- Initial literature review
- Draft of methodology

- Preliminary findings
- Other materials to be decided on in consultation with your advisors

1.6. Capstone II

Capstone II is the continuation of the research project from Capstone I and the final submission of a sustained, written thesis. Additionally, each student is expected to give a 15-20-minute presentation of their progress in a series of Capstone Colloquium sessions between Weeks 6 and 8 of the semester. You are expected submit your slides to Canvas before your own presentation session and to attend and engage with the presentations of your classmates.

Capstone II will be graded solely through assessment of a student's final submission.

What you might be expected to submit for Capstone II:

Midterm submission: (due four weeks before the end of the semester)

- A complete penultimate draft of a thesis

End-of-term submission: (due two weeks before the end of the semester)

- A revised and professionally presented written thesis

1.7. IRB Approval

If your project requires working with human subjects through processes that include, but are not limited to, in-person or online interviews, direct or indirect observations, opinion surveys, etc., you will be responsible for obtaining approval from Fulbright University Vietnam's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB approval process involves taking an online module to learn about IRB procedures, as well as submitting an application detailing your research design and plan for data collection and protection. Please be advised that the IRB procedure applies to all forms of Economics Capstones project, whether written thesis, applied or creative project.

Students must obtain IRB approval **prior to** the period of their human subject research. Failure to do so would result in delays to the project and/or its suspension. For this reason, Economics students are advised to begin their IRB application during

Capstone I at the latest. Bear in mind that the process of obtaining IRB approval may take several weeks.

More information on the IRB approval process can be found at <https://fulbright.edu.vn/irb/>

1.8. Academic Integrity

The capstone is subject to the regulations described in Fulbright University Vietnam's Code of Academic Integrity.

2. Capstone by Thesis Guidelines

2.1. Word Count Regulations

There is neither minimum nor maximum word count. However, typical undergraduate theses are 20-40 pages, **including** full bibliography and images with captions.

2.2. Style and Formatting

All theses must be written using LaTeX, a formatting software that ensures that the style and structure of your thesis adheres to department guidelines. When writing in LaTeX, you must adopt the template posted on the Economics Capstone Canvas with the Fulbright University Vietnam logo.

Sequence of Thesis Materials:

Preliminary pages, in the following order:

- A. Title Page. The title page should include the title of the thesis, your name, the date of submission, and your advisor's name. Include this statement on the lower third of the page:

**A thesis submitted to partially fulfill the requirements for the
degree of Bachelor of Arts in Economics**

- B. Table of Contents. A consecutive listing of chapters or major headings with page numbers; also include the page number for the additional sections, the appendix (if included), and the bibliography. Double space between these elements.
- C. Abstract page. Double-spaced.
- D. Acknowledgment(s) page. Optional. Double-spaced.
- E. List of Tables (as necessary), with titles and page references.
- F. List of Figures (as necessary), with titles and page references.

Note: The preliminary pages should be paginated using small Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, v, and so on). These may be placed at the bottom of the page. The title page counts as page i, but do not print a page number on this page. Begin the pagination with the next page (acknowledgments page, if you have one, or the table of contents).

Bibliography. Citation style: APA. Follow standard practice set by LaTeX. Discuss with your advisor(s) about this if you encounter technical issues.

Appendix. If there is an appendix, it should be placed after the bibliography.

2.4. Grading Process and Evaluation Criteria

There are two graders for each capstone project: primary advisor (60%) and a second reader (40%). We will follow the grading rubric below.

5=completely applicable 4=mostly applicable 3=often applicable 2=occasionally applicable 1=rarely applicable 0=Not applicable at all

	EVALUATION CRITERIA	SCORE	COMMENTS
1	ORGANIZATION (10%)		
1.1	The included sections are appropriate to the question.		
1.2	The overall structure of the Capstone, i.e. the ordering of sections, is logical and concise.		
1.3	The lengths of sections and sub-sections are proportionate to their importance.		
	Section Score		
2	MOTIVATION AND RESEARCH QUESTION (20%)		
2.1	The problem is strongly motivated.		
2.2	The research question is appropriate for an undergraduate Capstone project.		
2.3	The research question is formulated precisely.		
	Section score		
3	LITERATURE (20%)		

3.1	The sources include important works related to the research question.		
3.2	The important works included are clearly described.		
3.3	The literature review clearly explains the research gap and how the Capstone project fills in the gap.		
3.4	The bibliography and in-text citations are error-free and consistent with each other.		
	Section Score		
4	METHODOLOGY (20%)		
4.1	The methodology used is appropriate to the problem posed.		
4.2	The methodology used is clearly described with appropriate presentation.		
4.3	The reason for choosing the methodology is clearly explained.		
	Section Score		
5	RESULTS (20%)		
5.1	The results are clearly presented in relation to the research question.		
5.2	The contents of the results are correct.		
5.3	The interpretations of the results are correct.		
5.4	Results are critically analyzed.		
	Section Score		
6	FORMALITIES (10%)		
6.1	Written expression is independent, understandable, clear, and correct.		

6.2	Spelling and punctuation are always correct.		
6.3	The typesetting and formatting requirements are complied with throughout.		
	Section score		
7	EXTRA ACHIEVEMENTS/HONORS (5% BONUS)		
7.1	The Capstone distinguishes itself through its originality of the research question.		
7.2	The Capstone distinguishes itself through its creativity in implementation.		
7.3	The Capstone distinguishes itself through the diligence and effort applied.		
	Section score		
	TOTAL AVERAGE SCORE (weighted average of section scores)		

FINAL CUMULATIVE SCORE: 4.5-5.0 = PASS WITH HONORS
3.0-4.4 = PASS WITHOUT HONORS
2.9 and below = NO PASS