

## The Culminating Project

Every student must undertake a Culminating Project during the Stage II process in order to graduate. This project must be approved by the student's Panel Team after it is presented at Culminating Project Proposal Panel Days. After the Panel Team has approved the proposed Culminating Project and rubric, the project may only be revised with the approval of the Panel Team. Definitions, descriptions and details about this process are below.

<p>Definition of the Culminating Project</p>	<p>The Culminating Project is an opportunity to undertake a major piece of rigorous, original work in an area of great interest and personal relevance to the student. It may involve work directly connected to the student's intended path. It may involve exploration of path alternatives. Or it may be a personal passion unconnected to the student's stated path.</p> <p>Culminating Projects are self-motivating experiences that the student is interested in, even passionate about. The student chooses the project, designs it with input from their advisor and the Panel Team, and is solely responsible for its execution. The project is culminating in the sense that it brings together the student's skills and knowledge in carrying out a significant piece of self-directed learning.</p> <p>It is important to understand that a Culminating Project is not simply a student doing something they already know how to do for 120 hours. It should involve growth, new knowledge and new experiences that can all be demonstrated.</p> <p><b>Every New Vista graduate completes a Culminating Project that takes a minimum of 120 hours and earns 2 Learning Units over and above the 48 units of Common Learning and Path requirements.</b></p>
<p>When is the Culminating Project done?</p>	<p>A Stage II student may begin work on the project at any time after it has been approved by their Panel Team. Typically, students are within a year of graduation when they transition to Stage II and begin the Culminating Project.</p>
<p>Where is the Culminating Project done?</p>	<p>As the projects vary, so can the places. Restrictions for off-campus projects are related to credits and legal factors by which the school is bound. Students should work with their Advisor and Panel Team to ensure that these restrictions do not impede their project. Though most projects have taken place in Boulder, some have occurred in locations all over the world. (Note: The costs of travel-related projects, like the costs of any Culminating Project, must be borne by students and their families). In general, students are encouraged to create inexpensive projects.</p>
<p>Definition of the</p>	<p>The Culminating Project rubric is developed by the student with support from their Advisor. It can be thought of as a "contract" between the student and</p>

<p>Culminating Project Rubric and its Requirements</p>	<p>Panel Team for the execution and completion of the Culminating Project. The Panel Team approves this rubric and uses it to evaluate and grade each student’s Culminating Project. The rubric sets forth the Culminating Project requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Individual, Specific Project Components</u> - these components must clearly demonstrate learning and be measurable. These are the how, what, and where of the Culminating Project.</li> <li>● <u>Contact with Community Contributor</u> - this is time a student documents with an individual outside of NVHS who is a support for them throughout their project. Contributors can be experts in the area of the student’s Culminating Project or simply a support for them throughout the process.</li> <li>● <u>Research Component and Product</u> - there must be documentation and synthesis of research that occurs during the Culminating Project. This can include reading, internet research, personal interviews, and classes or experiences that support the specific components of the Culminating Project.</li> <li>● <u>Annotated Timelog</u> - this clearly documents the hours spent on completing the process and specific components of the Culminating Project. It is a document, a spreadsheet or some other agreed-upon method of accountability between the student and their Panel Team.</li> <li>● <u>Reflection</u> - this is a required written reflection, composed by the student, that demonstrates a “look back” on their Culminating Project.</li> </ul>
<p>Definition of a Panel Team</p>	<p>Each Panel Team is comprised of New Vista staff members, one of which is the student’s Advisor. Panel Teams are assembled in the Spring of every school year and are based on numbers of students wishing to graduate in each Advisory. The Panel Team approves the student’s Culminating Project and is responsible for the final grading and evaluation of the Culminating Project. The Panel Team also functions as an ongoing support for students as they work toward completion of their Culminating Projects.</p>
<p>Definition of Panel Days</p>	<p>Panel Days feature students giving presentations in relation to their Culminating Projects to their respective Panel Teams. The rest of the students in the school are audience members during select Panel Days. Students wishing to graduate from New Vista are required to participate in two main Panel Days and one check-in Panel Day during the Culminating Project Process. The official Panel Days are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Optional Summer Hours Panel Day</u> - Students who wish to propose that they earn hours toward their Culminating Project over the summer before their final year at New Vista may present their plan to Panel Teams. There is no student audience on this Panel Day.</li> <li>● <u>Culminating Project Proposal Panel Days (Required)</u> - Students formally present their proposed Culminating Projects and completed</li> </ul>

	<p>rubrics to their Panel Teams for approval on one of these days. Upon approval, students may start counting hours toward the 120 required hours. If students were approved for summer hours, they will also present supporting evidence for counting these hours for approval by the Panel Team. There is a student audience for these Panel Days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Panel Check-in Day</u> - Students present their progress and timeline for completion of their Culminating Project - this day can be thought of as a mid-point check-in designed to both support and hold students accountable for progressing towards completion of their projects. There is no student audience on this Panel Day.</li> <li>● <u>Culminating Project Final Panel Days (Required)</u>- Students formally present their completed Culminating Projects for final evaluation and grading by the Panel Team. There is a student audience for these Panel Days.</li> </ul>
<p>Definition of a Community Contributor</p>	<p>A Community Contributor is an individual that a student selects to support them throughout the Culminating Project process. The student documents their contact and time with the Community Contributor according to expectations in the Culminating Project rubric. This individual could be an expert in the field of the student’s project and provide support in completing the project components. They could also be a source of support for the student in a more informal way - helping the student stay on track, manage their time, edit their work and presentations, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Community Contributors should be carefully selected so that they are able to support the student throughout the timespan of the project, unless a scheduled agreement is made.</li> <li>● Community Contributors need to be 21 years of age or older.</li> <li>● It is important to note that New Vista Advisors and staff <u>cannot</u> be Community Contributors for any student’s Culminating Project.</li> </ul>
<p>Definition of an Annotated Time Log</p>	<p>A properly documented time log is a very essential component and expectation of the Culminating Project process. It can take many forms, but the hours spent on the Culminating Project need to be clearly documented and submitted to the student’s Panel Team. It needs to show the project activity, the dates, and the hours in a detailed and readable fashion. It is expected that a system will be used to keep track of hours throughout the course of the project.</p>

## The Culminating Project Process

The following features the Culminating Project process components that all students wishing to graduate from New Vista High School will complete. The timing of these components is the sequence that most 4-year New Vista graduates would move through on their way to graduation. Exceptions to the timing for students wishing to complete their Culminating Project and/or graduate outside of a 4-year timeline are determined by their Advisor and Panel Team. Links to specific checklists and documents are included below. A summary checklist that includes all of these steps can be found [here](#).

Process Component	Timing	Explanation
<a href="#"><u>Initial Culminating Project Ideas and Conversations</u></a>	5-6 quarters before intended graduation	The shape and scope of a Culminating Project evolves through a series of conversations. The first conversations take place between the student and Advisor. These lead to ideas written down by the student in the Culminating Project Working Proposal.
<a href="#"><u>Culminating Project Working Proposal</u></a>	<u>Due the last Friday in April</u>	This document is designed to get a student's thinking and ideas organized around the Culminating Project. This proposal is discussed, refined and clarified between the student, Advisor and Panel Team.
Optional Summer Hours Panel Day	Afternoon of Senior Exhibition Day	<p>It is important to note that what follows is <i>completely optional</i>, and that students can successfully begin their Culminating Projects after approval by their Panel Teams at Culminating Project Proposal Panel Days in the Fall.</p> <p>If a student wants to start or complete portions of their Culminating Project over the summer before their final year at New Vista, there are two options:</p> <p><u>Option 1</u>: Students who want to have up to 20 hours counted for summer work on their Culminating Project need to complete a <a href="#"><u>Culminating Project Summer Hours Proposal</u></a> and then informally present their plan to their Panel Team for approval.</p> <p><u>Option 2</u>: Students who want to have more than 20 hours counted for summer work on their Culminating Project need to complete their <a href="#"><u>Culminating Project rubric</u></a> and a formal Culminating Project Panel Presentation to their Panel Team for approval.</p> <p>In both of these cases, students must provide evidence of completion of their proposed hours to their Panel Teams at Culminating Project Proposal Panel Days in the Fall. Panel</p>
Optional Summer		

Hours Panel Day (cont.)		Teams will use this evidence to determine exactly how many of the proposed hours will be approved.
<a href="#">Culminating Project Panel Presentation</a> and <a href="#">Culminating Project Rubric</a>	Developed and refined throughout Spring and Fall	The Culminating Project Working Proposal is used to develop a Panel Presentation of the project components and their timing and execution. The Culminating Project Rubric is developed to be the “contract” between the student and their Panel Team, and it establishes the specific grading criteria for specific project components and requirements.
Culminating Project Proposal Panel Days	<u>Two October Dates, plus Make-Up - Revision Date</u>	The Culminating Project is proposed formally to the Panel Team for approval on one of these days. There is one make-up/revision day scheduled. Students present at ONE of the two days. If students were approved for summer hours, they will also present supporting evidence for counting these hours for approval by the Panel Team. These are mandatory dates for students wishing to participate in the graduation ceremony. If a student does not propose a Culminating Project, have it approved, complete it at a B or better, that student will not earn a diploma.
Fall Panel Support and Check-in Day	First Wednesday in December	Students meet as a group with their Panel Teams to discuss progress on their Culminating Projects. Students will have their rubrics and a timeline for completion for review.
Deadline for Changes to the Culminating Project and Project Rubric	Prior to Winter Break	Any changes to the Culminating Project and rubric must be made prior to Winter Break (the end of Second Quarter). These changes must be presented to the Panel Team and approved. The Panel Team will instruct the student on what is needed to document these changes. No changes to the Culminating Project or rubric can be made after winter break due to the time needed for successful completion of the project.
Winter Panel Support and Check-in Day	Last Wednesday in February	Rubric and documentation of what has been completed is shared with the Panel Team, including a plan for completion of the remainder of the Culminating Project. An in-progress grade will be given to students.
Ongoing Culminating	Ongoing	Students work with their Advisors, Community

<p>Project Work and preparation for <a href="#">Final Panel Day Presentation</a></p>	<p>throughout winter and early spring</p>	<p>Contributors and other supportive individuals to organize, complete and prepare their Culminating Projects and presentations for Culminating Project Final Panel Day.</p>
<p>Culminating Project Final Panel Days</p>	<p><u>Last Wednesday in April and First Wednesday in May</u></p>	<p>The <u>due date</u> for the final version of the Culminating Project is <u>the first Panel Day</u>. The <u>deadline</u> for all Culminating Projects is the second Panel Day. Culminating Projects must be presented to the Panel Team for final evaluation and grading. These are mandatory dates for students wishing to participate in the graduation ceremony . There is not an additional make-up or revision date. Projects must earn a B grade or better in order for the student to earn a diploma. Students present on only ONE of the two Final Panel Days.</p>
<p>Senior Exhibition Day</p>	<p><u>Second Friday in May</u></p>	<p>Students present their Culminating Projects to the entire school and community. This is a requirement for participating in the graduation ceremony. Presentations can feature material and artifacts that were not fully presented at the more formal Final Panel Days.</p>