

Capstone Completion Guide

Advanced Degrees and Administrative
Licensure Department



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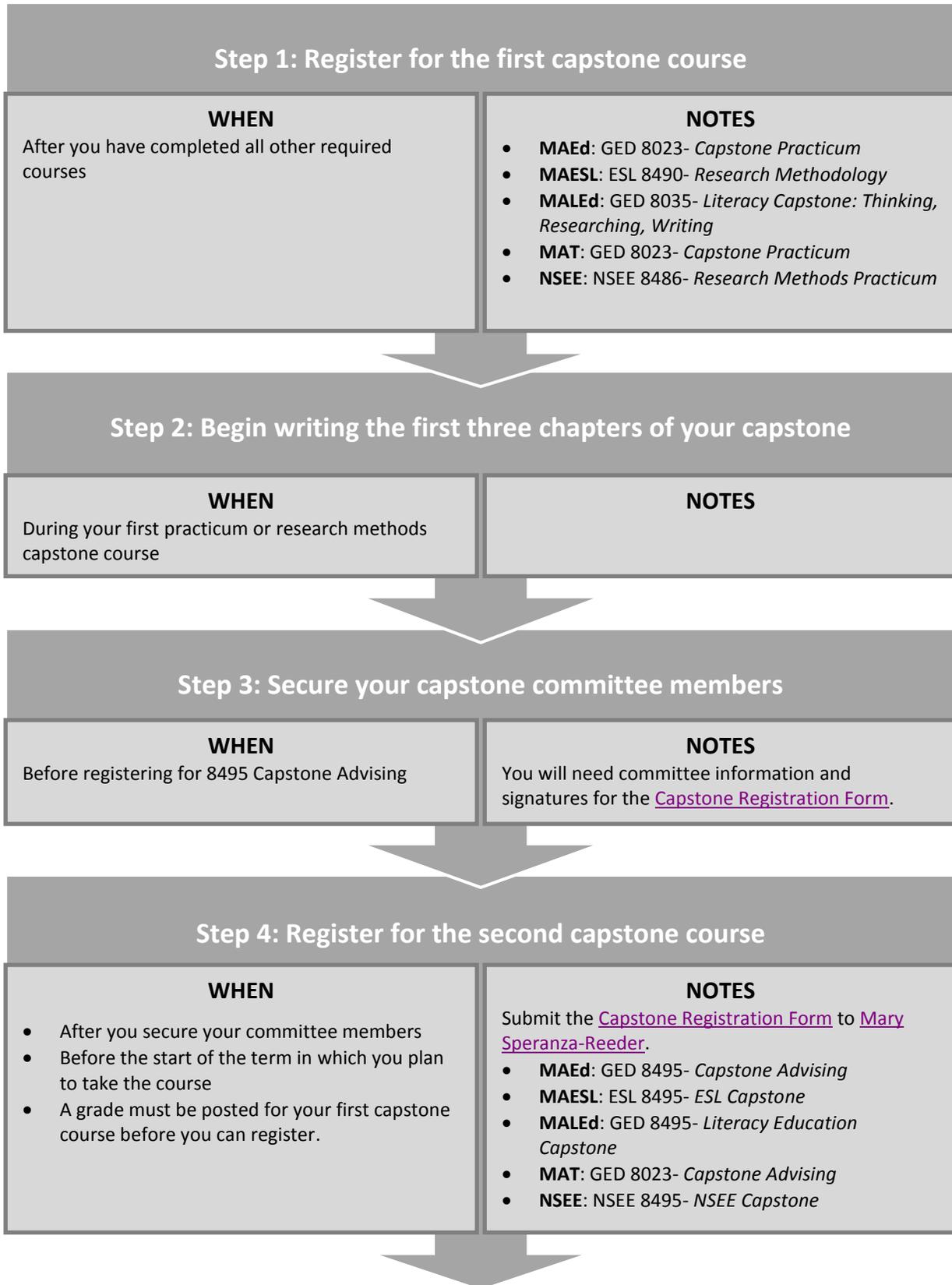
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CAPSTONE COMPLETION GUIDE
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CAPSTONE COMPLETION CHECKLIST



Step 5: Schedule your capstone proposal meeting

WHEN

After the approval of your first three capstone chapters by your primary advisor

NOTES

The student is responsible for scheduling the meeting and distributing copies to the committee.

Step 6: Develop your capstone completion timeline

WHEN

After your proposal meeting, work with your primary advisor to revise your timeline established in the first capstone course

NOTES

- Work with your primary capstone advisor and committee members to develop a timeline.
- Be sure to consider your intended term of graduation when formulating a timeline and remember to submit your [Intent to Graduate Form](#) to [Mary Speranza-Reeder](#).

Step 7: Submit your Human Subjects Research (HSR) form

WHEN

- After your proposal meeting
- Prior to conducting any research
- On or before the 10th day of the month

NOTES

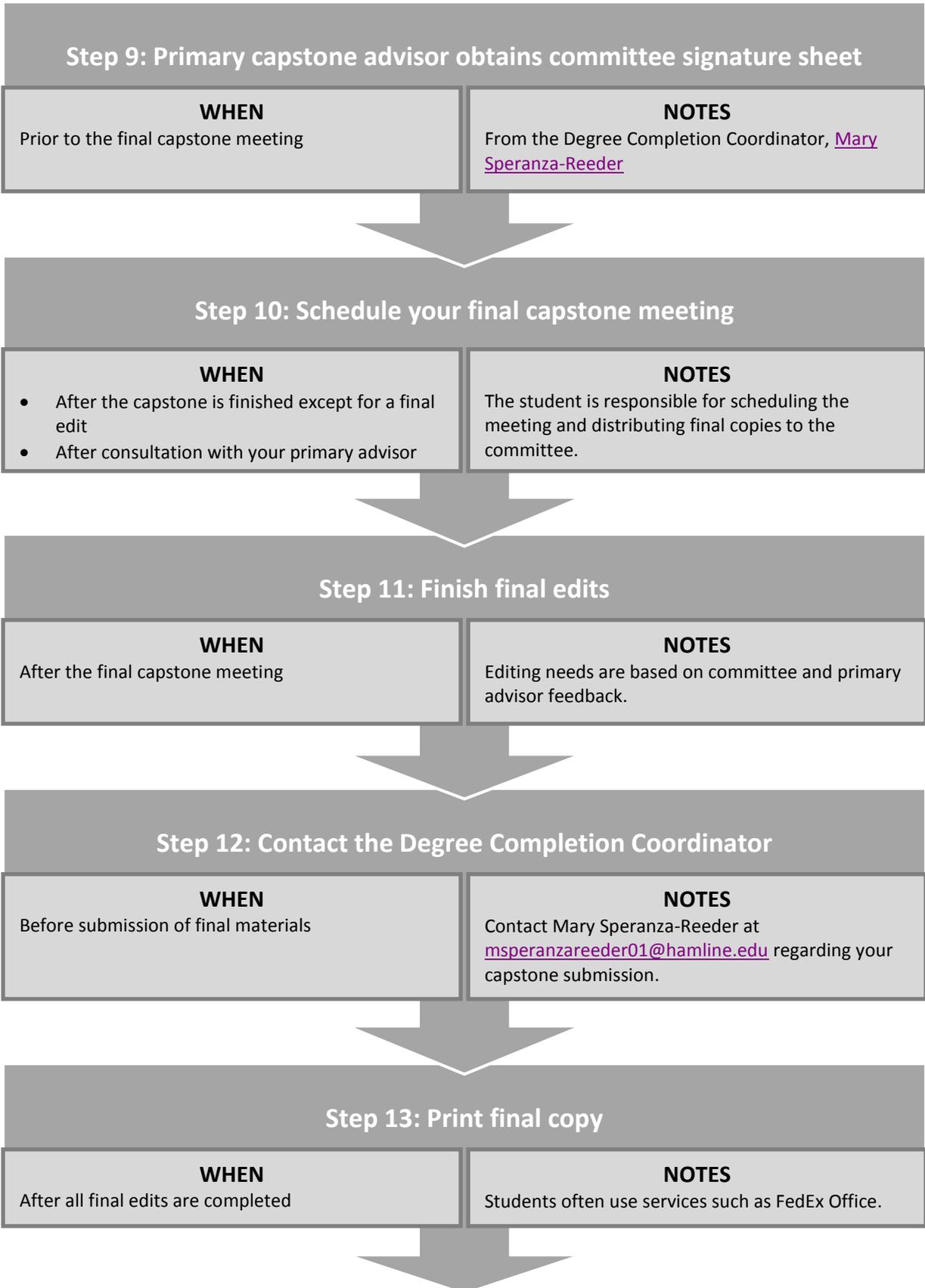
- Submit forms to [Mary Speranza-Reeder](#).
- Provide all required signatures.
- If data collection is time sensitive, submit HSR forms **two** months ahead of data collection.

Step 8: Finish writing and edits

WHEN

While registered for your second capstone course

NOTES



Step 14: Finish final steps including the submission of:

WHEN	NOTES
After obtaining a final printed copy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committee Signature Sheet• Copies of your abstract• Copy of abstract completion guide• Title page• Unbound copy of final capstone• Electronic copy of final capstone• W-9 form



Step 15: Submit capstone evaluation

WHEN	NOTES
After the capstone process is complete	A link to an online survey will be emailed to your Hamline account after the submission of your capstone.

DEFINING THE CAPSTONE

The capstone has been the culminating scholarly project for advanced degrees in education at Hamline University since the inception of the degree programs. The term *capstone* is used intentionally because it represents more than the formal research done in a thesis to support an intellectual theory. The capstone includes applied research or action research that draws from the student's formal study as well as professional and personal development. Thus, the capstone is a holistic, personal, and integrated journey that includes reflection, analysis, synthesis, and conclusions. The capstone becomes part of the public knowledge base of the education profession and will be a resource for other practitioners.

Capstone Development

Some students identify a capstone topic and “burning” research question early in the program; others explore a variety of topics or questions within a topic before making a decision. In either case, classroom assignments and projects in required courses and electives will often focus on some aspect of a prospective capstone topic, which may help to build background and refine the scope of the capstone topic.

Two four-credit experiences are required for the capstone (titles and course numbers vary by degree program):

The first is a course in research design and methods. In a typical course setting, students typically draft the first three chapters of the capstone. First capstone courses include:

- **MAEd:** GED 8023-Capstone Practicum
- **MAESL:** ESL 8490-Research Methodology
- **MAEd:** GED 8035-Literacy Capstone: Thinking, Researching, Writing
- **MAT:** GED 8023-Capstone Practicum
- **NSEE:** NSEE 8486-Research Methods Practicum

The second four-credit experience is an individual advising relationship with a primary advisor to continue and complete the work begun in the first course. Capstone advising has an 8495 course number common to all degree programs. Students work with their primary advisors to develop a timeline for capstone completion. The timeline will be different for each student; some students will be able to complete the capstone in a few months, and some may take up to two years depending on the topic and personal commitments.

The capstone may also be accompanied by artifacts such as videos, computer programs, manuals, or other tools developed as an integral part of the written capstone. The decision to include such artifacts should be jointly made by the student and primary advisor in relation to the research design.

Capstone Registration

To register for the second capstone course, students must complete the [Capstone Registration Form](#). The registration form requires the signatures of the three capstone committee members.

Once the form has been submitted to the degree completion coordinator and the student is registered, billing will occur through the [Student Accounts Office](#). If the capstone is not completed within two years of the term of registration, the grade becomes withdrawn (W) and the student will have to register again, paying the current full tuition rate.

Second capstone courses include:

- **MAEd:** GED 8495-Capstone
- **MAESL:** ESL 8495-ESL Capstone
- **MAEd:** GED 8495-Capstone
- **MAT:** GED 8495-Capstone
- **NSEE:** NSEE 8495-NSEE Capstone

Expectations for Writing

The capstone is the culminating scholarly project of the master's degree, and it becomes a public document catalogued in Bush Library and available for circulation and interlibrary loan. Therefore the quality of writing is important. Growth in writing emerges through the drafting-revising process done in conjunction with the guidance and advice of the capstone committee. It is expected that each student will revise each capstone chapter multiple times.

Well-written capstones are characterized by the following:

1. Logical, clear organization
2. Sufficient number of sources
3. Sufficient description, analysis, synthesis, and reflection
4. Careful editing for grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling
5. Accurate format and citations

The responsibility for editing the capstone resides with the student and the primary advisor. Matters of content, arrangement of content, and length are decided by the student and the capstone committee. All papers must follow the style outline contained in the [Capstone Formatting Guide](#). Its contents are based on the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition (2009) and on HU Guidelines for Capstone Formatting. The Hamline style outline takes precedence over the APA manual. Students should contact their primary advisor with questions about interpretation of APA style or its applications to the capstone.

Note: Capstones written before the publication of this guide may have been accepted under different style guidelines or degree program policies and should not necessarily be used as models for format and style. The information in this edition supersedes previous editions.

Human Subjects Research Protocol

Students **must** receive approval from the Human Subjects Research Committee **before** collecting any data for the capstone. The purpose of the human subjects process is to protect both Hamline graduate students and those who participate in their studies. Thus, you **may not** collect any data before you receive approval from the committee. Detailed and complete information about the

process can be found in the [Human Subjects Research Guide](#).

HSR forms must be submitted for all capstones, whether or not human subjects participate. Forms must be submitted for both adult and child participants. Editable HSR forms are available below:

- [HSR Short Form](#)
- [HSR Long Form](#)

Capstone Collaboration

Occasionally two students choose to collaborate on the capstone. A collaborative capstone may include co-authored chapters or sections of chapters as well as individually written parts. Primary advisors should be consulted about which parts of the capstone may be collaboratively written. Though working together, students will individually register and pay tuition for the capstone credits.

CAPSTONE COMPONENTS

Although the number of chapters and accompanying artifacts may vary depending on the project and the advice of the capstone committee, each capstone must have an introduction, a literature review, an explanation of methodology, an analysis and interpretation of results, and a conclusion.

Introduction

The introduction to the capstone presents the rationale for the study. This is usually a personal statement about the researcher's interest in the topic, compelling reasons to pursue the topic, and expectations for what may be learned. The introduction also includes the research question, which is the capstone's topic. The tone of the introduction is typically reflective and contains both related personal and professional information. It concludes with an overview of the remaining chapters.

Review of the Literature

The review of literature presents analysis, synthesis, and reflection on key people who have previously researched and published or implemented aspects of the capstone topic. The purpose of this review is to honor those who have come before and whose work has most informed the research question. Literature reviews typically include two to four large categories of research related to the capstone research question.

Methods

The methods chapter includes the action plan for investigation of the capstone topic. This chapter articulates the kind of data to be collected or developed, how these methods will yield data that addresses the research question, how the data links to the literature review, and the method of inquiry. Each program may have specific preferences for research design or methods; students should contact their primary advisor for additional information. All research projects must be approved by the Human Subjects Research Committee.

Results

The results chapter documents how the project proceeded and presents the data that was collected. This chapter should include the analysis (systematic description of the information collected and any themes or patterns that emerged) and the interpretation (explanatory synthesis) of the data collected. Concepts and categories identified in the literature review can assist in the interpretation of results.

Conclusion

The concluding chapter of the capstone highlights what was learned throughout the capstone process, revisits the literature review, considers possible implications and limitations of the study and its findings, recommends future research projects, reflects on the growth of the author, and the author's future research agenda. The conclusion may also include reflections on the relationship of the capstone to Hamline School of Education's Conceptual Framework.

CAPSTONE COMMITTEE

The capstone committee consists of three members:

- A **primary advisor**: a core faculty member in the degree program
- A **secondary advisor**: an individual knowledgeable about the capstone topic
In some cases this advisor is chosen by the student in consultation with the primary advisor.
The secondary advisor must:
 - Hold a master's degree
 - Submit a resume with the capstone registration form
 - Provide an address and social security number in order to receive the honorarium.
- A **peer reviewer**: someone of the student's choosing, often a colleague who supports the researcher as an advocate, sounding board, and reader.

Capstone Committee Meetings

The capstone committee will meet at least twice: once early in the process for the proposal meeting and once at the end for the final capstone meeting and sign off. The student will interact with each committee member throughout the capstone process.

Capstone Proposal Meeting

The capstone proposal consists of the introduction, literature review, and methods chapters. Students draft and revise these chapters with significant advice from the committee. When the primary advisor agrees that the proposal is sufficiently developed, the proposal meeting can be scheduled by the student. The student should distribute copies of the proposal to the committee at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

The proposal meeting typically begins with an introduction of committee members and how they became connected to the capstone project. The researcher and the committee discuss the introduction, literature review, and methods chapters through a series of questions that are meant to help the researcher gain insights, share ideas, revise and refine the proposal as needed, and set the stage for the final chapters of the capstone. The meeting does not focus on page-by-page editing of the proposal, although the student or committee members may ask questions or express concerns about mechanics, citation style, and any other matters, if necessary. The proposal meeting centers on questions such as:

- Is the research question clearly stated?
- Does the method match the question?
- Does the literature review provide a solid context for understanding the capstone question?
- Is the study feasible?
- What is the timeline for project completion?

Final Capstone Meeting

It is expected that the capstone will be revised several times. When the primary advisor agrees that the capstone is finished except for a final edit, the final capstone meeting can be scheduled. The student is responsible for scheduling the meeting and for distributing copies of the final draft to the committee at least two weeks before the final meeting. The primary advisor is responsible for requesting signature sheets from the degree completion coordinator one week before the final meeting.

The final capstone meeting is a celebration of the student's accomplishment. The student usually begins with a description of the capstone journey and the results of the project. The committee members engage in questions and dialogue with the student about various aspects of the capstone.

Committee members also submit their copies of the capstone with edits and revisions. After the final meeting, the student incorporates changes into a next-to-the-last copy, which is edited by the primary advisor. Once the advisor returns this copy to the student, the final stage of the capstone has been reached. The student makes any required changes and contacts the degree completion coordinator to arrange submission.

Capstone Submission Requirements

The student must submit the following to [Mary Speranza-Reeder](#), degree completion coordinator:

For MAEd, MAESL, MAEd, MAT:

- One unbound copy of the capstone
- One copy of the abstract completion guide (found in the [Capstone Formatting Guide](#)) with categories circled
- Two copies of your abstract
- One signature sheet
- An electronic version of both the entire capstone and the abstract
- W-9 form for the secondary advisor

For NSEE:

- Two unbound copies of the capstone
- One copy of the abstract completion guide (found in the [Capstone Formatting Guide](#)) with categories circled
- Two copies of your abstract
- Two signature sheets
- An electronic version of both the entire capstone and the abstract
- W-9 form for the secondary advisor

The electronic version can be emailed to the degree completion coordinator or turned in on a disc or USB drive.

SUMMATIVE CAPSTONE RUBRIC

The following indicators must be present for a capstone to receive a Pass grade.

The capstone:

- Follows current APA format for in-text citations and references.
- Follows HU School of Education [Capstone Formatting Guide](#).
- Is clearly organized throughout.

The **Introduction**:

- Identifies at least one specific research question.
- Describes the personal and professional significance of the research question.
- Provides an overview of the capstone.

The **Literature Review**:

- Explains clearly the connection(s) between the research question(s) and the categories of the literature review.
- Provides an overview of related literature.
- Attributes sources accurately and honestly.
- Explains, describes, and synthesizes resources, ideas and information throughout the chapter.

The **Methods**:

- Identifies the research plan.
- Presents a referenced rationale for the plan.
- Describes the setting(s) and participant(s) as appropriate to the study.
- Presents copies of research instruments.
- Describes data analysis technique(s) appropriate for the method(s).

The **Results**:

- Documents how the results respond to the research question.
- Documents data analysis in these ways:
 - Describes systematically the information collected, the themes or patterns that emerged;
 - Systematically explains the results and relationships.
- Presents results that are consistent with the methods and procedures stated in the methods chapter.
- Documents connections with the literature review.

Note: If the capstone is a curriculum-development project, this chapter presents one or more of the following:

- Needs assessment
- Curriculum design or revision
- Curriculum implementation
- Curriculum evaluation

The Conclusion:

- Reflects on major learning.
- Revisits the literature review.
- Considers possible implications of the study for policy, stakeholders, finance, or educational organizations.
- Considers limitations of the study.
- Recommends future research.
- Presents a plan for communicating and/or using the results.
- Reflects on the relationship of the capstone to HU School of Education's Conceptual Framework.

FINAL STEPS

Committee Signature Sheets

The signature sheets are obtained by the primary advisor from the degree completion coordinator prior to the final capstone meeting. They are signed by committee members at the conclusion of the final meeting and by the primary advisor after all revisions have been completed. The signed signature sheets are turned in with the final capstone and serve as the cover page in the bound copies.

Abstract

Two copies of the abstract must be submitted to the degree completion coordinator along with the final capstone copies. The abstract will be bound in an index at the end of the academic year and will be available as a reference tool to students and faculty in future research. If you have questions about how to write or format your capstone, refer to the Abstract Completion Guide in the Hamline School of Education [Capstone Formatting Guide](#).

Final Copies

Unbound, committee-approved, final copies of the capstone project are due to the degree completion coordinator as soon as possible after the final capstone meeting is held. These copies will be bound with the signature sheets serving as cover pages. The two abstracts will be bound with all abstracts from that academic year, categorized as indicated on the abstract completion guide. Bound capstones will be housed in Hamline's Bush Library. In addition to the printed copies, the student is required to turn in an electronic copy of the capstone and abstract.

Capstone Advising Evaluation

Following completion of the capstone process, we ask that students take time to complete the Capstone Advising Evaluation. This survey helps us monitor the quality of capstone advising provided. A link to the online survey will be emailed to your Hamline account after the submission of your capstone.