



**Central Connecticut State University**

**Special Project Capstone**

**(Plan C or E)**

**A Handbook and Writer's Guide  
For  
Graduate Students**

**Revised April, 2011**

**Community of Scholars**

**To facilitate active and ongoing participation, community, and interaction of faculty and students around a shared commitment to the advancement of knowledge through innovation and research.**

# The Special Project as the Capstone Experience

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## Introduction

Congratulations! You are going to engage in the Special Project, one of the graduate capstone experiences at Central Connecticut State University for students in master's programs. Your project will be a demanding and intellectually challenging task. You will learn and practice the skills required for organized research and documentation, analysis of information and effective communication. In doing your project you will be making the transition from one who is a consumer of knowledge to one who actively contributes to the knowledge base of their field or discipline. *You are becoming part of the Graduate Studies Community of Scholars by advancing knowledge through innovation and research.*

This handbook contains general guidelines for completing the special project capstone. However, since special projects can take multiple forms, such as *applied research, action research, exegesis, exhibitions, performances, and curriculum design and development*, the students should consult their departments for specific guidelines for the various approaches.

The Special Project Handbook has three chapters as well as ten appendices. Chapter I provides general guidelines to govern all special projects, regardless of the approach used by the department. Chapter 2 discusses specific standards (policies and requirements) required by the School of Graduate Studies in regard to special projects. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the courses designated as Special Projects and the approaches that departments may choose for their special projects. The ten appendices provide important information. These cover the Human Studies and Institutional Animal Use and Care Councils, as well as sample forms and documents that are needed for your special project. Appendix (H) is an approval form, signed by the student and advisor, to digitize the special project and post it at Elihu Burritt's Library homepage. The School of Graduate Studies offers this option in conjunction with the Burritt Library for students who provide the digitized version of their special project and submit the signed form. Appendix I contains a rubric developed and approved by the Graduate Studies Committee meant to inform you of criteria by which your special project will be assessed. Lastly, Appendix J is the Application for Graduation. You must complete and submit this form to the Office of Graduate Studies in order for your planned program to be audited and processed for graduation.

My thanks to the Graduate Studies Policy Standing Committee and all faculty members who contributed information to this handbook to help students successfully complete their capstone.

While every effort will be made to keep this *Handbook* up-to-date, please confer with your graduate advisor about any recent changes that may have taken place. Please contact the School of Graduate Studies Office, Barnard Hall, room 102, 860-832-2363, if you have questions.

Writing a Special Project takes time, hard work, and patience. Nonetheless, you should find it to be a worthwhile and rewarding endeavor. I wish you successful completion of your Special Project work.

Dr. Paulette Lemma  
Associate Vice President Academic Affairs/  
Dean, School of Graduate Studies

## Chapter 1

### The Special Project as the Capstone Experience

The Special Project is a culmination of the Master's Program for students who elect Plans C or E for their Graduate Studies capstone experience at CCSU. Specific guidelines depend on the approach the Special Project takes within the individual departments. Nonetheless, all Special Project Capstones provide an opportunity for students to complete an academically rigorous, professional project that contributes in some meaningful way to the discipline and communities to which they belong. The Project should reflect an understanding of knowledge related to the discipline or field and an ability to apply this knowledge. The capstone represents the student's ability to demonstrate a synthesis of the master's program. Students completing Plan C receive valuable mentoring by their faculty supervisor and committee members. Students in Plan E are in classes with other students who are all working on similar approaches to the Special Project, led by an instructor who provides mentoring and guidance.

#### Registering for the Special Project

To register in the special project capstone, **Plan C**, you must complete the Graduate Capstone Course Registration form (Appendix A) and obtain the necessary signatures. The Dean, School of Graduate Studies, is the last person to sign the form which must be submitted to Barnard 102 for her signature. You should register for the special project in the registration period for the semester you intend to begin work with your special project advisor on the proposal. You must register using the *Capstone Course Registration Form* during the regular registration period. No capstone forms will be accepted after the add/drop registration period ends (i.e., after the third week of classes).

To register in the special project capstone, **Plan E**, you must register for the department's designated course during the regular registration period as you would for any other coursework. (Some departments require special permission by the department chair.)

In order for you to register in the special project capstone (whether C or E), graduate policy requires that you have at least a 3.00 overall GPA and that you have completed 18 credits in programs with 30-35 credits or 24 credits in programs with 36 or more credits.

## **Special Project Guidelines**

Each special project, regardless of the form it ultimately takes, must contain the following:

1. Abstract
2. Definition of the Project
3. Project Objective (its purpose, a rationale for conducting the project)
4. Review of Literature
5. Research Methods or Plans for conducting the Project
6. Results and/or Findings
7. Summary/Conclusion
8. Bibliography/References
9. Human Studies/IACUC approval or exemption if appropriate
10. Appendices as appropriate
11. Elihu Burritt Reproduction Approval form (optional)

The Department will specify the Style and Format to be used, the expected size of the committee, and whether an oral defense or an artistic performance/exhibition is required.

## **Approaches to the Special Project**

Various approaches exist for completing Special Projects, such as those that follow:

1. An extended research paper, based on primary and/or secondary sources.
2. An artistic exhibition or creative performance.
3. An action research project in a classroom or professional setting.
4. An applied project of practical research that includes details of the design and implementation of a product.
5. An internship with an accompanying paper that documents the experience and includes descriptive data with analysis.
6. A curriculum project that is designed, implemented, and evaluated.

As indicated above, what constitutes an appropriate special project varies between disciplines and among the departments offering this option. Although no single description of a Special Project exists, each is an exercise in rigorous research and application to the discipline.

## **Common Characteristics**

A special project is an exercise in applied research. Special Projects stress problem solving and knowledge application. They normally consist of an expansion or synthesis of work from courses within the student's planned program. In this regard, to complete the Special Project successfully, the student must demonstrate mastery over both the specific content area and the methodology of the discipline.

A second common element to all special projects involves examining a specific topic of interest related to the discipline, chosen with the Special Project faculty supervisor. The topic should focus on a limited area and explore an issue or question related to their discipline. Students are asked to demonstrate their skills in using the methodologies of their fields and applying their knowledge to the selected topic of interest. It also requires the student to have an in-depth

understanding of the particular area of interest. The student must know the current “state of the art” or literature if they are to add to it.

Third, a special project represents an opportunity to work closely with one or more faculty members in your field. One characteristic of good graduate education is the opportunity for faculty and students to work together in a close relationship characterized as mentoring. Nuances, connected to the discipline, are best conveyed in the context of a close working relationship. Working on a special project under the supervision of faculty provides an opportunity for learning that goes beyond what is found in other graduate school activities.

A final characteristic of a special project is more personal in nature: A special project is an exercise in self-discipline. Completing a special project requires sustained initiative and focus for an extended period of time. YOU, the student, provide the structure of your work. The choice of topic is largely yours. Faculty will generally look to you to be the initiator of your special project work. A Master’s degree acknowledges you as a professional in your field; the mark of a professional is the ability to be self-motivated and self-directed.

To recap, a special project is a document that entails independent activity, with research that is integrated into its application. The special project is undertaken to explore an issue, problem or topic of interest that is applicable to the discipline or field. The goal of this activity is to synthesize what you have learned throughout your planned program of study, to add new or replicated knowledge to the discipline, and to demonstrate competency and worthiness of an advanced degree in the field.

### **The Special Project Process**

Major steps for the planning, executing, and writing processes are presented in Figure 1. While the tabular presentation implies a linear progression, in fact, it rarely happens that way.

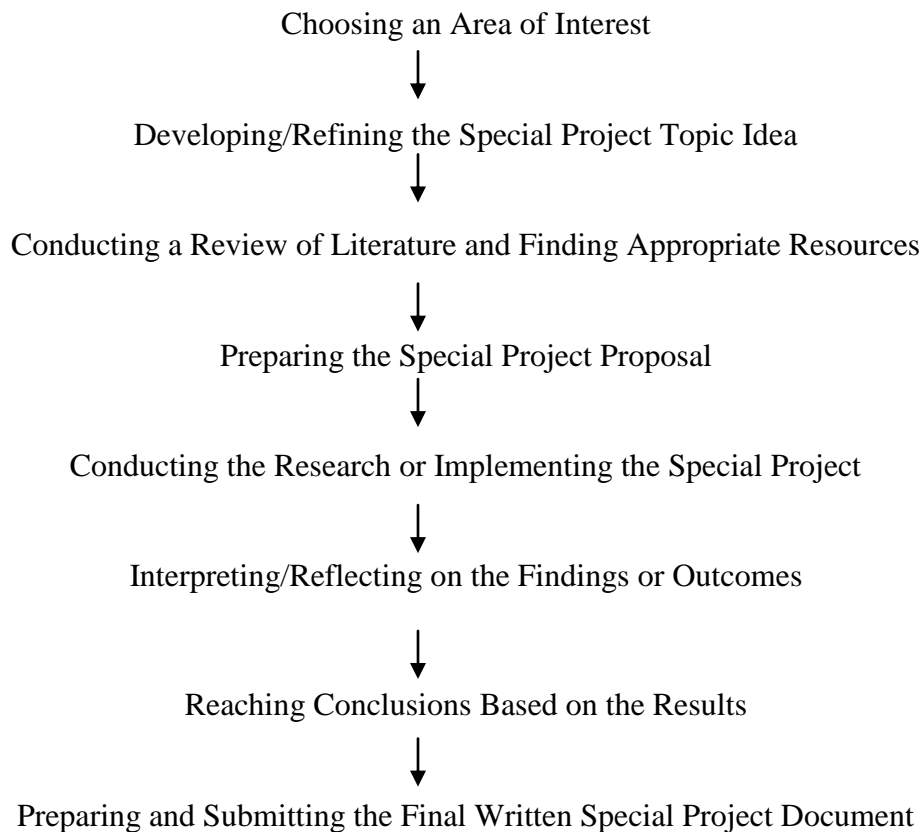
The first and often most difficult step for many students is selecting an idea or focus for the Special Project idea. Many students expect that a special project topic should suddenly come to them as a result of their own reflection. While at times this does happen, a more common process is that a person first identifies a general topic area and, then, following more examination of that area and consultation with his/her advisor, the student begins to focus more specifically on a topic that is appropriate for a special project. The sources from which the topic emanates are several: it may represent a topic in which students have had a long-standing personal interest; it may be a topic found stimulating in one or more classes; it may arise through discussions with instructors, advisors, or classmates; it may come from reading current books or journals in your field; or it may come from some organization or group that presents a problem or issue for resolution. Students should expect to spend time and patience on refining their Special Project topic.

### Some “Dos” and “Don'ts” for Selecting the Special Project Topic<sup>1</sup>

1. **Do** choose an idea that can sustain your interest over a long period of time.
2. **Do** write down interesting ideas, thoughts and quotations as you come across them in your readings as well as notes on discussions with faculty and peers, etc.
3. **Do not** choose topics that are overly ambitious. No project will be the final word on any particular topic.
4. **Do not** go it alone. Coming up with a topic is a negotiated effort between you and your advisor. Regularly talk with your advisor about your ideas.

<sup>1</sup>adapted from Rudestam & Newton, 1992.

**Figure 1**  
**Steps for Planning, Executing, and Writing the Special Project**



A key part of refining your topic of interest involves a critical literature review of the field. This review does several things: (1) makes you aware of the current "state of the art" and knowledge base of the area; (2) helps you to identify gaps, *i.e.*, key issues or questions around this topic that need to be explored; and (3) informs you about the kinds of methodologies that have been used to explore aspects of this topic. Keeping good notes on the material you read (including all information needed for a proper bibliographic citation in the style utilized in your department) will help you when you write your special project.

Today, almost all literature searches begin with (but are not limited to!) electronic search techniques. All major abstracts are computerized and can be searched via author, subject, and/or keywords. A complete description of how to use the various electronic databases is beyond the scope of this manual, but Burritt Library provides specific instructions on using the many databases on *Consuls* and in the reference section (third floor) of the library, as well as regularly offering classes in search techniques. Please consult with the reference librarian for further information.

### **Five Key Issues**

As you read through the literature, you will gain a better understanding of what is known about your topic. At this point, it is advisable to begin discussing your ideas with departmental faculty (either within the specific class for Plan E or with designated faculty for Plan C). The suitability of your topic refers not only to the quality of the idea, but to logistical considerations that will have an impact on your ability to complete the project. Indeed, students often have good research ideas which, for a variety of reasons, they may be unable to carry out. Five key issues to consider: (1) time, (2) cost, (3) access to needed resources, (4) faculty support and (5) approval.

The first consideration is time: How long will the project take? A special project should represent a substantial effort on one's part, but it is not expected to be one's life work. While there are no hard and fast guidelines, a special project (once a workable idea is developed) should take no more than one to two semesters. A student who puts in regular, consistent effort on the project and meets regularly with the faculty advisor should be able to bring the special project to a successful close. If it seems that a possible topic would take a longer time to complete (assuming regular effort), you should consider narrowing the topic or selecting another topic.

A second consideration is cost. Will the project entail considerable out-of-pocket expense? Most students expect to (and do) spend some money on research expenses, but the amount should not be excessive. If your project requires extensive travel or the use of expensive materials, you should explore possible sources of financial support. For example, the Graduate Student Association (GSA) offers scholarships to help support student research. (Visit the graduate web site [www.ccsu.edu/grad](http://www.ccsu.edu/grad) and click on Graduate Student Association for funding information.) Your special project advisor also may know of research funds to help defray your costs. Depending on your topic, you might be able to get some support from business and industry, and/or professional associations. If funds are not available, and there are substantial costs involved, you may want to rethink your project.

A third consideration is access to needed resources. If your work depends on access to certain library materials or other documents, a key question is whether the materials are available. If certain materials are essential for the research, you should check whether these are obtainable before extensive effort is made in planning the project in more detail. You may want to set an arbitrary time limit on securing key material. If, for example, the materials you need are under another person's control, such as a school principal or agency director, you may choose to pursue the project (assuming other factors make it seem worthwhile) for what you and the advisor consider a reasonable amount of time. If after that time, no clear progress has been made in obtaining the needed materials, it may be prudent to rethink the feasibility of the project.

A fourth issue that falls under the heading of feasibility is the availability of faculty support. It is in your best interest to connect with at least one faculty member in your program who shares an interest in your proposed topic and who has expertise in this area. If no one in the department has the interest or expertise to assist you, your project probably won't get off the ground.

A final and very important concern involves clearance of a research proposal through institutional review procedures. Before submitting your proposal for review to the Human Studies Committee (HSC) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (see Appendix B), your special project advisor needs to review and sign the related forms. While CCSU has its own set of Human Studies and Animal Care review processes (see Appendices C & D, respectively), if your research involves another institution (e.g., school, hospital laboratory), your research proposal may also require the review and approval of that institution. It is of critical importance that you identify the nature of the review mechanism, collect or prepare the documents you will need to submit, and allow sufficient time for review. Failure to submit your project for review at the appropriate time may seriously delay your schedule. It is important to remember that clearance from HSC or IACUC must be obtained **before** you begin any data collection.

You might already know who will serve as your advisor or, if appropriate, on your committee. However, if you are in a **Plan C** Special Project and have developed your special project idea without consultation with any faculty (which is not recommended!), you may not have a clear idea of who should serve as your special project advisor. In this case, you should talk with your program advisor and the department chairperson who will know how to direct you to appropriate faculty who have expertise and share an interest in your topic. The purpose of the special project advisor (and committee) is to help you develop and shape your special project idea, to mentor you as you work on the project, and to evaluate the finished project that you produce.

For either Plan C or E, as you refine your interest area into a specific special project topic, you will develop specific research questions and the research methods for your project. Typically, this is an iterative process that cycles between reading the literature and discussions with your advisor. It is during this period that you will be completing your critical review of the literature.

All the reading, deliberation and discussion with your advisor should culminate in the writing of your special project proposal. Special Project proposals go through several revisions, reflecting both conceptual and stylistic changes. While the proposal is essentially an action plan, it can also represent, if done carefully, the first several chapters for your final submission of the special project, the definition of the project, its objective, and the review of literature.

Once research methods or plans for conducting the project have been agreed upon, you and your advisor must submit appropriate forms to the Human Studies Council or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee if the project involves either human or animal subjects. Approval from the appropriate committee is required *before* data collection/research can begin. Indeed, starting your research without human or animal subject approval is unethical and potentially exposes you and the university to legal complications.

For both students in **Plan C and Plan E**, the special project proposal must be reviewed and accepted by your advisor (committee). For students in **Plan C**, the Assoc. V. P. for Academic Affairs/Dean, School of Graduate Studies should receive a copy of the proposal and a signed Approval of Special Project Proposal Form. (See Appendix E.)

Following submission of the proposal (and approval of the Graduate School Dean for Plan C) the research effort is begun in earnest: experiments or interventions are conducted; surveys are distributed; historical works are examined; curriculums are evaluated; artistic or performances are begun, etc. For many students this part of the process, which they expect to be tedious, turns out to be exciting. The intellectual challenge of the research endeavor is experienced in a way that is never captured in the dry accounts that typify most academic journals and books.

While engaged in this phase of your special project, you should keep in close touch with your advisor (committee). Problems or questions will often arise (hopefully minor) that may require some modification of your research plan. Consulting with your advisor about possible changes will minimize misunderstandings about such alterations later.

The analysis and interpretation of one's results are often the most challenging parts of the project. As the results are examined and initial expectations are confirmed or negated, students begin to understand, more clearly than ever before, the human side of the research enterprise. Results are never as clear cut as they seem to be in print; different interpretations now seem plausible; shortcomings in methods are seen in hindsight; and directions for new research emerge. Once again, it is important to consult with your advisor as you formulate the conclusions and recommendations that your work will add to your field or discipline.

### **Writing Strategies**

If producing and interpreting the data are more exciting than most students expect, writing the special project is often more painful than students anticipate. Simply put, writing is hard work. If it is any consolation, it is hard work for everyone. There are, however, several strategies that you can follow that will make you more productive.

First, understand that revisions are inevitable and using and saving copies to your computer will make that task relatively painless. Also, all word processing packages contain spelling and grammar checks which can help with the writing process. Moreover, there are now specialized word processing programs available that can help you with format issues. (If you do not own or have access to a computer, computers are available on the campus, primarily the Micro Computer Lab in Marcus White Annex. Also, the Micro Computer Lab regularly conducts classes on word processing packages.)

The second trick is to write something everyday--even if it is only a few paragraphs. Getting something down on paper (stored on the computer) is the hard part; it is always easier to revise once you've gotten the basic idea down. Don't worry if it doesn't sound "right" in its original form--that's what revision is for. If you've done a good job in putting your proposal together, you probably can use most or all of the proposal with some modification in the actual project that will be submitted.

Thirdly, don't feel that you have to write the whole special project before you can ask your advisor for feedback on what you've written. It is best to submit materials in intervals; your advisor is there to help.

A word to procrastinators. You really want to finish and get that degree. If it seems that you just never seem to get down to writing, put pressure on yourself. Finding other students who are writing their projects can also be a good source of encouragement. Call regularly. Set small but realistic goals.

Also, keep in mind that each semester you have not completed the special project, the Continuing Registration Fee of \$40 must be paid when you have not registered for any other courses. (Fee is due upon the letter from the Dean, School of Graduate Studies.) If you do not receive a letter regarding this fee, call the Graduate Studies Office at (860)832-2363 to confirm that the fee has been charged to your pipeline account.

Some departments require that students completing the special project must make an oral presentation before the department will officially accept it. The oral defense is done after a completed version of the special project has been read by the advisor or committee members. The department will explain the format to follow for the oral defense.

Once your advisor (committee) has approved your special project, you will need to make an official copy and an additional abstract for submission. For students in **Plan C**, your advisor (committee) will sign an Approval of Special Project Form (Appendix F) which will be turned in with your copies to the Dean, School of Graduate Studies (Barnard 102).

It is always a good idea for you to check with your advisor or the Dean, School of Graduate Studies after your special project has been submitted to be sure that you have completed all requirements for graduation. If you haven't completed an application for graduation, be sure to do so. (See Appendix J.)

That's it! Go home, tell your significant other, family or friends to celebrate with you. You've earned it.

## Chapter 2

### School of Graduate Studies Policies and Requirements

#### Submission Requirements

Central Connecticut State University follows certain procedures regarding approval of special projects (see below). Individual departments may set additional criteria. (See Chapter 3.)

After a **Plan C** special project has been approved by your special project committee, the chair of the committee or the student must submit:

1. An original, including abstract, of the special project in a three-ring notebook or clamp-type binder;
2. Three (3) additional copies of the abstract to be maintained in the School of Graduate Studies Office;
3. Approval of Special Project Form (see Appendix F) signed by all members of the special project committee, to the Assoc. V. P. for Academic Affairs/Dean, School of Graduate Studies;
4. Digitized copy and library form (Appendix H), only if the student, with advisor approval, wishes to post the special project to the web.

(**Plan E** projects are handled differently per department policies.)

In addition to the original and copy of the special project, students may prepare final copies of the special project for their special project advisor, other members of their committee, and themselves.

The Graduate School also has certain guidelines that govern each of the items on the following pages.

## **Special Project Cover Page**

Each special project must include a cover page of pertinent information. The cover page should contain the following elements (items in italics require you to put in accurate information):

*Title of Special Project*

*Your Name*

A Special Project  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of *(list your degree)*  
In  
*(list your program)*  
Department of *(list department)*  
Central Connecticut State University  
New Britain, CT

*Month, Year*

Special Project Advisor: *Advisor Name*

## **Abstract Cover Page (See Appendix G)**

Each special project must include an abstract that summarizes the purpose, methodology, findings and conclusions of the study. The abstract should be written with approximately 200-300 words or from one to two pages. As a summary of the special project, it should contain the following elements: (1) a summary of the project's purpose; (2) brief statements regarding the methods of investigation or the planning of the project; (3) a description of the results or the findings, including where and how you obtained them; and (4) conclusions and/or recommendations, which relate back to the original objective of the special project. When writing an abstract, it is important to be exact, concise, and unambiguous.

## **Biographical Note**

It is your choice as to whether to include a short biographical note as the last page of your special project. At a minimum, you should summarize your academic background and honors and pertinent employment history. Additional information--about your family, your interests, your long-term goals--is acceptable.

### **Digitized/Electronic Submission**

Students completing Special Projects may submit a copy of their special project in digital format. Both the digital copy and the signed Special Project Reproduction Form (Appendix H) should be submitted to the Graduate School Office (Barnard 102) at the same time that you submit the hard copy and abstract of your special project.

### **Special Project Deadlines**

Submission of special projects follows the final examination deadlines for both fall and spring semesters. For students seeking summer graduation, Special Projects should be submitted no later than August 15.

### **Capstone Rubric**

The Graduate Studies Committee has developed and approved a capstone rubric form (Appendix I). The rubric provides specific areas that all special projects should contain and indicates levels by which special projects will be assessed by committee members.

## **SPECIAL PROJECT CHECKLIST**

The following checklist is provided to assist you with the organization of your special project. It is suggested that you check all the boxes below to be certain your special project contains each of the items before you submit your special project for review.

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**The paper format of your special project should be assembled in the following order**

- Special Project Cover Page**
  - Abstract Cover Page**
  - Abstract** (The abstract size should be between 200-300 words.)
  - Text/Narrative, along with appropriate tables and figures**
  - List of References**
  - Appendices**
  - Biographical Statement** (If appropriate)
- 

**Submission requirements:**

- Original of the special project, including abstract**
- Additional three abstracts for Office, School of Graduate Studies**
- Approval of Special Project Form** (See Appendix F)  
(Form must be signed by all members of the special project committee.)
- HSC or IACUC Approval Forms, as appropriate**
- Special Project Reproduction Approval Form, if appropriate** (See Appendix H)
- Capstone Scoring Rubric (completed by readers)**

## Chapter 3

### Specific Department Requirements

As noted in earlier chapters, The University's Graduate Studies Committee has established certain policies regarding the special project process. Beyond these requirements, individual departments may set additional criteria or policies regarding special project work. Departmental special project requirements may include committee size and/or composition, style, format, and evaluation process, such as an oral defense of special project. Table 1 presents a summary of these requirements for Special Projects that are considered Plan C. Table 2 presents a summary of these requirements for Special Projects that are considered Plan E.

Students should consult individual departments for these specific requirements.

**Table 1**  
**DEPARTMENT *PLAN C* SPECIAL PROJECT**

Department	Program	Course Number	Type of Project	Committee Membership	Style Format	Other Requirements
Art	MS Art Education	ART 597	Exegesis (written component) and Body of Original Artwork	Two department members	APA or MLA	Exhibitions
Communication	MS Communication	COMM 597	Applied Communication Project (Public Relations Campaign, Training Workshop, Communication Audit, etc.)	At least 2 dept. members with terminal degree	APA	Oral Defense
Computer Sciences, MIS, Comp. Electronics/ Graphic Technology	MS Computer Information Technology	CIT 595	Applied Practical Research, with written report that includes the design and implementation of a product	Two or more faculty who teach for the Program	APA	Oral Defense
Criminology/ Criminal Justice	MS Criminal Justice	CJ 597	Internship that documents Applied Research; Collaborative Project with Agency	Two Full Time Tenure Track Department Members	APA	Oral Defense
Design (Graphic Information)	MA Information Design	DES 597	Applied Practical Research, with written report that includes deliverables (design and implementation of product)	Two or more faculty who teach for the Program	APA	Oral Defense
Engineering Technology	MS Engineering Technology	ET 598	Applied Research	Must be Members of the Department	Chicago	Public Presentation to faculty and students in the program

**Table 1 (Continued)**

**DEPARTMENT *PLAN C* SPECIAL PROJECT**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Course Number</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Committee Membership</b>	<b>Style Format</b>	<b>Other Requirements</b>
Geography	MS Geography	GEOG 595	Applied Research	Must be member s of the dept.	Chicago	Oral Defense
History	MA Public History	HIST 595	Client or Academically Based Research (Exhibitions, Oral Histories Archival Preparation, Walking Tours, etc.)	Two or more faculty		
International and Area Studies	MS International Studies	IS 595	Applied Research	Full-time faculty who teach for IS program	APA or MLA	Oral Presentation
Manufacturing & Construction Management	MS Construction Management MS Technology Management	IT 595	Applied Research	Advisor and at least one more faculty member	APA	Public presentation to faculty and students in the program
Mathematics	MS Math	Math 590	Action Research	Two or more faculty	APA	Oral Defense
Music	MS Music Education	MUS 597A	Action Research	Two or more faculty	APA or MLA	
Music	MS Music Education	MUS 597B	Performance or Conducting Recital	Two department members	APA	Oral Defense
Technology Education	MS Technology & Engineering Education	TE 596	Curriculum Project or Action Research in a classroom setting	Two department members	APA	

**Table 2**

**DEPARTMENT *PLAN E* SPECIAL PROJECT**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Course Number</b>	<b>Type of Project</b>	<b>Style Format</b>	<b>Other Requirements</b>
Educational Leadership	MS Educational Technology	EDT 597	Applied Research	APA	
Physics/ Earth Science	MS Natural Sciences Specialization: Science Education	SCI 595	Action Research		Research Presentation Submission for possible Publication
Special Education	MS Special Education	SPED 596 and SPED 597	Action Research	APA	
Teacher Education	MS Early Childhood Education. MS Elementary Education	EDEL 591 EDEL 592	Action Research	APA	Presentation
Teacher Education	MAT	MAT 550	Action Research	APA	Presentation
Teacher Education	MS Educational Foundations: Secondary Education track	EDSC 586	Action Research	APA	Presentation

## References

- American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* ( 5<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Gibaldi, J. (1998). *The MLA style manual and guide to scholarly publishing*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America.
- Rudestam, K., & Newton, R. (1992). *Surviving your dissertation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- University of Chicago Press. (2003). *The Chicago manual of style: For authors, editors and copywriters* (15<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

## Appendix A



**Graduate School--Central Connecticut State University, New Britain CT 06050**  
**GRADUATE CAPSTONE COURSE REGISTRATION FORM for Plan A (Thesis) and Plan C (Special Project)**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>ID:</b>
<b>Street:</b>	<b>Phone:(H):</b> (    )
<b>City:</b>	<b>(W)</b> (    )
<b>State/Zip:</b>	<b>Email:</b>
<b>Country (if appl.):</b>	<b>Date:</b>

<b>Program (e.g., Math, Reading):</b>	<b>Degree (e.g., MS, MA):</b>
<b>Current Graduate Overall GPA:</b>	<b>Number of Program Credits Completed:</b>
<i>***A student must have at least a 3.00 overall GPA to be eligible for all graduate program capstones and have completed 18 credits (for programs with 30-35 credits) or 24 credits (for programs with more than 36 credits).***</i>	

<b>Capstone Title:</b>			
Capstone Type	Academic Term	Year	Student Status
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Plan A: Master's Thesis</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Fall <input type="checkbox"/> Spring		<input type="checkbox"/> Full-time
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Plan C: Special Project</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Summer (only by special approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies)		<input type="checkbox"/> Part-time

**The sponsoring faculty member completes this section with the graduate student:**

<b>Proposed Course No. (e.g., ENG 599):</b>	<b>Average Weekly Contact Hrs. (3, 6):</b>	<b>Credits (3, 6):</b>
---	--	------------------------

**Meeting Place (classroom, office, or other location):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Evaluation Schedule:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Planned Readings and Other Assignments:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Means for Evaluation:** \_\_\_\_\_

Required Capstone Written Agreement/Approvals:

<b>Submitted by</b>	_____	<b>Date:</b>	_____
	<small>Student's Signature                      Printed Name</small>		
<b>Sponsored by</b>	_____	<b>Date:</b>	_____
	<small>Faculty Member's Signature                      Printed Name</small>		
<b>Approved by</b>	_____	<b>Date:</b>	_____
	<small>Department Chair's Signature                      Printed Name</small>		
	_____	<b>Date:</b>	_____
	<small>Dean of Academic School's Signature                      Printed Name</small>		
	_____	<b>Date:</b>	_____
	<small>Dean of Graduate School's Signature                      Printed Name</small>		

**Note: faculty load credit of .5 is awarded when capstone advisor submits student's thesis or special project proposal approval form and thesis or special project proposal to the Graduate School Dean; final .5 is awarded when advisor submits completed capstone work and final approval form to the Graduate Dean.**

Effective 11/2005. **Distribution of Completed Form: original**-Enrollment Center; **copies**-faculty member, chair, student, academic dean, Graduate School

## Appendix B

### Description of the Human Studies Council and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

#### USE OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS OR ANIMAL SUBJECTS IN YOUR RESEARCH

In keeping with current federal standards and regulations, **all research involving human participants or animal subjects must be approved by the appropriate campus committee:** the *Human Studies Committee (HSC)* or the *Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)*. These groups function to insure that appropriate safeguards are used to protect the rights and wellbeing of research subjects.

#### ***Human Studies Council - Institutional Review Board***

ALL graduate program final projects - theses, dissertations and special projects- that involve human research participants, must be reviewed by the Human Studies Council (HSC).

**WHY?** The HSC is CCSU's Institutional Review Board (IRB), the body federally mandated to protect the welfare and autonomy of human participants in research conducted by CCSU faculty, students and staff. The function of the Human Subjects Council is to protect the rights and welfare of human research participants and to assist faculty and students in developing ethical research protocols.

**WHAT?** The HSC conducts a risk-benefit analysis in which committee members review the study's proposed objectives, recruitment process, interventions/measures, consenting process, data security plans and intended method of report reporting findings. The HSC works with an investigator to identify and minimize potential risks in study involvement –either by direct participation in the data collection phase, or due to breaches in data security/privacy after participation is complete.

**HOW?** Customarily, *minimal risk* studies with adult volunteers are approved quickly through an expedited review process. However, research projects with protected populations (such as children, prisoners, mentally disabled persons) or projects that involve deception or *greater than minimal* risk go through a full review process. The full review process can be done only at convened meetings of the Human Studies Council. These meetings occur throughout the year; the meeting schedule is posted on the HSC website.

**WHEN?** Before submitting a proposal for review, and to comply with federal regulations, researchers must complete a research ethics education module. CCSU endorses the National Institutes of Health [Protecting Human Research Participants](#) tutorial to meet this educational requirement. The student's *Certificate of Tutorial Completion* and all relevant proposal addenda must accompany a Protocol Submission Form before the HSC can begin the review process. The HSC recommends submitting proposals two to four weeks before study activities are scheduled to begin.

**WHERE?** Faculty Advisors are to review student proposal materials and submit them on their advisee's behalf to [hsc@ccsu.edu](mailto:hsc@ccsu.edu).

**For more information about the CCSU Human Research Protections Policy, graduate research requirements and HSC submission process and forms, contact the HSC Administrator at 860-832-2366 or [hsc@ccsu.edu](mailto:hsc@ccsu.edu) or visit the HSC website ([www.ccsu.edu/humanstudies](http://www.ccsu.edu/humanstudies)) or Office of Grants and Funded Research in Barnard 120.**

### *Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)*

The IACUC is responsible for oversight and evaluation of the animal care and use program at CCSU. Its functions include inspection of facilities; evaluation of programs and animal-activity areas; review of proposals for the use of animals in research, testing or education; and the review of concerns involving the care and use of animals at CCSU.

The following should be considered in the preparation and review of animal care and use protocols:

- ♦ Rationale and purpose of the proposed use of animals
- ♦ Justification of the species and number of animals requested. Whenever possible, the number of animals requested should be justified statistically.
- ♦ Availability or appropriateness of the use of less-invasive procedures, other species, isolated organ preparation, cell or tissue culture, or computer simulation.
- ♦ Adequacy of training and experience of personnel in the procedures used.
- ♦ Unusual housing and husbandry requirements.
- ♦ Appropriate sedation, analgesia and anesthesia.
- ♦ Unnecessary duplication of experiments.
- ♦ Conduction of multiple major operative procedures.
- ♦ Criteria and processes for timely intervention, removal of animals from a study, or euthanasia if painful or stressful outcomes are anticipated.
- ♦ Post procedure care.
- ♦ Method of euthanasia or disposal of animals.
- ♦ Safety of work environment for personnel.

The Application for Project Approval (APA) form is available from Ruth Rollins, Chair IACUC, located in Copernicus Hall. Each APA is reviewed by the IACUC, which includes a veterinarian. Some protocols may be approved by an expedited process and may require two to three weeks. Other protocols require a full review process that can be done only at a regularly convened meeting of the full IACUC. The full committee generally meets four times a year. Timely submission of proposals is especially important if approval is required before submission of research proposals for university or external grants.

**Appendix E**

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**Graduate School--Central Connecticut State University, New Britain CT 0605**

Approval of Special Project Proposal

**TO:** Dean, School of Graduate Studies

**FROM:**

--	--

*Primary Special Project Advisor*

*Department*

**SUBJECT:** Approval of Special Project Proposal

Attached you will find one copy of the approved Special Project Proposal prepared by:

<b>Name:</b>	<b>CCSU ID:</b>
<b>Street:</b>	<b>Phone: (H) ( )</b>
<b>City/St/Zip:</b>	<b>(W) ( )</b>
<b>Country:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Major:</b>	<b>Degree Program:</b>
	<b>Email:</b>

<b>Title of Approved Special Project Outline:</b>
---

If human or animal subjects are involved, your proposal to HSC <input type="checkbox"/> or IACUC <input type="checkbox"/> should be attached.
---

**REQUIRED SPECIAL PROJECT PROPOSAL SIGNATURES:**

<b>Primary Special Project Advisor:</b>
<b>Date Approved by Primary Special Project Advisor:</b>
<b>Committee Member:</b>
<b>Committee Member:</b>
<b>Committee Member:</b>

**ACCEPTED BY:**

--	--

*Assoc. V.P. for Academic Affairs/Dean, School of Graduate Studies*

*Date Approved*

Appendix F



Graduate School--Central Connecticut State University, New Britain CT 06050  
Special Project Approval Form

**TO:** Assoc. V.P. for Academic Affairs/Dean, School of Graduate Studies

**FROM:**

--	--

*Primary Special Project Advisor*

*Department*

**SUBJECT:** Approval of Special Project

Attached you will find an original of the approved special project and one additional copy of the abstract prepared by:

<b>Name:</b>	<b>CCSU ID:</b>
<b>Street:</b>	<b>Phone: (H) ( )</b>
<b>City/St/Zip:</b>	<b>(W) ( )</b>
<b>Country:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Major:</b>	<b>Degree Program:</b>

<b>Special Project Title:</b>
-------------------------------

If human or animal subjects were involved, have you included HSC or IACUC approval in the appendix of the special project? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
--

REQUIRED SPECIAL PROJECT APPROVAL SIGNATURES:

<b>Primary Special Project Advisor:</b>
<b>Date Approved by Primary Special Project Advisor:</b>
<b>Committee Member:</b>
<b>Committee Member:</b>
<b>Committee Member:</b>

**ACCEPTED BY:**

--	--

*Assoc. V.P. for Academic Affairs/Dean, School of Graduate Studies*

*Date Accepted*

## **Appendix G**

### **Sample Abstract Cover Sheet**

(Special Project Title )

(Your Name)

An Abstract of a Special Project  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
(name your degree e.g. M.A. M.S.)

In

(your Program)

Central Connecticut State University  
New Britain, Connecticut

(Date)

(Special Project Advisor Name)  
(Department)



## Appendix I

### Capstone Rubric

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

CCSU ID # \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Assessors \_\_\_\_\_

Capstone Rubric (Plans A/C/E)	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
1. Definition of Project/Introduction Or Statement of Hypothesis	Introduction does not clearly explain the nature and structure of the capstone, its rationale and relevance to discipline.	Introduction clearly presents the capstone, its nature, relevance and structure.	Introduction makes strong case for the value the capstone provides to the discipline, as well as presenting its nature and structure.
2. Thesis/Argument	Argument is unclear, inconsistent, inappropriate, or not suitably original.	Argument is appropriate, clearly presented, consistently applied, and suitably original.	Argument is clear, consistent, sophisticated, and strikingly original.
3. Familiarity with/ Grounded in Literature. Knowledgeable of the current state of discipline	Does not indicate familiarity with literature; has large gaps and shows little grounding of the capstone in the literature. No substantive engagement.	Displays familiarity with reasonably full range of literature; demonstrates an appropriate grounding and engagement with the literature.	Displays impressive familiarity with full range of and grounding in literature; engages with it substantively and productively.
4. Methodology or Plans for the Project	Methodology is not clearly presented, not appropriate or not adequately applied to capstone.	Methodology is clearly presented, relevant and appropriately applied to capstone.	Methodology and project are mutually enriching.
5. Results/Findings/ Demonstration of Thesis Argument and Claims	Outcomes minimally address research questions and fail to demonstrate its claims persuasively. Presentation minimally addresses research questions; structure reflects a lack of organization, detail, understanding and/or accuracy.	Outcomes address research questions. Presentation of evidence uses argumentation and is reasonably persuasive in making connections with research ideas.	Outcomes thoroughly address research questions. Presentation of evidence conveys a mastery of argumentation. Structure provides a coherent and clear focus of new understandings.
6. Summary/ Conclusion or closing argument	Capstone summary is minimally supported by results and/or findings; exhibits a lack of original ideas, personal interpretation of findings, and/or an inability to draw an inventive synopsis.	Summary sufficiently supported by results and/or findings while adequately and accurately summarizing the capstone.	Summary presents carefully analyzed information to present inventive and originally developed decisions and/or conclusions supported by results and/or findings.
7. Bibliography/ References	Lack of proper format and limited details with many sources missing or incomplete.	Bibliography/References are mostly complete and correctly formatted. Capstone contains a variety of sources.	Bibliography/References are complete (all sources shown) and correctly formatted; inserted to validate evidence.
8. Writing	Writing is unclear, distracts from meaning, is not at appropriate level, or contains excessive errors.	Writing is clear and appropriately sophisticated, with virtually no errors, and supports meaning.	Writing is at or near professional level, has no errors, and enhances meaning.

Totals \_\_\_\_\_

Overall Score: \_\_\_\_\_

