

ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
College of Liberal Arts
INDEPENDENT STUDY - Instructions/Guidelines

PURPOSE

An Independent Study allows a student to pursue an area of academic or research interest that goes beyond existing course work. In order to receive academic credit for an Independent Study, a student must submit an Independent Study Proposal (ISP); have the ISP approved by a faculty sponsor, the chair of the student's home department, the chair of the academic department in which the Independent Study is being offered, and the Dean (or Dean's delegate) of the College of Liberal Arts; and, complete the work requirements contained in the proposal for an official grade. *The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for the preparation of the ISP.*

PROCESS

The ISP preparation and approval process consists of the following:

1. The student should meet with a faculty sponsor, who must be a fulltime faculty member in the College of Liberal Arts, to discuss the Independent Study concept and to outline key elements for inclusion in the ISP.
2. The student should prepare the ISP according to the sections and format described below. The ISP will ordinarily require the student to work with the faculty sponsor to make necessary revisions, and so appropriate time should be afforded to this step in the process.
3. The student should submit five (5) copies of the ISP with an approval form (see Attachment A). All required signatures must be secured prior to submission for final approval by the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts.
4. Once all signatures are obtained, the student should work with the COLA Office of Student Services to ensure that he/she is enrolled properly.

ISP CONTENT

The content of the ISP must include the following five sections. (Please use the form attached.)

1. Abstract

The *Abstract* offers a condensed summary of the topic area, activity, and outcome sought through the independent study. The abstract should be 250 words or less.

2. Statement of Objectives

The *Statement of Objectives* should include a list of the intended purposes or outcomes of the independent study. Each objective should be written in the infinitive form: e.g. "To acquire..." "To learn..." "To know..." "To discover..." "To develop..." "To create..." In other words, this portion of the proposal should present the specific reasons why the student wishes to engage in this study in terms of the outcomes to be achieved by the student.

3. Description of the Independent Study

The *Description of the Independent Study* provides a 1-2 page detailed description of the project itself. This includes a description of the actual work to be done by the student

and the role of the faculty sponsor in guiding this work. This section may include a description of the following:

- readings to be accomplished;
- tasks to be achieved;
- identification of regular meetings with the faculty sponsor or others;
- research techniques to be employed; and,
- specific written assignments to be completed.

4. Methods of Evaluation

The *Methods of Evaluation* section must include specific detail as to how the student work will be evaluated by the faculty sponsor, including the percentage of the grade affected by each task or expectation. For example:

Activity	Percentage of Grade
Participation in weekly discussion with faculty	20%
Project journal entries	20%
Readings and discussion reflection papers	30%
Final paper	30%
TOTAL	100%

5. Bibliography

The Bibliography section should include a list of references that may be used for successful completion of the Independent Study. The Bibliography should certainly include any assigned readings for the Independent Study, but may also include optional texts or articles that may help the student complete his/her work.

CONCLUSION

This document outlines the key requirements associated with the development and approval of an ISP. Any questions regarding the approval process content of this document can be directed to the Assistant Director of Student Services in the College of Liberal Arts Office of Student Services. Any questions regarding ISP content or development can be directed to the faculty sponsor and/or Liberal Arts Chair.

**College of Liberal Arts
INDEPENDENT STUDY
Proposal Form**

Student:
Proposal Title:

1. Abstract (a brief summary of the proposed Independent Study Project – no more than 250 words)

2. Statement of Objectives

3. Description of Study to be Undertaken

4. Methods of Evaluation

5. Bibliography/List of references

ATTACHMENT A.

**ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
INDEPENDENT STUDY APPROVAL FORM**

STUDENT NAME: STUDENT ID NUMBER: _____ STUDENT GPA (must be 2.7 or higher) _____	STUDENT'S HOME DEPARTMENT:
TITLE OF PROPOSAL: 	
FACULTY SPONSOR: 	FACULTY SPONSOR'S DEPARTMENT:
ACADEMIC TERM: 	NO. OF CREDITS:
APPLICATION DATE: 	

This course will be used for Liberal Arts:

Elective: _____ **Immersion:** _____ **Minor:** _____ **Major:** _____

REQUIRED SIGNATURES

Student: _____ **Date:** _____

Faculty Sponsor: _____ **Date:** _____

Liberal Arts Chair: _____ **Date:** _____

Student's Home Department: _____ **Date:** _____

COLA Dean's Office: _____ **Date:** _____

Note: Submit this form with five (5) copies of your Independent Study Proposal.