MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MERIDIAN
School of Health Professions

# Combined Health Service Psychology Programs

# Capstone Project Guide

## Doctor of Psychology (PsyD)
## Master of Science (MS)

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## INTRODUCTION

The graduate programs offered by Mississippi State University – Meridian School of Health Professions are based upon a practitioner-informed-by-science training model. Students in the PsyD in Combined Health Service Psychology (PsyD CHSP), and the Masters in Combined Health Service Psychology (MS CHSP) are prepared to be highly competent problem-solvers who draw upon a strong foundation in core knowledge areas of their field of study. Moreover, students are prepared to offer a full continuum of empirically supported services to their stakeholders and communities.

The Capstone Project within the Department of Health Service Psychology helps to prepare the student to be a lifelong consumer, evaluator, and utilizer of research to guide practice. It is conducted under the supervision of faculty but is to be the student's independent, original work, properly citing ideas, results, and/or quotes from other sources. Like published studies, it can answer only certain questions but demonstrate the student's scholarship, interpretive acumen, and writing skills.

The Capstone Project serves as a mechanism for the graduate student to develop an area of expertise under the mentorship of the major advisor. This project, and the resulting document, should be conceptualized as having a significant impact on the field of knowledge and practice and will be presented to a public audience including the capstone committee at the capstone defense.

## COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT

The major professor will serve as the student's academic advisor and as the capstone chair and provide significant guidance to the student in selecting the committee that is intended to facilitate the completion of the capstone project and degree. Eligible committee members are those who possess expertise in the Capstone Project's content and/or methodology to be used in the project. The Capstone Project committee will consist of four (4) members and **MUST** include the student's major professor who serves as the capstone chair. This individual MUST be an eligible, full- time MSU-Meridian Department of Health Service Psychology faculty member in the student's program. The second and third committee members **MUST** also be a full-time MSU-Meridian Department of Health Service Psychology faculty member in the student's program. Each of the first two committee members must possess an earned doctorate from a regionally accredited institution and be an active scholar with demonstrated capabilities for research/scholarship and for supervision of a doctoral student. Committee member four may come from outside of the MSU-Meridian Department of Health Service Psychology. Each member is reviewed by the student's CHSP graduate coordinator, based on information provided in his or her updated curriculum vitae.

The student will be required to consult each potential committee member to determine if the individual is willing to serve on the committee. After the student has secured agreement from each person to serve on the committee, the student, with the major professor's help, will initiate the completion of the MSU-Office of Graduate School's Committee Form (https://www.grad.msstate.edu/students/forms). This committee will also serve as the student's doctoral program committee and be responsible for signing all official MSU program of study and comprehensive examination documents.

Adjunct faculty and other qualified individuals may be asked to serve on capstone projects (e.g.,

internship supervisor at the student's placement location). Students should discuss the benefits and limitations of adding adjunct faculty members to their committee with their capstone chair. On such occasions, the individual would serve as committee member three or four and *must* be approved by the graduate coordinator, by the student's *Committee Chair*, and administrative procedures must be followed.

When a student requests a committee member who is not a full-time MSU-Meridian Department of Health Service Psychology or adjunct faculty member, that student must submit the proposed member's curriculum vitae outlining qualifications pertinent to the proposed Capstone Project. The student's graduate coordinator reviews these credentials for approval to serve as a member of the Capstone Project committee. Eligibility for participation on the committee may include:

- Research and/or clinical practice related to the proposed project
- Publication(s) within the last five years
- Previous experience directing/supervising students' activities
- Previous experience serving on similar (e.g., directed study/capstone project/Student Research) committees

Any changes to the members of the Capstone Project committee while the project is in progress must be approved by the student's graduate coordinator and all MSU policies MUST be followed with completion of the required forms (https://www.grad.msstate.edu/students/forms). **There are no exceptions to these policies**. The students should discuss first with the chair and then with committee members procedures to be followed.

Should a student work on their Capstone Project across multiple semesters, a faculty member who is serving on a student's committee may leave the program in pursuit of other professional interests prior to the completion of the project. On such occasions, the faculty member may request to obtain adjunct status and must follow university guidelines for approval to remain on the committee. However, this would be approved for a one-year period of time and, if the student's Capstone Project is going to take longer than one year, then the faculty member would require replacement. Faculty members who have left the program may elect not to continue their service on the committee, which would require their replacement on the committee.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Capstone Project is guided by the major professor/capstone project chair. Selection of the topic and modality of the project should be discussed with the chair who then would recommend potential Capstone Project committee members. The Capstone Project committee helps the chair develop recommendations for the project's components so that it will meet expectations for a quality product. The component of the project will depend upon the modality or type of project the student will complete for their Capstone Project. Sufficient time must be allowed for review of the project by the committee at critical stages of the project (e.g., pre-proposal, if any; proposal; submission of written product; oral presentation or "defense" of the project; submission to various administrative requirements for acceptance of the final approved project prior to graduation).

By the end of the second semester of full-time enrollment in the CHSP program, students should select a faculty mentor or chair for their project. Prior to selecting a chair students should consider how well

they would work in collaboration with the faculty member as well as the level of expertise the faculty member in the area of interest. This information can be obtained by meeting individually with faculty members, by reading about their areas of interest (which are provided in the MSU-Meridian Department of Health Service Psychology Handbooks and other venues), and by talking with other students who have worked under the guidance of prospective chairs.

After gathering this information, the student is advised to meet with the faculty member(s) he or she is considering as the project's chair. The student should ask questions that will help in deciding whether the faculty member would be a good chair for the project, particularly with regard to expectations and roles. Establishing clear, direct communication with a chair is very important. Students should not necessarily expect a faculty member to agree to chair their committee.

The duties of the chair are to provide guidance, to check on progress, and to supervise the preparation of the document. Selecting a chair is one of the most important decisions made in the early stages of planning the Capstone Project. A student will work closely with the chair in selecting the area of specialization and developing a Capstone Project idea and methodology. The chair provides expertise in the student's area of interest, specific feedback on work, and support. The chair similarly approves the proposal prior to submitting the document to the capstone committee. This frequently involves reading and critiquing multiple drafts of each section of the Capstone Project before final submission.

It is strongly advised that the student, the chair, and the committee meet regularly to delineate the parameters of the project. It is important to note that two of the three committee members must provide final approval of the project by utilizing the appropriate rubrics.

Students moving toward capstone should expect to submit their Capstone Project proposal by the middle of the semester in which they take the capstone seminar and defend during their end of the same semester. Students choosing to submit a pre-proposal should follow the timeline below appropriate to their graduation semester for a general submission window regarding the pre-proposal.

## TYPE OF CAPSTONE PROJECTS

A scholarly capstone project starts with identifying a problem within the scope of practice in health service psychology. Again, the student will need to seek guidance from the chair and committee members regarding the best format. A capstone project may be designed and disseminated in one of the following formats.

1. **Empirical Research Project:** Students design and conduct an original research study, often following APA research competency guidelines. The project focuses on experimental, quasi-experimental, single-case design, survey, or mixed-methods studies with skills demonstrated in research design, data collection, data analysis (quantitative/qualitative), ethical research practices, and dissemination of findings. *Example: Examining the effectiveness of a mindfulness intervention for reducing test anxiety.*
2. **Program Evaluation Project:** Students evaluate an existing clinical, educational, or community program to determine effectiveness, fidelity, or areas for improvement. The project focuses on the

application of research methods to real-world service delivery systems with skills demonstrated in needs assessment, logic model of development, outcome measurement, and stakeholder communication. *Example: Evaluating client outcomes from a school-based mental health program.*

3. **Clinical Case Analysis or Case Study Project:** Students conduct in-depth analysis of one or more clinical cases, integrating theory, assessment data, and evidence-based interventions. The project focuses on the application of psychological science to practice, with a scholarly analysis of outcomes and implications with skills demonstrated in clinical conceptualization, evidence-based decision-making, ethical considerations, and outcome monitoring. *Example: Comprehensive case report on a client with co-occurring depression and substance use, including evidence-based treatment rationale*
4. **Systematic Literature Review or Meta-Analysis:** Students perform a comprehensive synthesis of existing research on a topic relevant to health service psychology. The focus of the project is to identify gaps, summarizing best practices, or providing recommendations for future research and practice with skills demonstrated in literature search strategies, critical appraisal, synthesis, scholarly writing. *Example: A meta-analysis of parent training programs for children with disruptive behavior disorders.*
5. **Quality Improvement/Community-Based Change/Clinical Practice Project:** Students implement quality improvement strategies in healthcare or community setting, often focusing on service delivery efficiency or clinical outcomes. The focus of the project is to enhance practice through evidence-based changes or to develop a solution for community change with skills demonstrated in change management, applied problem-solving, and collaboration with interdisciplinary teams. *Example: Developing and piloting a clinician training workshop in suicide risk assessment.*
6. **Training or Educational Intervention Development:** Students create and evaluate a training curriculum, workshop, or educational materials for students, clinicians, parents/caregivers or community members. The focus of the project is to translate psychological science into accessible education with skills demonstrated in instructional design, knowledge translation, and outcome evaluation. *Example: Creating psychoeducational materials for families of children with autism.*
7. **Policy Analysis or Advocacy Project:** Students analyze a policy issue relevant to mental health and advocacy for evidence-based solutions. The focus of the project is to integrate psychological science with public policy and social justice with skills demonstrated in policy analysis, communication to non-psychology audiences, advocacy, and system-level thinking. *Example: Policy briefs on expanding telehealth access for underserved populations.*
8. **Assessment Tool Development and Validation:** Students create or adapt a psychological measure, screening tool, or assessment protocol, followed by pilot testing and psychometric evaluation. The focus of the project is to address gaps in existing measures, adapting tools for specific populations, or improving cultural/linguistic appropriateness with skill demonstrated in test construction, psychometrics (reliability, validity, factor analysis), ethical test use, cultural competence, research translation to practice. *Example: Creating a structured interview protocol for evaluating treatment readiness in substance use disorders*

## STAGES OF CAPSTONE PROJECT

The capstone project process includes three major phases: a) Pre-proposal phase, b) project proposal phase, and c) project defense. A capstone project pre-proposal is not required. However, many students choose to go through this step in order to receive feedback regarding their proposed project before progressing further.

**Pre-proposal Stage**

CHSP students may convene their committee to present a preliminary proposal. This meeting should be scheduled only after the major professor/director of the capstone project has approved the direction of the project. The student may schedule a pre-proposal meeting at any point after the student's committee has been approved. The pre-proposal is a concept paper and the approval of it, and the direction of the capstone project, is not binding upon the student or the doctoral committee. The proposal should adhere to the following format.

1. A one-paragraph introduction to the topic
2. A 300-word abstract of relevant research and theoretical literature with no citations
3. An outline of the literature review
4. A list of the guiding research questions
5. A description of the preliminary methodology for the project
6. An explanation of the proposed data collection and analysis (if any)
7. A list of references in APA style (No fewer than 10 references).

With the consent of the committee, a student may elect to incorporate their written comprehensive examination (WCE) in their pre-proposal meeting. The student must give a notice in writing upon submitting the departmental application to sit for the WCE and obtain approval by the committee and graduate coordinator.

**Project Proposal Stage**

The capstone project proposal meeting can be scheduled any time **AFTER** the successful completion of the comprehensive examination requirements (i.e., the WCE and OCE). At the proposal meeting, the first sections (e.g., introduction, review of literature, and methodology) should be presented. To reach this stage of completion, the student must work closely with the major professor/capstone project director. The student **MUST** anticipate a number of rewrites prior to and, potentially, following the proposal meeting.

Because this is the proposal stage and if applicable, the MSU Office for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) approval must be obtained for all human subjects research at MSU after successful completion of the proposal. The student **MAY NOT** collect data for the project without oversight of the capstone project director and approval from MSU IRB. Additionally, all graduate students in the College of Education must complete IRB training with a certificate of completion during their first semester of enrollment. This certification must be renewed as appropriate. Collecting data prior to formal approval of the research plan puts any study at great risk.

The student should contact his or her major professor, director of the capstone project, and committee members to schedule a date, time, and place for the proposal meeting only after giving directions by the capstone project director to do so. It is the student's responsibility to coordinate the scheduling of the meeting. After an agreement from the committee on the date, time, and place of the meeting has been reached, the student must inform the appropriate staff member. The staff member will then issue a written invitation to all members of the student's committee.

Once the date has been determined, a copy of the proposal must be submitted to the committee members **at least one (1) week** prior to the scheduled meeting date. Also, a hard copy of the proposal must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator and the records secretary. Once the proposal is successfully completed the student may now officially be referred to as a Doctoral Candidate.

**Project Defense Stage**

Faculty expect the candidate to consult with the capstone project director frequently and comprehensively as the project is conducted and as the initial drafts are written. If close contact with the director is not maintained during this critical period, the candidate can expect to experience stress, delays, rewrites, and other difficulties.

Among the important ethics of scientific inquiry, there is one that must be strictly adhered to and must not be violated during the project process. This cardinal ethic is "Absolute adherence to the capstone project protocol as reported in the project procedures section and approved by the student's committee during the proposal meeting." If the candidate does not follow the project protocol as designed and had approved by the committee and (if applicable) the MSU Office for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB), the student could be subject to severe penalties up to and including rejection of the project and removal from the program.

After the agreed upon methodology is completed, and the written product has been reviewed and approved by the project director, the candidate is ready to discuss the capstone project defense. This is an indication that the director is satisfied that the document is defendable. Only upon reaching this milestone should the student believe that it is time to discuss scheduling the defense with the committee members. At this point, the student should schedule the defense meeting at a date, time, and place agreeable to the committee members. Appropriate staff will need to be informed of the agreed upon meeting time to issue a written invitation to the student's committee and the division faculty. An announcement inviting the public to attend the defense will be posted.

A copy of the final project draft must be submitted to the committee members **at least 10 working days** (i.e., two calendar weeks) prior to the scheduled meeting date. A copy must also be submitted to the records secretary so that faculty, students, and the public may read the copy of the capstone project written product prior to the defense. They may attend the defense meeting and faculty (only) may ask questions upon the invitation of the project director.

## EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE

**Course Requirements**
When a student is approved to begin to formally work on the capstone project, he or she must enroll in HSPY 8620 Capstone Project in Health Service Psychology and maintain continuous enrollment until the project is successfully defended. All students will complete a capstone project agreement (see Appendix A) with the major professor/capstone chair at the beginning of each semester enrolled. The capstone project agreement is used to assign a grade for the course. This course uses the following grading scale:

S/P – Satisfactory/Pass
U/F – Unsatisfactory/Fail

**Defense Requirements**
The Combined Health Service Psychology core faculty and other committee members will review the components of the written project and oral presentation for the capstone project, and rate the quality of the required elements according to the following scale:

Exemplary (4) – Surpasses expectations; highly original, scientifically rigorous, and demonstrates strong integration of science and practice.

Proficient (3) – Meets expectations; solid, well-executed project with only minor limitations.

Developing (2) – Partially meets expectations; gaps in design, execution, or analysis reduce impact.

Beginning (1) – Falls below expectations; significant flaws in rigor, ethical considerations, or clarity.

Each capstone committee member will rate the student using the Health Service Psychology Capstone Project Written and Oral Defense Rubrics (see Appendices B and C). Students must receive an overall score of 21 (Proficient) or higher to pass the written defense for the capstone project. If student a receives an overall score of 20 or less than from two or more committee members, then student will receive a status of "fail" attempt.

## GENERAL WRITING TIPS

**Institutional Research Board Training**
All Division of Education doctoral students must complete CITI training. If conducting an empirical study, this must be done prior to submitting the proposal to the Institutional Research Board for approval. The student should allow sufficient time for IRB approval before beginning any research. Please visit MSU's Office of Research, Compliance, and Security for more information about CITI and IRB. https://www.orc.msstate.edu/compliance/human-

subjects/training. Following a successful IRB approval, if applicable, the student may begin research endeavors.

**APA Publication Manual Guidelines**

The student must write in the style specified by the American Psychological Association (APA) as described in the most current edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. It is the responsibility of the student to gain access to and review the APA publication manual for writing scholarly research projects.

**MSU Polices and Guidelines**

All students must become familiar with the guidelines provided by and deadlines set through The Office of Thesis and Dissertation at MSU. This office is responsible for the final review process and it offers a variety of resources, to make this process more bearable, such as workshops and consultations, both face-to-face and online. (https://www.library.msstate.edu/thesis)

## APPENDIX A

CAPSTONE PROJECT AGREEMENT

# HSPY 8620 Capstone Project Course Agreement

Student's Name: Net Id:
Degree Level: MS or PsyD Program: Combined Health Service Psychology

As a graduate student in the School of Health Professions – Combined Health Service Psychology Program, I am enrolling for _____ credit hours of capstone research during the _____ semester. **I realize that I must produce tangible evidence of research by the last class day of the semester in order to receive a satisfactory grade for my capstone activities. I also realize that an unsatisfactory grade may be grounds for dismissal from the doctoral program.**

Expect to realistically complete between 2 to 4 tasks from the following list in the order presented for each semester credit hour in which you are enrolled in capstone project hours (HSPY 8620). Each student must review the list, select the appropriate number of items and consult with capstone chair for approval. Credit for exceptional progress made in a previous semester can be awarded at the discretion of the capstone chair.

**Pre-proposal Activities**

____ Selection of topic/identify and summarize 3 to 5 core articles for topic

____ Selection of 4 committee members (must include 3 HSPY faculty) and Committee Request Form completed and placed in file; a formal request (i.e., a letter) must be submitted to each committee member requesting their membership on the student's committee

____ Establish a timeline for capstone completion and review with capstone chair

____ Become familiar the capstone process by: (a) review the Thesis and Dissertation Handbook produced by the MSU Library (available online), (b) purchase and review the APA Publication Manual, (c) review previous recent dissertations for formatting examples, and (d) attend library presentations on thesis and dissertation formatting.

____ Obtain an approved outline of review of literature with a minimum of 20 articles related to your selected topic (provide a reference list and electronic copies to capstone chair)

____ Engage in 2 to 4 face-to-face meetings with capstone chair to report updates and seek supervision regarding potential research questions, justification of study and statement of problem.

____ Submit proposal draft of Literature Review with references for edits by capstone chair

____ Finalize proposal draft of Literature Review with references (Expect several changes for final approval)

____ Develop Methodology outline for your study and submit to your chair for edits

____ Collect articles relevant to your Methodology (provide a reference list and electronic copies to capstone chair)

____ Submit proposal draft of Methodology with attached data collection materials (i.e., questionnaires, instruments, surveys, etc.) for edits by capstone chair

____ Finalize proposal draft of methodology (Expect several exchanges for final approval)

____ Develop introduction outline for your study and submit to capstone chair for edits

____ Collect articles relevant to your introduction (provide a reference list and electronic copies to capstone chair)

____ Submit proposal draft of introduction with references

____ Finalize proposal draft of introduction (Expect several exchanges for final approval)

____ Integrate introduction, literature review and methodology sections and submit to capstone chair for edits (expect about 5 exchanges)

____ Upon the approval of your capstone chair, submit complete proposal to your committee and schedule a formal date for your proposal with the department (2 weeks prior to proposal)

**Post-Proposal and Data Collection Activities**

____ Complete IRB application

____ Submit IRB application with edits provided by your capstone chair

____ Upon approval from your committee and IRB begin arrangements to conduct data ____ collection (submit scheduled to capstone chair)

____ Complete data collection

____ Analyze data and submit to chair for review

**Final Writing and Pre-Defense Activities**

____ Develop outline for Results Chapter and submit to capstone chair for edits

____ Collect articles relevant to your Results Chapter (provide a reference list and electronic copies to capstone chair)

____ Meet/Consult with capstone chair and/or other committee members regarding presentation of results

____ Submit defense draft for Results Chapter with references, graphs and tables

____ Write outline for Discussion Chapter and submit to chair

____ Complete Discussion Chapter and submit to chair for edits (expect about 5 exchanges)

____ Complete defense draft of Methodology chapter (Expect several exchanges for final approval)

____ Complete defense draft of Literature Review Chapter (Expect several exchanges for final approval)

____ Complete defense draft of Introduction (Expect several exchanges for final approval)

____ Integrate final draft with completion of all edits and submit to capstone chair

____ Upon approval from capstone chair, arrange defense date with the division, provide your committee with a complete copy of your document (2 weeks prior to defense)

**Post-Defense Activities**

____ Complete changes as directed by your committee, obtain signatures, submit to Dean's office for review and approval (Please review College of Education's deadline)

____ Make revisions from the Dean's Office and submit to capstone chair for review and re-submit as needed to obtain signature

____ Submit signed copies to library for first review and complete required changes

____ Submit approved copy of capstone to library for binding by deadline and provide your committee members and the department with a copy of the final capstone document

_____ Other (please be specific):

**Credit for Exceptional Progress** (Please indicate semester and description of activity to be given credit):

I have met/consulted with my capstone chair/co-chair regarding the expectations for this agreement. I understand that my ability to complete these tasks during the semester enrolled will be reflected in my grade assignment for the same semester. I understand that I must complete **80%** of the tasks selected in order to meet satisfactory.

_____ _____

Student's Signature Date

_____ _____

Capstone Chair's (Co-Chair) Signature Date

## APPENDIX B

HEALTH SERVICE PSYCHOLOGY CAPSTONE PROJECT
WRITTEN DEFENSE RUBRIC

# Health Service Psychology Capstone Project Written Defense Rubric

**Student Name: _____** **Degree Program/Concentration: _____**
**Committee Member: _____** **Date: _____**

| Criteria | Exemplary (4) | Proficient (3) | Developing (2) | Beginning (1) | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Clarity of Purpose & Significance** | Problem is clearly articulated; strong rationale with thorough literature support; project highly relevant to HSP. | Problem well defined; rationale adequate; relevance to HSP clear. | Problem somewhat vague; rationale limited; relevance inconsistent. | Problem unclear; little/no connection to HSP or literature. | ____ |
| **Methodological Rigor / Project Design** | Design highly appropriate; methods clearly justified; ethical standards fully met. | Sound design; methods adequate with minor flaws; ethical standards followed. | Weak or incomplete design; limited justification; ethics addressed superficially. | Serious flaws in design or methods; ethics overlooked. | ____ |
| **Integration of Science & Practice** | Excellent connection between research/theory and applied practice; implications clearly described. | Adequate integration with some connections between science and practice. | Minimal integration; weak or inconsistent application to practice. | No meaningful integration of science and practice. | ____ |
| **Data Analysis / Evaluation** | Analyses/evaluation methods appropriate and clearly explained; results accurate; limitations acknowledged. | Analyses adequate; results mostly clear; limitations noted superficially. | Analyses incomplete, weak, or poorly explained. | Analyses absent or seriously flawed. | ____ |
| **Cultural & Ethical Considerations** | Cultural competence deeply demonstrated; ethical issues thoroughly addressed. | Cultural and ethical considerations addressed adequately. | Limited acknowledgment of cultural or ethical factors. | No attention to diversity, culture, or ethics. | ____ |
| **Communication & Organization** | Exceptionally clear, logical, professional writing/presentation; APA style flawless. | Clear and professional overall; minor organizational or APA issues. | Organization and clarity inconsistent; frequent APA/style errors. | Writing unclear; disorganized; major APA/style errors. | ____ |
| **Impact / Applicability** | High potential impact on practice, policy, or research; dissemination-ready. | Practical implications identified; moderate potential impact. | Limited discussion of practical application. | No clear application or impact identified. | ____ |

**Total Score: ____ / 28**

## APPENDIX C

HEALTH SERVICE PSYCHOLOGY CAPSTONE PROJECT
ORAL DEFENSE RUBRIC

**Health Service Psychology Capstone Project**
**Oral Defense Rubric**

**Student Name: _____** **Degree Program/Concentration: _____**
**Committee Member: _____** **Date: _____**

| Criteria | Exemplary (4) | Proficient (3) | Developing (2) | Beginning (1) | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Content Mastery & Knowledge** | Demonstrates deep understanding of project and related literature; confidently addresses complex questions. | Demonstrates solid understanding; answers most questions accurately. | Demonstrates partial understanding; struggles with some questions. | Demonstrates little understanding; unable to answer questions effectively. | ____ |
| **Organization & Clarity** | Presentation exceptionally clear, well-structured, and logical; time used effectively. | Presentation organized and generally clear; minor issues with flow or timing. | Presentation somewhat disorganized; difficult to follow at times. | Presentation lacks structure; unclear or unfocused. | ____ |
| **Scientific Rigor & Critical Thinking** | Provides strong rationale; critically evaluates strengths/limitations; implications well articulated. | Provides adequate rationale; addresses strengths/limitations; implications somewhat clear. | Provides limited rationale; minimal discussion of strengths/limitations. | Weak or absent rationale; does not address strengths/limitations. | ____ |
| **Integration of Science & Practice** | Clearly links findings to practice, policy, or future research; demonstrates strong applied relevance. | Makes some connections to practice or research; relevance generally clear. | Connections to practice or research limited or vague. | No clear connection between project and practice/research. | ____ |
| **Response to Questions** | Answers thoroughly, accurately, and thoughtfully; demonstrates flexibility and depth of knowledge. | Answers most questions accurately; minor gaps in depth or clarity. | Answers limited, incomplete, or somewhat inaccurate. | Unable to answer questions or responses largely inaccurate. | ____ |
| **Professionalism & Delivery** | Confident, polished delivery; maintains professional demeanor; effective use of visuals/technology. | Professional delivery overall; minor issues with confidence, tone, or visuals. | Uneven delivery; noticeable issues with professionalism or visual aids. | Poor delivery; unprofessional demeanor; ineffective or no visuals. | ____ |
| **Engagement & Communication Skills** | Engages audience effectively; communicates complex ideas clearly and accessibly. | Communicates clearly overall; audience engagement adequate. | Communication uneven; audience engagement minimal. | Communication unclear; audience disengaged. | ____ |

Total Score: ____ / 28