

Independent Study Option and Approval Process

Purpose of Independent Study

An independent study is a valuable way in which students can further specialize and focus their interests in their graduate program. The independent study is offered as a way to further enhance the curriculum of a student. For example, an individual might develop a market review of Internet business strategies and assess them in terms of alternative strategic models developed in literature. Also, a research project on a particular topic that might require the collection of primary data or an in-depth analysis and review of secondary data would merit consideration.

Approval Process

In order for an independent study to be accepted as a substitute for an elective offering, the proposal must meet several criteria. (see next page for proposal requirements)

Foremost for any independent study project to be acceptable, it must have demonstrated academic value. (Independent studies are considered elective courses and not acceptable or allowed as a substitute for a core course.) In order for an independent study project proposal to be accepted, a completed proposal (see next page), with approval from a faculty sponsor and the associate dean, must be completed by the beginning of the second week of classes. Proposals turned in after that date will not be accepted for that current semester.

Since credit is awarded for an independent study similar to an academic course, employment activities conducted in conjunction with an assistantship, or experiences of a professional development nature alone, while all of value are not acceptable for academic credit.

Credit Amount

Academic credit for an independent study can be from one to three credits based on the scope of the project. The decision regarding the appropriate amount of credits to be awarded is made by the faculty sponsor and Associate Dean.

Independent Study Proposal

In order to have an independent study considered for acceptance, a student must develop a proposal in conjunction with a faculty sponsor. This proposal must address the following aspects

- Project purpose – The independent study proposal must have a concise, clearly worded description of the scope of the project. The project purpose should explain the unique aspect of the proposal and the need to address it through the independent study alternative.
- Academic merit – The proposal must address the academic component that will be addressed in this independent study such as the exposure to alternative marketing research methodologies, or the review of emerging literature on the impact of business-to-business Internet strategies.
- Measurement of performance – In order for any independent study proposal to be accepted, a specification of how the student's academic performance on this project will be assessed must be clearly defined.
- Faculty sponsor – It is the student's responsibility to identify a faculty sponsor and gain the faculty member's support for the project.
- Credit requested
- Time Line for project – A specific outline of the progression of this project, including a scheduled date for completion.

Complete page 3 and attach as your cover sheet to the completed proposal for submission and approval.

If you have any questions you may contact us at:

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Isenberg School of Management
121 Presidents Drive
Amherst, MA 01002

Phone: 413-545-5608 Fax: 413-577-2234

Email: mba@isenberg.umass.edu

Independent Study Cover Sheet and Approvals

Name: _____ Spire ID: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Semester/Year: _____

Faculty Sponsor: _____

Approval Signatures:

1. _____
Student date

2. _____
Faculty Sponsor date

3. _____
Associate Dean date

OFFICE USE ONLY

Class # _____

Date added in Spire: _____

Entered by: _____