THE GRADUATION PROJECT
Student Manual

Parkland High School
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(610) 351-5600
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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 1 inch 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>HS</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>NYS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides specific, accurate, precise information/data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draws thoughtful conclusions supported by information/data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses precise, accurate vocabulary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflects insightful consideration of the value of the project</td>
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<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>HS</th>
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<th>NYS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is appropriate to the topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses an engaging beginning and thoughtful ending</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clear focus on a controlling idea or thesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transitions from one idea to the next</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH</th>
<th>HS</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>NYS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utilizes a variety of sources appropriate for the topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilizes credible, timely sources</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cites resources utilized</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONVENTIONS OF LANGUAGE</th>
<th>HS</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>NYS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uses varied and structurally correct sentences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses correct mechanics, grammar, and word choice</td>
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</table>

**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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>COMMUNICATION</strong></th>
<th>HS</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>NYS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides supporting information/data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draws conclusions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses accurate and appropriate vocabulary</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>ORGANIZATION</strong></th>
<th>HS</th>
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<th>NYS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is appropriate to the topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses an engaging beginning and thoughtful ending</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focuses on a controlling idea or thesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transitions from one idea to the next</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>EFFECTIVE SPEAKING</strong></th>
<th>HS</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>NYS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develops eye contact with the audience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaks clearly, correctly, and efficiently</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presents oneself with poise</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS</strong></th>
<th>HS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effectively responds to all questions from the Evaluation Panel</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>VISUAL MEDIA (when applicable)</strong></th>
<th>HS</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>NYS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates effective use of graphic design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clearly communicates significant information/data</td>
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**FINAL GRADE:**

? **HS= Highly Successful**

? **S= Successful**

? **NYS= Not Yet Successful**

**NOTES:**

13
EXHIBITS/PERFORMANCES/DOCUMENTARIES/TECHNOLOGY
EVALUATION FORM

STUDENT: ________________________________   ID#: __________________
GRADUATION PROJECT ADVISOR: ________________________________
EVALUATION PANEL: ____________________, ______________________,
____________________, _______________________

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>HS</th>
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<th>NYS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presents research on the selected topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explains in-depth process of learning about topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates (through portrayals or technology) comprehensive knowledge of the topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicates information in an accurate and organized manner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Produces an original product (student developed)</td>
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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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>RUBRIC</th>
<th>HS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Completes Time Log</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explains in-depth process of learning about topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Describes the type of tasks performed</td>
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<td>Communicates information in an accurate and organized manner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyzes the value of the project</td>
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FINAL GRADE:

?- HS= Highly Successful
?- S= Successful
?- NYS= Not Yet Successful

NOTES:
GRADUATION PROJECT TIME LOG

STUDENT: ________________________________  ID#: __________________

GRADUATION PROJECT ADVISOR: ________________________________

Complete the following time log as you work on your Career or Service Graduation Project. A minimum of 25 hours is required. A supervisor from the organization or business must initial each entry to verify your participation. The supervisor’s signature is required at the conclusion of this project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time Spent</th>
<th>Supervisor’s Initials</th>
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Student’s Signature: ________________________________

Supervisor’s Signature: ________________________________

Organization: ________________________________
Position: ________________________________  Phone #: __________________
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)

Two Authors (book)

More than Three authors (book)

Editor (book)

Anonymous (book)

Encyclopedia Article (well-known encyclopedia set)

Book in an Anthology or Collection
MLA Examples, continued

Magazine Article (w/author)

Magazine Article (anonymous)

Newspaper Article

Pamphlet

Interview (unpublished)

Television/Radio Program

Internet Article

***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
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