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INTRODUCTION

The Field Experience Capstone, as designed and intended, is an experiential learning opportunity for individuals with some healthcare employment experience. The working assumption is that Field Experience degree-completion requirement is an opportunity to exercise hands-on responsibility for a project that is: a) representative of a current healthcare issues and b) relevant/of value to the site organization. As such, the project should be viewed as a further experiential opportunity to a) identify and issue, b) design an intervention, c) implement the intervention, d) analyze the results, and e) report the findings and recommendations – all done in the organization’s best interest.

The overarching challenge of the Field Experience Capstone is to enhance one’s administrative critical thinking abilities. Since the Field Experience Capstone is a project with communication expectations, it is very much like day-to-day responsibilities encountered by healthcare administrators. As such, the project’s requirements are similar to those required by developing business plans, program development proposals, and reports to stakeholders.

MHA Program Goals

The University and the College of Health Professions (CHP) have established strategic initiatives as expressions derived from their respective Vision and Mission statements. Also, the MHA Program has established specific goals that it desires to accomplish in the lives of its students and graduates. These goals are aligned with the University’s strategic initiatives and values. In turn the MHA Program’s goals drive curriculum priorities and a set of competencies that are built into each person as they progress through the courses.

Student Learning Outcomes and Competency Objectives

This section identifies each learning outcome that drives the purpose and methods for this course. Also, the intent of each learning objectives and its associated assignments is to build specific competencies into your administrative mindset; an outlook that fosters executive capabilities in the world of work and motivates continuous professional development. Since each course in the curriculum has a similar purpose, a number of competencies will be introduced and continuously reinforced throughout your time in the program. As you move through the curriculum courses, it is important to consider the associated competencies and the ways in which each course enhances competency awareness and progressive attainment.

The learning outcomes and the corresponding competencies for this course are as shown in the following table. If you want information and definitions of each competence, please consult the Competency Handbook that is posted in the Bb Syllabus tab.

After successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:
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<th>No.</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes¹</th>
<th>Competencies²</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Develop in depth understanding of specific areas within healthcare as defined by the field experience.</td>
<td>Information Seeking, Analytical Thinking, Self-Development</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Demonstrate application of identified content from the program in the development and organization of the field experience. (For example if the field experience involved strategic planning, those skills and knowledge will be demonstrated in the experience.)</td>
<td>Project Management, Initiative, Organizational Awareness, Accountability, Analytical Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Apply in a practice setting the increased knowledge and abilities gained from the field experience.</td>
<td>Achievement Orientation, Impact and Influence, Professionalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Develop a written project and defend the project orally.</td>
<td>Professionalism, Communication Skills</td>
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¹ The course will have the same learning expectations regardless of whether it is offered online, in the classroom, or as a hybrid course. These outcomes will be achieved even though the method of delivery may be different.

² Competencies are derived from the MHA Program’s competency model based on the National Center for Healthcare Leadership (NCHL) Competency Model plus additional CAHME competencies added to the NCHL model.

**PROJECT OVERVIEW**

1. Assumes that the project is a healthcare leadership experience with a realistic organizational problem-solving, program enhancement, statistical process control (SPC) intervention.
2. Expands your experience with hand-on, direct responsibility for taking initiative to identify a problem, design and intervention, execute the performance improvement design, analyze the outcome, and submit a formal report to the stakeholders.
3. Requires research support for a definition of the project’s issue-to-be-addressed and the intervention methodology.
4. The project may be an analysis of a specific operational, finance, clinical, or compliance issue of concern to the site organization. Such an analysis should lead to proposed policy solutions and/or readily implemented organizational operating enhancements.

**KEY PERSONNEL**
Two individuals have support, oversight, and evaluative roles for your field experience project. Those two individuals and their duties are as follows:

**MHA 697 Faculty.** The MHA faculty is the CMU representative who provides consultative guidance for the Site Supervisor. This faculty representative is responsible for assuring that the field experience project and its final presentation meets the University’s academic standards.

**Field Experience Site Supervisor.** The Site Supervisor is an individual with day-to-day exposure to and involvement with you and your project. This person has a significant decision-making role regarding the feasibility, applicability, and relevance of the proposed project to the site organization. That is, your Site Supervisor is responsible for assuring that the effort extended in identifying, executing, analyzing, and reporting your project is more than a routine feature of your day-to-day job duties.

**PROJECT ELEMENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

This section of the Guide contains information designed to define the essential element and activities involved in fulfilling the requirements of MHA 697 – Field Experience. A best approach to getting started is to familiarize yourself with the details involved in each of the four projects elements. Again, this guide has been prepared for the purpose of anticipating your questions and providing guidance before starting, and you progress through, and complete your field experience project.

**STEP 1 - PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN**

The priority of this step is twofold. First, it is necessary to engage your site supervisor and MHA faculty in a discussion of the feasibility and acceptance of a proposed project. This can be accomplished verbally or via a synchronous WebEx session.

Once you have a positive response from the supervisor and faculty member, the next step is to prepare a concise proposal. The proposal should be treated as an exercise in professional writing/professional communication. Also, once the proposal is completed it should be forwarded to the Site Supervisor and MHA Faculty member in preparation for a final approval decision. To that end, the proposal should be organized using the following outline with the specified information contained within the outline:

**Project Proposal Structure/Outline**

It is understood that the proposal, as a professional writing piece, is to be developed using APA style and formatting. The total document should be double spaces using 12pt Times New Roman font throughout. An exception to the APA formatting requirement may be granted if the site organization uses a different format for its reports, policies, and communiqués.
As an exception to the APA requirement, it is possible that the site organization has adopted its own required format for written reports, policies, and presentations. If this is the case, the field experience project paper should be formatted accordingly.

**Introduction**

This section should identify the issue to be addressed by the proposed project. Developing the Introduction will also involve research about this healthcare issue, including its relevance to organizational operating issues. Ideally, current research should be introduced here as link to the Method section. The narrative of this section will identify and define the key variables associated with the projects issue and purpose. Finally, this section should be developed as a justification for the core research question or purpose to be addressed. Again, the Introduction should be developed as a foundational argument that leads to defining the very specific purpose of the proposed project.

**Purpose**

This section is to be a brief summary of the projects purpose as it relates to: a) issues within healthcare administration and b) the value to the site organization.

**Method**

The Method section should be a well-organized review of the way in which the project will be executed. In outline form, this section should specify: a) the resources needed, b) personnel to be involved, c) implementation action sequence, d) data source(s) and e) analysis tactics. A Method section should be an objective, concise, organized explanation of the project’s implementation. As such, any reader should be able to use the Method narrative and conduct the same project.

**References**

The Reference section is to contain and document the nature and extent of research sources used to support the proposed project’s importance/relevance to the site organization. Each source cited here should be cited in the proposal’s Introduction section. All citations are to be entered using the APA format.
STEP 2 - PROJECT EXECUTION

For the purposes of the Field Experience MHA Capstone, execution defined as the student’s progressive demonstration of an ability to identify and organizational issue, design a professional approach to studying the issue, and prepare a professionally written document summarizing the project. An additional component of execution is the nature and extent of student initiative to move the project from beginning to end – without being prompted to do so by either the Site Supervisor or MHA faculty member.

STEP 3 - PROJECT REPORT AND PRESENTATION

As with most administrative initiative, communication of intent, actions, findings, recommendations, and policies is an essential obligation. Thus, Step 3 provided an opportunity to complete a key administrative action – communicate one’s findings to the organization’s stakeholders. This is best accomplished by expanding the Field Experience Proposal to include a Findings and a Recommendations sections. Each section should convey the information shown as follows:

Findings

There is every reason to believe that the field experience study will generate findings in one form or another. This section is to be a very objective, organized, concise summary of the findings. A concerted effort is to be made to editorial comments and avoid conclusions in this section. This type of input is to be saved for the Recommendations section. Instead, the reader should receive only a focused, objective summary of findings.

Recommendations

The working assumption is that your project’s results will provide information having the potential to impact the organization is some way. This section is to be a discussion of the findings in terms of the organizational value derived from the project.

Presentation. At the discretion of the Site Supervisor, you may directed to prepare a deliver a presentation to staff members of interest in the site organization. Such a presentation is best delivered via a set of well-designed, concise PowerPoint slides that summarize the project and its implications for the organization. It is important also that the presentation convey a positive, non-critical tone, especially if the finding and recommendations are corrective in nature.

If the Site Supervisor determines that a formal presentation is not necessary, the follow-up question should be, “Would it be of value to send the project report to the interested stakeholders?”
STEP 4 - PROJECT REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The final draft of your project paper is to be forwarded simultaneously to the Site Supervisor and the MHA Faculty member. These individuals will review your paper individually and follow-up with a conjoint consultation to determine a final CR/NCR outcome. If it is determined that the paper needs some enhancements or amendments, a grade will not be posted until the project paper has been approved.

In addition, the Site Supervisor will complete the required Competency Attainment Survey and forward it to the MHA Faculty for review and tabulation. You will be asked to complete and submit the Student Competency Attainment Survey. This is a self-rating assessment to determine your view of the extent to which the Field Experience course outcomes and competencies were accomplished.