

## Capstone Project

The capstone project is an opportunity for trainees to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they have learned through the LEND program, academic programs of study, professional or volunteer positions and/or life experiences. Each capstone project will address one or more LEND competencies. In general, these are individual projects. However, prior approval may be given for two or more trainees to work on a large project.

## Identifying the Capstone Topic

The capstone project addresses a practical issue associated with neurodevelopmental or related disabilities on a clinical, organizational, programmatic or policy level. Each trainee will identify a problem statement that contains the real-world disability-related concern or issue the capstone project will address. Trainees should work with their mentor to identify their capstone topic. Titles and descriptions of capstone projects from the prior year may be found on the LEND portal.

## Capstone Mentor

The capstone proposal must include the name of the mentor who will oversee your work on the capstone project. Often, this is the LEND mentor. However, it may also be someone else. For example, if a trainee is working with a faculty member in an academic department or a staff member of an advocacy organization, then that person may be the capstone mentor. If this is the case, trainees are expected to keep their LEND mentor up-to-date on progress on the project.

## Systematic Investigation

An important part of the capstone is systematically investigating what has been done elsewhere in the problem area you are addressing. For example, if the project is to create a training program for teachers, then the process would include identifying and reviewing similar teacher training programs. It may also include a general review of the literature in the topic area.

## Product

Trainees are expected to produce a tangible product as part of the capstone project. Examples include a tip sheet, infographic, presentation for stakeholders, poster presentation, brochure, curriculum, lesson plan or training module. Note that the end-of-year presentation made by each trainee on their capstone project is not the product. End-of-year presentations (see below) must include a discussion of how the product will be disseminated (e.g., when and to whom a presentation or tip sheet will be disseminated). In most cases, the dissemination will have taken place before the presentation. In some cases, however it may be disseminated after the presentation. An example is a presentation at a conference or meeting that is scheduled for after the presentation.

## Presentation

Trainees will make a formal presentation to other trainees and LEND faculty at the end of their second semester. Presentations will be 20 minutes (15-minute presentation plus 5 minutes of questions and answers). Presentations must be a PowerPoint presentation that follows accessibility guidelines (e.g., font size, contrast, etc.). Accessibility guidelines will be discussed at a LEND session during fall semester.

## Process

The following are the steps and timelines for the capstone project. It is expected that you communicate regularly with your LEND mentor about your progress on the project.

1. Identify and frame the capstone project problem with your LEND mentor.
2. Submit a draft of the Capstone Project Proposal form to your LEND mentor by **October 10, 2025**. This form can be found on the LEND portal.
3. Review feedback from LEND faculty and submit final Capstone Project Proposal to your LEND mentor and [HSC-NM-LEND@salud.unm.edu](mailto:HSC-NM-LEND@salud.unm.edu) by **October 24, 2025**.
4. Complete your capstone project, including submission to IRB, if necessary.
5. Submit a draft of your final presentation to your LEND mentor by **April 17, 2026**.
6. Submit your PowerPoint to the [HSC-NM-LEND@salud.unm.edu](mailto:HSC-NM-LEND@salud.unm.edu) as an e-mail attachment two days before your designated presentation date. You **MUST** provide the presentation in .ppt format, which you can save from Microsoft PowerPoint or Google docs.