

HSE 480 Final Project Guidelines and Rubric

Overview

The final project for this course is the creation of a **comprehensive human services program proposal**.

As the final stop in your journey toward your Bachelor of Arts in Human Services, you will complete a capstone that integrates the knowledge and skills you have developed in previous coursework by conducting a community needs assessment that will ultimately inform the creation of a comprehensive human services program proposal designed to meet a specific consumer need in the community. You will also reflect on your journey through the Human Services program and how you plan to position yourself professionally through a third component in the form of a personal and professional reflection.

This capstone will be assessed somewhat differently than other courses you have taken online at SNHU. There are three major components: (1) community needs assessment; (2) human services program proposal; and a (3) professional and personal reflections paper. Think of the community needs assessment and human services program proposal as the two parts of one final assessment. Your personal and professional reflection will be a separate document attached to your final submission as an appendix. The components will be submitted at different times during the course; however, they operate together to comprise the whole capstone experience. They are not assessed separately. You will be evaluated on all three as a unit in determining whether you have demonstrated proficiency in each outcome. Your instructor will guide you through this process, keeping a running narrative of your strengths and areas for growth in relation to the outcomes as you progress through the class. Your work is expected to meet the highest professional standards.

The project is divided into **five milestones**, which will be submitted at various points throughout the course to scaffold learning and ensure quality final submissions. These milestones will be submitted in **Modules Two, Three, Four, Five, and Six**. Components 1, 2, and 3 are due in **Module Eight**.

In this assignment, you will demonstrate your mastery of the following course outcomes:

- Evaluate the social, political, and historical milestones and trends in human services in relation to the human services professional's role in advocating for individuals, families, and communities in need
- Apply culturally responsive strategies across diverse populations to strengthen professional practice and enhance human services outcomes
- Apply legal and ethical standards in the administration and delivery of human services systems to provide comprehensive and well-informed care
- Employ professional, interpersonal dynamics in formal and informal networks to improve human services delivery
- Evaluate the policy development cycle for advocacy avenues, communication strategies, and coalition-building opportunities to effect social change
- Develop knowledge and skills in inquiry, critical and creative thinking, and decision making to create and implement appropriate assessment and intervention strategies

Prompt

“Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

—Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948)

Gandhi inspired the world through his tenacity, strength of spirit, and belief in reducing human suffering and promoting freedom and equality using only non-violent means. Fallible and imperfect, he used his whole self (body, mind, and spirit) to effect positive change in the world. He was able to look at individual suffering and create change on a large scale. While most people do not enter into a human services program expecting to become the next Gandhi, in many ways human services professionals share his vision concerning the inherent value and ethical treatment of human beings as well as the dignity, respect, safety, and equality each individual deserves. This capstone project is an opportunity for the student to move along the continuum of human services work from an individual and organizational focus to one that incorporates both views toward community change.

Working individually and with your instructor, you will identify, research, and analyze a social service need in your community as the foundation for developing a human services program proposal that will include an intervention or set of interventions aimed at solving a problem from the perspective of the consumer. Your topic and recommendations will depend on your area of study. For example, for students on a general track in this degree program, your problem might center on the mental health of veterans or barriers to receiving adequate healthcare for elderly populations. If you have a concentration in child and family welfare, then your selected problem must focus on needs and issues surrounding children, adolescents, and/or teens and their families. For example, you might focus on childhood nutrition or domestic violence.

Generally speaking, you will conduct a needs assessment of your community, which will inform the creation of a human services related program proposal that attempts to address the identified need or problem. This proposal will also include the development of appropriate tools and support materials that would be used to implement the program and measure outcomes.

Your completed capstone project will be a final paper with several sections and follow this outline:

1. Cover Page
2. Table of Contents
3. Executive Summary
4. Community Needs Assessment (Capstone Component 1)
5. Human Services Program Proposal (Capstone Component 2)
6. Appendices (Appendix A and B)
7. References
8. Appendix: Personal and Professional Reflection (Capstone Component 3)

Capstone Component 1: Community Needs Assessment

For the first of three components, you will choose a local community and conduct an assessment of that community in relation to a social problem. Typically, this is a community that is somewhat familiar to you and is limited to a city, county, or neighborhood level. For example, if you have identified a problem with

child hunger in your hometown, your assessment should seek to uncover how and why this is happening by conducting a review of the literature and collecting and analyzing data on your chosen community, while also identifying existing resources designed to combat child hunger.

You will not be conducting a full community needs assessment; rather, you will be identifying a need through a preliminary review of local newspapers or other relevant sources and talking with other human services professionals who live or work in the area. Your instructor is available to review sources and identify ways to obtain information and navigate the system. From there, you will research what is out there, what is missing, what others have done to solve the problem, and so on. This comprehensive evaluation also presents the opportunity for you to engage the community. In your evaluation, you will be required to contact appropriate individuals in the community, either directly or using the internet or the telephone, to interview them about the problem you have selected. This does not fully meet the “fieldwork” definition, but it will require you to become involved with your selected community in some form and engage providers and consumers.

Your community needs assessment should include the following sections:

- I. **Overview of Community and Problem:** This section should serve as the foundation for presenting your community assessment and is your opportunity to comprehensively describe the selected community and identified problem. Overall, it is important to include any information that is pertinent for comprehending the community and problem—it is up to you to establish a robust context for understanding and responding to the community’s need.
- II. **Gathering Community Information (Methodology):** In this section, you will discuss your methodology for collecting the information about your community and provide a summary of your findings. Your methodology will involve conducting a brief systematic literature review of your chosen community, the problem you identified in Milestone One, and other communities who have dealt with the same issue or problem. In other words, for this section, discuss how you will collect the information and provide justification for your chosen method(s) by outlining the exact steps you will take to complete your systematic literature review.
- III. **Literature Review:** Using primary and secondary sources, analyze how the problem is being addressed in other communities. How prevalent is it? Through a review of the literature, evaluate the social, political, and historical milestones and trends relative to the identified problem. You should also review interventions that have been attempted in other communities and their success, or lack thereof.
- IV. **Needs Analysis:** This section should include your analysis of the information you gathered on the community. This will provide the conclusions you have drawn from thinking about the findings you described in the preceding section. Based on your assessment of the community and comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the problem:
 - What is the magnitude of the problem in the community?
 - What resources and interventions currently exist in the community?
 - Provide a description of the impact the current resources and interventions are having on the population. Are they effective? Why or why not?
 - What are the obstacles that exist in the community that prevent impacting or addressing the problem?
 - Why is this problem one that the community needs to address? What are the demographics of the individuals affected by the problem?

Citations/Formatting:

Your community needs assessment should be approximately 5–8 pages in length and should include the necessary elements that one would find in a professional needs assessment. It should include a title page, table of contents, bibliography, and appendices, if applicable. The information should be cited according to the rules of the latest publication manual of the American Psychological Association (APA). You may include illustrations, photographs, graphs and charts, and other non-textual materials as needed to support the needs assessment. These can be placed as an appendix at the end of the final paper or, if appropriate, incorporated in the body of your paper.

Capstone Component 2: Human Services Program Proposal

Based on your findings and assessment of your chosen community, you will develop a proposal that lays out a program/project description for addressing the problem you have identified.

The proposal should have the following elements:

- I. **Statement of Need:** This section serves as a summary of the community assessment document you just created. This is where you should highlight the most important points of your needs analysis, being sure to also address specific cultural considerations.
- II. **Program Proposal Description:** In this section, you will describe the evidenced-based program you think the community should implement and discuss how and why it will make a positive difference in the community.
- III. **Goals and Objectives:** This section is an opportunity for you to offer a comprehensive description of what your program aims to do and how those goals will be achieved. Define potential measurable improvements in behavior, performance, and process, or highlight a tangible item that will result from the project.
- IV. **Method/Intervention:** This section should include a detailed description of the activities required to achieve the project objectives. You will summarize them in the “Intervention” column in the logic model chart and then explain them in the body of your paper.
- V. **Staffing/Administration/Resource Needs:** This section should cover the resources necessary to implement your program, such as staffing and overall budget needs (the resources column in the logic model chart). It should include a short description of the number of staff members needed, their qualifications, and a brief summary of what they will do. You will summarize the information in the provided chart template and explain it within your paper.
- VI. **Program Evaluation Plan:** The logic model chart that you will add as an appendix represents your program evaluation plan. You now need to describe the data collection process. This section is a description of how the organization will know the project is a success. What methods will be used to evaluate success? What types of measures will be used? Who will do the measurement? What data will need to be collected? Who will collect the data?
- VII. **Guidelines for Program Implementation and Stakeholder Communication Tool:** You will begin by creating an implementation plan using the provided Implementation Plan Chart Template, which will be placed in Appendix B and described in this section of your capstone project. You will also identify one

key stakeholder that you want to communicate with. Describe a communication tool that you determine would be most effective in gaining support for the proposed program from that one key stakeholder. A key stakeholder could be a mayor, governor, member of law enforcement, superintendent, legislator, or other person. Examples of appropriate communication tools include but are not limited to:

- Professional presentation that is designed for a specific audience
- Editorial for potential publication in the local paper in your community
- A letter for potential distribution to local media, with the goal of getting the story published or featured on the local news
- A letter for potential distribution throughout the community
- Social media messages

Regardless of your chosen communication tool, you must build a solid communication plan for a specific target audience that aims to convince them and gain buy-in for your ideas. For instance, your presentation might be crafted to be given before constituents at a town hall meeting or community leaders that have influence on ensuring that your proposed program moves forward. Your choices essentially depend on your overall project: your community, the identified problem, the data that you gathered in your needs assessment, and your program proposal.

Citations/Formatting:

Your program proposal should also be approximately 5–8 pages in length and include the necessary elements that one would find in a professional needs assessment. It should include a title page, table of contents, professional bibliography, and appendices, if applicable. The information should be cited according to the rules of the latest publication manual of the American Psychological Association (APA). You may include illustrations, photographs, graphs and charts, and other non-textual materials as needed to support the program proposal. These should be placed as an appendix at the end of the final paper.

Capstone Component 3: Professional Reflection

For the third and final component of your capstone, you will write a 4-page essay in which you discuss the process and outcomes of this project, as well as how your coursework culminated in the capstone project. This may include discussions of unforeseen problems or obstacles, and any unexpected surprises. The essay should also discuss your identified strengths and problems that you encountered while completing the project and outline how you will apply what you have learned to your future academic and/or professional life. Finally, the essay will examine how the capstone project will be useful in the job market or in furthering your education.

You should envision this component as a personal reflection on the capstone and your experience in the Human Services program as a whole. For instance, relative to the capstone, you could discuss what you did (or intended to do), and then consider what worked well, what challenges you faced, and what you would change or do differently to make your experience better. In reflecting on your time here at SNHU, you might discuss where you started, where you have ended up, where you see yourself going, and so on. Note that this component is not about evaluating the capstone itself but rather your experience within the capstone project. Include how your program and its implementation align with the code of ethics for human services professionals.

Some of the issues that you could address in this final component of this capstone may include:

- Overall, what was your capstone experience like?

- Reflect on the significance of the capstone in relation to your own experience at SNHU.
- What connections do you see between your capstone and your academic program?
- What ethical dilemmas or issues came up for you during your education as well as in the completion of the capstone?

Milestones

Milestone One: Draft of Overview of Community and Problem

In **Module Two**, you will submit a draft of the **Overview of Community and Problem** for your community needs assessment. Address critical elements from Section I of Capstone Component 1 above. This draft needs to fully develop the reasoning for selecting the community or area and the problem or need you plan to address in your final paper. The community can be one you live in or one you are interested in for some specific reason. The social problem or need has to be specific to that community and also be amenable to resolution. Explain why you selected the community, as well as describe the community to draw a picture of it for your readers. Then, provide a thorough description of the social problem you plan to address in your paper that exists in the community you selected. **This milestone is graded with the Milestone One Rubric.**

Milestone Two: Draft of Gathering Community Information (Methodology)

In **Module Three**, you will submit a draft of your **Gathering Community Information (Methodology)** section, which will require you to describe your methodology for conducting a brief literature review to analyze how the social service need in your community is being addressed in other communities. In addition, you should be sure to include any social, political, or historical trends that impact other communities, as well as any legal or ethical issues you find. After you present the information about your community, you will analyze and summarize it for the readers. Paint a picture of your community and then discuss how the social problem impacts the community. This is part of the community needs assessment portion of your final project, and should address all critical elements from Section II of Capstone Component 1 above. **This milestone is graded with the Milestone Two Rubric.**

Milestone Three: Draft of Literature Review and Needs Analysis

In **Module Four**, you will submit a draft of your **Literature Review and Needs Analysis**, which are both part of the community needs assessment. Address all critical elements from Section III and IV of Capstone Component 1 above. The literature review section should include mostly primary and some secondary resources that apply to the social problem or need you identified, as well as the community you selected, in Module Two. For more information about primary and secondary sources, use this [SNHU library resource](#). Use research that has been conducted to solve a similar social problem in other places. Additionally, use primary and secondary resources that thoroughly present the social, historical and political contexts of the social problem. In the Needs Analysis, you should draw conclusions in response to information you included in your Milestone One findings for your identified community issue and Milestone Three literature review while demonstrating cultural sensitivity and good ethical decision making. **This milestone will be graded using the Milestone Three Rubric.**

Milestone Four: Draft of Statement of Need, Program Proposal Description and Goals and Objectives

In **Module Five**, you will submit a draft of the beginning of Capstone Component 2, which includes a **Statement of Need, Program Proposal Description and Goals and Objectives** for your proposed program, which are part of the human services program proposal. Address all critical elements from Sections I, II and III of Capstone Component 2 above. In this section, you will begin with a statement of need (based on Milestones One and Three) and a description of the proposed program with program goals and objectives. You want to have a clear goal outlined that includes what the program or intervention seeks to accomplish. In this

Milestone, you will also begin working to complete the Goals and Objectives sections of the Logic Model Chart, which you will continue working on in Milestone Five and will submit as Appendix A in your Final Project paper. **This milestone is graded with the Milestone Four Rubric.**

Milestone Five: *Draft of Method/Intervention, Staffing/Administration/Resource Needs, Program Evaluation Plan, Guidelines for Program Implementation and Stakeholder Communication Tool sections*

In **Module Six**, you will submit a draft of the remaining sections of Capstone Component 2. For this assignment, you will continue working on the Logic Model chart that you began in Milestone Four, and also create an Implementation Plan chart that you will include in your final capstone paper as Appendix B. **This milestone is graded with the Milestone Five Rubric.**

Final Submission Components 1, 2 & 3: *Final Paper- Comprehensive Human Services Program Proposal and Professional Reflection*

In **Module Eight**, you will submit your **Community Needs Assessment**, your **Human Services Program Proposal** and your **Professional Reflection**. This should be a complete and polished artifact containing all of the critical elements of Components 1 and 2 and should reflect incorporation of feedback gained throughout the course. In addition, Component 3 will be submitted, which should be a reflection of not only the projects you completed for this course, but also a reflection of how the entire human services program or coursework impacted you. Discuss strengths, challenges, obstacles, surprises, and any other elements that are relevant. Additionally, reflect on how you have changed during your time completing the human services program, and how you might incorporate what you learned, as well as the challenges you encountered, into your professional work. Finally, evaluate any ethical issues or dilemmas that arose for you during the program and how experiencing these dilemmas will shape you as a human services professional. **This final submission will be graded holistically using the Final Project Rubric.**

Deliverables

Milestone	Deliverable	Module Due	Grading
One	Draft of Overview of Community and Problem	Two	Graded separately; Milestone One Rubric
Two	Draft of Gathering Community Information (Methodology)	Three	Graded separately; Milestone Two Rubric
Three	Draft of Literature Review and Needs Analysis	Four	Graded separately; Milestone Three Rubric
Four	Draft of Statement of Need, Program Proposal Description and Goals and Objectives	Five	Graded separately; Milestone Four Rubric
Five	Draft of Method/Intervention, Staffing/Administration/Resource Needs, Program Evaluation Plan, and Guidelines for Program Implementation and Stakeholder	Six	Graded separately; Milestone Five Rubric

Southern New Hampshire University

	Communication Tool		
	Final Submission: Capstone Components 1, 2 and 3: Final Paper – Comprehensive Human Services Program Proposal and Personal Reflection	Eight	Graded as a final product; Final Project Rubric (below)

Final Project Rubric

Guidelines for Submission: Your proposal must be approximately 14–20 pages in length (plus a cover page and references) and must be written in APA format. Use double spacing, 12-point Times New Roman font, and one-inch margins. Include a minimum of six references cited in APA format.

This rubric will be applied to all components as a whole, and no component will be assessed on its own. The “Possible Indicators of Success” are examples for you and the instructor of the types of concepts to look for to demonstrate proficiency. They are neither exhaustive nor proscriptive and should be used as guides for illustrating how your capstone embodies the outcome. All outcomes are weighted equally.

HSE-480-01: Evaluate the social, political, and historical milestones and trends in human services in relation to the human services professional’s role in advocating for individuals, families, and communities in need	Evident 100%	Not Evident 0%
<i>Possible Indicators of Success</i>		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student’s ability to identify social, political, and/or historical milestones or trends in human services that are pertinent to a specific community issue?		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student’s ability to identify opportunities for advocating for the needs of individuals, families, and/or communities?		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student’s ability to create linkages between human services milestones or trends and specific issues faced by individuals, families, and/or communities?		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student’s ability to assess and evaluate the relationship between human services milestones or trends and the client to create a successful advocacy strategy?		
HSE-480-02: Apply culturally responsive strategies across diverse populations to strengthen professional practice and enhance human services outcomes	Evident 100%	Not Evident 0%
<i>Possible Indicators of Success</i>		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student’s ability to assess cultural groups and traditions within a community or population for enhancing quality of care?		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student’s ability to research and take into account culture-specific considerations related to a specific human services issue?		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student’s ability to assess the needs of a community and develop intervention recommendations that account for cultural groups within a community or population?		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student’s ability to differentiate and choose a culturally sensitive communication strategy to increase the potential acceptance of a proposed human services intervention?		
HSE-480-03: Apply legal and ethical standards in the administration and delivery of human services systems to provide comprehensive and well-informed care	Evident 100%	Not Evident 0%
<i>Possible Indicators of Success</i>		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student’s ability to adhere to the National Organization for Human Services (NOHS) Ethical Standards for confidentiality and informed consent in implementation of human services intervention?		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student’s ability to include provisions for human services-related laws in the development and potential implementation of an intervention program?		

HSE-480-04: Employ professional, interpersonal dynamics in formal and informal networks to improve human services delivery	Evident 100%	Not Evident 0%
<i>Possible Indicators of Success</i>		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student's ability to communicate effectively with community experts regarding the need for a specific human services program within the community?		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student's ability to identify and plan to engage various community actors that have a stake in an issue?		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student's ability to identify appropriate members and assemble an effective multidisciplinary team for addressing a community issue?		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student's ability to develop an implementation-worthy communication tool to effectively influence, recruit, and/or solidify support for a proposed human services intervention?		
HSE-480-05: Evaluate the policy development cycle for advocacy avenues, communication strategies, and coalition-building opportunities to effect social change	Evident 100%	Not Evident 0%
<i>Possible Indicators of Success</i>		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student's ability to evaluate and apply the theories and concepts related to policy development, program development, and/or quality improvement life cycles to propose a human services intervention?		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student's ability to analyze and select appropriate and effective intervention strategies?		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student's ability to describe an appropriate communication tool that could be used to gain support for implementing the proposed human services intervention program?		
HSE-480-06: Develop knowledge and skills in inquiry, critical and creative thinking, and decision making to create and implement appropriate assessment and intervention strategies	Evident 100%	Not Evident 0%
<i>Possible Indicators of Success</i>		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student's ability to evaluate published data and research to identify needs and create an effective human services intervention to address a community need?		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student's ability to develop, potentially implement, and assess the effectiveness of an intervention program?		
Does the capstone demonstrate the student's ability to analyze, evaluate, and select an appropriate and effective intervention strategy?		