

## MBA 705 Final Project Guidelines and Rubric

### Overview

For the capstone assessment, you will create a **business implementation plan and audiovisual presentation** for the product, service, or idea you have been developing throughout your MBA coursework. You will be assessed through two artifacts. The first will be a business implementation plan, detailing the concept and proposed implementation for potential investors or senior managers. The second artifact will be an audiovisual presentation designed to pitch the concept (including implementation) to the same audience.

To effectively respond to the demands of a rapidly evolving business environment, today's business managers need to possess a solid grounding in the theory, best practices, and approaches that drive internal decision-making as well as the various external factors that can impact business choices. Perhaps no function encompasses as many of these critical skills as ushering a new business idea, product, or service from initial conception to implementation. Throughout your MBA coursework, you have been working to develop a business concept (product, service, or idea), considering the different elements that impact decision making and creating a business plan for moving the concept forward successfully. As the final step in your journey toward your Master of Business Administration degree, your capstone will bring all that work to the doorstep of implementation through the creation of a business implementation plan and an audiovisual presentation designed to present the idea to potential investors or senior managers. You will integrate the knowledge and skills you have developed in previous coursework and over the duration of the term with the goal of having a "ready to launch" project that you can present to an employer or potential financial backer moving forward.

The capstone project is composed of two components. The first is a business implementation plan detailing your concept and its proposed implementation for potential investors or senior managers. This plan should show potential supporters that you have done your homework and assure them that you have covered all the details necessary to ensure that their money and/or time will be well invested. The second component, an audiovisual presentation (such as a webcam recording or PowerPoint presentation with audio), will allow you to design and practice your "pitch." In it, you will briefly present the key features of your concept (including implementation) with an eye toward convincing busy business executives and potential investors to support your idea. Because many MBA programs end with the creation of a business plan, your ability to take the next step in planning for implementation will give you an important advantage both in gaining support for your project and in showcasing your ability to think through all phases of a project.

### Evaluation of Capstone

This capstone will be assessed somewhat differently than other courses you have taken online at SNHU. There are two separate components that operate together to comprise the whole capstone experience and are not assessed separately. You will be evaluated on both as a unit in determining whether you have demonstrated proficiency in each outcome. Your work is expected to meet the highest professional standards.

The project is divided into **six 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 One, Two, Three, Four, Five, and Six. The final submission for Capstone Component 1 and Capstone Component 2 is due in Module Nine.**

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

- Analyze primary and secondary data using quantitative and qualitative techniques and information technology skills for effective problem solving and decision making
- Lead and operate within cross-functional teams in complex and diverse business environments
- Demonstrate oral and written communication skills to effectively articulate thoughts and intentions in diverse business environments
- Integrate cross-cultural, economic, geopolitical, and systems knowledge to solve complex business problems in a global environment
- Incorporate legal and ethical conduct and corporate social responsibility in making sustainable business decisions
- Create intrapreneurial and entrepreneurial opportunities in a global environment that add value to an organization through the integration, synthesis, and application of business practices

## Prompt

Throughout your MBA coursework, you have been developing a business concept you think would be a valuable contribution in the current market context. You have created an initial business plan with relevant addenda and considered the financial, regulatory, and other elements that affect your concept. For your capstone project, you will take the next step to consider how you will implement your business plan and present your ideas to potential financial supporters or company executives. The capstone consists of two components: a business implementation plan and an audiovisual presentation of your business concept (including implementation).

### Capstone Component 1: Business Implementation Plan

In the first component of your capstone, you will create a business implementation plan detailing your concept and how it will be carried out for potential investors and other concerned stakeholders (management, cross-functional team members, and others). Throughout, you should build on your previous coursework, including your business plan and relevant addenda, making any necessary adjustments and being sure to tie the different elements together in presenting a comprehensive business implementation plan.

Keep in mind that although different actors will be looking for different things and will read your plan with varying levels of detail, all stakeholders will want to know that you have thoroughly researched your idea and have carefully considered all relevant aspects for its successful implementation before deciding to support it. Consequently, your plan should be well-grounded in evidence and data.

Your business implementation plan must include the following sections:

- I. **Executive Summary.** Provide a brief overview of your concept and its key features, including cost, time frame, and anticipated benefits.
- II. **Justification.** Lay out the rationale for the concept, including the problem or opportunity it addresses, the market for the product or service, and the key features that set it apart from the competition. You should also discuss how the concept fits with the mission, vision, and priorities of the company implementing it and how or why it is innovative.

- III. **Implementation Plan.** Propose a clear and comprehensive plan for implementing and managing the concept from inception to completion. Although the details of your plan will necessarily depend upon your concept, at a minimum your plan should consider:
- *Physical and technological resources* needed for the concept, including where these will come from and how they will be used to reduce cost or improve operations. Be sure to discuss why one resource option is better than another where appropriate.
  - *A detailed implementation schedule* covering what needs to be done, by when, and by whom. The schedule should identify the critical path to success and outline the dependencies between tasks.
  - *Project review processes and indicators of success* to ensure that the project stays on target
  - An explanation of how *intrapreneurship or entrepreneurship* factors in to the implementation of your plan and how you will protect intangible assets, such as intellectual property or brand
- IV. **Company and Key Personnel.** Explain why your organization is well positioned to carry out the project, including how the concept fits with your organization's core competencies and the type of corporate culture that will offer the best possibility for successful implementation. In addition, define the key roles, responsibilities, and qualifications of the cross-functional team that will be responsible for implementing the project. Although you may not always be able to provide the names of the specific individuals who will occupy those roles, you should explain the specific skills and experience required for each and the contributions each member will make, including what your own role will be in the process and contingency plans should the team composition you propose need to be modified.
- V. **Financial Analysis and Funding.** Analyze the projected costs, revenue streams, and net present value for the concept from launch until two years after the breakeven point. Be sure to include a budget, an assessment of assets and liabilities, your anticipated sources of funding, and the associated costs of attaining that capital as part of your analysis. Support your analysis with relevant primary and secondary data in an appendix, specifying any relevant assumptions and limitations. You should include, among other support, sales forecasts, cash flow statements, income projections, and any other relevant calculations or financial reports.
- VI. **Assumptions and Contingency Planning.** Clearly explain the assumptions you have made in creating your business implementation plan, any factors that may affect those assumptions or the success of the project, and how you have planned for those contingencies. At a minimum, you should discuss any cross-cultural, economic, and geopolitical factors that may impact the business environment and concept; how you will ensure that the project operates in a legally and ethically compliant environment, including relevant laws, regulations, or patents or permits that may need to be obtained; plans for incorporating stakeholder and customer diversity into planning and implementation of the concept; and the role corporate social responsibility will play in the implementation of your concept.

### Capstone Component 2: Audiovisual Presentation

For the second and final component of your capstone, you will create an audiovisual presentation (such as a webcam presentation or PowerPoint with audio) designed to pitch your concept to potential financial backers or senior executives. Your presentation should highlight the key elements of your business concept and implementation plan that are most likely to convince your audience to support the idea moving forward. Remember that while your audience wants to know you have thoroughly researched and planned out your idea, including implementation, they do not want a verbatim or lengthy repetition of the information in the business implementation plan when you pitch the idea. Instead, you should strategically select the information you will present and in how much detail

based on your intended audience. You should bear in mind the key information they will want to know and the types of concerns they are likely to have, and anticipate the types of questions they are likely to ask.

Also bear in mind that financial or managerial support for a project often has as much to do with the individuals leading the project as with the concept. Backers need to be convinced of project leaders' and key staff's ability to be the face and drivers of the idea, as well as of their honesty and integrity. Since you are presumably one of the key team members, how you present is just as important as what you present in building audience trust. Be sure to communicate clearly and professionally throughout.

## Milestones

### Milestone One: Justification

In **Module One**, you will submit the **justification** for your idea or concept. Lay out the rationale for the concept, including the problem or opportunity it addresses, the market for the product or service, and the key features that set it apart from the competition. You should also discuss how the concept fits with the mission, vision, and priorities of the company implementing it and how or why it is innovative. **This milestone is graded with the Milestone One Rubric.**

### Milestone Two: Implementation Plan

In **Module Two**, you will submit an **implementation plan**, which is a clear and comprehensive plan for implementing and managing the concept from inception to completion. Although the details of your plan will necessarily depend upon your concept, at a minimum your plan should consider:

- Physical and technological resources needed for the concept, including where these will come from and how they will be used to reduce cost or improve operations. Be sure to discuss why one resource option is better than another where appropriate.
- A detailed implementation schedule covering what needs to be done, by when, and by whom. The schedule should identify the critical path to success and outline the dependencies between tasks.
- Project review processes and indicators of success to ensure that the project stays on target.
- An explanation of how intrapreneurship or entrepreneurship factor in to the implementation of your plan and how you will protect intangible assets, such as intellectual property or brand.

**This milestone is graded with the Milestone Two Rubric.**

### Milestone Three: Company and Key Personnel

In **Module Three**, you will submit the **company and key personnel**, which includes your explanation of why your organization is well positioned to carry out the project, including how the concept fits with your organization's core competencies and the type of corporate culture that will offer the best possibility for successful implementation. In addition, define the key roles, responsibilities, and qualifications of the cross-functional team that will be responsible for implementing the project. Although you may not always be able to provide the names of the specific individuals who will occupy those roles, you should explain the specific skills and experience required for each and the contributions each member will make, including what your own role will be in the process and contingency plans should the team composition you propose need to be modified. **This milestone is graded with the Milestone Three Rubric.**

Milestone Four: Financial Analysis and Funding

In **Module Four**, you will submit a **financial analysis and funding plan**, which includes your analysis of the projected costs, revenue streams, and net present value for the concept from launch until two years after the breakeven point. Be sure to include a budget, an assessment of assets and liabilities, your anticipated sources of funding, and the associated costs of attaining that capital as part of your analysis. Support your analysis with relevant primary and secondary data in an appendix, specifying any relevant assumptions and limitations. You should include, among other support, sales forecasts, cash flow statements, income projections, and any other relevant calculations or financial reports. **This milestone is graded with the Milestone Four Rubric.**

Milestone Five: Assumptions and Contingency Planning

In **Module Five**, you will submit **assumptions and contingency planning**, which includes your explanation of assumptions you have made in creating your business implementation plan, any factors that may affect those assumptions or the success of the project, and how you have planned for those contingencies. At a minimum, you should discuss any cross-cultural, economic, and geopolitical factors that may impact the business environment and concept; how you will ensure that the project operates in a legally and ethically compliant environment, including relevant laws, regulations, or patents or permits that may need to be obtained; plans for incorporating stakeholder and customer diversity into planning and implementation of the concept; and the role corporate social responsibility will play in the implementation of your concept. **This milestone is graded with the Milestone Five Rubric.**

Milestone Six: Audiovisual Presentation

In **Module Six**, you will submit an **audiovisual presentation** (such as a webcam presentation or PowerPoint with audio) designed to pitch your concept to potential financial backers or senior executives. Your presentation should highlight the key elements of your business concept and implementation plan that are most likely to convince your audience to support the idea moving forward. Remember that while your audience wants to know you have thoroughly researched and planned out your idea, including implementation, they do not want a verbatim or lengthy repetition of the information in the business implementation plan when you pitch the idea. Instead, you should strategically select the information you will present and in how much detail based on your intended audience. You should bear in mind the key information they will want to know and the types of concerns they are likely to have, and anticipate the types of questions they are likely to ask.

Note: If you plan to use a presentation software other than PowerPoint, please check in with your instructor to make sure your instructor can access the software you plan to use.

**This milestone is graded with the Milestone Six Rubric.**

Final Submission: Business Implementation Plan and Audiovisual Presentation

In **Module Nine**, you will submit the complete project including **Capstone Component 1: Business Implementation Plan and Capstone Component 2: Audiovisual Presentation**. These should be complete, polished artifacts containing **all** of the critical elements of the final product. They should reflect the incorporation of feedback gained throughout the course. **The final submission will be graded using the Final Project Rubric.**

## Deliverables

Milestone	Deliverable	Module Due	Grading
One	Justification	One	Graded separately; Milestone One Rubric
Two	Implementation Plan	Two	Graded separately; Milestone Two Rubric
Three	Company and Key Personnel	Three	Graded separately; Milestone Three Rubric
Four	Financial Analysis and Funding	Four	Graded separately; Milestone Four Rubric
Five	Assumptions and Contingency Planning	Five	Graded separately; Milestone Five Rubric
Six	Audiovisual Presentation	Six	Graded separately; Milestone Six Rubric
	Final Submission: Business Implementation Plan and Audiovisual Presentation	Nine	Graded separately; Final Project Rubric

## Final Project Rubric

**Guidelines for Submission:** Your business implementation plan should be approximately 25 pages long (not including appendices, references, etc.), using 12-point Times New Roman font, with one-inch margins. You should use appropriate section headers to divide the text and cite references using the most recent APA conventions. You may include summary pictures, charts, graphs, or other explanatory diagrams as needed to successfully explain the concept and implementation, but should use appendices for detailed supporting documentation.

Your audiovisual presentation should be approximately 30 minutes (or roughly the equivalent of 25 slides) with sufficient audio to give the audience a clear, but concise, understanding of concept and its eventual implementation. Your instructor must approve the software you plan to use for the presentation early in the course to ensure that your instructor will be able to access the content.

This rubric will be applied to both 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.

<b>MBA-705-01:</b> Analyze primary and secondary data using quantitative and qualitative techniques and information technology skills for effective problem solving and decision making	<b>Proficient</b> 100%	<b>Not Proficient</b> 0%
<i>Possible Indicators of Success</i>		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to develop problem statements, based on data-driven analysis, that justify why the proposed project is desirable, timely, and relevant?		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to identify market problems and opportunities using appropriate information technology and data analysis techniques and tools?		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to assess, using relevant primary and secondary data, how his or her concept fits into the overall market ecosystem, including trends, consumer needs and preferences, and major competitors?		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to quantitatively and qualitatively analyze existing or potential competitors' strategies in informing decisions about his or her own product or service?		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to clearly present a financial analysis for the concept that shows the investment required as well as when the concept will break even?		
<b>MBA-705-02:</b> Lead and operate within cross-functional teams in complex and diverse business environments	<b>Proficient</b> 100%	<b>Not Proficient</b> 0%
<i>Possible Indicators of Success</i>		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to clearly designate the relevant operational functions and roles necessary in establishing an implementation team to execute the concept on time and on budget?		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to identify a leader for the concept implementation team with the relevant skills, experience, and professional profile that is likely to inspire trust among financial backers or other important stakeholders?		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to analyze how the skills of each team member will contribute to successful implementation of the concept in dynamic and challenging business environments?		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to appropriately plan for contingencies across the organization should assumptions regarding contributing team members and business conditions prove incorrect?		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to plan strategies for strengthening organizational culture to successfully implement the concept?		
<b>MBA-705-03:</b> Demonstrate oral and written communication skills to effectively articulate thoughts and intentions in diverse business environments	<b>Proficient</b> 100%	<b>Not Proficient</b> 0%

<i>Possible Indicators of Success</i>		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to integrate concept elements in a written report that effectively communicates relevant plan details, supported by evidence, to executive leadership, potential investors, or other financial backers?		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to effectively articulate his or her thoughts and intentions to the target audience through audiovisual media, highlighting the most important elements of the proposal for that audience succinctly and accurately?		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to deliver a clear, compelling, and professional oral presentation that is likely to convince financial backers to support the concept?		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to distinguish between the communications purposes of the written plan and audiovisual presentation and appropriately tailor the language and level of detail of each?		
<b>MBA-705-04: Integrate cross-cultural, economic, geopolitical, and systems knowledge to solve complex business problems in a global environment</b>	<b>Proficient</b> 100%	<b>Not Proficient</b> 0%
<i>Possible Indicators of Success</i>		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to incorporate stakeholder and customer diversity in planning implementation of the concept?		
Does the student demonstrate the ability connect the concept to the larger global marketplace and analyze how that connection will impact planning, marketing, production, and implementation?		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to anticipate how government regulation and political realities will interact with the concept?		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to effectively plan project review processes and success indicators by applying business systems knowledge?		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to develop a plan that properly protects intellectual property and other non-tangible assets in the global business environment?		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to analyze differences in regulatory requirements from country to country for how that impacts global competitiveness and concept implementation?		
<b>MBA-705-05: Incorporate legal and ethical conduct and corporate social responsibility in making sustainable business decisions</b>	<b>Proficient</b> 100%	<b>Not Proficient</b> 0%
<i>Possible Indicators of Success</i>		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to articulate the ways in which ethical precepts will be embedded throughout the implementation of the product, service, or idea?		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to connect the concept with socially responsible approaches to the environment and to other stakeholders, incorporating diverse perspectives?		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to develop strategies that have the potential to strengthen corporate culture such that the culture supports high performance and ethical behavior over both the short term and long term?		
Does the student demonstrate the ability to analyze the legal and regulatory environment to ensure compliance with relevant legal statutes and oversight?		
<b>MBA-705-06: Create intrapreneurial and entrepreneurial opportunities in a global environment that add value to an organization through the integration, synthesis, and application of business practices</b>	<b>Proficient</b> 100%	<b>Not Proficient</b> 0%

*Possible Indicators of Success*

Does the student demonstrate the ability to synthesize established business practices with innovative approaches in acting on intrapreneurial or entrepreneurial opportunities?

Does the student demonstrate the ability to integrate various project elements in presenting intrapreneurial or entrepreneurial opportunities to potential supporters?

Does the student demonstrate the ability to create new business opportunities by effectively articulating the ways in which the concept will make money for the organization and its backers?