The American University of Kurdistan
Policy of Capstone Projects

Policy Number: AS021
Effective Date: June 15, 2021

CONTENT

I.   INTRODUCTION

a. **Authority**: The Board of Trustees (herein referred to as "Board") at The American University of Kurdistan (herein referred to as "AUK" or "University") is authorized to establish rules and regulations to govern and operate the University and its programs.

b. **Purpose**: The purpose is to set forth a policy for AUK students that outlines the minimum qualifications, requirements and procedures required for completing Capstone Projects.

c. **Scope**: This policy applies to AUK students, Admissions and Registration Department (ARD), Provost's Office, Deans/Heads of departments and academic advisors.

II.   ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a. **Responsible Executive**: Provost

b. **Responsible Administrator**: Admissions and Registration Department

c. **Responsible Office**: Office of Provost and Office of Admissions and Registration

d. **Policy Contact:** Provost's Office

III.   DEFINITION

The Capstone Project is the final graduation project. It is an in-depth study or project of a topic selected by the student in consultation with the instructor, which showcases the student's skills and knowledge. Moreover, it demonstrates the learning outcomes of a

student at AUK, and provides faculty with a clear vision of whether the student learning outcomes and program outcomes were met. This policy puts forward the steps and guidelines that are required for successfully completing Capstone projects.

IV.   POLICY STATEMENT

The goal of the Capstone Project is to provide opportunity for the assessment of the program's effectiveness and for AUK students to demonstrate their achievement of the Program Outcomes (PO). The Capstone project can be any final "approved" project within the realm of the discipline. The final project is the culminating effort that will evidence the student's learning experience in their undergraduate study program.

V.   POLICY PRINCIPLES

To be eligible to begin the Capstone project:

- The student must have completed at least 90 credit hours, and for Architectural Engineering 120 credits.

- The student must be in good academic standing. Their cGPA must be 2.0 or above; any student with a cGPA below 2.0 is not allowed to begin a Capstone project.

The project must follow these guidelines:

- Based on the design of the academic program, the Capstone can be divided into two parts (part 1 and 2). The project is typically done over two semesters. It is preferable that the two parts are done in two different semesters. The first semester is often designated for developing the proposal and the second semester for the execution, completion, and presentation of the project.

- Every Capstone project must have a faculty advisor who agrees to supervise the project.

- The project proposal must allow the student to demonstrate various student learning outcomes as per the program assessment guidelines.

- The submitted thesis must be approved by the Department Capstone Committee consisting of at least two and up to three members including the Supervisor(s) and other Faculty.

- Faculty Teaching Credits:

 Credits will be given to faculty depending on the number of students, as follows:

1- The supervision of capstone projects for every 1-3 students (1 credit).

2- The supervision of capstone projects for every 4-6 students (2 credits).

3- The supervision of capstone projects for 7-9 students (3 credits).

VI.   PROCEDURES

1. The Department forms a committee of at least two and up to three Faculty including the supervisor(s) of the two Capstone semesters and other Faculty. An external representative from the public or private sector(s) may attend the final student's defense.

2. Students would choose to work individually or they are divided into random groups of 2 to 5 member teams based on the number of students, number of projects available, and the number of available Faculty.

3. If the Capstone extends over two semesters, the Department designates a Faculty for the first Capstone semester which involves the formulation of the research proposal, and a second Faculty to supervise the execution of the project in the second semester. The Faculty of the first semester and the second semester will be members of the Department's Committee to assess the student's defense of the bachelor's degree Thesis.

The Proposal

The proposal is a crucial component of the Capstone since the project cannot proceed until the proposal has been reviewed and approved by the Department's allocated Capstone Committee. The proposal is the student's "research roadmap", detailing what will be done, how it will be done, and what resources will be needed for its execution.

While the student's proposal is undergoing review, the Supervisor may greenlight the student to begin gathering data/information related to the prospectively approved topic(s). The Supervisor will not, however, allow the student to move forward with the development and writing of the Capstone paper or presentation until the proposal receives final approval. The student should address feedback from the supervisor in a timely manner. If there are questions, students need to take the initiative to get answers and make the requisite corrections. Communications are an essential part of this labor intensive process.

The Capstone review process should be focused on the following:

1. The student includes the required components of the project.

2. The student's proposal reflects/addresses the learning outcomes and POs.

3. The proposal demonstrates the student understands each of the learning outcomes and POs.

4. The proposal contains sufficient information/data to ensure the student will successfully demonstrate each aspect of their applicable POs if executed as proposed.

5. The proposal includes the sources of information to evidence whether the student has sufficient understanding of the sourcing of information and data required for each PO.

6. The American Psychological Association (APA) style has been followed.

The challenge for the student in the Capstone proposal process is in identifying and communicating how the learning outcomes and POs will be addressed and demonstrated successfully. Moreover, the student must demonstrate mastery of knowledge of the

appropriate POs through the application of the higher order of Bloom's (1956) learning skills, namely, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis.

Furthermore, the students will also show in the Thesis evidence of achieving the general education PO's through the practical skill of critical thought, communicating concepts in cogent written and oral presentation; demonstrate their information literacy through showing evidence of meaningful research, including gathering information from primary and secondary sources; and incorporating and documenting source material properly. Students will also demonstrate their scientific literacy through showing evidence of analyzing scientific data and quantitative reasoning as it relates to the physical world, as well as its interrelationship with human values and interests as indicated in analysis of survey data.

The Capstone thesis is required to be formatted in and follow the writing rules of the current edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (otherwise referred to as the APA manual) including being written in the third person and meeting required spacing requirements. **The recommended structure of the Thesis is as follows:**

- Chapter 1, Introduction

- Chapter 2, Review of Literature

- Chapter 3, Project Description

- Chapter 4, Results and Discussion

- Chapter 5, Conclusions

- References

- Appendix

The Faculty member will guide the student in the development, focus, scope and methodology of the project. The project must be comprehensive, relevant, and broad enough to clearly demonstrate achievement of each aspect of the applicable POs.

The student will submit the project proposal to the Supervisor who will forward with recommendation to the Department not later than seven working days from the submission date. Review and feedback of the proposal by the Department will be accomplished within seven working days from receipt of the proposal. The Supervisor will not forward a student submission that does not meet the standards outlined in this policy.

This Capstone project proposal and process may be adapted to the needs of specific college requirements.

VII.   POLICY HISTORY

a.   **Approved by**: Board of Trustees

b.   **Adopted**:   June 14, 2021

c.   **Amended**:   June 14, 2021