

# **Masters of the Environment Graduate Program**

## **Capstone Project Handbook**

### **January 2022**

#### **What is a Capstone Project?**

The MENV Capstone Project is the central pillar of the University of Colorado Boulder's graduate program in environmental management. It is an interdisciplinary team project in which students work closely with external sponsoring organizations, called Capstone Partners, to propose innovative solutions to real-world environmental and sustainability challenges that partners face. The Capstone Project is the crowning achievement of a Masters of the Environment (MENV) student's experience in graduate school – providing real-world opportunities to partner with an external organization to work on environmental management and sustainability issues that matter.

The purpose of the Capstone Project is to give students applied experience working in teams on complex, interdisciplinary challenges alongside professionals in real-world settings. The goals of the project are (1) to prepare students to work on real-world, long term, collaborative projects, (2) to help students grow and strengthen their professional networks in their respective fields, and (3) to provide client organizations with specific solutions to identified environmental and sustainability questions and challenges.

All Masters of the Environment (MENV) professional graduate students at the University of Colorado Boulder must successfully complete a 5-credit hour Capstone Project and three accompanying one-hour courses, Capstone Innovation Lab 1 (CIL 1), Capstone Innovation Lab 2 (CIL 2), and Capstone Innovation Lab 3 (CIL 3) as part of their degree requirements. CIL courses are designed to help guide students from the project planning phase through synthesis, analysis, and the production of professionally oriented work products and services. The CIL sequence consists of a 1-credit courses in the first fall semester; in the first spring semester, at the start of the Capstone process; and in students' second fall semester to coincide with the conclusion of the Capstone process. The five credits that constitute the Capstone Project are undertaken over the summer.

<i>Fall 2021</i>	<i>Spring 2022</i>	<i>Summer 2022</i>	<i>Fall 2022</i>
Capstone Innovation Lab 1 (CIL 1)	Capstone Innovation Lab 2 (CIL 2)	Capstone Project	Capstone Innovation Lab (CIL3)
1 credit	1 credit	5 credits	1 credit

The format of a Capstone Project differs significantly from both a research thesis and traditional summer internship. Capstone Projects are curated by MENV faculty and staff, co-developed by student teams (3 - 4 students) and external partner organizations, and guided and evaluated by MENV faculty advisors. While all Capstone Projects certainly have research elements, the projects do not consist solely of research, data collection and analysis. Instead, Capstone Projects can take a variety of forms, depending on the needs of the partners organizations.

Capstone Projects must have applied and professional elements integrated into their design (e.g., interactions with professionals and community members, time in the field and/or office, professional development opportunities, and presentations to professional audiences). The products should be professionally-oriented and consist of work products and/or services that include, but are not limited to, planning documents, management plans, public awareness and advocacy campaigns, product proposals, reports, toolkits, models, prototypes, or proof of concept projects.

**Capstone Project Criteria**

The purpose of this handbook is to guide MENV students and partner organizations in the creation, management, execution, and evaluation of a Capstone Project.

The MENV Capstone Project, conceptually, should be a discrete project that can be completed in accordance with the MENV timeline. In addition to being a new project developed for the organization, it can also be a phase of a larger project with which the partner is engaged or a continuation of a previous Capstone Project.

*The project should be value-added to the organization with a clear practical application. It should consist of products and/or services that have clear educational benefits and professional development opportunities for students.*

There are two underlying criteria defining a Capstone Project:

1. **Rigor:** The project should be substantive enough to serve as a master’s-level project for each of the students involved (typically 3 – 4). Students will be

expected to demonstrate the following:

- Knowledge of the academic and professional literature relevant to the project.
- Application of specific methods that are appropriate to address the problem or question at hand. The methods may include qualitative and/or quantitative analysis.
- Identification and prioritization of results, recommendations, and next steps based on the professional work completed over the course of the project.
- A written, professionally formatted, comprehensive deliverable that illustrates an understanding of the needs of the Capstone Partner, provides results to the Capstone Partner, and which exemplifies the depth and extent of professional work completed over the course of the project.

Finally, each student should have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and demonstrate skill development.

2. **Professional Relevance:** The project should provide opportunities for the students to substantively engage the partner organization in an ongoing manner, interact with a professional network, and contribute meaningfully to the profession. The final deliverable should not be something that will “sit on a shelf,” rather, it should be actionable and usable by the partner.

The Capstone Project should encompass at least three components that reflect the criteria discussed above:

1. A written deliverable (e.g., report, white paper, toolkit, etc.).
2. A product demonstrating engagement with the broader professional community (e.g., conference presentation, webinar, workshop).
3. An individual reflective essay (approximately 2,500 words) that connects the project to the student’s future and analyzes the process of engaging with the Capstone Partner.

The Capstone Partner may also require other deliverables of the group (e.g., community meetings, presentations for a board or other group, and other types of interactions with the public, community members, or internal teams).

These components will be developed by the Capstone Project team and the Capstone Partner, in concert with the Capstone Project’s faculty advisor.

The MENV faculty and staff will provide partners with an orientation to review the Capstone Project criteria and requirements. Importantly, we ask that our partners demand substance from the students. In other words, they should be held to the same standards of accountability and quality as an employee.

## Capstone Partners

### *Capstone Partner Benefits*

The MENV Capstone Project is primarily intended to be educational and for the benefit of the student, providing learning opportunities that build transferable skills that are aligned with the MENV program goals. Capstone Partners can expect the following benefits by working with a team of MENV students:

- **Capacity:** By working with the MENV program's top-level graduate students, Capstone Partners have added capacity to address challenges that they may not be able to address otherwise.
- **Solutions:** Through new ideas and approaches undertaken by students, Capstone Partners gain functional and innovative solutions to real-world environmental and sustainability challenges.
- **Collaboration:** Integrated teams made up of students, faculty, and partner organizations results in new perspectives and ideas.
- **Outreach:** Capstone Projects are showcased to the community at the MENV Capstone Symposium in mid-November. Capstone Projects may also be presented at professional symposia, workshops, or conferences.
- **Recruitment:** Close interaction with student teams provide Capstone Partners with a unique opportunity to recruit talented professionals.

### *Capstone Partner Expectations*

All Capstone Partners are expected to be supportive of the educational objectives of the project and to be active participants in their sponsored project. Successful Capstone Partners do the following:

- Provide a Project Lead who can dedicate an average of at least one hour per week to the project during the academic year and an average to two hours per week to the project during the summer;

- Communicate regularly with the student team and provide timely and constructive feedback (It is suggested that partner-student interactions take place weekly during the academic year and generally at least once per week during the summer);
- Communicate with the faculty advisor on a regular basis – providing feedback regarding project progress.
- Provide mentoring and professional development opportunities to students and help them develop their skill sets and networks;
- At a minimum, cover the direct financial costs of the project, including but not limited to travel expenses (including travel expenses for work outside of the Denver Metro Area), software programs, and printing/supplies. (While partners are not required to compensate students, we encourage them to do so.)

## **MENV Student Expectations**

One important aspect of the MENV Graduate Program is to train students to become leaders and innovators. As such, once teams are selected and the research scope of the project is defined, the planning, research, and associated work are expected to be **student-driven**. Faculty and partner input are critical, but ultimately student teams are responsible for managing the project and taking initiative to move the project forward.

Successful MENV students:

- Research prospective partners, submit professional application materials, and present a clear and cogent pitch to the Capstone Selection Committee;
- Work closely with teammates and faculty advisors to set clear project goals and benchmarks;
- Drive the progress of the project with solution-oriented approaches;
- Demonstrate professionalism in all interactions with partner organizations and other community members;
- Communicate regularly and professionally with partners and faculty advisors and submit materials for them to provide feedback;
- Produce and deliver on-time, high-quality, sophisticated, professional products and services to Capstone Partners.

## **Project Timeline**

The Capstone Project and associated classes make up eight credit hours of students' required coursework: One credit hour each for Capstone Innovation Labs 1, 2, and 3 (Fall 2021, Spring 2022, Fall 2022), and five credit hours for the Capstone Project (Summer 2022).

### *Summer/Fall 2021: Request for Proposals and First Round Approval*

In Summer 2021, the MENV program will begin the process for recruiting 2022 Capstone Partners. Prospective partner organizations interested in working with a team of MENV students will be asked to electronically submit a project proposal outlining goals, objectives, educational benefits, professional development opportunities, timelines, budgets, anticipated deliverables, etc. *See Appendix B.*

Once proposals are received, a member of the MENV faculty/staff will set up a time to speak with organizational representatives about their projects to ensure that they meet minimum MENV requirements and to help prospective partners refine their proposals if necessary. Organizations may be given the opportunity to revise their proposals after speaking with a member of the MENV team. Organizations can submit no more than two project proposals. The deadline for submitting final project proposals is Friday, October 29, 2021.

By early-December, organizations will be selected by an MENV faculty review committee to move to the final round of the selection process. These organizations will be notified and invited to participate in our Capstone Networking Night with MENV students in late January.

Students will be presented with the final list of the project partners at the end of the fall semester before winter break (mid-December).

### *Winter/Spring 2022: Partners/Team Selection, Project Planning, and Preliminary Research*

Students begin the spring semester on Monday, January 10. As part of the Capstone Innovation Lab 2 (CIL 2) course, students will have the opportunity to research the prospective Capstone Partners and project areas. On January 21, students will also have the opportunity to attend remote networking sessions with partners.

On January 28, following the networking events, students will submit their Capstone application materials (e.g., resumes, pitch videos, and an ordered ranking of project/partner preferences) to the Capstone Selection Committee. These materials will

include the learning objectives that students hope to achieve, as well as their career interests and skills and attributes that the students have to offer. The Capstone Selection Committee is made up of MENV faculty and staff. Based on student interests and aptitudes and prospective project types, the committee will select final Capstone Partners and projects, and match those with student teams.

On Friday, February 11, our 2022 Capstone Partners and final student teams will be notified. We anticipate approximately 30 projects in 2022.

Each Capstone team will be assigned an MENV faculty advisor. Advisors will be assigned to teams by February 11. Among other duties, faculty advisors serve as a points-of-contact between the Capstone Partner organization and the MENV student team.

Over the spring semester, student teams and Capstone Partners shall agree on a communications schedule. Students will also develop team contracts (which define team culture and working agreements), conduct background research, and refine the project scope to create a professional Scope of Work (SOW) document to present to the Capstone Partner. Student teams will present their final SOW documents in early-May.

Other important elements for spring semester:

- Each student is expected to work an average of approximately 8 – 10 hours per week on the Capstone Project outside of the CIL class during the spring semester (January - April).
- Student teams are expected to have team meetings at least once per week.
- Students and faculty advisors are expected to meet once every two weeks
- Capstone Partners are expected to check in with their student teams no less than every other week. These check-ins can be remote or in-person.
- Some dates are subject to change based on the MENV course schedule.

#### Summer 2022: Intensive Capstone Immersion

MENV students enroll in five credits of Capstone Project work over the summer. This is, generally, the primary academic activity taken by MENV students over this term. The nature of the Capstone Project activities during the summer terms will vary from team to team and will be stipulated in the finalized SOW.

While MENV students are not required to take classes on campus over the summer session, some may choose to do so. Capstone teams will need to plan accordingly and ensure that they communicate work and academic schedules clearly to their Capstone Partners. Summer capstone work may involve co-location at the partners' facilities and

other travel, including on and off-site visits, and professional, data-gathering, and analytical obligations as part of the project. All of these elements should be included in the finalized SOW.

**\*Students are required to work a minimum 60 hours for every credit hour earned over the summer. To earn five credit hours for the Capstone Project over the summer, students are therefore required to work a minimum of 300 total hours, and produce high quality work. Most students spread these hours out over 10 – 12 weeks, for an average of 25 – 30 hours/week of work. Students will be required to track their hours.**

*Fall 2022: Synthesis, Analysis, and Projection of Deliverables*

In their final semester, students resume classes, synthesize their capstone work, continue their final analyses, and, ultimately, submit their final deliverables to the Capstone Partner and to MENV. During this term, students shall continue to work on and produce agreed-upon deliverables for the Capstone Partner, as well as any stipulated additional academic components for MENV faculty. By the end of the fall semester, student teams will present these deliverables to client organizations, MENV faculty, and any relevant community members. The Capstone Project will culminate in a written product and presentation at the annual Capstone Symposium hosted by the MENV Graduate Program on campus in mid-November (Nov. 18). All materials must be completed by December 2.

\*Students are expected to work an average of approximately 5 – 10 hours per week on the Capstone Project outside of the CIL3 class during the fall semester. (Students time investment into the Capstone Project over the fall semester may vary depending on the progress made toward final deliverables over the summer. Students may work as few as 5 hours/week during the fall semester, or as much as or in excess of 10 hours/week, in order to provide their Capstone Partners with high quality deliverables. This work is completed in addition to the fall CIL3 class.)

\*Student teams and partners are expected to check in either in-person or remotely no less than every other week.



## **Important Dates (subject to change)**

### ***Fall 2021 Semester***

August 2: MENV Request for Proposals (RFP) process opens

August 23: First day of fall semester classes

October 29: RFP closes; deadline for organizations to submit final Capstone proposals

December 3: Finalist organizations invited to participate in the networking events

December 10: Last day of fall semester classes / Students receive project proposals

### ***Spring 2022 Semester***

January 10: First day of spring semester classes

January 21: Capstone Partner Networking (remote)

January 28: Student applications and pitches due to Capstone Selection Committee

February 11: Capstone Partners, teams, and advisors assigned and notified

February 18: Official start of 2022 MENV Capstone Projects

March 4: Team Contract

March 18: Draft Scope of Work (SOW) to Advisor (ungraded)

April 8: Project Design Workshop

April 25: Scope of Work (SOW)

April 28: Last day of spring semester classes

### ***Summer Session 2022 - Maymester***

May 10: First day of Maymester classes

May 27: Last day of Maymester classes

### ***Summer Session 2022***

Monday, June 1: First day of summer term classes

Friday, August 6: Last day of summer term classes

### ***Summer Session 2022 - Augmester***

August 1: First day of Augmester classes

August 18: Last day of Augmester classes

### ***Fall Semester 2022***

Monday, August 22: First day of fall semester classes

September 2: Project brief

November 18: Capstone Symposium / Final presentations

December 2: Final Capstone deliverables due

December 8: Last day of fall semester classes

December 15: Fall graduation

## Formation of Teams

At the start of their first semester, MENV students are encouraged to meet with one another to begin discussing their respective interests and skills, as well as their goals and objectives for their Capstone Projects. Students will also have the opportunity in January 2022 to review project proposals and meet with prospective partners at the in-person and virtual capstone networking events.

Team size and composition are dependent upon the project topic, project scope, and partner needs and resources available for the Capstone Project. **MENV requires that Capstone teams consist of no fewer than three students, and no more than four students.** Because navigation of team dynamics is a core Capstone learning objective, **under no circumstances are individual Capstone Projects permitted.** Capstone team members may all represent one specialization area, or they may be comprised of students across specializations.

Please note that not all prospective partners are guaranteed a team of MENV students. Similarly, there are no assurances that students will work with a specific partner, on a specific project, with a specific group of students, or with a specific advisor.

The Capstone Selection Committee, made of MENV faculty and staff, is responsible for final decisions regarding partner selection, team composition, and advisor assignment. Decisions of the Capstone Selection Committee are based on (1) individual student professional goals and objectives, (2) individual student preferences, (3) the ability of teams to meet qualifications set forth by partner organizations, (4) the ability of a team to accomplish the stated goals of the project, (5) feedback from partner organizations, (6) the appropriate number of teams/projects/advisors, and (7) interdisciplinarity and team diversity, when possible.

All committee decisions are final and not subject to reconsideration or appeal based on student interests or preferences. Maintaining a cohesive team throughout is an important and desirable feature of the Capstone process. Nevertheless, MENV reserves the right to administratively move a student to a different team under exceptional circumstances for the purposes of maintaining academic standards and/or providing an appropriate learning environment. This may happen at any point during the 2022 Capstone Project cycle. The committee's decisions regarding teams are final.

## **Role of Capstone Advisors**

MENV Capstone Advisors are the primary faculty points of contact for the Capstone Partners and Capstone student teams from February - December. Many of the advisors' duties are akin to an academic advising position, detailed below. Capstone Advisors will provide the grades for the students who are members of the capstone teams they are advising. Grades will be provided per student, not per team.

### *Meetings*

Capstone Advisors will conduct regular check-ins with students regarding their projects. Teams typically meet with their advisor once every two weeks. Meeting schedules and structure will be determined between advisor and advisees in the first part of the spring semester.

### *Advising*

Capstone Advisors will advise students on the direction of their projects as well as help guide engagement with the Capstone Partner, as necessary. These tasks include:

- Meet with students at the beginning of the semester to set a meeting schedule and expectations;
- Conduct regular check-ins and coaching sessions with students regarding their projects;
- Advise students on the direction of their projects as well as how they should engage with the Capstone Partner;
- Guide students to establish appropriate project timeline & benchmarks;
- Help as needed to create the substantive content of project planning, including project design, methods, budget, & resources;
- Promote equitable workload and creative contributions among team members;
- Connect students with other experts as needed or source required expertise.
- Monitor and help ensure academic rigor of Capstone Projects and adherence to Capstone Project policies;
- Help students problem-solve and prompt them to think creatively and critically about various aspects of their projects.

### *Engagement with Capstone Partners*

Capstone Advisors should be the first point of contact for any concerns or questions from the Capstone Partner. Advisors shall engage with and develop a relationship with the Capstone Partners. Except for meetings noted below, Capstone Advisors and partners will meet as needed.

Capstone Advisors will join at least one initial meeting, either in person or by phone/video conference, between the Capstone Partner and the student team within the first few weeks of the project launch. Capstone Advisors will check in with Capstone Partners at the end of the spring semester, at least once during the summer semester, and at least once during the fall semester. However, advisees are expected to have a high level of independence and take the lead in project design and implementation of their projects and interaction with the Capstone Partner.

Capstone Advisors may also provide memoranda to the Capstone Partners as well as the MENV faculty and staff periodically throughout the semester to keep all apprised of progress.

### *Grading*

Grading will be based on the quality of the work completed by members of the Capstone Project teams. Elements taken into account will be the final deliverable, work and project elements conducted over the year, adherence to the SOW, and contribution to the project.

## **Project Budget**

The MENV program has a clear and explicit expectation that Capstone Partner organizations pay for the costs associated with the project and agreed upon as part of the proposal. (Partner organizations are welcome to directly compensate team members should they choose to do so.)

Development of the project budget is the Capstone team's responsibility and must include projection of both expenditures and funding. This budget shall be developed in concert with the Capstone Partners. The group must operate within this budget unless additional funding is obtained. Cost overruns must be covered by the project team members. Funding may be received from a sponsoring organization, provided by team members, allocated by the MENV program (e.g., to support work with under resourced and historically underrepresented organizations), or a combination of the above.

## **Client Privacy**

While it is the preference of the MENV Graduate Program to share students' work publicly, Capstone Partners may request non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) due to the

nature of the data they share with student team members. This is an agreement between the students and client organization. As a general rule students do not sign this document on behalf of the University of Colorado Boulder. Whatever proprietary statement is signed cannot prohibit student work from being shared with the general public, but the agreement can be written to mask proprietary information, for example, substituting a pseudonym (e.g., Company X) for a specific organization name. Capstone Partners must discuss the terms of an NDA with the faculty advisor in advance of any agreement between students and the partners organization. Negotiation of the terms and conditions of an agreement may be necessary. These negotiations are conducted through the University of Colorado Boulder Office of Contracts and Grants, who has expertise related to openness of research. A sample Capstone Project non-disclosure agreement is available upon request.

## **Institutional Review Board (IRB) Review**

At the outset of the project, students and partners should discuss and put in writing agreements with regard to the ownership of data and the guidelines and restrictions put upon students by the University of Colorado Boulder Institutional Review Board (IRB).

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) requires that all research involving human subjects conducted by faculty or staff affiliated with the university be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to initiation. This may or may not apply to Capstone Projects.

For Capstone Projects that involve surveys or interviews, students will need to assess whether these activities for their project require IRB review. In order to determine if your project requires IRB review contact the Institutional Review Board Office (303-735-3702). IRB review will be discussed in Capstone Innovation Lab as students are beginning to finalize the scope of their projects, goals, objectives, and work plan.

Investigators may not solicit subject participation or begin data collection until they have received written approval from the IRB. The IRB further requires that all student research activities are supervised by a faculty member; however, some types of student research activities may not require IRB review above and beyond faculty supervision. CU Boulder supports a wide range of both undergraduate and graduate student research projects using human subjects from course related research exercises to dissertation studies. Not all projects that have an investigative aspect are considered to meet the definition of “research” or “human subjects research”.

## **Capstone Symposium**

The MENV Capstone Symposium will be held the morning of Friday, November 18, 2022. During the event, students will present both on their deliverables as well as their experience working with partners. In addition to MENV faculty, staff, and students, Capstone Partners are expected to be in attendance and to ask questions and offer feedback. Other interested parties may also be invited to attend the symposium. While the symposium is meant to showcase and celebrate the students' work, partners are encouraged to also have students present their deliverables to organizational leadership and to any other relevant parties. (Students are required to deliver a product demonstrating engagement with the broader professional community.)

## **Workers' Compensation and Liability Insurance**

See Appendix C.

## **Grading for Capstone Projects**

The Capstone sequence consists of two types of courses: a three (3)-credit classroom sequence (Capstone Innovation Lab 1, 2, and 3 (CIL 1, 2, and 3)), and a five (5)-credit Capstone Project immersive summer course. The CIL courses are offered during the spring semester and fall semester, respectively. The summer component of the Capstone course is listed as ENVM 6003 in the course catalog. It is a 10-week, five (5)-credit course taken during Summer Session D. There are no traditional classroom activities associated with the traditional summer session; students are expected to be primarily working on their Capstone Projects at this time.

The CIL courses provide a letter grade that is determined at the end of each respective semester. Individual components of the CIL grades will be outlined in the syllabus for those classes. The CIL 1, CIL 2, and CIL3 instructor(s) will provide grades for these classes.

Summer Capstone Project hours will receive an interim '*In Progress (IP)*' grade at the end of the summer. Capstone advisors will review students' final deliverable at the end of the fall semester and provide the Capstone deliverable grade. Capstone Partners may provide input and feedback but may not grade students' work.

This grade will be determined through the quality of the final Capstone product or deliverable, the quality of the Capstone presentation, a review of work done over the summer, as well as feedback from the Capstone Partner.

Minimum grades for both course types are **B-**. If a student receives a grade of C+ or lower for any element of the Capstone project - including CIL 1, CIL 2, CIL3, and other parts of the Capstone Project – *the student will have to retake that part of the Capstone Project*. A grade of C+ on the 5-credit summer component will result in a student having to begin a new Capstone project in 2023.

**Capstone Project Appendices**  
**Capstone Project Appendix A: Letter of Engagement**

[Partner Name]  
[Title]  
[Partner Organization]  
[Address]  
[City/State/Zip]

Dear [First Name]:

Thank you for partnering with the Masters of the Environment (MENV) Graduate Program at the University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) through a Capstone Project. The MENV Capstone Project is a cooperative educational experience where students are taught through a *coordinated* combination of specialized instruction at CU Boulder, are projects *sponsored* by CU Boulder, and where students receive professional experience through a business, agency, or organization or any governmental agency in cooperation with CU Boulder. This document briefly describes the Capstone Project, outlines partner and student expectations, and serves as an agreement in principle between [Name], the MENV Graduate Program, and CU Boulder, confirming our collective intention to work together for an approximate nine-month period spanning from February through December 2022.

**What is a Capstone Project?**

All Masters of the Environment (MENV) professional graduate students at the University of Colorado Boulder must successfully complete a Capstone Project and the accompanying three Capstone Innovation Lab (CIL) courses as part of their degree requirements. The Capstone Project is an interdisciplinary team project in which students work closely with an external partner and a Capstone Advisor to propose innovative solutions to real-world environmental and sustainability challenges.

The purpose of the Capstone Project is to give students applied experience working in teams on complex, interdisciplinary challenges alongside professionals in real-world settings. The goals of the project are (1) to prepare students to work on real-world, long term, collaborative projects, and (2) to help students grow and strengthen their professional networks in their respective fields, and (3) to provide client organizations with specific solutions and valuable products and services.

Capstone Projects must have applied and professional elements integrated into their design, e.g., interactions with professionals and community members, time in the field and/or office, and professional development opportunities, and result in the production



of professionally-oriented products, including but not limited to management plans, planning documents, public awareness and advocacy campaigns, product proposals, reports, presentations, models, prototypes, or proof of concept projects.

### **Partner Expectations**

All Capstone Partners are expected to be supportive of the educational objectives of the project and to be active participants in their sponsored project. Successful Capstone Partners:

- Provide a project lead who can dedicate at least one hour per week to the project during the academic year and up to two hours per week to the project during the summer;
- Set a meeting schedule and communicate regularly with the student team and provide timely and constructive feedback (It is suggested that partner-team interactions take place at least once per week);
- Provide mentoring and professional development opportunities to student teams and help them develop their skill sets and networks;
- At a minimum, cover the direct financial costs of the project, including but not limited to travel expenses (including mileage and/or lodging for work outside of the Denver Metro Area) and printing/supplies.

### **Student Expectations**

MENV students are expected to:

- Work closely with teammates and Capstone Advisors to set clear project goals and benchmarks;
- Drive the progress of the project with solution-oriented approaches;
- Demonstrate professionalism in all interactions with partner organizations and all community members;
- Communicate regularly and professionally with the Capstone Partner and provide material for them to provide feedback;
- Produce high-quality, sophisticated, professional deliverables.

### **Workers' Compensation and Liability Insurance Coverage**

CU students participating in a Boulder Campus Capstone Project are covered for workers' compensation and liability insurance through the university's self-insured program. If injured while performing the duties agreed on for the Capstone Project, students will need to file a Workers' Compensation Claim with University Risk Management within four (4) days. If it is an emergency go to the nearest emergency clinic/hospital, otherwise, students will need to go to one of the University's Designated Medical Providers.

Please review the MENV Capstone Handbook for more detailed information about the project, process, expectations, and timelines. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Kosmenko  
Capstone Lead  
Masters of the Environment Graduate Program  
University of Colorado **Boulder**

[Name]  
Capstone Advisor  
Masters of the Environment Graduate Program  
University of Colorado **Boulder**

**[Name: Student 1]**

**[Name: Student 2]**

**[Name: Student 3]**

**Agreement in Principle: Capstone Project with the Masters of the Environment  
Graduate Program at the University of Colorado Boulder**

*Client Name:*

*Title:*

*Client Organization:*

*Signature:*

*Date:*

## ***Capstone Project Appendix B: Capstone Proposal Template***

All project proposals are to be submitted as a PDF file to Myles Maland, Associate Director of Program Administration, at [myles.maland@colorado.edu](mailto:myles.maland@colorado.edu). The final deadline to submit your proposal is Friday, October 29, 2021. Please review the **2020-21 Capstone Project Handbook** for more information. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email [myles.maland@colorado.edu](mailto:myles.maland@colorado.edu).

### **1. Title page**

Proposed project title/topic  
Partner organization name  
Partner lead name/title  
Contact information (mailing address, phone, email)  
Partner website

### **2. Project executive summary (250 word max)**

Please give a brief overview or summary of the project including any relevant background information.

### **3. Goals and purpose (250 word max)**

What is the purpose of the project? What problem(s) will the team address?  
What question(s) will the team answer?  
Identify the primary goals for your project. What does success look like? Why is this important for your organization?  
What is the long-term benefit of this project to your org?

### **4. Experience**

*Required Experience:* What skills (technical and/or interpersonal) and experience are required to successfully complete the project?

*Preferred Experience:* What skills/experience would you prefer your team have (but is not necessary)?

### **5. Experience working with students**

What experience does the organization have working with students?  
What experience does the project mentor have working with students?

### **6. Anticipated deliverables**

What deliverables would you like students to produce throughout the course of the project? How will these products be implemented and used within your organization? Who is the intended audience?

### **7. Project location(s)**

Where will the student be located for the project? How much of the work will be completed in-person vs. remote? Is there any anticipated travel (e.g. field work,

meetings, conferences, etc.)?

**8. Project budget**

What are the anticipated costs of the project? Note that partner organizations must cover direct project costs (e.g. travel expenses, software, printing, supplies, etc.)

**9. Professional development**

What professional and skill development opportunities will students have in connection with this project?

How will your organization invest in students' professional development?

**10. Compensation**

While it is not required to compensate students for their Capstone work, we *highly encourage* organizations to offer an hourly wage or team stipend over the summer. Paid projects are often the most sought after and competitive. Will your organization compensate students? If so, please describe the arrangements. (Note: Partners are required to cover all of the direct costs associated with projects, e.g. travel expenses, software, printing, supplies, etc.)

***Capstone Project Appendix C: Workers' Compensation and  
Liability Insurance Coverage***

**UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO CAPSTONE PROJECTS  
Workers' Compensation and Liability Insurance Coverage**

CU students participating in a Boulder Campus Capstone Project are covered for workers' compensation and liability insurance through the university's self-insured program.

If injured while performing the duties agreed on for the Capstone Project, students will need to file a [Workers' Compensation Claim](#) with University Risk Management within 4 days.

If it is an emergency go to the nearest emergency clinic/hospital, otherwise, students will need to go to one of the university's [Designated Medical Providers](#).

For assistance with the process or questions, please call:  
Carolyn Peet, Director, University Risk Management, 303-735-5900 or Chadd Medina,  
Assistant Director, 303-492-6138.