Module Study Guide

Academic Year 2021–2022

Capstone Project

Bachelor in Psychology

Level: 6

Credits: 20 ECTS / 40 UK credits

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1 Module overview

1.1 Introduction

Welcome to the Capstone Project module. This is a year-long Level 6 core module, running across both semesters. A Capstone Project is an extended piece of research work (around 10,000 words) on a specific topic of your choice related to your Bachelor Programme.

In this module, you will work in close collaboration with the module leader and with your specific supervisor, who will guide you through the process of applying your skills and knowledge to researching a specific topic in an area of your interest within the field of Psychology. In doing so, you will have regular meetings with your specific supervisor and with the module leader when needed, who will provide you with support while advancing on your work and elaborating the formative and summative assessments that you will engage in throughout the academic year.

1.2 Module summary content and aims

Through the elaboration of your Capstone Project, you will be assessed on your capacity to select and define a topic for research, to articulate a coherent plan for researching this topic through the selection of a method, to gather the necessary data, to analyse those data and to discuss your findings in a way which satisfactorily addresses the set research question.

Thus, this module aims to:

- Support you in gaining research experience in developing a complete research project in the chosen field, including the definition of a research question, the critical review of appropriate literature to frame and justify such question, the choice of data collection and analysis techniques to collect empirical data, the interpretation and discussion of findings and the elaboration of a conclusion.

- Develop your ability to independently apply knowledge and competences related to research experience in an ethical and professional manner, with sensitivity, understanding, and appreciation of the research participants' differences.

Your Capstone Project should begin with a brief explanation of the research topic chosen and the research question to be addressed. This question has to be specific in its scope and feasible to address considering all the possible constraints (time, access to populations, resources, etc.). Likewise, the theoretical framework and the methodological approach have to be clearly defined. Hereafter, a report of your findings, a discussion of the findings and a conclusion summarising your own response to the question(s) raised have to be elaborated.

When you have identified your field of interest and a supervisor has been chosen, you will meet with your supervisor to agree on a particular topic and to arrange a pattern of regular meetings. The supervisor will advise you in the choice of topic, facilitate bibliographic guidance, provide written feedback on written drafts of parts or the whole of the Capstone Project and discuss any issues that might raise in the process.

The present Module Study Guide gathers general information about the module structure, the formative and summative assessments that you will engage in throughout the period when you will be elaborating your Capstone Project, and a selection of learning materials. Likewise, it provides you with specificities regarding the 'rules' that govern the way in which the formal written document that you will submit in the final stage of your Capstone Project will be presented (i.e., structure, sections, formal standards).

Timeline for the elaboration of the Capstone Project

Throughout the whole academic year, you will be having regular meetings with you supervisor and with the module leader if suitable. Hereafter there is a timeline including the key deadlines/milestones that you should accomplish in the elaboration of your Capstone Project.

Fall Semester

Weeks 1 – 3
- Initial meetings with the module leader and choice of your Capstone Project supervisor

Week 3 (Friday 22nd October 2021 at 18.00)
- Formative Assessment 1: Submission of Capstone Project's brief

Week 5 (Friday 5th November 2021 at 18.00)
- Formative Assessment 2: Submission of Draft 1 of the *Theoretical Framework and Literature Review* section of the Capstone Project Proposal

Week 7 (Friday 19th November 2021 at 18.00)
- Formative Assessment 3: Submission of Draft 2 of the *Theoretical Framework and Literature Review* section of the Capstone Project Proposal

Week 9 (Friday 3rd December 2021 at 18.00)
- Formative Assessment 4: Submission of Draft of the *Methodology* and the *Timeline* sections of the Capstone Project Proposal

Week 11 (specific timing to be confirmed at a later date)
- Formative Assessment 5: Delivery of oral presentation of the ongoing work

Week 13 (Monday 10th January 2022 at 18.00)
- Formative Assessment 6: Submission of Draft of the complete Capstone Project Proposal

Week 14 (Friday 21st January 2022 at 18.00)
- **Summative Assessment 1 (20% mark): Submission of Capstone Project Proposal**

Spring Semester

Week 3 (Friday 4th March 2022 at 18.00)
- Formative Assessment 1: Submission of Draft of the *Results/Findings* section of the Capstone Project

Week 6 (Friday 25th March 2022 at 18.00)
- Formative Assessment 2: Submission of Draft of the *Discussion* section of the Capstone Project

Week 8 (Friday 8th April 2022 at 18.00)
- Formative Assessment 3: Submission of Draft of the *Conclusions* section of the Capstone Project

Week 10 (specific timing to be confirmed at a later date)
- **Summative Assessment 2 (20% mark): Delivery of oral presentation of the ongoing work**

Week 12 (Friday 13th May 2021 at 18.00)
- Formative Assessment 4: Submission of Draft of the complete Capstone Project

Week 14 (Friday 27th May 2022 at 18.00)
- **Summative Assessment 3 (60% mark): Submission of Capstone Project**

1.3 Learning outcomes to be assessed

At the end of the module the student will be able to:

LO1. Develop a thorough understanding of the chosen research topic, including familiarity with the current debates and the ability to identify gaps of knowledge (Summative Assessments 1, 2 and 3).

LO2. Develop the ability to produce a clear and consistent research-based piece of work, including: the ability to produce a research design and put it into practice through the collection and critically interpretation of data; the ability to discuss the research findings at the light of previous literature and state conclusions, identifying limitations and possible future research lines (Summative Assessments 1, 2 and 3).

LO3. Develop the competence to use a holistic view to critically, independently, and creatively formulate and deal with complex issues (Summative Assessments 1, 2 and 3).

LO4. Recognise the importance of planning and preparation required to undertake a research project (Summative Assessments 1, 2 and 3).

LO5. Demonstrate the ability to clearly and effectively communicate knowledge in a specified written, verbal, or visual form, adapting to the target audience (Summative Assessments 1, 2 and 3).

LO6. Demonstrate the ability to locate reliable academic sources and present them in accordance with Harvard Referencing system (Summative Assessments 1, 2 and 3).

1.4 Indicative Contact Hours

Teaching Contact Hours	112 hours
Independent Study Hours	288 hours
Total Learning Hours	400 hours

1.5 Summative assessment grid

Type of Assessment	Word Count or equivalent	Threshold (if Professional Body-PSRB applies)	Weighting	Pass Mark	Indicative Submission week	Method of Submission & Date of Feedback (refer to NEOlms)
Written Assignment Capstone Project Proposal	3000 words (+/-10%), excluding references and appendices	n/a	20%	40	Week 14 - Fall Semester Friday 21st January 2022 at 18.00	Via NEOlms & 10 working days after submission
Oral Assignment Oral presentation of ongoing work	15 minutes (plus 5 minutes for Questions and Answers)	n/a	20%	40	Week 10 - Spring Semester (date and time TBC)	Oral Presentation & 10 working days after delivery
Written Assignment Capstone Project	10000 words (+/-10%), excluding references and appendices	n/a	60%	40	Week 14 - Spring Semester Friday 27th May 2022 at 18.00	Via NEOlms plus hard copy & 10 working days after submission

1.6 Assessment brief including criteria mapped to learning outcomes

Assessment 1: Capstone Project Proposal (20% of final mark)

The Capstone Project Proposal will be similar to what is widely known as a Research Proposal. A Research Proposal is a written document that describes a future research project, which on this occasion will be your Capstone Project.

Your Capstone Project Proposal will be 3000 (+/- 10%) words long, not including references, and will include the following sections: (*1) Introduction, (2) Theoretical Framework and Literature Review, (3) Methodology, (4) Time plan* and *(5) Bibliography and References.*

For further specifications regarding the structure and the content of your Capstone Project Proposal, please see the Appendix A below.

For specifications regarding the format of your Capstone Project Proposal, please see the Appendix B below.

You will submit your Capstone Project Proposal through NEOlms by the end of Week 14 in the Fall Semester: on Friday 21st January 2022 at 18.00

The elaboration of your Capstone Project Proposal will be supported by a series of formative assessments throughout the Fall Semester, as outlined below in a step-by-step guide.

Step-by-step guide for the elaboration of the Capstone Project Proposal (Summative Assessment 1), with formative assessments throughout

Initial meetings with the module leader and choice of your Capstone Project supervisor

During the first three weeks of the semester, you will have a weekly meeting with the module leader of the Capstone Project in order to be provided with general information about the structure and content of the Capstone Project module, and to discuss potential topics of your interest for you to base your Capstone Project on. Depending on the specific area of your chosen topic (e.g., Educational Psychology, Social Psychology, Work Psychology, etc.), you will select and start to be in contact with a specific Capstone Project supervisor. Your supervisor, together with the module leader whenever needed, will guide you through the elaboration of your Capstone Project.

Formative Assessment 1: Capstone Project's Brief

By the end of Week 3 in the Fall Semester, you will submit a written Project Brief through NEOlms. Within this Capstone Project Brief, you will include a general description of the chosen research topic, will formulate the tentative research question, and will sketch some ideas of your potential data collection plan to answer the research question.

Your supervisor will provide formative feedback on the referred submission in Week 4.

Formative Assessment 2: Draft 1 of the *Theoretical Framework and Literature Review* section of the Capstone Project Proposal

By the end of Week 5 in the Fall Semester, you will submit a first written draft of the *Theoretical Framework and Literature review* section of your Capstone Project Proposal through NEOlms. Please resort to the Appendix A for more detail on the expected content of the referred section.

Your supervisor will provide formative feedback on the referred submission in Week 6.

Formative Assessment 3: Draft 2 of the *Theoretical Framework and Literature Review* section of the Capstone Project Proposal

By the end of Week 7 in the Fall Semester, you will submit a second written draft of the *Theoretical Framework and Literature review* section of your Capstone Project Proposal through NEOlms. Please resort to the Appendix A for more detail on the expected content of the referred section.

Your supervisor will provide formative feedback on the referred submission in Week 8.

Formative Assessment 4: Draft of the *Methodology* and the *Timeline* sections of the Capstone Project Proposal

By the end of Week 9 in the Fall Semester, you will submit a written draft of the *Methodology* and *Timeline* sections of your Capstone Project Proposal. Please resort to the Appendix A for more detail on the expected content of the referred sections.

Your supervisor will provide formative feedback on the referred submission in Week 10.

Formative Assessment 5: Oral presentation of your ongoing work

In Week 11 in the Fall Semester (specific timing to be confirmed at a later date), you will deliver a 15-minute oral presentation about the ongoing work on your Capstone Project Proposal.

The oral presentation, which will be supported by any visual aid (e.g., Power Point presentation, or presentation in any other software, such as *Prezi*, *Genially* or *Canva*) will include your work so far on the following sections: *(1) Introduction, (2) Theoretical Framework and Literature Review, (3) Methodology, (4) Time plan* and *(5) Bibliography and References.*

This oral presentation will provide you with the opportunity to practice your presentation skills and get feedback on the progress of your Capstone Project Proposal from the supervision team and your peers. This feedback will be helpful in preparation for the draft of your Capstone Project Proposal, that you will submit by the end of Week 12 in the Fall Semester.

Formative Assessment 6: Draft of the complete Capstone Project Proposal

At the beginning of Week 13 in the Fall Semester, just after Winter Holidays, you will submit a written draft of your complete Capstone Project Proposal through NEOlms.

Your supervisor will provide formative feedback on your submission by the end of Week 13 in the Fall Semester. This feedback will be helpful in preparation for the final submission of your Capstone Project Proposal, which you will submit by the end of Week 14 – Fall semester.

Summative Assessment 1 (20% of final mark): Capstone Project Proposal

By the end of Week 14 in the Fall Semester, you will submit your Capstone Project Proposal through NEOlms. This submission will be subject of summative assessment (20% of your final mark on the Capstone Project module).

Assessment criteria for Assessment 1 (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5 and LO6 will be assessed)

This assessment will be marked according to the following criteria:

- ❖ **Knowledge and understanding I (20%).** The student is able to demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the main elements of a research proposal, as indicated in the guidelines.
- ❖ **Knowledge and understanding II (20%).** The student is able to demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of selected topic object of the Capstone Project.
- ❖ **Cognitive skills (20%).** The student is able to demonstrate knowledge in a coherent and appropriate structure and organization, where the main points are developed logically.
- ❖ **Academic skills I (20%).** The referenced sources are drawn from a wide range of reliable academic sources.
- ❖ **Academic skills II (5%).** The referenced sources are presented in accordance with Harvard Referencing system.
- ❖ **Communication skills (15%).** The student is able to communicate ideas fluently in written form and using an appropriate style of writing. This written presentation element requires students to be able to present an assignment that is correct in terms of spelling, grammar, and paragraphing.

Appendix A

Specifications for the Capstone Project Proposal

The structure and the content of the Capstone Project Proposal should include:

Title

The title of your Capstone Project Proposal should be succinct and descriptive. This title is preliminary, i.e., your final Capstone Project can have another title.

1. **Introduction**

   The Introduction should include the following issues:

   - Background of the research topic. Description of a brief frame of reference for the chosen research topic, including a general description of your research topic, a discussion of the significance of such a topic in the field, and reference to key debates / perspectives that are relevant to study.
   - Research question. Clear and concise formulation of the research question, whose scope has to be narrowed as to make the implementation of the planned research feasible considering the available time frame and the resources. The research question should be framed within the previous literature and should usually arise from a gap in such literature.
   - If hypotheses are appropriate for the type of research to be developed, they should be also stated on this section, along with a rationale.
   - Rationale and significance of the research. Explanation of why the research question is relevant to be addressed and how it will potentially contribute to existing knowledge in the field (refining, revising, or extending it).

2. **Theoretical Framework and Literature Review**

   After you have identified your research question, you have to determine what theories and ideas exist in relation to your topic. By presenting this information, you 'frame' your research and show that you are knowledgeable about key existing concepts and theories.

   The definitions and models that you select also give your research direction, as you will continue to build on these choices in different stages of your Capstone Project. The theoretical framework also provides scientific justification for your investigation: it shows that your research is not just coming "out of the blue," but that it is grounded in scientific theory.

   Furthermore, it should relate the existing studies to your research, and it also allows you to show the readers what is new about your research (for instance, you may address identified gaps in knowledge in the literature or whether your research adds new knowledge to existing knowledge).

   For further detail, the literature review critically reviews key issues relevant to the research topic, drawing on references to academic literature. It presents a logical, detailed and coherent picture of what literature states about the research topic. From this review, you identify a gap in knowledge and raise question(s) about your topic which requires collection of new data to provide answers to these questions and/or fill the research gap.

   The literature review serves several important functions: ensures that you are not "reinventing the wheel"; gives credits to those who have laid the groundwork for your research; demonstrates your knowledge of the research problem; demonstrates your understanding of the theoretical and research issues related to your research question; shows your ability to

critically evaluate relevant literature information; indicates your ability to integrate and synthesize the existing literature; convinces your reader that your proposed research will make a significant and substantial contribution to the literature.

3. Methodology

In this section, you should provide a full description of your research paradigm and design, as well as the specific research methods and procedures that you are going to use in order to answer your research question. You should also explain the limitations of your research and the ethical considerations to be acknowledged. For more detail, below there is a list of the sub-sections to include.

- Research epistemology (i.e., positivist, interpretative, critical)
- Research design (e.g., experiment, ethnography)
- Research methods (i.e., quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods)
- Unit of analysis
  - If people (field work research, collection of empirical data): include the age, gender, and other relevant characteristics, and explain why and how you have selected this group of people to study (sampling), referring to your research question.
  - If documents or other data sources (library-based research, revision of previous literature): describe them and explain why you have selected them and how you have selected them (sampling), referring to your research question.
- Data collection instrument(s). Description of the method(s) and the type of data to be collected (e.g., interview, observation, questionnaire…) and explanation on why it/they is/are suitable for your research.
- Data analysis techniques. Description of how you are going to figure out what the collected data mean, including any tools that will be used to assist with the analysis. It is key to indicate how analysing the data in this way will answer your research question.
- Limitations of the research. Explanation of the limitations of your research and its design in terms of the reliability and applicability of the results.
- Ethical considerations. They might include: the rights of those being researched (e.g., confidentiality, preservation of anonymity, use of informed consent), the researcher's responsibility, and how data will be collected, stored, and disposed of.

4. Time plan

It will include an outline of the different tasks involved in carrying out your research and the time estimated for each task (for example, time allocation for the elaboration of a detailed literature review, period for data collection, etc.). The elaboration of the timeline is intended to determine the scope of the research and notice if it is achievable within the given timeframe (the Capstone Project is expected to be submitted by the end of Week 14 in Spring Semester).

References & Bibliography

References: List any academic literature (books, book chapters, journal articles, etc.) cited in your Capstone Project Proposal.

Bibliography: List any academic publications which are relevant to your research topic and which might be used in the elaboration of your Capstone Project, but which have not been not yet cited.

In both cases, you should use Harvard Referencing system (guidelines are available in NEOlms).

Appendices
They can be a place for questionnaires and the like. Separate appendices are to be used for different sets of detailed information that would not be appropriate to include in the main text.

Appendix B

General Guidelines on the format of your Capstone Project Proposal

1. **Style**

    a) Clear language should be used.

    b) When an ordinary word is used in a technical or special sense, explain its meaning briefly.

    c) A general rule for numbers in the body of the text is that, up to ten, they are expressed in words (e.g., one, six instead of 1, 6) and above ten in figures (e.g.,124, 1,762). However, 'one hundred', 'five thousand', 'ten million' etc are expressed in words.

    d) Only recognised abbreviations should be used, and each should be given in brackets, on the first occasion, e.g., Department of the Environment (DOE). You may wish to provide a separate list of abbreviations.

    e) If a quotation from any source is included, it must be an exact copy of the original text and quotation marks must indicate exactly where the quotation begins and ends. At the end of the quotation, the author, date of publication and page reference must be given to ensure that you do not commit plagiarism.

2. **Pagination**

    All pages should be numbered consecutively throughout the proposal.

3. **Section Heading**

    The use of headings in each section and sub-section is required.

4. **Tables and figures**

    They should be placed in the text and their presence indicated (e.g., "see Table 3"). They should be numbered and given an accurate and descriptive title. All components should be carefully labelled, for example, axes given titles, frequencies indicated to be frequencies and so forth.

5. **Referencing**

    Harvard Referencing system must be used consistently, both when citing the sources within the text and in the list of references at the end. For further information, please find the guideline for referencing on NEOlms under the Section Library and within the page for the Capstone Project itself.

6. **Appendices**

    They should be numbered (Appendix 1, Appendix 2, etc.) and referred to in the main text. For example, you may refer to the appropriate appendix by putting in brackets (see Appendix 5). They should be clear, carefully structured and organized.

Assessment 2: Oral presentation of ongoing work on Capstone Project (20% of final mark)

In Week 10 in the Spring semester, you will be required to present orally the ongoing work on your Capstone Project, which will be close to be completed.

You will deliver a 15-minute presentation to the supervision team and your peers. The presentation should provide your audience a clear picture of your Capstone Project. You are required to create a visual aid to support your presentation (e.g., Power Point presentation, or presentation in any other software, such as *Prezi*, *Genially* or *Canva*).

The presentation will include the following elements: (1) Cover page: Capstone Project title and your name, (2) An overview or outline of your presentation, (3) Introduction, (4) Theoretical framework and literature review, (5) Methodology, (6) Results/Findings, (7) Discussion, (8) Conclusions and Implications.

Following your oral presentation, there will be a 5-minute mandatory Questions & Answers section. The followings are some tips for answering the questions:
- Do not rush to any answers. It is perfectly acceptable to think for a couple of seconds.
- Try to be concise and to the point and do not give superficial answers, but at the same time, do not go into unnecessary detail.
- Do not be defensive and be confident without being cocky. If the audience is able to point out some real flaws or weaknesses in your work, accept their criticisms with gratitude since it will be beneficial for your dissertation.

The oral presentation will provide you with the opportunity to practice your presentation skills and get valuable feedback on both your presentation skills and the progress of your almost completed Capstone Project Proposal from the supervision team and your peers. This feedback will be helpful in preparation for the draft of your complete Capstone Project Proposal, which you will submit by the end of Week 11 in the Spring Semester.

The presentation will be subject of summative assessment (20% of your final mark).

Assessment criteria for Assessment 2 (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5 and LO6 will be assessed)

This assessment will be marked according to the following criteria:

- ❖ **Knowledge and understanding I (20%).** The student is able to demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the main elements of a research proposal, as indicated in the guidelines.
- ❖ **Knowledge and understanding II (20%).** The student is able to demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of selected topic object of the Capstone Project.
- ❖ **Cognitive skills (15%).** The student is able to demonstrate knowledge in a coherent and appropriate structure and organization, where the main points are developed logically.
- ❖ **Academic skills I (10%).** The referenced sources are drawn from a wide range of reliable academic sources.
- ❖ **Academic skills II (5%).** The referenced sources are presented in accordance with Harvard Referencing system.
- ❖ **Communication skills I (15%).** The student is able to use a presentation software in order to organize and communicate information successfully in its clarity, format and stylistic appropriateness.
- ❖ **Communication skills II (15%).** The student is able to communicate ideas fluently and effectively in oral form.

Assessment 3: Capstone Project (60% of final mark)

The Capstone Project is an extended piece of research work on a specific topic of your choice related to your Bachelor Programme.

Your Capstone Project will be 10000 (+/- 10%) words long, not including references, and will include the following sections: *Title page; Acknowledgements; Abstract; List of contents; List of tables and figures; (1) Introduction; (2) Theoretical Framework and Literature review; (3) Methodology; (4) Results / Findings; (5) Discussion; (6) Conclusions; References; Appendices.*

For further specifications regarding the structure and the content of your Capstone Project, please see the Appendix C below.

For specifications regarding the format of your Capstone Project, please see the Appendix D below.

You will submit your Capstone Project through NEOlms by the end of Week 14 in the Spring Semester: on Friday 27th May 2022 at 18.00.

The elaboration of your Capstone Project will be supported by a series of formative assessments throughout the Spring Semester, as outlined below in a step-by-step guide.

Step-by-step guide for the elaboration of the Capstone Project (Summative Assessment 2), with formative assessments throughout

Formative Assessment 1: Draft of the *Results/Findings* section of your Capstone Project

By the end of Week 3 in the Spring Semester, you will have completed your data collection, as it was outlined in your Capstone Project Proposal (submitted by the end of the Fall Semester). By this time, you will submit a written draft of the *Results/Findings* sections of your Capstone Project. Please resort to the Appendix C for more detail on the expected content of the referred section.

Your supervisor will provide formative feedback on the referred submission in Week 5.

Formative Assessment 2: Draft of the *Discussion* section of your Capstone Project

By the end of Week 6 in the Spring Semester, you will submit a written draft of the *Discussion* section of your Capstone Project Proposal. Please resort to the Appendix C for more detail on the expected content of the referred section.

Your supervisor will provide formative feedback on the referred submission in Week 9.

Formative Assessment 3: Draft of the *Conclusions* section of your Capstone Project

By the end of Week 8 in the Spring Semester, you will submit a written draft of the *Conclusions* section of your Capstone Project Proposal. Please resort to the Appendix C for more detail on the expected content of the referred section.

Your supervisor will provide formative feedback on the referred submission in Week 11.

Formative Assessment 4: Draft of the complete Capstone Project

By the end of Week 12 in the Spring Semester, you will submit a written draft of your complete Capstone Project through NEOlms.

Your supervisor will provide formative feedback on your submission by the end of Week 12. This feedback will be helpful in preparation for the final submission of your Capstone Project, which you will submit by the end of Week 13 – Spring semester.

Summative Assessment 2 (60% of final mark): Capstone Project

By the end of Week 14 in the Spring Semester, you will submit your Capstone Project through NEOlms. This submission will be subject of summative assessment (60% of your final mark on the Capstone Project module).

Assessment criteria for Assessment 3 (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4, LO5 and LO6 will be assessed)

The Capstone Project will be marked taking into consideration the various sections that compose it in the following way:

- ❖ Introduction (10%)
- ❖ Theoretical Framework and Literature Review (20%)
- ❖ Methodology (25%)
- ❖ Results and discussion (25%)
- ❖ Conclusion   (10%)
- ❖ Overall coherence and presentation (10%)

For further detail on the specific areas that will be taken into consideration when evaluation every of the above referred sections, please refer to the corresponding Marking Grid.

For guidance on online submission of assignments, including how to submit and how to access online feedback, please refer to the MIUC NEOlms student guideline.

Appendix C

Specifications for the Capstone Project

The structure and the content of the Capstone Project should include:

Title Page

The following information should be presented in this order with all text centred: (a)The title and subtitle, if any; (b) Student name and student number; (c) *Marbella International University Centre*; (d) The month and year of submission.

Acknowledgements

It is not necessary to acknowledge members of staff unless you wish to do so. However, assistance from individuals and organisations outside the university should be acknowledged.

Abstract

A summary of the Capstone Project, of no more than two hundred words, is required. This should briefly state the main aims, findings, and conclusions.

List of Contents

This should list in sequence, with page numbers, all sections of the Capstone Project. If you are in any doubt as to how to do this look at the Contents page in any textbook. Word can generate a Contents page for you.

List of Tables and Figures

The lists of tables and figures (diagrams, graphs, illustrations) should follow the list of contents and each have their own numbering sequence.

1. **Introduction**

    The Introduction should include the following issues:

    - Background of the research topic. Description of a brief frame of reference for the chosen research topic, including a general description of your research topic, a discussion of the significance of such a topic in the field, and reference to key debates / perspectives that are relevant to study.
    - Research question. Clear and concise formulation of the research question, whose scope has to be narrowed as to make the implementation of the planned research feasible considering the available time frame and the resources. The research question should be framed within the previous literature and should usually arise from a gap in such literature.
    - If hypotheses are appropriate for the type of research to be developed, they should be also stated on this section, along with a rationale.
    - Rationale and significance of the research. Explanation of why the research question is relevant to be addressed and how it will potentially contribute to existing knowledge in the field (refining, revising, or extending it).

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

After you have identified your research question, you have to determine what theories and ideas exist in relation to your topic. By presenting this information, you 'frame' your research and show that you are knowledgeable about key existing concepts and theories.

The definitions and models that you select also give your research direction, as you will continue to build on these choices in different stages of your Capstone Project. The theoretical framework also provides scientific justification for your investigation: it shows that your research is not just coming "out of the blue," but that it is grounded in scientific theory.

Furthermore, it should relate the existing studies to your research, and it also allows you to show the readers what is new about your research (for instance, you may address identified gaps in knowledge in the literature or whether your research adds new knowledge to existing knowledge).

For further detail, the literature review critically reviews key issues relevant to the research topic, drawing on references to academic literature. It presents a logical, detailed and coherent picture of what literature states about the research topic. From this review, you identify a gap in knowledge and raise question(s) about your topic which requires collection of new data to provide answers to these questions and/or fill the research gap.

The literature review serves several important functions: ensures that you are not "reinventing the wheel"; gives credits to those who have laid the groundwork for your research; demonstrates your knowledge of the research problem; demonstrates your understanding of the theoretical and research issues related to your research question; shows your ability to critically evaluate relevant literature information; indicates your ability to integrate and synthesize the existing literature; convinces your reader that your proposed research will make a significant and substantial contribution to the literature.

3. Methodology

In this section, you should provide a full description of your research paradigm and design, as well as the specific research methods and procedures that you used in order to answer your research question. You should also explain the limitations of your research and the ethical considerations to be acknowledged. For more detail, below there is a list of the sub-sections to include.

- Research epistemology (i.e., positivist, interpretative, critical)
- Research design (e.g., experiment, ethnography)
- Research methods (i.e., quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods)
- Unit of analysis
  - If people (field work research, collection of empirical data): include the age, gender, and other relevant characteristics, and explain why and how you have selected this group of people to study (sampling), referring to your research question.
  - If documents or other data sources (library-based research, revision of previous literature): describe them and explain why you have selected them and how you have selected them (sampling), referring to your research question.
- Data collection instrument(s). Description of the method(s) and the type of data collected (e.g., interview, observation, questionnaire…).
- Data analysis techniques. Description of how you figured out what the collected data mean, including any tools that were used to assist with the analysis.
- Limitations of the research. Explanation of the limitations of your research and its design in terms of the reliability and applicability of the results.
- Ethical considerations. They might include: the rights of those being researched

(e.g., confidentiality, preservation of anonymity, use of informed consent), the researcher's responsibility, and how data will be collected, stored, and disposed of.

4. Results / Findings

In this section, you should provide a description of the results arising from the analysis of the data that you have collected in order to answer the research question.

Please note that you do not have to interpret your results neither draw general conclusions, because this is something that will be done in the Discussion section.

This section will vary considerably in both length and content depending on the type of research approach adopted, in such a way that it will be different in quantitative research (e.g., results can be the outcomes of the statistical analysis of data collected through questionnaires) than in qualitative research (e.g., results can be the outcomes of a thematic analysis performed to the written transcription of interviews).

Tables and diagrams might be included, but you have also to write what the results are.

Raw data, if appropriate, should be presented in Appendices.

5. Discussion

This section presents the interpretation of your results/findings and relates these to the research question (and hypothesis, whether suitable) that you set out in the introductory section and with previous research on the topic. Key questions that you can use to guide the elaboration of this section include:

- What is the relationship between the work done, the research questions, and previous work discussed in the literature review?

- What lessons can be learned from the way the study was conducted?

- What are the implications of the findings for policy and practice?

- What are the strengths and limitations of the study?

- What further research might follow from your findings?

6. Conclusions

The concluding sections summarises the main findings of your work and explains how the Capstone Project has answered the research question set out in the Introduction.

References

List all the references which appear in the text in alphabetical order by the authors' surnames using Harvard Referencing system.

Appendices

They can be a place for questionnaires and the like. Separate appendices are to be used for different sets of detailed information that would not be appropriate to include in the main text.

Appendix D

General Guidelines on the format of your Capstone Project

1. Style

- Clear language should be used.

- When an ordinary word is used in a technical or special sense, explain its meaning briefly.

- A general rule for numbers in the body of the text is that, up to ten, they are expressed in words (e.g., one, six instead of 1, 6) and above ten in figures (e.g.,124, 1,762). However, 'one hundred', 'five thousand', 'ten million' etc are expressed in words.

- Only recognised abbreviations should be used, and each should be given in brackets, on the first occasion, e.g., Department of the Environment (DOE). You may wish to provide a separate list of abbreviations.

- If a quotation from any source is included, it must be an exact copy of the original text and quotation marks must indicate exactly where the quotation begins and ends. At the end of the quotation, the author, date of publication and page reference must be given to ensure that you do not commit plagiarism.

2. Pagination

All pages should be numbered consecutively throughout the proposal.

3. Section Heading

The use of headings in each section and sub-section is required.

4. Tables and figures

They should be placed in the text and their presence indicated (e.g., "see Table 3"). They should be numbered and given an accurate and descriptive title. All components should be carefully labelled, for example, axes given titles, frequencies indicated to be frequencies and so forth.

7. Referencing

Harvard Referencing system must be used consistently, both when citing the sources within the text and in the list of references at the end. For further information, please find the guideline for referencing on NEOlms under the Section Library and within the page for the Capstone Project itself.

8. Appendices

They should be numbered (Appendix 1, Appendix 2, etc.) and referred to in the main text. For example, you may refer to the appropriate appendix by putting in brackets (see Appendix 5). They should be clear, carefully structured and organized.

1.7   Learning materials

The reading list for this module is available on NEOlms in the module area.

1.7.1.   Core reading

Special support guides for the module are also available to help you find relevant information. Please consult the Academic Support Librarian for your subject.

Books

- Bhattacherjee, A. (2012) *Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices*. University of South Florida: Scholar Commons. Available at: https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=oa_textbooks

- Coolican, H. (2014) *Research Methods and Statistics in Psychology*. 6th ed. Hove (UK) and New York: Psychology Press [Available in MIUC Library].

- Flick, U. (2011) *Introducing Research Methodology. A Beginner's Guide to Doing a Research Project*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications [Available in MIUC Library].

- Leedy, P. D. and Ormrod, J. E. (2016) *Practical research: planning design*. 11th ed. Boston: Pearson [Available in MIUC Library].

- Ruane, J. M. (2016) *Essentials of research methods. A guide to Social Science research*. 8th ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing [Available in MIUC Library].

- Sparkes, A. C., and Smith, B. (2013) *Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise, and health: From process to product*. New York: Routledge [Available in MIUC Library].

Specific chapters

➔ How to generate a research question

- Flick, U. (2011) 'Chapter 2. From research idea to research question', in *Introducing Research Methodology. A Beginner's Guide to Doing a Research Project*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 18-30 79 [Book available in MIUC Library].

- Leedy and Ormrod (2015) 'Chapter 2. The problem: the heart of the research', in *Practical research: planning design*. 11th edition. Pearson, pp. 27-51 [Book available in MIUC Library].

➔ How to elaborate a research proposal (relevant for elaborating the Capstone Project Proposal)

- Flick, U. (2011) 'Chapter 5. Designing social research', in Introducing *Research Methodology. A Beginner's Guide to Doing a Research Project*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 60-79 [Book available in MIUC Library].
- Leedy, P. D. and Ormrod, J. E. (2016) 'Chapter 5. Writing the research proposal', in *Practical research: planning design.* 11th ed. Pearson, pp. 116-135 [Book available in MIUC Library].

➔ How to do a literature review
- Flick, U. (2011) 'Chapter 3. Reading and reviewing the literature, in *Introducing Research Methodology. A Beginner's Guide to Doing a Research Project*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 31-43 [Book available in MIUC Library].

- Leedy, P. D. and Ormrod, J. E. (2016) 'Chapter 3. Review of the related literature', in *Practical research: planning design.* 11th ed. Pearson, pp. 52-73 [Book available in MIUC Library].
- Rowland, D. R. (n.d.) *Reviewing the literature: A short guide for research students.* The Learning Hub, Student Services, The University of Queensland.

➔ How to write the Results section

- Coolican, H. (2014*) '*Chapter 13. Writing research and using results', in *Research Methods and Statistics in Psychology*. 6th ed. Routledge. Hove (UK) and New York: Psychology Press, pp. 292-244 [Book available in MIUC Library].
- Sparkes, A. C., and Smith, B. (2013) 'Chapter 6. Representing qualitative findings', in *Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and health: From process to product*. New York: Routledge, pp. 147-178 [Book available in MIUC Library].

➔ How to elaborate a research report (relevant for elaborating the Capstone Project)

- Coolican, H. (2014*) '*Chapter 24. Planning your practical and writing up your report', in *Research Methods and Statistics in Psychology*. 6th ed. Routledge. Hove (UK) and New York: Psychology Press [Book available in MIUC Library].
- Flick, U. (2011) 'Chapter 24. Planning your practical and writing up your report', in *Introducing Research Methodology. A Beginner's Guide to Doing a Research Project*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 654-698 [Book available in MIUC Library].
- Leedy, P. D. and Ormrod, J. E. (2016) 'Chapter. 12. Technical Details: Style, Format, and Organization of the Research Report.', in *Practical research: planning design.* 11th ed. Pearson [Book available in MIUC Library].

1.7.2. IT, audio-visual or learning technology resources

The use of IT, audio-visual or any other technology resources will depend on the topic and area of the research. It will be advised and agreed with the module leader during the execution of the work.

1.7.3. Other recommended reading

The literature or theoretical resources to be used throughout the elaboration of the Capstone Project will depend on the topic and area of your research. It will be advised and agreed with the module leader during the execution of the work.

In any case, below there are two general lists of other recommending reading.

Other recommended reading on Research Methods:

- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, pp. 77–101. doi: 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
- Gelo, O., Braakmann, D., and Benetka, G. (2008) 'Quantitative and qualitative research: beyond the debate', *Integrative Psychological Behavioral Science*, 43(3), pp. 406–407. doi: 10.1007/s12124-008-9078-3
- Hammond, M. and Wellington, J. (2013) *Research Methods: The Key Concepts. New York:*

Routledge [Available in MIUC Library].

- Horn, T. S. (2011) 'Multiple pathways to knowledge generation: qualitative and quantitative research approaches in sport and exercise psychology', *Qualitative research in sport, exercise and health*, 3(3), pp. 291-304. doi: 10.1080/2159676X.2011.607181

- Howitt, D. and Cramer, D. (2011*) Introduction to research methods in psychology*. 10th ed. Harlow, England: Pearson, Prentice Hall.

- Onwuegbuzie, A. J. and Leech, N.L. (2005) 'On Becoming a Pragmatic Researcher: The Importance of Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 8(5), pp. 375–387. doi: 10.1080/13645570500402447

Other recommended reading on Academic Writing:

- Bailey, S. (2015) *Academic writing for international students of business.* 3rd ed. New York. Routledge [Available in MIUC Library].

- Belmont, W. and Sharkey, M. (2011) *The Easy Writer: Formal Writing for Academic Purposes*. 3rd ed. Frenchs Forest, Australia: Pearson [Available in MIUC Library].

- Lester, J. D. and Lester, J. D. (2015) *Writing research papers: A complete guide*. 5th ed. London, UK: Pearson [Available in MIUC Library].

- Lunsford, A. A. (2016) *The Everyday Writer with Exercises with 2016 MLA Update*. 8th ed. London, UK: Macmillan [Available in MIUC Library].

- Wang, G. T. and Park, K. (2016) *Student research and report writing: from topic selection to the complete paper.* Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons [Available in MIUC Library].

1.7.4. Other resources

Below there is a list of websites related to the area of research on the Social Science that might be of interest for you.

- Center for Social Research Methods. https://www.socialresearchmethods.net/

- Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ciej20/current

- International Association of Social Science Research. http://iassr2.org/

- Journal of Social Science Research. https://cirworld.com/index.php/jssr

- Social Research Association (UK). http://the-sra.org.uk/

- Social Science Research Council. https://www.ssrc.org/

- Social Science Research (journal) https://www.journals.elsevier.com/social-science-research/

Remember to log into MIUC NEOlms daily to receive all the latest news and support available at your module sites!

2   Things you need to know

2.1   Engagement

During the academic year 2021-22, the health, welfare, and safety of all our students and staff is our top priority as Spain continues to deal with the ongoing implications of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Face to-face-teaching, access to MIUC facilities and being part of our unique University community are key parts of the excellent student experience at MIUC. We have been working to create a safe and efficient plan that will allow us to deliver these elements when you start with us in the fall semester, subject to government regulation.

MIUC will be ready to teach in September and we are committed to engaging with you as closely as we can, and to ensuring that you have a rich educational experience that is safe and protected to ensure that you continue to get the most from the University life and the city of Marbella.

Whether you are engaging with teaching and learning activities on site or via the MIUC Virtual Learning Environment, we expect the same level of commitment and engagement from you. If you are unable to attend scheduled on site or online activities or complete activities in the timeframes set out, you should let your module leaders know. You should aim to stick to assessment deadlines; if you are concerned that you will not be able to complete your assessments on time, you should talk to your module leaders. Your engagement, whether online or on site, will be tracked and if we see that you are not engaging, we will get in contact with you. However, we encourage you to let us know if you are struggling so we can work with you to find solutions and get you back on track as soon as possible. Give yourself the best possible chance to succeed by engaging with the full range of learning and teaching activities available to you.

2.2   Need help, just ask

The University recognises that there are times when you may encounter difficulties during your course of study and provisions are made to help you. If you are struggling with meeting deadlines please talk to us, whether it's your course/module leader, personal tutor or any member of staff, speak to them so they can get you the support you need to succeed. You can extend your deadline if you have a good reason why you are not able to submit a piece of coursework on time, apply online for an extension before your deadline. An extension will allow you an extra 10 working days. If an extension is not sufficient and circumstances beyond your control are preventing you from completing your assessment, then you can, apply online for mitigation.

Please remember late submission without extension or mitigation will result in penalties depending on how late it is, see Academic Regulations.

You are reminded that MIUC applies penalties to students who commit an academic offence, in which case the Academic Offences Regulations will be used to deal with any cases of academic misconduct including examination offences, plagiarism and other means of cheating to obtain an advantage.

You are encouraged to seek advice from the Students' Union and counselling service which support you with all aspects of your academic experience by providing advice and guidance to ensure you are fully informed of the academic regulations as well as advocate for student views.

You are expected to behave in line with University expectations, irrespective of whether your

interactions with staff and other students are in person or online. As you will be engaging with others online and a range of online materials, it is important to consider how to stay safe online and ensure your communications are secure and appropriate. If you have any questions about how to manage your online activities, please contact your module leader.

If you have an issue about the module, you should speak to your Module Leader or Course Leader informally in the first instance. Your Course Representative can also raise your concerns at Course Committees, which take place each semester. If you are unable to resolve it informally, you should refer to the Complaints Procedure which is outlined in the student handbook and consult the Students' Union about it. The University aims to ensure that issues are resolved informally as quickly as possible to have minimum impact on your studies.

2.3   Getting support for your studies

Throughout your course of study, you will have access to a wide variety of sources of support depending on your individual circumstances and needs. Your first point of call for getting general academic support is your Personal Tutor. As well as approaching your Module Leader with any questions specifically related to your module and your Course Leader with questions on your Course, do contact your Personal Tutor for academic advice in relation your studies and your academic development.

Apart from the University-wide support framework, which encompasses the Module Leaders, Course Leader, the Subject Librarian, and your Course Administrator, you will also have at your disposal the MIUC Academic Support Team. The Team offers Academic Skills Workshops throughout the year, helping you to develop skills relevant to your degree. Workshops include for instance Essay Planning and Writing; Critical Thinking; Reflective Writing; Group Work and Presentation Skills.

English Language support and One-to-one academic support opportunities are also available. For information about all these services, please consult the Academic Office.

2.4   Student support

In addition to the support listed in the previous section, there is also more help offered by MIUC Student services, consisting of Student Life Department, Internship Support, Life Coaching Service and Counselling service. They offer a wide range of support and services consisting of extracurricular activities; Careers and internship support; Student Welfare and Counselling.

Contact Student Services for more information at:

Student Life Department: student.life@miuc.org

Internship Support: TBC

Life Coaching Service: Ms. Ana Cantle, ana.cantle@miuc.org

Counselling Service: Ms. Eva Berkovic, eva@miuc.org

2.5   Module evaluation – have your say!

Towards the end of the module, you will be invited to provide some anonymous feedback to the Module Leader through a (online) survey. This is your opportunity to give some direct feedback about the module through a series of questions and free text. Your constructive feedback will help the Module

Leader and teaching team to understand the module experience from your perspective and helps inform the development of the module.

3 Appendix — Research ethics and integrity

3.1 Research ethics guidance for students

3.1.1 What is research ethics? Why it matters

You will be asked to seek ethical approval for all your research projects undertaken in the course of your studies. Research ethics provides a framework for conducting research that might range from a short questionnaire devised by an undergraduate student through to a multi-million-pound project carried out by a group of professional researchers. All researchers, across all disciplines, should be mindful of ethical issues when planning, conducting, and reporting on their work.

Research ethics works to preserve the safety and rights of research participants in addition to safeguarding the well-being and integrity of the researcher, and the trustworthiness of the research. The University does not adhere to the principles of research ethics in order to prevent research taking place, but to facilitate good research; respecting the interests of all parties, mitigating risks to participants and researcher, and delivering research outcomes that are robust.

Surely some types of research raise more ethical issues than others?

Yes. Typically, research that involves the following would raise ethical issues:

- human subjects,
- vulnerable individuals or groups,
- personal data,
- any type of clinical/physical intervention,
- when conducted in a sensitive or potentially dangerous location, or
- security sensitive information

These ethical issues require appropriate planning in the design of the research to identify and mitigate the risks to the participant or researcher.

Interviewing your peers or friends on certain issues to do a research project is, for example, a typical case where ethical approval is required. Desk-based research centred on journal articles and books would be unlikely to pose acute ethical issues, except in relation to the way the researcher might select the articles, and report on their findings.

In any case, no research should be undertaken without research-ethics approval.

How can I understand and apply research ethics?

First and foremost, research ethics will be addressed by your tutor or supervisor as part of your module. It may also be part of your recommended reading. Different disciplines conduct a range of research using a variety of approaches, so your teaching will cover ethical issues that are most likely to apply to your subject. If you have any questions about the design or conduct of research that you are planning, then you should seek the guidance of the tutor responsible for the module.

Secondly, Research Ethics Risk Assessment system employs a *Research-ethics and integrity risk assessment form* that you are required to complete before commencing your project. This easy-to-

complete assessment form helps the University to identify and improve research projects that might raise ethical issues. Just as importantly, it will help you work through the potential ethical dimensions of your research in a structured step-by-step way.

My research does not involve any of the above issues?

You will still need to complete the Research-ethics and integrity risk assessment form before commencing your project.

Applying for ethics approval – a link to the 'Research-ethics and integrity risk assessment form' can be downloaded from MIUC NEOlms.

3.2   Easy steps to ethical approval

- Remember, the ethics application form **must** be submitted and approved **before** any research project starts and **before** any potential participants are approached.

- Make sure you have discussed any possible ethical issues with your Supervisor/Tutor/Module Leader before submitting your application. **You need your Supervisor's/Module Leader's/Tutor's approval before getting started with the online approval.**

- The '**Research ethics and integrity risk assessment form' can be accessed on MIUC NEOlms.

At various points you will be asked to provide complementary documents. **Your application cannot be processed without these. You are advised to first type your project description (this is good practice for all applications and research proposals generally).** Make sure you include the following where your project utilises these research methods and instruments (A and B compulsory for all projects):

A. The completed risk assessment form

B. A completed *Project Proposal*

C. A participant-information sheet

D. An informed-consent form

Discuss these with your supervisor since details may vary according to project

E. A copy of interview questions and/or the questionnaires/instruments you intend to use **or**, if you do not have these questionnaires/instruments, a statement of what will be used (in MS Word, with your application ID at the top)

F. A data management and storage statement

1.1.1.   How it works

1. The School/College Ethics Panel will review your application – **this is normally within two weeks of submission**

2. **You and your supervisor** will be informed of the outcome by email

3. Outcomes will be one of the following categories:

    - **Conditional** approval subject to review and re-submission (you must make the changes specified by the panel before you can start)

    - **Provisional** approval subject to additional information and re-submission (you can start your project, but you will need to provide further information at a date determined by the School/College Ethics Panel)

- **Final** approval (the approval is final, and you do not need to re-submit unless you make subsequent changes to the project)
- **Rejection** (you must discuss issues raised with your Supervisor)
- **Referral** to University Research Ethics Committee where risk is identified that requires such referral.