

Guidelines for Independent Study in All Departments

Office of Graduate Studies

- I. Guidelines for Independent Study: Independent study for course credit at Arcadia University is an individual project undertaken by a student under the supervision of a faculty member. It is expected that the student is familiar with the area selected and that the specific topic or project grows out of this familiarity. A student may not enroll for Independent Study in order to cover the content of a regular course or to receive additional credit for a course already taken. Independent study is a study in depth NOT breadth.
Most independent projects have as their primary goal a substantial paper of a critical or research nature. Other types of projects, however, may be undertaken. Supervisors of such projects are urged to require appropriate readings and a final written commentary on the project. The commentary might include purpose, procedures, explanatory notes, and the student's evaluation of both process and end result.
- II. Prerequisites for Independent Study:
 - a) Formal admission to a graduate degree program at Arcadia University.
 - b) Successful completion of at least two graduate courses at Arcadia in the department in which the student wishes to undertake the independent project.
 - c) Formal coursework and/or experience in the general area to which the topic or project belongs.
- III. Preliminary Procedures:
 - a) The student obtains a copy of the application form and completes the following:
 1. A relatively detailed description of the proposed project;
 2. A partial bibliography (sufficient to indicate some prior search and sufficient resources available to pursue the study); and
 3. The student's prior training and experience in the area of the project.
 - b) The student secures written approval on the form from the supervisor and the head of the department in which the project is to be undertaken two weeks before the beginning of the semester.
 - c) The student must submit three copies of the completed form signed by the supervisor and department chairman when he/she registers for independent study. These will be filed with the Graduate Office, department adviser, and the independent study instructor.
 - d) The student will be permitted to register for only one independent study or project in a given semester or term.
- IV. Supervision and Evaluation of Independent Study:
 - a) Normally the supervisor of an Independent Study is a member of the full-time faculty at Arcadia University. The department chairman may make exceptions when the special expertise is not available among the full-time faculty and a qualified part-time faculty member is willing to undertake the supervision.
 - b) At the beginning of the semester (preferably earlier), the supervisor and the student will arrange a schedule for conference and submissions of work.
 - c) The supervisor will arrange for a faculty member from outside the department to read the final paper and assist in evaluating the completed project (including non-verbal aspects of the projects as appropriate). A third reader may be added either from within or outside the department
 - d) The paper, in the form the student considers final, must be submitted in sufficient time before the end of the semester to allow for necessary revisions suggested by the supervisor and reader(s) before the final grades must be determined.
 - e) Each department should establish criteria for evaluating independent study. A copy should be given to the student at the beginning of the project.
 - f) Each department should give the student the departmental style sheet, or refer him or her to an acceptable manual of style.
 - g) The supervisor shall give the student a written evaluation of the project as well as a grade.
- V. Final Procedures.
 - a) Two copies of the paper are to be submitted: one to be filed in the department office and one in the Office of Graduate Studies. The supervisor may require additional copies. Copies will be retained for five years.
 - b) The cost of duplicating copies will be borne by the student.
 - c) An abstract, with title, is to be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies when the supervisor finally accepts this paper. The title will appear on the transcript and the abstract will be retained for five years in the student's file.