

## Creating an NAU Capstone Syllabus

Below is a summary of capstone syllabus elements for faculty to examine as part of the capstone refresh. Each aspect is addressed in greater detail in this website

Checklist of capstone syllabus elements that will be reviewed by the Liberal Studies Committee

### 1. Course Attributes

- a. Capstones must be at the 400-level course
- b. Capstones must constitute a minimum of 3 units of credit from "C"-designated courses

### 2. Course Purpose:

- a. Describes to the student how this course provides a culminating experience within the major, wherein students inquire, synthesize, apply, or work in ways that prepare them for a productive future.
- b. Describes to the student how this course integrates at least two of the Liberal Studies Essential Skills into the culminating experience (or at least addresses at least two of the following Essential Skills) or into an additional learning outcome and assignment.
- c. Describes to the student how this course integrates at least one of the Liberal Studies Distribution Blocks into the culminating experience (or at least addresses at least one Distribution Block) or into an additional learning outcome and assignment.

### 3. Course Learning Outcomes:

- a. Align with the course purpose and description of the culminating experience.
- b. Do course learning outcomes align with at least two Essential Skills and the Essential Skill descriptions ([click for descriptions](#))
- c. Does at least one course learning outcome align with at least one Distribution Block and one of its learning outcomes? ([Click for purpose and example learning outcomes](#)).

### 4. Assignments/ Assessments:

- a. As a whole, the assignments/ assessments align with the culminating experience within the major, wherein students inquire, synthesize, apply, or work in ways that prepare them for a productive future (such as: research paper, thesis, report, presentation; exhibit, portfolio, performance; service learning project, internship; practice in the field: student teaching, working with patients, designing work for clients, etc.).
- b. As a whole, it is clear from the assignments/ assessments align with or integrate the Learning Outcomes of the Essential Skills, and clearly identify which assignments/ assessment fulfill the Essential Skills.
- c. As a whole, it is clear from the assignments/ assessments that they have an element that aligns with or integrates at least one Distribution Block, and clearly identifies which assignments/ assessment fulfill the Distribution Block.

Step-by step process for refreshing your capstone syllabus:

1. Review the Degree Program's Purpose and Student Learning Outcomes located in the Academic Catalog <http://catalog.nau.edu/learningoutcomes/> (simply search for your degree program)
2. Review and select the Degree Program Student Learning Outcomes that represent culminating learning in the discipline.
  - a. Draft part of the Course Outcomes Section: Use these Degree Program Student Learning Outcomes "as is" or with changes to make them course learning outcomes. This will automatically ensure that your course outcomes "align with the course purpose and description of the culminating experience."
3. Consider how to integrate these culminating learning outcomes into the capstone's course design and assignments. Identify a common type of capstone experience, or combine types to create a culminating experience(s) that achieve the degree program's purpose and culminating learning outcomes. Alternatively, evaluate your current culminating experience to determine how well it achieves the culminating learning outcomes and purpose of the degree program.

Brainstorm ideas concerning (1) how the culminating experience fulfills the degree program's purpose and (2) how the culminating experience(s) fulfills culminating degree program learning outcomes.

Use the connections you have now established (and drafted) between your degree program's purpose and culminating learning outcomes to complete the following parts of the syllabus:

- a. Draft part of the Course Purpose Section: "Describes to the student how this course provides a culminating experience within the major, wherein students inquire, synthesize, apply, or work in ways that prepare them for a productive future"
  - b. Draft part of the Assignments/ Assessments of Learning Outcomes Section: "assignments/ assessments align with the culminating experience within the major, wherein students inquire, synthesize, apply, or work in ways that prepare them for a productive future (such as: research paper, thesis, report, presentation; exhibit, portfolio, performance; service learning project, internship; practice in the field: student teaching, working with patients, designing work for clients, etc.)"
4. Return to your Course Learning Outcomes section. Review the Liberal Studies Essential Skill definitions ([click for Essential Skill Definitions](#)). Consider which Essential Skills are best aligned with the Degree Program's Student Learning Outcomes that represent culminating learning. Select at least two Essential Skills that are best aligned with the culminating learning within the Degree Program.
  5. Brainstorm about how the course outcomes fulfill aspects of both the culminating experience fulfills the degree program's purpose and (2) how the culminating experience(s) fulfills culminating degree program learning outcomes.
    - a. Draft part of the Course Outcomes Section: "Clearly identifies course learning outcomes for at least two Essential Skills that align with the Essential Skill descriptions" by writing the LS

Essential Skill (example: Liberal Studies Essential Skill: Critical Thinking) next to the learning outcome.

b. Draft part of the Course Purpose Section: “Describe to the student how this course integrates at least two of the Liberal Studies Essential Skills into the culminating experience (or at least addresses at least two of the following Essential Skills) or into an additional assignment” describing how the course learning outcome achieves degree program and Essential Skill learning.

c. Draft part of the Assignments/ Assessments of Learning Outcomes Section: “As a whole, it is clear from the assignments/ assessments aligns with or integrates the Learning Outcomes of the Essential Skills, and clearly identifies which assignments/ assessment fulfill the Essential Skills” by writing the LS Essential Skill (example: Liberal Studies Essential Skill: Critical Thinking) next to the assignment(s).

6. Return to your Course Learning Outcomes section. Review the Liberal Studies Distribution Block purposes and example learning outcomes: ([click here](#)). Consider which Distribution Block(s) is best aligned with the Degree Program’s Student Learning Outcomes that represent culminating learning. Select at least one Distribution Block that is best aligned with the culminating learning within the Degree Program.

- a. Draft part of the Course Outcomes Section: “Clearly identify course learning outcomes for at least one Distribution Block(s) that aligns with the purpose and examples learning outcomes of the Distribution Block” by writing “Liberal Studies Distribution Block” (example: Liberal Studies Distribution Block: Cultural Understanding) next to the learning outcome.
- b. Draft part of the Course Purpose Section: Describe to the student how this course integrates at least one of the Liberal Studies Distribution Blocks into the culminating experience (or at least addresses at least one Distribution Block) or into an additional assignment.” by describing how the course learning outcome achieves degree program and Distribution Block learning.
- c. Draft part of the Assignments/ Assessments of Learning Outcomes Section: Identify the assignment that aligns with the Distribution Block by writing the LS Distribution Block (example: Liberal Studies Distribution Block: Cultural Understanding) next to the assignment(s).