The Verrazano School
Student Guidebook - Class of 2021
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The Verrazano School Mission Statement

The Verrazano School provides motivated and talented students with an exceptional baccalaureate experience at the College of Staten Island/CUNY in order to produce a community of students and graduates who strive for and achieve academic excellence in their course of study, are well-prepared for graduate studies and professional success, are connected to their local and global community through service and leadership, and are empowered with lifelong intellectual curiosity and strong personal integrity.

The Verrazano School achieves its mission through an integrated program of academic courses and learning communities; constructive contact with full-time faculty; forward-thinking academic advisement and career preparation; engagement and support of faculty-student mentorships and collaborations; and academic, social, and cultural learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom.

The Verrazano School Program Goals

1. To foster critical thinking, scientific inquiry, problem-solving skills, and integrative cross-disciplinary work.
2. To support students’ development of strong oral and written communication skills.
3. To promote academic excellence and in-depth disciplinary knowledge.
4. To advance career opportunities through professional development.
5. To encourage meaningful community involvement and engaged global citizenship.
6. To create intellectually curious learners with a strong sense of personal integrity.

About The Verrazano School:

The Verrazano School is a selective undergraduate honors program at the College of Staten Island (CSI) that provides motivated and talented students with the highest-quality undergraduate education possible.

Students choose from the full range of majors offered at CSI and received personalized assistance and guidance as they seek internships, pursue research opportunities, and prepare for careers or graduate studies. The Verrazano School provides a foundation on which students build their skills and talents, explore their interests, and create a positive, memorable, and valuable college experience.
Benefits of The Verrazano School

- Integrated program of courses and learning communities
- Constructive contact with full-time faculty
- Smaller class sizes
- Personalized academic advisement and career preparation
- Academic, social and cultural learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom
- Priority registration for classes
- Katie Geschwendt Study Abroad Scholarships to help support a study abroad experience through CSI-led programs
- Access to Verrazano Dolphin Cove Housing Scholarships
- A designated Verrazano student lounge for meetings, studying, and get-togethers
- The Verrazano distinction noted on your final transcript and recognition at Commencement-related events, including the Verrazano Senior Convocation and Honors Convocation

Verrazano Honor Statement

As academic integrity promotes fairness and intellectual growth at the City University of New York, the College of Staten Island, and The Verrazano School, I pledge that as an enrolled Verrazano student I will uphold the ideas of academic scholarship and serve as a positive example in the student body. I will not cheat, plagiarize, or in any other way violate the academic integrity policy of the City University of New York, and I will act with respect and civility towards all of my fellow students, the faculty, and staff of the college.
The Verrazano School Requirements

In addition to completing CSI and major requirements, to graduate with the Verrazano distinction, students must also fulfill The Verrazano School requirements in the following categories. These requirements are in place to help ensure that graduates of The Verrazano School have a well-rounded and enriched undergraduate experience and are well-prepared for employment and graduate school.

I. Grade Point Average (GPA) and Full-Time Status

Students must have a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA by the end of the freshman year and maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA thereafter to remain in The Verrazano School.

All Verrazano students must maintain full-time status throughout their four years at CSI. Full-time status is defined as enrolling in and completing a minimum of 12 credits each semester excluding winter and summer sessions.

II. Advisement

All Verrazano students meet with the Verrazano Associate Director for advisement through the fall of the sophomore year or until they have completed 45 credits – whichever comes later. After that time, students meet officially with their faculty advisor(s) in their major(s).

III. Verrazano Courses

All incoming freshmen are enrolled in a Verrazano learning community during their first fall semester.

All Verrazano students must take a minimum of three Verrazano honors courses, not including courses taken as part of a Verrazano learning community, during their undergraduate studies at CSI before they graduate.

All Verrazano students should plan to take HON 301 – the Interdisciplinary Honors Seminar – during the junior year in preparation for the required capstone project.

Notes:

1) All students in The Verrazano School must take
   a. Honors Introduction to College Writing (ENG 111)
   b. College Writing (ENG 151)
   c. Honors math, and
d. Honors COR 100.
Incoming freshmen who are awarded credit for a math course through a particular score on an AP exam or by taking a college course in high school may still be required to take Honors math, or a sequence of Honors math courses, depending on their intended major or area of study. Students accepted after the freshman year must take Honors COR 100 if COR 100 has not yet been taken and Honors math if they have not yet completed the math sequence for their major. Verrazano Honors math sections are offered through MTH 232 (calculus II).

Exemptions will apply only in the following cases:

- Students who are accepted to The Verrazano School after the freshman year and have been awarded credit for those courses through CSI, another university, or dual enrollment high school courses.
- Incoming freshmen who have scored a “4” or “5” on the AP Language Composition exam or earned an “A” or “A-” in a college course equivalent to ENG 111 during high school may receive credit for ENG 111 and move directly into Honors ENG 151. No incoming freshmen are exempt from Honors ENG 151.

2) For science-based courses with labs and lectures, the Verrazano lecture section and Verrazano lab section must be taken concurrently to be counted as one of the three required Verrazano courses.
3) Verrazano Honors sections are identified each semester and course lists are available on the Verrazano website. These courses may not be listed on CUNYfirst, but if they are listed they will be noted as Verrazano courses.
4) Failure of, or receipt of a WU in, a Verrazano-designated Honors course section will not count for one of the three Verrazano courses.

IV. Capstone Project and Presentation

All Verrazano students must complete a Capstone Project to graduate with Verrazano Honors. Students work closely with a professor to create a scholarly or otherwise significant project that builds on their knowledge and interest in a field, or fields, of study. Every field is different, so there is not a singular definition for the Capstone. Many students write a long, scholarly essay in their major, but students are permitted to do creative or multimedia projects as well. The departmental thesis/project associated with honors in the major will fulfill the Verrazano capstone project requirement; Verrazano students who are eligible to complete honors in the major are strongly encouraged to do so (to learn about departmental honors in your major, visit the section listing your major requirements in the College Catalog and then speak with a full-time faculty member in that department).

Examples of Possible Capstone Projects

- A substantial research paper
- A major research project
- A significant, high-level service learning experience
- An expanded study abroad experience
- A design project
- A recital or performance

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• Developing a website
• Curating an exhibit or directing a theater production
• Other project subject to approval of the Verrazano Director

Due Dates:

**Graduating in Fall** (January)
Proposal is due April 15th of the year before graduation
Project is due November 15th of the semester of graduation

**Graduating in Spring/Summer** (June/August)
Proposal is due September 15th of the semester before graduation (senior fall)
Project is due April 15th of the semester of graduation

The Capstone experience should typically be completed in the junior or senior years. Students who have clinicals, student teaching, or other commitments during their last semester should make arrangements to complete the capstone prior to their last semester, and ask well in advance for time off to present at the conference.

See the Verrazano website, Capstone link, for additional information.

**V. Verrazano Experiential Learning Activities (VELAs)**

Verrazano students must attend at least two VELAs each academic year and a minimum total of eight VELA events prior to graduation. Students who join Verrazano after they have already completed a semester or more of college, or students who graduate early, must still complete 8 total VELAs. Students who graduate later than their original Verrazano class year must attend one additional VELA during each extra semester.

VELAs are typically held during club hours on Tuesdays or Thursdays. They may include talks by, and conversations with, faculty and staff members; musical performances; creative arts discussions; and leadership activities, among other things. A listing of VELA events will be available on the Verrazano website. Double VELAs are off-campus activities (typically scheduled on Fridays) that count as two VELAs. Students are strongly encouraged to attend more than the required number of VELAs.

Students **must** sign the VELA attendance sheet (or CLUE attendance sheet where applicable) and fulfill any other requirements of the event as noted on the VELA Events section of the website to receive credit for their attendance. VELAs must be attended by the last day of classes. Failure to fulfill the VELA requirement each year will result in dismissal from The Verrazano School.

**VI. Professional Development**

All Verrazano students must fulfill the following four requirements during their first year and a half in the program. Please visit the Professional Development link on the Verrazano website for specific information and instructions about the workshops and resume process.

• Attend a Professional Communication Workshop (first semester)
• Complete Careers versus Majors assignment (first year)
Verrazano professional development workshops and activities help students become better prepared to apply for internships, scholarships, fellowships, job opportunities, and graduate school. These requirements are related to The Verrazano School’s goals of advancing career opportunities through professional development and supporting development of strong oral and written communication skills. Upperclassmen are encouraged to attend Career and Scholarship Center events on topics such as interviewing, internships, job preparation, networking, and graduate school applications.

VII. Community Service Requirement

Verrazano students must complete a minimum of 40 documented hours with a non-profit organization, with no fewer than 10 hours per academic year until the requirement is met. The requirement must be met prior to applying for graduation. Please review the Verrazano website for community service deadlines.

Service must be completed with a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization in the local community, where "local community" is defined to mean anywhere within the five boroughs of New York City. Students who want to complete service in NJ, PA, CT, or a more extended region should consult with the Verrazano Office prior to service. Final approval of all service hours will be determined by the Verrazano administrators. Students are encouraged to consult with the Verrazano Office if they have questions or concerns about how to fulfill the service requirement.

Notes:

• Students who participate in ongoing service at the same organization throughout the year should submit the verification form at the end of each semester (December 15th and May 15th) and at the end of each summer (if applicable).
• Students who participate in one-time service events must submit the documented hours within one month of the service date.
• Students accepted to The Verrazano School after the freshman year are still required to complete at least 10 hours per year and a total of 40 hours of community service. Please contact the Verrazano Office to discuss the distribution of the hours.
• Students who graduate early are responsible for fulfilling the total number of service hours required for a four-year student.
• Students who graduate later than their original Verrazano class year must complete five additional hours of service for each extra semester.

Failure to fulfill the community service requirement will result in dismissal from The Verrazano School.

VIII. Meeting with Director/Applying for Graduation

All Verrazano students must attend at least one personal meeting with the Director of The Verrazano School during their senior year. This meeting must take place before November 15th.
for all graduates. Students schedule the meeting within the first two weeks of the fall semester. Students who will be student teaching in the fall must meet with the Director during the semester prior to student teaching.

This is an opportunity for students to share their experiences in Verrazano as well as their future plans. Appointments can be made by contacting Cynthia Palumbo at 718-982-4171 or cynthia.palumbo@csi.cuny.edu.

In the final year at CSI, students must:

1. Apply for graduation with the Registrar’s Office at CSI by the notification deadline.
2. Notify The Verrazano School of your intent to graduate and submit the Verrazano Application for Graduation by the notification deadline.

IX. Communication

All Verrazano students are responsible for checking their college CIX e-mail on a regular basis for information from The Verrazano School and CSI. E-mail communication with students is done through CIX e-mail – the official college e-mail system – and other e-mail addresses will not be used.

Enrollment Appeal Processes for Unmet Requirements

All dismissals are made the end of the spring term. Students failing to meet GPA, professional development, or full-time status requirements at the end of the fall term will be (1) placed on probation, (2) required to communicate with the Associate Director about remediating their status, and (3) complete the requirements to avoid dismissal from the program at the end of the spring term. If, at the end of the spring term, students have not met one or more of the Verrazano requirements, they will receive a dismissal letter from the Verrazano School (this does not affect your standing with CSI).

GPA

Students can appeal for readmission after they have achieved a 3.0 cumulative GPA by writing a one page letter highlighting: 1) the factor(s) that caused their cumulative GPA to fall below 3.0, and 2) why they would like to be readmitted to The Verrazano School. In addition to this letter, students must include one letter of support from a CSI professor. The letter of support from a professor must be accompanied by the Letter of Support Information Form which can be obtained at The Verrazano School Office in 1A-304. The appeal documents are reviewed by the Director and the Associate Director of The Verrazano School.

Part-time Status.

Students can appeal for readmission by writing a one page letter highlighting: 1) the factor(s) that caused them to become a part-time student, 2) their plan for making up those credits in future semesters, and 3) why they would like to be readmitted to The Verrazano School. The appeal documents are reviewed by the Director and the Associate Director of The Verrazano School.
Note: If a student thinks they may (1) enroll in a part-time (less than 12 credits) schedule or (2) fall below 12 credits because of dropping or failing a course during a semester they should immediately contact the Verrazano office. If, after a discussion, the student needs to drop below full-time status they should immediately submit the appeal for review by the Verrazano Director.

**Unfulfilled VELAs**

Students can appeal for readmission to The Verrazano School after they have fulfilled the VELA requirement for the previous academic year as well as the current academic year. The student appeal letter must highlight: 1) how and when the student fulfilled the requirement, and 2) why they would like to be readmitted to The Verrazano School.

**Professional Development**

Students who do not complete the Professional Development requirements by the end of the first year can appeal for readmission after the requirements have been completed the following year. The student appeal letter must highlight: 1) how and when the student fulfilled the requirement, and 2) why they would like to be readmitted to The Verrazano School.

**Community Service**

Students can appeal for readmission after they have fulfilled the community service requirement for the previous academic year as well as the current academic year. The student appeal letter must highlight: 1) how and when the student fulfilled the requirement, and 2) why they would like to be readmitted to The Verrazano School. The student must also submit documentation of all completed community service hours.
VERRAZANO REQUIREMENT CHECKLIST BY TERM

**Freshman Year**

- Enroll in a Verrazano learning community in the fall semester
- Take Verrazano courses, including ENG 151
- Meet with the Verrazano Associate Director for advisement in fall and spring
- Complete the Professional Development requirements
- Attend at least two VELA events
- Complete at least 10 hours of documented community service
- Maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA and full-time student status

**Sophomore Year**

- Attend at least two VELA events
- Complete at least 10 hours of documented community service (or as needed)
- Take Verrazano courses as needed to meet minimum requirement and additional courses as desired
- Complete the resume portion of the Professional Development requirements
- Meet with Verrazano Associate Director for advisement through the sophomore fall or until 45 credits have been completed – whichever comes later
- Maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA and full-time student status

**Junior Year**

- Attend at least two VELA events
- Complete at least 10 hours of documented community service (or as needed)
- Take HON 301 – the Verrazano interdisciplinary honors seminar – in preparation for capstone work
- Take Verrazano courses as needed to meet minimum requirement and additional courses as desired
- Maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA and full-time student status

**Senior Year**

- Complete and present a capstone research project at the Undergraduate Research Conference (or other pre-approved venue)
- Attend at least two VELA events (see website for deadlines)
- Complete at least 10 hours of documented community service (or as needed; see website for deadlines)
- Complete Verrazano course requirement if not already completed
- Meet with Verrazano Director before November 15th. All meetings must be scheduled within the first two weeks of the fall semester.
- Conduct capstone research/work, present results at the Undergraduate Research Conference, and submit final capstone project report and reflection.
- File Verrazano Graduation Application by October 1st (Jan grads) or December 1st (June/Aug grads)
- File the CSI Application for Graduation
- Maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA and full-time student status