School of Individualized Study
Graduate Handbook 2015-2016

Because every tiger’s stripes are different.
The Professional Studies handbook was developed to assist prospective and current students navigate all aspects of their college experience, from the first class to graduation.

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The Professional Studies program enables mature learners, and especially individuals with professional experience, the opportunity to customize their graduate plan of study; tailoring it to their personal and professional goals.

Students in the Professional Studies program can select courses from the more than 60 RIT graduate programs when creating their unique concentration areas. For example: interactive media design, human resource development, strategic training, information technology, project management, and health systems administration, to name just a few. These concentrations can be combined in order to enhance knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to advance their careers, professional interests or personal goals.

The plan of study normally begins with the course Context and Trends, and is completed with a practical, hands-on Capstone Project directly related to the student’s individualized concentration areas.

Most students complete the 33 semester credit degree program within 18-24 months, yet students have up to seven years to complete the degree. The degree can be completed on campus, or entirely through online learning, which means students need not establish residency by actually living in New York State.
To begin the Professional Studies degree, each student designs a plan-of-study curriculum of 33 semester credit hours through one-on-one advisement with the graduate advisor and also by attending the gateway course Context & Trends.

**Required Courses:**

**PROF-705 Context and Trends (C&T)**
Context & Trends must be the first, or one of the first courses, taken in the Professional Studies program. During this course, the unique plan-of-study curriculum is laid out and reviewed by the Graduate Review Committee.

**Course Description:** In this course, students gain a variety of conceptual and analytical skills that will be useful in accomplishing their Graduate Review Proposals (GRC) and subsequently in their professional careers. Students have the opportunity to explore a number of important trends (demographic, economic, technological, political and cultural) that will affect their choice of concentrations and ultimately their careers. In addition, the course will introduce or expand the ability of the student to use library resources and other general and field specific informational-data bases, bibliographies, professional literature, and the internet. This course will offer students an opportunity to create their GRC’s, Plan-of-Study, and preliminary Capstone Project proposals while also engaging in project planning activities.

**PROF-770 Capstone Planning Seminar**
The Capstone Planning course (0 credits) must be completed in the term prior to enrollment of the Capstone course. This course guides the student through preparation of the Capstone Proposal that is required for the applied final course of his/her MS in Professional Studies degree - the Capstone Project. Student will determine a Capstone Project concept, and articulate the methods for implementing the Capstone Project. The course concludes with a paper describing the Capstone Project, including background and description, methodology, anticipated outcomes, and probable Capstone Mentor. Student will meet regularly with the course facilitator. Upon successful completion of this course, student will be registered for the Capstone Project.

**PROF-775 Capstone Project**
The Capstone Project is taken during the last semester of study. The Capstone is a culmination of a student’s work and knowledge in the Professional Studies program and allows the student a chance to demonstrate their reviewed work to others. Approval for the Project must be granted by the Graduate Program Coordinator before a student can be registered.

**Course Description:** This course, while an independent study, is a supervised, hands-on experience in which the students apply the skills and knowledge developed through their individualized Plans-of-Study and concludes with oral and written presentations.

**Example Plan-of-Study Curriculum**

### 2 Concentrations (Semester)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required</th>
<th>PROF-705 Context &amp; Trends</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concentration A: General Marketing</strong></td>
<td>MKTG-761 Marketing Concepts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MKTG-762 Advanced Marketing Management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MKTG-772 Internet Marketing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MKTG-xxx Marketing Elective</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concentration B: Project Management</strong></td>
<td>BUSI-710 Intro to Project Management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BUSI-711 Advanced Project Management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BUSI-712 International Project Management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Electives:**
  - HLTH-754 E-Health | 3 |
  - COMM-710 Visual Communication | 3 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required</th>
<th>PROF-750 Capstone Planning Seminar</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PROF-775 Capstone Project</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** 33

**Example Plan-of-Study Curriculum**

### 3 Concentrations (Semester)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required</th>
<th>PROF-705 Context &amp; Trends</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concentration A: Technical Information</strong></td>
<td>TCOM-711 Technical Information Design</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TCOM-721 Creating Technical Proposals</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TCOM-714 Science Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concentration B: Manufacturing &amp; Mechanical Technology</strong></td>
<td>MECE-801 Design for Manufacturer</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MECE-710 Product Development &amp; Integration</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MECE-618 Computer Aided Engineering</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concentration C: General Management</strong></td>
<td>MGMT-740 Organizational Behavior</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MGMT-763 Behavioral Skills for Managers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MGMT-741 Managing Organizational Change</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required</th>
<th>PROF-750 Capstone Planning Seminar</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PROF-775 Capstone Project</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** 33

Completion of a Capstone Project entails the following elements:

- An approved Capstone Proposal before work on the Project begins.
- Successful completion (S grade) in the Capstone Planning course, taken the term prior to the capstone course.
- Project must demonstrate how the course work in the Plan-of-Study contributed to the project specified in the outcome of the project overall.
- Each Project must conclude with a 15-20 page report.
- Each Project must be presented before the Graduate Program Coordinator and any invited clients, mentors, and guests. Presentations occur at the end of each semester. Students will submit a final copy of their paper and presentation to the Program Coordinator through myCourses.
- Students will be asked to consider signing a release form permitting their Capstone Project to be used as an example for future students, posted on the SOIS website, and/or displayed as demonstration pieces for internal or external SOIS marketing pieces.
Professional Studies students design two to three areas of concentration in collaboration with their academic advisor. Concentrations range from 9-15 credit hours unless otherwise noted. All concentration course choices require approval from their perspective program chairs. Final approval is sought during the first course in the Professional Studies program, Context and Trends. For most programs, courses cannot be taken until the student has completed Context and Trends and is accepted into the Professional Studies program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concentration Area</th>
<th>Concentration Restrictions/Pre-Requisites</th>
<th>Example Courses</th>
<th>Fully Online Option</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applied Statistics/Quality</td>
<td>Fundamentals of Statistics I &amp; II (RIT) or Statistical background</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Education</td>
<td>PS students not allowed to have this area as a concentration choice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>PS students are limited to 4 courses from the College of Business.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes but very few options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication &amp; Media Technology</td>
<td>Students limited to pre-approved set of courses.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Technologies (IT, Computer Science, Software Development)</td>
<td>PS students are limited to 4 courses from the Information Technology department. Should have programming background. If not, may have to take programming bridge program.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>Students should work with CJ chair to pick appropriate courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering Studies: Systems; Industrial; Computer Technologies; Manufacturing; Electrical; Computer</td>
<td>CMS grad advisors usually pre-screen individual with Engineering dept. to ensure student has sufficient educational background.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental, Health &amp; Safety Management</td>
<td>Environmental/science background preferred (sometimes required)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health System Administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Development</td>
<td>PS students are limited to 4 courses from the HR department</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imaging Arts: Industrial Design; Graphic Design; Computer Graphics; Photography; Fine Arts, etc.</td>
<td>Portfolio review &amp; approval by CIAS faculty required for most Imaging Arts concentrations. Many studio-based courses take place during day.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied &amp; Computational Math</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packaging Science</td>
<td>Economics in background may be needed</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Other concentrations areas may be available. Please consult with the graduate advisor for more information.
Admission Requirements

The Project Lead the Way curriculum is a four-year, flexible sequence of pre-engineering courses:
- Principles of Engineering
- Engineering Graphics/Solid Modeling
- Introduction to Design and Development
- Gateway to Technology
- Computer Integrated Manufacturing

PLTW teachers who attend RIT's National Technology Training Center may apply to receive graduate credit for those courses by successfully completing the course and passing the graduate examination. PLTW teachers can apply to the PS program during their PLTW enrollment or after completion of all courses. Upon acceptance, PLTW teachers can apply 20 semester credit hours, representing Concentration A, to their PS degree. PLTW students can either complete Concentration B by selecting three courses from the RIT Graduate Bulletin (9 credit hours), or transfer in 6 credit hours of graduate coursework completed at an accredited university and that meets their professional goals. PLTW students must also complete the required PS graduate courses, ‘Context & Trends,’ ‘Capstone Proposal Seminar,’ and the ‘Capstone Project.’

For more information on the PLTW program, visit the RIT Project Lead the Way home page at http://www.rit.edu/emcs/pltw or visit the national site at http://www.pltw.org

Example PLTW Curriculum (Semester)

Required
PROF-705 Context & Trends 3

Concentration A: Pre-Engineering Technology Education
PLTW Engineering Graphics/Solid Modeling 4
PLTW Principles of Engineering 4
PLTW Computer Integrated Manufacturing 4
PLTW Introduction to Design & Development 4
PLTW Gateway to Technology 4

Concentration B*
RIT concentration (3 courses) or acceptable graduate transfer coursework of 6 semester credit hours + 1 RIT course 9

Required
PROF-750 Capstone Proposal Seminar 0
PROF-775 Capstone Project 3

Total 35

*The decision on how to meet the requirements for Concentration B must be made at the time of admission to the program.

The Professional Studies (PS) program has been specifically designed to meet the needs of students who have formulated a clear idea of their career objectives. Students must complete both steps below in order to be fully accepted into the PS graduate program.

1. Application for RIT Graduate Admissions
2. Completion of the course, Context & Trends

1. Application*
- Submit a Graduate Application to the RIT Admissions Office including a personal statement of educational objectives that identifies areas of interest to be developed into concentration areas.
- Two letters of recommendations from individuals who have recently served as either a supervisor or an instructor are required. Letters from a manager or supervisor supporting the student’s career and educational goals and intended plan-of-study are especially helpful.
- Students must have achieved a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college of university with an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or better on a 4.0 scale.

All Admissions standards must be met and a graduate application must be submitted to guarantee full consideration for admissions to the PS program.

International Students must submit the results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (with a minimum score of 550 (paper-based); 280 (computer based); 79 (internet based) as part of the formal application. The TOEFL requirement is waived for native speakers of English and/or those submitting educational transcripts and diplomas from American colleges or universities.

2. Completion of Context & Trends
Context & Trends is the first required course of the PS graduate program and must be passed AND a plan-of-study must be approved by the Graduate Review Committee in order for student to continue taking graduate courses. The PS program cannot guarantee that courses taken prior to matriculation and the completion of Context and Trends will be accepted as part of the final, approved Plan-of-Study.

*Exceptions:
- Students who are already accepted by another RIT graduate program, or who are currently enrolled in another RIT graduate program and are in good standing, do not have to reapply for graduate admissions. Instead, a Change of Program Form must be completed. All coursework prior to acceptance into the PS program is considered on an individual basis to determine applicability within the PS degree.
- Non-matriculated students who wish to matriculate into the PS program can do so after the completion of two RIT courses, one being Context and Trends. If this course is not completed, there is no guarantee that further coursework will be applied to the program.
- International Students whose undergraduate program consisted of only three years of study must enroll in 26 credit hours of upper division undergraduate courses before they can be fully admitted into the PS graduate program. The final four (4) credit hours of this 26 credit hour requirement may the graduate course, Context & Trends, which will be the transition course into the graduate program.
- Application of the seven (7) year rule will be strictly adhered to. Students need to be aware of this rule as they will be expected to complete the required 33 credit hours within seven years in order to be certified. Special consideration needs to be given to any transfer credit as the seven year rule is applied to the date the course was taken and not to the date the course was transferred to RIT.
Concentrations may not exceed more than five (5) courses or 15 semester credit hours (whichever comes first) or be less than nine (9) semester credit hours.

Concentration A: must consist of no fewer than three (3) courses for a minimum of nine (9) semester credit hours drawn from a single graduate program.

Concentration B and C (if chosen) must each consist of no fewer than three (3) classes for a total of at least nine (9) semester credit hours. If a ‘concentration C’ is not chosen, students will have up to three (3) courses available as electives.

With approval, students can transfer in 6 semester credits of graduate coursework.

Each concentration must be from a different graduate content area.

The total number of credit hours, including the required ‘Context & Trends’ and the ‘Capstone Project’, must total no fewer than 33 semester credit hours.

Each concentration must be approved by the appropriate concentration advisor or designee. A list of appropriate concentration advisors will be made available to the student during ‘Context & Trends’. The student will arrange to meet with and discuss each concentration with the appropriate graduate concentration advisor or designee to obtain their approval. Concentrations need to be approved prior to the end of ‘Context & Trends’. Failure to obtain proper signatures of approval for concentrations could result in a student's GRC Proposal not going before the Professional Studies Graduate Committee.

Exceptions to concentration development: College of Business, Information Technology, and Human Resources concentrations can only contain a max of four courses or 12 semester credit hours.

See an SOIS grad advisor for other concentration policy and rules. Many will be discussed in Context & Trends.

The Graduate Review Committee Proposal (GRC) is the main outcome of the first course, ‘Context & Trends’. In this proposal, students outline and justify the plan-of-study they have designed through six main sections:

1. Executive Summary
2. Personal Objective Statement (POS)
3. Approved Plan-of-Study
4. Literature Review
5. Summary of possible Capstone Project idea
6. Professional Resume

The GRC proposals are submitted to the Graduate Review Committee during week 10 of the fall and spring semesters. All students in ‘Context & Trends’ are required to submit the GRC proposal or forfeit the right to take future graduate courses under the Professional Studies MS program.

1. Executive Summary
The Executive Summary should briefly (one-page, double-spaced) encapsulate a student's professional and academic goals, outline what courses their plan-of-study will entail, and also describe a possible capstone project.

2. Personal Objective Statement (POS)
The POS is a one-three page summary of a student's professional and academic background with a focus on why they have chosen the Professional Studies degree program and also what they hope to do once completed with the program.

3. Plan-of-Study
(See example pg. 5)
An individualized Plan-of-Study consists of two or three concentrations drawn from existing RIT graduate programs. See Concentration guidelines on the previous page. These guidelines must be met in order for the GRC proposal to go before the Review Committee.

4. Literature Review
Each concentration chosen for the Professional Studies degree must work towards the end-goal of the ‘Capstone Project’. In order for the GRC committee to fully understand a student's plan of study design, a rationale for each concentration and how it could pertain to a possible Capstone Project must be given through a comprehensive literature review.

5. Capstone Project Idea
Since the Professional Studies degree is non-traditional in its curriculum design, submitting a Capstone Project Idea in the beginning of a student's academic tenure at RIT gives the Committee a sense of how the courses will work towards a common goal. The Capstone Project idea can change as a student progresses through their degree plan. The Graduate Program Coordinator and your advisor are available to talk about Project ideas at any time during a student's plan-of-study.

6. Resume
A professional resume is the last tool the GRC Committee can review to obtain a sense of a student's professional background and also how the chosen courses relate to a student's current or desired profession.
Capstone Proposal Instructions

The Graduate Program Coordinator MUST approve your proposal idea before enrollment in the Capstone Planning Seminar occurs. For examples of past Capstone Projects, visit: http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/SOIS/getting-started/graduate/capstone-projects

Capstone Proposal Instructions & Evaluation:

Instructions
A successful Capstone Project Proposal will consist of the following sections. For specific due dates for each section, please consult the schedule in the course syllabus.

Abstract (1/4 page)
A short paragraph, less than 250 words, that:
• Introduces the specific problem, challenge or opportunity that your project will address;
• Explains what your project activities (plan of work) will involve; and
• Describes what the envisioned results, outcomes or accomplishments of your project will be.

Write your abstract in prospective (futuristic) terms, something like this:

“This Capstone Project will address the important problem (issue, challenge) of [INSERT PROJECT FOCUS]. Completing this project will involve my working in the [ABC organization] from January – April 2014. This project will result in [INSERT ANTICIPATED PROJECT RESULTS, OUTCOME(S) OR ACCOMPLISHMENTS].”

Problem Statement and Annotated Bibliography (1-2 pages)
In this section of the proposal, start by writing a one-sentence statement that describes the nature and extent of the problem, issue, opportunity and/or challenge that you will address in your capstone project. Then articulate background information related to the current and historical “context & trends” of your project. When considering the background information and references to be used, keep in mind your problem or issue statement. Stay focused on your specific Project idea, but keep in mind core factors contributing to the situation (i.e., environmental, economic, political, socio-cultural and technological factors as addressed in the Context and Trends course). Also, consider how the problem/issue is affecting the particular organization, group or population you intend to work with and the extent of the problem, issue, opportunity and/or challenge that you will address in your capstone project.

The annotated bibliography will reflect the type of research literature you will use in your final project. Some of your references may come from the literature review you completed in Context and Trends course. Depending on needed expertise the mentor may be an RIT faculty member, or a professional who works in the particular field, but preferably someone who is aware of and perhaps already involved to some extent with the problem, challenge or opportunity you intend to address. Depending on needed expertise the mentor may be an RIT faculty member, or a professional who works in the field.

NOTE: Your reference list should not, and cannot, only be from websites. Plan to include at least five (5) hardcopy or electronic reference sources (books, journal publications, articles, etc.).

Universal Resource Locations (URLs) should be listed for Web pages referenced. However, URLs alone are not acceptable for in-text citations, Reference List or Bibliography entries! Use official instructions for a conventional citation style manual procedure such as MLA, APA, or Chicago.

Project Description (0.5-1 page)
Describe what you propose to do in your capstone project and how your unique areas of academic concentration within the MS in Professional Studies degree program qualify you to be able to successfully implement this project. Your proposed project MUST build upon your academic concentrations. (Describe the solution to your problem.) Specify the steps you will take, who you will talk to and work with, what organizational setting (if any) you will be working in and where this work will be performed. Discuss resources you will need and acquire along with research, data analysis and/or project management methods that you will employ at various stages of project completion.

SPECIAL NOTE: SOIS capstone projects typically do not constitute human subjects research and therefore do not require advance written approval by the RIT Institutional Review Board (IRB). This determination will be made during the Capstone Proposal Seminar. Consult with the Graduate Program Coordinator well in advance if your project work will involve surveying people!

Anticipated Deliverables & Evaluation Methods (about 1 page)
Explain anticipated project deliverables. Explain what you intend to actually accomplish in your project activities (e.g., a prototype, working model, demonstration project, manual, business/program plan, new service, etc.).

Keep your project manageable and be circumspect about what you can reasonably take-on and accomplish in a reasonable timeframe. Remember, capstone projects are only worth 3 credits (unless otherwise determined) so don’t try to solve world hunger, bring about peace on Earth, or end climate change! On the other hand, make sure your problem is real and worth your time and effort.

Describe your plan and specific methods for evaluating the success of your capstone project (i.e., how you will know the issue was solved or ameliorated and to what extent this occurred).

Capstone Project Mentor (1/4 page)
You are responsible to arrange for a professional to help guide and review your capstone project field work and accomplishments. Use this section of the proposal to identify and describe someone who will assist you in this advisory and review (mentor) role. Please list their name, occupation, address, phone number and email, and why you chose them as your advisor. Keep the following in mind when considering your mentor:

• A Capstone Project Mentor should be a person you are professionally acquainted with and preferably someone who is aware of and perhaps already involved to some extent with the problem, challenge or opportunity you intend to address. Depending on needed expertise the mentor may be an RIT faculty member, or a professional who works in the field.

• A mentor cannot be a relative and or an individual, such as a manager, who holds a position of authority in respect to your relationship to him/her. And because they need to be completely objective in providing you with guidance and feedback on your work, they cannot also be your client (i.e., the person or organizational representative who will benefit directly from your capstone project).
Capstone Project Final Report

Writing the Capstone Project Report

After completing the Capstone Project each student is required to submit a written Capstone Project Report. The purpose of this report is to clearly present the problem to be solved, what approaches were taken to solve the problem, what was accomplished, and what conclusions and recommendations resulted. In many ways much of the information originally described in the Capstone Proposal will be repeated and expanded in greater detail within the Capstone Project Report. (Notice that the required format and headings are very similar!)

Evaluation

Capstone Proposal will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- A Capstone Project Mentor does not need to be an “expert” who knows everything about a given capstone problem or situation BUT they do need to have a degree of relevant subject matter expertise in the areas of focus for your project. They should, however, be someone whom you respect and trust, someone you can learn from and take suggestions from, and someone you get along with interpersonally and can trust.
- Ideally your mentor will have an advanced degree and/or several years of professional experience in the field(s) represented by your professional course concentrations (in your Plan of Study).
- They must be willing to provide you with guidance and review your draft and final capstone proposal papers, and continue to work with you through project completion.

Plan of Work, Timeline, and Budget (1 page)

Outline a timeline, in weeks, showing important project phases and/or benchmark accomplishments. You can accomplish this in a simple Word doc, Table, or excel spreadsheet. A GANTT chart and/or a PERT chart could also be used, if appropriate. If needed, also include a project budget to indicate how expenditures relate to project objectives over time, and list actual or potential sources of funding if applicable.

Please note if the client you are working for will be paying for any costs (and what those are). Also indicate out-of-pocket expenses you may incur. If no purchases will be required to accomplish your project, indicate this instead.

Problem Background (3-4 pages)

A detailed description of how you went about solving the problem. Here you are to describe all of the major steps you took to complete your fieldwork inclusive of who you spoke to and worked with, resources you utilized, and research methods and/or project management approaches you employed throughout the Capstone Project. In other words, you should essentially tell a chronological “story” about what you did and how. If interviews were conducted a copy of the interview schedule needs to be placed in the Appendix and properly identified.

Consisting of exactly three sentences (not exceeding 250 words) that respectively introduce the problem that the project addressed, summarizes project work involved, and explains what the project ultimately accomplished or resulted in.

Project Description (3-4 pages)

This is a detailed description of the nature and extent of the problem addressed by the Capstone Project. Here you must document the basis for concluding that the problem you addressed in your Capstone Project actually existed (within an organization, community setting, industrial field, etc.) with at least 15 and preferably as many as 30 or even more references. The goal is for you to explain why the problem needed your attention and expertise, and why it was worth your time and effort to solve.

Project Results (5-7 pages)

Here you are to explain AND show what you accomplished, discovered and/or solved. Importantly you should explain how you know that you know this to be the case. In other words, explain the evaluation processes utilized, and the evaluation outcomes. If applicable, you may describe ways
members of a group, employees of the organization, or a segment of the community extended praise for your project solution or work performance. Include other types of reported or anecdotal evidence of project success such a media accounts, newsletters, or photographs to the extent they are available. Remember to cite these sources as reference materials if utilized.

It is in this section of your report where you should include examples of your work: survey instruments, pictures, diagrams, flow charts, statistical charts and web page screen shots (if applicable) statistical data and or other quantifiable measure, etc. Remember that although you are encouraged to develop one or more appendices, this section of your report must consist of a clear and substantial explanation of your project results.

Conclusion and Recommendation (5-7 pages)
In this final section of the report students are to briefly recap the nature and extent of the problem they were trying to solve. Remind readers of why the problem was “a big deal” and deserving of the time and effort extended. Cite key references (again) as needed.

Next, students are to summarize their overall accomplishments, findings and project solution(s). This is an abbreviated version of what was written in the results section of the report. Here students are entitled to “brag a little” about what they did and who benefited as a result. Explain specific ways in which the individuals, work units, organizations, communities and/or society are (or could become) better off as the result of the problem solution(s) presented in the Capstone Project. Students should tie their discussion back to the problem background section of their report by citing key references as appropriate. In other words, link the project solution and product to the context and emerging trends in which the problem addressed was determined to exist.

Students must also make recommendations regarding their project solution and product. For example, what else should the organization do with the proposed end product? How can other organizations and professionals in the employment sector potentially utilize those solutions or project findings? And what should other professionals (or graduate students) do, do differently, or not do as a result of the Capstone Project experiences?

Hence, students are to reflect on the value of their accomplishments, as well as what went right or what may have been done differently along the way. Be candid about this — oftentimes admitting what may have been done differently, if given the opportunity, can add credibility to the report and is a sign of true professionalism! This is the section where students should also identify as yet unrealized but anticipated outcomes of their recommendations as well as potential and/or recommended methodologies for evaluating those outcomes.

Finally, in this section, students must explain how specific courses from their course concentrations prepared and enabled them to complete their Capstone Project.

References Cited, and Appendices
The reference list begins as a separate heading atop a new page. All in-text citations must be listed in the reference list in alphabetical order of the author’s last name followed by: the year of publication; title of article; name of journal, book or publication; the volume, number, or edition if applicable; and the location of publisher and name of publisher (if the source is a book).

“Appendix A” (plus “Appendix B,” “Appendix C,” and so forth as required. There are no page limits to appendices, nor are you required to have any appendices if your report does not require any). As previously indicated, appendix materials include supplemental materials including examples of your work, accomplishments, survey instruments, etc. All appendix material should be referred to in the body of your paper (e.g., “see Appendix A”). Each appendix must begin with a new (i.e., separate) cover page that labels the appendix material (e.g., “Appendix A: Survey Instrument” only without the quotation marks).

Citations and Reference List Instructions
All factual assertions and information not based on personal knowledge must be cited in the text of the paper and also listed in the reference list. Citations in text normally include the author and year of the publication in parenthesis. For example, (McQuade, 1998) OR if the author’s name is part of the text you would write: “McQuade (2001) reminds us that . . . ” Quotations require quotation marks around quoted text. Further, all quotations must be cited with the page number(s) on which they appear in the book or article. (Quotes from web pages do not require page numbers.)

If you are referring to the entire document, do not use page numbers. However, do identify page numbers in the non-quoted citation if the information pertains to only a specific idea, set of issues, or a portion of an article or book rather than the entire document: For example, (Standage, 1998, p.56) or (Standage, 2001, pp. 56-58).

Every new citation in the text of the paper requires the source to be listed in the reference list at the end of the paper. References are to be listed alphabetically according to the primary author’s last name and single-spaced (except double-space between references) like this:


Note that in the reference to Jones (above), the name of the journal and the volume number is underlined; this is followed by the non-underlined number (of the journal) and then the page numbers of the article; and note that there is a double space between the references.

Web pages can be a good source of background and technical information, and they must be cited in the text accordingly (i.e., by author and year if known). Then in the reference list, include the web page URL like this:


When an organizational web/home page is cited as the “author” the source should be listed like this:

To apply for financial aid, students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA - available at http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/). RIT’s federal school code is 002806.

NOTE: RIT rarely awards full financial support for graduate students. Loans are available.

**Professional Studies Scholarship Policies**
The Professional Studies Program (PSP) currently distributes scholarships to qualified graduate students and program candidates. Awards normally range from $1,000 to $3,000 per student per academic year, are paid to students on a yearly basis in accordance with their program of study, progress, and are based on the following criteria:

- GPA: Must be above a 3.0 to apply
- Academic and community or professional service accomplishments earned prior to or while becoming a SOIS graduate student
- Entrepreneurial professional interests which are inherently multidisciplinary in nature and coincide with specific areas of recruiting or program development within SOIS

**Scholarship Application, Approval and Award Process**
All PS graduate students in good academic standing are eligible to apply for a scholarship.

In addition, application for a PS Graduate scholarship or assistantship is part of the RIT Graduate Application process (online or paper). Once a student's application for admission is complete, the PS Graduate Program Coordinator and student’s advisor review the student’s file and qualifications to receive a scholarship.

If approved for a scholarship, students are notified of the award amount and time period during which their scholarship award disbursements will be made.

Scholarships are based on the RIT fiscal year calendar (June 1 – May 31), not academic years (e.g., fall through summer semesters). For renewal of a scholarship, students must reapply each spring. To begin the process, students must complete a Scholarship Application/Renewal form and submit it by the deadline date (normally the last Friday in May). The PS program will then make a renewal decision based on the criteria above combined with the student's success to that point in the PS program.

**Program Planning and Spending Review**
On a semester basis, the Professional Studies Graduate Program Coordinator or their designee will monitor the number, amounts, and type of scholarships granted. This is accomplished by reviewing the scholarship distribution report provided by the Office of Financial Aid and undertaken in order to ensure available funds are appropriately expended in accordance with SOIS goals.

**Financial Aid & Scholarships**

**Academic Policies**


**Seven Year Graduate Rule**
(Petitions for Extensions to the Seven-Year Graduate Rule-Master Level Programs-Guidelines)

In cases where the fulfillment of degree requirements extends beyond the seven-year limit, the Graduate Program Coordinator must petition the Graduate Council for a formal extension. Please note the following important requirements for these petitions:

- Requirements for the degree must be completed within seven years of the date of the oldest course counted towards the student's program. At the time of matriculation, each graduate student will sign an acknowledgement of the date at which the seven-year period will expire. (For example, if the first course counted towards the degree is taken in 2000-1 fall, the degree must be completed by the end of 2007-1 fall.)
- Application for an extension should be submitted to the Graduate Council at least one full semester prior to the expiration of the seven-year time limit.
- When a student’s program is projected to exceed the seven-year limit, he/she should not be encouraged to take courses or work on a thesis or final project until a decision has been made by the Graduate Council.

Documents included in the petition submitted to the Chair of Graduate Council by the Graduate Coordinator should include the following:

- Petition support signed by the Dean’s office.
- Detailed plan for completion of degree, addressing each unfulfilled requirement (generally, no more than one calendar year’s extension will be granted).
- Circumstances that delayed completion of degree.
- RIT graduate transcript and, where relevant, undergraduate transcript.
- Current resume
- A list of courses that will be older than seven years (and by how much) at the projected date of graduation. As the time of certification, the Graduate Coordinator will provide written documentation of the current or overdue courses.
- Letter of support from Graduate Coordinator or faculty advisor.

A subcommittee of Graduate Council, comprised of the following individuals, will consider the petition. The graduate advisor must be present at this meeting to advocate for the extension:

- Graduate Council representative from requesting college
- Graduate Council representative from another college
- Graduate Coordinator submitting the petition
- Chair of Graduate Council

Decisions are usually made at the time of the meeting and students are notified directly by the Chair of Graduate Council.

NOTE: RIT rarely awards full financial support for graduate students. Loans are available.
Add/Drop of Courses
Please reference the current RIT Academic Calendar for the last day to add/drop courses for each semester.

Computer Conduct
Please reference Computer Conduct Information.

Alternative and Transfer Credit
Credits for completing a Plan-of-Study are mostly commonly earned with RIT graduate courses. However, up to 6 graduate semester credit hours with a grade of B or better, earned at an accredited college or university, can be transferred to a Plan-of-Study where appropriate and applicable. The request to include these transfer credits as part of the PS program must be made at the time of admissions and then included when the Plan-of-Study is being developed for final approval by the PS Graduate Committee.

Students who transfer credits into the Plan-of-Study must keep in mind the seven (7) year rule as described on page 19 as transfer credits follow this rule.

Changing a Plan-of-Study
In approving a Plan-of-Study, the PS Graduate Committee cannot guarantee that all the courses listed in the original plan will be taught and available to the student at a future date. However, if a course is not available, the Graduate Program Coordinator and/or the student's advisor will work with the student to arrange an appropriate substitution.

In certain circumstances, the student may wish to amend or alter their Plan-of-Study. Any and all course substitutions must be approved by the concentration advisor, and a substitution form must be signed by the concentration advisor and submitted to the PS Graduate Program Coordinator the student's advisor. A change of three or more courses, either one at a time or all together, must be re-approved by the PS Graduate committee. Substitution forms are available from the PS Graduate Program Coordinator and student's advisor. Course substations or concentration amendments made without proper approval from the concentration advisor and consequently the PS Graduate Program Coordinator and the student's advisor could result in the student not being certified due to noncompliance with this policy.

Annual Review
The Program Coordinator and student's advisor will review each student's progress toward graduation at least once a year and will contact each student to determine how he/she is progressing.

Graduation Requirements
To be certified in the PS program, students must:

- Complete the approved Plan-of-Study (of at least two professional concentration areas) totally a minimum 33 semester credit hours including Context & Trends and the Capstone Project.

- Complete the program within seven years of the completion of the first course (if transfer credit is used, credit must have been earned with that seven year limit). Students are advised to review the seven year graduation rule to ensure all courses, RIT and transfer, fall within the guidelines.

- Obtain an overall program GPA of at least 3.0, and obtain a 3.0 in the specific concentration areas.

- Discharge all financial obligations to RIT.

- Complete an Application for Graduation form electronically through the Student Information System in the semester you plan to graduate.
Q: Is the PS Master's degree accredited?
A: Yes. All RIT degrees have been accredited by the Middle States Associations Commission on Higher Education and approved by the New York State Department of Education.

Q: What are the entry requirements?
A: The PS program requires students to have a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college of university and an undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.

All student must submit a completed Graduate Application to RIT’s Office of Graduate Admissions.

Letters of reference from two individuals who have recently served as either a supervisor or instructor are also required. Letters from a manager or supervisor supporting a student's career and educational goals and intended plan-of-study are especially helpful.

International Students must submit the results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). A minimum score of 550 is required for the paper-based test; 280 for the computer-based test. The TOEFL requirement is waived for those international students submitting educational transcripts and diplomas from an American college of university.

Q: Is an entrance exam required?
A: No. Entrance exams are not required, with the exception of the TOEFL exam for international students.

Q: How long is the program?
A: The program is 33 semester credit hours and can be completed either through full-time or part-time study. It is also possible to complete the program in an online format if a student's concentration areas are developed from online learning courses.

Q: What is a concentration?
A: A concentration is a grouping of at least 3 courses from a single graduate program. Concentrations are developed with assistance from a student's academic advisor.

Q: Is it possible to transfer in credits? If so, how many?
A: Up to 6 semester credits of graduate work with a grade of B or better may be eligible for transfer. The credits must be from a regionally accredited graduate school and will be evaluated when the student applies to RIT. The request to include these transfer credits must be made when the Plan-of-Study is developed. They must be appropriate and applicable to the student’s program. The final approval for transfer credits will be made when your program is reviewed by the PS Graduate Committee.

Q: Do all the courses in a given concentration have to come from a single graduate degree program?
A: Yes, usually - unless approved otherwise.

Q: How many graduate courses can I take from the College of Business?
A: Because of requirements of the College of Business's accrediting body, the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, students who are not matriculated in a College of Business graduate program are limited to four courses.

Q: Are all of RIT’s graduate courses available on a part-time basis in the evenings?
A: No. Some programs are designed to accommodate part-time evening students and offer a complete schedule of courses on evenings, weekends or online. Others require full-time attendance and offer courses exclusively or almost exclusively during weekday hours on campus.

Q: When is my program approved?
A: Your Plan-of-Study will be approved at the end of 'Context and Trends’. A committee of RIT faculty and program coordinators from SOIS will review your program and Statement of Educational and Career Objectives (SECO). Their acceptance of your Plan-of-Study becomes your approved curriculum.

Q: Can I take classes towards the PS program before I apply?
A: It is possible for some students to obtain approval from the PS program to register for 'Context & Trends’ before they are admitted into the program. However, the y must be able to demonstrate that their graduate application is in progress, they have provided a transcript showing a GPA of 3.0 or better on a 4.0 scale, and they can describe a preliminary plan-of-study. Formal acceptance into the PS Masters degree is contingent upon receipt of all required application materials, faculty review, and plan acceptance. Classes taken prior to matriculation cannot be guaranteed to be accepted as part of the finalized plan-of-study.

Q: Will my PS degree be recognized by employers or graduate professional programs to which I might seek admissions?
A: Yes, the PS master's has been designed for individuals who have decided that a conventional graduate program will not serve their career interests or meet the needs of current and future employers for cross-functional expertise. The PS program is not appropriate for those who are seeking advancement in fields which require completion of approved and certified programs of study such as public accounting or school psychology.

Q: What is my next step?
A: Make an appointment with the Graduate Program Coordinator. Please bring a copy of our transcript and/or resume if possible. Appointments can be made by calling 585.475.2234 or by emailing SOIS@rit.edu. Appointments can be done via phone or on-campus.
School of Individualized Study

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