The BIS Senior Project Handbook
2017-2018
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The BIS Senior Research Project

All Adult Degree Program students are required to complete a BIS Senior Research Project as a requirement for their Individualized Study major. Students generally complete their project in the semester before or the semester of graduation, but it can be completed any time after you have earned 90 credits.

Most ADP students register for IS 498 – BIS Senior Research Project. This is a one-semester, 3-credit, in-depth study of a topic related to your concentration. You work with a faculty advisor to develop your project curriculum, which must be approved by the ADP director. Once the project curriculum is approved, an ADP staff member will create the course for you. We will contact you with class and section number information so you can then log onto MyMadison and register for IS 498.

Additionally, the JMU Honors Program invites students with the prerequisite 3.25 or higher GPA to participate in the Honors BIS Senior Research Project, a 6-credit, two-semester independent study. Students must meet Honors Program requirements for their project, and work closely with both their project instructor and the Honors Program staff to achieve that. Students opting to complete an Honors Project register for IS 499.

The BIS Senior Research Project has two components:

1. The BIS Senior Research Project itself
2. Participation in the BIS Senior Research Project Forum
   a. Fall semester: held on the last Thursday of classes
   b. Spring semester: held on the last day of classes; changes yearly but has been a Thursday recently.
   c. 10-Week Summer semester: held on the last Thursday of classes

*These dates are subject to change depending on the academic calendar. Please watch for information on dates and times in your student email.*

We highly encourage you to print out a copy of this handbook to use as a reference throughout the semester as it contains information you will need as you complete your senior project, including policy on presenting at the Senior Research Project Forum and, if necessary, requesting an Incomplete for the course.
Getting started

You should begin planning for your BIS Senior Research Project early in the semester prior to the semester you plan to take IS 498 or IS 499.

The first step is to read this handbook, which reviews the parts of the BIS Senior Research Project and the process you need to follow to complete this capstone project for your degree in Individualized Study. Once you have read the handbook and fully understand what is entailed in completing a successful senior project, sign and complete the Intent to Register form (Appendix B). This form should be submitted as soon as possible and at least two weeks before you submit your course agreement form.

The final step is to select your project instructor. Many students choose their academic advisors; an equal number chooses a faculty member with whom they have developed a rapport. The choice is yours.

Your project instructor:

1. Helps you identify and define your project topic, project components, and resources;

2. Meets with you periodically throughout the semester (once or twice a month) to monitor your progress to ensure timely completion;

3. Identifies the criteria he/she will use to evaluate your project and list those on the Course Agreement Form; and

4. Submits your grade at the end of the semester on MyMadison as they do for other classes. Final projects are submitted to your project instructor. Final projects are NOT turned in to the ADP office unless an ADP staff member is your project instructor.

Your project instructor and academic advisor are also invited to attend the BIS Senior Research Project Forum.
Planning your BIS Senior Research Project

Your BIS Senior Research Project is the capstone of your degree and is directly related to your concentration. Your project must have academic weight; that is, you must research and learn in a way that expands your knowledge about an area of your concentration. For example, if your concentration is Music Education for After School Programs, creating three or four lesson plans is not sufficient.

Instead, you would research a specific area – for example, Korean Folk Music.

1) Research the cultural aspects of the folk songs, how they developed, their purpose
2) Incorporate that into a research paper, and
3) Develop three to four age/grade appropriate lesson plans that teach children about Korean folk music.

While students traditionally write a research paper, you really are limited only by your imagination. Here are some ideas.

1) 30 - 40 page research paper with bibliography of 15 to 20 resources
2) 15 - 20 page paper with resources and one item from the list below.
3) 7 – 10 page paper with resources and two items from the list below.

Your resources need to include scholarly journals, textbooks, and academic books, not just internet resources. For assistance, go to www.lib.jmu.edu, contact the ADP Library Liaison, Carolyn Schubert (schubecf@jmu.edu), or review the Madison Research Essentials Toolkit in ADP Foundations, found on Canvas.

The Writing Resource Center has provided instructions on how to begin a search for your research paper. Go to http://www.jmu.edu/uwc/link-library/writing-process/research-strategies.shtml to learn about these proven strategies.

Below are some ideas that you can combine with a research paper for your senior project. Feel free to contact the ADP office to set up a time to brainstorm ideas or to flesh out an idea if you would like some additional input.

- Play or skit
- Novel chapters
- Collection of short stories or essays
- Picture book or children’s novel
- Training manual or workshop
- Short video or animated film
- Collection of paintings, drawings, or photographs
- Lesson plans
- Illustrated timeline for a classroom or library display
- Business and/or marketing plan
- Series of marketing materials (restaurant menu, brochures, sample press releases, etc)
- Webpage(s)
RESEARCH PROJECT IDEA EXAMPLES

Your concentration is **Hospitality Communications**. You can:

A. Write a 30-40 page paper with bibliography on business communications; or

B. Create an advertising campaign for a new bed and breakfast inn and write a 15-20 page paper, with bibliography, that explains how you created the campaign, its purpose, and how it meets the principles of an effective advertising strategy; or

C. Develop a web page for a restaurant chain, create a training manual on how to maintain and update the website, and write a 7-10 page paper with resources that describes the procedure you used to develop both.

Your concentration is **Civil War History of the Shenandoah Valley**. You can:

A. Write a 30-40 page paper with bibliography on strategic battles that took place in the Shenandoah Valley; or

B. Write a skit that can be used by local teachers, day care or after-school providers with their students that depicts an event during that time period, and write a 10–20 page research paper with bibliography on the time period/event; or

C. Develop a list of resources, including books, magazine articles, web pages, that can be used by teachers or other researchers, create a visual timeline of the Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley that highlights major events, and write a 7-10-page research paper with bibliography on a strategic event during that time.

Your concentration is **Computer Animation**. You can:

A. Write a 30–40 page research paper with references that traces the history of computer animation; or

B. Create a short animated video and write a 10–20 page paper describing the steps that go into creating animated videos; or

C. Create the storyboard for an animated video, create a short segment of that video, and write a 7 to 10 page paper outlining the steps for developing and creating an animated video.
Registering for your BIS Senior Research Project

Once you have decided on what you will do for your BIS Senior Research Project, you need to complete the Course Agreement Form. The form outlines what you will do and how your instructor will evaluate what you have accomplished for a grade.

The first third of the Course Agreement Form is standard information – your name and contact information and the names and contact information of both your project instructor and academic advisor.

The second third of the form is the details of your proposal:

1. Here, you give a brief description of your project, and
2. Explain its learning outcomes and how it relates to your concentration, and
3. Outline what you will complete for the project, and
4. Your project instructor will list how they will evaluate and grade your project.

The last third is the signature section. You must sign the form and obtain the signatures of your project instructor and your academic advisor. See the sample form in Appendix C.

A blank copy of this form will be included in the Senior Research Project packet received from the ADP office. Be sure to save the file to your desktop or Documents file. If you just open the file, you can type in your information, but will not be able to save it. Course Agreement Forms must be typed.

The earlier you can start this process the better. This is especially important for students receiving financial aid and for JMU employees who must submit a tuition waiver form.

**Deadlines for submitting the course agreement form are:**

1. **Fall Semester** – by 5 pm on the last day of classes in the first 4-week block (“Maymester”) of the summer term.
2. **Spring Semester** – by 5 pm on the last day of classes in the fall semester.
3. **Summer 10-week term** – by 5 pm on the last day of classes in the spring semester.

You can find the exact dates each semester on the academic calendar on the Registrar's web page. [http://www.jmu.edu/registrar/students/academiccalendar.shtml](http://www.jmu.edu/registrar/students/academiccalendar.shtml)

Once your course agreement form is submitted, the ADP director will create a section of IS 498 for you in the MyMadison course scheduling system. This section will require student permission to register, so you and only you will be able to enroll. Once the section is created, the director will contact you, via email, with the section and class numbers you need in order to find the section on MyMadison and to enroll in the class.
Grading your BIS Senior Research Project

You will turn your final Senior Research Project into your Instructor. He/she will evaluate your project and upload your grade on MyMadison as they do for other classes. You do not need to submit a copy of your final project to the ADP office.

Incomplete grades for BIS Senior Research Projects

Incomplete grades are rarely given for BIS Senior Research Projects. Only cases of serious illness or a death in the family that affects the student for the bulk of the semester will be considered as extenuating circumstances requiring an Incomplete. You will need to meet or talk with your project instructor to request the Incomplete. You and your project instructor must create a specific action plan for completion of the work, which must be signed by both of you and submitted, to the ADP office two weeks before the last day of classes for that semester. You can find the form in Appendix D.
The BIS Senior Research Project Forum

The BIS Senior Research Project Forum is held on the last Thursday of the fall, spring, and 10-week summer semesters beginning at 4:30 p.m. on the first floor of the Ice House located at 127 West Bruce Street, Harrisonburg, Virginia. Participation at the forum is required and is 25 percent of the final IS 498 Senior Project grade.

The Forum is one way the ADP staff recognizes and celebrates your hard work as an adult student. It is your chance to show off!

There are two parts to the BIS Senior Research Project Forum:

1. **A typed, one- to two-page summary of your project** – your summary should include the principal points of your project:
   b. What you did for your project (research paper only, research paper and additional items)
   c. Two or three points from your research.
   d. See Appendix E for tips on writing your summary.

2. **A 10-minute presentation at the BIS Senior Research Project Forum** – things to keep in mind include:
   a. Include your thesis statement – that is what you did and why
   b. Explain how your project relates to your concentration
   c. Talk about what you did for your project
   d. Highlight the major points of your research
      i. You can show parts of a business or marketing plan or web page, read excerpts from a novel or story, play part of a video or animated film at this point in your presentation.
   e. **NOTE** – Your presentation is NOT your entire research project. You are sharing the highlights of your research and any product you created.
   f. You should practice giving your presentation and timing it several times before you present at the forum. This will allow you to be comfortable with the material and provide time to edit if your presentation runs over 10 minutes.
   g. Use a PowerPoint slideshow to illustrate your presentation. For tips on creating your PowerPoint, see Appendix F.
   h. Dress attire for the forum is business casual.

3. While most students opt to give a PowerPoint presentation summarizing their projects, there are alternatives:
   - If you have created a video or an animated short film, you can show that, along with a brief description of the video’s purpose and how you produced it.
   - If you put together a collection of photographs or artwork, you can give an “art” exhibit, with an explanation of the artwork.
• If you wrote a play, novel, children’s book, or collection of poetry, you can read selections from your work, accompanied by appropriate background information.

If you are unsure about your presentation, you can schedule a pre-forum meeting with the ADP Director or the ADP Student Services Coordinator to review your presentation. This should be scheduled 10 to 14 business days before the forum.

Invitations to the forum are sent out a month in advance and we encourage you to invite family and friends to attend. **The forums start promptly at 4:30 p.m.** You are encouraged to arrive between 4 and 4:15 so you can upload your presentation to the computer. There are usually three rooms where the presentations are held, and because 12 to 15 students present at each forum, you will be strictly held to the 10-minute limit.
Alternate Senior Project Forum Presentations

Presenting on your research at the Senior Project Forum is a required part of your Senior Project and worth 25 per cent of your grade. Failure to participate in the forum, therefore, represents a serious deduction to your final grade. The ADP staff does recognize, however, that as adults with jobs and families, presenting in person may present a conflict and we have developed an alternative for students who have a conflict. That process is outlined below.

1. The Senior Project Forum begins at 4:30 pm and it is your responsibility to request time off from work in order to participate. Dates for the Senior Project Forum are included in the confirmation email you receive when your section of IS 498 is created. Reminder notices are also sent out during the semester. These notifications provide you with ample time to have your supervisor approve the time off and for you to schedule projects and due dates around the Senior Project Forum.

2. In the event that there is a schedule conflict that cannot be resolved, you must notify the Director of the Adult Degree Program by mid-term each semester and no later than two weeks before the Senior Project Forum is scheduled. The Director must approve all requests to waive the requirement of presenting on your research in person. You must have a significant reason to request the waiver to present in person. These include, but are not limited to:

   a. Travel time of more than one hour one way
   b. Work schedule conflict
   c. Serious illness or hospitalization (yours, or that of a child, spouse, or parent)

3. You will present using Webex, a real-time presentation program that allows participants in the Ice House to see and hear you, and for you to see and hear them.

   a. ADP staff will schedule a Webex training prior to the Senior Project Forum. We will notify you of the day and time and send instructions on joining the meeting. Participation in this training is required.
   b. You will need to log on to Webex between 4 and 4:15 pm the day of the forum.

4. It is imperative that you begin the process of requesting a waiver for presenting in person at the Senior Project Forum as soon as you are aware there is a conflict.
5. In the event of an emergency, notify the ADP office immediately.
   a. An emergency is defined as an accident, unexpected illness or hospitalization (yours, child, spouse, or parent), or the death of a child, spouse, parent, or grandparent.
Appendix A: BIS Senior Project Checklist

*Check off each item as you complete it.*

___ Read the BIS Senior Research Project Handbook and contacted ADP office with any questions.

___ Submitted Acknowledgement & Intent to Register form to the ADP office as soon as possible and at least two weeks prior to submitting the Course Agreement Form.

___ Identified BIS Senior Research Project Topic.

___ Selected project instructor.

___ Signed Course Agreement Form returned to ADP office by the deadlines listed in this handbook.

___ Registered for IS 498 or IS 499.

___ Scheduled regular progress check meetings with my advisor.

___ RSVP would to forum invitation by deadline.

___ Optional Scheduled pre-forum meeting with ADP staff 10 to 14 business days before the forum.

___ Completed one- to two-page project summary and submitted it to ADP office at least one week before the forum.

___ Completed presentation for forum.

___ Completed project and turned final paper/product into project instructor for grading.

___ Presented at BIS Senior Research Project Forum.

___ Big sigh of relief (day after forum – you’re done. *Congratulations!!!!*)
Appendix B: IS 498 Senior Research Project
Acknowledgement & Intent to Register

Please sign and submit this acknowledgement and intent to register for IS 498 Senior Capstone Project no later than two weeks prior to the end of the semester before you are planning to take it. Send to Pamela Hamilton, brownpg@jmu.edu

I have read and understand the complete process for finishing my IS498 Senior Research Project, as described in the Senior Research Project Handbook.

Student Name: ____________________________________________________________

Student ID: __________________________________________________________________

Semester Completing IS498: _____________________________________________

Sign: __________________________________________________________________
Appendix C: Sample Course Agreement Form

This form must be typed and should be submitted to the ADP by the deadlines listed in the ADP Senior Project Handbook. Once you complete the form and have obtained all of the required signatures, return it to the ADP Office, James Madison University, 127 West Bruce Street/MSC 6906, Harrisonburg, VA 22807. You may also fax it to 540-568-4252, or drop it by the office, Room 332, The Ice House, 127 West Bruce Street.

____________________________________________________________

Student name                        student ID #    email address

____________________________________________________________

Project Instructor name           phone    email address

____________________________________________________________

Academic Advisor name           phone    email address

Semester   ___ Fall ___ Spring ___ Summer  Year ______

Course IS 250 ___   IS 290 ___   IS ___ 480  IS 490 ___ IS 498 ___ IS 499 ___

PROJECT TITLE______<name of project; this will appear on your transcripts>____________

Credits _____ (3)   _____ (6)

Student’s Concentration  ___________ Your concentration name  _______________________

1) Project Summary: 2-3 sentences describing your project. Think of it like what you find as a course description in a college catalog.

2) Relationship to your concentration and educational goals:  Tell us how what you learn as a result of your project will benefit you educationally, professionally, and personally.
3) Project Objectives: List your learning goals, that is, what you hope to learn as a result of your research.


5) Instructor’s Criteria for grading: (example: oral report, 40%, written report, 40%, bibliography 20%) Your faculty project instructor will list how he or she will evaluate you for your grade.

NOTE: For IS 498 or IS 499, the BIS Senior Research Project, a two-page summary and participation in the BIS Senior Research Project Forum, must be included in the grading criteria for 25% of the grade.

Student’s signature You sign here
____________________________________________________________

Project instructor’s signature Your instructor signs here
____________________________________________________________

Academic Advisor’s signature Your academic advisor signs here
____________________________________________________________

ISM Approval The ADP Director signs here
____________________________________________________________

FOR ISM OFFICE ONLY

Class number______________ Section Number______________
Override entered on ______________ _________  By _____________________
Appendix D: Requesting an Incomplete for IS 498: BIS Senior Project Form

To request an Incomplete for your Senior Research Project, please complete this form with your project instructor and submit to the ADP office at least two weeks before the end of the semester. Requests for Incompletes will not be accepted any later than two weeks before the end of the semester so we can complete plans for the Senior Research Project Forum in a timely manner.

1.) **Reason for requesting Incomplete:** *(Please note you must have a substantial reason for requesting an Incomplete; taking too many classes or poor time management skills do rise to the level of “substantial reason.”)*

2.) **Action plan for completing work for Senior Research Project:** *(Be specific; indicate work that needs to be completed and a timeline for submitting the completed work to your project instructor. This includes scheduled check-ins with your project instructor; due dates for individual parts of your project, such as bibliographies, drafts of the research paper, etc. **before** submitting all final work by the due dates listed below.)*

In order to ensure that your project instructor has sufficient time to review and evaluate your project and submit the Removal of the Incomplete paperwork to the Registrar prior to the deadline set by the University, your final work must be turned in to your project instructor by these deadlines:

- If you registered for IS 498 in the fall semester, you must submit final work to your project instructor no later than April 1st.
- If you registered for IS 498 in the spring or summer 10-week semesters, you must submit your final work to your project instructor no later than November 1st.
Signatures and Adult Degree Program Approval

All requests will be reviewed by the ADP staff; approval of the request is not guaranteed. The Director will sign off on all requests and email a copy of this form to the student for his/her records.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Printed name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Instructor</th>
<th>Printed name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Approved by the Adult Degree Program  ____Yes  ___ No  
*If no, please give reason:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADP Director</th>
<th>Printed Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Appendix E: Writing Your Senior Project Summary

Summary: a condensed statement of the substance or principal points of a larger work. (The American Heritage Dictionary, Fourth Edition; Dell/Houghton Mifflin, 2001)

The Senior Project Summary gives faculty evaluators at the Senior Project Forum an idea of what you have done over the past semester before you actually present. This is a summary of what you did, not your research paper word for word. Use the chart below to help you organize your summary so it flows well and contains all the information you want to include. Note, that you do not include section titles in your summary — these are listed to help you with the organization of your summary.

The final summary should be no more than 2 double-spaced, typed pages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th># of paragraphs</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1 to 2</td>
<td>State the thesis of your Senior Project Forum (Sections 1 and 2 of your Course Agreement Form)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body of Summary, part 1</td>
<td>2 to 3</td>
<td>Give an overview of what you did for your project (Section 4 of your Course Agreement Form)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What did you research?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• How did you use that findings from that research for your Senior Project? (EX: a research paper, a business plan, a learning unit, etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body of Summary, part 2</td>
<td>3 to 5</td>
<td>Give an overview of what you found in your research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Discuss 3 to 5 key points, in not more than three or four sentences each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>1 to 2</td>
<td>Wrap up your summary by discussing what you learned as a result of your Senior Project and the research involved in it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F: Planning Your Forum Presentation

The Senior Project Forum gives you the chance to share your research with faculty, ADP staff, and your fellow ADP students. You give an overview, you don’t read your entire paper!

Your presentation includes some sort of visual and most students create a PowerPoint presentation. Here are some tips to get you started on creating an effective PowerPoint AND presentation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slide</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>Title page – use the title of your project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| #2    | 2 or 3 bullet points that summarize your project:  
  • What you did – this is your thesis statement, such as “I wanted to better understand the process of restorative justice and its effectiveness.”  
  • How your project relates to your studies as an ADP student |
| #3 to #8 | Give an overview of research and what you did  
  • Discuss 3 to 5 key points, one key point per slide  
  • Have 2 or 3 bullet points that further explains each key point  
  o Keep the number of words on each slide to a minimum – Consider your PowerPoint as notes to guide your presentation not a “copy” of your full speech. |
| #9*   | Conclusion – end with a summary, again one or two key points of what you learned. Tie that learning back into your goals post-graduation. |

* The final number of slides is determined by how many key points you discuss in your presentation.  
* You have 10 minutes for your speech. Once you have your PowerPoint completed, do a run-through and time yourself.  
  o Stick to the facts. Don’t over explain.  
  o Keep key points on index cards you can see easily so you are not tempted to over-talk a point or read the slides word for word.  
  o Practice, practice, practice. The more you give your presentation, the more comfortable you will feel with the content, thus be less apt to “talk too much.”