Guidelines for Course-Based Master's Degrees Capping Exercise:
PERLS 900 (6 credits)

The Capping Project provides course-based master's degree students (MCoach, MA(RLS), MA) with the opportunity to engage in independent and meaningful research and explore in depth a particular topic, issue or practice related to their area of interest. This course involves completing a significant piece of scholarly writing that should be strong enough to be presented at an academic and/or professional conference or published in a scholarly and/or professional journal or magazine.

Students may work on the Capping Exercise during more than one academic term; however they must register in PERLS 900 for the term in which the project is to be completed. Normally the Capping Exercise will be completed near the end of a student's program; however students and their academic supervisors should begin to discuss possible topics within the first year. For example, the Coaching Practicum (PEDS 572) can be an excellent way for MCoach students to begin thinking about a possible Capping Exercise topic. Assignments completed for courses (e.g., PERLS 590) can also be used to formulate ideas and read and write in relevant areas. In addition, given that students often have professionally relevant responsibilities outside of their course work, these contexts also offer an excellent setting to complete a Capping Project. There are three primary ways for MCoach, MA(RLS), and MA course based students to complete their Capping Exercise:

1. A case study around a 'problem' the student has identified as important 'to solve' to advance his or her knowledge and understanding of coaching, leisure, recreation, sports, dance, exercise, etc. The structure of such a project should be as follows:

- Introduction Chapter that defines and contextualizes the problem to be investigated (approximately 5-7 pages);
- Review of Literature Chapter that is detailed and comprehensive in nature and reviews past and current understandings of this problem and approaches to solving this problem (approximately 25-30 pages);
- Implications Chapter where the student discusses, with the support of the research reviewed, some applications to his or her specific professional/practice context (approximately 15-20 pages);
- Conclusion Chapter where the student presents two to three key insights and discusses future directions around the topic both for practitioners and researchers (approximately 8-10 pages).

2. A type of "action research" project where the student designs and implements a specific theoretically informed intervention, pilot program or new practice and then reflects on its impact. The structure of this type of project should be as follows:

- Introduction Chapter where the student outlines a case for designing and implementing a new practice (approximately 5-7 pages);
- Review of Literature Chapter where the student argues through the relevant literature the rationale for implementing this practice, including the theoretical framework that will guide the student's reflections (approximately 20-25 pages);
- Method Chapter where the student outlines in detail how and for how long she or he will introduce this new practice and will measure, assess and evaluate its impact (approximately 10-15 pages);
- Results and Discussion Chapter where the student connects her or his reflections to theory and discusses how she or he made sense of what it meant to implement this new practice, with specific comments on the impact it had on the student's understanding as a professional working in his or her field (approximately 10-15 pages);
- Conclusion Chapter where the student presents two to three key insights and discusses future directions around the topic both for practitioners and researchers (approximately 8-10 pages).

3. A small scale quantitative or qualitative study that follows the same format, structure and procedures for a thesis, including ethical approval if appropriate, but with a much reduced scope. For example, an interview study with approximately five participants, a survey or questionnaire study with approximately 20-25 participants, or an analysis of some existing data or a lab-based study that is already set-up.

In addition, students may propose projects that do not fit into these categories. In such cases, they will be expected to have support from their academic supervisor. MCoach students will need approval from the MCoach coordinator.

In advance of beginning the Capping Exercise the student should formulate a proposal (similar to a thesis proposal) that outlines the focus of the project, including the rationale and purpose, and where appropriate the methods. The academic supervisor must approve the proposal before the student begins the main part of the work. Approval must be obtained from the appropriate Research Ethics Board if the work involves interaction with human subjects (e.g., interviews). The student and academic supervisor should interact during the project as required in a similar manner to how a supervisor and student might interact during the completion of a thesis project. The student may need some elements of training, supervision or assistance in order to complete the project. For example, the academic supervisor should be prepared to read drafts and provide feedback as required. The academic supervisor will take responsibility for guiding the student through the project and the development of the final product. Throughout this process, the academic supervisor needs to be prepared to monitor the amount and quality of the work to ensure the project aligns with the expectations of PERLS 900.

At an appropriate time during the project, the academic supervisor should, in consultation with the student, nominate a "second reader". The academic supervisor and the second reader are responsible for evaluating the project as a Pass or a Fail. To serve as a second reader for capping exercises for Course-based MA, MA (RLS) and MCoach degree programs in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation, the person must be eligible to supervise graduate students at University of Alberta or other master's degree granting universities. As part of the evaluative process, the student may be asked to make a presentation to the academic supervisor, the second reader and other members of the Faculty (e.g., professors, coaches, students). A requirement to revise aspects of the project may also be a component of the evaluation process. The academic supervisor and second reader will communicate the result of their evaluation to the Graduate Program Office by completing the Notice of Completion of Capping Exercise form. https://uofa.ualberta.ca/physical-education-recreation/-/media/physed/graduate/forms/appendixh-certificateofcompletion-cappingexercisejune2015.pdf. The student must submit an electronic copy of the final project to the Graduate Program Office.

Should the second reader refuse to sign the approval sheet because of a disagreement with the academic supervisor as to what is required to successfully complete the project, the case should be referred to the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies. In cases of dispute involving the Associate Dean, the case should be referred to the Vice Dean of the Faculty or to the Faculty specific Associate Dean in the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, who will determine the appropriate course of action.