Industry Client Guide for Capstone Project Course
College of Engineering Professional Master’s Programs

Capstone Project Overview

The College of Engineering graduate-level Capstone Project course aims to have graduate students in the professional master’s program integrate advanced technical knowledge in a real-world project experience sponsored by an industry client. Students enrolled in this course work either independently or in an assigned team to accomplish the project goals as identified by the industry client. There is weekly contact throughout the semester between the student(s) and an assigned industry representative, who serves as the primary project mentor.

Class Environment

Students remain at Illinois during the semester and work remotely with the industry client. Projects may be assigned to one student or a small team of students. Students interact on a regular basis throughout the semester with the industry representative through webinars or Skype meetings. On occasion, the client may request the student(s) to travel to the client’s site for an in-person meeting. The course instructor-of-record provides students with additional guidance as needed throughout the semester.

Project Expectations

The College of Engineering Capstone Project Coordinator serves as a liaison to help departments and industry clients successfully navigate through the capstone project process. The course instructor assigns students to teams, as appropriate, and communicates names and contact information of the students working on a project to the industry representative. At the start of the semester, students develop a project plan, including a budget, in collaboration with the industry client. The plan may include research, design, development, analysis, prototype build, test, and evaluation with emphasis on deliverables that are reasonable given the project duration and of importance to the industry client. Both the industry representative and the course instructor keep project records during the semester. Students participate in at least one oral presentation and submit a final written project report at the end of the semester.

Industry Client’s Responsibility

The industry client is responsible for providing the project and outlining the required deliverables. The College of Engineering requires clients to pay a fee, which is used to cover all project expenses, e.g. equipment purchases, supplies, software, and/or occasional travel expenses to the client’s site. The industry representative must interact on a regular basis with the student(s) throughout the semester. This interaction is crucial to the success of the student(s) and project. Clients also need to supply data and support necessary for project execution and completion, as well as supply all materials or equipment needed for the project that is not available to students at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Intellectual Property

Students completing the Capstone Project course sign a Course Project Agreement form. This form states that all technical and business information that is generated by the student(s) or provided by the industry client, in any form, is considered Intellectual Property of the client. There are specific guidelines from the university that govern how information must be protected by students during this experience and beyond, which are outlined on this form.

For more information, contact Laura Pew at laurapew@illinois.edu.