
Policy on Independent Study, Directed Study, and Independent Research Courses

Version: 1.0

Responsible University Official: Provost

Version Effective Date: August 1, 2024

1.0 Introduction

Information on the guidelines for taking an Independent Study, Directed Study, and Independent Research.

2.0 Scope

This policy governs all students and academic programs under the purview of the Provost and the Dean of the School of Medicine.

This policy does not govern the Directed Research course offered by the School of Law.

3.0 Definitions

Independent Study

An Independent Study course provides students with the opportunity to pursue a subject in more depth and independent manner than an existing course. Independent Study requires an outline form, developed through consultation between students and a faculty sponsor. This outline will contain the title of the Independent Study and serves as the official course description.

Directed Study

Directed Study is intended to be a replacement for the content of an existing course. A Directed Study provides students with the opportunity to pursue a course that may otherwise not be offered in a given semester. The material covered in such courses is the same as that covered in the existing course.

Independent Research

Independent Research is intended to be research projects or studies undertaken by students or faculty members outside of regular coursework and class assignments. An Independent Research course requires an outline form, developed through consultation between students and a faculty sponsor. This outline will contain the title of the Independent Research and serves as the official course description.

4.0 Policy Statements

Semester Limits – Independent Study/Research

Undergraduate students are limited to 8 credits of Independent Study/Research courses in a Fall or Spring semester. Undergraduate students are limited to 4 credits of Independent Study/Research courses in a Winter or Summer term/semester.

Graduate students are limited to 6 credits of Independent Study/Research courses in a Fall or Spring semester. Graduate students are limited to 3 credits of Independent Study/Research courses in a Winter or Summer term/semester.

Total Course Limits - Independent Study/Research

Undergraduate students may not exceed a total of 12 credits of Independent Study/Research courses.

Graduate students in programs with requirements of 36 credits or less may not exceed a total of 6 credits of Independent Study/Research courses. Graduate students in programs with requirements of more than 36 credits may not exceed a total of 9 credits of Independent Study/Research courses.

Academic units may set further course/credit limitations, through standard curriculum approval processes, on the number of Independent Study/Research course credits accepted toward their programs, majors, minors, or certificates.

Semester Limits and Total Course Limits – Directed Study

Undergraduate and Graduate students are not limited to the semester or total credits of Directed Study courses.

Student Eligibility

Permission to enroll in an Independent Study, Directed Study or Independent Research is at discretion of the instructor and department chair/program director.

Course Credit

Credit assigned for an Independent Study/Research course will be limited to 1-3 credits, as determined by the course's sponsor. The number of clock hours and nature/amount of work required by the Independent Study must comply with the requirements of SLU's [Credit Hour Policy](#).

Credit assigned for a Directed Study course will be set equal to the credit value of the traditional course.

Course Catalog

Independent Study courses will be listed in the course catalog and on student transcripts with the subject code of the course topic and a course number of 298#/398# (Independent Study), 498# (Advanced Independent Study), 598#/698# (Graduate Independent Study). Additionally, the title will be listed on student transcripts. Academic units may have multiple course numbers for their independent study courses, for example 4980 and 4981.

Independent Research courses will be listed in the course catalog and on student transcripts with the subject code of the course topic and a course number of 397# (Independent Research), 497# (Advanced Independent Research), 597# (Research Topics), 697# (Advanced Research Topics). Additionally, the title will be listed on student transcripts. Academic units may have multiple course numbers for their independent research courses, for example 6970 and 6971.

Directed Study courses will be listed in the course catalog with the same subject code and course number as the traditional course with a section of "DS".

Directed Study, Independent Study and Independent Research opportunities are a privilege, not a right.

Students are expected to do this work with much less instructor supervision than an existing course.

Students who wish to take a Directed Study, Independent Study or Independent Research course should begin the process well in advance of registration since published registration deadlines apply to these courses.

Students will register in Directed Study courses through standard procedures.

The Independent Study and Independent Research application and outline form are available through the Office of the University Registrar. Any application must be signed by the student, the instructor/faculty sponsor, and the department chairperson or program coordinator.

Students will be registered in the Independent Study and Independent Research courses after the completed application is submitted to the Office of University Registrar no later than the end of the add/drop period of the semester/term in which the course work will be completed.

5.0 Approvals

This policy was:

1. Approved by CADD: April 24, 2024
2. Amended by Provost: April 24, 2024