

# **The Graduation Handbook**

## **New Vista High School**

## Introduction to Student Education at New Vista: Stage I and Stage II

At New Vista, a student's education is divided into two stages:

Stage I	<p>Students entering New Vista High School are in Stage I. During this stage they work with their Advisors to select classes and educational experiences that help identify their unique areas of interest and curiosity, as well as their strengths and areas for growth. During Stage I, students begin taking courses which will meet the <b>Common Learning</b> requirements. All learning experiences are intended to balance student interest and passion with growth and exploration and the attainment of genuine competence across a range of knowledge.</p> <p>Questions that focus a student's planning during Stage I include: "What are my strengths, preferences and interests? What will life after high school look like for me? What are my goals now and in the future? What are some things I need to work on or improve about myself as a student? What do I need to learn?"</p> <p>This first stage of exploration ends with a commitment to the requirements of Stage II, which lead directly toward graduation. All of these experiences are the basis for identifying an <b>Individual Student Path</b> during the transition to Stage II.</p>
Stage II	<p>Stage II is characterized by greater focus and specific preparation for accomplishing the goals of the Individual Student Path and completing Common Learning requirements. The student and their Advisor select and identify courses, Community Experiences, a Culminating Project and other learning experiences that help meet all graduation requirements.</p> <p>In order to earn a diploma from New Vista, a student must successfully complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● the required Common Learning Units;</li><li>● the Individual Student Path learning units; and</li><li>● The approval and successful completion of the Culminating Project at a grade of B or better</li></ul>

## Introduction to Learning Units

Learning Units provide a way for students to measure the progress they are making toward fulfilling their graduation requirements. Each Learning Unit is the equivalent of 60 hours of class time. A course taken at New Vista for 1 learning unit in a single quarter is the equivalent of a semester-long course taken for 5 credits at a traditional high school. At New Vista, this system of Learning Units applies to all learning experiences students pursue in and out of school. Credits earned from programs and institutions outside of New Vista are translated into Learning Units.

<b>NVHS Learning Units Required for Graduation</b>		
Common Learnings	28 learning units needed	Common Learning requirements in the areas of Applied Technology, Art, Interpersonal Skills, Intrapersonal Skills, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and World Languages.
Individual Student Path	24 learning units needed	Learning units taken over and above Common Learning requirements; Community Experiences, Workshops, Independent Study; CTEC course credits; “C” grades in NVHS courses; “D” grades from courses/credits taken at other high schools.
<b>Total Learning Units needed for Graduation: 52</b>		
<b>In addition, every graduating New Vista student completes a Culminating Project that takes a minimum of 120 hours and earns 2 additional learning units.</b>		

## Earning Learning Units at New Vista

Students and their Advisors select classes and learning experiences at New Vista that meet graduation requirements and post-secondary goals. Below is a breakdown of typical credits that would advance a student to graduation in four years. Individual student plans and Learning Units earned may vary from quarter-to-quarter and from year-to-year, but an Advisor's and student's goal should typically be graduation after 4 years.

<b>Total Learning Units Needed for a 4-year Graduation: 52</b>
<b>Learning Units needed per year for a 4-year Graduation: 13</b>
<b>Learning Units per Quarter: 3.25</b>

Below is a list of classes and learning opportunities for which students can earn Learning Units. Some of these classes and opportunities are built in to the normal school day, and some take place outside of the school day.

<b>Classes and Learning Opportunities</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Learning Units</b>
First Period (quarter-long)	NVHS	.5 per quarter
First Period (trimester)	NVHS	1.0 per trimester
AM Block	NVHS	1.0 per quarter
Advisory	NVHS	.3 per quarter
Seminar	NVHS	.5 per quarter
PM Block / PM 1 & PM 2	NVHS	1.0 / .5 & .5 per quarter
Workshop	NVHS	.25 per quarter
Community Experience (student-initiated)	varies	Units based on hours: .5 = 30 hours per quarter
Service Learning	varies	Occurs in 4th quarter: .35
Independent Study Contracts (student-initiated)	varies	Units based on hours: .5 = 30 hours per quarter
Work Experience (student-initiated)	varies	120 hours = 1.0

### Credit Translations and Transferring Credit

Credits earned at other institutions and programs usually need to be translated into New Vista Learning Units. Here is a brief guide to some common translations that occur:

Educational Institution or Program	Credits or Credit Type	NVHS Learning Unit equivalency
Traditional High Schools	5 credits	1.0
Career and Technical Education Center (BVSD)	1 credit hour	.2; an AM or PM CTEC class for one quarter will earn a student 1.5 Learning Units
College (CU, FRCC or other public institutions)	3 credits	2.0 for A/B; 1.0 for a C
	4 credits	2.6 for A/B; 1.3 for a C
	5 credits	3.2 for A/B; 1.3 for a C

### Transferring Credit From Other Institutions and Programs

**How is credit from other high schools awarded to Common Learning Areas and Path?**

Transfer Students from Other High Schools: We will translate credits from other public high schools into Common Learning Units for all classes in which a student earned a C or above. Courses with a grade of D will only count toward Path Learning Units .

Unaccredited Private Schools or Home Schooling through a credit-granting organization: We will only award credit on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis with a maximum of 6.0 Path Learning Units per semester, subject to the discretion of the principal. This is in accordance with the policies followed at all BVSD high schools.

**What about credit from BVSD Summer School?**

Summer school classes taken while a student is at New Vista are treated the way all New Vista courses are treated in terms of how grades count toward graduation. A and B grades are needed for Common Learning Areas; Cs go to Path; D grades do not count - it is as if the grade was an F.

**What about classes taken at CTEC?**

Students taking an AM or PM session course at the Career Technical Education Center earn 1.5 Learning Units each quarter, 3 Learning Units for each semester, and 6 Learning Units for a

whole year. On a program-by-program basis, portions of these credits can count for Common Learning area requirements. For example, some CTEC courses feature a technical writing component which New Vista will then count toward Language Arts Common Learning requirements (B- grades or higher, of course).

**How do we count C's from college courses?**

Cs from college courses can count toward Common Learnings although for less credit than As or Bs. Ds can count toward Path requirements. This applies to both Stage I and Stage II.

**Once a student has enrolled at New Vista, that student must earn an A or B in any course taken at another BVSD institution in order for the credit to be counted for Common Learning requirements or during Stage II.**

## Common Learning Units

New Vista requires students to earn a total of **28 Common Learning Units** across nine different areas which are listed below. The skills and knowledge students gain by successfully completing the school's Common Learning requirements create a base on which students may construct post-high school options and build needed skills for pursuing their **Individual Student Path**. Common Learning requirements were identified through application of District and State curriculum standards and what is known about preparing all students to be successful in the world beyond high school.

**Common Learning requirements may only be satisfied by courses/experiences in which a student earns a grade of B- or above. Colleges, universities, and other post-high school institutions still view New Vista C grades as counting toward their entrance requirements, however.**

<b>Common Learning Units Required for NVHS Graduation</b>		
<u>Common Learning Area</u>	<u>Required Units</u>	<u>Specific Requirements</u>
Applied Technology	2	
Art	2	
Interpersonal Skills	3	Prorated for transfer students
Intrapersonal Skills	3	Prorated for transfer students
Language Arts	4	Reading, Literature and Culture - 2; Writing - 1; Choice - 1
Mathematics	4	Algebra - 1; Geometry - 1; Statistics - 1; Other - 1
Science	4	Life Science - 2; Physical Science - 2
Social Studies	4	World Geography - 1; US History - 1; World History - 1; Civics - .5; Choice - .5
World Language	2	2 units in the same language
<b>Total Common Learning Units required for NVHS Graduation: 28</b>		

## The Individual Student Path

Pursuit of the Individual Student Path is rigorous and important work for each student at New Vista; "Path" requirements make up nearly half of the Learning Units needed for graduation.

<b>Individual Student Path Learning Units Needed for NVHS Graduation: 24</b>	
How are Path Learning Units earned?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Learning Units earned over and above Common Learning requirements</li><li>● Community Experiences (CEs) and Workshops</li><li>● Successful completion of Independent Study Contracts (ISCs)</li><li>● Credit earned in the CTEC program or other district learning experiences outside of NVHS</li><li>● Work Experience credit</li><li>● "C" grades in NVHS classes</li><li>● "D" grades in classes transferred from other high schools</li><li>● Transfer credits from unaccredited programs or unaccredited classes; credits from home school programs</li></ul>

Serious pursuit of an Individual Student Path involves careful consideration of all the related knowledge and skills it might take to be successful on that path and in life in general. As students identify potential paths, they work to find concrete information about what a person needs to do in order to pursue those paths.

What are the requirements for a job as a Nordic ski instructor, and what other areas of study are relevant to this path? How do you get to Nicaragua, and what might you need to know to live there? Where do you get an application for the Rhode Island School of Design, Stanford, or Colorado State University, and what are the entrance requirements? How much money does one need to start a small business, and what business skills are necessary to be successful in running one?

## The Individual Student Path Across Stage I and Stage II

<p>Stage I and the Individual Student Path</p>	<p>Stage I is the time for exploring and identifying potential paths. During this time the student and Advisor identify courses, community experiences and other learning experiences that might help the student find and pursue these paths. Students design and revise their educational choices in an ongoing process guided by their Advisors and involving consultation with family members and other members of the community.</p> <p><b><u>Stage I Path Exploration:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Take courses on campus or in other settings;</li> <li>● Participate in Workshops or Community Experiences;</li> <li>● Confer with the advisor to reflect on these experiences and identify one's Individual Student Path.</li> </ul>
<p>Transitioning from Stage I to Stage II and the Individual Student Path</p>	<p><b><u>You are ready for the transition to Stage II when:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You have demonstrated exploration of interests in a variety of areas;</li> <li>● You have had at least one successful off-campus learning experience (Community Experience, Independent Study, Career - Technical Education Center, concurrent enrollment, etc.);</li> <li>● You have demonstrated the ability to consistently earn grades of A and B in Common Learning areas;</li> <li>● You can articulate your Individual Student Path and identify your proposed educational experiences for Stage II to your Advisor;</li> <li>● You complete the Culminating Project Working Proposal and submit it to your Advisor;</li> <li>● You formally present your Culminating Project and rubric to your Panel Team at Culminating Project Proposal Panel Days and have it approved. This initiates students' official entry into Stage II.</li> </ul>

## The Culminating Project

Every student must undertake a Culminating Project during the Stage II process in order to graduate. This project must be approved by the student's Panel Team after it is presented at Culminating Project Proposal Panel Days. After the Panel Team has approved the proposed Culminating Project and rubric, the project may only be revised with the approval of the Panel Team. Definitions, descriptions and details about this process are below.

<p>Definition of the Culminating Project</p>	<p>The Culminating Project is an opportunity to undertake a major piece of rigorous, original work in an area of great interest and personal relevance to the student. It may involve work directly connected to the student's intended path. It may involve exploration of path alternatives. Or it may be a personal passion unconnected to the student's stated path.</p> <p>Culminating Projects are self-motivating experiences that the student is interested in, even passionate about. The student chooses the project, designs it with input from their advisor and the Panel Team, and is solely responsible for its execution. The project is culminating in the sense that it brings together the student's skills and knowledge in carrying out a significant piece of self-directed learning.</p> <p>It is important to understand that a Culminating Project is not simply a student doing something they already know how to do for 120 hours. It should involve growth, new knowledge and new experiences that can all can be demonstrated.</p> <p><b>Every New Vista graduate completes a Culminating Project that takes a minimum of 120 hours and earns 2 Learning Units over and above the 52 units of Common Learning and Path requirements.</b></p>
<p>When is the Culminating Project done?</p>	<p>A Stage II student may begin work on the project at any time after it has been approved by their Panel Team. Typically, students are within a year of graduation when they transition to Stage II and begin the Culminating Project.</p>
<p>Where is the Culminating Project done?</p>	<p>As the projects vary, so can the places. Restrictions for off-campus projects are related to credits and legal factors by which the school is bound. Students should work with their Advisor and Panel Team to ensure that these restrictions do not impede their project. Though most projects have taken place in Boulder, some have occurred in locations all over the world. (Note: The costs of travel-related projects, like the costs of any Culminating Project, must be borne by students and their families). In general, students are encouraged to create inexpensive projects.</p>

<p>Definition of the Culminating Project Rubric and its Requirements</p>	<p>The Culminating Project rubric is developed by the student with support from their Advisor. It can be thought of as a “contract” between the student and Panel Team for the execution and completion of the Culminating Project. The Panel Team approves this rubric and uses it to evaluate and grade each student’s Culminating Project. The rubric sets forth the Culminating Project requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Individual, Specific Project Components</u> - these components must clearly demonstrate learning and be measurable. These are the how, what, and where of the Culminating Project.</li> <li>● <u>Contact with Community Contributor</u> - this is time a student documents with an individual outside of NVHS who is a support for them throughout their project. Contributors can be experts in the area of the student’s Culminating Project or simply a support for them throughout the process.</li> <li>● <u>Research Component and Product</u> - there must be documentation and synthesis of research that occurs during the Culminating Project. This can include reading, internet research, personal interviews, and classes or experiences that support the specific components of the Culminating Project.</li> <li>● <u>Annotated Timelog</u> - this clearly documents the hours spent on completing the process and specific components of the Culminating Project. It is a document, a spreadsheet or some other agreed-upon method of accountability between the student and their Panel Team.</li> <li>● <u>Reflection</u> - this is a required written reflection, composed by the student, that demonstrates a “look back” on their Culminating Project.</li> </ul>
<p>Definition of a Panel Team</p>	<p>Each Panel Team is comprised of New Vista staff members, one of which is the student’s Advisor. Panel Teams are assembled in the Spring of every school year and are based on numbers of students wishing to graduate in each Advisory. The Panel Team approves the student’s Culminating Project and is responsible for the final grading and evaluation of the Culminating Project. The Panel Team also functions as an ongoing support for students as they work toward completion of their Culminating Projects.</p>
<p>Definition of Panel Days</p>	<p>Panel Days feature students giving presentations in relation to their Culminating Projects to their respective Panel Teams. The rest of the students in the school are audience members during select Panel Days. Students wishing to graduate from New Vista are required to participate in two main Panel Days and one check-in Panel Day during the Culminating Project Process. The official Panel Days are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Optional Summer Hours Panel Day</u> - Students who wish to propose that they earn hours toward their Culminating Project over the summer before their final year at New Vista may present their plan to Panel</li> </ul>

	<p>Teams. There is no student audience on this Panel Day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Culminating Project Proposal Panel Days (Required)</u> - Students formally present their proposed Culminating Projects and completed rubrics to their Panel Teams for approval on one of these days. Upon approval, students may start counting hours toward the 120 required hours. If students were approved for summer hours, they will also present supporting evidence for counting these hours for approval by the Panel Team. There is a student audience for these Panel Days.</li> <li>● <u>Panel Check-in Day</u> - Students present their progress and timeline for completion of their Culminating Project - this day can be thought of as a mid-point check-in designed to both support and hold students accountable for progressing towards completion of their projects. There is no student audience on this Panel Day.</li> <li>● <u>Culminating Project Final Panel Days (Required)</u>- Students formally present their completed Culminating Projects for final evaluation and grading by the Panel Team. There is a student audience for these Panel Days.</li> </ul>
<p>Definition of a Community Contributor</p>	<p>A Community Contributor is an individual that a student selects to support them throughout the Culminating Project process. The student documents their contact and time with the Community Contributor according to expectations in the Culminating Project rubric. This individual could be an expert in the field of the student’s project and provide support in completing the project components. They could also be a source of support for the student in a more informal way - helping the student stay on track, manage their time, edit their work and presentations, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Community Contributors should be carefully selected so that they are able to support the student throughout the timespan of the project, unless a scheduled agreement is made.</li> <li>● Community Contributors need to be 21 years of age or older.</li> <li>● It is important to note that New Vista Advisors and staff <u>cannot</u> be Community Contributors for any student’s Culminating Project.</li> </ul>
<p>Definition of an Annotated Time Log</p>	<p>A properly documented time log is a very essential component and expectation of the Culminating Project process. It can take many forms, but the hours spent on the Culminating Project need to be clearly documented and submitted to the student’s Panel Team. It needs to show the project activity, the dates, and the hours in a detailed and readable fashion. It is expected that a system will be used to keep track of hours throughout the course of the project.</p>

## The Culminating Project Process

The following features the Culminating Project process components that all students wishing to graduate from New Vista High School will complete. The timing of these components is the sequence that most 4-year New Vista graduates would move through on their way to graduation. Exceptions to the timing for students wishing to complete their Culminating Project and/or graduate outside of a 4-year timeline are determined by their Advisor and Panel Team. Links to specific checklists and documents are included below. A summary checklist that includes all of these steps can be found [here](#).

Process Component	Timing	Explanation
<a href="#">Initial Culminating Project Ideas and Conversations</a>	5-6 quarters before intended graduation	The shape and scope of a Culminating Project evolves through a series of conversations. The first conversations take place between the student and Advisor. These lead to ideas written down by the student in the Culminating Project Working Proposal.
<a href="#">Culminating Project Working Proposal</a>	<u>Due the last Friday in April</u>	This document is designed to get a student's thinking and ideas organized around the Culminating Project. This proposal is discussed, refined and clarified between the student, Advisor and Panel Team.
Optional Summer Hours Panel Day	Afternoon of Senior Exhibition Day	<p>It is important to note that what follows is <i>completely optional</i>, and that students can successfully begin their Culminating Projects after approval by their Panel Teams at Culminating Project Proposal Panel Days in the Fall.</p> <p>If a student wants to start or complete portions of their Culminating Project over the summer before their final year at New Vista, there are two options:</p> <p><u>Option 1</u>: Students who want to have up to 20 hours counted for summer work on their Culminating Project need to complete a <a href="#">Culminating Project Summer Hours Proposal</a> and then informally present their plan to their Panel Team for approval.</p> <p><u>Option 2</u>: Students who want to have more than 20 hours counted for summer work on their Culminating Project need to complete their <a href="#">Culminating Project rubric</a> and a formal Culminating Project Panel Presentation to their Panel Team for approval.</p> <p>In both of these cases, students must provide evidence of completion of their proposed hours to their Panel Teams at</p>

Optional Summer Hours Panel Day (cont.)		Culminating Project Proposal Panel Days in the Fall. Panel Teams will use this evidence to determine exactly how many of the proposed hours will be approved.
<a href="#">Culminating Project Panel Presentation</a> and <a href="#">Culminating Project Rubric</a>	Developed and refined throughout Spring and Fall	The Culminating Project Working Proposal is used to develop a Panel Presentation of the project components and their timing and execution. The Culminating Project Rubric is developed to be the “contract” between the student and their Panel Team, and it establishes the specific grading criteria for specific project components and requirements.
Culminating Project Proposal Panel Days	<u>Two October Dates, plus Make-Up - Revision Date</u>	The Culminating Project is proposed formally to the Panel Team for approval on one of these days. There is one make-up/revision day scheduled. Students present at ONE of the two days. If students were approved for summer hours, they will also present supporting evidence for counting these hours for approval by the Panel Team. These are mandatory dates for students wishing to participate in the graduation ceremony. If a student does not propose a Culminating Project, have it approved, and a complete and complete it at a B or better, that student will not earn a diploma.
Fall Panel Support and Check-in Day	First Wednesday in December	Students meet as a group with their Panel Teams to discuss progress on their Culminating Projects. Students will have their rubrics and a timeline for completion for review.
Deadline for Changes to the Culminating Project and Project Rubric	Prior to Winter Break	Any changes to the Culminating Project and rubric must be made prior to Winter Break (the end of Second Quarter). These changes must be presented to the Panel Team and approved. The Panel Team will instruct the student on what is needed to document these changes. No changes to the Culminating Project or rubric can be made after winter break due to the time needed for successful completion of the project.
Winter Panel Support and Check-in Day	Last Wednesday in February	Rubric and documentation of what has been completed is shared with the Panel Team, including a plan for completion of the remainder of the Culminating Project. An in-progress grade will be given to students.

<p>Ongoing Culminating Project Work and preparation for <a href="#">Final Panel Day Presentation</a></p>	<p>Ongoing throughout winter and early spring</p>	<p>Students work with their Advisors, Community Contributors and other supportive individuals to organize, complete and prepare their Culminating Projects and presentations for Culminating Project Final Panel Day.</p>
<p>Culminating Project Final Panel Days</p>	<p><u>Last Wednesday in April and First Wednesday in May</u></p>	<p>The <u>due date</u> for the final version of the Culminating Project is <u>the first Panel Day</u>. The <u>deadline</u> for all Culminating Projects is the second Panel Day. Culminating Projects must be presented to the Panel Team for final evaluation and grading. These are mandatory dates for students wishing to participate in the graduation ceremony . There is not an additional make-up or revision date. Projects must earn a B grade or better in order for the student to earn a diploma. Students present on only ONE of the two Final Panel Days.</p>
<p>Senior Exhibition Day</p>	<p><u>Second Friday in May</u></p>	<p>Students present their Culminating Projects to the entire school and community. This a requirement for participating in the graduation ceremony. Presentations can feature material and artifacts that were not fully presented at the more formal Final Panel Days.</p>

## Stage II Expectations for Earning a Diploma and Participating in the Graduation Ceremony

Once a student’s Culminating Project is approved by their Panel Team, they officially become a Stage II student. Stage II students are held to a set of expectations and requirements as they progress toward earning their diploma and participating in the New Vista graduation ceremony. **Graduating students must satisfy the expectations, requirements and deadlines of Stage II and The Culminating Project Process. The consequence for not meeting these deadlines and expectations is loss of the opportunity to walk across the stage at New Vista’s Graduation Ceremony to receive a diploma.**

Why have we chosen this consequence? Graduation from New Vista is a complex undertaking that, in and of itself, helps prepare students for the independence that awaits them after graduation. We have intentionally structured the process to be demanding, both in its content and in its procedures. We feel it is appropriate to give it a “real world” finality as our students stand on the threshold of independence. In addition, the process is extremely demanding for Advisors. They are always dealing with at least several graduates and must also spread their time and energy across the other students in their Advisory as well. With these two concerns in mind, we decided to impose stiff consequences for not complying with the process and/or not meeting expectations and deadlines.

The consequence of not being able to walk across the stage at graduation is both very big and not so very big. Graduation from high school is a significant rite of passage in our society. Students and their families feel this deeply and want to be part of the communal experience. The fear of missing that experience is sometimes the extra added motivator necessary to get them to take care of business. On the other hand, students who miss deadlines still get to graduate from high school and, if all their work is done by the week before graduation, they can still receive their diploma on graduation day. What they cannot do, if they have missed earlier deadlines or not complied with the process, is participate in the ceremony.

Stage II Requirements	Expectations
Grades	Stage II students must earn grades of B or better in order for them to count toward the 52 required Common Learning Units and Path Learning Units needed for graduation. Grades lower than a B will appear on the transcript <i>but are not counted as credit toward graduation</i> . Failure to earn 52 required Learning Units will result in a student not earning a diploma as well as, obviously, not participating in the graduation ceremony.
The Culminating Project	Stage II students must complete their Culminating Project and earn a grade of B or better in order to earn a diploma and participate in the graduation ceremony.

<p>Panel Day Participation</p>	<p>Stage II students must present at their scheduled Culminating Project Proposal Panel Day and their scheduled Culminating Project Final Panel Day in order to participate in the graduation ceremony. Failure to present may also impact that student’s ability to earn a diploma at the desired time because it may indicate lack of intent to complete their Culminating Project or lack of finishing their Culminating Project.</p>
<p>Culminating Project Content and Presentation</p>	<p>The Culminating Project is presented to a wide range of audiences at Panel Days and Senior Exhibition Day that includes students, parents, family members, young children, teachers, and other community members. Special care and consideration must be taken to present content that is acceptable to this diverse audience.</p> <p>The Culminating Project is a <i>school</i> project, after all: explicit language, sexual imagery, drug references and imagery, and explicit depictions of violent acts for violence’s sake should be avoided in written, spoken, and visual forms.</p> <p>Ultimately, the Panel Team and school administration reserve the right to allow and disallow content and presentations throughout the process. The goal of this norm is not to censor expression or creativity. Rather, the goal of the student and Panel Team should be to design and approve products and presentations that show the student’s best work in the context of a high school setting, viewable by the community at-large.</p> <p><u>Students who violate Panel Team or administrative decisions on what can be presented will lose their opportunity to participate in the graduation ceremony. In extreme instances, the Panel Team and administration may convene and issue a lower grade which may result in that student not receiving a diploma at the expected time.</u></p> <p>The New Vista community trusts that its students understand and the core value of respect, and that they are members of a larger community.</p>
<p>Senior Exhibition Day Participation</p>	<p>Stage II students must present their Culminating Projects at Senior Exhibition Day in order to participate in the graduation ceremony.</p>
<p>Credit Count</p>	<p>Stage II students must complete a credit count with the principal in order to participate in the graduation ceremony.</p>

Other Steps and Deadlines	Stage II students need to meet certain deadlines and steps set forth by the school in order to participate in the graduation ceremony. These will be clearly communicated to students throughout the year and reminders will be given.
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### **Some Questions and Answers about Culminating Projects**

#### **Can a student get Culminating Project credit for paid work?**

This can happen in only two cases:

- 1) The student's path is such that holding a job, meeting expectations about that job, and reflecting on the work experience is the proper Culminating Project.
  
- 2) If a student needs to earn money for either a postgraduate experience or the actual Culminating Project, they may earn a maximum of .5 Learning Units out of the 2 awarded for the Culminating Project. In keeping with district policies, work time credit is counted at the ratio of 120 hours of work time = one Learning Unit. That means that in order to earn .5 learning units from work, a student must accrue 60 hours of work time.

#### **How early can you "do" your Culminating Project?**

A Culminating Project has to be approved by a Panel Team that includes that student's Advisor. Students are encouraged to not start their Culminating Projects early for a variety of reasons. The Culminating Project is a rigorous undertaking; factors like organizational skills, communication skills, accountability, independent work skills outside of school, etc. are just some of the demands on the student. In addition, it is likely that students will need to coordinate special meetings with their Panel Team outside of the established schedule and will not benefit as much from the built-in supports in the Culminating Project process. Students determined to complete a Culminating Project early should start that conversation with their Advisor.

#### **Can a Junior start their Culminating Project at the beginning of their Junior year?**

No, but a student can design an Independent Study Contract in the area related to what they will want to explore for their Culminating Project. At the end of their Junior year on Optional Summer Hours Panel Day, the student can follow the guidelines for presenting and proposing a Culminating Project to begin over the summer.

#### **Can you earn more than two Learning Units for a Culminating Project?**

Culminating Projects are designed to have integrity and coherence. They should have clearly defined beginnings, middles and ends. It is not uncommon for Culminating Projects to take up far more than the 120 hours specified for them. Some students, once they realize that this is happening, may want to take out Independent Study Contracts (ISCs) to earn additional credit.

Nevertheless, once the project has been conceived, refined and approved by the Panel Team, no parts of it should be severed off and turned into a Independent Study Contract. ISCs related to the Culminating Project may be identified at the time of project approval or as the project

develops and new opportunities unfold. Under no circumstances should an ISC “take over” pieces of the approved Culminating Project. If a student wishes to “ramp up” skills or experiences that they will need to execute their Culminating Project, they are encouraged to apply for an ISC prior to their entry into the Culminating Project process.

**What if a student wants to start their Culminating Project during the summer before the year they intend to graduate?**

This option is available to students and carries extra demands. If a student wants to start or complete portions of their Culminating Project over the summer before their final year at New Vista, there are two options:

Option 1: Students who want to have 20 hours or less counted for summer work on their Culminating Project need to complete a [Culminating Project Summer Hours Proposal](#) and then informally present their plan to their Panel Team for approval.

Option 2: Students who want to have more than 20 hours counted for summer work on their Culminating Project need to complete their [rubric](#) and a formal Culminating Project Panel presentation to their Panel Team for approval.

In both of these cases, students must provide evidence of completion of their proposed summer hours to their Panel Teams at Culminating Project Proposal Panel Days in the Fall. This is an extra component to the student’s presentation. Panel Teams will use this evidence to determine exactly how many of the proposed summer hours will be approved.

**How much travel time can be counted for hours in a Culminating Project?**

A student cannot count hours for “passive” travel i.e. flight times, drive times, etc. However, if there is an “active” travel component to a student’s project such as flight lessons, horseback riding, backpacking, etc., the Panel Team and the student will negotiate the hours that can be counted.

**In general, how many hours can I count per day towards my Culminating Project?**

Sometimes students complete immersive experiences for their Culminating Project where perhaps they are staying away from home or school for long periods of time. While the total experience is certainly valuable, students can count up to 8 hours per day in situations like this. That being said, Panel Teams and students should be clear about the specifics of counting hours.

# Notes

