

Preparing Your Capstone Research Project Proposal-

Start thinking about developing a *researchable* problem/question or a unique creative project.

The problem should be stated in the form of a researchable question or hypothesis and then it is possible to operationalize the question or issue.

Sources of questions:

- From class information
- From clinical experiences, labs, or observations
- From others
- From thinking about a problem
- From journal articles
- From prior research on the subject
- Etc...

Your Capstone Research Ideas:

- 1. Should be stated objectively, clearly, concisely, simply.**
- 2. Should answer a question that is meaningful.**
- 3. Should ask a question that can be answered.**

A major objective of research is to make a statement about the universe and the factors affecting it.

Tips for developing a topic and formulating a research question:

1. Start by identifying an area within your major that interests you. Then look for a specific topic or issue within that general area. The specific topic or issue should be something that has not been fully explored. Maybe you've read something for one of your classes that raised interesting questions. Maybe you've even done some research about it already. If you can't think of a topic that way, try using a database appropriate to your major to see what kinds of questions scholars in your field are currently interested in.

Another possibility would be to talk to a professor whose research interests coincide with your own and see whether he/she has any suggestions.

You will need to develop a research question or questions-

Record measurements of a representative sample of the universe and use the collection of measurements to reach conclusions about the universe.

- Does the question deal with a topic or issue that interests you enough to spark your own thoughts and opinions?
 - Is the question easily and fully researchable?
What type of information do I need to answer the research question?
2. Look for ways to make your research question narrow and manageable. You are writing a research paper, not a book, and you need to be able to cover your topic thoroughly in the space you have. Keep in mind, too, that you've got to read the existing research on your topic. If your topic is too big, there will be more existing research than you have time to read.
 3. Be mindful that your research must have an original element. How do you know that what you're doing has not been done before? (This is one reason why you have to read the existing research.)
 4. Determine appropriate methodology for answering your question. Your capstone supervisor will likely help you with this. The type of research that is done is highly varied. So think about where your information will likely come from? How much and what kind of data will you collect? How will you analyze it? If you are doing any kind of research involving human subjects, even a survey, you will need Institutional Review Board approval. If you are administering a questionnaire, what are your questions? (If possible, use an existing questionnaire that has already been shown to be valid and reliable.) If you will be doing statistical analysis, what kind of statistical analysis will you do?

5. A good proposal presents a sufficiently narrow question and a clear and simple plan for answering it.

Application Practice:

Given the type and scope of the information that I need, is my question too broad, too narrow, or okay?

Sample questions:

- Is a college education necessary in the world today? (way too broad)
- Do students like coming to speech therapy at X elementary school? (too narrow)
- Do differing head and body position changes required by two prominent videostroboscopic examination procedures effect patients' vocal acoustic outputs? (just right!)

5. What sources will have the type of information that I need to answer the research question (journals, books, government documents, people)?

6. Can I access these sources?

7. Given my answers to the above questions, do I have a good quality research question that I actually will be able to answer?

8. Have I established a relationship with a professor who has expertise in my area of interest and is willing and able to supervise my Capstone work?

More Examples of Research Questions:

- What is the relationship between course grades and clinical skills as defined by internal and external supervisor ratings during graduate school?
- Are patients more satisfied with new digital hearing aids after 6, 12, or 18 months of use?

- Is x intervention more effective than y intervention in treating word-finding problems in adolescents with specific language impairment?
- What is the attitude of middle school children without disabilities regarding the use of augmentative/alternative communication systems in classroom settings by children with disabilities?
- Does use of a peer-mediated intervention strategy increase reading comprehension scores for elementary age children?

First steps-

1. Think about potential research interests
2. Talk to potential capstone supervisors or request help from the Honors Liaison in your home department/school. If you still need help, contact the Honors College to assist you in finding someone who might be able to help
3. Conduct a literature review on the topic-READ related research
4. Outline prior research findings
5. Provide rationale for the proposed research
6. Show possible benefits of the research
7. Complete the proposal form and get a supervisor's signature and submit it for review to the Honors Council