

Senior Project Mentor FAQ

Thank you for your interest in being a mentor for one of Clark Magnet's young adults as they complete their Senior Project. Without real-world experience, the Senior Project would lose value. With your help, our students will get to experience a professional relationship with an individual or group of people and learn a number of things including working with others, time management, work place etiquette, punctuality, flexibility and responsibility. Below you will find common questions that potential mentors have.

Should you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me directly at Ntatevosian@gusd.net

Narine Tatevosian

Senior Project Coordinator

Senior English Teacher

Q: What is the *SENIOR PROJECT*?

The Senior Project at Clark Magnet High School is a key component of the vision for the educational experience of the Clark student. It is a culminating exit program that demonstrates a senior's ability to apply knowledge and skills, speak, write, problem-solve and practice the life skills of time management, organization and risk-taking. This long-term project is housed in the English curriculum although the core skills are taught and reinforced in all disciplines. Clark teaching staffs, community members and school district personnel act as mentors, evaluators, and advisors during the research, project, and presentation phases. The Senior Project has 5 main components: 6-8 page research paper, fieldwork hours (25 hours or more), a final product, a portfolio, and a final speech. For more information see "What is the Senior Project" document on the Senior Project Webpage.

Q: What exactly am I committing to?

You are agreeing to monitor the senior project as the student works on it. The student might come to you with questions or advice. The student might ask to meet with you to share what they have done periodically. You could be teaching the student or giving them feedback on what they are doing, or even signing off on their hours if they are taking place with you.

Q: What should I see the student doing?

You should see progress. The student should discuss their plans for the year and you should be able to see phases as they develop the project they claimed they would do.

Q: Am I responsible for tracking hours?

You are NOT responsible for tracking hours. The student is asked to keep a log. You are welcome to keep track of it if you'd like because you might be asked to sign it, unless there is a different supervisor while they are completing their hours.

Q: Is there a minimum amount of hours that the student must work?

The student must work a minimum of 25 hours, though most students far exceed that requirement.

Q: Is there someone I can or should contact if the student is not showing up?

Ntatevosian@gusd.net – Senior Project Coordinator- If she cannot address your question, she will direct the question to the English teacher for the individual student.

Q: Is there anything I need to sign?

Mentor Agreement Form – upon meeting the student you sign the form that you are willing to be their mentor.

Mentor Verification Form – after the project is complete, the student is asked to fill out this form so that it is typed and ask that you sign it. You are welcome to fill in the form yourself, but the students are asked to do it to alleviate any extra work from being given to the mentor.

Q: How involved must I be for the final product?

You can be as involved as you'd like, but you just need to see the final product in a few phases so you can sign off on the fact that the student did, in fact, complete the project on their own.

Q: Does the final product have to be done in my presence?

No, but in some cases, it might be. A different supervisor can sign off on hours. Your role as the mentor is to see the final product in a few stages and give the student feedback on ways to improve.

Q: Can I or should I help the student make their final product?

You are allowed to *help* the student create their final product but cannot make it for them. Students are to complete the majority of the senior project independently. They are told that their mentors can help them with minor adjustments, but mostly by giving advice, teaching and modeling rather than working on the project as the student watches.

Q: Is there any financial obligation?

No.

Q: Does the student I mentor have to be someone I didn't know before?

We want the students to get professional experience through the senior project. If the student is someone you know very well, it is not helpful to them for you to be their mentor because they are not going to learn how to communicate and interact with people professionally in that experience since they will already be very comfortable with you.

Q: Can anyone else sign off on the student's hours done at my place of business?

It can be a supervisor or a manager as well as the mentor. The person signing off on the students' hours needs to be a reliable individual.

Q: Do I have to allow the student to do certain tasks?

You can choose to allow the student to do anything that you would like or anything that you think is necessary. It is completely up to you what you decide to allow them to do in your place of business.

Q: Do I give the student a grade?

No. You are welcome to come to the oral board presentations at the end of the year to judge other projects, but you will not be grading the student you are mentoring.

Q: What happens if I change my mind later in the year?

The student will need to find a new mentor to complete the project, but it is possible if it is necessary. It is best to let the student know in advance that you will not have time and cannot commit to being their mentor if there is a chance that you will become unavailable.

The Senior Project is a vehicle that allows students to use the knowledge and skills they have acquired in a "real-world" application. It has the potential to motivate the student, connect the school with the community, and create pathways from school to career.