DOCTORAL CAPSTONE HANDBOOK

DOCTOR OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM (ENTRY-LEVEL)

July 2023

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DOCTORAL CAPSTONE OVERVIEW

Welcome to the entry-level Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) program at the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences (USAHS). The OTD program is designed to meet the standards of the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE, 2020). The OTD program is unique from all other entry-level degree programs at USAHS in that it requires students to complete a *doctoral capstone*. The doctoral capstone is the culminating academic experience of the OTD program.

This handbook is designed to familiarize students, faculty advisors, mentors, and doctoral capstone experience site supervisors with the doctoral capstone. The doctoral capstone is an "in-depth exposure to a concentrated area, which is an integral part of the program's curricular design" (ACOTE, 2020, p. 49). The doctoral capstone allows "for development of in-depth knowledge in the designated area of interest" (ACOTE, 2020, p. 44).

> The goal of the doctoral capstone is to provide an in-depth exposure to one or more of the following: clinical practice skills, research skills, administration, leadership, program and policy development, advocacy, education, and theory development (ACOTE, 2020, p. 44).

See the Appendix and the USAHS Scholarship and Open Access Repository (SOAR) for examples of student capstone papers (USAHS, n.d. -a) and posters (USAHS, n.d. -b).

Students begin the capstone process by selecting a population, group or setting of interest to them. They then begin the needs assessment process to identify a problem within the scope of occupational therapy (OT). Once the problem is identified, the needed solution will serve as the foundation of their capstone. The needs assessment process includes a review of relevant literature, and communication with key stakeholders, to identify a clear need (for a project) that will address the identified problem. Next, the student collaborates with faculty members, the Doctoral Capstone Coordinator (DCC) and mentors to plan their capstone. The doctoral capstone has two components: the *capstone project* and the *capstone experience*.

> The student will complete an individual capstone project to demonstrate synthesis and application of knowledge gained. The student will complete an individual 14-week capstone experience that must be started after completion of all coursework and Level II fieldwork, and completion of preparatory activities [to include a literature review, needs assessment, development of goals/objectives, and creation of an evaluation plan] (ACOTE, 2020, p. 44-45).

The USAHS OTD curriculum prepares students to enter the profession with in-depth knowledge and skills for competent entry-level practice, and ready to practice in a variety of contexts in an ever-changing world. After completion of the capstone project and experience, the student is required to disseminate their project through a poster presentation and submission of their

capstone paper to the USAHS SOAR. Students are encouraged to disseminate their capstone projects further through publication and presentation at professional conferences.

The student's capstone mentor, and capstone experience site supervisor are essential for the successful completion of student's capstone. The student selects a mentor (subject matter expert) based on the expertise required by the student to complete their project. This may be expertise on the client population, the type of service delivery, or the type of methodology the student will use in their capstone project. As such, the mentor does not need to be an occupational therapist. The capstone experience site supervisor provides either direct or general supervision of the capstone student, depending upon the tasks performed by the student and requirements of the capstone experience setting. If the capstone student is not delivering OT services (as defined by applicable state licensure laws), the site supervisor does not need to be an occupational therapist. Collectively, the capstone mentor and capstone experience site supervisor bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to students along their capstone journey.

THE DOCTORAL CAPSTONE SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Capstone Project
This section describes the capstone project timeline and expectations. The student begins the development of their capstone project in term 3 by selecting a topical area of interest and beginning the needs assessment process by reviewing relevant literature and talking to key stakeholders. The following timeline outlines the expected capstone development progression across the terms. The expectations or goals associated with this timeline may be modified based on individual needs in communication with the DCC.

Term 1 & Term 2 (Term 3 & 4 OTD Flex)
Student will:
- Recognize the requirements of the capstone project and experience. This will occur initially in small group meetings with the DCCs.
- Identify the areas where an in-depth experience may occur (E.g. clinical practice, research, "administration, leadership, program and policy development, advocacy, education, and theory development" (ACOTE, 2020, p. 44).
- Describe the distinct value of the OTD degree and communicate to peers the purpose of pursuing the OTD.
- Participate in core courses to enhance understanding of occupation and the OT profession.

Term 3 (Term 5 OTD Flex)
OTD Seminar 1
Student will:
- Explore areas of interest for potential topics suitable for a capstone in collaboration with the DCCs.
- Initiate a more focused literature search to explore potential capstone topics.

Term 4 (Term 7 OTD flex)
OTD Seminar 2
Student will:
- Explore the literature on your identified topic of interest.
- Explore/identify potential sites for the capstone experience through discussions faculty members, key stakeholders, and your DCC.
- Explore potential mentors with support from your DCC.
- Develop your individual capstone learning objectives.
- Submit a preliminary draft of chapter one of your capstone project proposal.
- Outline plans for your continued literature review process and preliminary plans/methods for your potential capstone project.

Term 5 (Term 8 OTD Flex)
OTD Seminar 3
Student will:
- Continue the literature review process and respond to feedback.
- Submit a revised chapter one of your capstone project based on your expanding knowledge from the literature review and your evolving vision of your capstone project.

Term 6 (Term 9 OTD Flex)
OTD Seminar 4
Student will:
- Finalize who will serve as your capstone mentor.
- Continue the literature review process and respond to feedback.
- Submit a revised chapter one of your capstone project based on your expanding knowledge from the literature review and your evolving vision of your capstone project.

Term 7 (Term 10 OTD Flex)
Capstone Project & Capstone Experience 1
Student will:
- Complete OCT 6700 in the first 10 weeks of Term 7 and begin Capstone Experience I in the last 4 weeks of Term 7.
- Submit your complete written capstone proposal (background, literature review, methods) to your DCC in week 10 of OCT 6700.
- Prepare a research application for the Institutional Review Board (IRB) if you plan conduct research, as defined by the IRB.
- Present your capstone proposal (in OCT 6700) to USAHS community, upon approval of your DCC.
- After your successful capstone proposal defense presentation, you will meet with your mentor and your DCC to discuss suggestions to further improve your capstone project.
- The student will create their capstone project deliverable and complete their capstone experience across Term 7 and 8.
- Begin your capstone experience at the approved mentored practice setting/s.
- Establish a memorandum of understanding with your capstone experience site that includes specific capstone experiences objectives.
- Keep a log of the time you spend at your capstone experience sites.
- Identify how you plan to disseminate your capstone results upon completion (E.g. presentation at conferences, publication in refereed publications or lay literature, post presentations on social media such as YouTube, etc.).

Term 8 (Term 11 OTD Flex)
Capstone Experience 2
Student will:

- Complete your capstone experience as approved by your DCC.
- Log time spent at the capstone experience setting(s)
- Coordinate with your site supervisor(s) so that they can complete the student's midterm and final evaluations.
- Finalize and submit your capstone deliverable product(s) and final capstone paper.
- Present a scholarly poster at the USAHS Doctoral Capstone Poster Symposium
- Submit your capstone poster and paper to SOAR.
- Describe plans for further dissemination (e.g., local or national conference, professional publication, etc.)

The Capstone Experience

This section describes the capstone experience timeline and expectations.

The length of the doctoral capstone experience [must] be a minimum of 14 weeks (560 hours). This may be completed on a part-time basis and must be consistent with the individualized specific objectives and capstone project. No more than 20% of the 560 hours can be completed off site from the mentored practice setting(s), to ensure a concentrated experience in the designated area of interest. Time spent off site may include independent study activities such as research and writing [related to the capstone experience]. Prior fieldwork or work experience may not be substituted for this doctoral capstone experience. (ACOTE, 2020, p. 45)

Site Supervisor

The capstone experience site provides a site supervisor who is available to support the student during the capstone experience, and who can collaborate regularly with the student and DCC. The site supervisor does not have to be an occupational therapist but must have expertise consistent with the student's area of focus. The mentored practice setting identifies a site supervisor to collaborate with student mentor(s), student, and DC to develop individualized, specific objectives and plans for supervision.

Minimum Time Requirement

The capstone experience is a minimum of 14 weeks (560 hours). This may be completed on a part-time basis and must be consistent with the individualized specific objectives and culminating project. Experiences may be virtual and/or in-person. No more than 20% of the 560 hours can be completed outside of the mentored practice settings(s). Approval is needed for activities completed outside of the mentored practice setting to ensure compliance with the standard.

Required Weekly Time and Activity Log

Students are required to collaborate with the DCC to create and submit a schedule/outline of how the student plans to obtain their required capstone hours. The student will be required to submit a log of hours and activities weekly and secure the site supervisor's signature verifying hours.

Approval Process for a Day off

Students must submit written requests to the DCC and site supervisor for any desired days off, outside of the normal schedule, prior to the requested time during their capstone experience. Students are further expected to arrive on time at each scheduled experience and are encouraged to arrive early. Students who expect to arrive late are expected to call the site supervisor to notify them prior to the start time and should communicate an anticipated arrival time.

Students are required to make up any absence(s) from the planned capstone experience. For planned absences students must provide supporting documentation to justify the absence. The student must obtain permission from the site supervisor and DCC prior to taking time off. Students must submit a written plan to the site supervisor and DCC documenting how they will make up the missed time that is to be completed prior to completion of the capstone experience. Unexcused absences are not permitted.

Capstone Experience Site Documentation

Site documentation involves two steps: establishment of a Student Affiliation Agreement and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Site documentation begins with a Student Affiliation Agreement. Once a student obtains at least a verbal agreement with a new site that they will accept the student for their capstone experience, the student gather the following information send it to their DCC:
- Name of the site (business/institution/agency)
- Address
- Website
- Phone number
- The name of the contact person for the contract
- The email address of the contact person for the contract

The DCC will submit a New Contract Request form with the above information to the USAHS Clinical Education department contract team to pursue the Student Affiliation Agreement (contract). This step is not needed if USAHS already has a contract with the site.

There must be "a valid memorandum of understanding for the doctoral capstone experience, that, at a minimum, includes individualized specific objectives, plans for supervision or mentoring, and responsibilities of all parties. The memorandum of understanding must be

signed by both parties" (ACOTE, 2020, p. 45). The student collaborates with the site supervisor to identify, and agree upon, site-specific objectives, timelines, and outcomes that the student will complete during the experience. The student completes the MOU during Capstone Experience 1 and updates it as often as needed. If students have more than one site, they will also have more than one MOU.

The site will provide the student with any documentation about site requirements such as dress code, immunization, CPR, or other requirements to participate at the site. The student is required to meet all site requirements to participate at the site. If the student does not meet the requirements, the student will be required to leave the site.

The student is responsible for completing all forms and submitting all forms in an appropriate, timely manner. This includes the weekly time logs, the midterm evaluation, and final evaluation. The student is responsible for scheduling the meetings to secure this documentation.

Site Expectations

- The site staff practices within the ethical and legal scope of their professions.

- The site's philosophy and objectives for client care and clinical education are compatible with those of the University.

- The atmosphere of the site is conducive to staff and student interaction.

- The administration of the site is willing to provide and is supportive of the capstone experience and student program.

- The site is committed to the principle of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action as required by federal legislation.

- During the capstone experience, regular communication between the site supervisor, mentor, the DCC and the student will take place through synchronous and asynchronous discussions.

Student Expectations

- Students must complete their capstone experience within 18 months of their academic preparation and failure to complete within this time frame will result in dismissal from the program. A student may appeal the dismissal to the Academic Appeals Committee as outlined in the Student Handbook.

- Students are expected to be responsive to feedback from their capstone experience site supervisors. Students will be evaluated by their site supervisors via a midterm and final evaluation. The evaluation addresses the student's performance and success in achieving individualized learning and outcome objectives.

- The student will complete all forms and reports appropriately and in a timely manner. This includes scheduling the midterm and final evaluation with the site supervisor and weekly time logs.

- Prior fieldwork experience or work experience may not be substituted for any part of the capstone experience.

OUTLINE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Responsibilities

- Students are responsible to identify an acceptable topic for their capstone (with guidance from the faculty, mentor, and DCC), that is within the scope of OT, and that provides "an in-depth exposure to one or more of the following: clinical practice skills, research skills, administration, leadership, program and policy development, advocacy, education, and theory development" (ACOTE, 2020, P. 44).
- Students are responsible to identify a suitable capstone experience mentored practice setting (with guidance from the faculty, mentor, and DCC), that is "consistent with [their] individualized specific objectives and capstone project" (ACOTE, 2020, p. 45).
- Students are responsible to independently arrange for and finance their housing and transportation for the capstone experience.
- Students must communicate with their DCC about any desired changes in their approved capstone project and/or experience sites.
- Additionally, students are responsible for the following:
  - Maintain regular contact with site mentor and faculty mentor once assigned
  - Obtain and provide a copy of the mentor's curriculum vitae (CV) or resume to the DCC
  - Complete student requirements (e.g., background check/fingerprints/etc.)
  - Complete a needs assessment and literature review prior to the capstone experience
  - Collaborate with the mentor and capstone experience site supervisor to develop individualized specific goals/objectives, evaluation, and supervision plan for the capstone experience
  - Notify the DCC and supervisor of any absences or concerns about performance
  - Complete a capstone experience of a minimum of 14 weeks and 560 hours "consistent with the individualized specific objectives and capstone project" (ACOTE, 2020, 45)
  - Maintain a time log of the capstone experience
  - Evaluate the capstone experience site and site supervisor to help continue to improve educational outcomes
  - Write letters of appreciation to the site mentor and applicable site administrators

Mentor (Subject Expert)

- Provide guidance and advice to the capstone student within the mentor's area of expertise (the mentor does not need to be an occupational therapist)

- Collaborate with the student and the DCC to establish learning objectives for the capstone experience

- Sign the Mentor Agreement Form to demonstrate agreement with the student's individualized objectives and plan

- Collaborate with the student and DCC to provide expert content feedback on the capstone project

Site Supervisor

- Supervise and the doctoral student during their capstone experience in keeping with state licensure laws as applicable. The site supervisor does not need to be an occupational therapist unless the student will provide skilled OT services.

- Collaborate with the student and DCC with feedback on the student's performance

- Collaborate on the development of the student's individualized specific objectives and plan for supervision

- Sign the MOU to demonstrate agreement with the student's individualized objectives and plan

- Evaluate student performance at complete midterm and final evaluation forms

- Verify the number of hours the student has spent "on site"

Doctoral Capstone Coordinator

- Assure compliance with ACOTE D standards (ACOTE, 2020, p. 44-46)

- Instruct in the OTD Seminar courses, Capstone Project Course and Doctoral Capstone Experience courses as assigned by the program director.

- Submit New Contract Requests for new capstone experience sites

- Follow up on the status of Student Affiliation Agreements (contracts)

- Advise students on site selection

- Confirm willingness/commitment from site to accept the student

- Track paperwork and logistics

- Monitor student requirements (background check/fingerprints/CPR, etc.)

- Sign the MOU to demonstrate agreement with the student's individualized objectives and plan

- Collaborate on any student issues with their capstone experience

COMMUNICATION

Communication between the Student, and Site Supervisor, and Doctoral Capstone Coordinator

At the mid-term and end of the doctoral capstone experience, the site supervisor completes and signs evaluation. Next, the student uploads the form into the Blackboard course shell.

Documentation of Communication

When issues arise, academic faculty must document necessary communication with student, mentor(s) and/or site supervisor. This information is kept confidential and is kept in the procession of the DCC. This document should include the names of people involved in the conversation, who initiated the call, content of the conversation, action plan and follow up.

Communication with the Capstone Experience Sites

Communication with the capstone experience site is to be from the student, the DCC, the Clinical Education contract team, and or program director. Other individuals (such as family members, friends, etc.) may not contact the clinical sites at any time.

EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Evaluation is professional judgment about the student's performance relative to identified expectations. Evaluation of performance is a matter of professional judgment and subjective opinion is difficult to avoid. **The initial discussion between the student, the DCC, and site supervisor about strengths, weaknesses, and goals is, therefore, critical**. If expectations are clarified initially, there will be fewer misunderstandings about evaluation of performance. Unless proven otherwise, it is assumed that all evaluators are fair and reasonable in their expectations and evaluation of students. It is also assumed that all students set high expectations for their own performance and are eager to take on the challenges presented to them.

Capstone Experience Evaluation Tool
This evaluation tool is part of the capstone experience course, so it is subject to periodic revision. This tool is completed at midterm and end of the capstone experience. The site supervisor is responsible for completing the midterm and final assessment via the capstone experience Evaluation Tool. The site supervisor and student should then meet to discuss both evaluations. At the end of the experience, the student is responsible for ensuring the form is provided to the site supervisor in a timely manner and electronic signatures are obtained. Evaluations without signatures will not be accepted.

Doctoral Capstone Coordinator's Evaluation of Student Performance
This tool is completed at the end of Term 8. This evaluation tool is part of the capstone experience course, so it is subject to periodic revision. The DCC is responsible for completing the Doctoral Capstone Coordinator's Evaluation of Student Performance, which evaluates project development, professional growth/development, products, and professional behavior. Products include the final capstone paper, poster, and project. Students work closely with their DCC and mentor to determine when their work is ready for final submission. The DCC will inform the student when their work meets expectations.

All work must be submitted, revised, and subsequently graded by the time 'grades are due for graduates' as indicated on academic calendar. DCCs may award the temporary grade of Incomplete (I) when a student is experiencing extenuating circumstances beyond their control that prevents the student from completing course requirements before the end of the registered term. Please see university academic policies regarding temporary grades. Please refer to the University Catalog/Handbook for all policies related to regarding temporary grades.

GENERAL CAPSTONE PROJECT AND EXPERIENCE POLICIES

Personal Safety
The personal safety of everyone is very important. Please refer to the University Catalog/Handbook for all Safety and Security policies. During an experience, sites should provide the student with any helpful information relating to potential personal safety hazards and ways to minimize risk. If a student has any concerns about their personal safety, they should discuss it with their site mentor and contact their DCC.

Dress Code
Students are expected to always present a professional appearance in alignment with the site expectations. Please refer to the University Catalog/Handbook for all policies related to professional dress and appearance code.

Site Changes/Cancellations to Capstone Experiences
Due to unforeseen circumstances, a student may encounter a change or cancellation at the mentored practice setting.

If a mentored practice setting cancels the student placement, the student will notify the DCC immediately and an individual plan for securing a new capstone experience mentored practice setting will be established.

If the student has concerns about a setting, students may request a change of capstone experience mentored practice setting but the decision to change must be made in consultation with the DCC and/or the PD. Students MAY NOT independently cancel a scheduled and approved capstone experience at a mentored practice setting once the capstone project is approved and a memorandum of understanding is established. Placements for the capstone experience are considered firm commitments.

If circumstances at an approved capstone experience setting lead the student to think it is in their best interest to leave the setting (E.g., unethical or illegal behavior, harassment, unsafe practices, etc.), the student should immediately inform the DCC of the situation. The process of reassignment should be initiated by the student as soon as a problem is identified. The student is expected to contact the DCC for instructions on how to address the situation. The DCC will handle all requests for reassignment on a case-by-case basis. Students may be required to submit written documentation of their concerns before the request is considered. Requests for leave for any other personal reason will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Circumstances may lead the DCC to determine that a student should be removed from a scheduled capstone experience setting. Such circumstances will be dealt with on an individual basis with possible reassignments made at the discretion of the DCC based upon the nature of the site's request or other circumstances that may indicate a student should not remain at a

setting. When a reassignment is warranted, the DCC and student will work in collaboration to find another suitable site.

The DCC may determine that a student should be removed from an approved capstone experience mentored practice setting as a result of student actions or behavior (E.g., unethical or illegal behavior, harassment, unsafe practices, etc.).

> **Please note - If a mentored practice setting terminates the experience due to poor student attendance or performance, this will impact the overall grade and may impact capstone completion/graduation.**

Please refer to the University Catalog/Handbook for all grading policies.

Attendance Policy
The length of the doctoral capstone experience must be a minimum of 14 weeks (560 hours). This may be completed on a part-time basis and must be consistent with the individualized specific objectives and capstone project. No more than 20% of the 560 hours can be completed off site from the mentored practice setting(s), to ensure a concentrated experience in the designated area of interest. Time spent off site may include independent study activities such as research and writing with direct relation to the project or experience objectives (ACOTE D.1.5).

During the experience, students maintain a time log to document the number of hours engaged in the experience and submit the log as directed by the DCC. Please refer to the University Catalog/Handbook for attendance policies.

Please refer to the University Catalog/Handbook for attendance policies.

Level I and Level II fieldwork hours and previous work experience cannot be substituted for any part of the capstone experience (ACOTE, 2020, p. 45).

Absences
Any time missed from the capstone experience due to illness or other unexpected events will need to be made-up so that the 14-week/ 560 hour requirement is met. Any offsite time must be approved by the DCC.

Regardless of the reason for missing experiential time, all students must document their plan to complete the activities/objectives they will miss or have missed during the absence.
Students shall follow the schedule of the mentored practice setting including holidays. Students must submit written requests to the DCC and site supervisor(s) for any days off, prior to the requested time during their capstone experience. Students are further expected to be prompt to each scheduled capstone experience and are encouraged to arrive early. Students who

expect to be tardy are to call the site supervisor(s) to notify them prior to the start time and should communicate an expected arrival time.

- Students are required to make up any excused absence(s); these absences require supporting documentation and are required to be approved by the DCC and site supervisor prior to taking time off. Students must submit a written plan to the DCC and site supervisor documenting how they will make up the missed time that is to be completed prior to completion of the capstone experience. Unexcused absences are not permitted.

- Students who are habitually tardy or attempt to depart early are subject to failure on professional indicators, with excessive tardiness and absenteeism putting them at risk of failing the Capstone Experience course.

Conference Attendance
Students are encouraged to attend professional conferences and meetings during their capstone experience; however, it is the decision of the site supervisor to excuse the student to attend conferences. Students who plan to attend should include the conference attendance as a site or project objective. Students must discuss this with their DCC, and site supervisor first and have the days to attend incorporated into the capstone experience timeline. The time at the conference can be counted towards the 560-hour requirement if it aligns with site-specific objectives or project objectives.

Please refer to the University Catalog/Handbook for other policies related to illness, counselling, professional behavior and misconduct.

CAPSTONE PRODUCTS AND OUTLINES

As part of your doctoral capstone, you will develop four scholarly products:

1. The Preliminary Introduction to the Capstone Project (Chapter 1)

2. The Capstone Project Proposal (Chapter 1 -3)

3. The Capstone Project Paper (Chapters 1-5)

4. The Capstone Poster Presentation

 The following will serve as a timeline for the scholarly products you will produce for your capstone, as well as a guide to what should be included in each of the scholarly products.

Preliminary Introduction to the Capstone Project (Scholarly Product #1)
In your fourth term, as part of the course OCT6420 – *OTD Seminar 2,* you will write a preliminary introduction to your capstone project that serves as an early draft of Chapter 1 of your capstone proposal. The doctoral capstone is intended to be an integrative and transformative learning experience. It is integrative in that you are expected to incorporate all that you have learned throughout the program to identify a problem that needs to be addressed, and to develop a project to address the identified problem. That is**, you must establish the need for your planned project.** The capstone is also transformative in that it changes you. Specifically, it is intended to change your way of thinking about OT, to prepare you to identify the needs of communities and the profession, and to develop solutions to address those needs. Additionally, the capstone process is intended to help you develop additional skills in the identification and use of scholarly literature; the use of critical thinking to identify and solve problems; and to effectively communicate through writing.

In chapter 1, you must articulate your vision of a viable capstone project, framed within the context of supporting OT theory, and other supporting theories as applicable. You may be asking yourself, "How do I do that?" Since the capstone is a learning experience, it is driven by what you want to learn. Since you will spend hundreds of hours working on your capstone, by the end of it, you will have become a de facto expert in that area. As such, deciding upon what expertise you want to develop is an important part of the capstone planning process. Through your coursework, you began to learn about OT practice and should have developed a sense of what practice area interests you the most. Based upon this interest, you will look at the scholarly literature in your area of interest to identify knowledge gaps and to become aware of potential problems facing the field. Additionally, you can communicate with your faculty members, and other therapists, to get a sense of problems that need to be addressed, and which can be addressed through a capstone project.

Since the capstone consists of both the capstone project and the capstone experience in a mentored practice setting, it is critical that your envisioned capstone project is developed simultaneously with the identification of a mentored practice setting, as you develop proposal, it should be planned with a specific capstone experience mentored practice setting in mind.

Chapter 1 is expected to be a clear presentation of the background that identifies the problem, a well-defined statement of the problem, and a well-articulated vision of your capstone project, as framed by supporting theory. Students are not limited to OT theory. It must include your preliminary learning objectives and outcome objectives and should identify your intended mentored practice setting. Please note that this is only a proposal, so there will be many drafts of this document as it transforms from the preliminary draft to your solid Chapter 1 of your proposal. Expect changes to occur, especially to your objectives. Chapter 1 will be reviewed and approved by the DCC. The *Preliminary Introduction to the Capstone Project* (Chapter 1) consists of the following:

- Background: This is a succinct presentation of scholarly literature that identifies the problem that will be addressed in the capstone project. It must demonstrate clear linkages to OT theory and clearly show how OT theory will shape the capstone project.
- Statement of the Problem: This is a succinct statement of an issue or situation that requires resolution, that is related to OT the profession, clinical practice, or the occupational needs of a population, and that is within the OT scope of practice.
- Purpose statement: This is a succinct statement of what you will do to resolve the identified problem. That is, you state how you will address the problem.
- Rationale for proposed project: This is as a description of "why" the project should be done.
- Significance of the proposed project: This is a description of the envisioned impact of the project on the target population, facility, practice, profession or society.
- Preliminary project objectives: This is a list of clear statements of what your plan to learn (learning objectives) and what you will produce (outcome objectives) in the process of completing your capstone project. Please label each set of objectives in separate lists at this stage.

Capstone Project Proposal (Scholarly Product #2)
You will complete the final elements of your comprehensive *capstone project proposal* during your seventh term as part of the course OCT6700 – *Capstone Project*. The final capstone project proposal will be reviewed and approved by the DCC in collaboration with your Doctoral Capstone Team. The capstone project proposal should be supported by relevant theory and use language consistent with the American Occupational Therapy Association (2020) occupational therapy practice framework. The capstone project proposal consists of three chapters:

Introduction to the Capstone Project – Chapter 1 *consists of the following:*

- Background

- Statement of the problem

- Purpose statement

- Rationale

- Significance

- Objectives

- Definition of terms: This is a description of terms which are not in common use, that are key to understanding the project. [This is OPTIONAL]. Talk with your DCC to determine if a definition section is needed. It is often better to define key terms in-text as they arise.

- Assumptions, limitations, and delimitations: These are statements of what you believe to be true, the constraints on your project outside your control, and the constraints on your project that are within your control.

Literature review – Chapter 2
This is a comprehensive discussion of the literature relevant to your capstone. Specifically, you will demonstrate that you have reviewed the literature so that you know what you need to know to do what you stated you would do in your purpose statement. You will begin the literature review process in OTD Seminar 2 and continue to add to your body of literature in OTD Seminar 3 & 4. The expectation is to have this completed by week-four of the Capstone Project course. Chapter 2 consists of the following:

- Introduction

- Summarize and synthesize the literature related to the project. Include identifying themes (e.g. the magnitude of the topic, incidence, prevalence, impact on occupation, current OT intervention, OT theory related to the identified problem or planned project, a summary of relevant literature on the planned methodology, etc.), point out gaps in literature, and present bias-free information to support your project. You will use a variety of headings and subheadings dependent on your identified themes and literature.

Methods/Project Description - Chapter 3
In this chapter, you will describe how you plan to create the product you described in your purpose statement. You must demonstrate that you have a viable plan, and timeline to accomplish your project in the time available. Chapter 3 consists of the following:

- Introduction (Summary of Chapter 1)

- Process/Methods – description of procedure of your project in a logical, detailed, and precise manner

Process/Methods for Research Projects Only

- Hypotheses

- Research question

- Design

- Participants/Sample

- Data Sources

- Recruitment procedures

- Instrumentation

- Data Collection

- Data Analysis

- Informed Consent

Process/Methods for Program Development Projects

- Target setting, group or population

- Program goals

- Measures used to inform the project (if continuing the needs assessment)

- Planned data analysis (if continuing the needs assessment)

- Program outline (Should include at a minimum, main program component, anticipated resources needed, etc.) Development and implementation process

- Evaluation components (if applicable)

Process/Methods for Educational Projects (E.g. guidebooks, webpages, video series, short courses, etc.)

- Target audience, group or population (E.g., clients, caregivers, therapists, etc.)

- Educational product outline (Should include at a minimum, main headings and subheadings, number of sessions, etc.)

- Development and implementation process (if implementation is planned)

- Evaluation components (if applicable)

- Alignment with Objectives

- Conceptual Framework

- Timeline of project (E.g. Gantt chart)

- Data Analysis (if applicable) -Only include planned analysis if you are collecting data that requires analysis.

- Envisioned Next Steps/Conclusion - The "envision next steps" will consist of your beginning thoughts of what will become your discussion chapter in your final capstone paper.

Capstone Project Paper (Scholarly Product #3)
You will complete the final components of your *capstone project paper* as part of OCT6832 – *Capstone Experience 2.* Your capstone project paper is the scholarly work in which you document your capstone project.   The DCC will review your capstone project paper, in consultation with your capstone mentor, to determine that it has met the level of academic rigor expected of a doctoral capstone. The DCC will determine when this expectation has been met and will approve the final capstone paper at that time. You should plan to complete the paper by the end of week 12, or when assigned by your DCC, to allow time for revisions if needed. The capstone project paper consists of five chapters (this may vary depending upon your project).

Introduction - Chapter 1
Described above.

Literature Review - Chapter 2
Described above.

Methods/Project Description - Chapter 3
Described above.

Results & Analysis   -Chapter 4
This chapter is used to detail the results and analysis of any data that was gathered as part of the capstone project <u>if a research type project was implemented</u>. The results section reports the data that was collected, and the analysis section reports what was done with the data that was gathered. In some capstone types, this section may detail portions of your needs assessment, program outcomes, and relevant feedback. Work with your DCC to select the relevant outline and subheadings for developing and writing this chapter.

For some projects, this chapter can be written as an article intended for an outside audience, such as a description suitable for publication in OT Practice magazine. This is especially appropriate for educational or advocacy projects such as webpages, YouTube channels, or guidebooks that are accessible via Quick Response (QR) when a rapid dissemination is desirable.

In either case, **the product that is developed as the capstone project (E.g. educational products, guidebooks, webpage text and links, video text and links, program materials, etc. See Appendix) is typically presented as an appendix or appendices to the capstone paper.**

Summary, Conclusions, Discussion -Chapter 5
This chapter should open with a summary of the capstone project. This may include a description of any changes in your methodology from what you planned in your proposal. If original data was collected or observations were made from the development or implementation of the project, the doctoral candidate should share what conclusions they have drawn from them.

The discussion section answers the question – "So what?" That is, the doctoral candidate must discuss what the impact is of the project on the literature, the target population, facility, OT practice, the OT profession or society. This chapter should show how the project relates to and contributes to the literature on the topic. The discussion should also identify both the strengths and limitations of the project. The discussion should articulate a detailed vision of the logical next steps regarding the continued development of a line of scholarship, practice, or research based upon the results of the capstone project – "Now what?" The headings may be as follows:

- **Introduction**

- **Summary**

- **Strengths and Limitations**
  - Strengths and Weaknesses
  - Limitations

- **Discussion**
  - Implications of the Project
  - Recommendations

- **Conclusion**

The Capstone Poster Presentation (Scholarly Product #4)
Initial dissemination of your work will occur through the OTD Capstone Project Poster Symposium. You will create a scholarly poster and a 10–20-minute oral presentation to showcase your work. Your DCC will inform you of the timing and scheduling of the symposium. In addition, your DCC will provide guidance on the required format. See the SOAR OTD Capstone Symposia (USAHS, n.d. -b) for examples of capstone posters.

References

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Shahin, J., Kasyan-Howe, P., & Domville, K. (2021, April 15). *Occupational therapy in youth violence: An occupation-based program for at-risk youth.* [Poster]. Virtual OTD Capstone Symposium, University of St Augustine for Health Sciences. https://soar.usa.edu/otdcapstonesspring2021/15

Starvaggi, S., & Smith, M. (2023, May 17). *Is college liberating for all students? the impact of sensory challenges on participation of students on the autism spectrum and with other neurodivergent diagnoses.* [Poster]. Virtual OTD Capstone Symposium, University of St Augustine for Health Sciences. https://soar.usa.edu/otdcapstonesspring2023/35

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University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences. (n.d. -b) *OTD Capstone Symposia.* https://soar.usa.edu/otdcapstonesymposia/

APPENDIX

Capstone Types and Potential Products

Problem	Purpose/Project Product	Project Type
"Attractions such as the Jacksonville Zoo can be challenging for those with [autism spectrum disorder (ASD)] without proper accommodations" (Schermerhorn, et al., 2023).	"Advocate for updated evidence-based sensory accommodations at the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens for those with an ASD diagnosis with the intention of creating a more inclusive zoo experience" (Schermerhorn, et al., 2023).	Education/ Advocacy
"People with disabilities (PWDP "PWD may experience limited access to CrossFit due to structural and social barriers to access equipment and participating in movements" (Adams, 2022).	"Develop a program that improves access to desired exercises and equipment in CrossFit for PWD" (Adams, 2022).	Program development
"OT practitioners do not have an OT practice guideline, protocol, or manualized intervention available to guide OT practice when working with clients with SUDs." (Ardoin, 2022).	"Develop an OT guidebook for OT practitioners working with individuals with SUDs using the theoretical framework of the Model of Human Occupation (Ardoin, 2022).	Education
"There is a lack of discussion on how to promote occupational rights in occupational therapy practice when faced with institutional, cultural, political, personal, and interpersonal barriers in the workplace" (Arakaki, 2022).	Create "workshops that stimulated individual and collective critical reflection, discussion, and collaboration on how to implement occupational rights into daily practice" (Arakaki, 2022).	Education/ Advocacy
"OT practitioners are unaware of the potential therapeutic properties of video games they have not played, so are unable to integrate unfamiliar video games	"Develop an online database of commercial video games, and their therapeutic properties, to facilitate their use as therapeutic media in OT	Education/ Clinical practice

as therapeutic media in clinical practice." (Brinkman, et al, 2023).	practice" (Brinkman, et al., 2023).	
The lack social participation and self-regulation skills in at-risk youths can lead to youth violence and other maladaptive behaviors.	Create a "program to improve social participation and self-regulation skills in at-risk youth" (Shahin, et al., 2021).	Program Development
It is not known "how parents [of children with a pediatric feeding disorder] manage behaviors and stress during mealtime routines" (Patino, 2021).	Conduct a qualitative study to "identify and analyze how parents of children with PFD manage maladaptive mealtime behaviors and parental stress" (Patino, 2021).	Research
There is a "lack of knowledge of adaptive sports equipment amongst clinicians, coaches, & athletes with disabilities is a barrier to participation in adaptive sports" (Chown, et al. 2023).	"Create an online resource that describes the types of adaptive equipment available to enable participation in adaptive sports by athletes with disabilities" Chown, et al., 2023).	Education/ Clinical practice
"Neurodivergent college students report sensory-based challenges in their campus environments, which interfere with their academic, daily, and occupational participation; it is currently unknown how to support these sensory-related needs" (Starvaggi et al., 2023).	[Conduct a study] "to identify challenging sensory features within environments on a college campus that limit the occupational participation and performance of neurodivergent students with sensory processing differences" (Starvaggi, et al., 2023).	Research

Note. This table presents examples of capstone projects for you to better understand the range of potential projects. You should discuss your vision with your DCC. Your DCC will help you to shape your capstone vision and ensure your capstone is of acceptable academic rigor. See these SOAR links for additional examples of capstone papers (https://soar.usa.edu/capstones/) and capstone symposium posters (https://soar.usa.edu/otdcapstonesymposia/).