

# Idaho Falls District 91 Graduate Project Student Handbook 2017-18



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## INTRODUCTION TO THE GRADUATE PROJECT

### **What is The Graduate Project?**

The Graduate Project consists of three major components: the project, the portfolio and the presentation. All components must meet standard in order to pass. This handbook will guide you through the process. It includes most of the information and forms you will need to complete the project.

If you attend an Idaho high school, you must complete a senior project that includes a portfolio and an oral presentation in order to graduate. Successful completion of the Graduate Project will meet this Idaho State Department of Education requirement.

### **The Project**

The project is the core of the Graduate Project experience. You will choose a project that extends your learning, stretches your potential, challenges your abilities and relates to your post high school plans. What that may be is up to you. You could choose an interest and act on it by finding or discovering something that you've never done or known before but always wanted to do or know. Another option is to take something you know or can do but take it to a new and challenging level. Remember, the project must represent a "stretch" for you. The project should be an EXTENSION of a current interest or the pursuit of a new interest, not merely a continuation of a current interest.

The work on your project should produce a final product/performance that will be evaluated. For Example... A possible project for someone who might be interested in a career in advertising would be to design an effective, sustained advertising campaign around a societal problem such as teenage smoking—MORE than just a single poster or recording.

### **The Annotated Bibliography**

After you've decided on a project, you will need to know more about how to complete it. That's where the Annotated Bibliography comes in. With the approval of your Graduate Project Advisor you will select a research topic that will help you learn more about whatever it is you've decided to do.

### **The Portfolio**

As you work on your project, you will need to document what you have done and keep a neat and professional record for the Graduate Panel judges. You will need to keep accurate records of the time you devoted, how much money you spent, where you went, who you talked to, research resources you used, what you learned and so on. The portfolio is simply a place to log all that information.

### **The Reflective Essay**

After you've completed the project, you will reflect on the experience. In clear, concise writing, you will describe the goals you had for the project, the experiences you had, the new skills and knowledge you acquired, and you will reflect on the impact the project has had on you.

### **The Presentation**

Finally, you will present your project at the Graduate Project Presentation in front of a panel of judges that will include teachers and community members. You will share with them your project and portfolio, the process you followed, what you learned along the way and your personal growth as a result of your ambitious project. If you chose a project that really excites you and captures your interest, your enthusiasm will shine through to the panel.

## **The Graduate Project Checklist**

Read the Graduate Project Handbook with your parents

Complete the Adviser Check-in sheet as you begin working on your project

Parents read Parent Letter

Secure a project mentor and give that individual the Graduate Project Mentor Letter

Submit project proposal to your advisor

Mentor completes the Graduate Project Mentor Agreement Form (give a copy to your advisor and place a copy in your portfolio)

Parents complete the Parent Permission Form (give a copy to your advisor and place a copy in your portfolio)

Fill out the Contact Information Form (give a copy to your advisor and place a copy in your portfolio)

Read the Plagiarism and Misrepresentation Pledge (initial the Parent Agreement form confirming that you read it)

Research your topic

Create Annotated Bibliography

Work on your project – take pictures and complete an Activity Log to document your work

Mentor completes Mid-term Report (give a copy to your advisor and place a copy in your portfolio)

Complete your project product/performance, Activity Log and write your Reflective Essay

Mentor completes Final Evaluation Form

Write your Mentor a Thank You Letter (place a copy in your portfolio)

Write Letter of Introduction

Complete your portfolio

Submit project and portfolio to your advisor

Submit Presentation Needs Survey to your advisor

Practice presentation

Give presentation when scheduled

## **General Policies and Information**

### **Graduate Project Advisor and the Graduate Project Committee**

Advisory teachers will serve as the Advisor for Graduate Project students. The Advisor's role is to monitor student progress on the project and preview all components. The Advisor will also meet often with Graduate Project students in order to provide information regarding project components and to answer student questions. Students will be required to complete the Advisor Check-List to monitor meetings and progress with Advisors. Students are welcome to seek the advice of their Advisor as they complete the Graduate Project process. The Advisor will be the first person to officially review a student's Graduate Project Proposal.

Students are expected to follow directions and to meet deadlines in order to fulfill the requirements of the Graduate Project. If special circumstances arise, your Advisor should be able to resolve most problems. If not, your Advisor may refer you to the Graduate Project Coordinators who resolve Graduate Project issues. Some situations may require that you appear before the Graduate Project Committee. The Graduate Project Committee will approve/disapprove all project proposals.

### **Grading of Project Components**

Each student will be graded by the rubrics and standards set forth in this handbook. Students must score "Meets Standard" on each rubric description in order to receive a score of "Meets Standard" for the given component (Project, Portfolio and Presentation). Students must receive a score of "Meets Standard" for each component in order to receive a grade of "Meets Standard" for the Graduate Project Course. Only those students receiving a grade of "Meets Standard" will receive the course credit necessary for graduation. The Graduate Project Committee will score the Project and Portfolio components. The Presentation component will be scored by the Presentation Panel members. Students may revise and resubmit components that receive "Doesn't Meet Standard" scores. If necessary, students may appeal a "Doesn't Meet Standard" course grade by making a formal appeal in writing to the Graduate Project Committee. See the Appeals Protocol.

### **Panels**

A Presentation Panel will be formed for each student's Graduate Project Oral Presentation. The panel will include the student's Graduate Project Advisor and two other adults. This panel will be responsible for scoring a student's Graduate Project Oral Presentation. Family members and other guests, such as the mentor, are allowed to attend the Panel presentation.

All Idaho Falls School District 91 Graduate Project students are required to attend and give an oral presentation at the scheduled time. Any student failing to appear at the scheduled time will receive a score of "Doesn't Meet Standard" for the presentation component. Special circumstances may be presented to the Graduate Project Committee in a written appeal. If your appeal is granted, you will be scheduled to present to the school's Graduate Project Remediation Panel within a reasonable time from the previously scheduled presentation.

### **Late Policy**

Assignments are due at the end of the school day on the dates given for the Project Checkpoints and Deadline. If a student is absent or signs out, the assignment is still due on the assigned date. If a student does not complete work that "Meets Standard" by the end of the day of the due date, he/she will be required to make necessary revisions and meet other requirements for the next deadline. The specific requirements are explained below. The Project and the Portfolio must all receive scores of "Meets Standard" at the Project Deadline.

Students that do not submit a Portfolio that “Meets Standard” and a Project Product/Performance that “Meets Standard” at the Final Due Date will be required to revise the component(s) that “Doesn’t Meet Standard” and resubmit it. The revised component(s) are due at the Revision Deadline.

At the time of the Revision Deadline, students who have any components receiving a “Doesn’t Meet Standard” score will not be allowed to schedule an oral presentation, will receive a “Doesn’t Meet Standard” grade for the graduate project course and will be ineligible for participation in extra-curricular activities. The student will need to enroll in either the Graduate Project Night School Class, the Graduate Project Summer School Class, or complete the course through Advisory through the next school year. Information regarding the registration for the Night School Class and/or the Summer School Class may be obtained from the school counselors.

### **Visual Recording**

A student whose project involves the participation of anyone under the age of 18 must receive written permission from the participant’s parent/guardian before taking photographs or making video recordings that include the participant. Photographs and/or video recordings that include participants under the age of 18 must be kept confidential and may not be distributed. The purpose of the photographs and/or visual recordings is only for the documentation of the student’s Graduate Project. No other use is allowed. Please use the Visual Recording Permission Form to obtain permission for participants under the age of 18.

### **Advisory Periods**

Students are responsible for organizing their time and work for the Graduate Project. Monthly Advisory class periods will be the formal check-ins with Project Advisors. These will be scheduled once a month from September through April. Advisors will remind students of upcoming deadlines, monitor progress and provide assistance.

### **Students Receiving Special Services**

Students receiving Special Services may require accommodations and/or adaptations to complete their Graduate Project. Accommodations required for students on IEP, 504, or ELP Plan will be discussed with the appropriate Special Services Case Manager and will be described in the student’s Graduate Project Proposal.

### **Transfer Students**

Students transferring into an Idaho Falls School District #91 high school from another high school will be required to complete a Graduate Project. A student must make a formal project proposal to the school’s Graduate Project Committee. The proposal may be for a project that the student has not yet begun or had approved at another high school. If a student has already begun a project in another high school, he/she must submit a project proposal that includes details regarding how the previous work meets Idaho Falls School District #91’s Graduate Project Requirements and any modifications the student plans to make in order to meet those requirements.

Students transferring into an Idaho Falls School District #91 high school after the start of their senior year may propose modifications to the project in consideration of the shortened time frame. Formal Graduate Project proposals, with or without modifications, must be approved by the school’s Graduate Project Committee.

### **Appeals Protocol**

A student participating in the Graduate Project may formally appeal the decisions of the Graduate Project Advisor by following the procedure described in the Appeals Protocol. If the procedure is not followed,

via the protocols established, the appeal will be summarily dismissed. A student may appeal “Doesn’t Meet Standard” scores for project components, missed deadlines, not attending his/her Presentation, allegations of plagiarism/misrepresentation and to change his/her Graduate Project Mentor. Also, an appeal form needs to be filled out if a student wants to complete his/her project on school track instead of summer track.

### **Project Costs**

Students are responsible for any and all costs associated with the Project.

## Advisor Check-in Form

*These sheets will document your one-to-one time with your advisor. Each checkpoint is a moment that you will need to either speak with your advisor or turn in an item to your advisor. Your advisor will need to also offer feedback and comments on the sheet.*

1. Check in to ask your advisor about your project idea. Is it a challenge? Could your topic turn into a career for you? How can you take your idea and ‘step-it-up’? What will you research? What will your goal be? Do you have or need an idea for a mentor? Who could you access?

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Advisor’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

2. Check in to show your advisor your proposal letter. Your advisor will make sure it includes proper format, a signature, three research questions, and three skills you hope to acquire through this process, challenges to the project and of course, your WHY. If your letter is not okay, you will re-write for the advisor.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Advisor’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

3. Check in to share your mentor information with your advisor. Your advisor will maintain contact with the mentor to make sure that BOTH you and your mentor are in contact with one another consistently. A good mentor will guide you and provide support. You cannot meet with your mentor only once. Your advisor only needs to see the contact sheet, the parent permission form, and the mentor agreement form. YOU will need to keep these forms safe--in your binder or dropbox it.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Advisor’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

4. Check in to share your mentor mid-term evaluation. Again, your advisor will only need to see it and discuss your progress. You keep it safe in binder or dropbox it.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Advisor’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:



5. Check in to share your final mentor evaluation and a general sense of your progress on your project. Again, your advisor will only need to see it and discuss your progress. You keep it safe or dropbox it.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Advisor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

6. Last check in to show your advisor your portfolio- have your advisor make sure you have it collected and organized correctly and that it meets the criteria. If it all looks good, your advisor can turn it in for you, or you can give it to Graduate Project Coordinators. Make sure to include this sheet in your 'Forms' section.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Advisor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

\*\*I have contacted the mentor and verified that he/she is at least 21 and has the expertise necessary to guide the student in this project. The mentor also knows that he/she can call/email me if there are any concerns about this student's progress on the project.

**Advisor's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Project Proposal

The Graduate Project can be one of the most rewarding assignments of your high school career, and it is required for graduation. Since you will be spending a great deal of time working on your project, choose a topic that is genuinely interesting to you that you feel will prepare you for your future careers.

### Pre-planning

Think about all of the things you are interested in—things you would like to fix, do, learn, understand, see, improve, create, experience or own. Brainstorm your ideas as they come to you; don't edit yourself at this point. If you're into sailing and want to sail solo to Hawaii, write it down. You can always eliminate ideas later if they turn out to be impractical or too expensive. Narrow your ideas down to three or four ideas which are "do-able" and prioritize them. In deciding whether or not a particular project idea will work, take into consideration whether or not research information is available and whether the project is one you can afford. Your project should take you at least fifteen hours to complete, should maintain your interest for an extended period of time and meet the approval of your parents, your Graduate Project Advisor and the Graduate Project Committee. Also, remember that in order to qualify as a Graduate Project, your plan needs to be one which will stretch your abilities and challenge your limitations. To get project ideas, you may also look to your Explore or ASVAB results to find areas of aptitude.

### Minimum Requirements of the Project

Your project must...

- be a personal stretch and challenge,
- be an EXTENSION of a current interest or pursuit of a new interest, not merely a continuation of a current interest,
- take a minimum of fifteen hours outside of research time to complete (time spent writing proposal letter, your reflective essay, or doing any work on the portfolio does not count towards the 15 hours required),
- be approved by your Graduate Project Advisor, the Graduate Project Committee, and by your parents,
- produce a product/performance,
- be individual—no group or collaborative projects,
- include work with an adult mentor,
- and, last but not least, be legal.

### Unacceptable Projects

These projects will cause problems and will not be acceptable for your Graduate Project.

- Illegal or inappropriate activities.
- Group or collaborative projects: you may be reliable, but your friends and colleagues may let you down. No collaboration or joint projects will be allowed.
- Unfinished work: If you state in your proposal letter that you will write a novel, we will not accept three chapters. It is not a finished product.
- No stretch or challenge as determined by your Advisor and the Graduate Project Committee.

### Project Considerations Note

INL: Students considering a project that might involve a mentor or job shadowing at the Idaho National Laboratory should be aware that it can take time to complete the proper procedures and obtain the security clearances sometimes necessary to visit a DOE facility. Students should address those issues with the INL employee they're working with, and the INL employee should be able to make the necessary arrangements.

Health Care Fields: Students hoping to find mentors or do job shadowing in the medical profession can face some challenges. Patient confidentiality and patient safety is a critical concern for hospitals, doctor's offices, and other medical centers. There are usually very specific protocols that students must follow in order to visit or job shadow at these facilities. Students should speak to their mentor or the proper authorities about available opportunities, rules that are in place, and how students can comply with them.

## Criteria for Specific Projects

The product must meet the following criteria. If you have a product that does not fit one of these categories, you will need to submit a plan that outlines your intentions.

### **Technical products:**

#### **Video:**

##### ***The student must...***

- create a video or documentary film demonstrating mastery of all the elements of production, including music (if appropriate) and text (title, credits, etc.)
- provide documentation that details all phases of production, including planning, scripting, filming, editing and final production
- keep a typed log with a thorough description of all activities
- work with a mentor and have times, dates and activities verified by the mentor

#### **CD/Audio Recording:**

##### ***The student must...***

- create a CD of an original song or performance demonstrating mastery of all the elements of production
- provide documentation that details all phases of production, including planning, recording, editing and final production
- create a CD cover with a description of the music to accompany the CD
- keep a typed log with a thorough description of all activities
- work with a mentor and have times, dates and activities verified by the mentor

#### **Website:**

##### ***The student must...***

- extend beyond classroom work or his/her current level of expertise
- create a website that is appropriate for his/her topic
- show mastery of graphics and text
- use information that relates to the research and presents ideas in a new and useful manner
- use text that is original with appropriate documentation of sources
- use text that is grammatically correct and worthy of review in the community
- create a website that is well developed, includes different pages, and links to other useful site
- keep a typed log with a thorough description of all activities
- work with a mentor and have times, dates and activities verified by the mentor

#### **Computer programming:**

##### ***The student must...***

- extend beyond classroom work or current level of expertise
- keep a typed log with a thorough description of all activities
- work with a mentor and have times, dates and activities verified by the mentor

## **Job shadowing/Internships:**

### ***The student must...***

- job-shadow with a mentor for at least 15 hours
- be responsible for all the arrangements related to the job shadowing experience
- document work (through video, photographs, audiotapes, etc.)
- keep a typed log with a thorough description of all activities
- work with a mentor and have times, dates and activities verified by the mentor
- create a tangible, concrete visual that demonstrates what you have learned during the required 15 hours. Ideas: create a business proposal based upon Small Business Administration guidelines, build a product needed for the business, create a product showing the process that you learned (paint a car door, make a mold of teeth, perform a demonstration using tools from your study etc.)

## **Community service/Volunteer work:**

### ***The student must...***

- provide service or volunteer for at least 15 hours
- work with a mentor and have times, dates and activities verified by the mentor
- be responsible for all the arrangements related to the service/volunteer experience
- document his/her work (i.e. video, photographs or audiotapes)
- obtain visual recording forms for participating youth under the age of 18
- keep a typed log with a thorough description of all his/her activities
- create a tangible, concrete visual that demonstrates what you have learned during the required 15 hours. This “physical evidence” should demonstrate or extend your learning experience and be informational, educational and professional in quality.

## **Fundraising:**

### ***The student must...***

- spend at least 15 hours actively marketing the event/cause
- set a dollar amount as a goal (min. amount \$250)
- employ a variety of marketing strategies (i.e. social media, flyers, posters, Public Service Announcements, websites, door-to-door, booths, etc.)
- work with a mentor and have times, dates and activities verified by the mentor
- document all donations from various marketing tactics and identify sources of donations larger than \$25
- prove receipt of funds from the organization funds are being donated to
- obtain visual recording forms for participating youth under the age of 18
- keep a typed log with a thorough description of all his/her activities

## **Coaching/Youth Camps:**

### ***The student must...***

- work with youth for a minimum of 15 hours
- camp must be independent from school extra-curricular programs
- student must be registered as the head coach (or Camp Director). Other coaches and volunteer helpers cannot be working on a Senior Project. All projects must be completed as individuals.
- work with a mentor and have times, dates and activities verified by the mentor
- obtain visual recording forms for participating youth under the age of 18
- keep a typed log with a thorough description of all his/her activities
- turn in tangible products associated with coaching (i.e. practice plans, skill drill lists, game win/loss records, data on players etc.)

**Building a product:** paintings, models, costumes, computer programs, set designs

***The student must...***

- create a log and pictorial account of the steps in creating the invention or product
- create a product that reflects attention to detail and application of research
- create a product that is of greater quality than just a model or superficial design
- work with a mentor and have times, dates and activities verified by the ment
- keep a typed log with a thorough description of all activities

**Teaching experiences, group presentations or performances:**

***The student must...***

- teach a class, clinic or workshop; this also includes organizing and conducting assemblies, seminars or shows
- submit a typed log detailing the planning and organization of the product
- submit a tangible product such as a video of the product. If no video is provided, the teacher must be present during the product
- be responsible for ensuring that he/she has an audience
- work with a mentor and have times, dates and activities verified by the mentor
- obtain visual recording forms for participating youth under the age of 18
- keep a typed log with a thorough description of all activities

**Publications:** short story, novella, children's book, collection of poetry

***The student must...***

- show a substantial mastery of graphics and text
- follow the publication guidelines that relate to the genre of his/her product
- include original writing and not just copies of existing materials in the product
- discuss specific guidelines with his/her teacher before starting work
- keep a typed log with a thorough description of all his/her activities
- work with a mentor/expert/supervisor and have times, dates, and activities verified by the mentor/expert/supervisor

**Learning a new skill:** obtain a license/certification, create a stock portfolio, care, maintenance and sales of livestock, learn to play a new instrument and perform in front of audience (not a home audience).

***The student must...***

- have a learning experience that adds up to at least 15 hours
- work with a mentor/expert/supervisor and have times, dates and activities verified by the mentor/expert/supervisor
- keep a typed log with a thorough description of all activities and details of meeting dates
- create a tangible, concrete visual that demonstrates what you have learned during the required 15 hours. This "physical evidence" should demonstrate or extend your learning experience and be informational, educational and professional in quality.

**Research Paper:**

***The student must...***

- turn in all work used to write the paper, including notes, previously revised drafts, copies of articles, etc. Failure to submit material in the folder that is cited in the paper constitutes plagiarism and will result in a score of "Doesn't Meet Standard"
- write a paper of eight pages (minimum) or longer (not including Works Cited page)
- double space everything within the paper; use 12 point font (Times New Roman font); use 1" margins on all sides of paper

- include a Works Cited page that properly follows MLA format
- include at least seven in-text citations for quoted and paraphrased material
- only use charts and graphs when appropriate, but not clip-art and drawings merely for the sake of decoration
- have a controlling central idea (thesis) with clear specific thesis statement with an effective introduction
- include supporting details, specifics, quotations and explanations that inform and/or persuade
- write fully developed, unified paragraphs with effective transitions and sentences that provide a consistent logical focus throughout the paper on the idea established in the thesis statement
- use correct punctuation, spelling and grammar
- show control of language and writing techniques, such as varied sentence structure, use of vocabulary, limited use of passive voice and avoidance of redundancy, vague language and wordiness
- work with a mentor/expert/supervisor and have times, dates and activities verified by the mentor/expert/supervisor
- keep a typed log with a thorough description of all activities and details of meeting date

### **CTE (PTE)**

Students in the following courses: EMT, CNA, Culinary Arts, Academies, Early Childhood, etc. can use the hours from their work and the subsequent job shadowing to apply to a senior project. However, students must create a tangible product separate from any product created in the class for a grade. Students must also keep a detailed time log of activities with commentary about what was learned throughout the process along with the evidence required in the portfolio.

## The Graduate Project Proposal

Formally declare your project in a business letter addressed to your Advisory teacher. Once you have discussed your proposal with your Advisor, submit it to the Graduate Project Coordinators. You are now committed to your topic and product. Your letter must follow block format (1" side-margins and centered vertically on page) according to the instructions below. Your letter must be no longer than one page. Use proper organizational strategies and transition words in your writing.

111 Belair Road (Your address)  
Idaho Falls, ID 83402  
September 15, 2012 (Press enter three times)

Mrs. Graduate Project Advisor (Your Advisor's name and school address)  
High School Name  
533 Blue Ridge Drive – BE AWARE! This is not your school's address!  
Idaho Falls, ID 83402 (Press enter two times)

Dear Mrs. Advisor: (Press enter two times)

**Paragraph 1:** State what you want to do for your project. Describe the general area of interest and your background, if any, in this area. Discuss how the project relates to your post high school plans and **identify three skills** you feel will help you in your future. Describe how this topic is a learning stretch for you. (Press "enter" two times.)

**Paragraph 2:** Describe the topic of your research. List at least **three research questions** you will seek to answer as you complete your project. Explore job opportunities related to your project. Remember that you have to have five sources on your annotated bibliography, including your mentor. The sources also need to include three different types of sources (i.e. book, personal interview, online article, etc.) Include your mentor's name and qualifications. (Press "enter" two times.)

**Paragraph 3:** Describe your step-by-step plans for your project. Then, state how you will demonstrate your work (and when you will present, if on summer track). Address major concerns such as finances or time constraints. Remember, if you are job shadowing or performing community service for your project hours, you must also create a tangible product to demonstrate what you learned in addition to your presentation. The tangible product is NOT your powerpoint presentation. (Press "enter" two times.)

**Paragraph 4:** Conclude your letter by expressing your enthusiasm about your project. (Press "enter" two times.)

Sincerely, (Press "enter" 4 times so that you have room to sign your name, and then sign your name after you print)

Johnny A. Goodstudent (Type your name exactly as you sign it)

## Graduate Project Proposal Expectations

You cannot start on your Graduate Project until your proposal is approved by the Graduate Project Committee. Your proposal will not be accepted unless it meets the following criteria:

Proposal represents a **stretch or a challenge**. If the student is an athlete, coaching a youth team isn't necessarily a stretch. The student needs to indicate how it is a challenge and **three skills** that will be acquired through the process.

The proposal needs to include information about the **mentor** that explains the **mentor's expertise** and how that helps the project.

The proposal needs to state **three research questions**.

The proposal needs to be **relevant to post high school plans**.

Any proposal for a job shadow, volunteering, or coaching, needs to include a **TANGIBLE product**. The plan for a product needs to be included. Tangible products cannot be journals or photos.

The proposal letter needs to be in letter format and should be **readable** (few errors) and **professional** (keep in mind how a potential employer would look at the letter).

Advisor signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature reflects that advisor has discussed the above items with the student and has given feedback)

Project Coordinator signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature indicates that the proposal has been **APPROVED**)

**Students keep this copy and your proposal letter. If you are worried about keeping it safe, ask your advisor to keep a copy for you.**



## The Portfolio

Now that your project had been approved, begin working on your portfolio. Your Graduate Project Portfolio is a collection of all forms, documentation, and evidence you have collected. **Make sure to be keeping a detailed project log of everything you are doing and learning.** Your Graduate Project Portfolio documents the entire Graduate Project process. See below for organization and required pieces.

- All documents are neatly placed in a 3-ring binder with labeled section dividers
- Cover Page (first and last name, year of graduation, project title)
- Table of Contents

### Introduction Section

- Letter of Introduction to Panel

### Proposal Section

- Graduate Project Approval Form and Project Proposal Letter

### Forms Section

- Contact Information Sheet\*
- Signed Parent Permission Form\*
- Advisory Check-in Sheet\*

### Mentor Section

- Graduate Project Mentor Agreement Form\*
- Graduate Project Mentor Mid-Project Report Form\*
- Graduate Project Mentor Final Evaluation Form\*
- Copy of Mentor Thank You Letter

### Evidence Section

- 5 items of evidence minimum
  - Photos of project work/completed products (Visual Recording forms as needed)
  - Letters and other communications relevant to the project
- Project Log (15 hr. minimum on the project itself, not the research, essay, or portfolio building)

### Research Section

- Annotated Bibliography (at least 5 sources, including your mentor)
- Sources are alphabetized and cited in MLA format
- 3 types of sources (interview, internet article, book, video, etc)

### Reflection Section

- Reflective Essay

\*The forms you need are included in this manual. You may always go to the Graduate Project website and print a new one.

## **Idaho Falls School District #91 Parent Information Letter**

Dear Parents/Guardians:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of a major project that is being assigned to all seniors through the Graduate Project Course. This assignment, the Graduate Project, has far-reaching potential for positively affecting students, not only while in high school, but well into the future. The objective is to bring together all of the skills that students have developed throughout their education, offer them an opportunity to expand that learning through a project which they choose and develop, and to assist them in a presentation to the larger community beyond high school.

The Graduate Project has three components: the Project, the Portfolio and the Presentation. The first component is the Project. The student begins by researching a topic related to his/her project. The purpose is to give the student solid background knowledge needed in completing the project. The student will create an Annotated Bibliography summarizing his/her sources and explaining how the sources will aid in the project. The student will take advantage of the information gained during research, choose someone who is highly knowledgeable in that particular field to serve as a mentor and then spend a minimum of 15 hours pursuing some activity for which there will be a final result or product. There is a broad range of topics that may be pursued, ranging from volunteering at a Crisis Center, coaching a youth team, volunteering in a shelter or the Mayor's office and many, many more. The student's own desire and interest determines the topic. One essential part of the portfolio is the Reflective Essay. Here the student reflects on the goals of the project, describes the experiences and their impact and discusses the impact of the project on the student.

The second component is the Portfolio. The student collects and records evidence of his/her efforts related to the project. All related forms, project related communications, photos and the Reflective Essay will be kept here.

The third component is the Presentation. This is a multi-media oral report of eight to ten minutes before a panel of teachers and community members. These volunteer panelists are the student's Graduate Project Advisor and community members. We welcome you to serve as a panelist for our Graduate Project Panels.

All of the guidelines for the Graduate Project will be distributed through the Graduate Project Handbook and the Idaho Falls School District 91 website. One of the most important features of the Graduate Project is the lesson it teaches in self-discipline, responsibility, integrity, and time management. Your son or daughter has already been given access to the handbook that includes all due dates, as well as advice, directions and examples. We expect this to be a challenging yet extremely rewarding project, one which will be a crowning culmination of your teen's entire school experience. We invite your involvement.

Sincerely,

Idaho Falls School District 91

## **Plagiarism and Misrepresentation Pledge**

The most important part of any educational experience is academic honesty. For the most part, you control what you learn, and your ethics, or lack thereof, can shape your academic decisions. You are responsible for ensuring that you do not plagiarize or misrepresent yourself in any way.

### **What constitutes plagiarism?**

- Directly copying from another source without using quotation marks and/or without giving credit to the author by citing your sources.
- Not paraphrasing the information completely or correctly.
- Using another person's work, in part or as a whole, as your own.
- Using work that you have completed for another teacher without approval. (You may expand on previous research, but you must have approval first.
- Using research that you do not include in your Annotated Bibliography or that the teacher cannot verify with the material in your Annotated Bibliography.
- Passing on your work to another student in another class and/or in another school. What constitutes misrepresentation?
- Claiming you have had no previous experience or knowledge in a given area when you actually have.
- Falsifying documents and assignments.
- Using a family member as a mentor or interview subject.
- Allowing other people to complete portions of your assignments.
- Committing any other breach of the project assignments.

I have read the plagiarism and misrepresentation policy. I understand that if I am caught cheating in any way during this process, I will receive a score of Doesn't Meet Standard for the Graduate Project Course. I will need to redo the Graduate Project process again for a new project. I give my word that I will be honest during the entire process.

**PARENTS AND STUDENTS: SIGN AND INITIAL THE PARENT PERMISSION FORM TO INDICATE THAT THIS PLEDGE HAS BEEN READ AND UNDERSTOOD.**

## Parent Permission Form

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Phone: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_

As a parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, I am aware that my son/daughter must participate in the Graduate Project activities as the Graduate Project is a graduation requirement. For the project, my son/daughter has chosen to:

He/she has my permission to complete this project, and I agree to release Idaho Falls School District 91 and its employees from all claims arising from financial obligation incurred or damage, injury or accident suffered while my son/daughter participates in the project that he/she has chosen.

My son/daughter has chosen \_\_\_\_\_ to be his/her Graduate Project Mentor for the Graduate Project. The above named Mentor has agreed to the responsibilities outlined in the Graduate Project Mentor Agreement form and letter.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents, please sign your initials if you have read the following:  
Letter regarding the Graduate Project Plagiarism and Misrepresentation Pledge \_\_\_\_\_

Students, please sign your initials if you have read the Plagiarism and Misrepresentation

Pledge \_\_\_\_\_

## The Graduate Project Mentor Letter

Dear Graduate Project Mentor:

Seniors in Idaho Falls School District 91 are required to complete a Graduate Project prior to graduating. The purpose of the Graduate Project is to challenge students to expand their horizons, stretch and challenge their abilities and showcase their achievements. They began this process by selecting a project and having it approved. Because they have chosen a project which will require them to take a topic further than they have ever done before, an essential component in their success is a **Graduate Project Mentor** – an adult who has *experience or knowledge* in the student's chosen field of study.

\*Mentors may be teachers, community members or business professionals who are willing to guide students through each phase of project completion. Mentors cannot be relatives or under 21 years of age.

\*Mentors are asked to assist, encourage and support the student in completing the project.

\*Mentors serve in an advisory capacity only. It is the student who is responsible for completing required work.

\*Additionally, mentors assist in verifying the progress of a project at **two** checkpoints during the year.

Thank you for taking the time to share your experience and expertise with our students. The Graduate Project depends upon the generosity of people like you.

Sincerely,

District 91 Senior Project Coordinators

## The Graduate Project Mentor Agreement Form

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor's Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

I, the undersigned, have met with the above named student and have discussed his/her plans for the Graduate Project.

I acknowledge that the student will work on his/her project and that I will offer assistance in completing the project phase of the Graduate Project during that time.

I understand that I will be a resource and consultant for the student and will be asked to verify the student's progress and hours spent and I will attend his/her Presentation.

I also understand that the Graduate Project is the sole responsibility of the student and that I am not to complete the project for the student.

I understand that I will work with the student only by phone or on site at his/her high school unless given express written permission by the parents of the student to meet off campus.

I verify that I am at least 21 years of age and that I am not related to the student. (Under certain circumstances, exceptions may be granted. The student must submit a written request explaining why no other qualified mentor is available.)

Qualifications/Experience in the field relating to the project:

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your support of Idaho Falls School District 91.*

I hereby DO DO NOT (check one) authorize my son/daughter to meet his/her Graduate Project Mentor off-campus for the purpose of working on the Graduate Project.

**Parent/Guardian Signature:**

## CONTACT INFORMATION FORM

Student \_\_\_\_\_ (printed name)

Project topic \_\_\_\_\_

Student's phone \_\_\_\_\_

Student's email \_\_\_\_\_

Parent \_\_\_\_\_ (printed name)

Parent's phone \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's email \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor \_\_\_\_\_ (printed name)

Mentor's phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor's email \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor \_\_\_\_\_ (printed name)

Advisor's Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor's email \_\_\_\_\_

\*Students, keep a copy of this form for your own convenience while working on the project and remember that it needs to be included in the portfolio.

## The Graduate Project Mid-Term Mentor Report

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you very much for the time and effort you are contributing to our student and his/her Graduate Project. We very much appreciate your time and energy.

Have you seen the student's Activity Log? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

**Please respond to the following:**

The student has conferred with me about his/her project- Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

How many times have you met with your student thus far?

In what ways have you worked with the student?

The student is making satisfactory progress at this point and should be able to successfully complete the Project component by the first checkpoint. Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_  
Comment:

Please give a brief explanation of any concerns or questions you may have about the student's progress toward completion of his/her project.

**Mentor Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Graduate Project Mentor Final Evaluation Report

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate Project Mentor Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

**To the Graduate Project Mentor:** You have been chosen to verify this student's efforts on his/her Graduate Project. Since most of the time spent on the project component of this assignment has been out of class, verification of the student's efforts is necessary before he/she will be allowed to present to the Graduate Project Panel. Please answer the following questions to help us evaluate his/her project. Please feel free to attach additional paper as needed. Thank you for your cooperation and your support of Idaho Falls School District 91's Graduate Project. It is appreciated.

1. Can you verify that he/she spent at least 15 hours creating this project? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Comments:

2. Have you seen this project at different stages of completion, not just the final phase? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Comments:

3. What specific problems did this student encounter and overcome?

4. What successes have you seen this student achieve?

**Mentor's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mentor's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## THANK YOU LETTER TO MENTOR

**Salutation:** Address the letter to your project mentor. Follow the name with a colon.

**Paragraph #1:** Thank your mentor for the time he/she spent helping you with your project.

**Paragraph #2:** Add specific details about what you learned because of your mentor's involvement. Specifically address how working with your mentor has helped you build your collaboration skills.

**Paragraph #3:** Conclude by restating your thanks for your mentor's time commitment and expressing an expectation that you will continue to benefit from this experience.

**Signature:** You must sign your name above your typed name and below the word "Sincerely." Follow the directions for Block Form Business Letter Format.

It is appropriate to write thank you letters to all of the individuals who helped you with your project.

\*Make two copies of this letter. You will save one copy for your portfolio and one to give to your mentor.

## Sample Mentor Thank You Letter

Wanda Full Student  
5 Hill Street  
Idaho Falls, ID 83402  
April 22, 2010 S

Mr. James Voltz  
Red Cross, Idaho Falls Chapter  
2731 North First Street  
Idaho Falls, ID 83402

Dear Mr. Voltz:

Thank you for agreeing to mentor me in my Graduate Project. I appreciate both your time and expertise.

I specifically want to thank you for being such an effective CPR teacher. I enjoyed all the classes I took at the Red Cross, but I probably had the most fun and learned the most from the one that you taught. In addition, you worked with me on both the research for my project and the project itself, which shows that I can be a collaborator (relate specific examples).

I want to thank you again for the time you spent with me, for your patience, and for all of your good advice. I know that the lessons I learned in completing this project will stay with me for a lifetime.

Sincerely,

*Wanda Full Student* (sign your name here)  
Wanda Full Student

## Evidence for Portfolio

Your portfolio MUST include 5 pieces of evidence to document the process, progress, stages of completion, and/or revisions to the project. Some choices include:

- high quality photos (one including your mentor would be nice but not required)
- receipts of any supplies necessary for completing your project
- communications including emails, texts, letters
- marketing/advertising materials created for the project
- sketches
- business plans
- lists
- final products (if appropriate, i.e. sheet music composed, architectural drafts, etc.)
- pictures of final product if final product cannot fit into portfolio
- any other appropriate documentation

Use your best judgment to collect evidence that will reflect the effort you have put into your project. Use a variety of types of evidence for a most comprehensive report of your work.

## Project Log Guidelines

In addition to the 5 pieces of evidence, make sure to include a detailed project log of all of the steps involved in completing your project *with commentary* about what you learned from each step. See the sample on the following page, but create your own template using Word or Excel or Google Docs.

Include the following information on your project log:

- Name, date, advisor, topic, mentor name and contact info
- Date and time for each activity
- List of activities *with commentary* for each activity
- Total time spent on each page with a grand total on the final page (note: time spent on portfolio or portfolio documents does NOT count towards your 15 hours)

## Graduate Project Activity Log Sample

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

Project Topic \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor: Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Your log should include what you have accomplished and the time you spent each day completing it (i.e. writing, designing, constructing, planning, taking classes or lessons, contacting sources, volunteering, etc.). You should also reflect on what you did and what you learned. Your commentary will help you remember what you did and what you thought when you begin to prepare for your presentation. This is the place to show all your effort, hard work and progress on your project. **\*You must document at least 15 hours on the project itself (not counting research).**

### Sample Log

Date and Time	Activity & Commentary
<p>Thursday, 3/1/01 1 &amp; 1/2 hours</p>	<p>Activity: Went to Falls Print &amp; Image Graphic Design on Laguna Blvd. to talk to Mr. Russell about designs for my poster advertising my project</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Commentary: The cost for printing the poster was more than I had planned due to the size of the poster and the four colors I had planned to use. However, I don't want to compromise my design, and my parents have agreed to the additional cost. Mr. Warren explained that I could economize a little if I were to use two colors instead of the original four, so it's back to the drawing board!</p>
<p>Monday, 3/5/01 1 hour</p>	<p>Activity: Went back to Falls Print with my new poster design. Mr. Warren liked my revisions and said this design would be more sophisticated.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Commentary: I'm so glad I revised my design; it looks so much more stylish with the two colors . . . .</p>
<p>Total time this page: 2 1/2 hours</p>	

Project Log Form (create as many second sheets as necessary)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Date and Time</b>	<b>Activity &amp; Commentary</b>
Total time this page:	

## Visual Recording Permission Form

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As part of my Graduate Project, I am required to submit visual evidence of my work on the project. My project involves

The primary focus of the visual recording is on my efforts and not on the children involved. This recording will only be shared with my Project Advisor (teacher) and my Graduate Project Presentation Panel (my Project Advisor, my Project Mentor, and two at-large community members). The recording will be kept confidential.

During the course of visual recording, your child may be recorded. I am requesting your permission to allow your child to participate as part of the visual recording of my Graduate Project.

If you have any questions about my project, please feel free to contact me, my Advisor or my Mentor.

Sincerely,

Project Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Project Mentor \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Student name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

I am the parent/legal guardian of the student named above. I have received and read this form regarding the visual recording for a Graduate Project.

I give permission to you to include my child's image in a visual recording as he or she participates in your project.

I do not give permission to visually record my child.

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## **What is an Annotated Bibliography?**

As you are preparing and doing your Graduate Project, you need to learn how to do it correctly. As you stated in your project proposal, this will be a learning stretch. So, how do you learn what you need to know? Research. Research can be conducted in many ways including, but not limited to: reading articles, books (sections and chapters of books count), manuals and documents; viewing videos or documentaries; and questioning people with experience in the field of your project (including your mentor).

An annotated bibliography documents your research in a very precise way. Each citation is followed by an annotation. The citation is how you let your panel know where the information came from. It is the first thing you see when you look at an annotated bibliography. It has the author's name, title of the work, etc. The annotation is the paragraph that summarizes the source, evaluates it and explains how it was useful.

### **Citations**

- Refer to the MLA Citation Entry Sample pages and the Annotated Bibliography Sample for format guidelines.
- Only list sources that were helpful with your project.
- List your 5 (minimum) varied sources alphabetically.
- You must use at least three different types of sources (print, interview, video, etc.).
- Double space if the citation is two or more lines and indent the second line a half inch.

### **Annotations**

- Summarize the source
- Evaluate the source's credibility
- Explain what was useful about this source when doing the project
- Leave one blank line after the citation
- Type a double-spaced summary (annotation) and description of the usefulness of your source. Be sure to left indent the summary a half-inch as the sample shows.
- Use size 12 font, Times New Roman font and 1" margins

### **Citation Entries**

MLA updated citation format in April 2016 to simplify the citation process. The new requirements include one list of core elements, no matter what type of source is being cited. The list is as follows (including the following end punctuation, but not the bullets):

- Author.
- Title of source.
- Title of container,
- Other contributors,
- Version,
- Number,
- Publisher,
- Publication date,
- Location.

## Sample Citation Entries for Annotated Bibliography

Some of the following information is from the OWL at Purdue. See an eighth edition MLA handout or a resource such as the OWL at Purdue for more comprehensive information.

### **A book with one author:**

Jacobs, Alan. *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction*. Oxford UP, 2011.

### **An article from a scholarly journal:**

Kincaid, Jamaica. "In History." *Callaloo*, vol. 24, no. 2, Spring 2001, pp. 620-26.

### **A website:**

Chacos, Brad. "How to Build a PC: A Step-by-step, Comprehensive Guide." *Pcworld.com*, IDG Consumer & SMB, 16 Oct. 2015.

"City Profile: San Francisco." *CNN.com*, Cable News Network, 14 May 2002.

### **Personal Interview:**

Brown, Kristina. Personal interview. 14 Mar. 2016.

### **You Tube Video:**

Levitin, Daniel. "How to Stay Calm When You Know You'll Be Stressed." *Youtube.com*, Ted Talks, 23 Nov. 2015.

See the sample annotated bibliography on the following pages:

Johnny Goodstudent

Mrs. Graduate Project Advisor

Graduate Project Course 2016

14 March 2017

### Annotated Bibliography

Edison, Katherine. Personal interview. 12 Oct. 2005.

Katherine is my voice teacher. With a successful professional career to back her up, she has always been a good source of information for me. After lots of research, I still had several questions I needed her help with. During one of our rehearsal sessions, I asked her several questions regarding my voice, the opera I'm studying and how to analyze recordings and performances of the opera. Katherine helped me understand my voice in context to the aria I'm singing; she also put me in the right direction in regards to my research. She suggested the recordings I should listen to and the performances I should view, including those of Mirella Freni and Anna Moffo. Finally, she gave me specific instructions on how to analyze different recordings of arias and entire operas. I feel so fortunate to have such a knowledgeable mentor and voice teacher.

Erwin, Lynette K. "Biography: Anna Selina Storace," *Lynetteerwin.com*, Alla Breve For the Arts, 29 Sept. 2005.

This article was about Anna Storace. A British soprano, Storace was only twenty years old when the role of Susanna was specifically written for her voice. What probably helped me most about the article was that it suggested that she was an excellent actress who specialized in portraying servants or common-class girls. Some of the descriptions of her acting abilities have helped me incorporate a spunky, flirtatious attitude of a witty

servant in the aria. The article also taught me about the historical importance of the opera, as it also described other pieces and operas that Storace performed in at the time and how they related to history.

Fleming, Renee. *The Inner Voice: The Making of a Singer*. Viking Publications, 2004.

I read this book in its entirety very quickly – I couldn't help it; I simply soaked up every bit of knowledge that Renée Fleming has put down on paper. Although Fleming is a lyric soprano who has performed everywhere and has a defined and successful career, I was surprised to find that she described many of her insecurities. Her words really helped me realize that I wasn't crazy –her insecurities and doubts as a singer are ones that I too experience. Accepting the fact that sopranos-of-steel – as my voice teacher calls them, referring to the fact that they are singers who seem to handle any opera, any opera house, and any bad review – have issues with how they sing and question their abilities just as often as I do really helped with my confidence. I now know that I can pursue this project without constantly worrying about my singing technique. Fleming also describes how to add originality to acting and singing styles. When most people sit down to watch an opera, they often don't realize that a hundred other sopranos have sung the same role; a singer must therefore put her own individual fingerprint on her singing.

## **Outline for Reflective Essay**

Any learning experience will have a more lasting effect if you take some time to think about it. Now that you have finished your project and while you are preparing your portfolio and getting ready for your presentation, you need to spend some time thinking about your Graduate Project experience. Write a Reflective Essay and place it in your portfolio. The essay should be two to three pages in length and follow MLA formatting (see below). This essay will be scored as part of your portfolio. The panel will look at it at the time of your presentation.

Your essay should elaborate on the following topics:

### **I. Project Proposal**

#### **a. Project Description and reasons for choice**

i. What did you do? How did you do it? Did it work? Remember that this is a reflective essay, so you should put thought into the “what” and “how” of your project.

#### **b. Learning Goals for Project and how this represented a stretch**

i. Focus on explaining and defending your goals for the project. This section is the “why” of your project. How does the project relate to your life after high school and how was this project a stretch for you?

### **II. Steps Taken to Complete Project thoroughly described so that there is no doubt about the authenticity of the project and the knowledge acquired**

#### **a. Use your Activity Log to help you remember what you did to complete the project**

### **III. Skills and Knowledge**

#### **a. Previous skills and knowledge related to the project**

i. If you had no knowledge/skill but a lot of interest in the topic, be honest and explain that

#### **b. New skills and knowledge acquired through project**

i. What skills have you learned about the topic- reflect on the three skills that you hoped to acquire (from your proposal letter)

ii. What knowledge did you acquire about your topic- reflect on the three questions that you hoped to answer through research (from your proposal letter)

### **IV. Experiences**

#### **a. Predicted experiences**

i. Focus on your thoughts and feelings before the project began

#### **b. Actual experiences**

i. Focus on your actual experience while completing the project. Did you enjoy completing the project? Why?

#### **c. Explanation for differences and/or similarities between predicted and actual experiences**

- i. How were your expectations different from your actual experiences? Be sure to explain why your experiences were similar to or different from your expectations.

#### V. Mentors and Instructors

##### a. Mentor

- i. How did your mentor help you? How was your project influenced by your mentor? What advice and recommendations did your mentor give you? How did your mentor feel about your project?

##### b. Role of Advisors

- i. How did your Graduate Project Advisor help you throughout the process (proposal to project completion)?

##### c. Other significant contributors

- i. Who else helped you complete your project? What help did they provide?

#### VI. Impact of Having Done the Project on Future Learning

##### a. Connection to future plans

- i. How has your project affected your interest in the topic? How do you see this project affecting your life after high school?

##### b. What has been learned about self

- i. What have you learned about yourself? Did you learn of any personal strengths or weaknesses? Have you discovered something about how you learn? Did you discover any learning strategies that will help you in the future?

#### **MLA Formatting**

- First page includes your first and last name, Instructor's Name, Course Number and Date
- Title is centered, but not bold or underlined
- One inch margins all around
- Each page has a header of last name and page number
- Paper is double-spaced throughout with no extra space between paragraphs
- Size 12 font using Times/Times New Roman

## Letter of Introduction

One of the first impressions the judges will have of you will come from this letter. The purpose of this writing is to give the judges an introduction to you as a whole person beyond the work you have done on the Graduate Project. They will be able to see you as a young adult with goals, interests and opinions. When they hear you speak at the Graduate Project Presentation, they will bring these insights into their understanding and consequent assessment of your presentation. This letter, therefore, must be in your best writing and must be a sincere expression of how you perceive certain aspects of yourself. Use a full block style formal business letter format. The letter should be approximately one page in length.

This letter may include any of the following topics:

- Family background
- Schooling
- Hobbies
- Goals
- Driving principles or passions
- Individual talent
- Challenges, obstacles or any unusual circumstances
- Experiences with the Graduate Project or other intense learning activities
- Reflections on your high school years
- Expressions of regret or gratitude
- Views on any subject you think will give the judges useful information about you as a graduate

The preceding list is only intended to give you some suggestions. You can write on other topics or choose one or two from the list above to develop in detail. Type this letter using a formal business letter format. Consider the following model letter of introduction, but do not use it as a template. Your sentence structure and phrases should be your own.

## Sample Letter of Introduction

111 Belair Road  
Idaho Falls, ID 83402  
March 1, 2005

Judges, Senior Project Board  
District 91 High School  
690 John Adams Pkwy.  
Idaho Falls, ID 83402

Dear Judges:

As a soon-to-be graduate of High School, I want to take this opportunity to tell you about myself and some of the things I learned this year. I learned the following: procrastination did not help me write an essay, graduation is earned (not just given as an automatic ticket at the end of the senior year) and an accomplishment means more when you work hard and stay with it. These lessons will be very useful to me when I leave here and go on to further training and into the workforce.

I was not sure if I could make it through four years of high school and graduate. My family has moved around a lot because of my dad's job, and I never could seem to achieve what I wanted to in school. Whenever we moved into a new area, I was very frustrated. Often I had to repeat something I had already learned or be confused because I came in during the middle of a unit. But it has always been important to me to complete my education because I want my family to be proud of me, and I want to go on to college. My parents have always had a lot of faith in me and my abilities, and I want to prove to myself that I can achieve something important.

The choice of my Graduate Project on carpentry relates to my career goal. I want to be a master carpenter. I love wood and working with it. I can see myself making beautiful pieces of furniture and cabinets for new homes. Too many people these days do not appreciate the time and skill it takes to make quality furniture. I would like to draw their attention to the art involved in carpentry. My family really appreciates my work in this area. In fact, my parents and grandparents are currently negotiating over who will keep the walnut coffee table I made for my project. I want to leave something with my family when I move on to college, so I decided that they should keep it.

Although I had to cut back on my hours of work at Starbucks coffee shop to work on school assignments and Graduate Project this year, I am now very happy that I did. I found that I enjoyed researching Victorian styles of furniture, and I gained a lot of satisfaction from making my walnut coffee table.

Sincerely,

*Joe Student*  
Joe Student



## **Presentation Preparation and General Guidelines**

The presentation is the final step in the process. In your presentation, you will describe what you have learned from the project experience, research, and overall preparation. It is also a time for self-evaluation and reflection for all that you have accomplished. Students are evaluated on their preparedness, their ability to communicate, their ability to think on their feet and the overall quality of their presentation. The members of the panel will view the portfolio and project before the presentation to obtain an understanding of what has been accomplished. The panel will also evaluate the presentation. The individual judge's scores will be averaged to determine the grade on each component. If there is a significant discrepancy in the grades, the case will be reviewed.

**Requirements:** An eight to ten minute presentation, with the use of high quality visuals and/or audio aids, followed by a five-minute question and answer period. You must speak for approximately 70% or more of the time. You may play a recorded product that is no longer than two (2) minutes.

**Appearance:** Treat your presentation like you would a job interview. You want your appearance to be the best possible so as to leave a favorable impression. You should have a clean, neatly groomed appearance. Dress shoes are preferable, but neat tennis shoes would be acceptable. If you are a gentleman, appropriate clothing would be a neat polo shirt or collared shirt with neat slacks (no jeans). For a professional appearance, a tie and a jacket are appropriate. If you are a lady, appropriate clothing would include a neat blouse and skirt/slacks or a dress. For a professional appearance, a dress/pant suit is appropriate. An appropriate uniform or costume is also acceptable.

### **Preparing for Presentation**

**Come with prepared notes.** Students should bring prepared notes to their preparation to help them stay organized and address all required information. These notes may be included in your PowerPoint/Prezi file, note cards, a piece of paper, etc. These notes should be written as they would be for a speech class. Do NOT expect to read your presentation word-for-word from these notes.

**Test all technology before the time of presentation.** Check to make sure that whatever programs you are using are compatible with the ones provided by the school. Do not learn how to use something for the first time during your presentation. Don't wait until the night of your presentation to test any technology you may be using. Practice with the overhead, slide projector, computer, etc. If you have questions about technology, check with the technology specialist as soon as you discover that you have special needs.

**Practice, practice, and practice before the date of your final presentation!** Know your facts and be natural. Remember the audience is on your side; they want you to do well. Look comfortable and confident, even if you aren't. Smile! Greet each judge, one at a time. Look each judge in the eye as you shake hands. Decide on the exact words you will use to start and close your presentation. If something bad happens, laugh and recover. Don't let one thing ruin your presentation. Treat the situation with a sense of grace and humor, and the audience will respect you.

Practice by saying the words aloud so you are sure of the pronunciation, the speed to use in saying the words and the words and phrases you want to stress. Practice until your presentation becomes smooth. Be sure to practice using your audio/visual aid in the presentation.

### **Visual and Audio Aids**

- The visual should be something that helps the audience understand the content of your presentation as well as a device to keep your speech organized and on track.
- The visual should focus on “substance,” not show. Since it functions to help guide both you and the audience, it should not in itself be distracting, nor should it take attention away from you.
- The visual should be an outline of your talking points (NOT your entire speech).
- Make sure that your presentation does not rely exclusively on PowerPoint or Google Slides. Make sure you have a backup in case Google Slides crashes. Make sure that you use fonts large enough to be seen from the back of the room. Make sure that your graphics are clear.
- If you created an original video/audio recording as a product, you may play a clip of the product that lasts no longer than two (2) minutes during the allowed time. You should narrate the video, if appropriate, or comment occasionally to continue the flow of the speech.
- You may also want to consider models, costumes, in class demonstrations, photographs or a tangible product to enhance your presentation.

### **Delivery**

- Body language: How you conduct yourself sends nonverbal messages to your audience. Avoid sitting, leaning on the lectern, moving too much, moving too little, chewing gum, etc. You want your audience to feel that you are not afraid and that you know your material.
- Eye contact: Make sure that you try to make eye contact with as many people in the room as possible. Avoid focusing on one specific person or on one side of the room.
- Pacing of time: Make sure that you have practiced so that you meet time limits and do not appear rushed.
- Don't fidget.

## Suggested Outline for Presentation

- I. Introduction (Be brief: 1-2 minutes) The Introduction should do the following:
  - a. Introduce yourself and your project
  - b. Hook audience
    - i. Some possible creative ways to begin the introduction:
      1. Use an interesting quote, tell a joke which fits the topic, get the judges involved by having them do something, use your audio/visual aid, demonstrate something or pose questions about your subject that you will then answer in your presentation
  - c. Should lead naturally to your presentation
- II. Your Project (4-5 minutes) Address some of the following:
  - a. Explain how and why you selected your project
  - b. Prior knowledge about your topic
  - c. Sources of research you used?
    - i. Mentor
      1. How did you choose your mentor?
      2. How helpful was he/she?
    - ii. Other people who helped and what they did
    - iii. Resources listed in your Annotated Bibliography
  - d. Steps taken to complete the project? (Be brief)
  - e. Anything unique or creative about your project
- III. Self-Reflection (2-3 minutes) Address the following:
  - a. Learning goals you had for the project
    - i. Explain whether or not you met them and how the project represented a stretch for you
  - b. New skills and knowledge gained which could include what you learned about yourself
  - c. Problems encountered and how you dealt with them
  - d. Significance of the project to you and others
  - e. What you would do differently (if applicable)
  - f. What you are most proud of in completing the project
- IV. Conclusion (1-2 minutes)
  - a. Summarize main points of presentation
  - b. Link learning experience with future goals and plans
  - c. Thank the panel for their time
  - d. Offer to answer questions
- V. Provide a visual or demonstration to support your presentation

## Presentation Questions You May Be Asked

You should be covering most, if not all of this during your presentation, but you may be asked for clarification or for more details. If you become nervous and omit something that is required, the panelists are instructed to prompt you for the information. All of the panelists will be doing their part to help you meet standard on the presentation. If you cannot answer a question, offer related information that you do know. Take time before the presentation to prepare your answers. Be prepared to discuss the details of your Reflective Essay and your project. Community members are very interested in what you have done. Remember that some of them have expertise in your area of study, so know your details!

- How did you plan and direct your work?
- What new skills and knowledge did you gain?
- What was your best source of information and why?
- What plans do you have for the future that relate to your project?
- How many hours did you spend on your project and when/how did you spend them?
- What was the most valuable part of working on your project? Why?
- What was the most difficult part of working on your project? Why?
- Would you recommend other students do a similar project? Why?
- Describe how you best learn and give an example.
- Explain in more detail the incident or person that influenced you the most as a student—the pivotal experience.
- What was the most difficult thing about writing your Reflective Essay?
- How did you deal with time management while doing all the parts of this Graduate Project work?
- What would you do differently if given the opportunity and why? •What advice do you have for next year's students?
- What do you plan to do after high school?

## **Appeals Protocol for Graduate Project**

A student participating in the Graduate Project may formally appeal the decisions of the Graduate Project Advisor by following the procedure described below. If the procedure is not followed, via the protocols established, the appeal will be summarily dismissed.

### **Issues that may be appealed**

#### **A. “Doesn’t Meet Standard” Scores**

- a. Project Proposals not receiving approval
- b. Project components
- d. Not attending Presentation
- e. Plagiarism and Misrepresentation

#### **B. Change in Graduate Project Mentor**

### **Procedure**

#### **1. Informal Reconsideration**

A student may meet informally with his/her Advisor to appeal a decision regarding the Following:

- a. Change in Graduate Project Mentor
  - i. If approved by Advisor, the student will need to complete a new Graduate Project Mentor Agreement Form and Contact Information Form
- b. Change Scheduled Presentation
  - i. Within three school days of notification of his/her scheduled presentation, a student may request a schedule change by contacting the school’s Graduate Project Community Coordinator to arrange a possible rescheduling of the Presentation.

#### **2. Formal Appeal**

A student may formally appeal an Advisor’s decision in the following cases:

- A.. “Doesn’t Meet Standard” Scores
  - i. Project Proposals not receiving approval
  - ii. Portfolio and Project Presentation Components
  - iv. Plagiarism and Misrepresentation
- B. Missing the Graduate Project Presentation

To make a formal appeal, a student must follow the procedure below:

- A. Submit a completed Petition for Appeals Form to Graduate Project Committee within two school days.
- B. Within five school days of receiving the Petition for Appeals Form, the Graduate Project Committee shall convene for an Appeal Review.
- C. Attendance by a simple majority of the Committee is necessary for an Appeal Review to be held.

D. The Committee will elect an attending member to serve as the Chairperson for the Appeal Review.

E. The student will be contacted to make an appointment to attend the Appeal Review.

The student will be allowed ten minutes to present his/her case before the Committee.

The student presentation of the appeal will be followed by ten minutes of clarifications as needed.

A parent/guardian, Project Advisor, and/or Project Mentor may attend the Appeal Review with the student. After the case is presented, the Graduate Project Committee will go into executive session and a decision will be rendered which will include written documentation of the decision. A file of all written documentation will be maintained by the school's principal. The appeals process is confidential. The decision will be rendered no later than one day after the Appeal Review.

The Committee will decide one of the following:

i. If the appeal is granted, the student will be given an opportunity to fulfill the requirements of the component. All new deadlines (if necessary) will be determined by the Graduate Project Committee

ii. If the appeal is not granted, the student is subject to Graduate Project protocols described in the Graduate Project Student Handbook

## Petition for Appeals Form

For Official Use Only

Received by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of the Appeal Review \_\_\_\_\_

Approved " " Disapproved " " Date of Notification \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

Graduate Project Committee Chair Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Project \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate Project Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate Project Mentor \_\_\_\_\_

**Component Appeal Requested (mark all that apply)**

**Proposal    Project    Portfolio    Presentation**

I have discussed this Petition for Appeals Form with my child and understand that the Graduate Project Committee will decide one of the following:

1. If the appeal is granted, the student will be given an opportunity to fulfill the requirements of the component. All new deadlines (if necessary) will be determined by the Graduate Project Committee.
2. If the appeal is not granted, the student is subject to Graduate Project protocols described in the Graduate Project Student Handbook

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Please comment on each question and clearly print or type your answers.)

1. What do you understand to be the general reasons for the decision/score given?

2. What are the reasons for submitting your appeal? Please be specific. Cite pages, illustrations, scoring guide, etc. Please explain. Use additional pages if necessary.

3. In your opinion, how can the situation be resolved?

4. Detail any applicable extenuating circumstances that should be considered.

5. Do you have any other comments concerning this request?

Signature of Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_