COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

MSIA Program
2013-2014

CAPS 795
Information Assurance Thesis
Capstone Guidebook

(Including Intent Form and Sample Intent Narrative)
About This Guidebook…

Dear Graduate Student,

Your MSIA program will culminate with the completion of the Capstone Experience course (CAPS795), which is taken during your last ten-week session. The course is designed to provide an opportunity for you to apply and integrate the knowledge and skills that were gained during the entire MSIA program. Therefore, the Capstone topic must be related to information security and encompass material that was covered in the MSIA curriculum.

The purpose of this guidebook is to explain details of the CAPS795 research thesis. The Capstone course consists of researching and writing a thesis paper, as this provides the best option for students to merge their learning with real world experience.

An understanding of the research thesis is very important because some preliminary work is to be completed while enrolled in other MSIA courses. An official Capstone Intent form and narrative must be received and approved at least one session before enrolling in the CAPS795 course. The purpose of the Capstone Intent form is to describe the nature of your research thesis.

We welcome any comments that would be helpful for the update of this guidebook. If we have not answered all your questions, The MSIA Program staff is eager to assist you. Feel free to call or e-mail us.
FAQ About the Capstone Experience Course

Q: What is the Capstone Experience?
A: The culminating experience in the MSIA Program at Davenport University is the Capstone Experience course. It involves completing a research thesis. The Capstone course is taken during your final session at DU. Planning for it takes place well before the student’s last session.

Q: What is the purpose of the Capstone Experience?
A: The purpose of this course is to integrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities gained from several courses in the MSIA program.

Q: What is the process to complete the Capstone?
A: You will first choose a topic and complete the Capstone Intent Form. Once this has been approved, you will participate in a pre-capstone seminar, where you will work to develop your proposal. Once your proposal has been accepted, you may then complete the Capstone course and complete your thesis.

Q: Can I choose any topic for my thesis?
A: The Capstone thesis topic must be related to information assurance and encompass material that was covered in the MSIA curriculum.

Q: Who should I contact for more information about the course?
A: Your advisor can provide basic information. Questions regarding the academic content of the course should be directed to staff listed in this guidebook.

Q: Can I take the Capstone course prior to finishing the rest of my course requirements?
A: The Capstone Experience can be taken only as the last course in the graduate program. Although one course may be taken concurrently with the Capstone, such action is not recommended. A grade of “B” or better in the class is required for graduation. The Capstone Experience can be repeated only once.

Q: Is it too early to begin to discuss my Capstone project ideas?
A: It is never too early to discuss the Capstone. The sooner you begin to formulate ideas, the better prepared you will be before enrolling in the course. The required paperwork can be submitted in the semester prior to enrolling in the capstone session.
Q: When does my Capstone topic become “official?”
A: After you complete a Capstone Intent Form (attached) and a narrative which describes your thesis, secured approval from the faculty advisor who will facilitate the course, and scheduled for the class with your student advisor, you may begin preliminary work that involves published sources. The topic must be approved at least one session before the capstone begins. The Intent Form is not a contract, so if you wish to change your project, you may do so with another Intent Form and narrative.

Q: Are there assignments that will be considered in grading besides the thesis?
A: Yes. These will be explained in your professor’s syllabus.

Q: What is a thesis statement?
A: A thesis statement declares what you believe and intend to demonstrate. A thesis paper describes a problem and contains a thesis statement. The remainder of the paper then contains material to focus on the problem and sustain the thesis statement.

Q: What is the pre-capstone seminar?
A: You will participate in the pre-capstone seminar in the session immediately before your Capstone course, provided you have received approval of your Capstone Intent form. In the pre-capstone seminar, you will further develop your topic and write a proposal. Once your proposal has been accepted by your faculty advisor, you will be allowed to proceed into the succeeding CAPS795 Capstone course.

Q: What is the difference between a proposal and a thesis paper?
A: In simple terms, the amount of work completed. The proposal is a substantial amount of work completed toward your final thesis paper. In your proposal, you should have completed much of the background research, framed your introduction around your thesis statement, written much of your literature review, described the method to be used (if primary research will be conducted), and provided a timeline toward completing the remainder of your thesis.
Capstone Thesis Details

Research Methods

The project is to involve an investigation of a current issue, trend, problem, or opportunity for a department, company, or industry. It will entail extensive research of published sources (secondary information) and may include gathering primary data, as well. Primary data could be gathered through focus groups, in-depth interviews, or a telephone or mail survey, however, this may present two major challenges. First, the student must become thoroughly knowledgeable in the use of the method through independent study. Second, desired survey respondents may not be available. Design of a primary research study must be approved by the faculty member before class begins. This includes sample selection, questionnaire design, and methods of analysis.

If your proposed topic will contain content from a paper that was written for another class, it must involve extensive additional research or it will be considered plagiarism. Plagiarism is grounds for dismissal from the University.

Examples of projects may be available for review at your local Davenport LInC. Examples of previous projects completed specifically for the CAPS795 course may be found at: http://www.davenport.edu/college-technology/center-academic-excellence-isaac/research

Please note: Certain assignments may require students to assess the marketing or business strategies of real-world organizations. Because companies (including Davenport University) generally hold such strategic information confidential, students should be challenged to use secondary research and analytical reasoning to draw conclusions about strategic direction. Only public information will be readily available to students, and they should learn to derive meaning from that information.

Written Report

Below is a brief outline of the thesis. APA style is to be used.

- Title Page
  1. Abstract or Executive Summary
  1. Introduction
  2. Literature Review
  3. Method Used to Gather Information (If primary research is conducted)
  4. Results
  5. Conclusions or Recommendations
    1. References
    2. Appendices
    3. Copy of PowerPoint presentation slides (hardcopy with 6 slides per page)
Oral Presentation

Students deliver an oral presentation of their findings upon completion of the course using PowerPoint slides. PowerPoint slides (6 slides per page) are to be included in the written report. The oral presentation may be completed in class or via conference call or online presentation, depending on the delivery method of the course.

Evaluation of the Project

The written report and oral presentation are evaluated based on the attributes below. Students should use this as a checklist for self-evaluation.

Assessment of Written Assignments

A Paper (Exemplary):

1. Complies fully with the assignment. Information clearly and effectively supports a central purpose or thesis and displays a thoughtful, in-depth analysis of a sufficiently limited topic. The reader gains insights.

2. Is directed towards and meets the needs of a defined audience (is persuasive or argumentative).

3. Begins, flows, and ends effectively. The introduction, body and conclusion of the paper are sound.

4. Provides compelling supporting arguments, evidence, examples and details. The use of supporting detail is embedded in a context of discussion.

5. Is well-organized and unified with ideas and sentences that relate to the main topic. The ideas are arranged logically to support the thesis.

6. Uses appropriate, direct language: the writing is compelling; the sentences are well-phrased and varied in length and structure. Paragraphs are well-structured, use of headings is excellent, and the paper shows strong organization.

7. Correctly acknowledges and documents sources in APA style (e.g., in-text citations, works cited pages, etc.).

8. Is free of errors in grammar, punctuation, word choice, spelling, and format.

9. Maintains a level of excellence throughout, and shows originality and creativity in realizing 1-6.

B Paper (Proficient):

1. Complies in a competent manner with the assignment. Information provides firm support for a central purpose or thesis, and displays evidence of a basic analysis of a sufficiently limited topic. The paper demonstrates overall competency. It
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shows some originality, creativity, and/or genuine engagement with issues at hand.

2. Is directed towards and meets the needs of a defined audience (is persuasive, argumentative or informational).

3. Begins, flows, and ends effectively. The introduction, body and conclusion of the paper are adequate.

4. Provides adequate supporting arguments, evidence, examples and details. The use of supporting detail is embedded in a context of discussion.

5. Is well-organized and unified with sentences that relate to the main topic. The ideas are arranged logically to support the thesis. Paragraphs are well-structured, use of headings is good, and the paper shows general organization and flow.

6. Is comprised of well-phrased sentences which are varied in length and structure. There are occasional violations in the writing, but they don’t present a major distraction or obscure the meaning.

7. Correctly acknowledges and documents sources in APA style (e.g., in-text citations, works cited pages, etc.).

8. Contains minimal errors in grammar, punctuation, word choice, spelling, and format.

C Paper (Marginal):

1. Complies adequately with the assignment. Information supports the thesis at times. Analysis is basic or general. The purpose is not always clear. The paper completes (rather than engages in) the assignment.

2. Presents an unclear (either persuasive or argumentative) rhetorical position.

3. Has partial or inadequate introduction and conclusion.

4. Does not provide adequate supporting arguments, evidence, examples and/or details.

5. Is not arranged logically. Ideas fail to make sense and are not expressed clearly. The reader can figure out what the writer probably intends, but may not be motivated to do so.

6. Contains some awkwardly constructed sentences which present an occasional distraction for the reader. Paragraphs are unstructured, headings are missing, and general organization and flow is lacking.
7. Incorrectly or partially acknowledges and documents sources in APA style (e.g., in-text citations, works cited pages, etc.). Although occasional references are provided, the writer relies on unsubstantiated statements. The reader is confused about the source of ideas.

8. Contains numerous errors in grammar, punctuation, word choice, spelling, and format, which is distracting to the reader.

**F Paper (Unacceptable):**

1. Does not adequately comply with the assignment. The paper does not successfully identify the thesis. Analysis is vague or not evident.

2. Has no rhetorical position.

3. Has an inadequate introduction and conclusion.

4. Does not provide adequate supporting arguments, evidence, examples and/or details. Paragraphs may “string together” quotations without a context of discussion.

5. Is not arranged logically. Frequently, ideas fail to make sense and are not expressed clearly. The reader cannot identify a line of reasoning.

6. Contains frequent errors in sentence structure, which present a major distraction to the reader. Paragraphs are unstructured, headings are missing, and the paper lacks general organization and flow.

7. Incorrectly or partially acknowledges and documents sources in APA style (e.g., in-text citations, works cited pages, etc.). Although occasional references are provided, the writer relies on unsubstantiated statements. The reader is confused about the source of ideas.

8. Contains numerous errors in grammar, punctuation, word choice, spelling, and format, which obscure the meaning of the passage. The reader is confused and stops reading.
## Assessment of Verbal Presentation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>79% - 70%</td>
<td>Information presented not always clear or succinct. Concepts not described fully or communicated effectively. Did not hold audience attention. Weak preparation. Lacked ability to persuade audience. Weak organization and flow. Many spelling or grammatical errors. Sources and references not always used or cited properly in presentation. Did not meet time requirements for presentation. Did not respond effectively to audience questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69% - 60%</td>
<td>Information presented not clear or succinct. Concepts not described or communicated effectively. Did not hold audience attention. Weak preparation. Lacked ability to persuade audience. Weak organization and flow. Unacceptable number of spelling or grammatical errors. Sources and references not cited properly or used at all in presentation. Did not meet time requirements for presentation. Did not respond adequately to audience questions.</td>
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**Comments:**

________________________________________________________________________

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Grade: _________
Final Grade

The lowest passing grade in this course is “B.” All course requirements must be submitted on or before the last day of the session. An Incomplete (“I”) grade is only submitted in extreme circumstances. Please refer to the Graduate Catalog for the policy on Incompletes. Students who do not pass the course may repeat it once with a different topic.
Getting Started

Below is the process to get started with the course:

Step 1: Schedule for the class

Students may schedule for the course at any time, however, they are wait-listed until their topics are approved. It is the student’s responsibility to secure approval of the project from the faculty advisor. Contact your student advisor or the appropriate staff member below to find out who will be facilitating your capstone thesis for the semester in which you are enrolled.

Step 2: Submit and secure approval with the Capstone Intent Form and project narrative

Early during the session preceding the one in which students intend to begin the course, they must complete the Capstone Intent Form (attached) and a narrative that describes the topic. A sample of a narrative is provided later in this guidebook. It is essential that students receive approval by the Capstone faculty member at least one session prior to the beginning of the capstone course so that there is time to finish the project while enrolled.

Step 3: Participate in the pre-capstone seminar to Gather and study information for the project

Once the Capstone Intent Form and narrative are approved, you will participate in a pre-capstone seminar in the session immediately preceding your Capstone course. You should begin gathering published information for the project. This would include securing books and articles about your topic, reading them, and noting relevant information. If the project involves focus groups, interviews, or a survey, do not begin this phase until you secure approval of the research design from the professor. Completion of the pre-capstone seminar will be demonstrated by the acceptance of your written proposal.

Contact Information

The Capstone Intent Form and narrative are to be submitted to the professor who will be facilitating the course. Attached is the form. Submit the completed form and narrative to the appropriate Davenport University staff/faculty member below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MSIA Contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questions/Comments – <a href="mailto:MSIACapstone@davenport.edu">MSIACapstone@davenport.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Chair – Dr. Lonnie Decker – <a href="mailto:Lonnie.Decker@davenport.edu">Lonnie.Decker@davenport.edu</a> – 989-794-1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Dean – Aphrodite Jones – <a href="mailto:Aphrodite.Jones@davenport.edu">Aphrodite.Jones@davenport.edu</a> – 616-554-4743</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CAPS 795
CAPSTONE THESIS TOPIC

INTENT FORM

MSIA PROGRAM

Students are expected to describe in writing their Capstone thesis. Please complete the form below and provide a narrative which describes your thesis. A sample narrative follows. All students must secure approval of their thesis topic at least one session before their Capstone course. Example: For Winter CAPS 795, the Intent Form must be approved prior to Fall Session 2.

Student Name: ___________________________________________ Student I.D.# ____________________________

Address: ____________________________________________________________

City State Zip

Phone Numbers: (Home) ____________________________ (Work) ____________________________

(Cell) ____________________________ (Fax) ____________________________

E-Mail __________________________________________________________

Campus location ____________________________ Student Advisor ____________________________

Requested Faculty Advisor (if any) ____________________________

Note: Faculty Advisor requests are not always granted. Many factors are taken into consideration when determining Faculty Advisors.

Expected session of your Capstone class enrollment:

Year _______ Session _______ Online or in-seat section ___________________________

Office use only

☐ The above student’s Capstone Intent was reviewed and approved.

MSIA Representative Signature __________________________________________ Date ___________

☐ The above student’s Capstone Intent was reviewed and must be revised. The student should see attached comments.

MSIA Representative Signature __________________________________________ Date ___________


Davenport University: MSIA CAPS 795 Capstone Guidebook (13-14 lgd)
I have read the Capstone Guidebook which describes the nature of the project.

Please attach a **three- to five-page (double-space) narrative** to the Intent Form that describes the information below. Include your name, professor’s name, and date on the attachment. A sample of a narrative is attached.

1. What is a proposed title of your project? Describe the project you have in mind. What question(s) will be answered by your research? (List and state them as questions. For example, “How can a college or university effectively use celebrities, who interact with students in a campus academic setting, to promote the college or university?”)
2. Why are you interested in pursuing this project? How will it benefit you?
3. How will the project benefit the field, your company, and/or another firm?
4. How will you gather information? Does it involve only extensive research from published sources? Does it also involve collecting primary data through focus groups, in-depth interviews, and/or a survey? If so, which research method will be used? How many people will be surveyed? Why will this method accomplish the research objectives?

**NOTE:** If your research involves surveys, questionnaires, focus-groups, or other methods involving people, you will need to have your study approved by the Davenport University Institutional Review Board (IRB). For more information see: http://www.davenport.edu/academics/institutional-review-board-irb

5. What skills, knowledge, or classes are important for you to master in order to complete this project?
6. Does the project involve content in a paper that was written for another class? If so, submit a copy of the paper with this form.

I hereby submit this **Capstone Intent Form and narrative** for approval.

I understand that the Graduate staff/faculty member assigned to evaluate it has the right to reject it and request a re-write and resubmission.

I understand that my thesis paper consists of research and may be posted as such through the Information Security and Assurance Center (ISaAC) at Davenport University.

**I further understand that my project is to be original and that plagiarism is grounds for possible dismissal from the MSIA program.** The Academic Integrity policy is provided in the Graduate Catalog.

Student Signature: ___________________________ Date:_________________

Send your completed Capstone Intent Form to msiacapstone@davenport.edu

(Sample Intent Form Narrative)
Capstone Intent Form Narrative

[Replace sample text to complete the narrative]

Submitted By:  (Student’s Name)

Submitted To: MSIA Capstone Committee

Date:  (Provide date)

Proposed Title: Factors Affecting the Security Awareness of End-Users

Description

This will be a research project exploring the question: What is the significance of internal, external, and inherent factors of an organization’s end-users’ level of computer security awareness? Specific questions that will be addressed in the study are:

1. Does participation in security awareness training increase the level of security awareness of end-users?
2. Does emphasis on security by the organization’s management increase the level of security awareness of end-users?
3. Do external factors from outside the organization contribute to the end-user’s level of security awareness within the organization?
4. Do inherent factors within end-users affect their level of security awareness?

Personal Interest

Discuss in this section why this topic is of interest to you.

Benefits of Research

Discuss in this section any benefits you believe may result from this research.

Methods of Gathering Information

Discuss the methods you will use to answer your research questions. This may include primary research (surveys, interviews, focus-groups, intervention, etc.), or secondary research involving data that has already been collected. Also note if you expect your research to be subject to IRB approval.
Knowledge and Skills Needed

Discuss the skills/knowledge that you expect to be important in order to be able to complete this paper. For example, the research questions above assumes knowledge of security awareness training programs, training methods, organizational structure, and external factors.

Previous Research on this Topic

If you have written a previous paper on this topic, list the title of the paper here and its purpose (previous course, etc.), and attach a copy of the paper with this form.

For questions, see the contact information in the CAPS795 Capstone Guidebook, or email msiacapstone@davenport.edu