

Independent Study for Course Credit in Rutgers School of Business-Camden

What is an Independent Study?

In an Independent Study Course, a full-time faculty member acts as guide, mentor or facilitator on a study project initiated by the student. The final design of the course plan may be worked out between faculty member and student, but it is the students' responsibility to make the initial proposal, to approach a suitable faculty sponsor, and to manage their own work throughout the assigned timeframe.

Who is eligible?

School of Business-Camden students are eligible to request an independent study, when they have Junior or Senior status (having completed at least 58 credit hours). Additionally, a current GPA of at least 3.0 is strongly encouraged.

Are there other restrictions related to taking an Independent Study?

No more than 6 credits of Independent Study can be counted toward graduation requirements AND no more than 3 credits can be counted in an area of specialization (see catalog for identification of specializations in each major).

Other things to consider?

- There is no requirement that faculty members take on Independent Studies and they receive no compensation for doing so. Providing this type of mentoring is a personal investment based on confidence that the student will effectively manage the process and produce high quality work. Just as with any other professional mentoring situation, it's important that the student recognize this placement of trust and make every effort to meet or exceed expectations.
- The information in this document is for Independent Study Course Credit described below in two variations, one of which is a proposal for research. The School of Business course offerings also include an Honors Thesis option for a 6-credit research project supervised by a faculty member. The Honors Thesis is separate and distinct from a standard Independent Study, and information on that option is available elsewhere.

What is necessary to put forward a proposal?

Following are four recommended steps to take the student from an idea through the proposal and to enrollment in an Independent Study.

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STEP #1. Two of the most common types of independent study are shown below with specific features to include in a written proposal. Whether the independent study proceeds as originally proposed is subject to negotiation between the student and the faculty sponsor, but it is the students' responsibility to initiate the discussion with strong documentation of intent.

<p>A proposal for Research with a Faculty Member:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Specify a <i>research question</i> – a clear statement of the specific issues you plan to investigate and why this is interesting and important. The question should have both practical and theoretical significance Provide <i>background</i> to this question in a brief summary of previous related research. Include a reference list from both academic journals (e.g., Journal of Finance & Economics, Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Business Ethics) and business publications (e.g., The Wall Street Journal, Business Week, Fortune). Explain the <i>methodology</i> you plan to use in your investigation of the topic (i.e. surveys, readings, interviews, etc.). The more detail you can provide, the better. Provide a clear <i>timeline</i> that shows responsibility for deliverables on specific dates throughout the time of the project. These might include deadlines for written work or presentations, or scheduled progress meetings at which to review specific portions of the work and receive feedback. Describe the anticipated <i>benefits</i> of the project – the expected outcomes for your own learning and its fit in your educational program, as well as the potential contribution of resulting information for other researchers and business people. (for this type of project, you would seek out a faculty member who does related research) 	<p>A proposal to study specific information for which no class is currently offered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the <i>body of knowledge</i> you want to study, including why this is important to your overall program of study. This should include an overview of available courses that you have investigated and verified they do not cover what you are seeking. List proposed <i>sources for information</i> you want to study. This could include books, articles in professional journals, academic research articles, and others. Include full bibliographic information along with your reasoning for use of each source. Specify the <i>final product</i> of your work and intended audience (written paper or chapter on the topic, oral presentation to a class, related business proposal, etc.). Provide a clear <i>timeline</i> that shows responsibility for deliverables on specific dates throughout the time of the project. These might include deadlines for written work or presentations, or scheduled progress meetings at which to review specific portions of the work and receive feedback. Describe the anticipated <i>benefits</i> of the project – the expected outcomes for your own learning and its fit in both your education program (as referenced in item a), and your career ambitions after graduation. (for this type of project, you would seek out the faculty member whose area of teaching and research is most closely related to your topic area)
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STEP #2. The student submits (1) a completed Independent Study Application form, (2) an unofficial transcript, and (3) the proposal following guidelines above to a full-time faculty member. The faculty member may agree to the proposal, suggest further discussion and possibly revisions, or decline involvement. NOTE: the application should be submitted to the faculty member during the time of pre-registration for the semester in which the work will occur.

STEP #3. If the student and faculty member reach agreement on the Independent Study, documentation of their agreement (see Independent Study Application form) is sent by the faculty member to the Area Coordinator, who may request additional information for clarification or simply initial the application and, if desired, retain documentation in a central file for later reference.*

STEP #4. If given a "go-ahead" on the proposal (form is signed by faculty member and initialed by the area coordinator), the faculty member will provide the Special Permission Number (SPN) required for the student to enroll in the course. Student should utilize the web registration system to enroll in the course.

Then what happens?

With enrollment complete, the student begins the work on the agreed project. It is the student's responsibility to set all necessary appointments with the faculty mentor and manage time commitments to adhere to the proposal timeline.

COMPLETION

The student provides deliverables according to the descriptions and deadlines put forth in the final, approved proposal. High quality work is expected. Simply completing the work is no guarantee of an A grade. When the student and the faculty mentor agree that the work is complete, the faculty member assigns a grade and submits that to the registrar for posting to the student's record. To allow for any needed discussions at this point in the process, it is wise to schedule completion of the planned work a week or more before the standard grade submissions for that semester.

Students are asked to sign a permission form stating that their project will be retained for future reference and may be used as a sample or guide for other students considering independent study.

RECORD RETENTION

Each area coordinator maintains a file of Independent Study Projects. This should contain the original agreement document, a copy of the final written outcome of the project and a copy of the student's signed permission to use as guide for future projects. As area coordinator responsibilities are passed to another individual, this file will also be handed over to the new coordinator. Project samples are to be retained for 2 years.

Independent Study Application

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT AT TIME OF INITIAL PROPOSAL (STEP 2)

_____ Student Name (please print or type)	_____ Rutgers ID
Current GPA: _____	Number of Credits Completed to Date: _____
Proposed term for Independent Study:	
Spring 20_____: Fall 20_____; Summer 20_____ Semester.	
_____ Student Signature	_____ Date

TO BE COMPLETED AFTER STUDENT AND FACULTY MEMBER HAVE AGREED ON FORM AND CONTENT OF INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT (STEP 3)

An Independent Study project titled:	
_____ _____	
has been approved for the above noted semester, for a total of ____ academic credits. The final, approved proposal is attached.	
_____ Signature of Faculty Member	_____ Date
_____ Printed name of Faculty Member	Approved by area coordinator:
_____ _____ _____	_____ Print name and initial

TO BE COMPLETED BY FACULTY MEMBER AFTER CONSENT GIVEN FOR PROJECT STATED ABOVE (STEP 4)

<i>Faculty Member should request the following information from the Academic Services Office secretary after final approval has been granted.</i>	
Course Number:	52: _____: _____
Index Number:	_____
Special Permission Number:	_____
<i>Student should utilize the online web registration system to add the course within the applicable timeframe; contact the Registrar's Office for assistance if needed.</i>	