



RUTGERS

School of Public Affairs
and Administration | Newark

MPA Capstone Orientation

January 07, 2021

6:00 – 8:00 P.M.

Click link below for a recording of the session:

<https://rutgers.zoom.us/rec/share/rblmx4vy2KfuOcrdczoPw23hQFXj5h-Ct9E24WPnYJHX3Ktvc9VK-HjXZmhZ2v-.DhPJIJoCKnhKE7OO>

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Overview

Two Options:

(1) Capstone Paper

(2) Professional Portfolio

Human Subjects Protection & IRB

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Overview

5 NASPAA Core Competencies

- 1) To lead and manage in the public interest.
- 2) To participate in, and contribute to, the policy process.
- 3) To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make evidence-informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment.
- 4) To articulate, apply, and advance a public service perspective.
- 5) To communicate and interact productively and in culturally responsive ways with a diverse and changing workforce and society at large.

- Students integrate, synthesize and apply **knowledge, skills, and perspectives** gained throughout MPA core curriculum.
 - Bring together theoretical and practical **knowledge**.
 - Develop and demonstrate effective research, analytical, critical thinking, problem solving, and communication **skills**.
 - Develop and present **perspectives** on public administration and management.

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Option 1: Capstone Paper

Individual students work on an **independent** and **original** capstone research project:

- **Identify organizational, program, or policy issue**, problem, or concern, and present relevant contextual and background info;
- Articulate **research questions** regarding topic;
- **Review and synthesize relevant literature**, including theoretical frameworks and/or best practices;
- **Develop a research design** regarding appropriate data sources, data collection methods, and analytical methods;
- **Analyze** data and **interpret** results;
- **Develop recommendations** derived from research findings; and
- **Complete a final written report and deliver an oral presentation** which effectively communicates research findings and significance.

Select a topic that you have built up a fair level of familiarity with; you may select a topic directly related to job, internship, or negotiated with a local organization.



Initial Steps

1. Topic

2. Read

(1) What questions are being addressed?

(2) What data and methods?

(3) What questions interest you?

3. Data

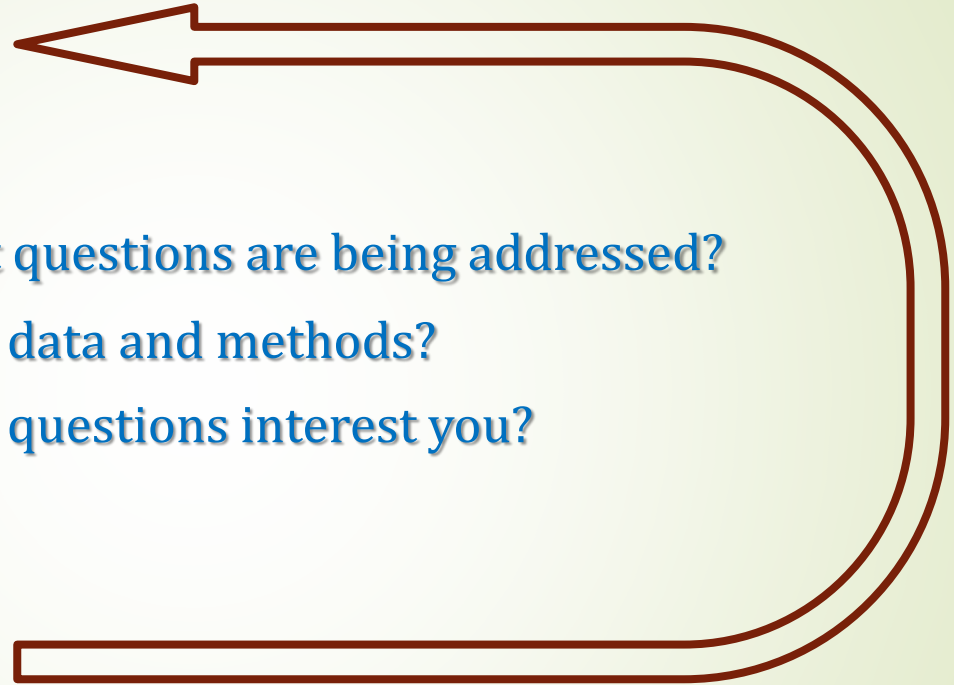
Yes



No

4. Formulate questions

5. Start literature review



Formatting: (Key Elements)

- ❑ **Title/Cover Page**
- ❑ **Table of Contents** (on a separate single page)
- ❑ **Executive Summary** (on a separate single page)
- ❑ **The Body** (no page breaks between sections in the body)
 - **Introduction**
 - **Literature Review**
 - **Methods**
 - **Framework and Model** (research questions, data sources)
 - **Variables and Measures**
 - **Design**
 - **Procedures**
 - **Analysis and Results**
 - **Recommendations and Conclusions**
- ❑ **References**
- ❑ **Appendices**

• *Headings in “Methods” will vary in each Capstone. This sample is for reference only.*

Titles should be sufficient and specific.

A Tale of Two Policies: Evaluating the Impact of Small Schools of Choice (SSC) and Renewal Schools (RS) on New York City's Low-Performing Minority Student Populations

Right to Work Laws and the Gender Pay Gap: A Quantitative Analysis of State and Local Governments in the U.S.

The Effects of Performance Management Systems on Employee Performance in Public Organizations -- A Case Study of a Public Library In New Jersey

The Relationship between Doctoral Degrees in STEM-Related Fields and Patents Awarded: A Quantitative Analysis of the U.S. States

Titles that need improvement:

Is Technology in Healthcare Really Worth it?

Increasing Mental Health Healing for Adolescents through Literacy and Peer-Support

Exploring Educational Outcomes for Students from Low-Income Communities in the Nation's Capital

Arts Organizations and Economic Development

Executive Summary

- ❑ **About one page that presents concise picture of proposed Capstone research**
 - ❑ Include major
 - constructs and hypotheses/questions;
 - results and findings; and
 - recommendations, significance, and implications

Introduction

□ Statement of problem/issue

- State general problem area clearly and unambiguously.
- Discuss importance and significance of the problem area, especially within the context of your research.

□ Research questions and objectives

- Clearly state questions (such as any causal relationships, application of frameworks, or indicators to be assessed) to be studied.
- Relate research questions or objectives to general problem.

Literature Review

❑ Identify, organize, and link together literature

- Find literature from reputable and appropriate sources.
- Condense literature in an intelligent fashion, using headings and subheadings to draw out major themes and theories.
- Only include the most relevant info for your research and explain its relevance.
- Identify the gap in the research that your study will fill.

❑ Statement of constructs

- Explain each key construct, concept, and keyword in existing research and how they are relevant to your study.

Literature Review/Methods

□ Significance of study

- Identify gap in prior research on the subject and explain significance of your study.
 - If applying a prior theory or framework to new context, explain.

□ Specific research questions and/or hypotheses

- State and support research questions or hypotheses.

Sufficient and Specific Research Questions /Hypotheses

A Tale of Two Policies: Evaluating the Impact of Small Schools of Choice (SSC) and Renewal Schools (RS) on New York City's Low-Performing Minority Student Populations

Q2: Has students' academic performance changed since experiencing the SSC policy intervention?

H2a: There is a difference in student attendance after SSC policy intervention.

H2b: There is a difference in student graduation rate after SSC policy intervention.

H2c: There is a difference in student SAT/Regents scores after SSC policy intervention.

Research Design: Data and Sample

□ Data

- **What data?**
 - Primary data vs. secondary data
- **Data sources?**
 - Data collection methods for primary data.
 - Access to existing secondary data.

□ Sample & Population

- **Sampling procedure specifications**
- **Sample description**
- **External validity considerations**
 - Consider generalizability from sample to population.

Research Design

□ Measurement

- Describe measure(s) for each construct
 - Include support (unless you created the measure)
 - Ensure measures relevant to questions and hypotheses.
- Construction of measures
 - Explain questionnaires, interviews, or other protocols.

□ Design and Procedure

- Ensure design is appropriate for “research questions” and/or “research hypotheses”.
- Describe research procedure
 - Overview of how study was conducted.
 - For archival/secondary data, describe original collection procedures.
 - For original data, describe procedures used for collecting quantitative and qualitative data.
 - Include sufficient information so study could be replicated.

Analysis and Results

□ Statement of results

- State results concisely, clearly, and consistently.
- Results and findings correspond to questions.
- Ensure that they are plausible for research.

□ Tables and figures

- Format table and figures to present relevant results accurately and concisely.
- Explain graphics with interpretation in text.

Recommendations and Conclusions

□ Recommendations

- Explain specific organizational, program, or policy action plan developed from and supported by results.

□ Conclusions

- Summary of each major component of Capstone.
- Highlight significance for practice and research in field.

□ Limitations

- Describe limitations of research design, data, etc.
- Identify how future research should proceed. (research recommendation)

Capstone Paper Presentations

- Final capstone research projects are presented at a Public Policy and Management Forum to faculty and fellow students.

Option 2: Professional Portfolio

Important:

We are still experimenting with the new option of professional portfolio in Spring 2021 semester. Capstone faculty are not required to offer this new option in the sections they teach. Please reach out to your capstone professor to find out whether both options are being offered in your section.

Building a capstone portfolio of your work.

- The portfolio includes a mix of original written work, analytical work, or presentations that demonstrate the student's competencies in the following core areas of the MPA program:
 - 1) To lead and manage in the public interest;
 - 2) To participate in, and contribute to, the policy process;
 - 3) To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make evidence-informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment;
 - 4) To articulate, apply, and advance a public service perspective;
 - 5) To communicate and interact productively and in culturally responsive ways with a diverse and changing workforce and society at large.



Students submit 2-3 pieces of work in each of the 5 core areas

- ▶ This work includes papers, memos, projects, or presentations completed in prior courses in the MPA program.



Papers

Memos

Projects

Presentations

Students work on the pieces for professional portfolio

- ▶ The students revise, reformat, and update the selected prior coursework (as needed) for presentation in the portfolio.
- ▶ In addition, during the capstone semester, the students may include original essays, reflections, or presentations to present their professional accomplishments, community service work, or other relevant experiences related to the MPA.

Websites for portfolio

- ▶ Students generally prepare their portfolio as a professional website in which the student's work is presented online, along with a bio, headshot, resume, social media links, and contact information.
- ▶ This option allows the students to present their portfolio for professional networking and job-seeking after graduation. Some free website building services include Wix, Weebly, WordPress, and Google Sites.
- ▶ Students may also choose to prepare their portfolio as a document (or collection of documents).

Examples of Portfolio Sites

- <https://sbullinger.wixsite.com/eportfolio>
- <https://jayhowellportfolio.weebly.com/>

Capstone Portfolio Presentations

- Final projects – professional portfolios – are presented at a *Public Policy and Management Forum* to faculty and fellow students.

Human Subjects Protection & IRB

IRB

Institutional Review Board

Minimal Risk means that –
the probability and magnitude
of harm or discomfort
anticipated in the research are
not greater than those
ordinarily encountered in daily
life or during routine physical
or psychological examinations
or tests.



Course Level IRB Approval

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- ❑ If you work on a **capstone research paper**, and you intend to **conduct interviews** to collect data information about a program or an organization.

**Course Level IRB Approval
(for MPA capstone students)**

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graph TD; A[Course Level IRB Approval (for MPA capstone students)] --> B[Model Interview Guide]; A --> C[Oral Consent Script];
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Model Interview Guide

Oral Consent Script

Course Level IRB Approval: Benefits & Restrictions

- ❑ You do not need to submit your own IRB review request.
- ❑ You must use the attached invitation script/oral consent script and interview guide for all participants. No other assessments and/or research activities may be administered without the IRB's approval.
- ❑ If you wish to use the data beyond the fulfillment of the capstone course requirements, then you are **REQUIRED** to come back to the IRB with an individual application submission for review and obtain IRB approval prior.

Please consult your capstone professor:

Is my capstone project eligible for “course level IRB approval”?

Are there any specific requirements about data collection?

- how interviews are conducted?
- how interview data are recorded?
- etc.

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Human Subjects Protection & CITI Training



Categories of Data that DO NOT Require IRB Review

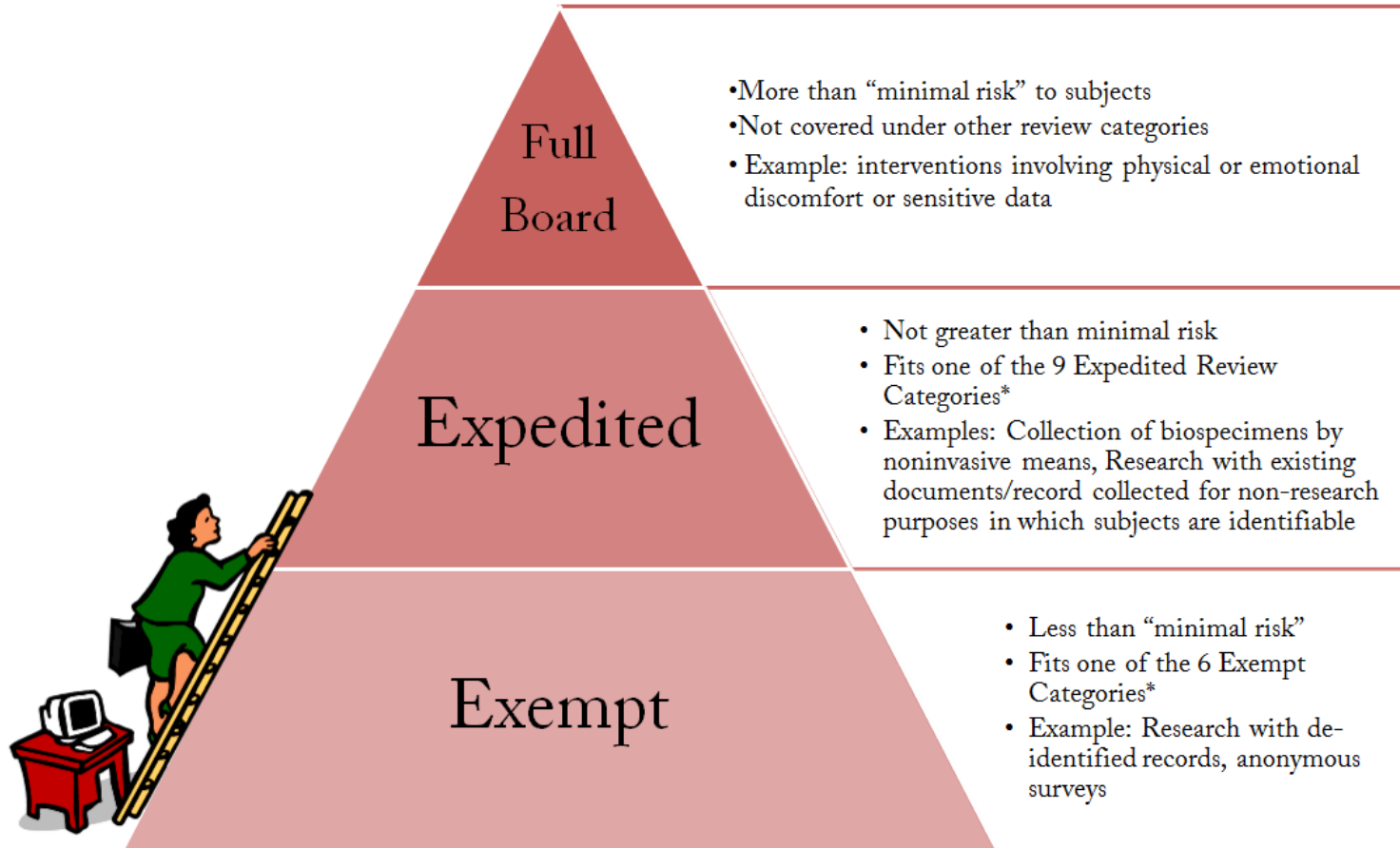
- ▶ Meta-analysis of printed data.
- ▶ Analysis of de-identified, publically available data sets (e.g. Census data, General Social Survey data, etc.)
- ▶ Research on organizations, programs, and projects which utilize information about operations, budget, etc. from representatives or data sources and DOES NOT include identifiable private information about individual members, employees, or staff.

Capstone and IRB Review

- ❑ **Who makes this determination of IRB review?**
 - Students **MUST** consult their Capstone Professor early in the semester if they wish to collect any primary data.
 - Capstone Professor will provide necessary guidance but it is Rutgers IRB that determines whether or not a student's research project requires IRB approval.



Levels of IRB Review



*Defined by federal regulation (45 CFR 46)

Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) Human Subjects Protections Online Training

- ❑ If your capstone project involves collecting original data information from and about human subjects, you must file your own IRB review application & you must complete CITI Human Subjects Protections online training
 - Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Human Subject Protections Basic Course
 - SPAA students select “Rutgers Arts & Science IRB”
- ❑ Instructions on CITI training can be found at <https://orra.rutgers.edu/citi>



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