

GRADUATION PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Graduation Requirement

All high school students will be required to complete a Graduation Project. Students will present the project to a group of educators, parents, and students. The project must

- include a school-to-career component;
- allow students to demonstrate their ability to research, apply, synthesize, and evaluate information across at least two content areas and communicate significant knowledge and understanding; and
- provide evidence that students understand the connection of the project to the standards.

Standards

The Graduation Project work supports the following Pittsburgh Academic Standards. Depending on the specific project each student selects, the student will have the opportunity to meet additional Standards in other subject areas.

Communications

1. All students use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technologies.
2. All students write for a variety of purposes, including narrating, informing, and persuading, in all subject areas.
3. All students compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that are designed to persuade, inform or describe.
4. All students communicate appropriately in business, work, and other applied situations.

Citizenship

1. All students demonstrate their skills of communicating, negotiating and cooperating with others.
2. All students demonstrate that they can work effectively with others.

Science and Technology

1. All students demonstrate basic computer literacy, including word-processing, software applications, and the ability to access the global information infrastructure, using current technology.

Career Education and Work

1. All students explore the multiple purposes of work and the range of career options, including entrepreneurship and relate them to their individual interests, aptitudes, skills, and values.
2. All students assess how changes in society, technology, government and the economy affect individuals and their careers and require them to continue learning.
3. All students understand and demonstrate the importance of relating their academic and vocational skills; for example, interviewing, creative thinking, decision-making, problem solving, understanding and giving written and oral

GRADUATION PROJECT

Required Phases

Phase I: Planning

1. Project Identification
 - a. Brainstorming
 - b. Linking to Career Interests
2. Identifying Coach
3. Formal Written Proposal
 - a. Description of Product
 - b. Action Plan and Timeline
 - c. Materials and Resources

Phase II: Project Completion

1. Research: Primary and Secondary Sources
2. Product Development
3. Reflective Journal
 - a. Planning
 - b. Problem-solving
 - c. Ongoing Assessment

Phase III: Graduation Project Portfolio

1. Evaluation: Reflective Essay
2. Project Journal
3. Project Product (actual product, videos, photos, etc., as appropriate)

PHASE IV: Panel Presentation

1. Presentation
2. Questions and Answers

GRADUATION PROJECT RESPONSIBILITIES

PROJECT COACH

The Project Coach will be responsible for the following:

1. assisting the student in understanding the requirements of the Graduation Project;
2. approving the student's proposal and assisting with the development of a timetable for completion;
3. supervising and advising students throughout the process, including conferring with the student regularly and completing the Progress Report;
4. checking to see that appropriate research methods, technology, and review procedures have been employed;
5. sanctioning the readiness of the project to be presented to the review panel;
6. keeping a record of the student's progress;
7. notifying parents/guardians in writing if the student is behind schedule or experiencing any other problems;
8. *providing expertise or referring the student to others for expertise in the project knowledge area;*
9. attending the student's presentation (where possible) of the project to the evaluation panel;
10. submitting the evaluation sheet and final project evaluation to the guidance office.

Project Coach

- a faculty member who advises and oversees the student as he/she plans and completes the Graduation Project, ensuring that the student meets deadlines, develops all the necessary components, and is thoroughly prepared for presentation

Project Portfolio

- a collection of the student's project-related work that is presented to the panel and includes the following: evidence of research, journal entries, other proofs of progress (such as videotapes, receipts, and photographs), Parent Approval Form, Graduation Project Proposal, Interview Form(s), rubrics and/or checklists, Poor Progress Letter (if applicable), and Reflective Essay
- The student must gather documentation through all phases of the project and present this documentation to the presentation panel.

Research

- investigation of the topic area to collect information or skills to use to complete the project

Rubric

- a public set of criteria (scoring guide) that students and teachers use to define and assess the quality of work necessary for the student to meet the standards

Secondary Source

- a source that gives information gathered from others and is reported secondhand

Visual Component

- visual aid(s) used in presenting, explaining, and demonstrating the project
- These may include objects, charts, displays, models, overhead projections, slides, videotapes, photographs, and/or computerized materials.

GRADUATION PROJECT COMPLETING THE PROJECT WORK

After you have planned your project and your proposal has been approved by your coach, it is time for you to complete the project work itself. It is important that you follow your timeline and work regularly on your project. You must allow time to deal with any unexpected problems or obstacles. Do not postpone or delay; it is to your benefit to finish early so that you can then prepare for your Project Presentation.

Keep the following things in mind as you do the work to complete your project:

- Keep focused on your proposal, but remember that the nature of real work may require you to make changes as you go along. Be sure to inform your coach of any changes and document any changes, as well as the reasons for the changes, in your journal.
- Meet with your coach regularly and keep your project coach informed. Seek your coach's advice and assistance throughout your project, especially whenever any problem occurs.
- Utilize the rubrics and checklists to make sure you are staying on task and meeting the essential criteria.
- Make regular entries in your journal whenever you are engaged in any aspect of the project—planning, working, evaluating, or reflecting. It is important that the journal give an accurate and detailed report of your efforts.
- Document all research. Keep copies of all correspondence, articles, surveys, questionnaires, interview notes, meeting notes, etc. that provide evidence that you have done research of any kind.
- Be sure to keep all of your work—brainstorming, drafts, final documents, journal entries. If appropriate, you may wish to take pictures or videotape some of your work. You will need to have evidence of all you have done in order to select the best items for your Project Portfolio. You will also need concrete evidence for your Presentation.
- If your project involves creation of a product of any kind, be sure to keep the product for inclusion in the portfolio or provide acceptable evidence of the product. If the project results in an event of some type, be sure to collect and document appropriate evidence of the event and its impact. Your coach will help you decide what evidence you will need.

GRADUATION PROJECT
WHERE DO I FIND THE INFORMATION I NEED?

Research is the most important component of your work. If you do well on finding information, the rest of your project will easily come together. The main sources of information are books, encyclopedias, journals, newspapers, magazines, Internet sites, library reference material, and publications from private organizations. Check the PCPE website for guidelines to make sure the Internet sources you use are reliable ones. Also, you will find excellent lists of places to find information.

HOW DO I KEEP TRACK OF INFORMATION?

You must take notes as you do your research. Keep in mind that you may not be able to take materials home with you. You can keep your notes in a notebook or on index cards.

- ◆ **List all bibliographical information.** See your school librarian for a preprinted form to use for this purpose.
- ◆ **Write down important details** - information that stands out and is related to your project topic.
- ◆ **Summarize** – briefly describe how each resource helped you and what information it provided.
- ◆ **Paraphrase** – restate what the author said in your own words, giving the authors credit for their ideas in your final product.
- ◆ **Carefully record direct quotes** – write down any quotes that you might use, word for word and comma for comma. List the source, the page number and the context of the statement so you don't forget why it is important.

See the PCPE website for more information and a sample note-taking form.

PCPE WEBSITE: <http://www.graduationprojectchelp.org/info.html>

GRADUATION PROJECT KEEPING A JOURNAL

One of the key practices in your Graduation Project will be keeping a Project Journal. The Journal provides a place where you can "think aloud" about your work as you describe the work you have done and help you make decisions about what you plan to do on your project. In the Journal entries, you should describe the strengths and weaknesses of your work, the problems or difficulties you encountered, and possible solutions to help solve those problems or to improve your work.

The Journal is an important part of your assessed work, and it will be read and reviewed by your Project Coach, who will use the Journal along with the Progress Form as a basis of conferring and co-planning with you about your plans, work, and the problems you encounter as you attempt to complete the project.

Journal responses should be made every time you work on your project, if possible. You should have at least 10-15 journal entries of some length (half to full page), but you may include more if appropriate for your project. Your coach will assist you in determining when you have met this requirement. Although informal and unedited, your responses should be as neat and as legible as possible. Putting a date on each entry will be both important and useful as you track your learning and progress over time.

Project Journal *General Guide Questions*

In your Journal, simply describe the work you are doing for your project and how that work is progressing. You may use one or more of the questions below as a general guide to making responses in your journal. Sometimes your coach or mentor may suggest more specific questions.

- What work have you done on your project? Be specific in describing the actions and steps you have taken.
- What decisions did you make about your project and activities? Explain why you made the choices you did.
- What do you think went well on the work you did? Explain why you feel it went well.
- What difficulties or problems did you encounter? How did you solve those problems or how might you solve those problems?
- What can you do to improve your work?
- What are your next steps? Do you need help at this stage? What people or resources do you need in order to continue your work?

PROJECT RUBRIC

CRITERIA	1			
	4	3	2	1
	ADVANCED	PROFICIENT	BASIC	BELOW BASIC
Research Skills and Time Management	<p>The project shows that the creator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ used many reliable, appropriate primary sources. ◊ used many reliable appropriate secondary sources. ◊ used appropriate evidence and examples. ◊ used preparation time to go beyond basic research. 	<p>The project shows that the creator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ used several reliable primary sources. ◊ used several reliable secondary sources. ◊ used appropriate evidence and examples. ◊ used preparation time well. 	<p>The project shows that the creator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ used minimal resources. ◊ used little evidence and examples. ◊ spent minimal preparation time. 	<p>The project shows that the creator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ used few or no resources. ◊ used no evidence or examples. ◊ spent no preparation time.
Content of the Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ completely fulfilled the project's proposal. ◊ produced a project that is well-designed, creative, and appropriate to the content. ◊ covered the topic of the project with specific information. ◊ credited sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ adequately fulfilled the project's proposal. ◊ produced a project that is well-designed and appropriate to the content. ◊ covered the topic of the project with specific information. ◊ credited sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ minimally fulfilled the project's proposal. ◊ produced a project that is adequately designed and somewhat related to the appropriate content. ◊ omitted important information. ◊ provided incomplete credit for sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ did not fulfill the project's proposal. ◊ exhibited no sense of organization or relationship to the content area. ◊ omitted much of the basic information. ◊ neglected to provide credit for sources.
Visual Elements of the Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ produced a product that is creative, interesting, and easy to see and understand. ◊ supported the purpose of the project. ◊ fully communicated main ideas. ◊ exhibited outstanding effort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ produced a product that is interesting and easy to see and understand. ◊ supported the purpose of the project. ◊ communicated main ideas. ◊ exhibited excellent effort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ produced a product that is somewhat interesting but difficult to see. ◊ somewhat supported the purpose of the product. ◊ minimally supported the main idea. ◊ exhibited a fair effort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ produced a product that is messy, disorganized, and difficult to see and understand. ◊ produced a product no related to the purpose of the project. ◊ exhibited no effort.

WRITING RUBRIC: REFLECTIVE ESSAY

	4	3	2	1
	ADVANCED	PROFICIENT	BASIC	BELOW BASIC
CRITERIA FOR REFLECTION				
OCCASION FOR REFLECTION				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A thing experienced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses show that the writer meets all the criteria listed in Score Point 3. memorably presents the experience for the reflection. uses extended detail like a writer. uses language to be convincing. shows great depth of thought. is creative and original. reveals ideas through use of comparison and imagery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses show that the writer presents the experience through use of concrete, sensory language, quotations, and narrative accounts that effectively use dialogue, action, and pacing. effectively focuses on a single subject including related experiences and observations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses show that the writer does not go deeply enough into the reflection. talks too much about himself/herself instead of the experience. uses concrete detail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses show that the writer assumes experience that prompted reflection is implicit in the response.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> REFLECTION exploring analyzing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implicitly reveals feelings and thoughts through presentation of the experience. makes the reader understand the abstract ideas underlying the reflection through use of specific detail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is thoughtful, convincing, insightful, and exploratory. is firmly grounded in the subject. reveals a strong connection between the subject and the experience(s). analyzes the experience by looking at more than one angle. explores the subject in personal and general reflections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is limited to flimsy generalizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses only simple, obvious statements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WRITING STRATEGIES using specific, concrete details comparing, contrasting naming, describing reporting conversation reviewing the history explaining possibilities creating a schematic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> effectively uses writing strategies to enhance reflection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a variety of writing strategies. uses specific, concrete details to make the reflection clear to the reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses few purposeful writing strategies. uses some details and sensory language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not attempt to elaborate ideas or elaborates only through repetition of the initial statement.
COHERENCE AND STYLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consistently uses appropriate language. shows deep insight through a natural flow of ideas and an effective conclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> achieves only through a natural progression of ideas. uses precise language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses only simple, generic language. has lapses in coherence. has the tendency to digress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not have coherence in writing. is not organized in writing.

**PRESENTATION RUBRIC
GRADUATION PROJECT**

CRITERIA	1			
	4	3	2	1
	ADVANCED	PROFICIENT	BASIC	BELOW BASIC
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ precise pronunciation ◊ precise enunciation ◊ defines all unfamiliar terms with elaboration ◊ no mechanical or usage errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ few pronunciation errors ◊ few enunciation errors ◊ defines all unfamiliar terms ◊ few mechanical or usage errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ some pronunciation errors ◊ some enunciation errors ◊ defines most unfamiliar terms ◊ mechanical or usage errors not severe enough to interfere with speaker's purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ many pronunciation errors ◊ many enunciation errors ◊ makes little or no effort to define unfamiliar terms ◊ mechanical or usage errors seriously interfere with speaker's purpose
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Shows all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ excellent use of gesture ✓ clear, distinct voice ✓ effective eye contact ✓ poised, calm delivery ✓ enthusiasm ✓ speaking as opposed to reading ✓ appropriate rate ✓ appropriate volume ✓ appropriate posture ◊ unique, well-chosen topic ◊ dynamic introduction ◊ logical, coherent arrangement of ideas ◊ insightful and sophisticated use of supporting detail ◊ interesting, effective conclusion ◊ creative, sophisticated content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Shows most of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ excellent use of gesture ✓ clear, distinct voice ✓ effective eye contact ✓ poised, calm delivery ✓ enthusiasm ✓ speaking as opposed to reading ✓ appropriate rate ✓ appropriate volume ✓ appropriate posture ◊ well-chosen topic ◊ attention-getting introduction ◊ logical arrangement of ideas ◊ excellent use of supporting detail ◊ effective conclusion ◊ content particularly well-developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Shows some of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ excellent use of gesture ✓ clear, distinct voice ✓ effective eye contact ✓ poised, calm delivery ✓ enthusiasm ✓ speaking as opposed to reading ✓ appropriate rate ✓ appropriate volume ✓ appropriate posture ◊ topic somewhat broad or somewhat narrow ◊ good introduction, but not polished ◊ ideas occasionally confusing and/or out of logical sequence ◊ good use of supporting detail ◊ weak conclusion ◊ content limited to a listing, repetition, or mere sequence of ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ Shows little or none of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ excellent use of gesture ✓ clear, distinct voice ✓ effective eye contact ✓ poised, calm delivery ✓ enthusiasm ✓ speaking as opposed to reading ✓ appropriate rate ✓ appropriate volume ✓ appropriate posture ◊ topic too broad or too narrow ◊ weak or confusing introduction ◊ ideas presented in a haphazard fashion ◊ minimal use of supporting detail ◊ vague or confusing conclusion ◊ superficial content
Content and Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ unique, well-chosen topic ◊ dynamic introduction ◊ logical, coherent arrangement of ideas ◊ insightful and sophisticated use of supporting detail ◊ interesting, effective conclusion ◊ creative, sophisticated content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ well-chosen topic ◊ attention-getting introduction ◊ logical arrangement of ideas ◊ excellent use of supporting detail ◊ effective conclusion ◊ content particularly well-developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ topic somewhat broad or somewhat narrow ◊ good introduction, but not polished ◊ ideas occasionally confusing and/or out of logical sequence ◊ good use of supporting detail ◊ weak conclusion ◊ content limited to a listing, repetition, or mere sequence of ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ topic too broad or too narrow ◊ weak or confusing introduction ◊ ideas presented in a haphazard fashion ◊ minimal use of supporting detail ◊ vague or confusing conclusion ◊ superficial content

**PRESENTATION RUBRIC
GRADUATION PROJECT**

CRITERIA	1			
	4	3	2	1
	ADVANCED	PROFICIENT	BASIC	BELOW BASIC
Use of Visuals and/or Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ professional and high quality ◊ demonstrated creativity and originality ◊ enhanced and was an integral part of the presentation ◊ supportive of purpose, including text, if present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ high quality ◊ original but not particularly creative ◊ contributed to and was an important part of the presentation ◊ supportive of purpose, including text, if present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ average quality ◊ appropriate, but not particularly creative nor original ◊ related to presentation but much is unclear ◊ particularly supportive of purpose, including text, if present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ poor quality ◊ inappropriate or none used ◊ minimal relationship to presentation; little reference made to media or visuals during presentation ◊ minimal relationship to and not supportive of purpose, including text, if present
Question/Answer Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ answered questions with fluency and confidence ◊ demonstrated vast knowledge of the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ little hesitation and lack of fluency when answering ◊ demonstrated adequate knowledge of the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ much hesitation and much lack of confidence ◊ not very informative; limited knowledge of topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ could not or refused to answer ◊ minimal knowledge of topic
Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ strong evidence of analysis concerning -goals met -obstacles overcome -quality of learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ evidence of analysis concerning -goals met -obstacles overcome -quality of learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ some evidence of analysis concerning -goals met -obstacles overcome -quality of learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◊ little or no evidence of analysis concerning -goals met -obstacles overcome -quality of learning