

Parkland School District



THE GRADUATION PROJECT *Student Manual*

**Parkland High School
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INTRODUCTION

The Graduation Project is a meaningful learning experience, which the Parkland School District feels should be a part of every student's educational career. The project provides a student or group of students with an opportunity for in-depth learning of a self-selected topic, which involves research and analysis.

Chapter IV Regulations of the School Code require that all Pennsylvania students complete a Graduation Project before a diploma can be awarded. Parkland School District has pledged to uphold these state-mandated regulations.

After a particular area of interest is identified and approved, students will ask questions, select resources, conduct research, and develop written reports and oral performances/demonstrations/exhibits on the topic. The project will be under the guidance and direction of a high school faculty advisor, and all projects will require a written and oral presentation to a Graduation Project Evaluation Panel.

The purpose of the project is to assure that a student or group of students is able to apply, analyze, synthesize and evaluate information and is able to demonstrate significant understanding of a topic.

This Graduation Project Manual describes the components of the project, the steps necessary to complete the project, a timeline, and evaluation procedures. It should be emphasized that both the Graduation Project process and the product are important.

It is the belief of the Parkland School District that the Graduation Project is a positive learning activity that will benefit students in their educational careers while meeting a state-mandated requirement for graduation.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

I. General Procedures

- Receive Graduation Project instructions through a T.V. broadcast.
- Select a topic of personal interest and gather information.
- Report to Graduation Project Advisor during specified meetings.
- Return signed contract (see pg. 18) to the Graduation Project Advisor.
- Present the oral and written results to an Evaluation Panel.
- Adhere to the established Graduation Project timelines.

II. Contract requirements

- Describe the topic.
- Explain why the topic was selected.
- Describe a plan for gathering information.
- Obtain the signatures of the parent/guardian and the project advisor.

III. Research requirements

- Identify at least **three** appropriate sources.
- Gather, organize, interpret, and present information and/or data.
- Evaluate the importance, value or impact of the project.

IV. Written requirements

- Submit typed pages with 1inch margins and 12 pt. Times Roman font.
- Explain the importance, value, and impact of the project.
- Provide supporting information and/or data.
- Draw conclusions from the research/experience.
- Include a Works Cited page with at least **three** sources.

V. Oral Presentation/Performance/Demonstration requirements

- Summarize the highlights of the project.
- Deliver an organized presentation.
- Demonstrate effective speaking skills.
- Utilize visual material (if appropriate) to enhance the presentation.
- Answer questions posed by the Graduation Project Evaluation Panel.

ADVISOR TIMELINE

Meeting #1:

- Take attendance
- Review the Graduation Project Student Manual
- Review the Graduation Project Contract (due at next meeting)
- Assist students in determining appropriate topics

Meeting #2:

- Take attendance
- Collect signed Project Contracts
- Initially determine if each student's topic is appropriate

Meeting #3:

- Take attendance
- Check progress of all students; answer questions
- Remind students of upcoming presentation dates

Meeting #4:

- Take attendance
- Check progress of all students; answer questions
- Remind students of responsibilities, upcoming presentation dates

STUDENT TIMELINE

Ninth grade:

- Review Graduation Project Manual
- Determine Graduation Project topic
- Complete Contract

Tenth grade:

- Research topic
- Organize and gather information

Eleventh grade:

- Present project (must be presented by end of 1st semester)

Twelfth grade:

- Finish project and present, if not already completed

SAMPLE PROJECT IDEAS

Academic Projects:

- Develop and carry out scientific research
- Carry out statistical projects
- Develop math/computer projects
- Produce architectural design project
- Produce an engineering project
- Create computer software
- Produce and perform a dramatic interpretation
- Plan preschool activities
- Develop a home decorating/fashion/culinary or interior design project
- Produce a body of significant literary works
- Perform a visual interpretation of a major literary work
- Conduct an intensive study of a major author and his work
- Participate in a multi-disciplinary research project
- Write and perform an original dramatic production
- Research and critique dietary guidelines of local healthcare facility
- Research and perform an instrumental/vocal recital
- Videotape and/or photograph historical architecture of a community
- Develop and carry out historical research
- Research and create an original piece of art
- Compose and perform an original piece of music
- Develop a project based on an area of personal interest
- Conduct an extensive study of a current problem facing society

Internships:

- Intern with a business firm
- Shadow an elementary teacher/subject area teacher
- Intern in a health-related career
- Intern with the government or private industry
- Intern with the media
- Intern with a designing firm/local theater/art association
- Intern with a day care center
- Intern in an athletic-related field
- Intern with Student Support Services
- Intern in a technical or trade facility (pending approval)

PROJECT IDEAS, cont.

Community Projects:

- Coordinate a service project for a philanthropic organization
- Perform a service project in the community
- Volunteer at a geriatric facility
- Volunteer at a hospital/nursing home
- Participate in an environmental improvement project
- Examine community needs and implement an improvement project
- Refurbish an historical site
- Design a community golf course or a miniature golf course
- Build or renovate a house
- Develop projects to benefit local, non-profit organizations (pending approval)

Social Improvement Projects:

- Develop and execute a student-tutoring program
- Write a computer program for administration
- Organize a Career Day
- Produce a video about physical fitness and health issues
- Develop an intramural program
- Carry out aesthetic projects (murals, landscaping)
- Research current policies and recommend improvements
- Design a children's playground

Entrepreneur Projects:

- Set up a small business and keep records
- Form a company and design/develop/produce a product
- Junior Achievement

****All projects must be pre-approved by the Graduation Project Advisor and the Graduation Project Coordinator.***

RESEARCH PAPER REQUIREMENTS

I. Format

- A. Minimum of **four** double-spaced, typed pages
- B. Title page (not included in four page requirement)
- C. Times Roman font
- D. 12 point font
- E. One inch margins
- F. MLA style Works Cited page (minimum of **three** sources)
- G. One unmarked copy of the paper (submitted to the Evaluation Panel)
- H. Students may work in groups, but must have pre-approval and submit *one* paper and contract *per person*.

II. Evaluation

- A. Graded by a panel of three teachers/administrators
- B. Content
 - 1. specific, accurate, precise information/data
 - 2. thoughtful conclusions supported by information or data
 - 3. precise, accurate vocabulary
 - 4. insight regarding the importance and value of the study
- C. Organization
 - 1. logical order of information based on topic
 - 2. engaging beginning and thoughtful ending
 - 3. clear focus on controlling idea or thesis
 - 4. transitions between ideas
- D. Research
 - 1. variety of sources appropriate to study
 - 2. credible, timely resources
 - 3. MLA style Works Cited page (minimum of three sources)
- E. Conventions of Language
 - 1. varied and structurally correct sentences
 - 2. correct mechanics, grammar and word usage

****Use this format when completing an in-depth research project.***

NARRATIVE PAPER REQUIREMENTS

I. Format

- A. Minimum of two double-spaced, typed pages
- B. Title page (not included in two page requirement)
- C. Times Roman font
- D. 12 point font
- E. One inch margins
- F. MLA style Works Cited page (minimum of three sources)
- G. One unmarked copy of the paper (submitted to the Evaluation Panel)
- H. Students may work in groups, but must have pre-approval and submit *one* paper and contract *per student*.

II. Evaluation

- A. Graded by a panel of three teachers/administrators
- B. Content
 - 1. specific, accurate, precise information/data
 - 2. thoughtful conclusions supported by information or data
 - 3. precise, accurate vocabulary
 - 4. insight regarding the importance and value of the project
- C. Organization
 - 1. logical order of information based on topic
 - 2. engaging beginning and thoughtful ending
 - 3. clear focus on controlling idea or thesis
 - 4. transitions between ideas
- D. Research
 - 1. variety of sources appropriate to study
 - 2. credible, timely resources
 - 3. MLA style Works Cited page (minimum of three sources)
- E. Conventions of Language
 - 1. varied and structurally correct sentences
 - 2. correct mechanics, grammar and word usage

****Use this format when completing demonstrations, exhibits, service projects.***

ORAL PRESENTATION REQUIREMENTS

- I. Format
 - A. Ten- fifteen minutes overall
 - B. Evaluation panel will ask questions regarding the project, which must be answered effectively.
 - C. Notify the Graduation Project Advisor or Graduation Project Coordinator of any special equipment needed for the presentation.
 - D. Students working in groups must present together, which each student participating equally.

- II. Evaluation
 - A. Graded by a panel of three teachers/administrators
 - B. Content
 - 1. supporting information
 - 2. conclusions
 - 3. importance, value or impact of the project
 - 4. sources of information
 - 5. vocabulary relevant to the topic
 - C. Effective Speaking
 - 1. exhibits poise
 - 2. maintains consistent eye contact with the panel of judges
 - 3. speaks clearly and uses proper diction
 - 4. varies tone, volume, and speed to enhance presentation
 - D. Organization
 - 1. reflects the nature of the topic
 - 2. utilizes an appropriate introduction and conclusion
 - 3. supports a central thesis or idea
 - 4. transitions between ideas
 - E. Visual Media (when appropriate)
 - 1. uses graphic design effectively
 - 2. communicates significant information
 - 3. communicates information clearly accurately, and precisely
 - F. Response to questions
 - 1. responds appropriately to all questions from the Evaluation panel
 - 2. uses questions from the panel as a point of departure to illuminate the topic

OVERALL EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The Graduation Project Evaluation is composed of two parts- a written and an oral component. The Evaluation Panel will evaluate both the Graduation Project process and the final product.

The following sheets are samples of the grading rubrics used to determine the Graduation Project Final Evaluation. The type of project chosen determines the form that will be used. Notice that all projects require a written and an oral/demonstration/service form to be completed.

The Graduation Project Evaluation Panel is composed of three teachers or administrators, and the student is required to sign up for a presentation time in advance.

If a student receives a NOT YET SUCCESSFUL evaluation, he/she will be notified by the Graduation Project Evaluation Panel. The student will also meet with the Graduation Project Coordinator to determine the steps needed to improve the project, as well as to schedule a new presentation date.

Graduation Projects must be completed by the end of the 1st semester of the junior year. Students not completing the project by this time will lose driving privileges as well as early dismissal/late arrival privileges.

The Graduation Project is required by both the Parkland School District and the Pa. State Department of Education. **Seniors will receive letters from the principal following the 1st semester to indicate the danger of not fulfilling the graduation requirement.**

WRITTEN PAPER EVALUATION FORM

STUDENT: _____ **ID#:** _____

GRADUATION PROJECT ADVISOR: _____

EVALUATION PANEL: _____, _____,
 _____, _____

RUBRIC: HS=Highly successful S=Successful NYS=Not yet Successful

CONTENT	HS	S	NYS
Provides specific, accurate, precise information/data			
Draws thoughtful conclusions supported by information/data			
Uses precise, accurate vocabulary			
Reflects insightful consideration of the value of the project			

ORGANIZATION	HS	S	NYS
Is appropriate to the topic			
Uses an engaging beginning and thoughtful ending			
Clear focus on a controlling idea or thesis			
Transitions from one idea to the next			

RESEARCH	HS	S	NYS
Utilizes a variety of sources appropriate for the topic			
Utilizes credible, timely sources			
Cites resources utilized			

CONVENTIONS OF LANGUAGE	HS	S	NYS
Uses varied and structurally correct sentences			
Uses correct mechanics, grammar, and word choice			

FINAL GRADE:

? HS= Highly Successful

? S= Successful

? NYS= Not Yet Successful

NOTES:

ORAL PRESENTATION EVALUATION FORM

STUDENT: _____ **ID#:** _____

GRADUATION PROJECT ADVISOR: _____

EVALUATION PANEL: _____, _____,
 _____, _____

RUBRIC: HS=Highly successful S=Successful NYS=Not yet Successful

COMMUNICATION	HS	S	NYS
Provides supporting information/data			
Draws conclusions			
Uses accurate and appropriate vocabulary			

ORGANIZATION	HS	S	NYS
Is appropriate to the topic			
Uses an engaging beginning and thoughtful ending			
Focuses on a controlling idea or thesis			
Transitions from one idea to the next			

EFFECTIVE SPEAKING	HS	S	NYS
Develops eye contact with the audience			
Speaks clearly, correctly, and efficiently			
Presents oneself with poise			

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS	HS	S	NYS
Effectively responds to all questions from the Evaluation Panel			

VISUAL MEDIA (when applicable)	HS	S	NYS
Demonstrates effective use of graphic design			
Clearly communicates significant information/data			

FINAL GRADE:

? **HS= Highly Successful**

? **S= Successful**

? **NYS= Not Yet Successful**

NOTES:

**EXHIBITS/PERFORMANCES/DOCUMENTARIES/TECHNOLOGY
EVALUATION FORM**

STUDENT: _____ **ID#:** _____

GRADUATION PROJECT ADVISOR: _____

EVALUATION PANEL: _____, _____,
_____, _____

RUBRIC: HS=Highly successful S=Successful NYS=Not yet Successful

Presents research on the selected topic			
Explains in-depth process of learning about topic			
Demonstrates (through portrayals or technology) comprehensive knowledge of the topic			
Communicates information in an accurate and organized manner			
Produces an original product (student developed)			

FINAL GRADE:

? **HS= Highly Successful**

? **S= Successful**

? **NYS= Not Yet Successful**

NOTES:

**CAREER OR SERVICE PROJECT
EVALUATION FORM**

STUDENT: _____ **ID#:** _____

GRADUATION PROJECT ADVISOR: _____

EVALUATION PANEL: _____, _____,
_____, _____

RUBRIC: HS=Highly successful S=Successful NYS=Not yet Successful

Completes Time Log			
Explains in-depth process of learning about topic			
Describes the type of tasks performed			
Communicates information in an accurate and organized manner			
Analyzes the value of the project			

FINAL GRADE:

? HS= Highly Successful

? S= Successful

? NYS= Not Yet Successful

NOTES:

SAMPLE MLA WORKS CITED ENTRIES

Please see the Parkland High School Librarians with any bibliographic or research questions. They will be happy to assist you whenever possible.

FORMAT:

- Double space between title (Works Cited) and first entry
- Alphabetize entries by last name of author (or first word in title if no author)
- Double space within and between entries (*not done here due to space limits*)
- Indent (5 spaces) all lines after the first in each entry
- Use 1 inch margins all around
- Use MLA Handbook (2003 is most recent edition)

Author (book)

McMurtry, Larry. Buffalo Girls. New York: Simon, 1990.

Two Authors (book)

Hooper, Henry O., and Peter Gwynne. Physics and the Physical Perspective. New York: Harper, 1977.

More than Three authors (book)

Lewis, Laurel J., et al. Linear Analysis. New York: McGraw, 1969.

Editor (book)

Hall, Donald, ed. The Oxford Book of Quotations. 2 vols. New York: Random House, 1997.

Anonymous (book)

Literary Marketplace: a Directory of American Publishers. New York: Random House, 1997.

Encyclopedia Article (well-known encyclopedia set)

Tobias, Richard. "Thurber, James." Encyclopedia Americana. 1987 ed.

Book in an Anthology or Collection

Updike, John. "A & P." Fiction 100. Ed. James H. Pickering. 4th ed. New York: Macmillan, 1982. 1086-89.

MLA Examples, continued

Magazine Article (w/author)

Healy, Jane M. "10 Reasons *Sesame Street* is Bad News For Reading." *Education Digest* 56 (1991): 63-66.

Magazine Article (anonymous)

"The Talk of the Town." *New Yorker* 29 July 1991: 21-25.

Newspaper Article

Walters, David. "Redefining Art from the Heart of Africa." *Christian Science Monitor* 22 July 1991: 10-11.

Pamphlet

United States Civil Services Commission. *The Human Equation: Working in Personnel for the Federal Government*. Pamphlet 76. Washington, DC: GPO, 1970.

Interview (unpublished)

Page, Oscar. President, Austin Peay State University. Telephone Interview 5 Mar. 1991.

Television/Radio Program

Shakespeare, William. *As You Like It*. Nashville: Nashville Theatre Academy. WDCN-TV. 11 Mar. 1975.

Internet Article

Ross, Don. "Game Theory." 11 Sept. 2001. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Ed. Edward N. Zalta. Fall 2002 ed. Center for the Study of Lang. And Information, Stanford U. 1 Oct. 2002
<<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/game-theory/>>.

****Cite as much information is provided on the web page, and include the date the website was accessed just before the URL.*

Library/Online Database Article

Koretz, Gene. "Economic Trends: Uh-Oh, Warm Water." *Business Week* 21 July 1997: 22. Electric Library. Sam Barlow High School Library, Gresham, OR. 17 Oct. 1997 <<http://www.elibrary.com/>>

GRADUATION PROJECT CONTRACT

Name: _____ Date: _____

Year of Graduation: _____ ID#: _____

Guidance Counselor: _____

GRADUATION PROJECT ADVISOR: _____

Project Title: _____

Briefly describe your intended project:

Explain why you have chosen this project:

Explain how you will complete this project:

List possible resources and materials to be used:

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____

PARENT SIGNATURE: _____

PROJECT ADVISOR SIGNATURE: _____

PROJECT COORDINATOR SIGNATURE: _____

Graduation Project Advisor Guidelines

Topic Suggestions:

- hobbies/interests
- class projects
- science fair/ history day projects
- vo-tech job shadowing

Graduation Project Booklets/Forms:

- Freshmen will receive booklets at first Graduation project meeting of year
- Students can print booklets off the Intranet or the PHS website (new)
- Students will receive notices of advisors & room #s for project meetings at the beginning of each year
- Evaluation forms will be available in the library at all times

Paperwork:

- Only one form must be filled out for each student (all members of evaluation panel sign this form)
- Forms must be submitted to the Library immediately (do not hold forms, even if students are missing items)
- Fill out both sides of evaluation forms completely
- Each student presenting in a group must each have a contract, individual paper, and evaluation form
- All paperwork will be housed (locked) in the library.

Questions?

- Please call Mr. Pfeiffer or the Library staff with any questions