

Honors Program Capstone Project Advisor Roles and Responsibilities

Agreeing to be an advisor for an Honors Program Capstone Project means agreeing to the following responsibilities:

- Help the student select a suitable and focused project.** Many times students have a large topic that needs to be narrowed down and tailored. Others have an area in which they are passionate about, but need direction as to a specific focus. Others yet are not sure what topics “have already been done” and which topics would be “new territory.” And some students select a topic that can in no way be done due to its vastness, monies needed, and/or hours they have available to commit to the research. The project needs to be one that an undergraduate can reasonably complete while taking a full load of other undergraduate courses.
- Carefully review the Honors Capstone Packet in its entirety.** The student will bring a copy of this packet to your first scheduled meeting. Be sure to review all documents so that the two of you have a thorough understanding of what is expected throughout the process.
- Assist the student in developing his/her proposal.** We have provided the student with guidelines that serve as talking points for the advisor and advisee to shape the direction of the Honors Capstone Project, its components, and how to evaluate the end result. The proposal will detail where and how often the advisor and advisee will meet, as well as define the advisor’s role. The proposal will also include a timeline of specific deadlines for each stage of the project.
- Determine when, where, and how often you will meet:** Some advisors/advisees will meet daily, some weekly, and some just twice a month. The nature of your student’s project will determine how often you should meet. A student is not to disappear once their proposal is signed and then reappear after the project is finished. ***The dates and times of your planned meetings must be included in the student’s proposal.*** A guest meal card is available in the Honors Program Office should you wish to have a meeting over breakfast, lunch, or dinner in one of the CMU Residential Restaurants.
- Develop specific criteria for evaluating the final result of the student’s Honors Senior Project.** Please refer to the Honors Capstone Evaluation form. Some criteria are listed but feel free to add additional expectations with which you will grade the project. These criteria should be specific and be included in the student’s project Proposal. Be sure to clearly communicate to the student your expectations of the project in terms of quality. Remember that amount of work they put into their project should be the equivalent of 3 credit hours worth of work and that they will receive a letter grade on their transcript. The end result should be such that it could be presented at a professional conference or published in a professional journal. Some students select a project that can be completed in the course of one semester; others need two semesters or even two years to carry out their plans.
- Sign off on the final draft of their project proposal.** A Proposal, written by the student, and approved by you, must be submitted to the Honors Program Office at least **two** semesters before the student plans to graduate (not counting summers as semesters). The Director of Honors will review the proposal, give their signature of approval, and then mail a copy of the signed proposal to both the student and to you, the advisor, meaning the project has been approved and work on the project can now commence. The student will also be mailed a signed bump card for HON 499.
- Meet with the student on a regular basis to review their progress.** Give the student a large measure of initiative, independence and responsibility. At the same time, be constantly ready to offer suggestions, direction, and answers to his/her questions. **Make it clear that you want to see work that has been done**—drafts of papers, data collected, results of surveys, preliminary sketches, photographs, or whatever relevant material you need to examine in order to make sure the project is on track. As you check their work in progress, evaluate both content and form, and don’t hesitate to ask for revisions in either area. During your meetings come up with a list of specific tasks the student should accomplish by your next meeting.

- Guarantee the honesty and integrity of your student's work.** Students will include their Honors Project on their resume and have the possibility of it going on their official academic transcript. Completing their project as part of their Honors Protocol also qualifies them for Honors distinction at graduation and on their transcript.
- At the conclusion of the project the student will turn in a final copy of their project to you to be graded.** Please see the Honors Capstone Project packet for specifics as to what to include for submission and in what order the project should be bound. You will then fill out the Honors Capstone Project-Faculty Grading and Assessment form and review your evaluation and letter grade with the student. Once you and the student have both reviewed and signed the evaluation form, the student turns in a copy of their project with the evaluation form to the Honors Program office. The Honors Program must have the student's project and evaluation on file no later than one full semester before the student plans to graduate
- If student is taking HON 499 as a writing intensive option, help student develop revision plan.** HON 499 is the course in which Honors students enroll when working on their Honors Capstone. With your approval, students may take HON 499 as a writing intensive course. If WI, then with your input, the student will need to include details about the re-write process and work progress dates on the detailed timeline that is submitted with your capstone proposal. Advisors need to approve the timelines and can help structure the due dates to ensure there is enough time for revision and completion of each section. The student's paper must be at least 18-pages (including references, tables, figures, etc.), and at least 50% of the formal writing will need to be revised if you are taking the WI option. Each of the five sections (e.g., introduction, literature review, methodology, results, and discussion) of the research paper offers an opportunity for revision. The capstone proposal can be considered the first draft of the first sections of your final capstone, and as such, can be counted in the required revision process.
- Inform the student of professional conferences and journals where their work might be displayed, presented, or published.**
- If the student is enrolled in HON 499 or HON 499 WI, your academic department will receive \$400. This money may be available to you based on your department's policies and procedures.**
- Enjoy!** Honors students are among the best and brightest at CMU, and you will surely develop a rewarding relationship with your advisee. The Honors Program is aware of the considerable time, energy, and thought required on your part, and is deeply grateful for your willingness to take on the task of project advising in addition to your normal workload.
- Students must present their Honors Program Capstone Project at a campus, state, regional, or national conference.**

If you have questions about the roles and responsibilities of an Honors Capstone Advisor, please contact the Honors Program Office at (989) 774-3902.