

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE v122116

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE OPTIONS

All MS Community Development students at Kansas State University complete a final examination, master's report or thesis, allowing you to undertake an independent project focused on a specific area of professional interest. This culminating experience demonstrates the highest level of professional competence achieved during your education.

You are the manager of your capstone experience. Supported by a network of people and resources, you are responsible for the definition, organization and management of your work. The leadership skills you develop and demonstrate in this effort are great assets in your professional career. Your final product will be available to others; examinations through the department, reports and theses at <http://krex.k-state.edu/dspace/>. The opportunity to share your work with others in this permanent collection is an important contribution to your professional portfolio as well as the future of the discipline.

The three options for your capstone experience and considerations related to each are described below. Each involves independent investigation of a problem or topic with direction from a supervisory committee. Your consideration of the organization and process; methods and outcomes; and sequence of activities should give special attention to:

1. Your future career plans.
2. Your personal goals, obligations and timeline for degree completion.

Organization and Process

The organization and process for the three capstone experience options differ greatly in expectations and time required.

Coursework/Examination option focuses on application of knowledge gained in coursework to practice related issues and ideas through a written exam. The examination might engage a problem from your professional work or address a focus area of potential future employment. The majority of students complete their degree with this option. The coursework/examination requires 36 credit hours of coursework, including one credit hour of CDPLN 703 Applied Community Development.

Completion of the degree by coursework/examination requires:

1. Submittal of a one page summary of student's aspirations for use of the Community Development degree and student's specific areas of interest including geographies, methods and topic focus.
2. Appointment by the program administrator of a supervisory committee of K-State MS CD faculty with applicable expertise in the areas indicated in student's one page summary.
3. Approval of the one page essay and preparation of 4-5 essay questions by the supervisory committee. The questions will reflect the information included in student's one page summary.
4. Student preparation of responses to a written examination prepared by the supervisory committee.
5. Evaluation of the examination by the supervisory committee.
6. If necessary, requirement by the supervisory committee for the student to revise examination responses and submit for reevaluation.

There are very specific deadlines associated with each of these steps. Per Graduate School policy, no credit is given for the examination. You will need to be enrolled in the semester in which you graduate.

Master's reports require at least one credit of CDPLN 880 for proposal development and two credits of CDPLN 899 in a subsequent semester for completion of the report. The remaining credit hours of the 36 credit hour Program of Study is coursework. Master's reports focus on application of research to practice related issues and ideas. The investigation typically applies existing or emerging research to a community development project in an original way, allowing you to explore potential solutions or new applications and classify, analyze and/or evaluate their effectiveness. A student must identify a major professor to work with on completion of CDPLN 880 and 899 and obtain their agreement to serve as major professor.



A thesis requires at least one credit of CDPLN 880 for proposal development and six credit hours of CDPLN 899 for completion of the thesis. This process requires a minimum of three semesters. The remaining credit hours of the 36 credit hour Program of Study is coursework. A thesis is the traditional expectation of students who will pursue a doctorate degree and/or an academic career. The process of completing a thesis can be of value in professional practice. The scope of investigation engages original research to address a question or hypothesis using recognized quantitative and/or qualitative method(s). A thesis is an individual effort that requires significant independent work and decision making. The experience of completing a thesis is central to developing your knowledge and skills for an academic or research focused career. A student must identify a major professor to work with on completion of CDPLN 880 and 899 and obtain their agreement to serve as major professor.

Methods and Outcomes

The process, methods and products of your capstone experience will be best served in specific ways by completion of the examination, report or thesis. Similar topics may be explored in different ways through each option. Looking at previous students' work can help you envision if a report or thesis is appropriate for you to consider. All Community Development capstone documents are available at <http://apdesign.k-state.edu/larcp/research/CDreportsstheses.html>

THE SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

Every community development student works with a three-person supervisory committee composed of a major professor, a secondary member and a tertiary member. A committee will be assigned for students completing the coursework/examination option.

Your major professor must be a member of the K-State Community Development Graduate Faculty. All supervisory committee members must be members of a GP IDEA member institution Graduate Faculty. KSU graduate faculty are listed by department in the current *Graduate Catalog*. You may include advisory members on your committee who are not members of the Graduate Faculty, such as practitioners or faculty from other institutions, with permission of your major professor. Advisory members are not voting members of your Supervisory Committee. Current KSU Community Development Graduate Faculty are:

Jason Brody	Stephanie Rolley
Cornelia Flora	La Barbara Wigfall
Huston Gibson	
John Keller	Gary Stith, Associate

Note: Associate Graduate Faculty may serve on Supervisory Committees but are not assigned as Major Professors

Students must formally request that a qualified faculty member serve as their major professor for the report and thesis options. These major professor assignments are approved by the department head. Appropriate secondary and tertiary committee members are identified by you and your major professor. A Program of Study must be filed with the Graduate School prior to the semester you will graduate and before enrollment in any CDPLN 899 credits.
