



# Senior Project Certification

***Implementing  
a Senior Project  
program is one thing.  
Maintaining and sustaining  
excellence is quite another.***

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# Senior Project Program Certification

## ***Why would a school seek certification for its Senior Project program?***

All Senior Project programs are not equal. Quality Senior Project programs represent

- Challenging, rigorous and relevant processes** producing worthy results.
- Four components** (paper, product, portfolio and p presentations) each reflecting quality student work, student-driven and teacher-guided
- Increased exit standards** blending real world application with traditional learning
- Long-term educational expectations** based upon as strong, relevant foundation

Certification will verify to the nation, state, region, local community as well as other high schools, businesses and colleges that the established program is one of significant and consistent merit. Certification means that the program is not only recognized and valued by the local school and district, but has been examined by individuals from outside the region who have a high degree of Senior Project expertise, knowledge and research and have deemed the program to be one of significant merit. Once certified, the school and/or district can include the certification on grant applications, apply the certification to the transcripts to signal program rigor for all graduates involved in the program as well as use the certification for promotional and public relation purposes.

## ***Who is on the certification team?***

The Senior Project certification is an opportunity for a school to have the program's structure and student work quality assessed, validated, and verified by a team of Senior Project specialists. Team members represent over 16 years of Senior Project expertise and experience training and facilitating Senior Project programs nationwide.

## ***What does the certification involve?***

Contained within the Certification Review Folio are the following documents:

- **Cover Letter-** notifies school of the certification status
- **Certification Brief-** provides a 'report card' of the indicators received for each of the 31 criterion (See attached)
- **Performance Summary-** addresses the findings per the initial documents' review, onsite visitation (portfolio review, focus groups, interviews) and research paper assessment, as well as providing the evidence strand if the school has received a 'Not Yet' in any area.
- **Specific strategies to address any Not Yet's received.**
- **Waiver Designation(s)-** confirms reason for the issuance of a waiver
- **Research Paper Assessment-** explains the research paper findings
- **Recommendations and Refinements-** provides recommendations, 'next step' options, and suggestions for further program refinement (Note: the order of content in this document is not prioritized, and may be grouped in broad categories i.e., community involvement, or may address a specific criterion)

Certification will be based upon the composite results involved in each process.

## ***What happens when the school's Senior Project program is certified?***

Official notification will be mailed to both the principal and the superintendent. The school will receive a plaque signifying certification. A press release announcing the award will be mailed to the district information officer, local newspapers and respective State Department of Education. Notification of the award of certification will be announced and highlighted on the Senior Project national web site. The school will receive discounts for attendance to Senior Project Institutes, support materials, and the Senior Project certification seal for student transcripts.

### ***What happens if a school's Senior Project program does not receive certification?***

The school will have a year grace period to achieve compliance in the areas that are in question. The principal and Senior Project coordinator will be notified in writing that Senior Project certification has not been obtained. The Senior Project Center will work with the school to guide methods and strategies that address the areas of concern. Once all "Not Yet's" have been cleared, Certification will be granted.

### ***Once a school's program receives certification, how long does the certification last?***

Once achieved, certification will be granted for a period of four years. A formal renewal process begins after year one of certification. The process requires completing and mailing a notarized program update form sequentially each of the last three years. Reminder and the form will be sent to the high school and district office. Notarized renewal forms must be received no later than June 30th of the second, third and fourth year. If the certification is not renewed, the school no longer publicly or privately use the certification on transcripts, grants and/or public relations. Certification status will then be classified as lapsed. To renew certification after the four years of after certification has lapsed requires the school to begin the process anew. If school or district personnel knowingly compromise any aspect of the certification process, the process will be terminated. If certification has been achieved by the submittal of compromised documentation the certification will be automatically revoked.

### ***How much does the certification process cost?***

The Certification Review Process is \$5,000, plus all travel expenses related to the onsite visitation. Annual renewal involves a \$75 administrative fee. (Certification can be renewed for 4 consecutive years.)

### ***How can a school prepare for the certification process?***

If a school is considering applying for certification, it is important to prepare. The process is rigorous and certification is not guaranteed. To prepare before filing a certification application a school should:

- Carefully review the certification and the 31 targeted areas, plus student work quality**
- Make sure** that all documentation is available
- Consider student work consistency** for all four components in terms of quality, skill level, thoroughness, completeness, and skill application
- Review the level** of community and staff involvement and training
- Review** the rubrics for each component and the application
- Consider the interaction**, communication and preparation with parents
- Review** the student manual
- Review** all policies and procedures looking for consistency and equity
- Note** program and student growth: where the program started and where it is now.

### ***How does a school start the certification process?***

1. Fill out and return the application accompanied with a purchase order number. Because the certification process involves examining actual student work and interviewing staff and students, application deadlines are dependent upon school schedules. Schools on a 4 x 4 block should apply no later than October 15th if they wish to have the program certified first semester. On site visitation will occur at the end of the first block. Traditional schedule schools should apply no later than March 15th. Onset visitation will occur at the end of the school year.
2. Once the application is received and processed, the Senior Project Center will contact you and schedule the certification process.

# Senior Project Certification

Carefully designed, rigorous and relevant Senior Project programs impact more than just the senior year and the seniors. Built upon a strong framework of high expectations blending traditional skills with performance-based application, sophisticated programs raise not only graduation standards but influence student expectations, guide and refine district curricula strategies, and offer continued opportunity for significant community involvement. This level of program sophistication requires not only fidelity of implementation but policies and procedures that create long-term program quality and sustainability. Designed to reinforce and refine established programs, Senior Project Certification not only evaluates and validates veteran programs but also facilitates continued, rigorous development.

Backed by 18 years of Senior Project expertise, certification assesses the program's current status and provides focused, specific suggestions and strategies for strengthening weaknesses, stabilizing procedures and taking next steps. The Senior Project moves beyond compliance to commitment and shifts from "program" status to a sustainable and relevant high school reform initiative.

The Senior Project Certification process is most valuable for veteran programs of 3 years or more. However, using the certification guidelines or attending "certification training" creates a strong framework and guiding vision for programs being implemented.

## ***The Senior Project Certification involves a thorough program examination incorporating the following processes:***

- Initial application
- Required documentation prior to the visit
- Onsite visitation from a Senior Project Certification team
- Program review guided by a series of "Yes or Not Yet" criteria- (school must receive all "yeses" to initially be considered for certification eligibility.)
- Guided interviews supported with school documentation when possible (Groups to be interviewed: Administrators, Senior Project Coordinator, Senior Project Steering Committee/ Advisory Board, Community members, students)
- Quality and content review of randomly chosen student portfolios
- Assessment of 10 %- 15% of randomly chosen Senior Project student research papers

The outcome of this process involves a thorough report citing specific documentation as well as supporting suggestions for improvement and growth. When all phases of the review process are completed, the report will be sent not only to the school but for review by the Certification Board. If the review supports certification, the superintendent, the principal and the State Department of Education will be notified. If certification is not awarded, the school will be notified with specific details pinpointing "not yet" status and offering detailed strategies for improvement. The school will have one year to improve the area(s) highlighted as "Not Yet."

***Once certification is achieved, a school may successfully retain the seal of certification for 4 years by validating continued quality during an annual off site review, renewal process. When completing the application process, please read and carefully complete the following processes. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us:***

[www.seniorproject.net](http://www.seniorproject.net)

[seniorproject@charterinternet.com](mailto:seniorproject@charterinternet.com)

Phone/ fax: 541-770-9483

4259 Innsbruck Ridge

Medford OR 97504

# Senior Project Certification Application

Schools on a 4 x 4 block should apply no later than October 15th if they wish to have the program certified first semester. All other schools should apply no later than March 15th. Please fill out and return. Also, when considering certification please call our office prior to filling out the application,

**Mail complete sets of part 1, 2 and 3 to the following individuals:**

<b>(Original set to:)</b>	<b>Complete copy to:</b>	<b>Complete copy to</b>
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## Part 1: General Information

### District Information:

Name of district/area superintendent: \_\_\_\_\_

District address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

PO#: \_\_\_\_\_ Check #: \_\_\_\_\_

### High School Information:

Name of applying school: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Coordinator(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Years of coordinator experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact for certification Process: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

School Web Site: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. (Optional) Contact name and address of 3 local businesses, corporations to be contacted when certification is achieved by the school:**

A. Name of business or corporation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Name of business or corporation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

C. Name of business or corporation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

2. (Optional) Contact name and address of **the local newspaper** to be contacted when certification is achieved by the school:

Name of newspaper: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part II: Program documentation needed 3 weeks prior to visitation

**All documents requested** (aside from the newspaper clipping or letters of support) must reflect the materials currently being used in the program. Send an example of each of the following listed below. (**Identify each example by clearly marking in the upper right hand corner of the cover or first page the number aligning with each document, i.e., # 3 = Portfolio Rubric and/or checklist or content requirements**)

1. \_\_\_ Alphabetical list of all the names of current seniors participating in Senior Project
2. \_\_\_ Research paper rubric
3. \_\_\_ Project Rubric
4. \_\_\_ Portfolio Rubric and/or checklist or content requirements
5. \_\_\_ Senior Boards Presentation Rubric
6. \_\_\_ Student Senior Project handbook, manual
7. \_\_\_ Parent Senior Project Handbook or information packet (if available)
8. \_\_\_ Any documentation that explains or verifies any unique program aspect(s) and/or especially strong or unusual program practices or procedures.
9. \_\_\_ Judges' Information Packet or training/ orientation material
10. \_\_\_ Mentor Information Packet or training/ orientation material
11. \_\_\_ Required Letters/ Forms used for parent contacts
12. \_\_\_ Any copies of SP surveys and tabulated results of faculty/staff/student and/or community surveys
13. \_\_\_ (Optional) Senior Project Brochure
14. \_\_\_ (Optional) Copies of newspaper clippings, letters of program support written or published prior to the certification application

Documentation completed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contents verified by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*If school or district personnel knowingly compromise any aspect of the certification process, the process will be terminated. If certification has been endorsed by the evaluation of compromised documentation, the certification will be automatically revoked.*

## Part 3: Senior Project Program Information

**Please note:** *Responses should be brief*

**Today's Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Questions answered by:** \_\_\_\_\_

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1. Why did the school implement the Senior Project?
  
2. \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No...Are there any other schools in the district that have implemented the Senior Project?
3. \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No...Are those programs different from yours in any significant way?
4. \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No...Is there a district-level contact person? Are there scheduled district-level meetings that Senior Project Coordinator's from each school attend?
5. \_\_\_\_\_...Number of years the school has participated in the Senior Project program, including this year.
6. \_\_\_\_\_...Number of certified staff (include counselors, media and technology specialists and administrators) on-site.
7. \_\_\_\_\_...Number of staff involved in some aspect of the program.
8. Briefly describe the level and types of staff Senior Project involvement and support:
  
9. \_\_\_\_\_...Number of seniors enrolled at the high school:
10. \_\_\_\_\_...Number of seniors participating in the Senior Project program this year:
11. \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No...Are there any areas of modification for Special Needs populations?
12. \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No...Are any students exempted/excluded from the Senior Project
13. Type of school schedule: \_\_\_1) Traditional \_\_\_2) A/B Block \_\_\_3) 4 x 4 \_\_\_4) Modified \_\_\_5) Other (describe):
14. Explain/describe your Senior Project model (Where is the program housed/ skills taught):
  
15. If the program has incorporated any unique, special or strong practices or procedures related to the Senior Project, please describe them. If available, attach any related documents.
16. Briefly describe the Senior Project Coordinator position, including roles, responsibilities, and/ or compensation:
  
17. Briefly describe the types of Senior Project community involvement:
  
18. Do you have a Community Coordinator? If so, describe the roles, responsibilities, and compensation/rewards (from salary to dinner for two after Boards):
  
19. Do you have a Staff Advisory Board? If so,  
--Describe its roles, responsibilities, and, if possible,  
--One brief example of how it handled a "tough call," for example, questionable projects or special modifications.
  
20. Briefly describe the Senior Project "Boards" process:

21. Briefly describe the scoring process for the students'

--Paper:

--Project:

--Portfolio:

--Presentation:

22. \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No...Are there safety nets for each component?

23. \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No...Are there consequences for Safety Net violations? Explain:

24. How do you handle...

--Component failures?

--Late components?

--Ethical violations?

--Program failure?

25. What impact, if any, do the scored components have on grades?

26. How are the evaluators trained?

27. Briefly describe Senior Project related Professional Development opportunities for the faculty/staff.

28. Briefly describe the kinds of computers and other high-tech equipment accessible/available to all students:

29. How is the program evaluated? How are target areas needing improvement identified?

Document completed by:

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

Contents verified by: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal or Superintendent **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Position:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**If school or district personnel knowingly provide false or inaccurate information, the certification process will be terminated. If certification has been granted and it is determined that inaccurate or false information was provided, the certification will be automatically revoked. Application fees will not be refunded.**

## Part 4: Randomly selected research paper examination

**Prior to the certification visitation** the following mailing process should to be completed so that the certification process is complete, well organized and does not involve delays.

1. Once the list of participating seniors is received by the Senior Project Center, the school will be notified of the respective, randomly selected seniors' names whose work (research papers and portfolios) will be evaluated during the onsite visitation and / or by an the offsite specialist. **Once the school is notified of the selected senior names, it is expected that non-graded, clean copies of the selected research papers be mailed in a timely manner to**

**Please contact the Senior Project Center at (541) 770-9483 for specific addresses.**

*(Please note that these copies of the research papers will not be returned to the school.)*

## Part 5: Visitation Preparations

**The portfolios of the same students whose research papers were requested, mailed, and examined should be gathered and placed in a school location that allows the certification specialist(s) to preview the portfolios *privately* the day of the certification visitation.** (Please note, it is preferred that the portfolio review begin the certification visitation.)

Interview schedules and preparations need to be set up for the following individuals and groups. The order the interviews occur is up to the school. However, notification of the times and the day's schedule is requested prior to the visitation.

- 1 \_\_\_\_ Portfolio review (first onsite certification activity)...1 hour
- 2 \_\_\_\_ Senior Project Coordinator....1 hour
- 3 \_\_\_\_ Senior Project Steering Committee...1 hour
- 4 \_\_\_\_ Building principal...30 minutes
- 5 \_\_\_\_ Student focus group (Note: students in this group represent the students whose papers and portfolios were examined)---1 hour
- 6 \_\_\_\_ Staff at large (These individuals should not be members of the Steering Committee.) –1 hour

**This form and supporting information should be completed and returned to**

Partnership for Dynamic Learning, Senior Project Center,  
4259 Innsbruck, Medford Oregon 97504

\_\_\_\_\_ by March 15th (to be considered by 2nd semester review) or

\_\_\_\_\_ by September 15th (to be considered for first semester review) of any given school year.