

# Student Handbook

## ROWAN-SALISBURY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION PROJECT



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## Secondary Education

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Dear Parents and Students,

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and Rowan-Salisbury Schools' leaders have embraced the challenge of preparing students for a 21st century global society. Research shows that project-based learning and assessment of essential skills are more effective than a single day of testing. With this as our focus, the Rowan-Salisbury School Board determined that all Rowan-Salisbury Schools' students would be required to complete a Graduation Project to receive a high school diploma.

### The Graduation Project includes four (4) components:

- **Research Paper:** The student will write an eight (8) to ten (10) page paper, which shows the knowledge gained through research and expresses a deep understanding of the topic.
- **Product:** The student will develop a product, which is an extension of the Graduation Project Research Paper. A minimum of 15 hours (outside of the regular school day) must be completed. Students are required to work with a mentor at least 3-4 of the required 15 hours in their Graduation Project topic. The mentor will assist in making connections between the research and real-world applications of the chosen topic.
- **Portfolio:** The student will produce and collect documentation that supports his/her work with the topic.
- **Presentation:** The student will participate in a formal oral presentation of the Graduation Project, from the topic selection to project completion. This presentation should show the student's growth in knowledge and understanding of the topic. Each student will be evaluated on his/her performance in elements such as presentation, design, problem solving, academic content, work ethic, and time management.

As a Rowan-Salisbury School System graduation requirement, the Graduation Project is an important process in your child's academic career. Successful completion will involve parental involvement and community support. Please read this booklet with your child. It contains the requirements, rubrics, and forms necessary to complete the project. Sign and return the forms to your child's advisor. If you have any further questions, please contact the Graduation Project Coordinator at your child's high school.

Sincerely,

*Eisa M. Cox*

Director of Secondary Education



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Estimados Padres y Estudiantes,

El Departamento de Instrucción Pública de Carolina del Norte y la administración de las Escuelas de Rowan-Salisbury han aceptado el reto de preparara a los estudiantes para una sociedad global en el siglo 21. Las investigaciones muestran que el aprendizaje a base de proyectos y evaluaciones de habilidad son más efectivas que un solo día de examen. Con este enfoque, la Junta de Educación de Rowan-Salisbury requiere que todos los estudiantes de las Escuelas de Rowan-Salisbury terminen el Proyecto de Graduación para recibir un diploma de escuela superior.

**El Proyecto de Graduación incluye cuatro componentes:**

- **Documentos de Investigaciones:** El estudiante escribirá un documento de ocho (8) a diez (10) paginas, en el cual demostrara las destrezas de investigaciones y expresara a fondo su entendimiento del tema.
- **El Producto:** El estudiante desarrollará el producto, el cual es una extensión del documento de las Investigaciones del Proyecto de Graduación. Debe tener un mínimo 15 horas completas (afuera del horario diario escolar). También, se requiere que el estudiante trabaje en el Proyecto de Graduación con un mentor por 3-4 horas de las 15 horas. El mentor le ayudara a ser las conexiones entre las investigaciones y como aplicar el tema que el estudiante escogió en la vida real.
- **Portafolio:** El estudiante creara y reunirá los documentos necesarios que apoyan el tema de su trabajo.
- **Presentación:** El estudiante participará en una presentación oral formal del Proyecto de Graduación, desde la selección del tema al fin del proyecto. Está presentación debe de mostrar el desarrollo del estudiante en el conocimiento y compresión del tema. Cada estudiante será evaluado en su ejecución en los siguientes elementos; presentación, diseño, contenido académico, como resolver un problema, ética de trabajo, y tiempo.

Como requisito de graduación del Sistema Escolar de Rowan-Salisbury, el Proyecto de Graduación es un proceso importante en la carrera académica de su hijo. El éxito de finalizar el proyecto involucrara el apoyo de los padres y la comunidad. Por favor lea este folleto con su hijo. Incluye los requisitos, directrices, y formas necesarias para completar el proyecto. Firme y devuelva las formas al consejero de su hijo. Si usted tiene alguna otra pregunta por favor comuníquese con el Coordinador del Proyecto de Graduación en la escuela superior de su hijo.

Atentamente,

Eisa M Cox,  
Directora de Educación Secundaria

# Timeline for Forms

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Form Name	Completed By	Date Due	Date Submitted	Comments
Graduation Project Letter of Intent (p.5) <i>(Submit w/ Permission &amp; Liability Form)</i>	Student			
Permission and Liability Form (p.6)	Student/Parent/Guardian			
Graduation Project Ethics Pledge (p.7)	Student/Parent/Guardian			
Rough Draft of Research Paper	Student, as part of English III requirement			
Final Copy of the Research Paper	Student, as part of English III requirement			
Graduation Project Product Plan (p.8)				
Portfolio (p.10-11)	Student collects evidence			
Mentor Form (p.12)	Parent/Guardian/Student/Mentor			
Academic Advisor Log (p.13)	Academic Advisor			
Student Journal Entries (p.14)	Student			
Final Written Reflection (p.15)	Student is required to complete after the Presentation component.			
Graduation Project Verification Form (p.16)				



# Graduation Project Letter of Intent Guidelines

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Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**FOCUS:** The letter of intent introduces the topic proposal to the Graduation Project Advisory Committee. Because the Committee will approve or deny the topic based on the letter, it is extremely important the student write a letter that clearly provides the following information. The Graduation Project Proposal Form should be attached to the letter of intent when submitted.

Does the letter of intent:

- ♦ follow correct business letter form and is it addressed to the Graduation Project Advisory Committee?
- ♦ clearly state the topic?
- ♦ clearly explain why the topic was chosen?
- ♦ clearly state the focus of the research paper?
- ♦ state the sources of information the student plans to use for the paper?
- ♦ state the relationship between the paper and the project hours?
- ♦ use correct English, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation?
- ♦ contain the student's signature?

The Graduation Project Letter of Intent will be:

- ♦ submitted to English III teacher who will assess the letter for grammar & mechanics.
- ♦ submitted to the Graduation Project Advisory Committee for topic approval. Approval or suggestions for adjustments to the topic will be indicated on the returned letter.

Provide a brief description of a possible Product that will connect your research?

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***Completed in English III***





# Permission and Liability Form

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Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the Letter to Parents and Students about the Graduation Project and understand that the satisfactory completion of the Research Paper, Product (with 15 project hours; 3-4 of those with the mentor), Portfolio, and Presentation is required to graduate and receive a diploma from the Rowan-Salisbury School System. I also understand that the student and his/her parents are responsible for any damage or injury to the student or others during the student's self-selected Graduation Project.

I understand that my child, \_\_\_\_\_, has chosen \_\_\_\_\_ for his/her Graduation Project topic. I understand this topic must be reviewed and approved by the Graduation Project Advisory Committee at his/her school.

*Please print.*

Parent/Guardian Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Home Phone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

2<sup>nd</sup> Signature (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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



# Graduation Project Ethics Pledge

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Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand the Graduation Project, in all of its phases, is to be completed independently under the supervision of the mentor, the academic advisor, and other school staff deemed necessary with support from my family, friends and community. I understand my academic advisor will be available to help guide me through this process and will make suggestions as needed.

I understand if I commit plagiarism in the research paper or falsify the paper, project, product, portfolio, and/or presentation in any way, I will not “successfully complete” the Graduation Project and will not meet this graduation requirement.

I understand I must be responsible by meeting deadlines, completing requirements, and making sure the required elements, as specified in the Graduation Project Handbook, are completed with integrity and attention to detail.

I understand I must independently create a presentation to be given before a review panel, which clearly details the research and real-world applications and accomplishments of my entire Graduation Project experience.

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

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

2<sup>nd</sup> Signature (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_





# Graduation Project Product Plan

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Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Submitted \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Research Focus: \_\_\_\_\_

Possible Products: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe your proposed Product in as much detail as possible. How does this Product connect to your research?

What materials/resources will you need?

What is the approximate cost of materials/resources?

Where will you get these materials/resources?

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

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

Parent/Guardian Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Graduation Project Product Examples

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- ♦ Flyer
- ♦ Brochure
- ♦ “Before & After” Photos
- ♦ Authentic survey (and display results)
  - Rebuilding
  - Redecorating a room
  - Restoring a car
- ♦ Hands-on demonstration:
  - Shoeing a horse
  - Digitally editing photos
  - Performing Massage techniques
- ♦ Facilitate a Book or History Club (provide agendas and notes)
- ♦ Cookbook; produced to reflect genealogical & cultural heritage information
- ♦ Lesson plans for teaching a class and provide course materials
- ♦ Original works of art
- ♦ Experiment
- ♦ Community Service project
- ♦ Original music composition demonstration
- ♦ Public Service Announcement; written or videotaped
- ♦ Digital scrapbook of:
  - A family’s heritage
  - A landscaping project
  - Learning a new skill, such as scuba diving or flying a plane
- ♦ Audio scrapbook of:
  - Personal interviews of Great Depression experiences
  - Musical anthology of historical time periods
  - Influential sportscasters throughout American sports
- ♦ Video of student doing a demonstration:
  - Decorating a cake
  - Perform a pedicure
  - Demonstrating various body building techniques
- ♦ Personal poetry anthology; written and organized by student
- ♦ Personal art portfolio – digital

# Graduation Project Portfolio

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The portfolio is the learning record of the Graduation Project. It will document the student's progress as they complete the requirements of the graduation project. The mentor and academic advisor will use the portfolio to monitor the project as it develops. Prior to the presentation, the review panel will examine the portfolio to become familiar with the student's project. Students can choose to create either a digital portfolio or traditional binder portfolio. Regardless of the form, all portfolios must have a professional appearance and include the items listed below. However, additional evidence can be included to support the student's successful completion of the graduation project.

## **Guidelines and Requirements:**

1. The portfolio can be in digital or traditional binder form. If a traditional binder portfolio is created, all text must be typed. The portfolio must have a neat, professional appearance.
2. All forms and logs completed and returned during the project should be in the portfolio. Those forms are included in this student handbook. Proper and timely completion of the forms will be considered in the successful portfolio completion.
3. The portfolio should include:
  - a. Title Page
  - b. Table of Contents
  - c. Letter of Intent
  - d. Ethics Pledge
  - e. Graduation Project Product Plan
  - f. Clean Copy of the Research Paper
  - g. Academic Advisor Log of Project Contact Hours
  - h. Student Journal Entries of Product Contact Hours
  - i. Final Reflection
  - j. Graduation Project Verification Form
4. Other evidence can be included to create a visually appealing portfolio and document student engagement and participation in the graduation project activities. This evidence could include, thank you notes, pamphlets, photographs, products created, fliers, etc.

# North Carolina Public Schools' Graduation Project Portfolio Rubric

	Successful Completion		Has Not Completed		
	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Developing/ Emerging	Resubmission Necessary	Not Submitted
<b>Format/ Appearance</b>	Adheres to all guidelines for portfolio appearance.	Adheres to most guidelines for portfolio appearance.	Adheres to some guidelines for portfolio appearance.	Does not adhere to guidelines for portfolio appearance.	Fails to submit portfolio.
<b>Organization</b>	Exhibits exceptional organizational skills in compilation of portfolio.	Exhibits sufficient organizational skills in compilation of portfolio.	Exhibits minimal organizational skills in compilation of portfolio.	Exhibits no organizational skills in compilation of portfolio.	Fails to submit portfolio.
<b>Completeness</b>	Meets all requirements for portfolio contents.	Meets most requirements for portfolio contents.	Meets some requirements for portfolio contents.	Does not meet requirements for portfolio contents.	Fails to submit portfolio.
<b>Student Growth</b>	Demonstrates exceptional depth in academic and/or personal growth.	Demonstrates sufficient depth in academic and/or personal growth.	Demonstrates limited depth in academic and/or personal growth.	Does not demonstrate depth in academic and/or personal growth.	Fails to submit portfolio.
<b>Student Reflection</b>	Reveals exceptional insight into how the student anticipated changes and dealt with contingencies.	Reveals sufficient insight into how the student anticipated changes and dealt with contingencies.	Reveals limited insight into how the student anticipated changes and dealt with contingencies.	Reveals no insight into how the student anticipated changes and dealt with contingencies.	Fails to submit portfolio.
<b>Information, Technology and Communications Literacy</b>	Effectively employs technology in construction of portfolio.	Sufficiently employs technology in construction of portfolio.	Minimally employs technology in construction of portfolio.	Employs no technology in construction of portfolio.	Fails to submit portfolio.

September 2007

The North Carolina Graduation Project Implementation Guide

In compliance with federal law, the Rowan-Salisbury School System administers all educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, age, military service, disability, or gender, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law.

# Mentor Information Form

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Thank you for agreeing to serve as a mentor to a RSSS senior! Please complete the information in section one and return to the school or send by the student.

**Section 1:** *(To be completed by mentor)*

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

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Phone (Work): \_\_\_\_\_ (Home): \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation/Title/Expertise Related to Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Years of Experience in Topic Area: \_\_\_\_\_ Mentor Over 25: ☐ yes ☐ no

Relationship to student? *(Check appropriate response below)*

☐ Just met ☐ Close friend of student/family ☐ Acquaintance of student/family ☐ Non-household family member

I understand the responsibility entrusted to me as a Rowan-Salisbury Graduation Project mentor. I will oversee the above student's progress during this graduation project.

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

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As the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, I understand his/her selection of an adult mentor should be approved by me. I understand the Rowan-Salisbury School System is not responsible for checking the background of the individual I approve. I understand the Rowan-Salisbury School System will not be held responsible for the selection of my child's mentor.

Parent/Guardian Name (Please PRINT): \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

# Academic Advisor Log of Project Contact Hours

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE TOTAL	PURPOSE OF INTERACTION	RECOMMENDATION	INITIALS
	Topic Review and Selection		
	Research Paper Review		
	Product and Portfolio Review		
	Presentation Review		

The Academic Advisor should meet with the student a minimum of 4 times for:

1. Topic discussion and selection
2. Research Paper review
3. Product and Portfolio review
4. Presentation review

The Academic Advisor should meet with the student additional times to provide the needed support and assistance. Please feel free to use multiple forms if you have additional meetings.

# Student Journal Entries of Product Contact Hours

Students are required to complete a minimum of 15 hours (outside the regular school day) for the Product. During this time students must work a minimum of 3-4 hours with a mentor who is an “expert” on the Graduation Project topic. The mentor will help connect the student’s research to the real world.

Provide specific information about what *you have done* and *how this affected* what you *have learned about yourself* during your contact hours.

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

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Time Start - End	Specific Information and Reflections

# Final Written Reflection Guidelines

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The Final Written Reflection is the summative description of your Graduation Project. While your Student Product Journal Entries have discussed what you learned as you moved through the product and contact hours, the Final Written Reflection describes your overall feelings, impressions, and opinions *about what you learned from all of your Graduation Project experiences.*

A thorough Final Written Reflection should include your thoughts on the research phase of the process now that it is complete.

- ♦ What did you learn during the research process?
- ♦ How did your research guide you with your product and how you earned your hours?
- ♦ Did your product hours reveal any new information you had not learned during your research?
- ♦ Did your product change your opinions from those you had developed through your research?

Summarize your Product and the time you spent completing it.

- ♦ What life skills did you acquire during the Product hours?
- ♦ How did creating a Product and completing the hours challenge you academically and personally?
- ♦ How did working with your mentor affect your understanding of the topic and your development of the Product?

Reflect on the final stage, which will be the Oral Presentation.

- ♦ What are your feelings about the Presentation you are planning?
- ♦ What experience do you have with Presentations or speaking in front of others?
- ♦ What are you doing to prepare for the Presentation to ensure your successful completion?

Reflect on the total process.

- ♦ If you had to go back and do parts of the Graduation Project again, what would you do differently?
- ♦ How did the entire process strengthen you as a learner and as an individual?
- ♦ How did you overcome any obstacles you encountered?
- ♦ How will the skills you learned and mastered during the Graduation Project help you in life?





# Graduation Project Verification Form

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

School: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>GRADUATION PROJECT COMPONENT</b>	<b>SCORE DATE</b>	<b>RATING</b>	<b>DATE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED</b>
<b>RESEARCH PAPER</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> Not submitted <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission Necessary <input type="checkbox"/> Developing/Emerging <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Exemplary	
<b>PRODUCT</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> Not submitted <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission Necessary <input type="checkbox"/> Developing/Emerging <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Exemplary	
<b>PORTFOLIO</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> Not submitted <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission Necessary <input type="checkbox"/> Developing/Emerging <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Exemplary	
<b>ORAL PRESENTATION</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> Not submitted <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission Necessary <input type="checkbox"/> Developing/Emerging <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Exemplary	
<b>GRADUATION REQUIREMENT</b>		Successfully completed all components	

Graduation Project

Coordinator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date entered into Home Base: \_\_\_\_\_ By: \_\_\_\_\_