

**CAPSTONE PROJECT GUIDELINES  
FOR BS (SOCIOLOGY)**

**(CODE 9461)**



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## **1. What Is a Capstone Project?**

After the completion of core and advanced-level courses in the BS Sociology program, students are required to undertake a Capstone Project. This final semester project provides students with the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world problems through independent research or problem-solving. The project helps bridge academic learning with professional skills required in industry or further academic research.

A capstone project is a multifaceted academic experience in an academic program. Capstone projects come in all shapes and sizes, including **research papers, case studies, creative works, and field placement projects**. They are designed to challenge students to think critically, solve complex problems, and demonstrate their readiness for work in their field. Capstone projects are often a highlight of a student's academic career and can provide valuable experience and skills for their future endeavours.

A capstone project is a culminating academic task that allows students to integrate and apply what they have learned throughout their coursework to analyze, interpret, and propose solutions to a social issue or research question using sociological concepts and methods.

## **2. What Is the Goal of a Capstone Project?**

A capstone project aims to demonstrate a student's mastery of a particular subject or field of study. It is typically a culminating project that integrates and applies the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course of a degree program. The project may involve research, analysis, problem-solving, and creative work, and it should demonstrate the student's ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and work independently. The ultimate aim of a capstone project is to produce high-quality, original work that contributes to the student's academic and professional development.

## **3. Capstone Project Objectives**

The Capstone Project aims to:

- i. Integrate multidisciplinary knowledge and skills
- ii. Apply research methods to a real social issue
- iii. Enhance students' analytical, communication, and report-writing abilities
- iv. Foster problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making skills
- v. Strengthen readiness for the job market or postgraduate studies

#### 4. How to Choose a Capstone Topic

After dedicating time and effort to your academic program, the following requirement is to select a unique interest topic that will embody all the knowledge and academic growth attained throughout your studies. How do you choose a capstone topic? What determines what kind of topic is most suitable?

- **Identify your interests and passions:** Choose a topic that you are passionate about and interested in. This will make the research process more enjoyable and engaging, not only for the student but also for the audience.
- **Consider your career goals:** Examine your future career goals and choose a topic that aligns with them. This will help you gain relevant skills and knowledge that will be useful in your future career.
- **Research current trends and issues:** Look for current trends and issues in your field of study and choose a topic that addresses them. This will make your capstone project more relevant and impactful.
- **Consult with your advisor:** Consult with your capstone advisor to get their input and guidance on choosing a topic. They can provide valuable insights and help you narrow down your options.
- **Consider the scope and feasibility:** Choose a topic that is manageable in terms of scope and feasibility. Make sure you have access to the necessary resources, equipment, and data to complete your project successfully.
- **Brainstorm and refine your ideas:** Brainstorm a list of potential topics and then refine them based on your interests, career goals, and feasibility. Choose a topic that you are excited about and can confidently expound upon.

#### Some Suggested Capstone Research Areas

- i. Gender roles in urban Pakistan
- ii. Social media and gender identity
- iii. Women's mobility and family control
- iv. Child neglect and abuse
- v. Children's rights
- vi. Elderly care
- vii. Parenting and education
- viii. Digital learning
- ix. Globalization and local culture
- x. Online activism

Overall, depending on your program's structure, a Capstone project may take the form of:

- A mini ethnography (based on fieldwork or interviews)
- A policy analysis or evaluation report
- A case study of an institution, community, or social problem
- A comparative study (e.g., gender norms in urban vs. rural areas)
- A theoretical analysis applying sociological theory to a local issue

## **5. Role and Responsibility of the Student**

Students are expected to:

- i. Conduct independent research or fieldwork
- ii. Adhere to ethical research standards and academic integrity
- iii. Maintain regular contact with the assigned supervisor
- iv. Submit work as per deadlines and guidelines
- v. Demonstrate seriousness, originality, and academic discipline

## **6. Focus of Work**

The Capstone Project should be focused and practical. Students must:

- i. Define a clear problem statement based on practical issues in the real-life scenario
- ii. Support analysis with theory and evidence
- iii. Demonstrate application of research methods and data interpretation
- iv. Provide concrete findings and actionable recommendations
- v. Maintain an academic tone with professional formatting

## **7. Pre-Project Readings**

Before initiating the project, students must review relevant literature and resources such as:

- i. Academic journals
- ii. Business reports and financial statements
- iii. Industry-specific publications
- iv. Regulatory and policy documents
- iv. Government policies and regulations

## **8. Project Work Plan (Suggested Timeline) Time Activities**

Weeks 1–2: Topic selection, supervisor approval, literature review

Weeks 3–4: Research design, data collection tools, proposal writing

Weeks 5–6: Data collection (survey/interview/secondary data)

Weeks 7–8: Data analysis, preparation of charts/tables

Weeks 9–10: Drafting chapters and submitting for supervisor feedback

Weeks 11–12: Final editing, proofreading, and submission

## **9. The Six Components of a Capstone Paper**

A comprehensive capstone paper typically consists of six key components that are essential for its success. These components include an *introduction*, *literature review*, *methodology*, *discussion*, *conclusion*, and *recommendations*.

### **a) Introduction**

The introduction section of a capstone paper is a crucial part of the document that sets the tone for the entire project. It should cover the key points of the paper, including the purpose, scope, and significance of the research. The introduction should also provide a clear and concise thesis statement that outlines the central argument or focus of the paper. It should include problem background, objectives, scope etc. The total words should be within 500–700.

### **b) Literature Review**

The literature review section of a capstone paper provides an overview of the existing research and knowledge on the topic. It covers key points related to the research question or problem statement and helps establish the study's overall context. The literature review should be comprehensive, well-organized, and focused on the most relevant and recent sources. It should also identify gaps in the literature and highlight the need for further research. The total words should be 800–1000.

### **c) Methodology**

The methodology section should provide a clear and detailed description of the research methods used in the capstone project and should demonstrate that the research was conducted rigorously and ethically. The total words should be 800–1000. This includes:

- **Research design:** This section should describe the overall approach to the research, including the type of study (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods), the research

questions or hypotheses, and the sampling strategy.

- **Data collection:** This section should describe the methods used to collect data, such as surveys, interviews, or observational data sources. It should also consider any instruments or tools used to collect data, such as questionnaires or interview guides.
- **Ethical considerations:** This section should examine any ethical considerations related to the research, such as confidentiality and privacy.
- **Limitations:** This section should review any research limitations. This involves acknowledging any weaknesses or shortcomings in the research and discussing how they may have affected the results, such as sample size, data quality, or financial resources.

#### **d) Data Analysis/Discussion**

The discussion section of a capstone paper summarizes the findings of the research and provides an analysis of the results. The total words should be 1500-2000. Key points include:

- **Summary of findings:** The discussion section should begin with a summary of the main findings of the research. This should include a concise critique of the results and their significance.
- **Interpretation of the results:** This portion of the discussion section should offer an analysis of the data, quantitative or qualitative, and clarify what it means in the context of the original research question.
- **Comparison with previous research:** The discussion section should also compare the research results to prior studies in the field. This helps to contextualize original findings and identify any similarities or differences.
- **Implications of the findings:** Another critical component of the discussion section should also discuss the impact of the findings on the field of study. This involves classifying any practical applications of the research and examining how the results can be used to inform future research.

#### **e) Conclusion**

The conclusion of a capstone research paper strives to objectively present the data or information that you gathered throughout the entire capstone project. The story you tell will point readers to any figures and tables that illustrate relevant data and tie them back to the general purpose of the research. The overall goal is to bring it all back to the initial hypothesis. The total words should be 600-800.

## **f) Recommendations**

Capstone research papers typically include a recommendations section, which provides recommendations for future research related to the topic. This involves identifying areas where further research is needed and suggesting potential avenues for future study.

Additionally, this section can be derived directly from the research findings, providing readers with concrete examples and recommendations based on the data and its implications. The total words should be 400-500.

## **10. Format of Capstone Project Report**

- i. Title page
- ii. Supervisor's certificate
- iii. Acknowledgements
- iv. Table of contents
- v. List of tables & figures
- vi. Abstract
- vii. Introduction
- viii. Literature review
- ix. Methodology
- x. Data analysis/discussion
- xi. Conclusion
- xii. Recommendations
- xiii. References (APA style)
- xiv. Annexures

## **11. Guidelines for Writing Capstone Project Report**

- Font: 12 font size, Times New Roman
- Spacing: 1.5 line spacing
- Margins: 3 cm on all sides
- Justification: Fully justified
- Paragraphs: Use blank lines between paragraphs and sections
- Headings: Use hierarchical heading formatting (Heading 1, 2, etc.)
- Word Count: 6000-8000 words (excluding annexures)
- Page Numbers: Roman numerals (i, ii...) for preliminary pages, Arabic (1, 2...) from Chapter 1
- Spelling/Grammar: Use MS Word grammar/spell check

## **12 General Rules Regarding Capstone Project**

1. Every student enrolled in the capstone project must complete it within the allocated semester under the supervision of a supervisor (who will be appointed from the list of

AIOU Registered Tutors) allocated.

2. Eligibility to undertake Capstone project is subject to successful completion of two content courses from each major and the research method course.
3. The responsibility to propose a suitable topic lies with the student.
4. The department or assigned supervisor will finalize the topic and may suggest changes.
5. The supervisor will guide students about the objectives, structure, ethics, and report writing of the Capstone Project. And this is on continuous basis until the final submission.
6. A six (6) day workshop will be held by the university to facilitate topic selection and provide orientation on research procedures.
7. The student needs to submit final topic to the assigned supervisor preferably within 15 days following the conclusion of the workshop for formal approval.
8. The student is required to follow professional and ethical standards throughout the research. If project shows more than 20% similarity index, may be returned to the student for correction.
9. The supervisor shall maintain a detailed progress report of each student, recording submission, review and approval status of each student.
10. The maximum duration of the Capstone project is four (4) months from the conclusion of the workshop. However, the department must assure that the Capstone project's results are submitted within the same time frame allotted for the submission of results in other courses.
11. At the end of the semester, the final Capstone project must be submitted in electronic format via LMS for evaluation by the end of the semester.
12. The supervisor shall electronically sign the project only if all revisions have been made.
13. Upon completion of the supervisor's review process, the student shall submit the fully formatted final version of the Capstone project in both PDF and MS word format to the programme coordinator.
14. A signed declaration must be attached with the project stating submitted work is original, has not been previously submitted or published, and will not be submitted elsewhere for the award of another degree.
15. The Capstone project should strictly adhere to the format and academic standards as described earlier in this document.
16. The department will assign an evaluator. The evaluation will be done on the approved proforma.
17. Evaluation may be conducted by a designated tutor, not exceeding 100 students per evaluator.
18. The pass marks for the Capstone Project are 50 out of 100. Failure to meet the minimum score will result in a re-enrolment in Capstone project.
19. The University holds no financial liability related to any field visits or data collection undertaken by the student.