

REQUESTS FOR RESEARCH INDEPENDENT STUDY

*Dept. of Psychology & Neuroscience
Duke University*

Courses entitled Research Independent Study are 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. Such research independent study courses bear a Research (R) code and satisfy general education Research requirements. One research independent study may be submitted and approved for a Writing (W) code in addition to the R code designation, but no other curriculum code designations are permitted for research independent study courses. Students who wish to request a W code for one research independent study course must take the appropriate form to 02 Allen Building by the end of the drop/add period of the semester they are enrolled in the course. The request form is available at <http://trinity.duke.edu/academic-requirements?p=independent-study-research-w-coding>. One research independent study may also be used to fulfill the major's Depth Requirement. Students should notify the Psychology Office of Undergraduate Study as the credit will not automatically apply towards this requirement.

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 highly 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:

1. **Approval** -The independent study must be approved by the instructor(s) involved as well as by the Director of Undergraduate Studies in Psychology. If the independent study is offered by a certificate program, approval is required by the Certificate Program Director.
2. **Faculty appointment**-The instructor of record (supervising faculty member) must hold primary faculty appointment at Duke within the Psychology Department. In some cases, a faculty member person who holds an appointment outside Psychology may mentor the bulk of the independent study. If this is the case, a supervising faculty member from within the department is responsible for submitting the final grade, and ensuring that the instructor adheres to academic standards, policies, and procedures pertaining to undergraduate students in Trinity College of Arts & Sciences.
3. **Course Content / Quality**-The independent study must provide a rigorous academic experience equivalent to that of any other undergraduate Duke 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.
4. **Meeting schedule**-In addition to the individual effort of the student, which normally entails ~10 hours 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 (at least once a week during the summer).
5. **Final product**-The student will produce a final academic product to be completed during the semester for which the student is registered for the course.
6. **Grading**-The instructor will evaluate the work, including the final product, associated with the independent study, and submit a grade by the end of the semester. 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 department or program, who will submit the final grade.

* For policies and procedures related to independent study in Study abroad programs, see Duke Abroad handbook.

Procedures:

1. Students wishing to register for an independent study or research independent study must first 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 evaluation criteria.
2. The student submits the Independent Study Permission Form (attached here) to the Director of Undergraduate Studies or Certificate Program Director for final approval before the end of the drop/add period of the term in which the independent study is to be taken. If approved, 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
 Read faculty research interests on Department webpage
 Discuss possible projects with relevant faculty, get a faculty advisor
 Write a brief description, complete the independent study form

	Independent Study	Graduation with Distinction
Goals	Learn how to develop a research question, study it, report the results	Develop an original research question, test it empirically (with data analysis), write thesis for a professional audience and possible publication; complete oral exam
Duration	1 or more semesters (only 2 count toward major); Student & advisor meet at least every other week	Minimum of 2 semesters (only 2 count toward major) Student & 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/she must complete a final product to be graded at the end of each semester. For example, at the end of the first semester the student may want to submit the introduction and methods of research, at the end of the second semester produce a draft of the final paper, etc.	
Types	<i>Empirical Project</i> , with original data collection and analysis; or secondary analysis of existing data <i>Literature Review</i> (review and synthesize article)	Usually an Empirical Project , with original data collection and analysis; or secondary analysis of an existing data Comprehensive Literature Review also acceptable (see this article for general approach)
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: approx. 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 faculty advisor; depending on the field Typical manuscript length is 15-30 pages plus references and figures/tables
Literature Review	All papers have basic literature review, whether they are Empirical or Literature Review options What is currently known, gaps in knowledge, relationship to student work, minimum 12 articles in peer-reviewed journals	Substantive literature review relevant to the research question plus additional citations as needed for interpretation of results
Oral Exam	None	Minimum 1-hour oral exam with committee (advisor plus two others); see Department webpage for details Focus = the final paper (submitted at least one week in advance)

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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, research / readings to be conducted. If you are planning a multi-semester project, be sure to clearly indicate that 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 as opposed to a literature review project.

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 what 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 is to be evaluated.

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

Signature of Student

Date _____