

## **Minor in Business, Ethics, and Society/Ethics, Society, and the Institution of Business Experience Requirement and Themes**

The experience requirement is an essential piece of the BES/ESIB minor.<sup>1</sup> It provides valuable opportunities for you to incorporate your coursework into actual business practice, and it enables you to begin building toward your capstone project. Most of all, though, it is a vitally important arena in which you can begin building the reflective and communicative skills and habits so essential to ethical action in or about the institution of business. To help you take full advantage of these possibilities, you need to identify an area of concern regarding the institution of business and select two themes – an ethical theme and a societal theme – to explore during your internship. The area of concern should come from your application to the minor or, if you have not yet been admitted, from the minor worksheet. The worksheet is available on Canvas.

For the capstone project. In the capstone seminar you will identify a single ethical issue that falls within the general area of concern outlined in your application or on your worksheet, identify an existing organization (for-profit, not-for-profit, or policy-making) that has encountered or is likely to encounter that issue, and draw on your coursework and the experiences and research from your work experience to advocate for a proposed action by that organization. Your final presentation will include:

- A description of the ethical issue
- A description of the organization confronting it, together with a list of actors (your audience) and stakeholders
- An ethical, financial, and legal argument recommending a proposed action to your organization

Over the course of the work experience, you will identify at least two possible ethical issues to pursue in your capstone project and begin the process of developing them.

For the ethical theme, you should first determine whether you want your capstone project to focus primarily on personal (individual) action, organizational action, or societal/political action. Ideally, this will connect with the course you took (or will take) to complete your minor ethics requirement, as noted below. Having done so, select one of the following themes:

- *Personal ethics:* Understand the kinds of ethical issues that arise at the level of the individual, and the importance of ethical congruence between an individual and an organization. Become familiar with the aspects of individual psychology and the work environment that make it harder or easier for individuals to identify, analyze, and act on such issues. Develop ways for individuals to address the hindrances. (Pairs with approved courses in ethics, including PHIL 204, 207, and 249; RELS 141 and RELS 143)
- *Organizational ethics:* Understand the kinds of ethical issues that arise at the level of the organization, the typical ethical structures of organizations, and the importance of organizational ethics (both internally and externally directed). Become familiar with the aspects of organizational structure and the work environment that make it harder or easier for organizations to identify, analyze, and act on such issues. Develop ways for organizations to address the hindrances. (Pairs with any course approved for the BES/ESIB ethical requirement.)

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that, among other things, a qualifying internship must have a supervisor and run at least 20-35 hours/week for 8 to 10 weeks.

- *Politics*: Understand the kinds of ethical issues that arise at the level of an industry, and the importance of regulation. Become familiar with the aspects of industry structure and governance that make it harder or easier for governing bodies to identify, analyze, and act on such issues. Develop ways for governing bodies to address the hindrances. (Pairs with approved courses in political theory, including PHIL 247 and 265; POLS 101)

For the societal theme, regarding the fundamental orientation of the institution of business to society, select one of the following:

- *Corporate sustainability*: Develop an understanding of corporate (as opposed to environmental) sustainability: what it is, how it is measured, and how it is justified as an orientation.
- *Corporate social responsibility*: Develop an understanding of CSR: what it is, how it is measured, and how it is justified as an orientation.
- *Corporate political responsibility* (CPR, also called *political CSR*). Develop an understanding of the political role of private enterprises. Become familiar with the ways in which an organization or industry is or could be involved in “political” action, whether in conjunction with a governmental body or in its own right, and when such engagement would be justified.

Your progress on exploring your area of concern, identifying potential issues for your capstone project, and researching the themes will be tracked via a series of three memos submitted to the BES/ESIB advisors over the course of the work experience. The prompts for the memos are also posted on Canvas.

Logistics: Please keep the headings in the memo prompt but otherwise replace the provided prompt completely before you submit them; place your citations in footnotes, and do not include a bibliography. Submit your memos via Canvas on the dates noted there; your memos will be returned with comments via the same interface.

Two things to keep in mind about these memos, as discussed in more detail at the Work Experience Workshop: First, your writing should be clear, simple, active, and concise; this is a business writing exercise, not a paper. Second, you’re not writing three separate memos; you’re writing successively more substantive, sophisticated drafts of a single memo. With that, you should *revise* the first memo and add information to generate the second, and should *revise* the second memo and add information to generate the third. To that end, please submit a blackline with your second and third memos, showing the changes from the previous memo; you can find instructions here (<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/compare-document-differences-using-the-legal-blackline-option-dbf7351-4022-43a2-a0c4-54d1898702a0>) if you’re not familiar with the process.

To: Don Brand, BES/ESIB Advisor  
Karen Teitel, BES/ESIB Advisor  
From:  
Date:  
Re: BES/ESIB work experience – first report (maximum 800 words)

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### Capstone

Provide a brief description of your proposed area of concern for the minor and explain why you personally are interested in it, including why you think it matters. Give three examples of specific ethical issues related to your area of concern that could be developed into your capstone project.

**Note:** As you continue through the rest of this prompt, bear in mind that the themes you select should cohere with the kinds of issues you've described here.

### Work experience

Briefly describe your position, including an overview of your organization (its size, structure, and source[s] of income), its industry and place in that industry, and your role/responsibilities (including where your position is located within that structure). For this first memo, this introduction should be no more than 150 words. It will become more analytical and comprehensive in subsequent submissions.

### Ethical theme

Identify the ethical theme you want to explore during your work experience, and explain your interest in it. How does this theme/issue fit into the development of your personal career and life goals? How might it appear within your capstone project?

Discuss how you have and will continue to explore your ethical theme. Consider and include one course you have taken at Holy Cross (not just BES/ESIB classes) and one you would like to take.

### Societal theme

Identify the societal theme you want to explore during your work experience, and explain your interest in it. How does this theme/issue fit into the development of your personal career and life goals? How might it appear within your capstone project?

Discuss how you have and will continue to explore your societal theme. Consider and include one course you have taken at Holy Cross (not just BES/ESIB classes) and one you want to take.

To: Don Brand, BES/ESIB Advisor  
 Karen Teitel, BES/ESIB Advisor

Date:

Re: BES/ESIB work experience – second report (maximum 1,700 words)

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### Potential Capstone Issue #1

Develop your previous description of your area of concern to bring out your claims about why it matters; be sure to address aspects that would be persuasive to someone at your organization. Use (and cite) two sources; you may use materials from your courses. Next:

- Describe your **first** potential issue: the issue, the stakeholders, and the likely financial, ethical, and legal implications; use (and cite) two possible sources to supplement your description.
- Identify one or two organizations (for profit, not-for-profit, or political ) likely to encounter the issue.
- Discuss your thoughts about your potential issue with someone at your organization and then describe this conversation and how it was received. Did they agree or disagree with your initial ideas or observations? Did they encourage you to continue to work towards this as a capstone project? Did they suggest any revisions to your plans or make other comments to help you succeed?

### Work experience

Develop your previous description of your organization, its place in the industry, and your role/responsibilities to bring out those aspects that are relevant to your chosen themes. How does your organization attempt to support individual or organizational ethics, or act politically? How does it pursue corporate (not environmental) sustainability, CSR, or CPR (as relevant)? Specifically:

- For your organization, what are the roles and functions that are relevant to your themes? Who occupies or performs them?
- For your role, where does it intersect with your themes (i.e., where do you have opportunities to learn or enact them?)
- For your industry, generally speaking, who are the stakeholders (i.e., who or what participates in, affects, and is affected by industry operation)?

### Ethical theme

Develop your previous explanation of why your ethical theme matters, being sure to address aspects that would convince someone at your organization. Use (and cite) two sources; you may draw on materials from the courses identified in your first memo. Also, respond to **one** of the following:

- If you selected *personal ethics*: Kidder<sup>2</sup> identifies five universal values of honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness, and compassion; choose three that you would like to express in the workplace, or suggest some of your own. Identify three situations in which someone in your organization had (or might have had) the opportunity to express one (or more) of those values. Now briefly describe the culture of your organization – is the culture mission-driven, achievement-driven, revenue/sales-driven, competitive, collaborative, etc. – and explain how this makes it harder or easier to express your chosen values.
- If you selected *organizational ethics*, briefly describe the culture of your organization – is the culture mission-driven, achievement-driven, revenue/sales-driven, competitive, collaborative, etc. – and describe how those values (of mission, achievement, etc.) shape workplace dynamics; what kinds of

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<sup>2</sup> Rushworth M. Kidder, *Moral Courage: Taking Action When Your Values Are Put to the Test* (William Morrow, HarperCollins Publishers, 2005), pp. 39-76.

values are likely to get lost, with that kind of orientation (i.e. what are the blindspots)? Briefly describe the ethical structure of your organization, including the titles of and routes to the relevant positions: how would you go about discussing or reporting a concern? What would make it harder or easier to do so?

- If you selected *politics*, briefly describe the relationship between your employer and the governing bodies you identified, and the relationships between your industry and society at large; give an example of how your employer and/or your industry affects or engages with its governing bodies and society at large. Also identify one group that advocates for the industry in which your employer operates, identify one group that challenges it, and briefly describe your employer's political awareness (i.e. its general process for staying abreast of pending regulations and legislation).

### Societal theme

Develop your previous explanation of why your societal theme matters, being sure to address aspects that would convince someone at your organization. Use (and cite) two sources; you may draw on materials from the courses identified in your first memo and materials provided on Canvas. Also, respond to **one** of the following:

- If you selected *corporate sustainability*, provide your own definition of corporate – not environmental – sustainability (cite your sources), and explain how it can be measured. Also identify one way in which your organization is succeeding at being sustainable, and one way in which it is failing.
- If you selected *corporate social responsibility*, provide your own definition of corporate social responsibility, as opposed to ESG (cite your sources), and explain how it can be measured. Identify one way in which your organization is succeeding at being socially responsible and one way in which it is failing.
- If you selected CPR (also called *political CSR*), provide your own definition of CPR (cite your sources) and explain how it would be measured. Identify one way in which your organization is succeeding at being politically responsible and one way in which it is failing.

Discuss your thoughts about *both* of your themes with someone at your organization and then describe this conversation and how it was received. Did they agree or disagree with your initial ideas or observations? Did they encourage you to continue to work towards your themes? Did they suggest any revisions to your plans or make other comments to help you succeed?

To: Don Brand, BES/ESIB Advisor  
 Karen Teitel, BES/ESIB Advisor  
 From:  
 Date:  
 Re: BES/ESIB work experience– third report (maximum 2,000 words)

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### Potential Capstone Issue #2

Make any final revisions to your previous explanation regarding why your area of concern matters; this is your final statement regarding the significance of your area of concern and potential capstone project. Then, keeping the statement about your first issue (and perhaps revising it a bit), add a second, separate entry:

- Describe your *second* potential issue: the issue, the stakeholders, and the likely financial, ethical, and legal implications; use (and cite) two possible sources to supplement your description.
- Identify one or two organizations (for-profit, not-for-profit, or political) likely to encounter the issue.
- Discuss your thoughts about your potential issue with a different person at your organization, then describe this conversation and how it was received. Did they agree or disagree with your ideas or observations? Did they encourage you to continue to work towards a potential capstone project? Did they suggest any revisions to your plans or make other comments to help you succeed?

### Work experience

Make any final revisions to your previous explanation to give your final description of your work experience, including an overview of your organization, its place in the industry, and your role/responsibilities. As you give your final, fully developed statement, include your thoughts about

- whether the organizational roles and functions described in your second memo seem well or poorly designed with respect to the concerns identified in your themes
- whether and how your role enabled (or interfered with) your ability to make progress on your themes.
- how your industry affects and is it affected by the stakeholders identified in your second memo.

### Ethical theme

Make any final revisions to your previous explanation regarding why your chosen theme matters; this is your final statement regarding the significance of your ethical theme. Then respond to **one** of the following:

- If you selected *personal ethics*, edit the initial statement in your second memo to simply *list* the three situations, then further develop your description of *one* of the situations with reference to the relevant value; suggest some things that could be changed about that situation to improve the outcome or to make an already positive outcome easier to achieve. Where your stated values are out of sync with the organization's – which they must be, somewhere – how should you address that?
- If you selected *organizational ethics*, build on your description of your organization's culture by suggesting some things the organization might do to make it easier to fulfill its chosen values and to adjust for blindspots in the current orientation. Building on your description of the discussion and reporting process, what might your organization do to encourage or facilitate discussion or reporting of ethical concerns? Where the organization's actions are out of sync with its own stated values – which they must be, somewhere – how should you address that?
- If you selected *politics*, build on your description of the relationship between your employer, your industry, their governing bodies, and society by suggesting some things that your employer/the industry could do to improve those relationships. Also, building on your description of your

employer's political awareness, briefly describe how your employer might insert itself into the political process.

### Societal theme

Make any final revisions to your previous explanation regarding why your chosen theme matters; this is your final statement regarding the significance of your societal theme. Then respond to **one** of the following:

- If you selected *corporate sustainability*, present/refine your definition of sustainability (cite your sources) and your account of your organization's difficulties from your second memo, then suggest what your organization might do to address them.
- If you selected CSR, present/refine your definition of corporate social responsibility (cite your sources) and your account of your organization's difficulties from your second memo, then suggest what your organization might do to address them.
- If you selected CPR, present/refine your definition of corporate political responsibility (cite your sources) and your account of your organization's difficulties from your second memo. Then suggest what your organization might do to address them.

Discuss your thoughts about *both of* your themes with someone else (other than the person from your second memo) at your organization. Based on these two discussions, answer the following questions. Is it difficult to discuss these issues at work? What might make you (or someone else) feel more comfortable doing it?