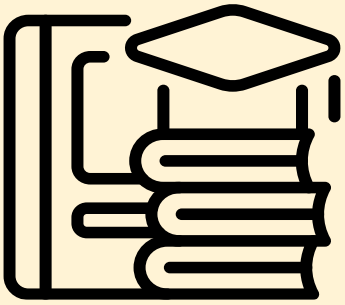
High-Impact Practice (HIP): Capstone Courses & Projects

- Typically, but not always, completed in the final year of study
- Students integrate, apply, and showcase the knowledge and skills gained throughout their academic program

Documented Impacts of Capstone Courses & Projects



- Increased integrative and critical thinking skills
- Improved writing, research, and communication abilities
- Experience with discipline-specific tasks and better understanding of disciplinary knowledge
- Creation of strong portfolios and work samples for careers or graduate school
- Greater ability to articulate skills and career goals

Checklist for Capstone Courses & Projects

- ❑ Provide a clear purpose aligned with program learning outcomes
- ❑ Clearly define and provide timeline for scaffolded assignments leading to final deliverable (e.g., research paper, creative project, ...), including a required public presentation or defense
- ❑ Ensure transparent grading criteria and rubrics
- ❑ Create a system for consistent mentorship/feedback from peers, faculty, and partners
- ❑ Connect course or project with real-world relevance
- ❑ Include tasks requiring integration and application of prior learning
- ❑ Include opportunities to connect academic learning to professional goals
- ❑ Require structured reflection (writing, journals, or presentations) and documentation of skill development

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

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8 Elements of a HIP Experience

1. **Performance expectations set at appropriately high levels**
   Students engage in rigorous, integrative projects that showcase their mastery of knowledge and skills developed

2. **Significant investment of time and effort by students over an extended period of time**
   Projects unfold over a semester or year, requiring sustained engagement.

3. **Interaction with faculty and peers about substantive matters**
   Frequent and consistent mentoring, feedback, collaboration, and presentations.

4. **Experiences with diversity**
   Projects involve diverse populations, perspectives, or real-world contexts.

5. **Frequent, timely, and constructive feedback**
   Milestones and drafts yield ongoing feedback from faculty, peers, and sometimes external partners

6. **Periodic, structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning**
   Students integrate program learning and reflect on growth, challenges, and readiness for future work.

7. **Opportunities to discover relevance of learning through real-world applications**
   Projects often mimic or directly engage professional practice, research, or community issues.

8. **Public demonstration of competence**
   Presentations, showcases, portfolios, or defenses delivered to an audience of peers, faculty, or industry professionals.