

Senior Project Guidelines

Expectations for demonstration of knowledge, skills, and values

As a **capstone** course, the senior project provides a venue for students to demonstrate and integrate knowledge, skills and values learned. It is also your opportunity to produce a product that demonstrates these elements for potential employers. The URP curriculum includes the following components (right column):

| Inclusion in senior project: | Included in curriculum: |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| | a) Knowledge |
| address | 1. Structure & Function of Settlements |
| at least | 2. History/Theory of Plng. Proc. & Prac. |
| one | 3. Administration/Legal/Political |
| required | 4. Familiarity with Spec. Knowledge |
| | |
| | b) Skills |
| required | 1. Prblm/Form./Resrch. Skills & Data Gath. |
| If relevant | 2. Quantitative Analysis & Computer |
| required | 3. Written/Oral & Graphic Comm. |
| optional | 4. Collaborative Problem Solving |
| required | 5. Synthesis & Application of Knowledge |
| | |
| | c) Values |
| address | 1. Equity, Social Justice, Welfare |
| at least | 2. Government & Citizen Participation |
| one | 3. Resp. Diversity of Views & Ideology |
| | 4. Conservation of Natural Resources |
| | 5. Ethics of Professional Practice |

A student's senior project must demonstrate his or her knowledge in a specific area as well as knowledge relating to knowledge areas 1, 2 **or** 3. It must demonstrate the skills in problem formation and research, written and oral communication, and synthesis and application of knowledge. Finally, it must demonstrate awareness of at least one of the five value areas.

In making a proposal for the senior project, the student should articulate how the proposed project will meet the requirement to demonstrate competence in the required areas of knowledge, skills and values.

The senior project is normally an individual project. We also allow small group senior projects. If a group of two or three students proposes to collaborate, their proposal should include individualized sub-proposals that show how each student involved will meet these requirements.

Senior project instructors and their students use a variety of modes of interaction including face-to-face class meetings, one-on-one face-to-face meetings and computer-mediated exchanges including the use of course management software such as Blackboard. The choice of modes of interaction is the prerogative of the instructor.

Senior Project Proposal Requirements
ALL ENTRIES MUST BE WORD PROCESSED
URP 461: SENIOR PROJECT PROPOSAL

Student's Name

Area Code (_____)

Contact Phone Number

E-mail Address

Quarter/Year seeking to enroll in URP 461

Brief Title for your Project Your proposal should have **four parts** as outlined below. The proposal should be 500-1000 words, and should demonstrate that you have done some preliminary thinking about your project. If yours is part of a group project, the group may submit the proposal and must also complete and submit the group-project cover sheet (last page).

1. The Subject: Write several paragraphs in which you:

- a. describe your proposed topic,
- b. articulate which area of specific knowledge it draws upon
- c. and also explain how it draws upon your knowledge in areas 1, 2 **or** 3 (1. Structure & Function of Settlements, 2. History/Theory of Plng. Proc. & Prac., and 3. Administration/Legal/Political). Ways to describe your topic include posing a research question. Research questions can be

- **exploratory**, such as "How could circulation be reconfigured in order to ban automobiles from the central Cal Poly campus?" Note that a question like this can motivate a design-based inquiry as well as a qualitative- or quantitative-social-science-base inquiry.
- **descriptive**, such as "who chooses to park in the new parking structure?" Descriptive inquiries can also motive design-based as well as social-science-based inquiry.
- **explanatory**, such as "how do various campus constituencies respond to rising gasoline prices?" or
- **evaluative**, such as "does moving the ride-share office from the 2d floor of the CLA building to a secured office "behind the counter" in the new campus police department influence participation rates?"

After describing your topic, tie it to the appropriate URP knowledge areas. If possible, mention research by others on which you may draw or that informs your topic.

2. The Method: Write a paragraph or two to explain how you intend to study the topic.

A good strategy here is to articulate which particular skills you will employ to research your topic and prepare your "deliverable(s)". Include some detail.

3. Brief description of the deliverable product(s), and how they will relate to each other.

Deliverables may include design products, policy proposal with analysis, social science research, and theoretical explorations. For example, if a proposal involves a design product, additional deliverables could include design research, site research, and documentation of the design process. Keep in mind that a senior project must be original research: you are to **create new knowledge**. To create new knowledge, you must demonstrate familiarity with the "old knowledge" on which you draw as well as offering something original.

4. Articulation of how the student will, through completion of a senior project:

- a. demonstrate the skills in problem formation and research, written and oral communication, and synthesis and application of knowledge.
- b. demonstrate awareness of at least one of the five value areas.

Cover sheet for group senior project (attach individual proposals to cover sheet)

This page is only required for group senior project proposals.

Names of students (**maximum 3**): email:

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 | |
| 2 | |
| 3 | |

Brief description of the overall project and how it will be shared by the two or three participants. Individual proposals must be attached in which each student articulates how he or she will meet the requirement to demonstrate competence in the required areas of knowledge, skills and values.

Brief description of how the group will manage interdependence and mutual accountability. Group members may opt for individual grades or a group grade. Group members should put in writing how they will manage mutual accountability. For example, will they have a mechanism for disbanding or firing one member in mid-quarter. If so, how will they manage their joint "property?"

Brief description of the deliverable product(s), and how they will relate to each other and to efforts of the individuals involved. For example, if a group's proposal involves a design product, additional deliverables could include design research, site research, and documentation of the design process.