

**Rehabilitation Counseling Program**  
Department of Counseling and School Psychology  
Graduate College of Education  
University of Massachusetts at Boston

**Capstone Experience**

I. Purpose:

The purpose of the capstone in the Rehabilitation Counseling Track is to provide a culminating experience which require students to comprehensively employ classroom knowledge and clinical experiences in demonstrating a practitioner-scientist approach to practice. We value and emphasize students' use of a practitioner-scientist approach to their work in the context of our urban mission. The practitioner-scientist approach is founded on the belief that emphasizes practice first with the use of research as a solid foundation. Students are expected to demonstrate skills of systematic interpretation of research information presented in journals and other scientific sources along with clinical experience in the practice of rehabilitation counseling. Students may choose one of two options: a case analysis or a research project.

The intent of the **Clinical Case Analysis** is to engage students in an experience which, in its comprehensiveness, brings together their entire learning experience throughout their enrollment in the Track, and reinforces their own self-efficacy and feelings of competence as a rehabilitation counselor.

Students completing the **Research Project** are expected to systematically identify a problem or issue confronting them as practitioners during their field experience, the internship (the early part of their internship). Through consultation with peers and faculty (both group and individual consultations) students will develop methods of addressing the problem identified. Students may choose to address a policy issue or conduct a small scale research study. Key in the choice of the activity will be how the issue relates to practice as a rehabilitation counselor. Students may choose to address the identified issue through policy or research activities with focus on: interventions; adaptive technologies, systems functioning; or urban and diversity issues confronting those with disabilities.

II. Capstone Project (Clinical Case Analysis option)

a. Clinical Case Analysis

During the internship experience, students are required to identify a clinical case: an individual they are working with in the counseling internship. Students will audio/video tape a counseling session of the identified case. The audio-video taped session must be a case that a student has worked with over several sessions. Students

must complete a comprehensive analysis of the case. The following documentation of activities is required:

- Transcription of the complete counseling session
- Signed Form of Consent from the client or their authorized representative for purposes of others having access to session content (you as the intern will keep a record of the consent. Do not place a copy in the materials submitted) and a signed Form of Consent from the supervisor who represents the institution providing service to the client.
- A written complete psychosocial history of the client.
- A summary of medical issues related to the disability.
- A discussion of ethical and legal implications in working with this particular client. This should include citations from the ethical codes and professional literature, illustrating the case through theories and basic concepts.
- A discussion of how developmental and contextual issues influenced this client and his/her current problems
- A discussion of how the client's disability may result in discrimination and/or exclusion
- Vocational and independent living issues
- A discussion of how the disability has affected this person's life.
- Identification of at least three different hypotheses about potential client problems. Students must identify content from the transcription which provides support for the hypotheses.
- A summary of an individual written rehabilitation plan (IWRP) which is clearly linked to the identified hypotheses and should include: the client's rehabilitation goal; and objectives and interventions.
- A discussion of the student-counselor's personal reactions to the client, including any countertransference issues. This should include a discussion of student-counselor's personal attitudes and feelings about working with this particular client.

b. Evaluation (**Clinical Case Analysis**)

Students must submit to their faculty advisor a final written document addressing the requirements listed above. The report must be typed and double-spaced. Included in this report should be a transcript of the counseling session and the tape itself. This entire documentation must be submitted to the advisor no later than April 1 during the second semester in which the student completes the internship.

The advisor and one other faculty member will evaluate the report and the counseling skills demonstrated by the student. The advisor will select another faculty member in the rehabilitation counseling track to review the report and tape. Students may either receive a pass or fail based on their evaluation. If there is a difference of opinion between these two faculty, then a third faculty member will be asked to review the materials. Evaluation of the documentation will be completed by faculty no later than May 1 in order for the student to rework and then resubmit the written analysis of the case. The

resubmission must be returned to the student's advisor no later than May 15 in order for a student to meet requirements for graduation.

### III. Capstone Project (Research Project Option)

#### a. Research Project

Students will initiate the actual Capstone experience during the early part of their internship in the Fall semester. Ideas will be discussed and presented during internship seminar classes. The internship faculty member will facilitate discussion of the process of selection and implementation of the Capstone Experience. Approval of the Project will be made by two rehabilitation counseling faculty, one being the faculty internship member (students may not begin the Project until formal approval by both faculty has been made, e.g. in writing to the student). The proposed project must be typed, double-spaced and be no longer than seven pages. The project description should include: a brief discussion of the identified issue, how the issue is linked to practice, and the method of addressing the issue. Approval of the proposed project must be completed by the end of the fall semester in which the student is registered for the internship.

#### b. Completion of the Capstone Project (Research Project)

The proposed Capstone Project should be an original idea and the work conducted during the internship experience and linked to actual practice as a rehabilitation counselor. The student will have primary responsibility for the implementation of the Project. He/she will complete periodic discussions and summaries of the Project during internship class seminars. Feedback from peers in the seminar class will be encouraged. Key in the discussion will be a focus on whether the Project is feasible for further implementation in the field of rehabilitation counseling. More specifically, students will be encouraged to assess whether the Project is practical, based on an assessment of: efficacy, efficiency, and cost.

#### c. Final Project Products (Research Project)

1. Students are expected to complete a formal written paper describing the Project by April 15, the Spring Semester. The written paper is to include: a discussion of the identified issue, how the issue is linked to practice, the method of how the issue was addressed (e.g. research methods used or how policy issues were addressed), conclusions/findings of the Project, and limitations in implementing conclusions/findings of the Project in actual practice.

2. Students are expected to complete a formal presentation of the Project to peers (at least three peer) and rehabilitation counseling faculty (a minimum of two faculty) at the end of the spring semester in which the internship was completed. Typically, the presentation will take place during an internship seminar or at other identified times where peers and faculty can be available. The format for the

presentation will follow an abbreviated format of the written product, e.g. discussion of identified issue, how the issue was addressed, etc.

3. Students are encouraged to present the Project to agency staff at the internship site whenever possible. The purpose here is twofold: 1) to provide an opportunity to present to professional peers, and 2) to share findings to demonstrate the importance of a practitioner-scientist approach to professional practice.

d. Evaluation of the Capstone Experience (Research Project)

1. Comments and reactions will be systematically solicited from rehabilitation counseling peers to the formal presentation of the Project. This will be achieved through anonymous written feedback. The information will be shared with the student/presenter by faculty members of the Rehabilitation Counseling track.

2. Based on the formal written Project, the formal presentation, and the feedback from students, the two rehabilitation faculty on the committee will determine whether the student:

- a. Passes the Project
- b. Is required to make revisions

In the event a student must complete revisions, the student must complete the revisions by May 1, Spring Semester (in certain circumstances extensions may be granted when both rehabilitation counseling faculty agree to grant one). Once the revisions are completed, both faculty must agree to pass the student. It is not expected that students would fail the Project because faculty and student peers will be providing feedback throughout the process.