Oxford Area High School

705 Waterway Road   Telephone 610-932-6640
Oxford, PA 19363   FAX 610-932-6649

GRADUATION PROJECT INFORMATION MANUAL

Rationale and Requirements

Within the Chapter 4 Regulations of the State of Pennsylvania it states that students will "apply, analyze information and communicate significant knowledge and understanding." Students will demonstrate their knowledge through a combination of research, writing and oral presentation/demonstration in a multidisciplinary project. The graduation project will provide all students with a culminating activity that demonstrates these skills. It also gives students an opportunity outside the classroom to integrate their various courses of study with their individual interests.

In order to graduate from high school, a student shall complete a project in one or more areas of concentrated study under the guidance and supervision of the high school faculty. The purpose of the project, which may include research, writing and/or some appropriate form of demonstration, is to challenge the student to go beyond his/her educational program. It is an opportunity for the student to expand his/her personal knowledge to real life situations that will promote lifelong learning.

To complete the graduation project, students will need to demonstrate self-initiative. This project is student driven. Sponsors, teachers and other resource people are available to assist students; the students must initiate any request for support. This approach to the graduation project is designed to prepare the student for future endeavors in post-secondary education or work.

Student Responsibility

Responsibility for all aspects of the graduation project rests solely with the student. The student is responsible for selecting a project, scheduling time to complete the project, completing requirements on time and seeking help when needed. It is the student's responsibility to utilize the many resources available at Oxford Area High School and in the community.

Students attending the Technical College High School (TCHS) will have the required junior year project count as the requirement for this project. Students who leave the TCHS program will be expected to complete this graduation requirement here at OAHS.

All students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner when representing OAHS working on their project and when presenting to the evaluation panel.

Project Time Schedule

Documentation Required	Anticipated Completion by
Graduation Project Proposal Form	June of Sophomore year
Paper/Log Hours/Sponsor Letter	September of Senior year
Graduation Project Presentation	November of Senior year

Project Sponsor

The individual student, based on the topic of the graduation project, selects a sponsor. The sponsor must have expertise in the area of the student's project. The sponsor serves as advisor while the student completes the graduation project. Therefore, the sponsor should be easily available to the student. The project sponsor does not have to be an OAHS faculty member. A sponsor is required to hold a high school diploma or GED and may not be an immediate family member of the student. Selection of a sponsor who has expertise in the area of a student's project and who is accessible to the student is crucial to the successful completion of the graduation project.

Sponsor's Responsibilities

The following are requirements of a person agreeing to be a sponsor for a project. Potential sponsors should read this list before agreeing to sign the Sponsor Approval Form. The student should provide this list to the sponsor.

The sponsor should:
- Have expertise in the area of the student's project
- Work with the student for the entire length of the project
- Encourage the student toward the completion of the project
- Consider serving on the evaluation team

Project Procedures

Choose your topic wisely and with much thought! Good judgment in selection of the topic is critical to successful completion of the project.   The project should be completed in an area of interest to the individual student and have a relationship to the student's future goals.

When choosing a graduation project topic, students should remember that the graduation project has two components:
1. Activity or Research project
2. Oral Presentation

A lack of foresight could prove detrimental to the overall project. Students should consider the oral presentation as they plan the project. Careful planning will ensure opportunities for creating an excellent presentation. Making or collecting visual aids and using appropriate technologies should not be left to the last minute.

Completing Forms

The required forms for the graduation project are available through the Oxford Area High School webpage: www.oxfordasd.org/oahs. Once on the high school's page, under the tab "Parents and Students," select the link for "Graduation Project." Forms are also available in the high school office, guidance office, and library.

Students will submit all graduation project forms to the Dean of Students via the high school office.   The project committee will keep track of all forms that students have submitted regarding their graduation project. All general questions relative to the graduation project should be addressed to the Dean of Students.

Activity v. Research Paper

Students may choose to complete an extensive study and research paper as an alternative to an activity-based project. An oral presentation will still be used for the evaluation of this graduation requirement. Please refer to "Graduation Project Research Paper Guide" for more details.

Oral Presentation

The oral presentation demonstrates what students learned, discovered, or participated in while completing their project. Students are encouraged to use various visual aids during their oral presentation. Visual aids will serve to enhance the oral presentation. Visual aids take the form of the following:

- Overhead transparencies
- Models
- Slides
- Videos
- Computers
- Brochures or pamphlets
- Posters
- Diagrams
- Charts
- Handouts
- Costumes

The oral presentation may be given in a variety of different formats. Some of the formats that meet the requirements of the oral presentation are as follows:

- Formal speech
- Informal speech
- Demonstrations
- Performance

This is a formal event. Preparation is essential. You must rehearse your presentation before you present. It is a good idea to think about all aspects of your presentation and to think about what could possibly go wrong and how you will respond. This is essential if you are incorporating technology into your presentation. Another aspect of professionalism is dress. Business casual is an acceptable dress code to follow. If you are dressed improperly, you will be asked to reschedule your presentation. Please contact a teacher if you have questions about dress.

Evaluation Procedures

The graduation project will be evaluated on a below basic – basic – proficient –advanced assessment scale. A satisfactory assessment is needed for purposed of meeting the Oxford Area High School graduation requirement. This means that all aspects of the graduation project must be at least proficient. Parts of the graduation project that do not meet the set standards will result in an overall unsatisfactory project. The deficient portion(s) of the graduation project must be re-evaluated by a committee member.

A panel consisting of up to two-three members will assess the oral presentation and all related project paperwork. The administrator or coordinator will select no more than three evaluators.

Plagiarism/Falsified Information

Plagiarism in any form, whether intentional or unintentional, is unacceptable in the graduation project of a student at Oxford Area High School. Submitting falsified information is also unacceptable. The penalty for plagiarism or submission of falsified information will result in an unsatisfactory assessment.

Special information

Administrative Approval of All Surveys

Prior to the administration of any survey, it must be presented to an Administrator or Graduation Project Coordinator for approval. Failure to receive approval may invalidate the survey for use as part of the graduation project.

Protection of Participants in Activity or Research Projects

Oxford Area High School does not sanction any kind of activity or research project that threatens the health or well being of any investigator, facilitator, or subject (human or animal) through:
- Biomedical procedures
- Procedures used to elicit information
- Procedures designed to directly modify the knowledge, thinking, attitudes, feelings, or other aspects of the behavior of the subject
- Procedures that create discomfort or distress

Oxford Area High School does not sanction any kind of activity or research project that causes subjects any degree of:
- Discomfort
- Harassment
- Invasion of privacy
- Risk of physical injury
- Threat to personal dignity
- Potential harm

Oxford Area High School does not sanction any kind of activity or research project, which involves giving false or misleading information to subjects or withholding information from them such that their "informed" consent is in question.

Procedures for maintaining confidentiality of all subjects' data must be included in all research projects using human subjects.

Students engaged in any activity or research must conform to school policies and procedures, state laws, and national laws currently in force. A violation of ethics could result in an unsatisfactory assessment. Example: Harassment of someone is unacceptable. Live subjects must be approved for surveys or research.

Only an Administrator or Graduation Project Coordinator, in consultation with the high school administration, can grant exceptions to the above guidelines.

Sample Graduation Project Topics

Study and utilization of solar power technology in vehicles
The operation of emergency, medical, or fire services
Working with elementary students with special needs
Developing an interactive visual basic program for troubled math students
Eagle Scout project – establishing a blue bird trail
Pediatric physical therapy
Martial arts as a means of self-defense, physical fitness and personal development
Veterinary medicine at the New Bolton Animal Hospital
The operation of the Humane Society of Chester County
Rebuilding a small engine
The techniques of firefighting
Screenwriting
The roofing industry
Restoration of an historic site
Youth-based ministry
Painting and paper hanging
Volunteering with the American Red Cross
French cooking
Computerization and auto mechanics

Graduation Project Resources

Oxford Area High School faculty
Oxford Area High School library
Community libraries
West Chester University
University of Delaware
Lincoln University
Experts in fields related to projects
Personal books, magazines, and newspapers
Community service organizations
Community health organizations
Local businesses
Government agencies
Other colleges and universities
Oxford Area High School computer labs
Chester County Historical Society
Lyons Club
Chamber of Commerce
Nature Conservancy
The Lighthouse Youth Center
Young Life Ground Zero
Oxford Vision Project
Writing Research Papers by James D. Lester, 9th edition or higher