Abstract Guidelines for Capstone Documents

_The abstract is a window for others into your research._

**Elements of the Abstract Guidelines**

Each area usually needs one sentence, except for Methodology and Results, which may take a few.

1. **Background/General Introduction of the Issue** (optional)—abstract may begin with research problem.
2. **Research Problem and Why It’s Important**—be clear; who cares if the problem is solved?
3. **Purpose or Rationale**—this is sometimes combined with research questions to avoid redundancy.
4. **Theoretical Foundations**—name the theory OR describe the conceptual framework, if appropriate.
5. **Research Questions (RQs)/Guiding Question**—present these as statements, not questions.
6. **Methodology and Overall Design**—be specific; include the sample size and inclusion criteria.
7. **Data Analytic Procedures**—explain how data were analyzed to address the research questions.
8. **Key Results/Conclusions/Recommendations** (for final paper only)—ensure alignment with purpose/RQs.
9. **Implications for Positive Social Change**—specify who benefits from the research and in what ways.

**OVERALL**—Alignment (along the logical progression from problem→ research questions→ method→ results)

**Form and Style Tips**

- Limit the abstract to one typed page.
- Maintain the scholarly language used throughout the capstone document.
- Keep the abstract concise, accurate, and readable. Use correct English grammar.
- Ensure each sentence adds value to the reader’s understanding of the research.
- Use the full name of any acronym/abbreviation and include the acronym/abbreviation in parentheses; you can thereafter refer to the acronym/abbreviation.
- Abstracts do not have paragraphs; keep the text to one long paragraph with no indentation.
- Do not include references or citations in the abstract.
- Per APA style, use numerals in the abstract, not written-out numbers, unless at the start of a sentence.

**What could delay the approval of an abstract?**

- Grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors.
- Lack of definitions of terms (important enough to be in your title, e.g., WiFi, PTSD, UN, etc.).
- Inadequate or missing social change implications.
- An unclear or absence of research problem, research question, or purpose of the study.
- No answer to the question “so what?” You must indicate why the research is important. Who will care that the issue was studied?
- A length of more than one typed page.
- Identification of participants, partner site, organization, or location.