



Senior Capstone Overview

The University Honors Senior Capstone is the final experience for students within the program. This requirement is facilitated directly through one-on-one work with a qualified faculty member, in students' interest areas, and takes place over an entire semester (and in some cases may extend into an entire academic year).

The Honors Senior Capstone project is an opportunity for a student and faculty mentor to advance a student's learning to new heights through personalized and unique approaches to their studies. We hope that both the student and faculty will benefit from this relationship.

The Senior Capstone should allow a student to explore a topic in-depth, and, moreover, serve as a mechanism to enhance future professional success. The expectation is that the Honors Senior Capstone should approximate professional academic work, include routine meetings with the faculty member, and produce an outcome that matches the expected work from a regular three (3) credit University Honors course. This requirement can be completed through a variety of different experiences.

Examples of Senior Capstone work include:

- Perform research resulting in a manuscript submission
- Construct an evidence based manual to improve quality of life, performance, social functioning, etc. for a specific segment of the population
- Collect an oral history of an event, person, etc. with a formal analysis
- Create a performance or exhibition with a formal analysis
- Form a company or non-profit and evaluate its social impact
- Complete a specific component of a design project with a formal analysis of impact to larger project and group
- Generate a report of pedagogical techniques, financial trends, research advances in a specific domain

Capstone Projects Involving Creative Work (fine art, music, writing, theatre or film production, dance, etc.)

In the event a student selects a project based on creative work, a 500-1000-word summary is required in addition to the final output. The summary should discuss the project, the findings, and may include a reflection of the experience. This summary is to be submitted in conjunction with all capstone material by the due date.



Senior Capstone Procedure

Step 1. Information Session Attendance

The University Honors Program offers regularly scheduled information sessions on the logistics of completing a Senior Capstone. Students **MUST** attend one of the Capstone Information Sessions or schedule an individual advising appointment to learn important logistics during the 2nd semester of their junior year.

Step 2. Faculty Consultation

In the **semester prior to enrollment**, the student is strongly encouraged to seek out a qualified faculty member with whom the student has a pre-existing relationship to discuss the possibility of supervising a Senior Capstone. Some topics during this initial meeting might include, but are not limited to:

- Topic(s) to explore during this experience
- The number of one-on-one meetings to be scheduled during the semester
- An overview of requirements/responsibilities of each individual
- Expectations/Evaluation of the student's Senior Capstone output

Step 3. Capstone Proposal Application Form and Submission (Due Sunday after week #2 of the semester)

By the aforementioned due date, the student **must complete and upload a Senior Honors Capstone Proposal** at <http://go.niu.edu/honorscapstone>. The proposal must include a typed synopsis of the work to be done and evaluative criteria. This synopsis should clearly articulate:

1. Title of your project
2. The topic, purpose, and/or hypothesis of your project
3. A brief description of your project articulating its importance
4. The methodology of your project
5. A complete timeline demonstrating how the project will be completed and evaluated
6. A reference page for any cited works listed in the proposal in a style appropriate to your discipline (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.)

True synopses are professional documents and should be approximately three pages in length (not including a title page).

Step 4. Proposal Approval

Once submitted, the proposal must be approved electronically by the faculty mentor, department chair, and the Honors Program. After the proposal is approved, the student and faculty mentor will receive an email from the Associate Director of Academic Strategic Planning. If the proposal is denied at any stage, the student will receive an email and have the opportunity to resubmit their proposal.

**Step 5. Attend Capstone Events**

The Honors Program offers a variety of events to support students and mentors throughout the capstone process. For example, the Capstone Reception is an opportunity for mentors and mentees to share information and ask questions of Honors staff. Various workshops may be offered on specific information or skills to support the successful completion of the capstone project. Specific events and dates will be listed in the Weekly Update.

Step 6. Presentation

In order to receive credit for completion of the Senior Honors Capstone students must present their capstone projects. Presentations may include department or college showcases or colloquia, local, regional, or national conferences, [Conference on Undergraduate Research and Engagement \(CURE\)](#) (spring) or Honors Day celebration (fall).

Step 7. Completion and Evaluation

The Senior Capstone is due the Sunday before finals begin (by 11:59 p.m. CT). Students must submit a PDF of their capstone, title page, and faculty signed approval page to honors@niu.edu and upload a copy of their capstone to Huskie Commons. If a student successfully completes the Senior Capstone (as determined by the faculty supervisor) and meets all submission deadlines, University Honors credit for the experience will be received.