

SENIOR PROJECT HANDBOOK

2021-2022



Greenville Technical Charter High School

Developing Leaders of Their Own Learning

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Introduction

Choosing to learn, and learning to choose.

Why Senior Project?

Students at GTCHS are engaged learners who will demonstrate their learning through a capstone Senior Project. By senior year, all students have had multiple interactions and experiences in exploring careers and their personal pathways. When possible, the senior project will be related to a student's chosen field of study and career pathway.

This intense, year-long student directed project, allows students to demonstrate they have acquired 21st Century Skills and the characteristics outlined in the SC Profile of the High School Graduate and These skills are also representative of the South Carolina State Department of Education inquiry based ELA standards for reading, writing and presenting. These skills are Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, Communication, Information Literacy, Media Literacy, Technology Literacy, Flexibility, Leadership, Initiative, Productivity, and Social Skills.

The GTCHS Mission Statement states that our students will be prepared to be citizens and lifelong learners as part of a global workforce. The intention of the Senior Project is to allow graduating seniors the opportunity to demonstrate their skills as independent learners. The process will be evidence of each student's ability to solve problems, organize time and resources, communicate effectively, and reflect on oneself as a learner.

There are three types of senior projects available to ensure the flexibility necessary to meet every students' needs:

- Internship
- Traditional (which may include a community outreach project)
- Research

Each student will present his/her senior project to members of the school community and the local professional community. Parents and mentors may be invited as well. They will share their learning journey as well as any associated frustrations and triumphs in this presentation.

Important Dates to Remember

Activity	Internship	Traditional Research
INTERNSHIP Mentor Contract due	Aug 14	N/A
All Parent meeting (Open House)	Aug 24	Aug 24
Project Proposal due (Internship Reflection)	Sept 3	Sept 3
TRADITIONAL Mentor contract due	N/A	Sept 17
Annotated #1 due	Sept 24	Sept 24
Mentor interview, bio, and pic due Mentor Eval #1 due	Oct 8	Oct 8
Student Led Conferences	Oct 15	Oct 15
Annotated #2 due	Oct 22	Oct 22
Mentor Eval #2 due	Nov 5	Nov 5
Annotated #3 due	Nov 19	Nov 19
Mentor Eval #3 due	Dec 3	Dec 3
Annotated #4 due	Dec 17	Dec 17
Mentor Eval #4 due	Jan 7	Jan 7
Annotated #5 due (Internship ONLY)	Jan 7	N/A
Mentor Eval #5 due	Feb 4	Feb 4
Annotated #6 due (Internship ONLY)	Feb 4	N/A
Final Reflection (Internship Only)	Feb 11	N/A
Turn-in Portfolio/Product	March 4	March 4
Presentations (held in the morning)	March 11	March 11
Grade Appeals Deadline	March 29	March 29
Appeals heard by committee	April 5	April 5
Failure Redos due	April 29	April 29
Awards Day/ Senior Luncheon	May 13	May 13
Graduation	May 24	May 24

EXPECTATIONS FOR SENIOR PROJECT CLASS

What is the Senior Project Class?

Our Charter requires all graduating seniors to complete a Senior (Capstone) Project. The focus of the Senior Project Class is to help each senior engage in a personalized learning experience. **Students create a portfolio of their learning that includes assignments and activities from the class, reflective writings, a learning log where they record time spent on their project, and individualized documentation of their learning.**

This class receives a .5 credit and is considered a “workshop” style class where students start class learning together, then work in class or in the community independently, and then come back together at the end of the course as they prepare to present to the community. Students are permitted flexibility to leave campus if they need to do so in order to complete an aspect of their project; in order to leave campus they must have notified their coach, be passing the course, and have their parents permission to sign out.

Expectations

- Each student will select a type of project to complete.
 - o Research Paper
 - o Internship (*selected by application and interview in spring of Junior year*)
 - o Traditional Project (which may include Community Outreach Project)
- Each student will **meet all deadlines** associated with the class
- Each student will **meet (in-person or virtually) on a regular basis (at least twice a month) with a mentor** who is an expert in their chosen area. Mentors must sign an agreement at the beginning of the project and will evaluate the student in writing once a month. Mentors cannot be family members and must be at least 25 years old.
- Each student will **complete individual conferences with the Senior Project coach** on a regular basis (once a month) to discuss progress and develop goals for the project. Conferences will be scheduled by the senior project coach and calendar invitations for all conferences will be sent through Google Calendar. Conferences will be held in person.
- Each student will **complete the required components:**
 - o Classwork (which will be showcased in the digital portfolio)
 - o An efolio (digital portfolio) to document the learning process.
 - o A product that is representative of their learning*
 - o A presentation to a panel of graders to communicate their learning

**Internship does not require a product*

REQUIRED COMPONENTS

Efolio (digital portfolio)

1. All students will create a digital portfolio. Students may select the platform they would like to use for their portfolio. Examples will be provided by the coach and posted in the Google Classroom.
2. Classwork and the student's independent work/research will be included.
3. Required paperwork and documents (annotated bibliographies, mentor contract, mentor interview, mentor bio, mentor picture, and all mentor evaluations) will be included.
4. Learning Log showing dates, times, and what student did when working on the project will be included.
5. Monthly personal reflections will be included.
6. Clear evidence of progress on 21st Century skills and the project will be included.

Product (Traditional, Community, and Research Projects)

A product is something that a student makes, creates, or does to demonstrate their learning. A product

1. Shows a clear application of the knowledge and skills the student has acquired.
2. Represents a learning stretch and is approved by the Senior Project coach and the student's mentor

Evidence of the process of creating the product must be clearly present in the portfolio (pictures, sketches, rough drafts, diagrams, videos, notes, learning logs, etc.).

We encourage all products to include a way to share the student's learning with the world; whether that is something big (such as a community outreach project) or something as simple as an aspiring pastry chef providing their creations to a group outside of our high school.

Presentation

This is the opportunity to communicate the students' learning journey; it will showcase the student's process. It is meant to celebrate and reflect on the learning. Each senior is required to appear before a panel of community members and faculty to discuss academic efforts on their project.

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT WORK

1. All assignments and documents are **DUE ON TIME!** Late work of any assignment will have the following guidelines:

- a. Student will have one week (5 school days) to complete the assignment.
- b. The grade will reflect the number of days late
 - i. After one late day, the grade will automatically receive a score no higher than two (2) quality points.
 - ii. After 2 - 5 late days, the grade will automatically score no higher than one (1) quality point.
 - iii. After the allowed 5 days, the grade will be recorded as 0. **Work must still be made up since it will be expected to be seen in the portfolio, but the student will not receive any credit.**

If a student misses a conference or does not submit the original proposal, a reflection, or an annotated bibliography, parents will be informed via email by the senior project coach; if the parents do not respond to the email, the parents will be called and suggestions will be given to ensure that the student has appropriate strategies in place to meet future deadlines. If the issues persist, the principal will be informed and the coach will hold a meeting with the student, principal, and parent. Following this, progress will be checked regularly as part of the school's multi-tiered systems of support.

2. Conferences with your Senior Project coach

- a. **ALL** students are required to conference with the Senior Project Coach once a month for the duration of their project (Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec, Jan, Feb).
 - i. Students must provide evidence of work and progress (goals, accomplishments, evidence, and reflection) on their conference sheet.
 - ii. All conferences are graded based on evidence presented and completion of goals.
 - iii. If a student cannot attend a scheduled conference due to a medical appointment or health/family issue, the student must notify their coach at least five days in advance in order to reschedule the conference.
 - iv. **Conferences will not be rescheduled due to lack of preparation. If for any reason the student is not prepared, he/she will still meet with the coach and the conference will be scored accordingly.**
- b. Conferences will be scheduled by the Senior Project coach and students will be sent their conference date and time at least a month before each conference.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

(Traditional, Community, and Research Projects)

The first big step is the formal Project Proposal which helps ensure consistency of rigor and that

all projects can comply with the guidelines. Be thorough and clear in your thinking. **If you put it in the proposal, you MUST do it. You cannot modify or change your proposal without appearing before the Senior Project Committee to provide clear evidence and explanation of why.**

The Formal Project Proposal should be substantial enough to answer these guiding questions thoroughly. The expectation is that this proposal will be clear and detailed, and will be logically organized and typed. Use your best writing and grammar skills as you write your proposal.

The Project Proposal should follow the following format: **(Please label each section in your typed proposal)**

- A. Project Title
- B. Focus: What is your Driving Question? How will this guide your learning? What are you trying to prove, discover, or create? What are the essential questions (EQs) you must answer in order to complete your project??
- C. Product: Give a clear detailed description of your product. How will this product demonstrate your learning?
- D. Timeline: How long do you believe you will need in order to complete your project? What steps will you need to take to accomplish your goals and complete your product by March 4, 2022?
- E. Intent
 - a. Purpose: What do you want to accomplish? Why is this topic interesting and exciting for you?
 - b. Prior Knowledge: What knowledge, experience, talents, or insights do you bring to this topic? How much do you already know?
 - c. What need are you meeting or what problem are you attempting to solve in the community with your new learning? How will your new learning impact others?
 - d. How does this topic stretch your comfort limits? What risks are you going to take?

DOCUMENTATION OF LEARNING

Throughout your learning journey, you will complete various assignments to help you capture your learning and growth. Your portfolio is your Senior Project story and contains everything! All documentation needs to be appropriately organized in your portfolio; your portfolio needs to be organized so it tells a clear story. As you complete tasks and reach benchmarks throughout your Senior Project journey, you will place information into your portfolio.

INTRODUCTION

1. Welcome your graders and introduce yourself and your project
2. Explain any portfolio features that may be unique or hard to find
3. Include your
 - a. Accepted Proposal (Traditional, Community, and Research Projects)
 - b. Reflective Introduction (Internship)
4. Any pre-project work
 - a. Evidence of finding a mentor
 - b. Evidence of landing an internship
 - c. Classwork you complete in preparation for your project/internship

MENTOR INFORMATION

1. Mentor Contract
2. Mentor Biography
3. Mentor Picture (with you!)
4. Mentor Interview questions and mentor responses
5. Monthly evaluations
6. Learning Log/Time Log (interns must have this signed by the mentor once a month!)

CONFERENCES

1. Monthly conference sheets (in chronological order)
2. Evidence that accompanies conferences

REFLECTIONS

1. Monthly reflections (in chronological order)

LEARNING JOURNALS (Internship Only)

1. Detailed summary of internship tasks
2. Interns must complete a journal entry every time they complete an internship shift

RESEARCH

1. Annotated bibliography entries
2. Annotated articles, interview notes - evidence of research
3. Final annotated bibliography document

Documenting Research Sources

Regardless of the type of source, each student must provide evidence they have used the source. This can be in the form of annotated text, personal notes, interview questions and response, outline, summary of info etc. **Each source** must be cited according to MLA format in alphabetical order in an annotated bibliography. Required

interview(s) must be with an adult (age 25 or older) who has significant experience with the topic/career and is **NOT** your mentor.

Research Requirements:

- Internship – 3 interviews (not your mentor), 3 other sources
- Community – 3 interviews (not your mentor), 3 other sources
- Research Paper – 2 interviews (not your mentor), 12-15 traditional sources
- Traditional – 1 interview (not your mentor), 3 other sources

FINAL WORDS/THANK YOU

1. Each portfolio should have a section that offers a conclusion
 - a. While interns include their Reflection Introduction in the Introduction portion of their portfolio, a closing statement should still be included to conclude the portfolio.

INTERNSHIP

Students who have applied and been accepted into the internship program must complete the requirements documented in the Senior Project Handbook. In addition to the requirements already included to this handbook, Interns must also complete the following:

1. The Intern is responsible for locating a placement and mentor. GTCHS may offer suggested contacts, **but the student is responsible for securing the mentor**. All students who do not confirm an internship by the designated deadline will be moved to the traditional class.
 - a. Time at placement must be documented and signed by the mentor in order to

receive credit for the time. The signed time log must be turned in during each class conference. Please do not wait until the last minute to get these hours verified. **They will not be accepted late.**

- b. The student is responsible for signing in and out of school in the appropriate notebook in my room. The student must also clear attendance with the attendance clerk.
 - c. Students are responsible for ensuring their senior project coach is aware of where they will be if not on school grounds during the class period assigned.
2. Complete at least 60 hours in an Internship related to their career choice.
 - a. Internship hours must be completed within your internship and must demonstrate learning that relates to the student's career goals
 - b. The intern may work alongside employees that have not been designated as their mentor as long as the work is completed within the internship placement
 3. Complete one mentor evaluation each month of interning (minium 3)
 4. Complete journal entries for each day spent at internship placement
 - a. Each entry should be detailed enough that the reader has a clear picture and understanding of what the intern accomplished on each internship day
 - b. Interns are expected to type their journals and add evidence in the form of photos, snapshots, scanned documents, etc. to support their entry
 5. Interns must present learning and information about their career

Students enrolled in the GTCHS Internship class are responsible for staying current with class work. Students will check the Google Classroom daily for assignments and other relevant information. Additionally, all interns are required to join the internship GroupMe chat group to communicate with Mrs. Moreira throughout the internship journey.

RESEARCH PAPER

The research paper option for senior project allows students to explore a topic that connects to their career interests but may not offer hands-on learning opportunities due to various laws and restrictions; it is also a good option for students who have a more academic-focused career and could benefit from this style of project. The research paper is considered the “product.” The requirements for the research paper are as follows:

1. Research papers will be at least 15 pages in length.
2. Research papers are organized into paragraphs and sections if needed. All research papers will be typed in 12 pt, Times New Roman, double spaced
3. Research sources must include

- a. at least 2 interviews (not with your mentor)
 - b. a variety of 12-15 traditional sources (journals, books, articles, recordings, videos)
4. All sources must be correctly cited (MLA or APA, depending on the selected topic) in the body of the paper (in-text citations or footnotes) and in a Works Cited List at the end of the paper.
 - a. Students who choose to write a research paper may wish to ask their mentor, coach, or another adult for assistance with proofreading and editing the paper.

Plagiarism is a very serious offense and will result in a zero on the paper, which would cause the student to fail the senior project class. To avoid plagiarism, consult the MLA/APA manual; have your coach and at least one other trusted adult and/or former English teacher review your paper; utilize a plagiarism checker if possible. Track all of the information and your sources, including your in-text citations as you write the draft. Be sure to cite all information gained from somewhere other than yourself. It is very important that you ask questions about your citations if you do not know how to cite something.

All information that is not your own, even if you have written it in your own words, must be cited in the text and on a works cited page. Also, work that has been simply copied and pasted from the internet will not be accepted. Any instance of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the research paper which would cause the student to fail the senior project class.

DISTINGUISHED

Those who achieve Distinguished are spotlighted during awards day and graduation. These projects are meant to be the “best of the best” of our GTCHS Senior Projects.

The first step to achieve the status of Distinguished is for the grading pairs to recommend students to the senior project committee following the grading process.

The team will complete the distinguished recommendation form that is sent to the senior project

committee that outlines why they have made the recommendation.

The committee will alert the student and ask the student to prepare a presentation of no more than 5 minutes to showcase what he/she did that went above and beyond the expectations for all senior projects. The committee will meet with each recommended student, hear their presentations, and determine if the student will earn distinguished. The overall classroom performance as well as the portfolio, product (except for interns), and presentation will be taken into consideration in making the final decision.

Achieving Distinguished qualifies the student to exempt all high school final exams with teacher approval.

GRADING POLICY

All components have a specified weight in calculating the final Senior Project grade average. It is the final F1 term grade that determines whether the student has met mastery of the senior project. The Final F1 grade is composed of the following components:

TRADITIONAL:
Class average = 35%
Portfolio = 25%

INTERNSHIP:
Class Average = 40%
Portfolio = 40%

Product = 25%
Presentation = 15%

Presentation = 20%

All work is graded holistically on a 4 point scale. Final averaging is based on the S. C. Uniform Grading Scale which is converted to a percentage for reporting purposes.

4+ = 100	3+ = 90	2+ = 80	1+ = 70
4 = 95	3 = 85	2 = 75	1 = 65

Work not turned in will receive zero (0) quality points but must be completed.

TROUBLESHOOTING

During the course of the semester, students will work with the Senior Project coaches, your Mentor, and other community experts. Proactive and transparent communication with the coach during class periods, especially during conferences, is critical. As a senior, students are expected to advocate for themselves and use the resources available. If students are faced with a problem, there are several avenues of support:

Coach

Your Senior Project coach is your first advocate. Any difficulties, such as the ones listed below, should be discussed with the coach first.

- Concerns with your mentor
- Locating research sources
- Setting, achieving, and documenting goals
- Staying on task
- Development of product and/or portfolio
- Technology concerns
- Citing sources

Advisor

Since you spend so much time with them, your advisor knows you pretty well! Use your advisor as a sounding board to solve your problems. As your advocate, they can help you find a solution.

Career Development Facilitator (CDF)

Our Career Development Facilitator is here to assist you; if you need help locating sources, obtaining a mentor, or making a connection with a local organization.

Senior Project Committee

This committee has the final ruling on many issues. They are designed to ensure consistent guidelines for all students. They are a last resort to consult. If you or your coach believe a meeting is necessary, a request must be submitted to the chairman in writing along with a clear explanation of the situation. Parents will be notified of the meeting and the purpose of the meeting. They are permitted to attend, but the meeting is with the student. If parents choose to attend, they are there for support and information only. Only the student will be speaking with the committee during the meeting. The committee is composed of members from each academic discipline by members of the GTCHS faculty and is chaired by Mr. Ken Gillespie. The committee will rule on the following:

1. Ethics issues
2. Plagiarism
3. Issues with the Project Proposal
4. The final product or portfolio being submitted past the deadline
5. Grade appeals for final product and/or portfolio

Teachers WILL NOT discuss any of the assessment process (product, portfolio, presentation, distinguished) with a student or parent. All questions will be referred to the Senior Project committee.

GRADE APPEALS

Students have until **March 29** to ask for an appeal for their portfolio and/or product grade. Students may not appeal the presentation or class grade.

To ask for an appeal,

1. Students should send an email to the head of the Senior Project Committee (Mr. Gillespie) and copy their coach.
 - a. This email should state which part of the project they would like to have re-graded.
 - b. This email should state the student's current grade on this part of the project.
 - c. This email should briefly state why the student feels that this part of their project

should be re-graded.

2. Students will meet with the Senior Project Committee on **April 5** to tell the committee why they are asking for an appeal and answer any questions the committee has.

If the committee grants an appeal, a new grading pair will use the same original rubric and grade the specified part of the project. The new grade will be averaged with the old grade to get the final grade for that part of the project. **The new grade could be higher or lower than the original grade.**

ACHIEVING MASTERY

Students who do not earn a 75% or higher for their final class grade are offered the opportunity to continue working on their project for the month of April.

These students and their adults sign the letter that accompanies their grades to signify that they understand that continuing to work on the project does not guarantee that the student will pass the senior project class.

1. Students are required to have weekly conferences with their senior project coach. Students will make weekly goals and be able to show progress at each conference. No conference sheets are used for these weekly meetings. **Failure to meet with the senior project coach for these weekly conferences will result in no improvement of the classwork portion of the senior project grade.**
2. Students are able to add to their portfolio and re-do their products in order to

demonstrate mastery.

3. The class grade for students may be improved as students use class time wisely, attend weekly meetings that demonstrate progress, and improve their projects.
4. The re-do grade will be averaged (twice) with the original grade (once) for a revised senior project grade.

Senior project re-dos are due by midnight on **April 29, 2022** in the Google Classroom.

Senior Project Ethics Policy

Your own ethical behavior ensures the integrity of your Senior Project. Conducting yourself ethically while working on the Senior Project means doing the right thing as you work on all parts of this project.

One obvious ethical violation is plagiarism. GTCHS has a policy regarding plagiarism that also applies to the Senior Project. This policy can be found in the student handbook. According to Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, plagiarism is defined as "to steal and pass off (the ideas, words, or work of another) as one's own" without crediting the source."

Another kind of plagiarism that applies to this project is the act of passing off someone else's work as your own, particularly in regards to the product phase of the project. If someone else completes any part of your product, you are not allowed to pass off the work as your own.

Lying and forgery will not be tolerated in any aspect of the Senior Project and will result in a grade of a zero on any work connected to the lying and/or forgery.

Students suspected of academic dishonesty will be required to appear before the Senior Project Committee and demonstrate the originality of all their Senior Project work. The committee will

then determine the action to be taken.

The best way to avoid plagiarism is simply to give credit where it is due. If you have any questions, ask your teacher.

Ethical behavior also extends into presenting yourself truthfully and honestly during the final presentation portion of the project. You are not allowed to embellish the truth; if your project did not go as planned, or even if it failed altogether, you must be honest.

If it is suspected that you have behaved unethically during any phase of the project, you will be required to meet with the Senior Project Committee, which will determine your penalty. Parents will be notified of the meeting and the purpose of the meeting. They are permitted to attend, but only the student will be allowed to participate in the meeting. You and your parents will be informed of their decision if they determine that in fact your behavior was unethical.

We acknowledge that we understand and will abide by the ethical behavior policy and accept appropriate consequences as determined by the Senior Project Committee in the event of a violation.

Student's Signature and Date

Parent's Signature and Date