

WILSON AREA HIGH SCHOOL  
GRADUATION PROJECT

## **I. DESCRIPTION**

In order to graduate from Wilson Area High School, each student shall design and complete an independent study project. The purpose of the graduation project is to assure that the student is able to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information and communicate significant knowledge and understanding. It is the responsibility of each student to fulfill the requirements set forth in this document. The high school faculty shall provide guidance and direction in the fulfillment of these responsibilities, if needed.

Projects may be undertaken by individual students or groups, but presentations shall be given on an individual basis. Also, all students must complete individual paperwork and materials.

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## **II. GOALS**

To provide all students with a culminating activity that demonstrates their skills in writing, speaking, research, and organization.

To provide all students with an opportunity outside the classroom to integrate their various courses of study and interest.

To provide all students with an opportunity to demonstrate a sense of responsibility and a good work ethic prior to graduation from Wilson Area High School.

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## **III. TYPES OF PROJECTS**

### **A. COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Please note: This is volunteering. Students cannot be paid for their hours.

1. Community service must be a minimum of forty (40) hours, unpaid:

- It does not include class assignments.
- It does not include personal employment or work.
- It cannot include volunteer hours performed during the school day.

2. Community service shall be performed at a non-profit organization operating as a service to the community. **STUDENTS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO COMPLETE THEIR COMMUNITY SERVICE IN STORES AND RESTAURANTS.**

3. Possible community service topics:

- Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts
- National Honor Society projects
- Soup kitchen volunteer
- Fish hatchery

- Animal shelter
- Recycling center
- Blood Mobile
- Church
- Homeless shelter
- YMCA or YWCA
- Elderly (nursing homes, assisted living facilities, senior centers)
- Hospital
- Library
- Organize a neighborhood clean-up program
- Fundraising, for school related organizations or community based organizations
- Habitat for Humanity
- Daycare (Please note: Volunteering in a day care at a non-profit or religious-based organization is acceptable. Volunteering at a private day care facility is not acceptable).

4. Students completing community service hours while on court-ordered probation may not use those hours for their graduation project. If a student wishes to keep volunteering at a community service location where he or she completed court-ordered probation hours, the student must provide proof that the required forty (40) hours were in addition to those hours ordered by the court.

5. Students must keep a log of their hours. A log must be filled out each time students volunteer. Log forms are available in guidance or from mentors.

6. Students must have a visual aid to accompany their project. Pictures of students performing the community service must be included. Other suggestions for the visual aid include a poster, video, charts, and objects from the event.

7. For the oral presentation, please see the oral presentation rubric for more details. The presentation will be given on a date set by the student and the mentor.

8. Students may complete their community service at religious institutions, such as a church, synagogue, temple, or mosque, provided they are providing a service to that religious institution, and the student meets the other requirements of the community service option.

9. Students may complete their community service at day care facilities that are connected with non-profit organizations, such as the YMCA or YWCA. Volunteering at a private day care facility is not acceptable.

10. Students may earn fifteen (15) hours maximum for participation in a school club which provides community service. Students must complete one year in good standing with the club to be eligible for the 15 hour credit. The 15 hours are credited only once during grades 9 – 12. Students must initiate the application process in order to take advantage of this credit.

11. Hours may be completed any time during the four high school years.

12. Each activity should be pre-approved to ensure hours are eligible to be applied to the graduation project.

13. A completed Community Service Log/Journal must be submitted to mentors upon completion of each activity. Due dates will be assigned by mentors.

14. Students must write a two to three page paper summarizing their accomplishments, what they learned, how they grew, and how they will apply their new knowledge/skills in the future. This will be typed, be double-spaced, be in 12 point font, and have no larger than one inch margins. The logs will assist in writing this paper. The paper must be submitted BEFORE the oral presentation for mentor review. A specific date will be given by the mentor.

15. At the scheduled time for the oral presentation, students must bring: the approved graduation project proposal, all logs/journals, the summary paper, and pictures of the student participating at each activity/event. These items should be in an organized portfolio for the review panel to peruse.

## **B. JOB SHADOW**

Please note: You cannot be paid for your shadowing hours.

1. Job shadowing must be a minimum of forty (40) hours, unpaid.
  - One or more professionals may be shadowed.
  - Students must complete their job shadow in blocks of a minimum of one hour each.
  - Students may NOT shadow at their present place of employment unless they receive prior written approval from their mentor.
2. Students will not be excused from school to fulfill their shadowing obligations.
3. Students must keep a log/journal of shadowing hours. A log/journal must be filled out each time (one log per day) students shadow. Log/journal forms are available in guidance or from mentors.
4. A completed shadowing log/journal must be submitted to mentors upon completion of each activity. Due dates will be assigned by mentors.
5. Students must interview people employed in the profession.
  - a. Five (5) interviews are required (different people within the same profession); the person(s) being shadowed may be interviewed.
  - b. A minimum of ten (10) questions must be asked of each person interviewed.
    1. The interview questions, along with responses, must be included with your project paperwork. Students may use the same set of questions for each person they interview.
    2. Students must keep a record stating the date, time, place, and signature of people interviewed and shadowed. A form for this is available in guidance or from mentors.
    3. The signature and date must correspond with each interview and shadowing experience.
    4. The contact address and phone number must be listed on the log.
6. Students must have a visual aid to accompany their project. Pictures of the student performing the shadowing must be included. Other suggestions for a visual aid include a poster, video, charts and objects from their shadowing experience.

7. Students must write a two to three page paper summarizing their experiences and interviews. This will be typed, be double-spaced, be in 12 point font, and have, no larger than one inch margins. Other topics student need to include in the paper are:

- a. Job qualifications
- b. Educational requirements
- c. Future outlook of occupation
- d. Salary
- e. Working conditions

8. The paper must be submitted BEFORE the oral presentation is scheduled for mentors to review. A specific date will be given by mentors.

9. For the oral presentation, please see the oral presentation rubric for more details. The presentation will be given on a date set by the student and the mentor.

10. At the scheduled time for the oral presentation, students must bring: the approved graduation project proposal, all logs/journals, all interview questions and responses, the summary paper, pictures of the student participating in the shadowing, and the visual aid. These items should be in an organized portfolio for the review panel to peruse.

### **C. RESEARCHED TOPIC**

1. For the researched topic, students must write a research paper five to eight pages in length (not including works cited page) that is typed, double-spaced, in 12 point font, and has no larger than one inch margins.

2. The research paper must follow MLA or APA format.

3. The research paper must contain a minimum of five sources (maximum of two website sources). Copies of the sources must be submitted with the paper. Students must highlight the particular area within the source utilized in the paper.

4. The paper must be written using a formal style, including:

- no contractions
- no 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> personal pronouns (I, me, my, you, etc.)
- numbers less than 10 should be spelled out
- use correct spelling and punctuation
- avoid abbreviations
- Use MLA or APA style for works cited and for in-text citation

5. Students found to have plagiarized will be required to complete either the community service or job shadow graduation project. Rewrites will NOT be allowed.

6. The research paper must be completed and submitted to mentors one month prior to the oral presentation to give mentor teachers time to read it and provide feedback. A specific date will be given by mentors.

7. The paper should propose a thesis. The research paper is NOT a “report.” Proof of application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation must be demonstrated within the paper.
  8. The written paper will be assessed using the Pennsylvania Domain Scoring Guide.
    - a. Focus – The single controlling point made with an awareness of task about a specific topic.
    - b. Content – The presence of ideas developed through facts, examples, anecdotes, details, opinions, statistics, reasons, and/or explanations.
    - c. Organization – The order developed and sustained within and across paragraphs using traditional devices and including introduction and conclusion.
    - d. Style – The choice, use, and arrangement of words and sentence structures that create tone and voice.
    - e. Conventions – Grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage, and sentence formation.
  9. For the oral presentation, please see the oral presentation rubric for more details. The presentation will be given on a date set by the student and the mentor.
  10. At the scheduled time for the oral presentation, students must bring: the approved graduation project proposal, a copy of the research paper and sources, and a visual aid. These items should be in an organized portfolio for the review panel to peruse.
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## **A FINAL NOTE ABOUT PROJECT CHOICES:**

All projects must be original. All projects must not have been submitted for credit/grading in any course, by any student, at Wilson Area High School or the Career Institute of Technology (CIT).

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### **IV. PROCEDURE/TIMELINE FOR GRADUATION PROJECT**

#### **A. Ninth/Tenth Grade**

1. Ninth grade students will be introduced to graduation project requirements.
2. Graduation projects may be completed early. If students wish to complete their project prior to their senior year, they will need approval from the building principal.

#### **B. Eleventh Grade**

1. A letter describing the graduation project will be sent home with the students and signed by the parent/guardian and the student.
2. Students and parents will be given the description, the procedure, and the assessment guidelines for what is expected.
3. Any teacher at Wilson Area High School can answer questions about the project.
4. Students will explore possible projects.

5. Students will complete a proposal form and submit it to their mentor teacher by a date set by their mentor teacher. Students will keep a personal photocopy at home.
6. Graduation projects may be completed early. If students wish to complete their project prior to their senior year, they will need approval from the building principal.
7. The entire project should be ready for presentation by the first day of school in March of the student's senior year.

### **C. Twelfth Grade**

1. Students may continue to accumulate hours for community service, for job shadow, or for writing of the research topic.
  2. The graduation project will be presented at times set by the Wilson Area School District in the fall. Students will be assigned a presentation date by their mentor teacher.
  3. If students do not show for their presentation appointment time, parents will be notified.
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## **V. ASSESSMENT OF PROJECTS**

1. The mentor's role is to administer the project, guide the student, and offer suggestions. The advisor will be a faculty member of the Wilson Area High School.
2. A faculty panel will evaluate all graduation projects and will be responsible for the final grade of the graduation project.
3. The grades for the project will be: Exceeds Expectations (E), Meets Expectations (M), and Unacceptable (U). Students who receive a grade of Unacceptable must re-do the project and reschedule an oral presentation.
  - a. A faculty panel will evaluate all graduation projects.
  - b. The review panel will be responsible for the final grade on the graduation project.
  - c. The grades for the project will be Exceeds Expectations (E), Meets Expectations (M), and Unacceptable (U). Students who receive a grade of Unsatisfactory must re-do the project and reschedule an oral presentation.
4. The oral presentation will be judged on the basis of the following categories:
  - a. Content
    - 10 - 15 minute presentation
    - supporting information
    - conclusions
    - importance, value, or impact of the project
    - sources of information
    - vocabulary relevant to the topic
  - b. Effective speaking
    - presenting one's self with poise and professionalism

- maintaining consistent eye contact with the review panel
- enunciating clearly
- varying tone, volume, and speed to enhance presentation
- speaking alone, without the aid of an interpreter

c. Organization

- is appropriate to the study
- uses an engaging beginning and thoughtful ending
- supports a clear thesis or idea
- flows smoothly from one idea to the next

d. Visual Media

- effectively uses graphic design
- communicates significant information and sights at appropriate place
- clearly, accurately, and precisely communicates information in the visual media
- includes photos that are mounted on poster board, organized in an album, or placed in a computer/slide presentation

e. Response to questions

- effectively responds to all questions from the panel
  - uses questions from the panel to illustrate the topic
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## **VI. REMEDIATION**

Students whose written and/or oral presentations are evaluated as UNACCEPTABLE (U) during the original presentation may have the opportunity to correct and resubmit their work at a time set by the mentor teacher.

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## **VII. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **A. For successful completion of the Graduation Project, students should:**

1. Keep a file containing all important documents pertaining to the graduation project.
  2. Make copies of all materials related to the project.
  3. Familiarize themselves with all aspects of the graduation project.
  4. Seek the help of mentors.
  5. Fulfill requirements completely and on time.
  6. Do their very best work on the graduation project.
  7. Be prepared for the assessment portion of the graduation project, by practicing the presentation before the scheduled presentation time.
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