

Independent Study

Independent study enables a student to pursue for course credit a research or other academic topic of interest under the supervision of a faculty member. Independent study is of two types:

- Independent Study (non-research)
- Research Independent Study

Courses entitled Independent Study provide opportunities for individual non-research directed study in a field of special interest on a previously approved topic taken under the supervision of a faculty member and resulting in an academic and/or artistic product. Courses entitled Research Independent Study provide opportunities for individual research in a field of special interest under the supervision of a faculty member, the central goal of which is a substantive paper or written report containing significant analysis and interpretation of a previously approved topic.

Policies

The following policies apply to both types of independent study:

- **Approval**— The independent study must be approved by the instructor(s) involved as well as by the Division Chair and the student's Academic Advisor.
- **Faculty appointment**—The instructor of record (supervising faculty member) must hold a regular rank faculty appointment at Duke Kunshan University in the academic unit sponsoring the independent study. In some cases, there may be an additional instructor who mentors the bulk of the independent study and holds an appointment outside the sponsoring academic unit. If this is the case, the supervising faculty member is responsible for submitting the final grade, and ensuring that the instructor adheres to academic standards, policies, and procedures pertaining to undergraduate students at Duke Kunshan University.
- **Course Content / Quality**—The independent study must provide a rigorous academic experience equivalent to that of any other undergraduate DKU course. Independent study courses may not duplicate available course offerings in the semester or summer term in which the independent study is being taken, nor may independent study be used simply to provide low-level support for other projects or to observe or shadow the work of others.
- **Meeting schedule**— The student will meet with the instructor of the independent study at least once a week for a 7-week course and during the summer or every two weeks for a 14-week course. In addition, the individual effort of the student normally entails:
 - § for a 4-credit course: ~20 hours per week for a 7-week course or ~10 hours per week for a 14-week course
 - § for a 2-credit course: ~10 hours per week for a 7-week course or ~5 hours per week for a 14-week course

- Final product—The student will produce a final academic and/or artistic product to be completed during the semester for which the student is registered for the course.
- Grading—The instructor will evaluate the work, offer midterm feedback and evaluate the final product associated with the independent study, and submit a grade by the end of the course period. If the instructor is someone other than the supervising faculty member, the instructor will consult on the final grade with the supervising faculty member from the sponsoring academic unit, who will submit the final grade.
- Credit toward a major -- The Dean of Undergraduate Studies, in consultation with the appropriate Division Chair, will determine whether an independent study course successfully completed will count toward the major.

Note: Though uncommon, it is not prohibited for a student to take more than one independent study course in a semester. Students may not receive academic credit for work (e.g., in a laboratory, an internship, etc.) for which they receive monetary compensation.

Procedures

- If you wish to register for an independent study or research independent study you must first find and make arrangements with a faculty member having expertise in the desired area. It is best to begin this process in the semester before you intend to enroll as there will be many details to work out.
- You and your faculty instructor should agree on the course title, plan of study, objectives and expectations, as well as on the nature of the final product and evaluation criteria.
- Then you need to complete and submit the signed Independent Study Permission Form. Your instructor (or the supervising faculty member from a sponsoring academic unit) will provide you with a course number, section number, and permission number which you will then use to enroll. You should complete your enrollment by the end of the drop/add period.