

## **SECTION 15**

### **CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE**

The Capstone Project serves as an outcome component for both the t-DPT and DScPT degrees and at the same time allows students to make a valuable contribution to evidence-based physical therapy practice. It should represent the cumulative knowledge and skill that a student brings with them to the program and develops throughout their course of study.

#### **15.1 Requirements**

Students entering the program with a Bachelor's degree will be required to design and conduct an original scientific research study, analyze the results, and write it up in a publishable format for a selected peer-reviewed journal. Assuming previous experience with research, students entering the program with a Master's degree or entry-level DPT degree may conduct an original scientific research study as described above *OR* they may choose to prepare an advanced case report for publication, develop a marketable product, or perform some other type of scholarly work. The deadline for completion is approximately 1 month prior to the planned graduation date.

#### **15.2 Registration and Academic Credit**

Students may register for the Capstone Experience PTH 798 credits—4 credits for the t-DPT and 6 credits for the DScPT--as needed to maintain their status as a full-time student and keep them eligible for financial aid. Students will receive a “DG” or “Deferred Grade” for those credits until the project is completed at which time the Capstone Coordinator will change the grades to “S” or “Satisfactory.” If a student drops out of the program and does not complete the Capstone Project, a “DN” or “Do not Need” grade will be given. If a student is working on a Capstone while not registered for any classes for credit, the Project Continuation Fee applies.

#### **15.3 Capstone Coordinator**

The first step toward completion of a Capstone Project is to prepare an Idea Paper for review by the Capstone Committee. Students may contact Caryn Pierce, PT, Capstone Coordinator ([http://www.andrews.edu/shp/pt/faculty/pierce\\_caryn.html](http://www.andrews.edu/shp/pt/faculty/pierce_caryn.html)) to discuss ideas (optional) or e-mail Idea Papers to [caryn@andrews.edu](mailto:caryn@andrews.edu). The Capstone Coordinator will advise students on the development of idea papers, present idea papers to the Capstone Committee, and relay feedback from the committee to students. Additionally the Capstone Coordinator assigns an Andrews University (AU) Faculty Chair to each approved Project, approves External Committee Members, receives Verification of Completion forms and files them with the records office, and catalogs completed Capstone Projects.

#### **15.4 Capstone Committee**

Before students proceed with working on a Capstone Project, Idea Papers are subject to the review and approval of the Capstone Committee. Capstone Committee members are all members of the Andrews University Physical Therapy Department faculty. They will be looking for **Quality--**worthy of doctoral level work and representative of program goals, **Academic rigor**—strong foundation in the current literature and professional knowledge base, **Originality / Uniqueness**—something that originates with the student and has not been done before, and **Valuable Contribution**—something potentially publishable or marketable that will benefit the physical therapy profession. When an Idea Paper has been reviewed, the committee may approve, disapprove, ask for more information, or set guidelines as a condition for approval at a future date.

#### **15.5 Andrews University (AU) Faculty Chair and External Committee Member**

Once the idea for a Capstone Project has been approved by the Capstone Committee, a detailed Proposal needs to be developed and refined in consultation with an **AU Faculty Chair** assigned by the Capstone Coordinator and an **External Committee Member** selected by the student and

approved by the AU Faculty Chair and Capstone Coordinator. The External Committee Member should be someone whose knowledge and skills complement those of the student and AU faculty Chair. For instance, the External Committee Member may serve as a content expert, statistician, editor, or source of research subjects—whatever is needed to round out the team. Verification of Completion must be provided to the Capstone Coordinator by the AU Faculty Chair after obtaining verbal or written approval from the External Committee member. Both the AU Faculty Chair and External Committee Member will be appropriately designated as co-authors on any published material that results from your collaboration. Ownership agreements will be drafted and signed in advance for work leading to the development of a marketable product.

**15.6 Institutional Review Board (IRB):**

All research Proposals involving human must be reviewed and approved by the Andrews University IRB prior to subject recruitment and data collection:

[http://www.andrews.edu/services/research/research\\_compliance/institutional\\_review/](http://www.andrews.edu/services/research/research_compliance/institutional_review/) . Collecting data on human subjects without IRB approval violates U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regulations. It cannot be included in any project that receives academic credit through Andrews University and will not be publishable in professional journals.

**15.7 Dissemination**

With the student's permission the written portion of completed Capstone Projects will be catalogued in a searchable electronic database accessible through Andrews University's James White Library. This service is free and does not preclude publication. All students are encouraged to submit their projects for publication in appropriate journals or presentations at professional conferences. Continued support through this process may be provided by the AU Faculty Chair or Capstone Coordinator.

**15.8 Additional Information**

Once students have registered for PTH 798 Capstone Experience, they will have access to resources and information about different types of projects, templates for Idea Papers, and step by step instructions for IRB submission, and verification of completion forms, etc. at <https://learninghub.andrews.edu>. Students who have not yet registered for Capstone credits but would like to view this information, may contact the Capstone Coordinator at [caryn@andrews.edu](mailto:caryn@andrews.edu) to gain access.