

REQUIREMENTS TO THE SENIOR (PROFESSIONAL) PROJECT

A professional project is different from a thesis in that it does not require an original academic research component (although some research can be carried out for situation analysis). The main goal of the project is to show that the students have acquired professional skills that they can apply to creation of a product of their own. The graduating student must carry out the professional project from the beginning to the end. Other people can be involved in the implementation stage, but the concept development must be fully credited to the student.

Examples of professional project outcomes may include, but are not limited to:

- 1) For TV/radio majors – an original broadcast program, a documentary on an issue of interest, or another program of similar kind. News broadcasts or other programs where the student participated as an anchor/reporter/host cannot be presented as graduation projects unless the student can prove that his/her contribution to the program was more than 70% of all the work done on the program.
- 2) For print majors – a portfolio of materials published on a particular issue or beat, a mock-up of a new and original newspaper/magazine, a website for an on-line newspaper, etc.
- 3) For PR/advertising majors – results of a particular campaign that the students carried out from the conception to evaluation stage. These may include fundraising campaigns, awareness and promotion campaigns that are not limited to only one form (one advertising commercial, e.g.), but present the key message in several different ways.

The professional project must be accompanied by a written document similar to a thesis. It should include the following sections:

1. **Problem statement.** This section can include some background information about the company, problem, or issue, explain why and how the student got interested in this project, and what was the major challenge of the project. It is roughly equal to the thesis' introduction section.
2. **Situation analysis and description of outcomes of similar projects** done by other companies or by the same company, as well as some theoretical and practical foundations for the project. This section is roughly equivalent to the literature review of the thesis.
3. **Clear definition of the project's goals and objectives, strategies and tactics.** This section should tie up the previous "generalist" section with the particulars of the project and clearly spell out the goals and expected outcomes. Rough equivalent of the methodology section of the thesis.
4. **Implementation.** In this section, the graduating student should spell out step-by-step how the project was implemented. Rough equivalent of the thesis procedure section.
5. **Outcomes.** This section should briefly describe the outcomes of the project. All products developed under the project should be presented at the defense and submitted to the department together with the document. Rough equivalent of the thesis results section.
6. **Evaluation.** This section should include the assessment of the project by the student as well as his/her mentor, project recipients or target beneficiaries. It also should include the section on what could have been done better and/or recommendations for similar projects in the future. This section is a rough equivalent of the conclusions and recommendations section of the thesis.