

## INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSES FAM 847.7

The College has adopted an academic plan which recognizes that certain students may profit from the opportunity to carry on studies in depth and in breadth, and achieve intellectual growth by engaging in specially designed Independent Study courses. These courses are usually designated Independent Study (commonly numbered 555 or 595). They should not be confused with regular courses presented as tutorial or community service courses nor substituted for established courses. Over the past decade these courses have developed in various directions in a number of areas. In order to maintain the quality of the independent study courses and provide for some continuity of administration, the following guidelines have been established. These guidelines have been drawn up to insure certain standards while allowing flexibility for more specialized needs of individual departments/schools.

### Guidelines

1. Students are required to have a minimum overall GPA of 3.0 in order to be eligible to sign up for independent study.
2. Each department/school shall require a written application for independent study. This will serve as the student's contract. The contract should indicate the student's objectives, a tentative schedule of student-faculty conferences, the nature of objectives, a tentative schedule of student-faculty conferences, the nature of the final project and the criteria upon which the independent study project will be evaluated. A copy of each approved contract is to be kept in a file in the department/school for at least one academic year.
3. A copy of each student's final independent study project is to be kept in a file in the department/school for at least one academic year. If placing a copy of the project on file is not feasible (as with films or productions) this should be indicated on the independent study contract. These final reports shall be placed in the file when the student's grade for the course is submitted.
4. It is required that within each department/school, independent study applications be reviewed and acted on each quarter, prior to registration. The procedure for this review shall be established by each department/school.
5. As a general rule, a faculty member is expected to devote an average of 1-1/2 hours a week for each 5 credit independent study student he/she directs. A student taking independent study is expected to devote 3 hours per week for each unit of independent study (i.e., a 5-unit independent study should involve approximately 15 hours per week for a student).

6. Other regulations regarding independent study may be instituted at the department level as desired by individual department's/school's needs. In particular, each department/school should decide how many units of independent study can be counted as units toward that major, credential or graduate degree.

## **Recording and Staffing**

The faculty workload assignment for Independent Study and other types of supervised instruction differs from that used for traditional classroom formats. Instead, faculty are assigned weighted teaching units (WTUs) based upon the number of students supervised, rather than the number of class meetings each week. Thus faculty supervising students enrolled for 5 or 6 student credit units (SCUs) of Independent Study are assigned .5 WTU per student. 24 such Independent Study students would constitute a full teaching assignment for one faculty member for one term. Lesser amounts of SCUs assigned to Independent Study students each proportionately fewer WTUs for the faculty involved in the supervision.

Since Independent Study is our most expensive instructional mode, the number of class cards available is limited each term. Their assignment to Colleges and Departments/Schools is the responsibility of the Dean of Academic Planning, who establishes norms for each instructional format in consultation with the Director of Institutional Research and the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Each Department/School offering instruction on an Independent Study basis assumes responsibility for establishing policies and procedures which insure that student projects are appropriate to the time and SCUs available and that adequate arrangements exist for the supervision and evaluation of student efforts. As a norm, faculty are expected to spend 1-1/2 hours per week in preparation for, meeting with or evaluating the work of each supervised student enrolled for 5 or more SCUs.

Every student enrolled for Independent Study should be credited to some faculty member's workload assignment, preferably the faculty member doing the supervision, irrespective of the effect on that faculty's reported workload. Each such assignment must be made within the Department/School in which the student enrolls for Independent Study.

Through the course of the academic year, faculty with greater than 12 unit course loads one term can be given reduced teaching assignments in a subsequent term within the same academic year. Or, at the discretion of the Department Chairman/School Director, and with the knowledge and consent of the College Dean, another faculty member within the same Department/School can be given a reduction in teaching assignment equal to the course overloads earned through Independent Study in the same or an earlier term.

The College Dean bears the responsibility for maintaining, in a clearly auditable fashion, the records of Independent Study assignments for each Department/School each term. The constraints involved in the procedures described include the following.