



The Puck Building, 295 Lafayette Street, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10012

212.998.7474 | wagner.nyu.edu/capstone

# Welcome to Capstone.

Capstone is learning in action. Part of the core curriculum of the Master’s program at the NYU Wagner, it provides students with both a critical learning experience and an opportunity to perform a public service. Over the course of an academic year, students work in teams—either to address challenges and identify opportunities for a client organization or to conduct research on a pressing social question. Ultimately, Capstone contributes not only to your education, but is a university resource for the public good.

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. 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 is an effort to provide all students with a shared base of expectations, information, and resources at the start of Capstone. This Guide includes:

* A list of important phone numbers and other resources
* Capstone Procedures
* Information on the Capstone Expo
* Description of Stakeholder Expectations
* Ethical 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, or the administrators that we’ve listed in the important phone numbers section, should you have any questions.

All our best,

John Gershman

Elizabeth Larsen

Capstone Co-Directors

# CONTACT INFORMATION AND 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.

## Capstone website:

wagner.nyu.edu/capstone/students

## 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 Dynamics Assistance:

Elizabeth Larsen, 212.998.7491, elizabeth.larsen@nyu.edu

## Capstone Reimbursements and Expo Logistics:

Catherine Falzone, 212.992.8701, catherine.falzone@nyu.edu

## Wagner Research Librarian:

Andrew Battista, NYU Libraries, andrew.battista@nyu.edu

* Can assist with research, literature reviews, and data visualization.

## 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](https://library.nyu.edu/departments/data-services/).

* 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.

# CAPSTONE PROCEDURES

## Room Reservations

Capstone teams can [reserve meeting spaces at NYU's Bobst Library online](http://library.nyu.edu/services/study-spaces/reservable-study-spaces). 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

### Travel Costs

If your Capstone client requires travel for fieldwork, 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, and 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).

#### 1. Getting started

First, discuss and agree on travel dates and destinations with your client, team, and instructor.

#### 2. Complete the Capstone Travel Google Form

Submit your dates, destinations, and estimated ticket costs to your faculty member for review via email. Once they have given their approval, have one person from your team fill out the [Capstone Travel Google Form](https://goo.gl/forms/fwIjQAXVA25jwHpY2) (https://goo.gl/forms/fwIjQAXVA25jwHpY2). This form will ask for your names, dates, destination(s), and the estimated figure for total ticket costs. Where prompted in the form, upload a PDF version of the email approval from your instructor.

A note about travel costs:

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.

#### 3. Pay for Your Trip in One of Two Ways:

Wagner provides two options for trip payment that depend on your travel plans:

1. 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.

**OR**

1. 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.

\*Please note that if you choose Option B you will be required to pay upfront for your airfare. In that case, Wagner is only able to reimburse you in an amount up to the price of a ticket to/from NYC.

**Option A: Booking via Egencia**:

* 1. Once you submit your [Google form](https://goo.gl/forms/fwIjQAXVA25jwHpY2), we will create a “Traveler Group” for your team in [Egencia](https://www.nyu.edu/life/travel-and-transportation/nyu-traveler.html) (also available through NYUHome).
	2. Each person on the team will log into Egencia using their NYU NetID and password.
	3. Search for and select an itinerary that falls within your approved budget.
	4. Choose Hannah Atchison as your “approver” and submit for approval.
	5. Hannah will approve or deny your request, based on whether the ticket is a reasonable price for the destination.
	6. You will receive an email stating either that you are free to book your flight or that the itinerary was rejected.
		+ If your itinerary was approved, we strongly suggest booking as soon as possible, as flight prices tend to rise.
		+ If your itinerary was not approved, we will suggest new itineraries and/or provide feedback and follow-up with next steps.
	7. Book your flight through Egencia—Wagner’s account will automatically be charged.

**Option B: Booking Travel Independently and Getting Reimbursed:**

1. Select an itinerary that falls within your approved budget.
2. Book and pay for your flight with your own credit card.
3. Travel to your destination.
4. When you return to NYC, fill out the [Reimbursement Form for Pre-Approved Capstone Supplemental Travel](https://wagner.nyu.edu/files/news/Reimbursement%20for%20Capstone%20Travel%20Expenses%202017-2018.pdf), found on the [Wagner student portal](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/academics/courses/capstone) in the Capstone Documents section. You must include:
	* + All receipts for expenses that are being reimbursed.
		+ All boarding passes and/or train ticket stubs for travel.
		+ 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.
		+ A copy of your itinerary showing flight locations and dates.
		+ For all reimbursements that pertain to foreign currency, include either a printout from a web-based currency conversion program (like [Oanda](https://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/)) to substantiate the rate of exchange to USD, OR your credit card statement showing the conversion rate.
5. Scan the completed forms along with all receipts, boarding passes, proof 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.
6. 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 4-6 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:

* Printing, binding, and preparation of Capstone documents (including materials for Capstone Expo)
* Calling cards or Skype purchased to make long-distance calls on behalf of client
* 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
* Local travel expenses incurred for project-related work.
* 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.
	1. For credit cards, a receipt showing the last 4 digits of the credit card is sufficient.
	2. If the receipt does not show the last 4 digits, include a copy of your credit card statement that clearly shows the charge.
	3. 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, as a back-up, Wagner-branded swag.
	1. Students should send their movie ticket and/or swag requests to wagner.capstone@nyu.edu at least two weeks in advance of the date needed.
	2. 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 [Student Portal of the Wagner website](https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/academics/courses/capstone). Go to Academics, then Courses, then Capstone. All forms are at the bottom of the webpage in the “Capstone Documents” section.

The reimbursement process is as follows:

* Each team member who purchases items using their own credit card must complete their own Reimbursement Form for Capstone Team Expenses (found in the “Capstone Documents” section of the Student Portal).
* Please complete all of the relevant fields in the first sheet, the “Student Expense Reimbursement Form” (you don’t have to fill in the chartfield/account number section).
	+ The “signature of payee” field requires an actual signature.
	+ You must also complete the Itemized Expenses Sheet on the second 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:** Catherine will submit your request via email to FinanceLink. You will receive a check in the mail (can take up to 4 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](https://www.nyu.edu/students/student-information-and-resources/registration-records-and-graduation/graduation-and-diplomas/graduation-information.html) 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 Expo

### Date and Location

Tuesday, May 14, 2019, 5:00pm - 7:30pm (refreshments begin at 6:00pm)
Kimmel Center for University Life
[60 Washington Square South](https://maps.google.com/?q=60+Washington+Square+South&entry=gmail&source=g), 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 will supply poster board and easel).

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.

#### Printing Your Poster

1. Identify a print shop (teams have used Unique Copy Center, FedEx, Staples, and NYU Reprographics, among others).
2. Call or email them to clarify all requirements they have for printing and mounting a poster onto poster board.
3. Confirm with print shop that they are able to print on 30”x40” poster board.
4. Clarify whether you can give them a poster board for printing onto, or whether they require that you buy one from them. (Some print shops will not print on poster boards customers give to them from outside, as some poster board material reacts to the heat created from mounting printed poster onto it. They will only print on their poster boards.)

### 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 2019. 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.

# 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)

## Informant-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.

### Here are 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.

### Here are the four most important concerns and how to address them.

1. Do potential informants understand the project and the data collection process?
	1. 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.
	2. 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?
	1. 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.
	2. 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?
	1. In most projects involving data collection from people, confidentiality is critical. This is how you can safeguard confidentiality:
	2. Make sure you conduct interviews on sensitive topics in places where others will not know who is participating.
	3. 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;
	4. Never attribute quotes or other data to a named individual (that is, saying, “one informant said…” rather than, “Molly Jones said…”)
	5. 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…”).
	6. 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, and 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.
	+ 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:



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

