

# Sustainable Landscape Professional Certificate Program

Sonoma State University, School of Extended Education

2008 Program Year

## Student Project Guidelines

The **objective** of the Student Project is to provide **an opportunity for students to apply the ideas and concepts learned in the Program, make a contribution in furthering the Sustainable Landscape “conversation” and have the broadest impact possible.** We strongly encourage students to **integrate** their projects within their local, County, or State communities (non-profits, governments, agencies, schools, etc). To use the analogy of a pebble dropped in the pond, we’re hoping for small stones making big waves.

We envision several different **types of projects**:

- **Building/construction project**
- **Public Policy**
- **Materials or Process Research**
- **Public Education / Advocacy**
- **Synthesis of above topics**

Student projects must **demonstrate**:

- **A broad integration of the program materials**
- **Independent research and creative thinking**
- **Application of current Sustainable Landscape “Best Practices”**
- **Grounding in specific, relevant standards**

Projects can be done **independently** or **collaboratively** within small group “teams.” We expect that each student will spend a **minimum of 40 hours** over the course of the program working on his or her Project.

While we acknowledge that it would be much easier for us if we had everybody do the same type of Project, we are hoping to encourage creative work and broader impact by imposing fewer strictures. The Student Projects are almost entirely **self-directed and self-paced**. Each student will be assigned a Faculty Advisor who will provide feedback and guidance. Here are a few more details:

A one- to two-page **Project Proposal** is due at the third class session and must address all of the following:

- **Who:** Your name. If the project will be a group effort, list the names of all students involved. If applicable, list the client (and contact person), and project location.
- **Why:** a statement of the Big Idea, the context, the goals or objectives
- **What:** a description of the project. Make sure you mention the form of the final project (video, Powerpoint presentation, landscape design, informational kiosk, built work, skywriting, cartoon manual, etc.) in addition to the required report.
- **How:** a brief outline of the steps needed to get from here to there.
- **When:** A timeline would be mighty impressive!

After submission of the proposal, students will receive a project evaluation that will let them know which areas of the project proposal are strong or weak and what improvements are recommended.

Final **Project Reports** are due within one year of enrollment in the program. We offer the following as a **short-form guideline** of what we're looking for. **The content will obviously vary depending on type of Project**, as well as on a large number of other variables:

<b>Content</b>	<b># of pages</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Introduction and overview</b>	1	Including a sense of personal involvement/interests/inspiration, the larger context, current practices, etc.
<b>Table of Contents</b>	1	Table of contents
<b>Process</b>	4 to 6	Discussion of goals, standards considered/used, extent of applicability, decisions faced, compromises made, results achieved
<b>Conclusion</b>	1	Include a look ahead: where do you/we go from here?
<b>References</b>	1 to 2	Bibliography, weblinks, local resources, etc.
<b>Total</b>	<b>8 to 11</b>	

**Photographs, diagrams, sketches, and supporting documents** are all welcome, but **they do no count toward the minimum number of pages** outlined above.

Students who choose to build an informational kiosk, host a Sustainable Landscape Conference, produce a feature-length documentary, or produce any other sort of product, will **still be required to submit a written report**. The report will detail the process and “lessons learned” so that others can benefit beyond the finished product.

The following are additional comments and suggestions based on several years of experience:

We are looking for a report that **meets the grammatical, organizational, and other standards appropriate to a college or university term paper**. **Reports must be clearly organized, neatly-presented, and well-written**.

Instead of simply re-processing (recycling?) material presented in class or available elsewhere, we expect that the bulk of the Project will be the **original, creative work of each individual student: a distillation of your own learning, in your own language**. We expect that any material contained in the report that is not original work be clearly labeled and attributed appropriately.

It is our intention that student Projects will have **broad applicability**. If, for example, you choose a remodeling project as the subject for your Project, we would expect that you treat it as a **case study: generalize from your own experience, extract lessons wherever possible, make connections, suggest implications and alternatives for others and for the larger society**.

We want these Projects to be more than just a didactic exercise. We hope and expect that your audience would include interested others who might benefit from the wisdom that you have gained. **Imagine that you are writing a magazine article instead of a term paper**.

It goes without saying and bears repeating: **reports need to be contained in some kind of a binder known to our species**. Examples include three-ring binder, spiral binding, etc. **Please: no loose papers!**

On **group Projects**, we expect to see a **clear description of the roles and contributions of the individual students**. On all projects, we expect to see some mention of who the heck you are.

A separate session will be scheduled immediately following the last class in each cycle at which there will be a formal acknowledgement of completing the program. In addition there will be several 6 15-minute slots available for students who wish to make an in-class presentation **in addition to** a written report. All of the standards noted here apply to students who choose to make an presentation **in addition to** a written report.