



The American University of Kurdistan

Policy of Capstone Projects

Policy Number: AS021

Effective Date: June 15, 2021

1. Policy

The American University of Kurdistan (AUK) recognizes the Capstone Project as a culminating academic experience through which students integrate and demonstrate achievement of the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) acquired throughout their bachelor's careers. Capstone projects may take various forms depending on disciplinary requirements, including research theses, applied or industry-based projects, policy analyses, creative or design-based projects, and internship-based capstone experiences.

a. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear standards, qualifications, responsibilities, and procedures governing the completion, supervision, assessment, and approval of Capstone Projects at AUK. This policy supports academic quality, continuous improvement, and the assessment of PLOs through a structured culminating academic experience.

a. Scope

This policy applies to all undergraduate students completing Capstone Projects, faculty supervisors, academic departments, College Deans, the Office of the Provost, and the Admissions and Registration Department (ARD), as applicable.

2. Definition of Terms

Capstone Project: A culminating academic project or thesis completed by a student near the end of an undergraduate program that demonstrates integration and application of program knowledge, skills, competencies, and Program Outcomes (POs).

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs): Statements describing the knowledge, skills, competencies, and behaviors students are expected to demonstrate upon completion of a program.

Faculty Supervisor: A faculty member assigned responsibility for supervising, mentoring, and evaluating a student's Capstone Project.

Academic Standing: A student's academic eligibility status as determined by cumulative GPA (cGPA) and compliance with university academic requirements.

3. Responsibilities

a. Issuing Unit

The Office of the Provost holds primary responsibility for the implementation, oversight, interpretation, periodic review, and revision of this policy.

b. Other Stakeholders

Admissions and Registration Department (ARD) – Maintains official academic records related to Capstone eligibility and completion.

Academic Departments – Coordinate Capstone implementation and assessment processes, form Department Capstone Committees, and ensure disciplinary alignment of projects and assessment standards.

Faculty Supervisors – Guide students in project development, methodology, ethical compliance, and completion while providing regular feedback and supervision throughout the project process.

College Deans and Department Chairs – Monitor implementation and compliance within their respective academic units and ensure adequate faculty support and academic oversight.

Students – Fulfill all Capstone requirements, timelines, academic integrity expectations, and submission standards.

4. Procedures

4.1 Eligibility Requirements

a. To begin a Capstone Project, students must:

1. Have completed the number of credit hours required by the study plan of their respective academic program. (See Section 6 – Related Documents).
2. Students shall be required to satisfy all prerequisites prior to commencing a Capstone Project.

4.2 Structure and Format of Capstone Projects

a. Capstone Projects may vary according to disciplinary and program requirements and may include:

1. Research theses
2. Applied or industry-based projects
3. Policy analyses or reports
4. Creative or design-based projects
5. Internship-based capstone experiences with analytical components

b. Depending on the academic program design, the Capstone Project may be divided into two parts conducted over two semesters:

1. The first semester focuses on proposal development
2. The second semester focuses on project execution, completion, and presentation

4.3 Faculty Supervision

- a. Every Capstone Project must have an assigned Faculty Supervisor who agrees to oversee the project.
- b. Faculty Supervisors are responsible for:
 - 1. Guiding students in project focus, methodology, scope, and development
 - 2. Providing regular supervision and feedback
 - 3. Ensuring adherence to academic integrity and ethical standards
 - 4. Confirming that projects demonstrate achievement of applicable Program Outcomes
- c. Faculty teaching credit for Capstone supervision shall be calculated and assigned in accordance with the provisions of the AUK's Faculty Workload Policy applicable to Independent Study courses.

4.4 Student Grouping and Participation

- a. Students may complete Capstone Projects individually or in groups, depending on program requirements and project availability.
- b. Group-based projects may consist of two to five students. Individual student contributions must be clearly identified and assessed through appropriate evaluation mechanisms, such as:
 - 1. Peer evaluations
 - 2. Individual reports
 - 3. Differentiated grading criteria

4.5 Proposal Development and Approval

- a. The Capstone proposal serves as the foundation and research roadmap for the project and must outline:
 - 1. Project objectives and scope
 - 2. Methodology and resources
 - 3. Alignment with PLOs
 - 4. Sources of information and supporting evidence
- b. The Capstone Project shall not proceed until the proposal has been reviewed and approved by the academic department in accordance with departmental procedures.
- c. During proposal review, Faculty Supervisors may permit students to gather preliminary information or data; however, students shall not proceed with full project development until formal proposal approval is granted. Proposal review shall evaluate whether:
 - 1. Required project components are included
 - 2. PLOs are adequately addressed
 - 3. The proposal demonstrates sufficient depth and academic rigor
 - 4. The methodology and resources are appropriate
 - 5. Proper scholarly and citation standards are followed

4.6 Academic Standards and Formatting Requirements

- a. Capstone Projects should adhere to current academic and disciplinary writing standards, including the most recent applicable edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), unless otherwise approved by the academic department.
- b. Students are expected to demonstrate:
 1. Critical thinking and analytical skills
 2. Information literacy and scholarly research
 3. Proper use and documentation of primary and secondary sources
 4. Effective written and oral communication
 5. Application of higher-order learning skills, including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation
- c. The recommended Capstone structure may include:
 1. Chapter 1: Introduction
 2. Chapter 2: Review of Literature
 3. Chapter 3: Project Description or Methodology
 4. Chapter 4: Results and Discussion
 5. Chapter 5: Conclusions
 6. References
 7. Appendices

4.7 Review, Submission, and Defense Procedures

- a. Students shall submit project proposals to the Faculty Supervisor for review and feedback in accordance with departmental procedures.
- b. The academic department shall review and provide feedback on proposals within the established institutional or departmental timelines.
- c. The final Capstone Project must be evaluated and approved by the academic department through established procedures, which may include oral presentations or formal defenses.

4.8 Continuous Improvement and Assessment

- a. Capstone Projects shall serve as an assessment mechanism for evaluating Program Outcomes, Student Learning Outcomes, curriculum effectiveness, and academic program quality.
- b. Assessment findings may be used to support:
 1. Curriculum improvement
 2. Program review processes
 3. Institutional effectiveness activities
 4. Accreditation and assessment reporting

5. Timeline and Communication/Implementation Plan

Activity	Responsibility Party	Timeline	Communication Channels	Details
Policy Revision Announcement	Office of the Provost	Upon approval and revision	University website, email, faculty meetings	Communicate updated Capstone requirements and expectations
Capstone Orientation and Advising	Academic Departments and Faculty Supervisors	Beginning of each academic year/semester	Meetings, orientation sessions, syllabi	Inform students regarding eligibility, timelines, and procedures
Proposal Review and Approval	Department Capstone Committee	During designated Capstone semester	Meetings, email, departmental communications	Review and approve project proposals
Periodic Policy Review and Updates	Office of the Provost and Academic Units	Every 3 years or as needed	Institutional communications , meetings	Ensure alignment with institutional priorities and academic best practices

6. Related Documents:

- AS001 – Policy of Undergraduate Degree Audit and Conferral of Degrees
- AS004 – Policy of Academic Integrity
- AS010 – Policy of Examination
- AS018 – Policy of Grading and Evaluation
- AS030 – Policy of Course Syllabus
- AS031 – Policy of Probation & Dismissal

7. Ways to Measure Success:

1. Successful completion and approval rates of Capstone Projects
2. Evidence of achievement of Program Learning Outcomes
3. Faculty and student satisfaction with the Capstone process
4. Use of Capstone assessment findings in curriculum improvement and program review activities
5. Consistent adherence to academic and ethical standards across academic programs

8. Policy History:

- a. Approved by: Board of Trustees
- b. Adopted: June 14, 2021
- c. Revised: June 15, 2026