

Graduation Project FAQs

1. What is the RSS Graduation Project?

The RSS Graduation Project is a performance-based exit assessment where students demonstrate their knowledge and skills on a self-selected topic, as they prepare to graduate from high school. The project has three (3) main components: a Paper, a Product, Portfolio, and a Presentation.

2. Whom does the Graduation Project affect?

The RSS Graduation Project will affect all students entering high school in 2009 and beyond. Every student will be required to complete the project in order to receive a North Carolina high school diploma from the Rowan-Salisbury School System.

3. Why is RSS requiring a Graduation Project?

Completing the Graduation Project will provide students the opportunity to apply 21st Century Learning Skills. These skills (communication, technology, higher level reading and writing proficiencies, effective time management, critical thinking, and working alone or collaboratively with complex situations) will prepare students for college and career experiences.

4. Will students have an opportunity to work on the project at school?

Yes. While students will be required to complete some of the work involved in the project independently, skills needed to complete the Graduation Project are embedded in the curriculum. Students will write their Graduation Project Research Paper in English III. Advisors, determined by each school, are assigned to students and provide ongoing advice and support. Opportunities for oral presentations should be integrated in all content areas to help students develop these skills.

5. How will the research paper topic be selected?

Students will choose a topic of interest for the project from one of the three following categories;

- Career/Profession
- Service to Community
- Personal Interest/Hobby.

All topics must be approved by the Graduation Project Advisory Committee at the school level.

6. How specific does the topic need to be?

The topic must be narrowed to an essential question and thesis, which can be addressed in an 8-10 page research paper. The topic should be broad enough for a research paper and should lend itself to a product. Students will receive guidance with their topic development, submit it for approval to the Graduation Project Advisory Committee, and will be notified when the topic is approved or requires revision.

7. What are some possible products?

The list of possible products is vast and various; the possibilities run from tangible to intangible and short-term to long-term. In other words, the key to an effective product is to allow for individual differences and creativity.

Possible Product examples include:

- Hands on demonstrations
- Original works of art
- “Before” and “After” photos showing an engine being rebuilt
- Facilitation of a book club
- Digital scrapbook: A Family’s History Preserved

****Refer to “Graduation Project Product Examples” page # 9, in Graduation Project Student Handbook. In all cases, the product should have a viable and logical link to the research topic and thesis.**

8. What is the Presentation component?

The oral Presentation is the final component of the Graduation Project. The student highlights the work and learning involved in the completion of his/her Graduation Project topic to a 3 member review panel; 2 of the 3 must come from the community. During this time, the student “communicates clearly, logically, and responsibly” his/her Product and research, with detailed information regarding how he/she has been impacted by this experience. The student may be asked questions by the review panel and should be prepared to answer other questions that may arise. If he/she does not know the answer, he/she should be honest and say he/she doesn’t understand.

The student should present a professional appearance, and may wear a career uniform related to the career area of their topic.

9. Who should students contact if they have questions?

Advisors are assigned at the beginning of each school year. Each student should talk with his/her advisors first and then seek answers from members of the Graduation Project Advisory Committee or Graduation Project Coordinator.

10. What happens if the student graduates early?

The student must complete the Graduation Project before he/she graduates.

11. What if a student transfers from another school?

A student transferring into the Rowan-Salisbury School System, before or during the first semester of his/her senior year, must complete the Graduation Project. A student is only exempt from the project if he/she transfers into our system during the **second semester of his/her senior year.**

12. How will Rowan-Salisbury Schools provide support with the Graduation Project to a student who transfers in during his/her senior year?

The Graduation Project Coordinator and school principal will assist the senior in developing an individual plan to successfully complete the requirements of the Graduation Project as determined by the principal and the Graduation Project Coordinator.