



TO: Prospective Advanced Policy Analysis (CAP) Client
FROM: Capstone Analytic Project (CAP) Faculty
SUBJECT: Client-Based Projects with Goldman School MPA Students, Spring 2022

OVERVIEW

In their final semester of study, GSPP Master of Public Affairs (MPA) students are required to write a high-quality professional paper, known as the Capstone or CAP, in order to complete the MPA degree. With faculty supervision and guidance, each student works as a consultant for a client to conduct a thorough analysis of a major policy problem facing a real-world organization, applying the interdisciplinary methods, approaches, and perspectives that comprise the GSPP MPA core curriculum.

A student's findings and policy recommendations are presented to the client as a professional-quality written report, and outlines the student's recommendations to solve the policy problem in light of relevant tradeoffs. The final product must meet both the academic standards of the School's faculty and the standards and needs of the client. While the analytic work and argumentation underlying the report must meet academic standards of the School's faculty, the written product should be engaging and persuasive to lay readers. In the past, these reports have led to significant changes in policy and organizational management practices. It is also the school's policy that final CAP reports are made available to the public, with occasional exceptions when mutually agreed upon by individual clients, students, and faculty members.

MPA students start their CAP projects in January and complete it by early May (approximately 15 weeks). Most of the student's time is spent outside of the classroom. However they also meet once a week with their faculty advisor and a small group of peers in a seminar which provides an opportunity for review, evaluation, and support of the students' projects. The CAP represents between 10-15 hours per week (for a total of 150 to 225 hours of work) of a student's workload during the spring semester, depending on the amount of time a student needs to complete the project.

Approximately 74 students will be doing CAP projects in Spring 2022. We invite organizations to submit proposals between now and November 1, 2021. All proposals will be circulated among students for review, and those interested in a proposal will submit application materials requested by potential clients, as outlined on the proposal form.

WHO ARE THE MPA STUDENTS?

Training: MPA students are highly-qualified mid-career professionals seeking to serve the public in a variety of ways. The focus of the degree is on policy analysis combined with deep engagement with questions of organizational leadership, innovation, strategy and adaptation.

Work Experience: Most students come with at least 10 years of policy-relevant work experience prior to graduate school. MPA students are selected into the program based on their strong professional backgrounds, energetic commitment to the public interest, and strong academic qualifications commensurate with UC Berkeley and Goldman School standards. Entering the degree mid-career, MPA students are accomplished managers and executives in their fields, with diverse and deep work experience and, in some cases, already hold an advanced degree or advanced training in a field.

Policy Consulting: MPA students are consultants for your organization providing professional level analysis and recommendations to solve policy problems. They are not interns and should not be assigned tasks extraneous to their project.

WHAT DISTINGUISHES A GOOD PROJECT?

Intellectually and analytically challenging. Ideal projects involve some uncertainty regarding the projected effects of specific policy choices in which the alternative outcomes are very different and consequential. In addition, projects should not be based on a client's preferred solution. We enjoin our students to take a critical stance toward any policy analysis problem and, if necessary, to try to persuade the client of a different point of view. Students are consultants (rather than interns) and are expected to maintain a fair degree of professional and analytical autonomy. Projects involving little more than collecting survey data (or only analyzing data), developing program descriptions or information about possible funding sources, or providing analysis to support a pre-identified policy choice are not suitable.

1. **Centered on a decision faced by your organization.** CAP projects should have an important “applied” component, rather than be primarily based on research with remote policy implications. Applied projects allow students to hone their policy analysis skills and ability to confront difficult tradeoffs between two or more alternative courses of action, and provide the client with options to inform decision-making around a policy problem.

The key to a good CAP project formulation is that it should begin with a statement of a policy problem or a perceived problem facing the client, and clearly state the policy decision for which the client is seeking recommendations. Policy decisions may be at the organization or agency level, at the legislative level, or elsewhere.

Essential to a successful project is the process of assessing possible solutions to a policy problem given a range of policy goals or criteria and weighing tradeoffs. However, the project may include analytical components in addition to recommendations on a policy decision, such as evaluation of an existing program, a review of best practices, a SWOT analysis, or analysis of data.

2. **Possible to complete in 15 weeks (by early May 2022).** Projects should be relatively narrow and complex, rather than broad and simple. There are instances when the client requires the student to start the project sooner than January; we regard this as perfectly acceptable, as long as the client and student mutually agree.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

Here are some examples of good CAP project formulations inspired by past projects:

1. The Ministry of Transportation of Taiwan needs to make a decision as to whether to extend an existing rapid train line, build a new conventional train line, or make upgrades to the highway to reduce traffic congestion on National Highway 5 connecting Taipei with Yilan.
2. San Joaquin County is growing fast and so is international passenger air travel. Yet its residents have to travel either to San Francisco International, Oakland International, Sacramento International or San José International airports to catch an international flight. Could Stockton Airport support international operations? And if so how can that be made to happen?
3. Indigenous people in Chile have not shared equally in the country’s economic growth. How should the Interamerican Development Bank support Chile in developing a strategy to promote indigenous business growth in Chile?

CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Successful working relations between students and clients will vary greatly in detail, but at their core they all have a client who sets high expectations for quality of analysis and presentation. A client has five main responsibilities:

1. Meet with the student, in person if possible, prior to the start of the project to negotiate and define the project’s scope, remembering that projects must meet the student’s academic requirements and interests, as well as the client’s needs;
2. Continue to consult with the student regularly throughout the spring semester to ensure the project stays on course, as well as provide feedback and comments to interim drafts;
3. Provide internal data sources relevant to the project, and advise students about acquiring external data sources;
4. Arrange for student access to stakeholders who may serve as an information source related to the project;
5. Read and provide feedback on the final report.

Most clients do more than this. Interacting more frequently with the student (including commenting on interim written products) is key to a project’s success. This typically improves the final report and increases the likelihood it will meet the client’s needs. In addition, clients often provide students with professional development opportunities such as presenting and/or disseminating their work to key decision-makers, stakeholders, and other audiences as appropriate. Some clients will work with the student to submit the final report for publication.

Compensation: Most clients pay students for their work, typically in the range of \$7,000 – \$9,000 total. However, students are sometimes paid considerably higher than this range (and sometimes less than this range). The market is at work here as elsewhere, and projects offering higher compensation tend to attract more student interest and talent. All payment details must be agreed upon in writing before the start of the project and should be negotiated with the student consultant directly.

If your organization cannot offer payment, reimbursement for project-related expenses including but not limited to travel, survey or transcription tools, attending conferences relevant to the project, as well as expenses such as phone calls and photocopying, is expected from the client.

CAP PROJECT TIMELINE

August- November	Clients submit proposals Clients begin to submit project proposals in August/September for students to review, with most students finalizing their client choices by early November. <i>We encourage clients to submit project proposals early during this timeframe. Agreements between student consultants and clients, as well as the basic project scope, should be established by December 1st.</i>	https://goldman.school/apa-capsubmissions
January- May	Project work begins. Students begin projects during the week of January 17, 2022. Preliminary work on the project can be done by the student earlier than January, depending on the needs of the client and/or the project. This must be mutually agreed upon by the client and student.	
Mid-April	Draft project due. Draft paper is due to the faculty advisor and client for review and feedback.	
Early May	Final paper due. Final paper is due to the faculty advisor, client, and GSPP student services unit.	

NEXT STEPS – SUBMIT A PROPOSAL

If you are interested in sponsoring a CAP project for Spring 2022, we invite you to submit a proposal at <https://goldman.school/apa-capsubmissions> between now and November 1, 2021. If you have questions or require consultation on your proposal to ensure it is well crafted, please contact Cecille Cabacungan, Managing Director of Career & Alumni Services (cecille@berkeley.edu).

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK WITH GOLDMAN SCHOOL STUDENTS

If the CAP project does not meet your organization's needs, you might also consider submitting one of the following:

- **Introductory Policy Analysis (IPA) – Small teams of 1st year MPP student consultants (for projects Spring 2022)**
Contact: IPA Course Coordinator – Laila Heid, 2nd Year MPP Student (laila_heid@berkeley.edu)
You may also reach out directly to professors Mia Bird (miabird@berkeley.edu) and Meredith Sadin (msadin@berkeley.edu)
Website: <http://gspp.berkeley.edu/career-services/client-based-projects/introduction-to-policy-analysis-ipa>
- **Capstone Analytic Project (CAP) – One MPA student consultant (for projects Spring 2022)**
Contact: Annie Campbell Washington, Senior Assistant Dean for Academic Programs and Dean of Students (acw@berkeley.edu)
Website: <http://gspp.berkeley.edu/career-services/client-based-projects/capstone-analytic-project-cap>
- **Summer Internships – 1st year MPP students (for internships Summer 2022)**
Contact: Cecille Cabacungan, Managing Director of Career & Alumni Services (cecille@berkeley.edu)
Website: <http://gsppjobs.net> (to post your summer internship opportunity directly)