Capstone Project Objectives

Each student in the program will design and develop a digital portfolio that documents their work and accomplishments over the course of their studies. As a culminating project, the ePortfolio serves an overarching goal to provide students an opportunity to examine and integrate their academic, professional and professional development experiences as a whole. In doing so, the Capstone Project strives towards the following goals:

- Develop a more comprehensive understanding of the graduate experience;
- Foster the integration of theory and practice;
- Ensure preparation for global higher education;
- Encourage professional development and professional socialization;
- Encourage involvement in professional organizations; and
- Improve students successful entry and/or advancement in their chosen field.

While much of the work done to create the Capstone ePortfolio is completed at the conclusion of the program, students are encouraged to begin completing the requirements for Professional Development and Global Education activities described herein during their first year.

Overview

To fulfill the requirements of the Masters in Higher Education and Student Affairs, each student will:

- Attain a minimum number of professional development points and global higher education points.
- Each student will write and have approved by their advisor a statement of professional philosophy and professional preparation.
- Design, develop and present an ePortfolio of their work and accomplishments during the course of the program.

Sequence

During the first year of the program, students are encouraged to review the requirements for the Capstone Professional Development and Capstone Global Higher Education Programs (commonly referred to as Capstone Points) and begin identifying opportunities that align with their own long-term goals and interests. Students should review activities with their advisor during their regularly scheduled appointments.

The development of the Capstone ePortfolio and statements typically occurs during the last semester prior to graduation through enrollment in the Capstone Workshop, a non-credit course that provides students with guidance on the process and feedback on ePortfolio preparation. (For students who expect to graduate in September, enrollment in the Workshop takes place during the spring semester.)

In a group session scheduled at the end of fall and spring semesters, students will present and explain their portfolio and statement and respond to questions from a panel of faculty. Each student will have had their portfolio and statement reviewed and approved ahead of time by their advisor. The Capstone presentation is meant to be a
celebration of students’ professional accomplishments rather than a defense of their work.

Capstone ePortfolio Elements

The digital portfolio is a creatively compiled collection of evidence related to the student's academic and internship work and accomplishments during her or his master's program. The process provides students with the opportunity to engage in self-assessment as well as forming a more holistic view of their graduate experience. A portfolio is also a powerful tool for students in their job search that can be shared during the application and interview process. The portfolio contains the statement of professional philosophy, and a collection of materials related to the student academic and professional experience at NYU.

Statement of Professional Philosophy and Program Preparation

This statement will be a two-part document.

1. A three to four page explication of the student's professional philosophy (i.e., values, beliefs, and perspectives as related to higher education or student affairs work); and
2. A three to four page narrative that focuses on integrating the elements of the program (i.e., academics, practical experience, and professional development) and that explains how the experiences have prepared the student to be an effective educator, administrator, and leader in the realm of higher education or student affairs.

The process of writing, presenting, and explaining this statement will also prepare students to address such issues in their job interviews. Students will develop an advanced draft of the statements as part of the Capstone Workshop prior to submitting faculty advisors who will review the work based on the rubric that appears at the end of the handbook. Advisors will need to approve the statement prior to the portfolio presentation.

Professional Development Points

A list is attached that identifies a wide variety of professional development activities. Each is assigned a certain point value, which varies according to the amount of time and effort required. Each student is required to attain a minimum level of Fifteen points prior to graduation.

Global higher education points

A list is attached that identifies a wide variety of global higher education activities. Each is assigned a certain point value, which varies according to the amount of time, energy, potential development, and depth of experience associated with each activity. Each student is required to attain a minimum of Five points.

Approval of Points

Forms must be submitted to and approved by the student's advisor. While activities may be reviewed at any point during a student’s studies, final submission of the forms usually takes place in the fifth week of the final semester with exact dates provided in the
Capstone workshop. This should include any forms for activities anticipated prior to completion (e.g., conference attendance or presentations). Some advisers may prefer a simple listing and will suggest a format to you.

**Guidelines for Professional Development Activities and Points**

Throughout the academic program, students are encouraged to seek out experiences that allow them to explore new fields of practice, engage with the larger professional community, advance skills and knowledge in chosen areas of concentration, assume leadership roles on campus and beyond, and pursue relevant research opportunities.

As students review the following tables, it should be understood that efforts have been made to capture the most common experiences for graduate students in the Higher Education & Student Affairs Program and is by no means intended to limit additional offerings that students may identify and seek out. (As students’ interests evolve and offerings change, entries will be added.) Questions concerning the points assigned to an unlisted activity can be addressed by the faculty advisor.

Some additional considerations that students should know:

- When more than two people present at a professional conference, a note of explanation to advisors of all students about the role and degree of participation by each person is required.

- Points will not be given for activities that are part of the normal expectations of one’s internship or full-time job. For example, training workshops on FERPA are required for many campus positions and should not be included here.

- Points are provided only for activities conducted during the time of enrollment in the master’s program.

- Points earned in this category cannot be used in the Global Higher Education category.

- Points earned are generally uncompensated services.