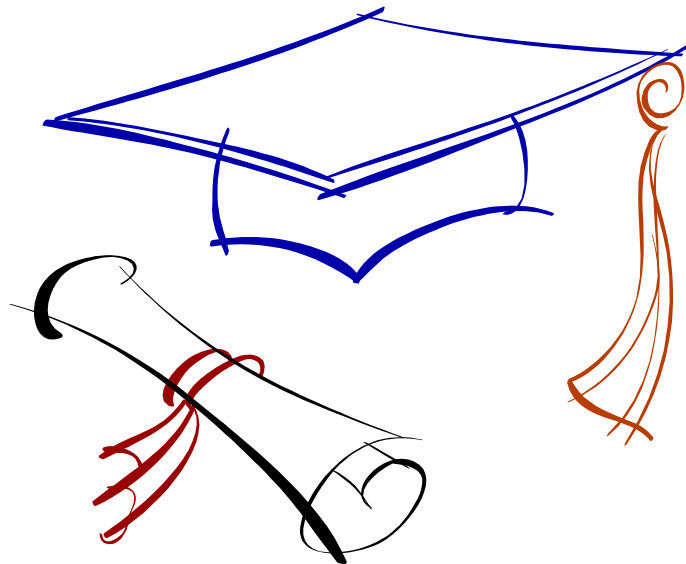


COLUMBIA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT GRADUATION PROJECT: Basic Information



**Columbia Borough School District
200 North Fifth Street
Columbia, PA 17512
Revised August, 2012**

PURPOSE OF GRADUATION PROJECT

The focus of the Graduation Project is to have students be able to research, analyze, and communicate information; to think critically and reflectively; to ask good questions and engage in good discussion; to problem solve; and to gain confidence in presenting to and influencing others. The graduation project should be meaningful for students.

The Graduation Project is designed to give students an authentic opportunity to direct their own learning through research, self-reflection, and presentation. To allow for differences in aptitude, learning style, and interest, students may choose their own topic from a variety of project types, including academic research, school and community service, internships, student-developed businesses, or an area of personal interest.

The Graduation Project requirement is intended to be the culminating experience of a student's education and designed to be an example of the student's highest quality work in high school. A Graduation Project is an individualized learning experience selected and planned by the student to represent an area of interest. Students must demonstrate research skills, self-directed learning, planning and self-reflection. Projects must demonstrate the attainment of knowledge or skills beyond the classroom experience and clearly show an extension beyond their current knowledge base. That is, the project should genuinely enrich a student's experience and not simply demonstrate abilities or past accomplishments. The selection of an area of interest and specific project is very personalized and may include academic or research-oriented activities, community service based projects, problem-solving real world applications and artistic endeavors. The Graduation Project process provides an opportunity for students to express creativity and to demonstrate unique talents and skills. The process is also intended to promote academic and personal growth, improve planning and research skills, and demonstrate accountability, self-direction and responsibility.

This handbook is designed to guide students through the Graduation Project process from the initial project proposal to the final presentation. If students carefully follow the steps outlined in this handbook and meet the deadlines, the project will be completed on time.

BENEFITS OF THE GRADUATION PROJECT

It is the district's desire that through this experience, students will benefit as follows:

- demonstrate that they have met select Pennsylvania State Standards
- complete state and local requirements for graduation
- gain a deeper understanding and awareness of critical thinking skills
- direct their own learning
- utilize effective written communication skills
- strengthen public speaking and presentation skills
- demonstrate proficiency in research skills, responsibility, and initiative
- improve record-keeping skills
- enhance time-management skills
- explore a topic of personal interest
- showcase talents and individual skills
- develop pride in accomplishment

PROJECT CATEGORIES

Project topics will be chosen from the categories listed below. All projects must be approved by the student's advisor. The ability to perform research is a requirement for all students. Research is necessary with all projects to gain new knowledge and improve skills in accord with the philosophy of the Graduation Project.

➤ **Research Project**

Examples:

- Conduct an in-depth study of one author's works or read several works and present a comparative study
- Conduct a cultural study of the context of a piece work, i.e., feminist, social realism, etc. and its relation to a novel, short story, art piece, musical piece, etc.
- Take an original position (your position) on a current issue and create a researched, reasoned, argument for your position.
- Analyze a mathematical concept that has been previously studied based upon the historical perspective of the time in which it originated. (What was taking place in the sciences, the arts, and the history of the time that influenced the development of this concept?)
- Investigate, research, and develop specific types of strength training. Compile research data, personal interviews, field visits, etc.

➤ **Career Internship Project**

A student choosing this project type will be committing to work in a selected career field. This project can give the student valuable insights into a potential career field. The student will be required to engage in a 25 hour, minimum, internship in the career field with someone working in that field and will be required to interview 3 persons in that career field as well.

➤ **D.E.P. Project (Demonstration/Exhibition/Performance Experience)**

Examples:

- Collection of Poetry
- Collection of Short Stories
- Art show
- Original four-movement musical piece
- Documentary
- Original computer program to help students understand a math topic with which students typically have difficulty
- Create a geometry project that incorporates the study of dimensions, 3-D visualization, and scale conversion, such as a museum design
- Undertake a field ecology study
- Musical recital

➤ **Service Experience Project**

Design and implement a project that provides a service to the community. A minimum of 25 hours is required. Create a portfolio that will demonstrate and evaluate the effectiveness of the project. Document the project with photos or video.

Examples:

- Providing services as a civil air patrol member
- Functioning as an emergency medical technician.
- Designing and implementing a blood drive

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of each student at Columbia High School to complete the Graduation Project. Students will:

- familiarize themselves with the project requirements
- determine a project idea and complete a Graduation Project Proposal by the end of the tenth grade year
- cooperate with their advisor
- set aside sufficient time to complete the project components
- pay for any expenses incurred during the completion of the project
- show evidence of research by completing a written document, delivering an oral component, and creating a physical product/performance
- document all sources used in completing the project
- produce an original work which is completely a product of individual efforts

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

The Columbia High School Graduation Project provides each student an opportunity to explore a topic of personal interest. While this is fundamentally a student-executed project, the school encourages parents/guardians to offer support to the students throughout the process. In addition to signing required forms, it is expected that parents/guardians will:

- know the topic and scope of the project
- offer suggestions and ideas related to the project
- review the required forms
- know the various due dates regarding the project
- provide accountability for the student to ensure that due dates are met
- communicate with the student on a regular basis about the project
- review the various components of the rubrics with the student before the project due date and oral presentation
- cooperate with the advisor