STUDENT GUIDE
# Table of Contents

Welcome to Capstone ................................................................................................................................... 1  
Contact Information & Support Services ................................................................................................. 2  
Student Travel ........................................................................................................................................... 4  
Team Reimbursements .............................................................................................................................. 6  
Capstone Project Abstracts ....................................................................................................................... 8  
Capstone Photos ......................................................................................................................................... 12  
Capstone Expo .......................................................................................................................................... 13  
Expo Printing ............................................................................................................................................ 13  
Invitations ................................................................................................................................................... 14  
Mutual Expectations for Capstone ............................................................................................................ 15  
Wagner’s Top Ten Guidelines for High-performing and Happy Capstone Teams .................................. 16  
Ethics Considerations in Capstone ........................................................................................................... 17  
How to include Capstone projects in your resume .................................................................................... 20
Welcome to Capstone

The Capstone program is a unique learning opportunity at NYU Wagner. Over the course of one academic year, you will work in teams with faculty oversight to identify opportunities for a client organization or to conduct research on a pressing social question. The course is designed in a weekly structure to facilitate reflection and learning in class, where you will collaborate with teammates, other classmates, and your faculty member—all to help you grow from this real-world experience.

In architecture, the capstone is the crowning piece of an arch, the center stone that holds the arch together, giving it shape and strength. Wagner’s Capstone program plays a similar role, by integrating and enhancing student learning in several different arenas: a content or issue area, key process skills including project management and teamwork, and methods for gathering, analyzing, and reporting data. You will also be learning new skills, such as acting as a consultant, making team presentations, and writing and editing literature reviews or environmental scans. Capstone requires students to interweave their learning in all these areas, and to do so in real time, in an unpredictable, complex real-world environment.

This Student Capstone Guide provides helpful information including:

- Contact information & support services
- Student travel and reimbursements
- Writing project abstracts
- Preparing for Capstone Expo
- Mutual expectations for Capstone participants
- Ethics Considerations
- How to include Capstone in your resume

While we’ve tried to be thorough, this handbook is a work in progress and we welcome your feedback on its content and organization.

As always, the Capstone Program Directors are at your disposal during this process. Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions.

All our best,

Erica Foldy
John Gershman
Elizabeth Larsen

Capstone Co-Directors
Contact Information & Support Services

While your Capstone instructor will be your frontline resource for help in navigating the Capstone process, we’ve included the names and contact information of individuals and departments that you can go to for specific needs.

**Wagner Student Services**
If you have questions about your overall academic progress or your graduation requirements, you should email Wagner Student Services to connect with your Student Services Program Advisor. Send your questions in an email to wagner.studentservices@nyu.edu and include your full name, your degree program and specialization, and your N#.

**Capstone Team Contacts**
- **Capstone team dynamics assistance:**
  - Erica Foldy
  - 212.998.7436, erica.foldy@nyu.edu
  - Elizabeth Larsen
  - 212.998.7491, elizabeth.larsen@nyu.edu

- **Reimbursements and Capstone Expo logistics:**
  - Catherine Falzone
  - 212.992.8701, catherine.falzone@nyu.edu

- **Traveling abroad:**
  - Hannah Atchison
  - 212.998.7558, hannah.atchison@nyu.edu

**Writing Support**
- Emily Austin
  - Wagner Writing Center Tutor
  - ea86@nyu.edu

**Library Support**
- **Research and literature reviews**
  - Katie Wissel (NYU Libraries)
  - Data Services Librarian, Liaison to Wagner
  - katie.wissel@nyu.edu

**NYU Data Services Studio**
Data Services is a joint service of New York University’s Division of Libraries and Information Technology Services to support quantitative, qualitative, and geographical research at NYU. Data Services offers access to specialty software packages for statistical analysis, geographic information systems (GIS), and qualitative data analysis. We provide training and support, as well as consulting expertise, for many aspects of the
research data lifecycle including access, analysis, collection development, data management, and data preservation. Data Services is part of Elmer Holmes Bobst Library’s Research Commons.

Consultation is available via email (data.services@nyu.edu), telephone (212.998.3434), by appointment, or on a walk-in basis. Studio hours are listed on the Data Services page.

- For help with data management (reformatting files, changing files from one software package to another), data analysis (SPSS, SAS, Stata), and GIS mapping.
- Located on the 5th floor of Bobst Library, this ITS/Libraries service conveniently locates staff, software, statistical computing, and data collection resources to support quantitative research at NYU.

**Room Reservations**
Capstone teams can reserve meeting spaces at NYU’s Bobst Library online. Some client organizations may also have spaces available for meetings and final presentations. If you are struggling to find space, please email wagner.capstone@nyu.edu.
Student Travel

If your Capstone client requires travel for fieldwork outside of the metropolitan area, Wagner will support you by paying for your airfare or train fare to your fieldwork destination. The Wagner travel fund is not intended to pay for accommodations, meals, in-country travel, transportation to/from the airport, visas, or vaccines. However, you and your teammates can discuss how to use the $500 allocated to you to defray these costs (see Team Reimbursement section below).

- **Getting Started:** First, discuss and agree on travel dates and destinations with your client, team, and instructor.

- **Complete the Capstone Travel Approval Google Form:** Submit your dates, destinations, and estimated ticket costs to your faculty member for approval via email. Once they have given their approval, have one person from your team fill out the Capstone Travel Approval Google Form for all team members. This form will ask for your names, dates, destination(s), method of payment, and the estimated figure for total ticket costs. Where prompted in the form, upload a PDF version of the email approval from your instructor.
  - Please be reasonable. Wagner won’t pay for business class or for flights that are wildly out of the normal range of flights to your destination. At the same time, we don’t expect you to choose flights with very long layovers or multiple legs just to save money.

- **Pay for Your Trip in One of Two Ways:** Wagner provides two options for trip payment that depend on your travel plans:
  - If you are traveling to/from a NYC airport (EWR, JFK, or LGA) you can request that Wagner pay for your airfare/train-fare using NYU’s travel agency, Egencia.
  - If you are traveling to/from an airport other than a NYC airport (not EWR, JFK, or LGA), you are required to pay for your trip upfront and to submit a request for reimbursement upon your return. This option would be used if, for instance, you were traveling or returning home for the holidays and traveling to your fieldwork destination from that non-NYC location.
    - **Note:** If you choose this option, Wagner is only able to reimburse you in an amount up to the price of a ticket to/from NYC. We will look at the price of your itinerary on Egencia and use that as our benchmark cost.

A. **Booking via Egencia**
   a. Once your team submits the Google form (one per team), we will create a “Traveler Group” for your team in Egencia (also available through NYUHome).
   b. Each person on the team will log into Egencia using their NYU NetID and password.
   c. Search for and select an itinerary that falls within your approved budget.
   d. Choose Hannah Atchison as your “approver” and submit for approval.
   e. Hannah will approve or deny your request, based on whether the ticket is a reasonable price for the destination.
   f. You will receive an email stating either that you are free to book your flight or that the itinerary was rejected.
i. If your itinerary was approved, we strongly suggest booking as soon as possible, as flight prices tend to rise.

ii. If your itinerary was not approved, we will suggest new itineraries and/or provide feedback and follow-up with next steps.

g. Book your flight through Egencia—Wagner’s account will automatically be charged.

B. Booking Travel Independently and Getting Reimbursed

a. Search online for an itinerary that falls within your approved budget.
b. Book and pay for your flight with your own credit card.
c. Travel to your destination.
d. When you return to NYC, fill out the Reimbursement Form for Pre-Approved Capstone Travel Expenses, found on the "When in Capstone" page in the Downloadable Resources section or in your Capstone Classes site under the tab “Student Resources.” You must include:
   i. All receipts for expenses that are being reimbursed.
   ii. All boarding passes and/or train ticket stubs for travel.
   iii. Proof of payment for all expenses (i.e., credit card statements, or stamped cash receipts). For credit card purchases, it is sufficient to just submit the receipt, as long as it shows the last four digits of the credit card used.
   iv. A copy of your itinerary showing flight locations and dates.
   v. For all reimbursements that pertain to foreign currency, include either a printout from a web-based currency conversion program (like Oanda) to substantiate the rate of exchange to USD, OR your credit card statement showing the conversion rate.

e. Scan the completed forms along with all receipts, boarding passes, proofs of payment, itineraries, and currency conversions into a single PDF document and email to wagner.capstone.reimbursements@nyu.edu. If you are unable to send your reimbursement electronically, it can be delivered to Catherine Falzone at the Puck Building, 295 Lafayette St., 3rd floor, workstation 3015-B.
f. Once your reimbursement request has been processed, you will need to sign an additional NYU form. You will be notified by email when this form is ready for you to sign—this can be scanned and completed via email or signed in person. It can take up to 6–8 weeks for NYU Accounts Payable to issue your check.
Team Reimbursements

Each team can be reimbursed up to $500 for the Capstone-related expenses outlined below.

Reimbursable expenses include:
- Local travel expenses incurred for project-related work.
- Printing, binding, and preparation of Capstone documents (including materials for Capstone Expo)
- Software programs purchased for data analysis or design
- Non-alcoholic refreshments for project-related meetings involving external participants, such as focus groups or client meetings
- Visas, vaccines, and other costs associated with international travel.

Non-reimbursable expenses include:
- Food and beverage expenditures for team project meetings or during team travel
- Hiring consultants (e.g., graphic designers, translators, copy editors)
- Gifts given to clients
- Gift cards given to focus group or survey participants (for more on this see #5 below).

Guidelines to follow when requesting reimbursement
1. Only NYU Wagner students can be reimbursed for team expenses.
2. Receipts must show proof of payment.
   a. For credit cards, a receipt showing the last 4 digits of the credit card is sufficient.
   b. If the receipt does not show the last 4 digits, include a copy of your credit card statement that clearly shows the charge.
   c. An invoice that does not indicate it has been paid is not acceptable.
3. NYU can only reimburse a student for a charge made on their own credit card.
4. Reimbursement for certain expenses will require the surrendering of the purchased item to the Capstone program at the project’s conclusion (e.g., small electronic devices).
5. NYU’s policies regarding gift giving/participant compensation for Capstone field research have changed. Gift cards are no longer reimbursable as a form of compensation. Instead, students can offer human participants in research studies (such as surveys or focus groups) discounted movie passes through NYU Ticket Central or Wagner-branded swag.
   a. Students should send their movie ticket or swag requests to wagner.capstone@nyu.edu at least two weeks in advance of the date needed.
   b. State the amount and/or type of gift you would like to provide to participants. Rather than reimburse the students for these expenses, Wagner will purchase them directly for student pick-up and debit the team’s $500 account accordingly.
6. All reimbursement forms can be found on the "When in Capstone" page on the Wagner website. Go to Academics, then Capstone, then When in Capstone.

The Reimbursement Process
- Each team member who purchases items using their own credit card must complete their own Reimbursement Form for Team Expenses (found in the “Downloadable
Resources section of the “When in Capstone” page or in the Student Resources tab of your Capstone Classes site).

- Please complete all of the relevant fields on p. 2, the “Student Expense Reimbursement Form” EXP2000S (don’t fill in the chartfield/account number section).
  - The “signature of payee” field requires an actual signature, not digital.
  - You must also complete the Itemized Expenses Sheet on the third page.
- Compile original receipts for all expenses that will be reimbursed.
  - Tape any loose paper receipts to a plain sheet of 8 ½ x 11 paper.
  - The Office of the Bursar will only accept original paper receipts, not copies. For online credit card purchases, include a printout of the confirmation email. Use paperclips, not staples, to keep everything together.
  - Receipts must be easily readable and must indicate proof of payment (a receipt that shows the last 4 digits of the credit card used). Invoices that don’t indicate payment or “balance due” statements will not be accepted. If your receipt does not show proof of payment, you must include a copy of your credit card statement that shows the charge.
- If you are not a US Citizen or Permanent Resident, you will need to submit a copy of your passport along with your original receipts.
- You can submit your Student Expense Reimbursement Form (EXP2000S), Itemized Expenses Sheet, and receipts with proof of payment in one of two ways:
  - Send scans of all documents to wagner.capstone.reimbursements@nyu.edu
  - Put hard copies in Catherine Falzone’s mailbox on the 3rd floor of the Puck Building or stop by her desk (3015-B, at the top of the internal stairs).
- Once your reimbursement form has been received, approved, and signed by a Wagner staff member, you will be notified via email.
- You can get reimbursed in cash (up to $300) or by check (any amount):
  - **Cash:** Pick up your approved and signed reimbursement form from your Puck Building mailbox. Bring it and all original receipts (and copy of your passport, if needed) to the Bursar’s Office at 383 Lafayette St. 1st Floor.
  - **Check:** We will submit your request via email to FinanceLink. You will receive a check in the mail (can take up to 6-8 weeks).

Please note: **The above processes are for current students only.** You MUST pick up your cash reimbursement or have Wagner submit your reimbursement request to FinanceLink before you graduate. If you do not do this, you will have to register as an external supplier in NYU’s procurement system, which can take a long time. If you do not know your exact graduation date, consult the NYU Graduation Information page for conferral date.

If you have any questions about whether an expense is reimbursable, or have any other questions not covered in this guide, please email the general Capstone alias at wagner.capstone@nyu.edu.
Capstone Project Abstracts

As part of the Capstone Expo on Tuesday, May 12, 2020, we prepare a Capstone Booklet, comprising abstracts that describe the year’s projects. Each team will need to submit a project abstract, approximately 150 words in length, that briefly states the project’s goals, methods used, and preliminary results and recommendations made to the client or issue studied (if that information is available by the date that the abstract is due). We typically request the abstract in February. For reference, please refer to the Abstract Guidelines (below) and the 2018-2019 abstract booklet.

Abstract Guidelines

Your abstract should clearly describe why the client engaged you, the steps you took to solve the client’s challenge(s), and your final deliverable(s) to the client. All team members should contribute to the writing of the abstract and sign off on the version submitted. Your abstract should be approximately 150 words in length, and should not exceed 180 words. Please see the abstract guidelines below for assistance in your writing: client based and Quantitative Analysis & SI3 Team-Generated project abstracts.

NYU Wagner’s Writing Style Tips*

- Spell out acronyms and abbreviations using capital letters without periods (e.g. FDA).
- Write in past tense: abstracts are published at the end of the year.
- Use the oxford comma (when writing a list please place a comma prior to the “and”).
- Use semicolons to separate series that have commas within.
- Write out numbers one through nine; 10 and up are written as numerals unless it starts a sentence.
- Be concise! Avoid extra words that aren't necessary: "in order to" --> "to."
- Use active voice, not passive.
- Capstone team (lowercase team) -- only need to say Capstone team once in each summary, then can say "the team" to simplify.
- If an acronym is only used once, it’s not needed and can instead be spelled out (there are some exceptions to this).
- Words formed with prefixes (nonprofit, predate, preexisting, antiamoebic, cofounder) are only hyphenated if two “i’s” come together (anti-inflation).
- Healthcare is one word.

* For further guidelines on writing style refer to Wagner’s Editorial Style Guide

Client Abstract Content

Please include ALL of the following in your abstract for client-based Capstone Project:

- A descriptive title that encapsulates the essence of your project (max 8 words)
- A brief description of the organization/client [briefly define/describe all terms/programs included] (1 sentence)
- The challenge question/problem to be solved (1 sentence)
- Overall task the client wants the students to undertake (1 sentence)
- Steps the students are taking/took to achieve this task (1-2 sentences)
Sample Client Abstracts

Example 1 (PNP)
Title: REVAMPING RECRUITMENT AND SIMPLIFYING HUMAN RESOURCES OPERATIONS

The South Asian Youth Action (SAYA) is a youth development organization that aims to “foster a strong sense of belonging in youth and provide them with tools to thrive academically, professionally, and personally.” SAYA has grown into a $3.9 million organization running programs out of nine Queens- and Brooklyn-based NYC public schools and its community center in Elmhurst, Queens. SAYA engaged a Capstone team in enhancing recruitment materials and processes to meet the organization’s recruitment challenges and to simplify human resources operations. The team designed an action plan that includes a customized proposal of vetted software providers to meet SAYA’s job application and employee compliance tracking needs, enhanced recruitment materials, and an actionable list of partnership opportunities to establish a job candidate pipeline. Through employee interviews, industry research, engagement of software providers, and pipeline opportunity exploration, the team provided SAYA with the tools necessary to attract qualified talent, enhance the organization’s recognition through external partnerships, and methodically track applicant and employee information.

Example 2 (HPAM)
Title: STANDARDIZATION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT CARE

NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H) is the largest public safety-net hospital system in the country, serving 1.4 million New Yorkers annually. In September 2014, H+H was awarded a $17.9 million healthcare innovation grant through the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation to reduce preventable emergency department readmissions over three years. H+H engaged a Capstone team in evaluating the project’s operational sustainability and making recommendations to improve standardization of care across six of the system’s hospitals. The team conducted extensive research into care management best practices, staffing models, and implementation strategies and tools. The team also interviewed key care management personnel within H+H and similar organizations. The team’s research resulted in the development of patient-facing health literacy tools, screening mechanisms for identifying social determinants of health, and program-specific staff competency evaluation tools.

Example 3 (MUP)
Title: MEASURING THE IMPACT OF ADVOCACY CONDUCTED BY BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS
The New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS) helps unlock economic potential and create greater economic security for all New Yorkers by connecting residents to good jobs, creating stronger businesses, and building a fairer economy in neighborhoods across the five boroughs. As the oversight agency for the City’s Business Improvement District (BID) program, the SBS Neighborhood Development Division monitors the fiscal and organizational health of all 73 BIDs in New York City. SBS enlisted a Capstone team to assess the impact of the BID program’s advocacy and identify needed resources. The team conducted focus group discussions with SBS, developed and implemented a survey administered to all 73 BIDs, and conducted in-depth interviews with select BID executive directors to define BID advocacy and determine measurement methods. Based on the collected and analyzed data, the team compiled a final comprehensive report with recommendations that included a framework for measuring the BID program’s advocacy going forward.

Example 4 (International)
Title: UNDERSTANDING VIOLENCE IN MEXICO: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Carnegie) is one of the world’s most highly regarded international affairs think tanks and the oldest in the United States. Carnegie’s mission is to advance the cause of peace through analysis and development of fresh policy ideas and direct engagement and collaboration with decision-makers in government, business, and civil society. Carnegie enlisted a Capstone team to conduct extensive research on compounded violence and political reform in Mexico City and Monterrey, Mexico. The team traveled to both cities and interviewed over 30 stakeholders, including representatives from government, civil society, academia, media, and employees in the private sector. The team researched the relationship between civil society and government and the impact of this relationship on violence and the political reform process. The team’s research culminated in a report that outlined the relationship structure between key stakeholders and provided recommendations for how to leverage existing mechanisms and partnerships to address the issue of violence in Mexico.

Quantitative Analysis Capstone & SI3 Team-Generated Projects Abstract Content
Please include the following:
- Brief description of the issue(s) you are exploring (2-3 sentences)
- Your team’s hypothesis (1 sentence)
- Research methods your team used, such as tests, analyses, surveys, etc. (1-2 sentences)
- High-level findings of your research (1 sentence)
- How the results were displayed, e.g., in a report, recommendations, best practices (1 sentence)

Sample Abstracts

Example 1 (Quantitative Analysis)
Title: A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF CHANGES TO HEALTHCARE AND HEALTH STATUS ACROSS A GENTRIFYING CITY

Health, socioeconomic status, and neighborhood characteristics have well-documented associations. Relatedly, limited healthcare access—typically thought of as a rural issue that can exacerbate health conditions and lead to poorer outcomes—also exists in low-income, urban neighborhoods. Over the past several decades, New York City neighborhoods have experienced significant economic transformations resulting in higher rents and costs of living in historically low-income neighborhoods. Williamsburg, Brooklyn Heights, and Park Slope have become national symbols of gentrification. Despite dramatic neighborhood change, there is a surprising lack of evidence suggesting gentrification has directly displaced low-income residents. A Capstone team explored healthcare and health changes for residents of gentrifying neighborhoods. Using data from the Primary Care Service Area Project, the US Census, and the NYC Community Health Survey, the team created a multi-pronged descriptive analysis to explore changes in healthcare availability, utilization, and health status across New York City through the lens of gentrification.

Example 2 (S1³)

Title: MEASURING THE IMPACT OF PERFORMANCE OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Within the world of social impact, funding decisions are increasingly based on an enterprise’s ability to demonstrate that it has created meaningful impact for the communities it intends to serve. At present, 76 percent of impact investment firms worldwide set impact targets and measure performance on some or all of their investments. However, impact measurement remains a critical pain point for the industry. In response to this need, a Capstone team is developing a technology solution to help investors and social enterprises more effectively collect, measure, and report out impact performance data to key stakeholders. Unetrics is a web-based application designed for impact investors and social enterprises that will streamline data collection, simplify impact metric selection, automate impact analysis and projections, and provide real-time performance data.
Capstone Photos

The Capstone team collects photographs that illustrate the impact of your Capstone work. We value your contributions throughout the U.S. and across the globe and want to share your work as seen through your eyes and captured through your lenses. In the spring, students will receive an email requesting at least one photo from each team to wagner.capstone@nyu.edu. Please include the location of the photograph in your email and use the project title submitted with the team’s abstract survey response as the subject line.

We'd love to receive photos of:
- Your team with country/city landscape
- Your team working on your project
- Your team in the field interacting with your client/community
- Your team giving a presentation

Please do not include photos of minors without having received express, written consent to do so. By submitting your photos, you are agreeing that NYU Wagner may use them for internal administrative purposes and external marketing purposes (the latter including email, web, and social media use). If you are personally sharing photos via social media, don't forget to tag them with #WheresWagner!
Capstone Expo

Date & Location
2020 Capstone Expo
Tuesday, May 12, 2020, 5:00pm - 7:30pm (refreshments begin at 6:00pm)
Kimmel Center for University Life
60 Washington Square South, Rosenthal Pavilion, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10012

Format
This event provides an opportunity for all Capstone teams to come together and display their work to the Wagner community. Each Capstone team is expected to prepare and display a poster board that represents and summarizes the work done over the course of the year. At the Expo, students, faculty, clients, and friends circulate and chat with teams regarding the substance of their work. Although there are no formal presentations made at this event, each team member should be prepared to succinctly describe the scope of the project, key activities, challenges, and findings/takeaways.

If possible, all team members should plan to be present at the Capstone Expo. We encourage at least one member of each team to arrive by 4:30pm on the day of the Expo to set up the display space. Guests will start arriving at 5:00pm, so teams should have at least one representative standing close by to talk about their projects by that time.

Presentation Method
Each team will display their work via a 30" x 40" foam core poster board (Wagner can supply poster board and will provide easels).

In deciding what content to present on a poster board, we suggest that each team think about the project holistically, with an emphasis on the overarching purpose and key insights. It is important that the elements work together visually, and it helps to have graphics (photographs, diagrams, etc.) and as few words as possible. The objective is to draw viewers in by presenting the project in a visually compelling way. Once you've gained their attention, you can then give them more detail via discussion. All poster boards should list the name of the client and names of all team members.

Examples of previous Capstone poster boards are displayed in the Career Services Resource Room, Puck Building, Room 2113. Please feel free to stop by and take a look.

Expo Printing
NYU Reprographics:
By choosing NYU Reprographics, you can print both your poster board and your final report without needing to submit a reimbursement (note: we will debit your $500 team budget). You can either email a requisition form and a PDF of your poster and/or report file (300 dpi
recommended) to repro@nyu.edu (preferred method) or visit them at 547 LaGuardia Place to fill out a requisition form and bring your files on a flash drive.

**Requisition Form:**

- [Download blank form](#)
- [Download sample form for poster order](#)

Use the sample order form as a guide to fill out a requisition form for poster printing.

Your printing requirements for reports will vary, so download the blank form and fill it out with the information below.

**Section 1, Client Information:**

- Department: Capstone
- School: Wagner
- Address: 295 Lafayette St. 2nd Fl.
- Phone: use YOUR phone number, not Wagner’s

**Section 2, Billing Information:**

- Account - Fund - Org - Program - Project: 63109 - 20 - 45000 - M6011 - MA904

Please arrange for a team member to pick up your final deliverables from NYU Reprographics.

If you have additional questions about filling out the form, printing specifications/options, pricing, or pick-up, call Reprographics at 212-995-1050 or visit them in person.

**Printing off-campus:**

If you do not want to use NYU Reprographics, you can pay for printing yourself from another vendor and then submit a reimbursement form (please submit before you graduate!). If you need poster board, Wagner has blank 30” x 40” foam core board you may use. You may pick it up at Wagner from April 20-May 8. Email catherine.falzone@nyu.edu if you want one.

If you have any questions about billing to Reprographics or reimbursements, please email catherine.falzone@nyu.edu.

**Invitations**

In celebration of the final projects, we invite the clients with whom the teams have worked during the course of the year—as well as students, faculty, staff, university VIPs, and others in the community—to attend the Expo. Inviting these individuals is a nice way to thank the people who participated in your projects and for outside guests to see the range of Wagner Capstone projects. Please feel free to invite as many people as you would like to the Expo. For those teams who have done research projects, if there has been someone especially helpful in your work, please invite them, too. A link to the RSVP page will be distributed in April 2020. Capstone students do not have to RSVP.
Mutual Expectations for Capstone

Capstone grows out of, and contributes to, a set of interlocking communities. Communities are sustained by mutual ties of responsibility and obligation, gift and receipt. So is Capstone. Capstone has four stakeholder groups, groups that come together to make Capstone work: clients, students, faculty and Wagner itself, as represented by its administration and the Capstone program staff. Each of these groups has interwoven responsibilities to the others; each group gives to the other groups and receives in return.

Students offer:
- Energy, time and engagement.
- A range of experience and expertise.
- A stance of curiosity and openness to their client, their faculty and each other.
- A willingness to re-negotiate and revise the project as necessary.
- A finished work product which advances the mission of the organization.

Faculty offer:
- A learning environment, both challenging and supportive, in which students can build on earlier experiences, while trying out new ways of thinking and acting.
- A set of class meetings, activities and assignments which gives students an overall framework within which to work, but is adaptable to the particular needs of their projects.
- Support to the client and its Capstone team, as necessary, to ensure that the project is moving forward to a successful conclusion.
- A willingness to act as liaison, as necessary, between Wagner, the client, and the students.
- An opportunity, towards the end of the course, for students to reflect on the bigger picture within which their project is located.
- Useful feedback during and at the end of the project in addition to a final grade.

Clients offer:
- A concrete, feasible project.
- An identified staff liaison with the Capstone team.
- Communication with and support of its Capstone team; an openness to mentoring team members, as well as treating them as work partners.
- A willingness to re-negotiate and revise the project as necessary.
- Useful feedback during the project and evaluation at the end of the project that can inform the faculty member’s grading decision.
- An engagement fee, where possible.

Wagner and Capstone Program Staff Offer:
- An academic environment with a set of supports, including specialization requirements and related courses, which contribute to Capstone’s success
- Smooth-running program administration
- A clear and transparent Capstone process
- A variety or resources and support to clients, faculty and student teams
- Openness of feedback from other stakeholders on what's working and not working.

We offer this list of mutual expectations in order to give all stakeholders a general sense of their obligations to others as well as others’ obligations to them. Once teams have been matched with clients, we suggest that more specific work agreements be drawn up so that mutual responsibilities are made transparent and explicit.

Wagner’s Top Ten Guidelines for High-performing and Happy Capstone Teams

1. Create a team charter. Use it. Revise it as necessary.
2. Create a detailed workplan. Check it early and often. Update it regularly.
3. Create agendas for meetings and use them.
4. Have a team coordinator – someone who sees the big picture and how all the pieces interrelate.
5. Have a process maven – someone who attends to participation, communication and decision-making and will raise issues if necessary.
6. Go slow to go fast. Take the time upfront to clarify what you’re hoping to accomplish and how you’re going to get there.
7. Always verbally summarize all decisions made during your meetings and make sure everyone agrees.
8. Don’t use email or other virtual communication methods for making any significant decisions. Misunderstandings are very likely to occur.
10. Take care of yourselves: Bring food to meetings, schedule fun time, start meetings with personal check-ins. (At the Olympics, team members are always hugging, high fiving, or finding some way to support each other and show connection – what is your equivalent?)
Ethics Considerations in Capstone

A Brief Overview for Students
A number of ethical issues can arise in Capstone projects. This memo lays out the most common issues and suggests ways to address them. If you have any questions, either now or as your Capstone project develops, please don’t hesitate to talk with your professor or with one of the Capstone co-directors. These issues are important and they can also be confusing, so err on the safe side and get more information if you need to.

We use the term “ethics considerations” to refer to a variety of concerns that can arise in the course of doing data gathering and working with an outside organization. These issues generally fall into two categories:

- Informant-related issues (Informants are the people you speak with to gather information related to your project);
- Client-related issues (Your Capstone client organization)

Information-related issues
Data gathering, whether done as part of an academic research project or on behalf of a client organization, has the potential to exploit or mistreat the individual informants from whom you are gathering data. For this reason, universities and research institutions generally have strict guidelines for any data gathering from people (as opposed to, for example, using archival information like government records or newspapers). These guidelines are most important when dealing with more vulnerable populations, such as children, prisoners, the recipients of social welfare services, etc. They can be less important when collecting data from organizational employees, though that is not always the case. For example, if you are asking employees to give you information that might be critical about their employer and could jeopardize their employment, then of course you need to be very careful.

Examples of projects with different levels of risk to informants:

- Virtually no risk: Projects involving surveys with fully anonymous data collection: This could include some kinds of web-based surveys or surveys conducted on a street corner that do not ask for name or other identifying information.
- Low risk: Projects involving interviews about non-sensitive or non-stigmatizing information, but in which readers of the final report may be able to identify who made particular statements. For example, team members might interview the Executive Directors of six nonprofit organizations and provide the client with a list of who was interviewed. Even if the report does not link a statement or quote or opinion with a particular interviewee, it still might be possible to guess his/her identity.
- Some risk:
  - Projects involving interviews in which participants might be under some pressure or coercion to answer in a particular way: For example, employees of the client organization who are being asked to assess an organizational program or policy (which could include assessment of other employees including their supervisor).
Projects including vulnerable populations, such as children, prisoners, or families involved in some sort of social services such as the child welfare system.

The four most important concerns and how to address them:

1. Do potential informants understand the project and the data collection process?
   a. Develop a clear, simple description of the data gathering which will be consistently provided to each informant, either with a written or verbal statement. The explanation should include the purpose of the project, who is conducting the data collection, the specific activities that the informant will be asked to do, and how much time will be involved.
   b. If, based on the examples and guidelines above, you think your project does pose some risk to potential informants, this statement should be written, rather than verbal. Work with your professor on this.

2. Do potential informants understand that their participation is truly voluntary and should be undertaken only with informed consent?
   a. Make sure your description of the project includes the stipulation that participation is voluntary and make sure you get at least verbal consent to continue.
   b. If, based on the examples and guidelines above, you think your project does pose some risk to potential informants, you should get written consent. Work with your professor on this.

3. Will informants' confidentiality be safeguarded?
   a. In most projects involving data collection from people, confidentiality is critical. This is how you can safeguard confidentiality:
   b. Make sure you conduct interviews on sensitive topics in places where others will not know who is participating.
   c. Give participants a code number and put this number on any of their materials (completed questionnaires, interview transcripts) so their name is not associated with these materials;
   d. Never attribute quotes or other data to a named individual (that is, saying, “one informant said…” rather than, “Molly Jones said…”)
   e. Do not disclose any informant characteristics if those characteristics could identify a given individual (for example, if you only had one or two informants from Fort Greene, you wouldn’t say, “A Fort Greene resident said…”).
   f. Keep your data and any materials that could lead to the identification of an informant in a secure place. (So, for example, you might choose to keep all your materials in your own home or office, rather than at the client organization, if someone there might have an incentive to look at the data and identify informants.)

4. Finally, you must ALWAYS receive consent from a participant if you wish to take pictures or make any recordings of an interview, meeting or other event.

Some students may be working with a client organization (usually in the health care field) that requires them to go through a formal review process (sometimes called the Institutional Review Board or Human Subjects Review) to safeguard potential informants. If so, you will need to work with the client and your faculty member on this.
HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)

HIPAA is a federal law passed in 1996 specifically to ensure privacy of patient health information. If you are working in a health-care organization, HIPAA could apply to your work, especially if you have access to data about individual patients. If this is the case, confer with your client organization and faculty member about how to handle this.

FERPA (Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act)

FERPA is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. FERPA gives parents certain rights over their children’s education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. If Capstone students are working in a school or other educational institution, you and the students should find out if FERPA is relevant to their project.

For students who think they might wish to publish their work:

If you want to publish your work, there are two considerations. First, you would need to get permission from the client. Second, if you are collecting data from people, then you will need to go through the Institutional Review Board at NYU. We strongly discourage you from doing this since it is labor- and time-intensive and could potentially set you back by months. However, if you still want to do this, then please understand that it is up to you to learn how to submit an IRB application, working with someone at the University Committee on Activities Involving Human Subjects. Your faculty member is not expected to support you on this, nor is the Capstone program.

Client-related issues

A different set of issues arise related to the client organization and your relationship with your client. Here are several significant issues and some thoughts about how to address them.

- **Who owns the work produced by the Capstone team?**
  - The final work product is owned by your client organization. However, Wagner reserves the right to publicly list the organization as a client, to keep copies of all Capstone teams’ final reports for review by the Wagner community, and to include a brief project description in Capstone promotional materials.
  - Given this, you may want to work with the client to answer these questions:
    - Will you have the right to disclose or disseminate the report?
    - Can you participate in the decision about how the report will be disseminated and to whom?
  - Furthermore, you are allowed to use your work in pursuit of your educational or professional careers.

- **Will Capstone teams have access to confidential and/or proprietary client information or materials?**
  - Clarify with your client if they have concerns about any of the information or materials you are working with. Discuss with them how to ensure that confidentiality is maintained and that no proprietary information is inadvertently leaked. If in any doubt, err on the side of caution.
• This will be particularly important if someone on the team is an employee of an organization that could be considered a competitor of the client organization. This could pose a conflict of interest for that team member. Any potential conflicts of interest should be disclosed to the client organization, so that you can jointly figure out how to address any concerns.
  o Make sure you determine with the client what should happen to these materials after the project is completed.

These are not the only issues, just the most common ones. If other issues arise in your work and you think they should be included in future versions of this memo, please let us know at wagner.capstone@nyu.edu.

How to include Capstone projects in your resume
Be sure to acknowledge the experience as part of an NYU team-based project. For most Capstones, your title should be Project Associate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9/18 – Present</th>
<th>NEW YORK CITIZENS HOUSING AND PLANNING COUNCIL</th>
<th>New York, NY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Project Associate, NYU Advanced Project in Urban Planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Serve on 4-person team consisting of NYU Wagner graduate candidates to identify recommendations for commercial development of Woodside, Queens in response to citywide and regional needs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Analyze current urban design elements, land use, and housing conditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conduct demographic analysis, including review of population and employment trends in order to determine present and future needs of area and forecast economic growth.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

If you are in a Quantitative Analysis Capstone, use the following as a guide:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9/18 – Present</th>
<th>NYU ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECT IN QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS</th>
<th>New York, NY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Serve on five-person team consisting of NYU Wagner graduate candidates to analyze the effect of cost and quality of college education on individual’s success upon graduation using panel data.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop regression models from restricted use data and conduct statistical analysis using SPSS.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Produce written reports of findings.</td>
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