



NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES PROGRAM

UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

School of Public Health

The MPH in Public Health Nutrition Practice (PHNP) Capstone Report Manual

Introduction

The MPH Capstone Report is intended to showcase the student's ability to apply public health skills, knowledge, and experience to develop strategies to improve the nutritional health of a community or larger population. It is aligned with the learning competencies of the Association of Schools of Public Health, and is designed to integrate the MPH Public Health Nutrition Practice (PHNP) learning experience from the core courses in public health and nutrition. The strategies proposed in the report should be evidence-based and relevant to advancing social justice, eliminating health disparities, and improving public health practice. The final product will be a structured, rigorously and thoughtfully researched, well-written report.

The data, stakeholder and communications analysis, and assessment of cultural/traditional acceptance, and other components of the capstone report should be firmly based in the realities of a specific community or population. In many cases this will be the community or population served by the agency where the summer fieldwork experience takes place, however another community/population that is of interest may be considered (with approval).

Timeline and Planning

The Nutritional Sciences Program has shared with community partners the opportunity for students to partner with them on MPH Capstone projects. During Spring quarter of the students' first year, students will select the community/population of focus for their project – the same community/population where the summer fieldwork takes place OR a different community/population of interest which has been approved by the MPH Capstone Faculty Advisor.

One Capstone credit will be taken in the 1st Spring quarter. During this quarter, students should become familiar with the Capstone Report Manual and the kinds of information that will be needed for the final report. Students should also learn as much as possible about the agency/organization, the population it serves, funding streams, and services provided, and begin to think about gaps or potential issues of interest for the capstone. For students completing their Capstone at their fieldwork placement organization, every opportunity should be taken during the placement (via key informant interviews, reading reports, website and literature review, etc) to learn more about the agency and the communities that it serves. A list of potential questions that could be used in key informant interviews is included in Appendix A to this manual.

Overall Timeline

Required courses for the thesis and capstone MPH options are the same with the exception the culminating project credits. Students completing the capstone option register for a total of nine capstone (NUTR 596) credits.

	Year 1		Year 2	
	Spr	Sum	Fall	Win
NUTR 596 (9 credits)	1 credit	Portfolio Fieldwork Capstone	Most Capstone credits taken during this quarter	Additional credits as needed to reach at least 9 total 596 credits and complete Capstone*

*During fall and winter quarters year 2, students may distribute the remaining NUTR 596 credits as best fits their schedule and anticipated quarter of completion. Note: students are strongly encouraged to complete Capstone during Fall quarter, year 2. ***The capstone report is due in the quarter that students register for their final capstone credits (of the 9 required).***

Human Subjects Review

All students are *required* to get a formal determination from UW IRB about whether your activity is research. You may not begin data collection on your project until this determination has been received. This process can take 2-3 weeks. Once the determination has been received, forward notification to the MPH Capstone Faculty Advisor. Acquisition of a formal determination is a three-step process. You will 1) complete circled questions on the standard IRB Protocol form or on the No Contact version of the form (this form is used if you have no contact with human subjects for your research) – forms can be downloaded using the link below; 2) In Zipline you will create a new application and attach your completed IRB Protocol form at the indicated place. The link to Zipline is: <https://www.washington.edu/research/hsd/zipline/>; 3) HSD will assess your application and issue a determination. Detailed instructions may be found by following this link: <https://www.washington.edu/research/hsd/do-i-need-irb-review/is-your-project-considered-research/>

Report Chapters

Chapter topics and/or content may be modified as the project develops, with consultation and approval from the MPH Capstone Faculty Advisor. Although your project may yield other written Capstone products appropriate for different audiences, *the primary audience for the Capstone report is faculty*. Detailed formatting instructions for the report are included in Appendix B.

Chapter I: Introduction

- Define the Capstone topic and working project title
- Why did you choose this population/community?
- What is the nutrition issue being addressed?
- Why is it important (briefly – more detail in Chapter IV)
- What are the potential implications of the project on the population of focus? (briefly – more detail in Chapter IV)

Chapter II: Description of the community/organization

- Describe the community/organization (e.g., history, mission, goals, services and values, organization type, funding sources, staff composition, governance and leadership)
- Population served (client demographics, eligibility criteria, geographic service area, etc)

- Key partners and collaborators
- How does this project fit with the mission/vision/goals of the community/organization?

Chapter III: Description of the target population/community

- Describe the population/community demographics
- What are major sources of existing data that can be used to assess nutrition and health in this population/community?
- Use appropriate data to develop tables and visual methods of displaying data.
- What is known about the health status and health disparities of this population/community?
- What is known about the social determinants of health in this population/community?
<https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-of-health>
- How are the social determinants of health and other contextual factors (settings and circumstances) of this population/community relevant to the Capstone project?
- What is known about the nutrition intake and nutritional status of individuals in this population/community?
- What are major causes of morbidity and mortality in this population/community?
- Perform some epidemiological or statistical analyses to test for associations between health or nutrition related factors and demographic variables in your community or population; be sure to include some analysis of important nutrition-related health disparities.
- What are the sources and quality of qualitative data that can inform nutrition and health assessment in this population/community? What are the major conclusions that can be drawn from these qualitative data?
- Based on existing data or reports about your community/population or similar groups of people, what environmental conditions might impact health?

Chapter IV: Nutrition issue of focus

- Describe the nutrition-related issue that you have chosen to focus on in your project. Why did you chose this issue?
- What are the upstream determinants of this nutrition-related issue? What do we know about these determinants in this particular community or population that may need to be addressed to improve the situation?
- What else might influence this situation? What do we know about these influences that can be addressed in this situation?
- Develop a visual graphic of an integrated system that depicts the interactions between factors that contribute to this situation.

Chapter V: Existing resources

- What exists in this community/population that can address the upstream determinants, root causes, and/or current adverse consequences associated with this nutrition issue?
- What is known about the effectiveness of these resources to address the issue or the upstream determinants of the issue?
- What gaps can you identify in current resources or the reach and quality of current resources?

Chapter VI: Proposed change strategy/strategies (program, policy, or intervention)

- Describe one or more program (s), policy change (s), or intervention (s) or combinations of these that could be applied to improve the specific nutrition issue/situation you have chosen to focus on.
- Discuss at least one behavior change theory or theoretical model that can be used to guide your change strategy (ies) and explain why it is a good fit for your change strategy:
http://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/otlt/MPH-Modules/SB/BehavioralChangeTheories/BehavioralChangeTheories_print.html
- Discuss the evidence for this approach as presented in peer reviewed publications. Include references, critical analysis of the papers and their findings and limitations, and how the existing evidence can be applied to your proposal.

Chapter VII: Strategic Plan

- Conduct a strategic planning process for your change strategy. List your overarching goal and/or mission, and measurable and time framed objectives and present a one-page logic model.
- Provide an annotated list of potential partners and collaborators. Include the rationale for including each one - the reasons each of them would want to join your effort, the resources, community trust and understandings they could bring to the table – and the potential roles that each could play.
- Describe how you would assure that your change strategy is responsive to the culture and needs of the community.
- Describe both process and outcome evaluation measures and how you would go about collecting evaluation data.
- If you were to lead this endeavor, describe how you would manage and lead this change process to assure maximum effectiveness, teamwork, buy-in from stakeholders and communities, and sustainability.

Chapter VIII: Communications Planning

- Review the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice Communications Planning Guide
<http://www.nwcp.org/communications/news/communications-planning-a-step-by-step-guide>
- Choose one specific focus for communications around some aspect of your change strategy (ies). Why is this an important thing to communicate about?
- Describe how you would implement each of the 8 steps of the NWCPHP communications process to communicate this topic
- IMPORTANT: Capstone products (such as training materials, brochures, toolkits, data analysis summaries, and other items outside of the Capstone report) may not be distributed prior to completion of the project without prior approval from the Capstone Faculty Advisor.

Chapter IX: Summary

In 250 words summarize your report. This section should function like an abstract to concisely highlight the most important aspects of what you came to know about your community/population, the nutrition-related issue that you chose to focus on, why you think the change strategies identified would be appropriate in this situation, and your plan for implementing, leading, managing, evaluating and sustaining these change strategies.

Project Check-Ins

At a minimum, check-ins are required twice per quarter with the Capstone Faculty Advisor. The purpose of these meetings is to assure that the project and timeline remain on-track, and that any issues or challenges are addressed promptly. It is up to the student to schedule these meetings and to complete the [Capstone Status Report](#). This *ongoing* form is to be updated twice each quarter after a student declares they will be completing a capstone. It is due via email to your Capstone Faculty Advisor on the 5th Monday of the quarter and then again on the 10th Monday (9th Monday summer quarter). It will serve as the basis for in-person discussions with the MPH Capstone Faculty Advisor, and for regular updates to the site preceptor.

Required Presentations

All Capstone students are required to present their project at the May Student Research and Practice Symposium and to one key stakeholder group of choice.

Evaluation Matrix

The nine required credits of NUTR 596, Nutrition Practice Capstone are graded as Credit/No Credit. To receive 'Credit' for NUTR 596, students' must demonstrate progress on the capstone project as outlined in their Capstone Status Report. The capstone report is due in the quarter that students register for their final capstone credits (of the 9 required). The Capstone Report will be evaluated by the Capstone Faculty Advisor. Sections that do not meet (or exceed) expectations will be revised by the student until they are rated at the meets (or exceeds) level. To successfully complete the capstone and earn a grade of 'Credit' on the final capstone credits, a student must meet or exceed expectations on all sections of the report.

Criteria	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Needs Revision
Overall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of organization of thoughts, paragraphs, and sentences. • Attention to grammar, editing, syntax. • Demonstrated thoughtfulness and thoroughness of ideas. • Well-referenced chapters • Appropriate and clear tables and graphics throughout • Bulleted items identified for each chapter are addressed 			
Chapter I. <i>Introduction</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear rationale for selection of community/population • Clear rationale for selection of nutrition issue • Clearly described implications for project impact on population 			
Chapter II. <i>Description of Community/Organization</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough description of the community/organization • Thorough explanation of project fit within community/organization goals, mission and vision 			
Chapter III. <i>Description of the target population/community</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough description of nutrition and health status of population/community • Thorough description of social determinants of health and health disparities in the target population/community • Clear and useful tables and visual displays of data 			

Criteria	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Needs Revision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough investigation and identification of existing data sources 			
<p>Chapter IV. <i>Nutrition issue of focus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear rationale for selection of nutrition issue of focus • Well-described determinants and influences • Well-designed and clear visual graphic depicting interactions between contributing factors 			
<p>Chapter V. <i>Existing resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough discussion of resources and gaps and relevance to project 			
<p>Chapter VI. <i>Proposed strategy/strategies (program, policy, or intervention)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed description of proposed strategy (ies) and evidence for effectiveness in addressing nutrition issue of focus • Clear explanation of rationale for choice of behavior change theory or theoretical model and application to strategy (ies) • List of references is comprehensive, current and complete 			
<p>Chapter VII. <i>Strategic Plan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed, logical plan containing all required components 			
<p>Chapter VIII. <i>Communications Planning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear rationale for communications focus • Thorough description of implementation of 8 NWCPHP communication process steps • Key stakeholder project presentation scheduled/conducted 			
<p>Chapter IX. <i>Summary</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adherence to word count guideline • Thorough, concise and well-written summary 			

Sample Key Informant Interview Questions for Capstone Project

- This fall as part of my MPH program at UW I need to develop a description of one of the communities or populations that you serve and propose an evidence-based policy, program or intervention that addresses a nutritional issue in this population. This strategy will be distinct from the work/product I am preparing for this fieldwork. In my preliminary research, I learned (*briefly discuss what you have learned so far about the agency and its population*). In learning about the nutritional needs of this population, I am interested particularly in (*name specific nutrition needs/interests of population*).
 - Do you think that this is a good focus area for my capstone project? Are there others that I have missed or that you would suggest for consideration?
 - Do specific policy changes or programs come to mind that you think might address this area of need/interest? (*If you have identified some of your own, discuss these*). Have any been tried before that did or did not work out?
 - Do you know of studies or other evidence that supports the changes we are discussing?
- In my preliminary work, I've identified the following qualitative and quantitative data and sources that describe the health and economic profiles of the population you serve, as well as demographic data (*describe them here*). Are there other data sources that you think I should look at to help me better understand this and similar communities/populations?
- What environmental health exposures are you aware of that might impact this community/population? Can you direct me to more information about this?
- In my preliminary research, I understand that the following cultures and traditions are important to consider as I think through my capstone project (*discuss here*). Are there others that I have missed? Do you have suggestions about where I can find out more about these considerations?
- I have identified potential stakeholders and partners who might care most about nutrition issues in this population as (*discuss here*). Are there others that I have missed? Do you have suggestions about how I can learn more about these stakeholders/partners?
- As part of my report this fall I will develop a communications plan about what I'm planning in my report. What groups and people would be most interested in learning about recommendations for policies, programs or interventions for this population? What would be the best ways of communicating with them?

MPH Capstone Format Guidelines

A. Required Sections - There are five required report sections:

1. Title Page

Title page template:

Your Name as it appears in your UW Student Record

A Capstone Report

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Public Health in Public Health Nutrition Practice

University of Washington

(Graduation Year, e.g. 2018)

(Capstone Faculty Advisor)

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Nutritional Sciences Program

School of Public Health

2. **Acknowledgements** - acknowledge community partners and others you would like to recognize as contributors to your successful capstone project.

3. **Table of Contents**

4. **Report Chapters**

The report contains 9 chapters. Each chapter addresses specific topics, but you should customize the chapter titles as appropriate to your topic. Example:

Chapter Content	Example of Capstone Chapter Title
Chapter I: Introduction	Introduction to the University of Washington Greek System
Chapter II: Description of the community/organization	Sorority Organizational Structure and Social Determinants of Health
Chapter III: Description of the target population/community	Nutrition and Health Assessment of College Students
Chapter IV: Nutrition Issue of Focus	Eating Disorders
Chapter V: Existing Resources	Existing Eating Disorder Resources at the University of Washington
Chapter VI: Proposed change strategy/strategies	A Guide to Promoting Nutrition, Health and Body Positivity in Sororities
Chapter VII: Strategic Plan	Strategic Plan
Chapter VIII: Communications Planning	Communication Plan
Chapter IX: Summary	Project Summary

5. **References**

References: – Students should use AMA Style unless another reference format can be justified as being more appropriate (see: <http://guides.lib.uw.edu/c.php?g=99161&p=642357>).

B. Formatting and File Format for the Report

1. Writing Tense: Avoid writing in first person.

2. Font: Any legible font except script, italic, or ornamental fonts equivalent in scale to 10 pt Arial or 12 pt Times New Roman.

3. Margins: Use 1” margins right, left, top and bottom. Page numbers should be at least 3/4” from the edge of the page.

4. Line Spacing: 1.5 space all sections except for footnotes/endnotes, bibliographic entries and lists in appendices. These should be single-space.

5. Color: Digital manuscripts will appear in color when viewed electronically, but reproductions will not preserve color. Colors will appear in shades of gray and may compromise legibility of figures, headings, illustrations, photographs and graphics. Data and information that is color-coded or based on color shading may not be interpretable. For best results, prepare report in black and white. Color may be used for attachments, appendices, or other materials associated with the project.

6. File format: Submit final report in Adobe PDF with no compression, password protection or digital signature. Be sure that the PDF version of your manual is correct.

7. Tables and Figures: The caption for a figure appears below the graphic; for a table, above.

- Typically, boldface or underscore the word "Figure" or "Table" and the associated number in the caption, then present the caption in plain text with only the initial letter of the caption and any proper names in the caption capitalized.
- Focus on completeness and concreteness as you caption figures and tables. Do not be afraid to use lengthy figure and table captions—better that than confusing or incomplete ones.
- If your figure or table is essentially the same as or based on another author's, but you recreated or adapted it, it is standard to include the words "Adapted from" or "After" followed by the author's name and a citation at the end of the caption.
- Always cite the figure or table if it—or its data—came from a source, using the same citation style that you have used throughout the paper. The most logical place for the citation to appear is at the end of the caption.
- Always refer to your tables and figures in the main body of the text. There should be no figures/tables without a clear reference to the main text.