



What is a keystone project?

The keystone project is a substantial, in-depth work of research, creation, or invention in a student's chosen field. The primary purpose of the keystone projects is to provide students with a sustained experience of intellectual discovery. That experience begins in the junior year, when students learn to balance the excitement of imaginative approaches to their intellectual interests with the rigor of field-specific methodologies, and work on the design of their research/creative project. The process continues in the senior year, when students conduct their research, create their artwork, or invent their devices, and assess the significance of the work they have done.

The form of the keystone project may vary from field to field, but it should aim for the highest standards of the disciplinary or interdisciplinary area in question. For example, students of international relations might write a policy paper; biomedical engineers might create a device; stage designers might create a set for a specific play; ecologists might design a study of the urban heat environment; painters might create a portfolio of pictures. Although the keystone project originates in and is supported by Kilachand Honors College, students will undertake their research, and be advised, in their chosen field of study.

When should students begin thinking about their keystone projects?

Kilachand Honors College has designed courses for students in their junior and senior years to help them choose, research, and complete their keystone projects.

All Kilachand Honors College juniors are required to take the seminar, *KHC HC 401: The Process of Discovery* (1 semester, 4 credits), aimed at helping them identify the question they wish to investigate, find the appropriate sources and methods they will use to answer that question, and then construct a research project around that question that is both imaginative yet feasible (that is, a project that is intellectually ambitious but that can be completed by the end of the student's senior year using the resources students have at their disposal). In addition to regular participation and completion of individual assignments, students enrolled in KHC HC 401 are required to:

- submit a proposal outlining their project
- make an oral presentation of the proposed project to their peers
- submit a budget (where relevant)
- identify a faculty adviser in their major discipline who has agreed to supervise their project.

All Kilachand Honors College seniors will work on their project with their faculty adviser while continuing to develop and communicate their work to peers in Kilachand Honors College. In addition to pursuing their research, students will take a year-long seminar, *KHC HC 501 and HC 502: Innovation, Culture, and Society* (2 semesters, 8 credits), which employs evaluations of case studies in innovation to complement the writing that students do for their keystone projects. In addition, Kilachand Honors College seniors will plan a series of workshops in which they will present their keystone projects to students and faculty before graduation.

What are the keystone project requirements?

In order to successfully complete the keystone project and the Kilachand Honors College program, students must:

1. Complete the junior and senior **seminars** with a grade of B+ or higher in each course. Students whose grade does not meet this standard have the right to appeal their case to the Kilachand directors
2. Obtain a **faculty adviser** willing to supervise the keystone project. Students must return the signed faculty adviser form to their KHC HC 401 instructor by end of the junior seminar
3. Propose a **viable** keystone project by submitting a formal research proposal by the end of the junior seminar. The proposal must be approved by the student's faculty adviser, the KHC 401 instructor, and a Kilachand director.
4. Submit a **detailed budget** by the end of the junior seminar (where relevant)
5. **Complete and present** the keystone project to Kilachand students and faculty at the close of the senior year

Are there any institutional constraints on the keystone project?

The short answer is no. Students are generally encouraged to work in their chosen disciplines, but exceptions may be made upon consultation with the directors. Student collaboration is encouraged, but students working together must take the junior seminar together (that is, the same class). Students who wish to work with professors at other institutions must petition the KHC 401 instructor and the directors; they are strongly encouraged to find an adviser at BU as well.

How do students find a faculty adviser?

Students often find their faculty advisers through course work in their major departments. Students may also turn to Kilachand faculty, who will help direct students to scholars in their chosen fields (a list of all BU faculty affiliated with KHC can be found on the KHC website).

How is research for the keystone project supported?

Kilachand Honors College is committed to supporting student research projects. That support includes making faculty affiliated with Kilachand available to help students design their research projects, providing assistance with identifying faculty advisers in appropriate disciplines, and providing students with intellectual advice and moral support.

Funding for research is generally difficult to obtain. For this reason, Kilachand Honors College hopes to provide modest funding when appropriate for student projects. At the same time, the College encourages students to find and utilize as many funding sources as possible, whether through UROP (grants primarily for summer research), University labs, or outside grants.

What happens if I decide to switch topics?

It is perfectly natural that some students will decide to switch topics. If your project is substantially different from the one you originally proposed, you must submit a new project proposal for approval to your KHC 401 instructor and the directors. Often, the new topic entails finding a new faculty adviser; in that case, you must submit a new adviser form to the office. Similarly, you should submit a new budget proposal where relevant. Extensions undergoing the process can be granted upon petition to the directors.

Do keystone projects count for distinction or honors in other departments?

Honors and distinction are awarded through individual departments at the University. Students are responsible for investigating the requirements for undertaking honors projects and work for distinction in their major fields. Departments typically have an application process for awarding honors and distinction, including a deadline that usually falls at the end of the junior year.

The specific requirements for honors projects and works for distinction vary from department to department. If students want their keystone project to count for honors or distinction in their major departments, they must confer with their home department to ensure that their keystone project meets their department's requirements. Kilachand Honors College faculty and directors are committed to helping students harmonize their major department's requirements with Kilachand's requirements when possible.

The keystone project qualifies for credit for senior design projects within the College of Engineering.

How do I receive credit for my keystone project in Kilachand?

After successfully completing the requirements listed above, Kilachand Honors College students will present their keystone projects and final results at a conference during their senior year, where Kilachand faculty and students will celebrate the culmination of our students' hard work.