

REQUEST FOR RESEARCH INDEPENDENT STUDY

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Courses entitled Research Independent Study involve individual research in a field of special interest under the supervision of a faculty member, the central goal of which is a substantive literature review or write-up of an empirical study. Such research independent study courses bear a Research (R) code and thus satisfy general education research requirements. One research independent study may be approved for a Writing (W) code in addition to the R code, but no other curriculum code designations are permitted for research independent study courses. Moreover, one research independent study also may be used to fulfill the major's Depth Requirement. Students should indicate on the proposal form if they would like the research independent study course to count towards the Depth Requirement, as such credit will not be given automatically. Students who wish to request a W code for one research independent study course must submit a request form (available at <http://trinity.duke.edu/academic-requirements?p=independent-study-research-w-coding>) to the Psychology Undergraduate Office (242 Soc/Psych), along with their Research Independent Study Proposal form. These forms are due by noon on the last day of Drop/Add.

Students interested in completing a significant research project during their undergraduate career may want to consider the Graduation with Distinction Program (GwD). This is especially important for students planning to pursue graduate education in psychology but is recommended for any student with a strong interest in research. The table on the following page offers a comparison of requirements for Independent Study and GwD.

Policies:

Approval – The independent study must be signed by the instructor(s) involved. There is no need to get the DUS's signature before turning in the form. If there is any problem with the proposal, the Psychology Undergraduate Office will get in touch with the student. In general, once arrangements have been made with the faculty member there shouldn't be any problem.

Faculty appointment – The supervising faculty member must hold a primary appointment within Duke's Psychology Department. In some cases, a faculty member holding an appointment outside Psychology may mentor the bulk of the independent study. If this is the case, the instructor of record is responsible for submitting the final grade, and ensuring that the research mentor adheres to the academic standards, policies, and procedures pertaining to undergraduate students in Trinity College of Arts & Sciences.

Course Content / Quality – The independent study must provide a rigorous academic experience equivalent to that of any other undergraduate course at Duke. Independent study courses may not duplicate available course offerings during the 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 – In addition to the individual effort of the student, which normally entails ~10 hours of work per week, the student will meet with the instructor of the independent study at least once every two weeks during the fall or spring semester, or at least once per week during the summer.

Final product – The student will produce a final academic paper before the end of the term. The specific due date will be negotiated with the instructor.

Grading – The instructor will evaluate the work, including the final paper, associated with the independent study, and submit a grade at the end of the semester. If the research mentor is someone other than the instructor of record, this mentor will communicate the final grade to the instructor of record, and the instructor of record will submit the final grade.

* For policies and procedures related to independent study in Study Abroad Programs, see the Duke Abroad Handbook.

Procedures:

1. Students wishing to register for an independent study first must make arrangements with a faculty member having expertise in the desired area. The student and instructor should agree on the course title, plan of study, objectives, and expectations, as well as on the nature of the final product and the criteria for evaluation. This information will be specified on the application form.
2. The student must submit the Independent Study Proposal Form (attached here) to the Undergraduate Psychology Office (242 Soc/Psych) by noon on the last day of Drop/Add for the term in which the independent study is to be taken. After the form is processed, the student will receive a permission number to register for the course.

Overview: Research Independent Study

Getting Started

- Consider topics/areas that interest you most
- Learn about faculty research interests on the Departmental website
- Discuss possible projects with relevant faculty
- Establish an agreement for working together
- Complete the Independent Study Proposal Form

	Independent Study	Graduation with Distinction
Goals	Learn how to develop a research question, study it, and report the results	Develop an original research question, test it empirically (with data analysis), write thesis for a professional audience and possible publication, and complete an oral defense
Duration	One or more semesters (only two count toward the major); Student and instructor meet at least every other week	Minimum of two semesters (only two count toward the major); Student and advisor meet at least every other week
Final Product	If the student plans to complete the research over the period of two or more semesters, he or she must complete a final paper to be graded at the end of each term. For example, at the end of the first semester the student may submit the introduction and methods of research, and at the end of the second semester he or she may produce a final draft of the paper.	
Types	<i>Empirical Project</i> , with original data collection and analysis; or secondary analysis of existing data; <i>Literature Review</i> (review and synthesis article)	Usually an <i>Empirical Project</i> , with original data collection and analysis; or secondary analysis of existing data; <i>Comprehensive Literature Review</i> also acceptable
Format	Usually APA style or similar; AMA style or similar if more relevant for medical journals	Usually APA or AMA style; in manuscript form or close, as for publication
Length (double spaced)	Empirical Project: approximately 15-25 pages of text, plus references and figures/tables as relevant; Literature Review: minimum 20 pages, plus references	Whatever length is appropriate, as determined in consultation with the faculty advisor; Typical manuscript length is 15-30 pages plus references and figures/tables
Literature Review	All papers must include a literature review that conveys what is currently known as well as any gaps in the research, and must reference at least 12 articles from peer-reviewed journals	Substantive literature review relevant to the research question plus additional citations as needed for interpretation of results
Oral Defense	None	Minimum one-hour oral defense with committee (faculty advisor plus two others); Focus = final paper (submitted at least one week in advance of the defense)

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DESCRIPTION OF STUDY: Using this page (or attached sheet), please provide the following information:

1. Title and Description of Proposed Study:

Provide a one-to-two paragraph description of the proposed study, including topic, course goals, and research / readings to be conducted. If you are planning a multi-semester project, be sure to indicate that clearly and explain why more than one semester is required for your project. Typically, multi-semester projects are ones that will involve data analysis and/or data collection in addition to a literature review.

2. Nature of the Final Product:

Describe the nature and length of the final product (e.g. academic paper, artistic product, research report, etc.) If you are planning a multi-semester project, clearly specify the final product you will be completing for the initial semester.

3. Scheduled Meetings and Work Expectations:

Provide information on frequency and length of meetings with instructor, and expected work commitments and/or timetables:

4. Grade to be based on:

Provide information on how your work in the course will be evaluated.

Description of Independent Study; Final Product; Scheduled Meetings and Work Expectations; Grade Basis:

Signature of Student

Date