

Fast Facts

1. What is it? The North Carolina Graduation Project is a performance-based exit assessment that allows students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills as they prepare to graduate from high school. The project has four main components: a paper, a product, a presentation, and a portfolio.
2. Who does it affect? The North Carolina Graduation Project will affect all students starting with the 2006-2007 ninth grade class. Every student will be required to complete the project in order to receive a high school diploma.
3. Why are we doing this? As they work to complete the project, students will have the opportunity to improve their communication skills, enhance their computer knowledge and information retrieval skills, develop higher level reading and writing proficiency, hone their verbal abilities and presentation skills, and increase their employability skills. They will have to identify and solve problems, self-evaluate, develop a timeline for work completion, take initiative, and exercise self-discipline. The North Carolina Graduation Project is **not** a Wake County Public School System initiative. It is mandated by the **North Carolina Department of Public Instruction for all high schools in the state.**
4. Will students have an opportunity to work on the project at school? While students will be required to complete much of the work involved in the project independently, certain aspects of the projects will be embedded in the curriculum and will emerge as class requirements in some of the classes a student will take over the four years he or she is in high school. Every student will also be assigned a faculty member "coach" and will select another adult from the community as a "mentor" to direct and coordinate his or her work and provide help and information as needed.
5. Will students choose the topic for the project or will it be assigned? Students may choose a topic of interest to them for the project. All topics must be approved by the graduation project steering committee at the school level. Topic selections are due at the beginning of the junior year.
6. What are the requirements for the four main components? The **paper** is the first step. It must be a research paper that follows traditional research procedures, including documentation. It will be scored using a statewide rubric, and students must receive a passing score on the paper, before moving to the presentation step. The **presentation** is a ten to fifteen minute oral version of the paper, given before a panel of teachers and other adults from the school community, and scored using a statewide rubric. The **product** is a tangible extension of the paper, and may take such forms as a model, an experiment, a performance, a demonstration, a pamphlet, a website, or a community service. Other examples of products could be performance-based such as fashion shows, musical and dance performances, athletic demonstrations, and culinary endeavors. Still others may be time logged in a particular activity such as job shadowing, internships and apprenticeships, and service learning. The product is also scored using a statewide rubric, and is included the presentation. The **portfolio** is simply a documentation of the student's work in the form of a notebook or journal. It will also contain properly documented forms and letters related to the project.
7. Who should I contact if I have questions? Coaches will be assigned near the beginning of the junior year, and will provide contact information. The coach should be the first contact regarding a student's progress. If you have questions before coaches are assigned, or general questions about the process, names and email addresses for the steering committee members are posted of the Apex High School website, or you may contact your counselor.
8. Can I request an AHS teacher to be my coach? Although not guaranteed, requests for coaches will be considered. Coach request need to be submitted along with the GP topic proposal form.
9. What happens if I graduate early? You will complete your Graduation Project before you graduate.
10. What does a Community Mentor do? Mentors will discuss the topic with the student, help to develop the "essential question", suggest sources of information, check student findings to assure they are on target with real world applications, assist in the development of the product. Their specific involvement will vary depending upon the topic and the product.

11. How specific does the topic need to be? The topic must be narrowed to an essential question that can be addressed in an 8 to 10 page research paper. The topic should have enough information available for a research paper and should lend itself to a product.

12. Can I complete my graduation project early? State guidelines call for a project that extends over the four years of a student's high school experience and is a culminating activity. Students may certainly choose to begin working on Graduation Project components early but should not expect school staff to be able to complete the evaluation process of the components early. Staff will assess research papers during the student's junior year. Products and presentations will be evaluated during the student's final year in high school. Students who have a reason to have the project assessed early should discuss their request with their Graduation Project Coach.