

INDEPENDENT STUDY GUIDELINES

To help ensure the quality and consistency of graduate learning for independent study, the following guidelines were created and adopted October 2006.

Independent study is intended as a student self-directed learning experience with faculty oversight and guidance. The topic of independent study should be a novel learning experience worthy of graduate credit. One credit hour reasonably approximates not less than one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work for each week of the term. Working with the independent study instructor, the student should prepare an Independent Study Learning Contract (see below) that is ultimately approved by the instructor prior to starting the independent study. The Independent Study Learning Contract must be completed, approved and signed prior to the last day to add/drop for a term in order to register for independent study that term.

Faculty involvement should be appropriate for the topic of study and the learning objectives. If supervised by an adjunct instructor, a regular OHSU faculty should provide oversight to ensure OHSU policies are followed and graduate academic standards are met.

The independent study deliverables should be sufficient to evaluate the level of learning and mastery of the chosen topic given the number of credits. Independent study must be **graded with a letter grade** and is subject to all OHSU and School of Medicine grading and academic policies.

Creating an Independent Study Learning Contract:

To receive approval to take an independent study under any faculty or instructor at OHSU the student is expected to prepare a *learning contract* that covers the content, means, timeline, number of credits and deliverables for the independent study course. The learning contract is intended to be a fluid document, allowing for instructor-approved adjustments throughout the term as appropriate. This contract must be agreed to and signed by the independent study instructor prior to the last day to add/drop for the term. Following the guidelines below, a 1-2 page document is to be prepared and approved by the instructor who has agreed to work with the student on an independent study. Once approved, a copy should be provided to the program's academic coordinator for the student's file.

What are the learning objectives? What new knowledge, skills and abilities will the student have at the end of the study? This may be concrete or flexible, but it's important for the student and his/her instructor to know what they are expecting to gain from the experience.

How will the learning objectives be achieved? The plan might include readings, interviews, discussion with a faculty advisor, or other forms of research as appropriate.

What are the deliverables? The faculty advisor must be able to evaluate what the student has learned. Possibilities might include; one or more written documents or reports, PowerPoint presentations, teaching cases, or other products that would be of value to the student and/or key audiences. A typical rule of thumb for traditional courses is one significant deliverable (a paper or a presentation) per credit, but this can be rearranged to best meet the stated learning objectives.

What is your timeline for deliverables? Include interim mileposts such as advisor meetings, feedback on drafts, and final project completion. The advisor and student can use this to gauge progress and provide feedback and support as needed.

Registering for Independent Study:

Independent study classes are set-up on an "as needed" basis once the learning contract has been established and agreed upon. The faculty advisor notifies the student's Academic Coordinator of the need for an independent study and provides the student's name and Banner ID, advisor's name, number of credits, and class title (optional: without a specific class title the class will be titled "Independent Study"). The Academic Coordinator submits the information to the Registrar's office for processing. The student is registered by the Registrar's office.