Frequently Asked Questions:
School of ATEC Capstone Requirement

Please view the ‘Capstone 101’ presentation on the ATEC website for information on this degree requirement. If you have questions beyond what is covered in the presentation and FAQ document, contact your academic advisor.

Q: What is Capstone?
A: Capstone is an upper-level major requirement for all School of ATEC majors and is intended to be a culminating course for the major. It is represented on the degree plan as ATCM 4397 (Senior Seminar) or ATCM 4398 (Capstone Project). Students in their final semester will engage in the creation of an advanced creative and/or research project of their own choosing based on their focus within the program. Students will take either ATCM 4397 or ATCM 4398 in order to complete the degree requirement. At the end of the semester, students enrolled in the two courses will participate in a conference-style poster session, Capstone Celebration.

Q: When can I complete Capstone?
A: Students complete Capstone in their last long semester (Fall/Spring) at UT Dallas. The project will utilize the skills developed and knowledge gained from moving through the majority of the major. Students are not able to complete their Capstone over the Summer semester.

Q: How do I register for Capstone Project (ATCM 4398) or Senior Seminar (ATCM 4397)?
A: Enrollment in ATCM 4397 or ATCM 4398 requires submission of the Capstone Proposal by the deadline in the prior semester. School of ATEC Faculty will review all proposals submitted by the deadline in order to assign students to either ATCM 4397 or ATCM 4398. *See the Capstone Proposal document for more information.

Q: What is the difference between Capstone Project (ATCM 4398) and Senior Seminar (ATCM 4397)?
A: Both courses fulfill the Capstone degree requirement. ATCM 4398 is more like an independent study that does not have an assigned meeting time, though consistent communication is expected between student and assigned faculty supervisor. The course requires students to attend two critique sessions during the semester to receive feedback from other faculty and peers. ATCM 4397 is structured as a workshop class in which students meet at a set weekly time to give and receive peer feedback, in addition to faculty critique, on project progress.

Q: What happens if I don’t turn in my Capstone Proposal by the posted deadline?
A: If you do not turn in your Capstone Proposal by the posted deadline, you may not be able to complete Capstone in your intended semester, resulting in a delay in your graduation timeline. It is very important that you submit your proposal by the deadline indicated on the Capstone Proposal document.

Q: Can I work with a partner or in a group?
A: Yes, you will want to include your group members’ names in the ‘Additional Notes’ box on your Capstone Proposal. Each of you must turn in a separate Capstone Proposal and must be specific in what your responsibilities are within the team. For example: Student A is responsible for modeling, while Student B is responsible for animating. Each student should be responsible for a semester’s worth of work in order to qualify as fulfilling their Capstone requirement.
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Q: Can I choose which faculty I’d like to have supervise my project?
A: No, you cannot request a specific faculty member to supervise your project. However, if you have already spoken to a professor about supervising your Capstone, you may note that in the ‘Additional Notes’ box on your Capstone Proposal. Please note, you are not guaranteed this professor as your faculty supervisor, but it will assist faculty to know if you’ve already spoken to someone when reviewing your proposal.

Q: Can I start working on my project before my final long semester?
A: If you are interested in developing work for your project prior to your final semester, you should reach out to the ATEC Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Eric Farrar. Some types of projects may benefit from completion of pre-production work, research, and/or other preparatory deliverables prior to enrollment. However, other projects require faculty input from the beginning and should not be worked on ahead of time. Associate Dean Eric Farrar will provide you with direction based on your type of project. Your Capstone cannot be completed prior to being enrolled in the course.

Q: What are the responsibilities of my faculty supervisor?
A: Your faculty supervisor is responsible for submitting your final grade and will provide guidance and feedback throughout your project. It is not your faculty supervisor’s responsibility to:
- Determine your project idea, goals, objectives, or timeline
- Remind you of deadlines or meetings
- Check in with you to see how your project is progressing

It is your responsibility to clarify all questions with your faculty supervisor and maintain consistent contact.

Q: Is it possible to fail this degree requirement?
A: Yes – and since it is a degree requirement, you would have to retake the course in order to graduate.

Q: Where can I find examples of Capstone projects?
A: Students are highly encouraged to attend Capstone Workshop and Capstone Celebration in a semester prior to submitting a Capstone Proposal. Capstone Workshops are hosted by faculty and may include review of prior Capstones and discussion of students’ tentative project ideas. Capstone Celebration, a conference-style poster session involving all enrolled Capstone students, is an excellent opportunity to get an idea of different types of projects that ATEC students are able to complete. Additionally, you can view some past Capstone projects by visiting the ATEC website.

Q: I am interested in pursuing School of ATEC Major Honors. How do I do so?
A: Please check the ATEC website for details on School of ATEC Major Honors. If interested, you will want to discuss your eligibility with your academic advisor. Do not wait until your graduating semester to look into Major Honors eligibility.

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