

**Capstone Overview and
Expectations UIC
Ed.D. Program: Summer 2022**

Overview and Purpose

The purpose of this document is to capture the UIC Ed.D. Program's shared views on the goals, expectations, and organization of the Ed.D. Capstone Thesis. This document is not and cannot be a substitute for strong academic advising and reflective conversations among the Ed.D. candidate, faculty, and leadership coaches. It can, however, make the purposes and expectations of the Capstone clearer for all of those engaged in such conversations.

The Ed.D. or Doctor of Education Degree is one of a number of professional doctorates in American higher education, some of which pre-date the Ph.D., or Doctor of Philosophy.

Professional Doctorates are doctorates of practice, and include the M.D. (Doctor of Medicine), the J.D. (Doctor of Jurisprudence), and D. Psych. (Doctor of Psychology). In 2008, the Council of Graduate Schools Task Force on the Professional Doctorate used the term "capstone experience" as the analogue to the Ph.D. research dissertation (CGS, 2008). Generally speaking, a capstone could be a dissertation or it could take a "different form," tailored to the professional field in question. The Carnegie Foundation Project on the Educational Doctorate--A Knowledge Forum on the Ed.D.-- has experimented for a number of years with the design of capstone projects most fitting for the Ed.D. (<http://cpedinitiative.org>, 2018).

Goals of the UIC's Ed.D. Capstone Research Experience

The UIC Urban Educational Leadership Program is a heavily practice-based doctoral program that culminates with a written capstone. The capstone research experience arguably begins at entry into the program as students develop language and skills associated with inquiry cycles in school communities. Students engage in intense capstone research work over a two-year period of school leadership under close supervision of coaches and with the support of coursework.

A successful capstone offers evidence to our faculty, coaches, and staff as well as our district partners and the broader field that we have done our part in producing scholar-practitioners who are prepared to serve children and youth in high need urban schools. The capstone is not merely a demonstration of leaders' ability to write analytically about their leadership practices. When done well, **it is an opportunity to accelerate their leadership growth and strengthen the leader's identity as a scholar-practitioner.** Obviously then, UIC's Ed.D. capstone research project is not a traditional research dissertation experience. Our Ed.D. Program is not designed to develop traditional researchers.

While the literature is replete with definitions of the term "scholar practitioner", most share two themes in common. First, the term denotes a person who can comfortably traverse the purported theory-practice divide (Horn, 2002). The scholar-practitioner school leader is familiar with

empirical and theoretical literature and considers that work while engaging thoughtfully in the practice of leadership. And reciprocally, scholar-practitioner school leaders engage regularly in inquiry at their workplace in ways that could conceivably inform the larger scholarly field. At UIC, we are trying to develop **practitioner-inquirers who use data collaboratively in their schools to build a culture of continuous improvement in student and staff learning** (Cosner, et al, 2016).

Second, several school leadership academics believe that being a good scholar practitioner school leader requires bricolage (Lowery, 2016), which is a term that comes from art and construction. Bricolage means a construction achieved by an assortment of materials, whatever is at hand. Reviewing an assortment of scholar-practitioner literature in the 21st century, Lowery (2016) concludes that school leader scholar-practitioners are encouraged to draw upon multiple theories such as social justice leadership, critical pragmatism, democratic leadership, organizational theory, and more.

We believe the idea of school leader bricoleur is partly correct. The busy scholar-practitioner school leader does construct new understandings, including the capstone, the way an artist may use found objects to create art. However also being a practitioner inquirer, UIC-trained school leaders don't just rely on existing data – they drive data collection as part of the school improvement process. That is, school leaders need to collect and reflectively utilize theory and data in ways that specifically promote school improvement with an equity focus.

Consequently at UIC, we strive to provide students with an assortment of theoretical lenses and the tools and skills to collect and use data from the school site that can then be interpreted through those multiple lenses. In the end, we aim for our school leaders to be reflective bricoleurs, knowing which data and which theories can be brought together to illuminate root cause challenges for students and schools. And from that starting point, the UIC school leader actually leads others to effect meaningful school improvement that promotes equity.

While the author of the UIC capstone will have been engaged in school leadership practice for a minimum of 3 years, the capstone represents the scholar-practitioner's first sustained attempt to document this school improvement work through a disciplined analysis.

General Description of the Capstone Experience

UIC's Commitments

The Capstone is an intensive research and writing process that culminates in a multi-chapter work of doctoral-level academic writing that is distinct in format yet commensurate with a dissertation (as described below). However, the experience itself starts with entry into the EdD program. Through coaching and coursework, UIC commits to provide EdD students with the tools, theoretical and practical perspectives, and intellectual and professional support to lead urban schools.

Our commitment is to provide an educational experience that produces school leaders who graduate from our program with the ability to leverage scholarly research on leadership, school improvement, and cycles of inquiry into transformational school-based leadership practices. We expect these practices to improve organizations, teaching, and ultimately student learning opportunities and outcomes. We also expect students to be able to use conventions of graduate level writing to demonstrate how relevant scholarship has shaped their thinking and practice in

school leadership.

Expectations of Students

Students should come into UIC's Ed.D. program expecting to be challenged to grow as scholars and practitioners. As scholars, students will need to engage (and re-engage) with research literature. They may need to wrestle with ideas that challenge their worldview or the prevailing conventional wisdom and practices of the school district in which they work. As practitioners, students are expected to engage in a cycle of inquiry work – planned change to purposefully and mindfully lead others (but especially other educators) to improve their practice for the purpose of improving student outcomes and promoting equity.

UIC's Capstone document: A General Description

A capstone is a theory-based and data-informed study of building organizational capacity in a school or larger educational unit, such as a district or network of schools to ameliorate an identified problem. As a genre of inquiry, the UIC Capstone can best be described as a practitioner-inquiry case study (Herr & Anderson, 2014). As a case study (and form of bricolage), the capstone typically draws on multiple kinds of qualitative and quantitative data for description and analysis of the case (Stake, 1997). As a practice, it is both inquiry and leadership: inquiry into a school-based issue that is framed into a problem, and leadership as a process of social influence in which others are successfully engaged to do work in the service of an organizational goal which they would not otherwise do.

We expect a final capstone study to exhibit the following characteristics, typically in ~130-150 pages, excluding appendices:

- Generally, the UIC capstone should demonstrate leadership in building organizational and instructional capacity in a school or multi-school setting, in part through implementing collaborative cycles of inquiry.
- Intellectually, it draws upon evidence **and** relevant literature to (a) demonstrate a vision for why a particular strand or strands of school improvement work was done (b) support theoretical and research-based claims about organizational capacity building, instructional improvement or the importance of particular student outcomes (c) explain why planned organizational changes did or didn't proceed as planned.
- Methodologically, it is a coherent case study that contains multiple sources of data that are analyzed in a persuasively credible manner. When capstoners make descriptive and analytic claims, they provide evidence to support them.
- Ideologically, it demonstrates the author's commitment and leadership to school improvement with and achieving more equitable student outcomes.
- Aesthetically, it is written at a professional, doctoral level and the document follows the format guidelines of APA style and the *UIC Graduate College Thesis Manual*.

Because the capstone documents the leadership exercised through a cycle of inquiry to intentionally build organizational capacity and improve schools to make them more equitable, the format of the capstone itself typically contains sections that mirror a cycle of inquiry process. Final capstones will include:

- 1) a description of the setting and its challenges and opportunities for building

- strong capacity for student learning (i.e., the problem framing);
- 2) the theory initially selected for leveraging (or creating) strengths to address those challenges, especially how and why organizational capacity for implementing cycles of inquiry will be developed;
- 3) the implementation and modification of that theory in practice throughout a prolonged period of time (more than one school year). Most capstones will cover a period of **at least two academic years, the two years of 586;**
- 4) clear data on the results obtained, with attention to such organizational capacity results as developing and implementing inquiry cycles, as well as results in teacher/instructional practice and student outcomes;
- 5) an analysis of those results that uses relevant research literature to explain why they came about as they did and, when appropriate, why they were not better than they were; and
- 6) consequently the next edges of growth recommended for both the school and for the leader writing the case, again using the research literature for support.

While the research literature has been explicitly identified in items 5 and 6 above, it should be cited in all six of these general elements of the case.

Additional considerations

The thrust of the UIC EdD program is school improvement through cycles of inquiry toward more equitable outcomes for students in Chicago (and other school districts). Many, maybe most, of planned change efforts in UIC capstones will be focused on instructional improvement given that one of the key purposes of schools is to facilitate student learning. However, program faculty recognize that the wide diversity of schools in Chicago and the surrounding suburbs present unique demands on our capstoners because of the varied obstacles to student learning in the schools they serve. Schools are complex open human systems operating within complex communities. As such, a one-size-fits-all approach is counterproductive.

Specifically, students might select as the focus for their capstones any improvement/equity push within that complex system as long they do so with a sustained cycle of inquiry approach. For example, the focus on improvement could be changing how educators' respond to anti-social student behavior in ways that promote social emotional competencies, thereby lowering barriers to learning and reducing inequitable learning and discipline outcomes.

It is important that students utilize their EDPS 586 experiences in leading cycle of inquiry work to maximum effect for their capstones. Because the 586 courses will focus intensively on leading cycle of inquiry work, we encourage our students to select work that has high impact on their school and hopefully can be sustained over a two-year period.

UIC faculty also recognize how difficult it is to foster cycle of inquiry work in schools where there is little to no history or culture that supports that practice. Research shows that schoolwide capacity for change has a strong influence on the traction and effect of any efforts at instructional reform, particularly with regard to teacher motivation and subsequently teacher learning (Slegers, et al, 2015). However, the current understandings of planned change is that simply engaging the process is crucial to developing organizational capacity that can later foster improvement.

In short, leading cycle of inquiry work is non-negotiable. The focus of that work

should be based on deep problem identification that is site-specific and determined locally.

What is required “to capstone” from a position other than the principalship?

EdD students work in numerous capacities while they are in the capstone process. The vast majority of capstoners will be principals and assistant principals. Some might have school district or sub-district leadership roles. It is crucial that all EdD students who write a capstone be in a position where they can lead other adults, formally or informally, in cycle of inquiry work. And, the capstone will be a first-person account of the effects of the cycle of inquiry efforts and the role of the capstoning student in securing those effects. The rare waiver from this requirement must be secured through the program coordinator in consultation with program faculty and coaches.

If you are leading from the assistant principal position, an element of your capstone will likely be how you “manage up” and secure the time, space and authority to lead other adults in school improvement toward equity. If you are leading from a district position, an element of your capstone will likely include how you facilitate the growth of school-based leaders, like principals, who are key to leading change. Your capstone advisors and coaches will be helpful resources for you in how to write about these role-specific demands.

Logistics of the Capstone Process

Students must have completed all coursework before being permitted, in consultation with their capstone advisor, to submit a request for a capstone proposal defense. Specifically, students will have taken 2 years of EDPS 586 through which they have led their school-based colleagues through cycles of inquiry to address problems of practice impacting their schools and created a robust data set for the capstone. Then, students take EDPS 544 – *Research Design in Educational Policy Studies*—in which they outline and begin to write sections of their capstone proposal. The remainder of the proposal is completed in consultation with an assigned capstone advisor after the course has been completed.

The assigned advisor may be an academic or clinical faculty member, and students are encouraged to work with their advisors on when and how to solicit the input of their leadership coaches and other capstone committee members as they write their proposals. Unless there are special, extenuating circumstances, leadership coaches should be part of capstone committees as either a member or in some cases as chair. Leadership coaches will likely have been a second pair of eyes witnessing the school improvement work on which the capstone is based so they can provide both insight and support during the entire process. The capstone chair will send the proposal to the full committee two weeks prior to the defense date. All timelines should be crafted to ensure that this deadline is met.

The Capstone Proposal

The purpose of the proposal is to present and elaborate a plan for documenting the cycle-of-inquiry and other capacity-building work the student is accomplishing in his/her leadership role, as well as the results of those efforts. As such, a capstone proposal should typically address each of the following (though different leadership experiences may lead to different elements of the proposal in consultation with the advisor):

1. *Setting or Context: Using as much relevant governmental data that describe neighborhoods as possible* to craft a compelling account, you should describe the setting in which your organization sits. You should relay the historical and spatial context of the school or network and its reputation within the community/city. *Catalyst* and newspaper archives are also great resources.
2. *Professional Background and Personal theory of action:* In this relatively shorter section, capstoners reveal their own backgrounds and experiences as educators, and those shaped their personal theories of school change. These espoused theories of action typically follow the formulaic patterns made famous by Donald Schön: Take action A to get results B because of reason C.
3. *Entry Inquiry and formulation of situated theory of change.* With another strong infusion of existing data, describe the organization you inherited including key challenges as you first perceived them. Many students use the (Community), Leadership, Organization, Instruction, Student Outcomes (C)-L-O-I-S logic model quite effectively to organize their descriptions although Community (C) may have been described in great detail within the earlier section and if so, need not be repeated. Students should draw on traditional existing data sources (e.g., 5Essential Supports reports). The best capstones take appropriately critical stances toward all data, respecting what they show and questioning what they do not.
4. Without repeating at-length the information shared in the first section, here students discuss the entry diagnosis data collection and early cycle of inquiry work that they led as they entered the school. They articulate their situated theory of action which is almost always a more nuanced and refined site-specific vision of school improvement than their personal theory of action. The situated theory of action is a capstoner's original theory for school improvement **within the unique organizational circumstances in which they started leading cycle of inquiry work at this work site**. Using the same formulations, capstoners should relay how they believe that if Action A is taken, then B results will be achieved because of reason C. Moreover, students are asked to articulate why B results are so important in these circumstances (i.e., what vision they hold, and perhaps promote for pursuing those B results). Within this section, students should also address the following:
 - a. How did the UIC logic model (LOIS) inform your diagnosis of the improvement needs, and how were cycles of inquiry implemented as a part of, and/or result of, the diagnostic process?
 - b. Describe how your personal theory of action evolved to a more situated theory as you were informed by your diagnosis and as you implemented cycles of inquiry to address the school's needs and existing capacity?
 - c. How was that emerging situated theory a product of your early efforts to lead vision, people, and systems through implementing cycles of inquiry?
5. *Implementation of situated theory and evolution of shared theory of action (note: a shared theory of action is publicly shared and likely modified significantly from the situated theory of action which is typically yours alone):*
 - a. Identify and *briefly* describe the most important initiatives you undertook to build school or system capacity for equitable school improvement (i.e., often to improve instruction and student learning) and to ensure ongoing diagnosis based on

- implementation of change-strategies. We highlight the word briefly in the preceding sentence because students will elaborate this section significantly for the final capstone. However, you, the capstoner must provide enough information for the committee to understand what specific strategies you did implement, including adult learning strategies, to develop organizational, instructional and other capacities for changed practice with students? How did you determine what strategies would be employed and how did you go about implementing and assessing them? It will be important to reference the research literature as it relates to your description of strategies implemented, and it will be helpful to employ the (C)LOIS logic model and the concept of cycles of inquiry as organizing concepts.
- b. How did your situated theory of action develop and evolve as you engaged others, especially school or system staff, in collaboratively examining data to diagnose key challenges and implementing interventions to improve the school? When, how, and to what extent did your situated theory of action become a shared theory of action, owned by a critical mass of others on the staff? Capstoners should repeat the same formulation to articulate the shared theory of action, if there was one? [If we take Action A, we'll get B Results because of Reason C. We pursued B results because...] To what extent did the sequence of diagnosis, planning, implementation, and assessment reflect the literature on inquiry cycles in organizational constructs? What role did the examination of relevant data play in these processes?
6. *Results*: What is the evidence of the impact of your implementation efforts, or evidence that the change process you led made a difference and promoted equity. You should report on process results (how the school's systems and routines changed) as well as product results (data on improved outcomes). You should report on positive data as well as results that fell short of your aspirations. It is important that your account of results refer back to the account of the school provided in the setting, using the (C)LOIS framework to identify how the descriptive account (including metrics) in the beginning of the period under study did or did not change by the end of the period of study. It would not be uncommon if you happened to create new metrics as part of your cycle of inquiry process. Don't feel constrained by the intuitive pull to demonstrate pre- and post-intervention data, though such comparisons are welcomed.
 7. *Vexing questions to pursue*: In the proposal stage, you are working to identify **a small number of "potential" questions raised by the combination of:** (a) the comparison of (C)LOIS data from the beginning and end of the time period addressed in the capstone AND (b) from some of the key moments outlined in the sections of narrative related to the cycle of inquiry work. The discussion during the proposal defense centers in part on determining what these key questions are so that analysis areas during the final stage of the capstone writing process are really the most fruitful. Questions for future analysis will come from areas where developmental progress was made (to learn why), or related to particular challenges or issues that stalled work (to learn why/how to overcome), or some other organizational or environmental factor(s) relayed in the narrative of cycle of inquiry work that is important to explaining the results obtained.

While it is expected that you will address these guiding questions to the best of your ability, at the proposal stage you will not be able to address in detail all of the question sets listed above. The EDPS 544 instructor and your capstone advisor will assist you by providing feedback about the

appropriate level of specificity needed for the proposal defense. Although proposals are of varying length, one recommendation is to **try to keep the proposals in the neighborhood of 60-70 pages of text**. This length should allow all of the issues above to be addressed without going too far down the track of a completed capstone prior to the committee's approval of and advice regarding the final project.

In addition, each proposal is expected to provide a) a list of references cited in the proposal, using APA style, and b) a data-table showing what specific bodies of data are informing the case study.

Students who are eager to peek ahead may want to know that the capstone proposal is an expandable skeleton for the final capstone. The final capstone will have additional sections in which you will explain why you got the results you did, and why they were not even better. To do so, students will need to identify authors, research, and theoretical perspectives that inform your ability to think about explanations for WHY the capstone work results in each component of the (C) LOIS framework look the way they do. Additionally, the final section of the capstone is forward-looking and students will have to write about the implications of this structured reflection on their leadership work for the organization they led and for themselves as leaders. While students may be tempted to begin writing about their future at the proposal stage, it is advisable to postpone the composition of these sections until after a thorough analysis is presented in the final capstone.

The Capstone Proposal Defense

Each capstone proposal defense committee consists of some combination of four people who are drawn from Graduate College-approved academic faculty, clinical faculty, leadership coaches and research staff. Two of these members must be tenured faculty from inside or outside the EDPS Department. The capstone Chair should be a tenure-line or clinical faculty member, determined by the Ed.D. Coordinator in consultation with faculty. The candidate and the Capstone Chair should work with the Program Coordinator's office to select a Capstone proposal committee of 4 and should work with that committee to set a defense date. No later than three weeks prior to the intended proposal hearing date, the candidate must submit a Proposal Committee Recommendation Form to Elise Wilson, Doctoral Advisor in the COE. The form is available on-line, and the Ed.D. Program Coordinator's office or the candidate's advisor may assist the student with this submission. The capstone chair will determine whether the proposal is fit for a defense and will then send the final capstone to the full committee no later than two weeks prior to the defense date. All timelines should be crafted to ensure that this deadline is met.

The purpose of the capstone proposal defense is twofold: a) to make sure the student has enough conceptual and practical grasp of the proposed study and relevant research literature to execute it well, and b) to help the student develop the details of the proposed study, including developing a clear plan for a research literature-based analysis, to complete the final product at a high level of descriptive and analytic quality. Although the candidate and Chair can modify the following procedures as needed, these elements are typical of a capstone proposal defense meeting, and for that matter, typical of the final capstone defense as well.

- The candidate arrives about 15 minutes before the scheduled time to make sure the slide presentation is loaded and working properly. The candidate should not bring treats,

drinks, etc., as some students occasionally feel obliged to do. This meeting is a formal program examination and a work session.

- When the committee is assembled, the Chair (capstone advisor) dismisses the candidate from the room for a few minutes while the committee discusses what approach to the questioning will be most useful for making any improvements necessary in the final capstone.
- The candidate is then called back to the room to present the study to the committee in no more than 15 minutes. The best way to structure this presentation is typically with a set of PowerPoint or Prezi slides, and a handout of the slides.
- The goal of the presentation should be to ensure that the committee members understand what the candidate wants them to understand about the key elements of the study. One could imagine, at a minimum, a six-slide presentation that would focus on the main elements of the proposal as enumerated above, but students typically need more slides to communicate the key ideas of their proposals. At the end of the presentation, the Chair moderates a discussion of the capstone proposal. The Chair or Chair designee usually takes detailed notes to guide any possible revisions. The candidate's job is to fully engage the committee in conversation; responding fully to committee questions and showing good capacity for taking suggestions that will improve the study.
- When the committee's suggestions and questions are exhausted, typically within 60 minutes, the Chair asks the candidate to leave the room again while the Committee deliberates about necessary revisions and determines the Committee assessment of the proposal defense.
- The candidate is then called back into the room to learn whether the committee judgment is Pass or Fail, and if Pass, what revisions are necessary before going forward to the Capstone study, including a detailed literature-based analysis.
- Notably, the committee typically recommends substantial revisions to the vexing questions section and the student should expect that throughout the discussion such considerations are likely to be entertained.

During the proposal hearing, committee members may offer suggestions for the candidate's continued study and reflection as the final capstone study is prepared. These may include resource ideas such as literature to help frame the complexity of the problem, strengthening the data presentation by attending to given metrics (i.e., disaggregating assessment data by race/ethnicity), considering a modified focus, or framing new analytic questions.

When the candidate re-enters the hearing room, the committee will deliver its formal assessment: Pass, Fail, or Pass with revisions necessary, which may be formalized as Pass with Conditions. In the case of a Fail or Pass with Conditions, students may be allowed to repeat the proposal defense under specified conditions. Most often, the student earns a Pass but there is substantial feedback from the committee that must be incorporated on the journey to the final capstone.

Immediately after the Capstone Proposal Defense

In almost every instance after a proposal hearing, the student, in consultation with the capstone advisor, needs to craft a plan for transition from proposal to final capstone. In most circumstances, the capstone proposal committee members ask the student to use all of the notes and oral feedback from the proposal defense to write a detailed plan for incorporating committee feedback into the final capstone document. Typically, the student's Capstone Chair,

often with the Leadership Coach's input (if they aren't the same person), will support the student in writing this memo to the committee to make that plan explicit. The process of reviewing notes, crafting a memo, and sharing it with the committee serves multiple purposes. First and foremost, the student usually benefits from developing a concrete plan for moving forward. The process of crafting the memo itself is educative and can help students make sense of what happened during the hearing, which is a stressful work session. Additionally, committee members are able to see and approve the student's clear strategy for developing the final capstone.

From Proposal to Capstone and Final Defense

Following the construction and approval of the memo, the student is expected to execute the plan of moving from proposal to final capstone. As we outline the key differences between the capstone proposal and final capstone, the following describes the multiple types of scholarly activities required.

What is the difference between a final capstone and a capstone proposal?

An obvious difference between a capstone proposal and a capstone is size. Capstones can be about twice as long as proposals, up to 150 pages long. Capstoners will typically have to do the following to transition to the final capstone.

First, the final capstone will have a richer and deeper discussion of change and evolving theories of action during the period of time documented in the capstone. The proposal will typically contain the skeleton of the cycle of inquiry story that includes the evolution from situated to shared theory of action and very possibly, multiple versions of those. Students are expected to "flesh out" the story of evolution with deeper descriptions, anecdotes, and examples from relevant documents or emails, etc. Additionally, there are times that a proposal committee hearing elicits new information or information about the cycle of inquiry work that was deemed obvious or unimportant in the mind of the capstoner. This information then needs to be incorporated into the narrative. While there are no hard and fast rules about how much additional detail is required for the final capstone, students should expect to spend time deepening and elaborating the narrative of planned change.

Second, the student answers the vexing questions agreed upon after the proposal hearing. In doing so, the student will draw upon theories and concepts from research literature to explain the whats, hows, and whys of the cycle of inquiry work. These literature-based reflections are key elements of the final capstone. Students are encouraged to embrace the opportunity for deep, literature-based reflection on their leadership of planned improvement processes. In short, answering these questions should not be a "box-checking" exercise. In many ways, this work is the heart of the capstone.

Therefore, students should expect that they will locate solid bodies of literature for each anticipated area of analysis to answer the vexing questions. The process of analysis involves (re)reading, reflecting, and considering how the literature illuminates the case under study. Students should have ongoing conversations with their advisors and committee members to discuss the literature and their interpretations/conclusions. The advisor supports development of analytic thinking and is likely to authorize outlining (for advisor review) followed by writing. The advisor expects to see successive drafts of components of the study as it develops from the proposal to the final capstone document, and the advisor approves

the committee-ready version before it goes out to the committee for final defense.

Third, students will draw on the analysis of their deeper change narrative and translate their insights into recommendations for further school improvement and their own personal growth as a leader that lies ahead. There are NO FORMULAS or recipes for this section. Every school and school leader are different. Students are encouraged to consider their leader growth trajectory over the course of the entire EdD program and utilize tools and metrics that have tracked that growth while considering their next edges of growth.

Finally, students will write a paragraph or two to reflect on their program experience so that UIC faculty can continuously improve our EdD program. Students should answer:

- What were the key points in the program that led you to be able to get to this place where you are leading a school toward improvement and equity?
- Where could the program do better and support you so that you could have done even more?

There may also be an additional prompt added by the Program Coordinator, in consultation with program faculty, to address pressing continuous improvement needs.

The final capstone presents a case study that realizes the promise of the completed proposal and the subsequent plan for revisions and elaboration. All of the major elements of the proposal listed above, from Setting to Results, are elaborated in considerable depth in the final capstone. Students replace the section entitled Vexing Questions with one called Analysis and then add a final chapter called Next Edges of Growth along with any appendices necessary to provide data-based support for the description and analysis of the case. Notably, appendices do NOT replace descriptions of data in text; they merely elaborate them.

Typically, students complete the capstone within one academic year following proposal approval. Some students have completed the capstone more quickly. No student, however, should expect to defend the proposal and the final capstone in the same semester. The capstone is not simply a descriptive account; it is also a demonstration of thoughtful, careful, and reflective analysis that incorporates a complex body of literature. Students should expect that this process takes three to six months, and sometimes more, following the proposal defense. For Ph.D. dissertations, by way of illustration, the Graduate College expects that a full year will pass between the proposal defense and the final dissertation defense. Our shorter time-frame does not reflect lower expectations for depth of analysis, but recognition of greater program scaffolding for completion of the capstone in the, pre-proposal and post-proposal defense stages.

The Capstone Defense

Several weeks prior to the intended capstone defense date, the student must submit a Committee Recommendation Form to Elise Wilson, Doctoral Advisor in the COE. The Ed.D. Program Coordinator's office may assist the student with this submission. There are no fixed time parameters for completing the capstone once a proposal is approved, though the Graduate College expects all students to be finished within seven years of enrollment in the doctoral program—and Ed.D. students increasingly finish around the 5-year mark. Students may apply for extension beyond the seven years but that application is individually reviewed and granting an extension is not automatic.

The capstone final defense committee is composed of three persons, that should include your chair and your coach. The Graduate College requires the committee to have at least one tenured faculty member in the Educational Policy Studies Department. The procedures for the final defense are otherwise identical to those outlined above for the proposal defense. Feedback during the capstone defense may or may not be as extensive as the feedback from the proposal defense. During and after the final defense, for example, a committee may suggest improvements such as:

- Qualifying claims to make them more accurate, providing a more “real” or authentic account
- “Fleshing out” the story by including more vignettes, examples, or details to realize the potential of qualitative methods
- Deepening the analysis to apply the research literature more fully and to provide greater reflection on one’s own challenges in leadership growth.

At the end of the defense, the candidate will be informed of the committee’s assessment: Pass, Fail, or Pass with revisions necessary, which may be formalized as Pass with Conditions. In the case of a Fail or Pass with Conditions, students may be allowed to repeat the final defense under specified conditions.

Capstoners should understand that even a successful final defense is NOT the end of the process. Almost always, students have to make at least some revisions. The final pass is contingent on either the committee or the chair attesting that the capstoner has attended to the committee’s suggested revisions of the final capstone document.

When might students be asked for significant revisions? One way to ensure significant revisions is to commit to doing something in a post-proposal hearing memo and then not do it. Another way is if there are major holes within the capstone such as (a) no discussion of significant periods of time within the change narrative or (b) missing sections such as a section on your next edges of growth.

Capstoners and advisors should ensure that a date for a final hearing is set with sufficient time to attend to revisions. It is vital that faculty, coaches, and capstoners understand in advance that the final push to deposit cannot be treated as a “five-day emergency” where everyone is expected to drop their entire lives to finish. Those circumstances typically lead to “box-checking” rather than the reflective work necessary to maximize the capstone experience.

For the sake of clarity, we repeat in colloquial terms that **“If the cookies are not ready, they don’t come out of the oven.”** And the committee takes the measure of whether “the cookies are ready or not.”

On those occasions when revisions required are significant enough that a capstone committee needs to physically reconvene or even to review the revisions to a capstone document, students should NOT expect to have a quick turnaround. However, in most cases, students can submit the capstone for final deposit with the EDPS Department after the recommended modifications to the capstone are completed in consultation with the capstone advisor.

The capstone deposit deadline varies based on graduation dates but is usually requested no later than two weeks prior to commencement so that it may be reviewed by the capstone committee and Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). Procedures and identified forms for final approved capstone deposit are listed on the “Capstone Deposit Procedures Checklist for EdD Candidates.” (See the “Capstone Deposit Procedures Checklist.”).

Once the final deposit is made, the capstone remains under seal due to agreements with UIC’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Chicago Public Schools Research Review Board (RRB). The Educational Policy Studies Department has a memorandum of understanding with these bodies that: A) The UIC Institutional Review Board (IRB) has determined that the Capstone study is not traditional research to be published in its current form because IRB cannot ensure that people in the school or school system under study are not identifiable;* B) that UIC is therefore not free to share the study with anyone beyond the candidate's committee, without the candidate's permission; and c) the candidate is free to share the study with others but assumes responsibility for doing so.

Updated
July 12, 2016, S. Tozer
July 9, 2018, C. Sima
November 4, 2018, S. Tozer
November 5, 2018, C. Barron
November 19, Cosner/Tozer
November 28-Dec. 17, Cosner/Tozer
January 14, 2019, C.Sima
May 9, 2019 Mayrowetz/Cosner/Irby/LaCoste/Barron
October, 21, 2019 Barron
March 11, 2020, Mayrowetz
June 13, 2022, Hebert
June 14, 2022, Barron

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Statement from the Office of Protection of Human Subjects regarding Capstone IRB approval, November 2018:

*EdD capstones do not require normal IRB approval. The UIC Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) has determined that the Educational Policy Studies Doctoral Program Student Capstone Projects do not meet the definition of human subjects research as defined by 45 CFR 46.102(f). EdD students may conduct the projects without further submission to IRB. The following is understood:

- (1) These projects will involve the analysis of pre-existing, public, non-confidential, aggregate school performance data; and
- (2) The resulting documents will not be filed with the Graduate College and will not be shared beyond the EdD program faculty who read the projects.

If these projects -- individually or collectively -- are used in conjunction with any other research involving human subjects or modified in any way, they must be re-reviewed by OPR

Capstone Deposit Procedures Checklist for EdD Candidates

You should have already submitted the **Intent to Graduate** form for the semester the student intends to graduate to the Graduate College at <https://my.uic.edu>

The Chair/Advisor, in consultation with the student, will submit the **Committee Recommendation Form** (four members) three weeks in advance of the **proposal defense** date.

https://grad.uic.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/form-CommitteeRecommendationForRev_08-2016.pdf

The Chair/Advisor, in consultation with the student, will submit the **Committee Recommendation Form** (three members) three weeks in advance of the **final capstone defense** date.

https://grad.uic.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/form-CommitteeRecommendationForRev_08-2016.pdf

The capstone should adhere to the format indicated by the **UIC Graduate College Thesis Manual** through the summary section.

<https://uofi.app.box.com/s/ecf9vcm5g50kde0o4320cxevu9dwpagq>

The capstone text forward should follow the format guidelines of the **Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)**, 7th edition.

Contact Dr. Sharon Spears (slspears@uic.edu) regarding signature and submission for the following four documents required for the final deposit:

1. **Final Edited Capstone approved by the Capstone Chair.**
2. **EdD Capstone Research Project Sign-Off**
3. **Disclaimer and Assurance for EdD Capstone Projects**
4. **Abstract on the approved form**

These documents must be submitted to the program director with a copy to the program coordinator. The program director is responsible for securing the DGS signatures.

CAPSTONE SUBMISSION FORMS



Educational Policy Studies (MC 147)
1040 West Harrison Street
Chicago, Illinois 60607-7133

Edd Capstone Research Project Sign-Off Sheet

This form is to be submitted by the student with the final EdD Capstone Research Project to the Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Educational Policy Studies. It will then be forwarded to the College of Education and to the Graduate College.

As Committee Chair for the Ed.D. Capstone Doctoral Research Project submitted by (name of Ed.D. candidate) _____,

I attest that:

- A) The human-subjects research conditions stipulated in the IRB Approval are not violated.
- B) The project meets the format requirements set by the EdD Program.
- C) All conditions (revisions, etc.) for final deposit that were stipulated on the Graduate College Examination Report for the final defense of this project have been met.

The Ed.D. Program and Department of Educational Policy Studies are responsible for keeping completed Capstone projects on file.

Signature, Capstone Committee Chair

Date

Signature, EDPS Director of Graduate Studies

Date

**Ed.D. in Urban Education Leadership
Disclaimers and Assurances for Ed.D. Capstone Projects**

Student Name: _____

Capstone Project Title: _____

Capstone Project Completion Date (Semester/Year): _____

I understand that UIC's IRB has determined that the Ed.D. program's capstone project is not considered human subjects research according to the IRB's definition. Therefore, my individual capstone project has not been subject to IRB review and approval. I understand that I bear full responsibility for any consequences that might arise if I share my project with others or otherwise make it public.

Signature, Student

Date

As a matter of program policy, the Ed.D. program at UIC retains copies of completed capstone projects. Because these projects are not considered human subjects research by UIC's IRB and because these projects are not subject to any required provisions for anonymity or confidentiality, the Ed.D. program and its faculty and agents will not share any of these projects with others or make any of them public without project author's consent and without review and approval of UIC's IRB.

Signature, Ed.D. Capstone Advisor

Date

Signature, Ed.D. Program Coordinator

Date

Ed.D. Capstone Research Project Abstract

Student Name: _____

Project Title: _____

Semester/Year Completed: _____

Elementary School: _____ High School: _____ District/Sub District: _____

Existing School: _____ New School: _____ Charter School: _____

Key Themes: _____

Project Description:

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CAPSTONE FORMAT CHECKLIST (Rev. 6-14-22)

Based on the October, 2019 Revision of the *UIC Graduate College Thesis Manual*

Introduction: The Capstone Format Checklist is intended to assist capstone authors to acceptably format capstone documents as they begin to write. Students should follow formatting guidelines indicated by the *UIC Graduate Thesis College Manual* for all pre-text sections or “preliminary” pages of the capstone through the “Summary” section and including the Table of Contents. The checklist below attends to the formatting of those preliminary pages only. Text forward, or actual writing of the capstone forward (including bibliography) should follow the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)*, 7th edition. Samples of chapter headings and subheadings are provided but the actual naming/labeling of chapter headings and subheadings is a decision that should be made in agreement with your capstone advisor.

Submitter’s Name:

Capstone Title:

Advisor:

Defense Date:

Expected Graduation Date:

Format Topic	Page Nos.	Guidelines/Requirements	Status	Comment
GENERAL				
Pagination	3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Preliminary (pretext) pages are numbered consecutively at the center bottom of each page within the typing area of the page, using lower case Roman numerals and <u>not</u> followed by a period or enclosed in hyphens or parentheses.● The title page, while counted as number “i” is unnumbered.● Arabic numerals are used, beginning with number 1 on the first page of the text and continuing consecutively throughout the rest of the thesis, including the CITED LITERATURE, BIBLIOGRAPHY, and VITA.● All pages after the preliminary pages should be numbered in the upper right-hand corner within prescribed margins (see ILLUSTRATIONS, FIGURES, and SCHEMES for exceptions).● Every page must be numbered consecutively, including appendices, diagrams, figures, and tables.● Page numbers must be inside the prescribed typing space, (i.e., numbers must be at least one half inch (½”) inside the paper edges) and not followed by a period or enclosed in hyphens or parentheses.● Two blank lines should appear between the page number and the text at the top of the page. <p><i>Note:</i> Basic directions for the pagination process can be provided</p>		

Abstract	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The abstract is not a part of the thesis, but is submitted separately as part of the electronic submission process. • A paper copy of the abstract is not required. The abstract must not exceed three hundred and fifty (350) words (maximum two thousand, four hundred and fifty (2,450) typewritten characters, including spaces and punctuation). • Mathematical formulas, diagrams, and other illustrative materials are not recommended for inclusion. • Outside readers typically view the abstract before deciding to read the thesis, so it should be well written, logical, and a complete reflection on your work contribution, as well as the other authors' contributions, must be included. 		
VITA	14, 46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section should be headed VITA. A VITA is not a resume. It is a professional biography of the candidate, including educational institutions attended, degrees, professional qualifications (including degree currently receiving from the University of Illinois at Chicago), honors, awards, publications, teaching and professional experience, and any other pertinent material. • It should be short and written concisely in the style of a curriculum vitae, with no personal information included. • The publications listed in the vita should follow the format used in the CITED LITERATURE section of the thesis; see example on page 46. • The VITA does not have to be limited to one page in length. 		
Spellcheck	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a spellcheck after completion and before submission of final capstone. Make corrections as needed 		
Grammar check	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a grammar check after completion and before submission of final capstone. Make corrections as needed 		
PRELIMINARY PAGES				
Title Page	4,22	Thesis Title <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The title should not contain abbreviations (including scientific, mathematical, or chemical names or symbols, whenever possible). • Dissertation Abstracts guidelines recommend the use of word substitutes for formulas, symbols, superscripts, subscripts, Greek letters, etc., in the title. Abbreviations such as CPR, VD or COPD should be avoided. • Length of title may not exceed 105 characters including spaces. • Since the student's name and thesis title must be identical to the title page in the thesis finally submitted, the student should be certain that the information on the Committee Recommendation 		

		<p>Form is what is desired, at the time the form is sent to the Graduate College. If the title of the thesis will be different from that listed on the submitted Committee Recommendation Form, a Request for Change in Thesis Title or Committee Member(s) form must be submitted and approved by the Graduate College well before submission of the thesis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The thesis title should be mixed-cased (see example on page 22). <p>Format of Title Page</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The title page is page i, but it does not receive a page number (see page 22). • Other preliminary pages follow in the order listed below, the first actually numbered is page ii and all others follow consecutively. • All preliminary pages except the title page must be sequentially numbered in lower case Roman numerals. • The spacing and format of the title page should follow the example given on page 22. • It should include the names and roles of the defense committee. The chair and advisor should be specified as well as department (if from UIC) or institution (if from outside UIC) of the outside member. <p>Fall Semester Theses</p> <p>If the deadline for thesis submission to the Graduate College for format approval for a fall semester is not met, the title page must use the following year as the date, since the degree will be awarded in the spring semester of the next year.</p>		
List of Pages Following Title Page (all pre-page numbered)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedication (optional) • Acknowledgments (optional) • Preface (optional) • Table of Contents • List of Tables • List of Figures • List of Abbreviations or Nomenclature • Summary <p>(First Arabic numeral numbered page is the first page of the first chapter)</p>		
Dedication (optional)	5,23	The dedication contains no special heading; (If used, page number ii). See example on page 23.		
Acknowledgments (optional)	5, 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ACKNOWLEDGMENTS page may be included in a preface (see below), or it may stand alone. • It is a brief note of appreciation for assistance given the candidate in the research and preparation of the thesis. • The word ACKNOWLEDGMENTS should be centered at the top of the page. • About five lines below the last line of the acknowledgments, beginning one inch (1") from the right hand margin, the initials of the author should 		

		<p>be given, all in capital letters, with no space or punctuation between them, e.g., ABC (see page 24).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing pages must be headed also, e.g., "ACKNOWLEDGMENTS (continued)", if this section is longer than one page. 		
Preface (optional)	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A PREFACE may contain the author's statement of the purpose of the study, or special notes to the reader. Continuing pages must be headed, PREFACE (continued), if this section is longer than one page. An acknowledgement may be included in the Preface, or may have a separate section. 		
Table of Contents	5, 25-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each entry shown should have a page number with leader dots from entry to page number that should flush right to the right margin. The heading TABLE OF CONTENTS should be centered and capitalized. The preliminary pages should not be shown in the TABLE OF CONTENTS. Roman numerals are used to designate chapters. Main headings should be shown in capital letter both in the TABLE OF CONTENTS and in the text headings. APPENDICES and the VITA should be shown in the TABLE OF CONTENTS. Note that no titles are shown with the listing of appendices (see examples on pages 25-27). Continuing pages must be headed, TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued), if the table of contents is longer than one page. 		
List of Tables	5, 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When tables are used, a LIST OF TABLES should be placed on a separate page immediately following the TABLE OF CONTENTS. Center and position the heading, LIST OF TABLES, in the same manner as the TABLE OF CONTENTS including leader dots. Table numbers should be presented in Roman numerals, e.g., TABLE I, TABLE II, etc., and table titles in capital letters. If the title is longer than one line, it should be single spaced, with double spacing between titles (see page 28). The complete table title must be shown. Appendices which are actually tables must be listed here as sequentially numbered tables. Continuing pages are headed, LIST OF TABLES (continued), if the list of tables is longer than one page. 		
List of Figures	5-6, 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When figures, process flow charts, metabolic pathways or similar schematics are used, a LIST OF FIGURES should be shown on a separate page immediately following the LIST OF TABLES. 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Center and position the heading, LIST OF FIGURES. ● Figure numbers should be presented in Arabic numerals. ● Each figure or illustration must have a legend or title, with leader dots to a page number. ● The figure legend is presented in lower-case letters except for the first letter of the first word, which is capitalized (see page 29). ● Either the full legend may be used or an abbreviated, adequately descriptive legend may be used. ● Continuing pages are headed, LIST OF FIGURES (continued), if the list of figures is longer than one page. 		
List of Abbreviations or Nomenclature	6, 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If more than three abbreviations of words or phrases which are not in common usage are used in the texts, e.g., NWEA, PLC, a LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (also called nomenclature) must be included (see page 30). ● Continuing pages must also be labeled as above, if the list is longer than one page. 		
Summary	6, 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All theses, masters and doctoral, must have a SUMMARY. This is not an abstract. ● Word "SUMMARY" should appear top middle of page. ● Continuing pages must be headed with SUMMARY (continued), if the summary is longer than one page (see page 31). ● Should include setting, purpose, results, and next edges of growth 		

Overall Comments:

Reviewer(s):

Date: