

Capstone Defense Rubric

15 min · Walter + 1 peer reviewer · Pass / Defer / Fail

Scoring criteria (5 dimensions · weighted)

Composite delta	25%	Final composite score vs baseline. Direction matters more than magnitude.
Growth-edge ownership	25%	Did they name + work the specific edge they declared in Week 1?
Behavior change story	20%	One concrete story, named people, specific moment, real stakes.
Self-awareness	15%	Acknowledges what didn't move + why · without self-flagellation.
Trajectory	15%	Plausible 30-day plan. Not a list of intentions — a system.

Decision matrix

PASS · CERTIFY	DEFER · 30 DAYS	NOT YET
Score \geq 75 + clear behavior change story + plausible 30-day plan. Walter says 'certified, you've earned it' on the call.	Score 60–74 OR strong work but missing one dimension. Walter says 'come back in 30 days with [specific deliverable]'.	Score $<$ 60 OR no behavior change demonstrated. Walter says 'not yet — and here's the one thing'. Re-defend in next cohort at no extra cost.

WALTER'S VOICE — WHAT TO ACTUALLY SAY

On a Pass: *"Certified. You earned it. Now do not coast."*

On a Defer: *"Strong work. Not certified yet. Specifically: [one thing]. 30 days."*

On a Not-yet: *"Not yet. Here's what I see. Here's what to do. You re-defend free in Cohort 2."*

Peer Reviewer Guide

Your role on someone else's capstone defense

What you're doing

You're not Walter's deputy. You're a fellow Cohort 1 leader who has been working the same framework for 6 weeks. Your job in someone else's capstone defense is to ask one specific question that Walter might not — because you know the cohort context, the inside jokes, and the moment they shared in Week 3 that they thought no one remembered.

Your one question — pick one of these patterns:

1. 'You said in Week X that [specific thing]. Where did that go?'
2. 'I noticed your [attribute] score moved less than the others. What's the story?'
3. 'If your team watched today, what would they push back on?'
4. 'In 30 days, what's the first thing that will threaten this?'
5. 'What did you stop doing this cohort that you wish you'd stopped earlier?'

Tone

Direct. Curious. Not adversarial. They're going to be in your network for the rest of your career. The question that helps them ship past Tuesday is the question that earned its place in the room.