

NC Graduation Project at Riverside High School

Beginning with the class of 2010, all students must complete a graduation project (in addition to all other required coursework) in order to be eligible for a diploma. The project has four parts:

- A research paper
- A product
- A portfolio
- An oral presentation

All four components **MUST** be successfully completed in order to pass this NC graduation requirement.

The Research Paper

Topics:

The topic is determined by you, the student, and is subject to approval by the school's graduation project committee. (see topic selection handout)

Format:

The paper will be word-processed following standard *MLA format* with full and correct citations. Papers may be argumentative or expository; however, all will be based on qualified research.

Paper Length and Sources:

The paper will include an *annotated bibliography* AND a *works cited page*. The suggested minimum sources are for the bibliography. The actual number of sources cited will vary depending on the nature of your project.

Standard English IV: Minimum of 5 pages
Suggested Bibliography of 6 or more sources

Honors English IV: Minimum of 8 pages
Suggested Bibliography of 9 or more sources

AP English IV: Minimum of 12 pages
Suggested Bibliography of 12 or more sources

To create an appropriate array of sources, your paper should include:

- At least one online source
- At least one book source
- At least one periodical source (newspaper, journal, magazine)
- At least one primary source
- The remaining sources can be any combination depending upon the nature of your research.

General encyclopedia sources (*World Book, Encarta, Wikipedia*, etc.) may be used as background, but cannot be used as works cited. Specialized encyclopedias (medical, etc.) may be used as works cited.

Product

You will create a product that is related to your research topic. The product should take a minimum of 15 hours and should represent significant learning over time. You will work with an advisor AND a mentor to develop a timeline and keep a log of your progress.

The following is a list of possible categories:

- a. Physical: This would include something the student makes or does that is related to his/her research topic (e.g., a student who has researched architecture builds a model home).
- b. Community Service/Action: This would include service/action related to the student's research topic (e.g., a student who volunteers for Habitat for Humanity after researching the issues of homelessness).
- c. Skills/Activities: This would include skills a student learns or activities he/she participates in that are related to his or her research topic (e.g., a student who researches water sports and learns to surf, or a student who researches wrestling and then holds a wrestling skills workshop for neighborhood kids).
- d. Career/Job Shadowing: This would include job shadowing related to a student's research topic (e.g., a student who researches nursing shadows a nurse or an EMS technician).

Presentation

This is a 5-8 minute informative session about your project. A panel of Riverside staff and community members will evaluate the presentation according to the state rubric (see rubric handout). Each presentation will take approximately 15 minutes, including set-up, break down, and questions:

Presentations will be 5-8 minutes in length, not including set-up and follow-up interviews.

Timeline should break down as such:

- 1 minute for set up
- 5 – 8 minute presentation
- 5 minutes for follow up questions and interviews

(Your attire should not conflict with established DPS dress codes. Any special costume or dress that pertains to a particular topic will need to be approved by the school's NCGP Committee prior to scheduling the presentation.)

****If you need special visual aid equipment (i.e. projectors, overheads, computers, etc.), you must make your request prior to scheduling the presentation, using the Technology Request form.**

Portfolio

You are required to maintain a portfolio that will document your work on the other three components; it will include reflections, documentation, and other essential information related to your project. Samples of these documents will be made available via the NC Graduation Project link on the Riverside website.

The portfolio must be word-processed and submitted in a **one-inch binder with clear-vue cover** that will include the following:

- Cover Sheet
 - Topic
 - Product title
 - Name
 - Graphic
- Table of Contents
- Letter to Review Board*
- Resumé
- Completed Checklist
- Proposal forms
- Acceptance Rubric
- Parental Consent form
- Research Paper
- Mentor forms
- Photos/Artifacts**
- Self-Evaluation

*Guidelines for Letter to Review Board

Each student must include in his or her portfolio a letter to the Review Board that will be assessing his or her presentation. This is an opportunity for students to introduce themselves to the reviewers and to provide a little bit of background information regarding their choice of topic, the process of completing the NCGP, and any other information they feel would be important for the Review Board to know. The letter should follow standard business letter format and should include:

- A personal introduction and background information
- A brief discussion of the project
- The thesis for the research paper and an overview of research conducted
- How the product is related to the research
- The knowledge gained by the student through completion of the NCGP

**Photos and Artifacts are records of the student's product. Artifacts might include sign-in sheets, logs, handouts, brochures, etc.)

Academic Advisors

Your **academic advisor** serves as the main contact, or “go to” person at your school. Your academic advisor helps to inspire and guide you throughout the development and completion of your graduation project. You will meet with your academic advisor on your own time during your junior and senior years. It is important that you understand that although your academic advisor is there to help guide you through the process, **it is ultimately up to you to fulfill all the responsibilities given to you as a student** (see student section that follows).

Academic Advisors *will*:

- Meet with students at least once per quarter during the junior and senior years.
- Maintain a NCGP checklist and basic information for each advisee.
- Make advisees aware of office hours and/or the best way to contact advisors.
- Assist students at pre-scheduled times which do not interfere with regularly scheduled classes.
- Review and update the NCGP checklist and timeline with the students.
- Review forms and parts of the NCGP with the students.
- Help students refine topic ideas.
- Serve as liaison between the student and the school-based Graduation Project Coordinator on issues or concerns regarding the NCGP.
- Share updates and other information received from the Graduation Project Committee with advisees.

Academic Advisors *will not*:

- Maintain materials and forms that are the students’ responsibility to file and submit.
- Request to see students during regularly scheduled class time.

Mentors

Graduation project mentors are community and/or faculty members who have expertise and experience with the project topic and accept the following responsibilities:

- Allocate time and make arrangements to work with you on your project.
- Provide suggestions and advice to you on applicable aspects of the research paper, product, portfolio, and oral presentation.
- Provide accurate and honest verification of your work.
- Serve as a support and resource to you in all stages of the graduation project process.
- Sign and return all required forms.

Students' roles and responsibilities

Because much of the project is done without the daily supervision of classroom teachers, it is **essential** that you take full ownership of the step-by-step process involved in the culminating project. Only when you have independently worked on the project at hand, will you reap the benefits from completing the Graduation Project.

According to SBE Policy HSP-N-004 (16 NCAC 6D .0503), effective with the class entering ninth grade for the first time in the 2006-07 school year, in order to graduate and receive a high school diploma, students who are following the career preparation, college technical preparation, or college/university preparation courses of study **must** successfully complete a graduation project that is developed, monitored, and scored within the local school district using state-endorsed rubrics. Therefore, if a student does not successfully complete a graduation project, he/she will **not** receive a high school diploma.

Students' responsibilities include, *but are not limited to*, the following:

- Identifying a viable project.
- Successfully completing all components: research paper, portfolio, product, and oral presentation.
- Working on the culminating project individually, unless otherwise approved for modification to this requirement.
- Submitting all letters, forms, and paperwork by designated deadlines.
- Seeking advice and assistance when needed.
- Maintaining documentation of completed tasks and timelines.
- Identifying, and then initiating and maintaining regular contact with academic advisors and project mentors as the graduation project is created and developed.
- Employing a variety of communication techniques, such as the letter of intent, interviews, phone calls, and electronic communication, as project work progresses.
- Researching and writing a paper on a topic of their selection that addresses state and local guidelines.
- Completing and documenting a minimum of 15 hours of verifiable work outside the regular school day on the product component.
- Preparing a reflective portfolio documenting work completed and making the portfolio available for the review panel in advance of the oral presentation.
- Making a presentation to the review panel that is assessed as acceptable by the panel.

The following page contains a chart to help you keep track of deadlines as you move through the process of completing the Graduation Project. You are encouraged to use this chart to enter deadlines as you are made aware of them.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Due to</u>	<u>Completed? (Signature & date)</u>	<u>Comments/Notes</u>
Written Proposal Submitted	Fall Eng III: December 10 Fall Eng III: Early May	English III teacher (who will then submit it to the NCGP Committee)		
Initial Meeting with Advisor	December 5, 2008	-----		
Mentor selection form		NCGP Committee		
Research Paper draft		Advisor		
Research Paper final	Fall Eng IV: Spring Eng IV:	English IV teacher/NCGP Committee		
Portfolio		NCGP Committee		
Presentation				
Technology Request Form		NCGP Coordinator/Media staff		

Resources/Further information

Works Cited: an alphabetical list of works you quoted from, or works or other sources (i.e., persons interviewed) you referenced in the paper. Works Cited uses MLA (Modern Language Association) style and is included as the last page of the research paper.

Annotated bibliography: an annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited. All items included in the *Works Cited* page must also be included in the annotated bibliography (along with any general encyclopedias and/or *Wikipedia*, if consulted).

(Note: Works Cited and Bibliography are not the same. In Works Cited you only list items you have actually cited. In a Bibliography you list all of the material you have consulted in preparing your essay - whether or not you have actually cited the work.)

MLA Format - (Modern Language Association) style is most commonly used to write papers and cite sources within the liberal arts and humanities.

Copyright/Citation/Plagiarism Information for Students

Riverside Media Center: The Media Center has an abundance of resources related to project ideas, documentation of sources, plagiarism and more available to you, including copies of the *MLA Handbook*. You may visit the Media Center at school or access it online via the link on Riverside's homepage.

Copyright Kids.

<http://www.copyrightkids.org/cbasicsframes.htm>

Citation Machine.

<http://citationmachine.net/>

Permission Template Landmark for Schools.

<http://www.landmark-project.com/permission1.php>

Visit to Copyright Bay.

<http://www.stfrancis.edu/cid/copyrightbay/>

Student Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism.

http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/TM/curr390_guide.shtml

You Quote It: You Note It.

<http://library.acadiau.ca/tutorials/plagiarism/> (interactive tutorial)

Upcoming Information Sessions and Events:

November 2008: Fall English III classes will receive orientation sessions and begin writing proposals.

November 2008: 11th graders will be assigned an advisor

November 13, 2008: PTSA meeting: Questions and Answers about the Graduation Project

November 17, 2008: A representative from The Volunteer Center in Durham will be here to talk about volunteer opportunities and how they might connect to your graduation project. This will take place during each lunch in the media center. See Ms. Pine, Mrs. Harrison, or Dr. Mayo for further information.

Graduation Project Coordinator for Riverside High School:
Amy Pine (amy.pine@dpsnc.net) or (919) 560-3965, ext. 65419
www.riverside.dpsnc.net – click on “NC Graduation Project”

