



NYU

ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE

CAPSTONE

CAPSTONE STUDENT GUIDE

The Puck Building
295 Lafayette Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10012
212.998.7400 | wagner.nyu.edu/capstone
wagner.capstone@nyu.edu

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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
- Team reimbursements
- Writing your project abstracts
- Mutual expectations for Capstone participants (students, faculty, clients, and the school)
- 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

Team dynamics assistance:

Erica Foldy

erica.foldy@nyu.edu

Elizabeth Larsen

elizabeth.larsen@nyu.edu

Team reimbursements:

Christopher Harris

christopher.harris@nyu.edu

Writing Support

Emily Austin

Wagner Writing Center Tutor

ea86@nyu.edu

The Wagner Writing Center offers you several ways to improve your communication skills as outlined on the Writing Center [Google site](#) and Wagner [webpage](#). The Wagner Writing Center's goal is to help you improve your overall writing; the model is to coach, not to edit. The Writing Center offers:

- 1) excellent free skills-based non-credit workshops on writing, research, citations;
- 2) one-off lectures, co-curricular modules, online webinars and how-to guides; and
- 3) one-on-one coaching to help students throughout their writing process from idea generation, to outlining, forming effective arguments, and final draft polish.

Emily Austin is our resident writing tutor extraordinaire who teaches the Professional Writing course and works with students at the Wagner Writing Center. For the past four years, she has been helping Capstone students with their deliverables.

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.

NYU Moses Center for Students with Disabilities

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities](#) (CSD) website and click the "Get Started" button. You can also call or email CSD (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

NYU Wellness Exchange

The [Wellness Exchange](#) is a mental health resource available to all NYU students. Call the 24-hour hotline at (212) 443-9999, chat via the Wellness Exchange app anytime, make an appointment, or stop by during drop-in hours to speak with a certified counselor about any day-to-day challenges or health concerns. You can email them at wellness.exchange@nyu.edu.

Questions related to Capstone of any other nature can be sent to the general Capstone alias at 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 during your fieldwork dates. 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. Travel should not interfere with any courses.
- **Faculty Approval:** Submit your approved travel dates, destination(s), and estimated ticket costs to your faculty member for approval via email.
- **Complete the Capstone Travel Approval Google Form:** Once your faculty have given their written (email) 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 full names, Capstone team, Capstone faculty member, fieldwork dates*, destination(s), method of payment, and an estimated figure** for total ticket costs.*** Where prompted in the form, upload a PDF version of the email approval from your instructor.

*Fieldwork dates are defined as the time you will be working on your Capstone project in the country. If you plan to travel before or after the confirmed fieldwork dates, you will be required to include those later on in the NYU travel safety process. For the Capstone Travel Approval Google Form please submit just your fieldwork dates.

**Estimated figure: 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.

***Total ticket cost that you indicate on this form is not necessarily the same as what you should expect as reimbursement. We reimburse based on the cost of actual tickets purchased. This estimate is merely a guideline.

- **Pay for Your Trip in One of Two Ways**

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

- **Option A:** You can request that Wagner pay for your airfare/train fare using NYU's travel agency, [Egencia](#). This option is only available to those who are traveling to/from a NYC airport (EWR, JFK, or LGA) during fieldwork dates (or a day or two before/after if needed).
- **Option B:** You can purchase your own ticket and submit a request for reimbursement upon your return. If you are traveling to/from an airport other than an NYC airport, you must choose this option (for instance, if you were traveling or returning home for the holidays and traveling to your fieldwork destination from that non-NYC location).
 - **Note:** If you choose to travel from a non-NYC airport, Wagner is only able to reimburse you in an amount up to the price of a ticket to/from NYC. We will benchmark the costs for your air ticket by looking at what it would cost to travel to and from the fieldwork destination during your fieldwork dates in Egencia. If one of your teammates used Egencia, we will benchmark the cost of your ticket based on the teammates ticket cost.

OPTION A: Book via Egencia

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).

In order to purchase tickets through Egencia, follow these steps:

1. Each person on the team will log into Egencia using their NYU NetID and password.
2. Search for and select an itinerary that falls within your approved budget.
3. Choose Hannah Atchison as your "approver" and submit for approval.
4. Hannah will approve or deny your request. Denied requests are often because the ticket cost is unreasonable for the destination or you are traveling outside of your fieldwork dates.
5. You will receive an email from Egencia stating that you are either free to book your flight or that the itinerary was rejected.
 - a. If your itinerary was approved, we strongly suggest booking as soon as possible, as flight prices tend to rise.
 - b. If your itinerary was rejected, we will suggest new itineraries and/or provide feedback and follow-up with next steps.
6. Finish booking your flight through Egencia. NYU Wagner's account will automatically be charged and a confirmation email sent to you and Hannah Atchison.

OPTION B: Book Travel Independently & Get Reimbursed

1. Search online for 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 and keep ALL receipts.

Reimbursement Process for Capstone Travel

This is a two-phase process so please read below carefully.

1. Wagner Approval Process
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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 <mailto:wagner.capstone.reimbursements@nyu.edu>. If you are unable to send your reimbursement electronically, it can be delivered to Christopher Harris at the Puck Building, 295 Lafayette St., 3rd floor, workstation 3007.
2. NYU Submission Process
 - a. Once your reimbursement approval request has been processed, you will receive an email link inviting you to complete reimbursement through Albert. Please refer to the following section on Team Reimbursements (Online Process for Student Payments→Submitting the Reimbursement) for instructions on submitting the complete documentation through Albert.

Team Reimbursements

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

Reimbursable expenses include:

- Local travel expenses incurred for project-related work
 - The least-expensive and lowest-carbon option should be chosen unless there are convenience or safety issues that justify the additional cost and carbon footprint.
- Printing, binding, and preparation of Capstone documents
 - All efforts should be made to use [NYU Reprographics \(Copy Central\)](#) who should bill the Capstone program directly. Please email wagner.capstone.reimbursements@nyu.edu if you have any questions
- Software programs purchased for data analysis or design
 - Software programs are not reimbursable if they or an equivalent is available for free to students. Please consult the list of student-accessible programs [here](#).
- Non-alcoholic refreshments for project-related meetings involving external participants, such as focus groups or client meetings (note that visitors are still not permitted on campus due to COVID safety restrictions as of the writing of this policy).

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. Gift cards are no longer reimbursable as a form of participant compensation for Capstone field research. Instead, students can offer participants in research studies (such as surveys or focus groups) NYU/NYU Wagner-branded swag.

- a. Students should send their 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.

The reimbursement form can be found on the ["When in Capstone" page on the Wagner website](#). Go to Academics → Capstone → When in Capstone.

NOTE: Reimbursement requests must be submitted within 60 days of the purchase. Failure to submit within that timeframe may jeopardize reimbursement.

Online Process for Student Payments

The Reimbursement Process

- Each team member who purchases items or services with their own credit or debit cards 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).
- Compile original receipts for all expenses that will be reimbursed.
 - Scans of 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 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 charge is in a foreign currency, you must use an online currency converter tool to calculate the price into USD **on the date of the transaction**. You can find one such currency converter [here](#). Alternatively, you can include a copy of your credit card statement that shows the charge.
- Please note: **The process noted for reimbursements are for current students only.** If you do not have your reimbursement request submitted, approved, (and picked up, for cash payments only), you will have to register as an external supplier in NYU's procurement system, which can be a lengthy process. If you do not know your exact graduation date, consult the [NYU Graduation Information page](#) for conferral date.

Submitting the Reimbursement

- **Within 60 days of the purchase**, email wagner.capstone.reimbursements@nyu.edu with the completed reimbursement form as well as scans of the receipts that you are submitting for reimbursement.
- Once the receipts and form have been given pre-approval by the reimbursement contact, we will then generate an email to you with a **one-time use link** to the online form through Albert.
- Complete and submit the online form **with the reimbursement form and all receipts that were pre-approved by the reimbursement contact**. If you have trouble viewing the form, please try using a different browser.
- Once submitted, you will receive a confirmation email with your **Payment Request ID**.

Here is a screenshot of the view in Albert:

Student Expense Reimbursement Form

This form is to be used by NYU students only to request reimbursement for university business expenses. NYU will not process requests for expenses that are deemed nonpermissible /nonreimbursable by the University. The following file extensions are permitted .img .jpeg .jpg .pdf .png .tif .bmp in the uploading of receipts, with the maximum file size per receipt set at 1MB. If you are using a mobile phone and are entering the item amount, please zoom out to see the content.

Request Number	158
University ID	
Name	
Description & Business Purpose	<input type="text"/>

Item Detail of Reimbursement

Item Amount	0.00	Item Description
Total Amount		

Add Item

Attachment for Reimbursement

Attached File

Add Attachment

I, the Payee, certify that the charges reported here are correct and that I am not claiming reimbursement from other sources for the same. I understand that the University will deduct all federal, state, and local taxes and report any payments made to me as required by law.

Submit Form

Payment Will Be Issued via Cash, Check, or Direct Deposit

- **Non-cash** payment(s) will be paid to your Bursar Electronic Suite ([eSuite](#)) Direct Deposit account. You will be notified via automated email once your payment request has been approved and issued. [Click here to learn how to update direct deposit information](#).
- If you are not enrolled in direct deposit, you will be paid via check. The check will be mailed to the Mailing Address listed in NYU Albert/SIS. If you have not created a Mailing Address, the check will default to the Permanent Address.
 - **How to Update Your Address**
 - *Directly via your Albert Student Center*
 - OR
 - *Complete the [Change of Student Information Form](#) and submit in person at [StudentLink](#) or email the form to registrar@nyu.edu*
 - *For more info, please see [NYU's Change of Information page](#)*

- You have the option of picking up a cash reimbursement if the total amount of your request is **\$300 or less**. You must click/select the cash option button when completing the online registration. Please note when picking up cash, you will be **required to bring in printed copies of your approval confirmation that is emailed to you as well as all receipts, and a copy of your ID**. For online credit card purchases, include a printout of the confirmation email.
 - For current information with updated hours and locations for cash pickup, please visit the [Office of the Bursar website](#).

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

Capstone Abstract Guidelines

As part of the Capstone Expo every spring, the Capstone program team prepares a Capstone Booklet comprising abstracts that describe the year's projects. Capstone abstracts are featured in the annual Wagner Capstone booklet. The abstracts not only display the illustrious work carried out by you and your peers, but also aid in recruiting clients for future projects.

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. Only one member per team needs to submit the abstract by the designated deadline, which will be communicated sometime at the beginning of the spring semester. 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.

See the [2020-21 Capstone Booklet](#) for further guidance.

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, antiamebic, 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-Based Abstract Guidelines

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

- 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)

- Description of the final deliverable(s) [report, analysis, recommendation, etc.] the students will provide to the client (1 sentence)

**Any abstracts that fail to include ALL these elements will be returned with a resubmission request.*

Sample Client Abstracts

The following examples effectively illustrate these required abstract components:

Example 1 (PNP)

FUTURES AND OPTIONS

CREATING AN EQUITY-FOCUSED TALENT STRATEGY

Futures and Options is a NYC-based youth workforce development nonprofit organization that aims to empower underserved youth by providing paid internship opportunities to high school students. Since 1995, Futures and Options has worked with over 7,000 students and 500 businesses. The organization has expanded to provide additional programming that includes career essentials and college counseling. The organization partnered with a team to create a strategic plan that reduces employee turnover and equitably recruits, retains, and develops employee talent. The team conducted market research and an environmental scan on current competitors, mapped the trajectory of former employees, researched talent retention best practices, developed and implemented a survey, and conducted interviews with current employees. Using this data, the team produced a report outlining recommendations for strengthening Futures and Options' talent pipeline by creating consistent and transparent organizational processes.

Example 2 (HPAM)

NEW YORK CITY HEALTH AND HOSPITALS – OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

IMPROVING ACCESS AND COMMUNICATION FOR PATIENTS WITH DISABILITIES

New York City Health and Hospitals (H+H) is the largest public health delivery system in America, providing services to over one million patients annually. In New York City, nearly 189,000 individuals experience deafness, 200,000 have vision difficulties, and 335,000 have cognitive difficulties. Given the diverse population that H+H serves, its Office of Diversity and Inclusion enlisted the Capstone team to identify and implement best practices to improve the quality and access of care for patients with disabilities. The team interviewed clinicians and advocacy groups, created a comprehensive literature review, worked closely with the Mayor's Office for Patients with Disabilities to design an advocate listening session, and rolled out surveys to H+H providers and patient advocates. The team incorporated its findings—including patient experience and best practices—into a toolkit encompassing a glossary and proper etiquette guide for H+H providers' use.

Example 3 (MUP)

PORT AUTHORITY OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

EVALUATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE-COUNTING TECHNOLOGIES

Port Authority Trans-Hudson (PATH), a subsidiary of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, is a heavy rail rapid transit system that serves commuters in Hoboken, Newark, Jersey City, and Manhattan. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and dramatic declines in ridership, PATH officials sought to address passenger concerns around safety, health, and overcrowding by engaging a team to evaluate the feasibility and procurement of a Car Density Information System (CDIS). Since a CDIS requires new hardware to monitor congestion on each train car and new software to relay information to passengers in real time, the team conducted extensive research and engaged with potential vendors and relevant stakeholders to ascertain the most vital criteria for assessing a range of technological solutions. Based on its findings, the team developed a robust scorecard and comprehensive report with recommendations to guide PATH's procurement process of people counting solutions and other technologies necessary for PATH's desired system improvements.

Example 4 (International)

INTERNATIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

ENSURING SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIAL WATER PRACTICES IN ACCRA, GHANA

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) supports sustainable development through financial and technical assistance to local governments in the world's poorest countries. UNCDF is launching a new International Municipal Investment Fund (IMIF) that aims to support local governments in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. One of the areas UNCDF seeks to invest in is a solution for sustainable plastic waste management. As part of this new initiative, the UNCDF enlisted the Capstone team to research successful plastic waste management models and identify potential areas for high-impact investments. The team conducted fieldwork in Accra, Ghana, where it interviewed various stakeholders invested in the country's plastic waste management. An unfinished recycling plant located in the Ada East District of southeastern Ghana emerged as an ideal target of financial support for UNCDF. The team presented their research findings in a final paper at the UNCDF headquarters in New York and the country office in Ghana.

Advanced Projects in 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 Client Abstracts

The following examples effectively illustrate these required abstract components:

Example 1 (Research Capstone)

MINIMUM WAGE POLICY AND ALTERNATIVE FINANCIAL SERVICES IN THE UNITED STATES

ANALYSIS OF STATE MINIMUM WAGES CORRELATED TO FINANCIAL PRODUCTS USED BY LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

Several states in recent years have instituted minimum wage policies to address a stagnant federal minimum wage. Historically, exclusions from mainstream banking, racially discriminatory lending policies, and financial industry deregulation have contributed to communities of color and low-income workers' withdrawal from mainstream banking, increasing the use of alternative financial services (AFS) such as check cashers and payday lenders. The Capstone team explored the relationship between state-level minimum wage policy changes and the use of AFS among low-income Americans, specifically unbanked and underbanked households (those without a bank account, and those who use AFS, respectively). Using publicly available data, the team conducted multiple regression analyses to test whether state-level minimum wage increases raise the earnings of low-wage workers, resulting in a decrease in household utilization of AFS and a reduction in the number of unbanked individuals. The final report details the study's findings and conclusions, providing a preliminary assessment of relevant policy implications for financial services and minimum wage.

Example 2 (Team-Generated)

DRIVEHER

ADDRESSING HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR WOMEN IN PUNJAB, INDIA

In Punjab, current employment rates for women are historically low, hovering at around 14 percent, while overall rates for men are approximately 55 percent. Factors that contribute to this employment gap include restrictive cultural norms, limited and unsafe transportation options, and a lack of access to education and skills development for women. To address this gap, the team conducted multiple interviews with key stakeholders including nonprofits, policymakers, and potential customers. The team discovered a strong demand for more women rideshare drivers, as it makes women passengers feel safer. To bridge the gender and skills gap in the transportation industry, the team created DriveHer, a social enterprise that aims to train the next generation of women drivers and help them become economically independent. DriveHer also plans to connect women drivers with ridesharing companies to create a seamless pipeline of qualified drivers for the growing rideshare market in India, while also making ridesharing a safer transportation option for women.

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!

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 of 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.

Student Concerns Regarding Self and Team

1. If students express concerns about their own mental health or well-being, faculty should encourage them to go to [NYU's Counseling and Wellness Center](#) or connect with a counselor via the [Wellness Exchange](#) by phone, chat, or email.
2. Students with disabilities may request academic accommodations from the NYU [Moses Center](#): Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) Telephone: 212-998-4980 ; Website: www.nyu.edu/csd ; Email: mosescsd@nyu.edu
3. If a student says they want to be on a different student team for any reason—including project preference, interpersonal relationships on the team, or concerns about safety—or they wish to undertake an independent project in lieu of a team project, faculty should direct them to the Capstone Co-Directors (John, Elizabeth and Erica) for consideration and provide the Co-Directors background information about the student and team.
4. Students may not switch teams or undertake an independent project in lieu of a team project for the reason that they are not interested in their current project or feel it will not serve their career goals.
5. Students who want to switch teams or undertake an independent project because of concerns regarding interpersonal relationships within the team or concerns about safety must have their request evaluated by the Capstone Co-Directors.
6. In making their decision, the Co-Directors will take all relevant factors into account, including input from the Capstone faculty member and any academic accommodations

advised by the Moses Center. The final decision about whether a student is allowed to switch teams or do their own project rests entirely with the Capstone Co-Directors.

7. Students must abide by the Academic Code in undertaking all Capstone-related activities. Any student conduct violations will be addressed by the Co-Directors and may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, removal of the offending student from a Capstone team.

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.
 - Make sure you determine with the client what should happen to these materials after the project is completed.

Resources for Proper Citation

All students are expected to pursue and meet the highest standards of academic excellence by adhering to the norms of a serious intellectual community. This includes the proper citation of ideas, data, and published work of others. The following resources serve as a guide to the rules or styles of citation. These references are universally recognized as acceptable by scholars and demonstrate how you should handle the issue of proper citation of material. All are available at the NYU Library or NYU Bookstores. Below are links to the guides of each style of acceptable citations.

- APA: <https://guides.nyu.edu/citations/apa>
- MLA: <https://style.mla.org/>
- Chicago: <https://guides.nyu.edu/citations/chicago>
- AMA: <https://guides.nyu.edu/citations/ama>

In addition to these manuals, below are some websites to help you learn about appropriate citations and writing research papers:

- [“Preventing Plagiarism,”](#) NYU Libraries
- [“Principles Regarding Academic Integrity,”](#) Northwestern University
- [“Sources and Citations,”](#) Dartmouth College

These are not the only ethics considerations in Capstone, 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.

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. Let's talk! Misunderstandings can easily occur over email or text and it can be challenging and time-consuming to fix them. Make sure to build in synchronous meeting time for difficult conversations and significant decision making.
9. Make charitable assumptions. Believe in the best in others. Presume innocence instead of guilt.
10. Take care of yourselves: Schedule fun time, start meetings with personal check-ins. (At the Olympics, team members high-five or find personalized ways to support each other—what is your team's equivalent?)

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:

9/22 – Present **NEW YORK CITIZENS HOUSING AND PLANNING COUNCIL** New York, NY

- 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
- Analyze current urban design elements, land use, and housing conditions
- Conduct demographic analysis, including review of population and employment trends in order to determine present and future needs of area and forecast economic growth

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

9/22 – Present **NYU ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECT IN QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS (Researcher)** New York, NY

- 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
- develop regression models from restricted use data and conduct statistical analysis using SPSS
- Produce written reports of findings