

Is a Senior Capstone Project Right for **You?**

Each Child, Our Future, Ohio's strategic plan for education, calls for high school students to be able to demonstrate knowledge and skills that will bring them success as they pursue their post-high school plans.

Ohio has approved senior "capstone" projects as part of the graduation requirements for the class of 2020. Through them, students can show evidence of their college and career readiness by connecting their academic and technical learning with real-world learning opportunities that deepen their knowledge.

A capstone project complements a student's test-based graduation requirements through a learning experience such as an internship, problem-based research project, public service project or other initiative the student designs.

How You Can Benefit from a Capstone Project

A successful capstone project allows you to:

- Initiate, design and conduct a project that shows what you know and can do as you work on a real-world problem or in a real-world setting;
- Use your analytical skills and draw on different academic disciplines to synthesize information, develop creative solutions and generate new ideas;
- Engage in or exercise innovation, discovery, creativity, resilience and persistence;
- Show your academic strength;
- Apply the deep knowledge you've gained through high school to career exploration;
- Develop more self-awareness, self-management, relationship and decision-making skills, and social awareness;
- Apply the knowledge and skills you've learned in the classroom to the real world.

The Four Parts of a Capstone Project

Your senior capstone project must include a **proposal**, **anchor experience**, **culminating portfolio of work** and **presentation**. Through these, you will demonstrate knowledge and skills in five core areas: **mathematics**, **research**, **writing**, **technology** and **communication**.

1. Your proposal – Your project objective, including the timeline you'll follow, the resources you'll need and what you expect to learn.

2. Your anchor experience – A learning experience you design that merges your passions, creativity and future career interests with the knowledge and skills you have gained in high school or elsewhere. It could include a semester-long public service project, a research project in your area of interest, a compilation of your creative work, a campaign or event that promotes your favorite cause, or another initiative you propose.

3.

Your culminating portfolio of work – The connection between your anchor experience and the collective knowledge and skills you learned in high school. Your portfolio proves that you've learned what you outlined in your capstone proposal and includes documents and other major deliverables you proposed, along with your reflections. Your portfolio also includes work you created, such as prototypes of objects or programs, research papers or reports, or video or artistic demonstrations.

4.

Your presentation – A summary of your capstone project delivered to a panel of district-chosen individuals, during which you take questions. You will talk about the lessons you learned and how they will affect the actions you will take after high school. Your presentation could include a project at a science fair or competition; presenting to your city council, local board of education or local civic organization; or taking part in a district-sponsored capstone presentation day.

Capstone Project Evaluation

Your school district will evaluate your capstone project to make sure it meets project rules and standards, so your teachers and school know it will serve you well.

How to Take the Next Steps

Talk to your school counselor to decide if a senior capstone project is best for you to satisfy Ohio's graduation requirements. Your counselor can give you more materials on the senior capstone project and help you understand what you need to do to complete this project at your school.

This toolkit includes forms and templates that can be used to help develop your proposal and document your progress toward completing the capstone project.



CAPSTONE PROJECT PROPOSAL GUIDE

STUDENT INFORMATION

Student Name: _____ Address: _____ City/Zip Code: _____

Telephone Number: _____ DOB: _____

High School Name and Address: _____

Capstone Advisor: _____ Anchor Experience: _____

Mentor: _____ Address: _____ City/Zip Code: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Objective:

CAPSTONE TOPIC

PROVIDE A BRIEF STATEMENT OUTLINING THE PROPOSED TOPIC, AREA OF STUDY OR FOCUS FOR YOUR CAPSTONE PROJECT. PLEASE INCLUDE A STATEMENT OF HOW THIS CONNECTS TO YOUR POST-HIGH SCHOOL PLANS.

Attach additional documents if necessary.

Type of Anchor Experience (Select all that apply.)

- Internship or work experience
- Problem-based research project
- Community service experience
- Visual or performing arts demonstration
- Other _____

DESCRIPTION OF ANCHOR EXPERIENCE

DESCRIBE YOUR ANCHOR EXPERIENCE AND HOW IT WILL EXPLORE THE CAPSTONE TOPIC, AREA OF STUDY OR FOCUS. THE ANCHOR EXPERIENCE SHOULD BE A STUDENT-DIRECTED, AUTHENTIC LEARNING EXPERIENCE THAT MERGES YOUR PASSIONS, CREATIVITY AND FUTURE CAREER OR COLLEGE INTERESTS WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS YOU'VE GAINED IN HIGH SCHOOL OR ELSEWHERE.

DESCRIPTION OF ANCHOR EXPERIENCE

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE AREAS WITHIN THE CAPSTONE PROJECT (EXAMPLE: ANCHOR EXPERIENCE, PORTFOLIO OF WORK, PRESENTATION, ETC.) IN WHICH YOU WILL DEMONSTRATE MATHEMATICAL SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE, RESEARCH, WRITING, TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION. THIS SHOULD INDICATE A PLAN FOR HOW YOU WILL DEMONSTRATE THESE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE.

MATHEMATICAL SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE:

--

RESEARCH:

--

WRITING:

--

TECHNOLOGY:

--

COMMUNICATION:

--

ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED IN CULMINATING PORTFOLIO OF WORK

PLEASE PROVIDE AN OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSED DELIVERABLES FOR YOUR CULMINATING PORTFOLIO OF WORK.

ALL PORTFOLIOS MUST INCLUDE:

- a. Capstone proposal and supporting documents;
- b. Documentation of progress;
- c. Evidence of completion of the anchor experience;
- d. Reflections; and
- e. Self-evaluation and capstone advisor and mentor evaluations

WHICH ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE OF ORIGINAL STUDENT WORK WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE STUDENT PORTFOLIO?

(For example: Artifacts or artistic work; college and career development-related supporting documents; materials developed during the anchor experience; literature review; project; prototype quantitative and/or qualitative data analysis; research paper or report; video, audio, photographic or artistic demonstrations; budget proposal or business plan; or other items identified by the student and approved in the proposal.)

CAPSTONE PROJECT TIMELINE

Student Name:

Directions: Set up a clear, detailed timeline for project completion. The timeline should include:

- i. Established benchmarks (in chronological order) for project completion; and
- ii. Identified check-in points with the capstone advisor and career or community mentor.

Be sure to consult with your capstone advisor for any check-in points or deadlines your school may establish.

EVENT/ACTIVITY	DATE	NOTES

SAMPLE CAPSTONE PROJECT PROCESS CHECKLIST

Student Name: _____

You will follow a process that will help ensure your success throughout the entire capstone project experience. You are required to complete these steps to qualify for graduation.

Description	Advisor Initials	Date
1. Project Development: With the help of advisor, the student will explore and research a potential capstone anchor experience and mentor.		
2. Capstone Proposal: Submit capstone proposal and discuss with advisor.		
3. Mentor Experience: Identify a community or career mentor.		
4. Anchor Experience: Finalize details for anchor experience.		
5. Project Approval: Meet with mentor and advisor for project approval.		
6. Work on anchor experience, research, portfolio and presentation: During this time, the student will meet with his or her advisor and mentor a minimum of twice per semester to review draft documents and receive assistance and guidance.		
7. Finalize and submit culminating portfolio of work Student will submit final research and portfolio.		
8. Portfolio evaluation Evaluation team selected by district evaluates student's portfolio.		
9. Presentation: Student will present capstone project, research findings and portfolio.		
10. Successful completion of capstone project: If all capstone project requirements have been met, the student will receive credit for completing the capstone project.		

CAPSTONE PROJECT CAREER OR COMMUNITY MENTOR REQUEST

Dear Mentor Volunteer,

Thank you for agreeing to be a capstone project mentor. The time and effort you are donating is helping _____, (*Student Name*) a _____ (*School District*) student, complete a project that is both important to him/her and serves as a capstone to 13 years of education. The capstone project is an optional graduation pathway, so your role as a mentor is critical in supporting this student.

The following agreement signifies your willingness to assist this student in his or her project. The information you provide will allow us to contact you if we have any questions regarding the project. Once again, thank you for your efforts in mentoring and supporting.

1. Mentor Name: _____

2. Mentor Address: _____

3. Phone Number: _____

4. Best Time to Call: _____

5. Email Address _____

6. I have read the student's capstone proposal and am aware of my role in the process. I agree to contribute to the development of the following skills and knowledge:

I am willing to mentor _____ (*Student Name*) in the successful completion of his/her capstone project and provide the assistance requested above. I have met with the student and discussed the project.

Mentor Signature: _____ Date: _____

DOCUMENTATION OF ANCHOR EXPERIENCE SAMPLE TEMPLATE

Student Name:		Anchor Experience	
Address:		Mentor:	
City/Zip:		Address:	
Phone:	DOB:	City/Zip:	
High School:		Phone:	
Capstone Advisor:		Start Date:	End Date:
Time	Duty/responsibility	Academic, technical or professional skill demonstrated	Evidence of demonstration

Student Reflection Questions

These reflection questions may be used in conjunction with any anchor experience. They should be answered for each work sample or writing sample that will be included in your portfolio. The goal is to reflect on your understanding of the learning objectives of the anchor learning experience. The reflection on learning has several purposes that will help you:

- Make connections between what you do in your anchor experience and the intended learning outcomes of the experience;
- Learn to evaluate the quality of your work in relation to the standards established for the intended learning outcomes;
- Think about how you have improved your knowledge and skills over time; and
- Identify your strengths and make plans for what you want to do next to improve even more.

What you write in your reflection becomes important supporting evidence of your learning that you can share with others in addition to samples of your work. These can become viable resources when you are applying for jobs, scholarships or admission to new education or training programs that will help you achieve your career and life goals.

Reflect on each of the prompts below:

1. What were some of the most interesting discoveries you made while working on your capstone project portfolio? Your anchor experience? About yourself? About others?

2. What did you learn were your greatest strengths? What are your biggest areas for improvement?

Student Reflection Questions

3. What were some of your most challenging moments and what made them challenging? How did you approach and resolve those challenges?

4. If this is not the first time you have reflected on your performance or products in relation to these intended learning objectives, describe how your work and the knowledge and skills it demonstrates have improved since the last time.

5. Describe what you would like to do next to improve your performance or product in terms of the standards and criteria given in the Student Skills Assessment Rubric.

CAPSTONE PROJECT EVALUATION PROCESS

An evaluation team will evaluate and approve your capstone project. The evaluation team will be made up of individuals determined by the district but may include the capstone advisor, community or career mentor, and a teacher or external expert in English language arts, mathematics or technology (to evaluate the content area demonstrations). The process for evaluation should include the steps outlined below.

Step 1: Planning and Approval

The capstone proposal and supporting document includes each of the following:

- A. Objective;
- B. Clearly defined goals;
- C. Timeline;
- D. Signed pledge.

Step 2: Documentation and Evaluation of the Anchor Experience

The student has adequately completed each of the following:

- A. Documentation of progress;
- B. Evidence of completion of the anchor experience;
- C. Student reflections;
- D. Self-evaluation of anchor experience;
- E. Mentor evaluations.

Step 3: Culminating Portfolio of Work Evaluation

The evaluation team selected by the district will evaluate the final portfolio of work at the end of the year based on the following competencies shown in:

- A. Research and writing;
- B. Mathematical skills and knowledge;
- C. Technology skills and knowledge;
- D. Problem-solving and critical thinking;
- E. Innovation and creativity;
- F. Capstone cohesiveness;
- G. Demonstration of three student-identified competencies outlined in the project proposal;
- H. Self-reflection essay.

Step 4: Presentation Evaluation

- A. Effective communication;
- B. Articulation of all capstone content requirements;
- C. Logical organization of presentation;
- D. Clear explanation of process and key findings and learning;
- E. Use of technology and other media.

Click [here](#) for additional resources, including a sample culminating portfolio of work rubric or sample presentation rubric.