



Guide to Including Independent Study in your Concentration Course Plan (“AoC”)

The value of independent study

Independent study courses are an opportunity for CUNY Baccalaureate students (creating an individualized major) to co-create a course with a faculty member. Independent study allows students to:

- fill in gaps in their knowledge or experience and develop skills;
- integrate learning, connecting ideas between disciplines, courses, and practice (in addition to research experiences, internships or capstone courses from a discipline);
- create a culminating signature work, either in lieu of or in addition to a thesis and capstone course
- practice self-directed learning, by creating a course not available within CUNY

Guide to including an independent study in your Area of Concentration (AoC)

- An independent study must meet the same standards as other courses, with clearly stated learning goals, including the final project (such as a report or presentation) and assessment criteria. The work needs to align to the level of the course and the number of credits assigned (typically 45 hours of study per credit hour).
- Note that generally, no more than two independent studies or internships can be used in a Concentration (or one in each of a dual Concentration; 6 credits total). If there is an academic reason for more than two to be used, the student and Faculty Mentor should request an exception to the Academic Director.

How to Propose to include an Independent Study Course in your Concentration

When you file your course plan for your Area of Concentration that includes an Independent Study course, include the proposal used to register for the independent study; it should include the following components:

1. *Overview and goals (including learning outcomes):* Introduce the area of study and explain your goals in examining the topic. See CUNY’s resources on developing [learning outcomes](#).
2. *“Syllabus” outline:* Describe how you plan to reach these goals. Similar to a syllabus, this would include:
 - a preliminary list of readings and sources, or bibliography, that you intend to use in the project. This is a beginning point, to help frame the project; your readings may evolve as you read more and refine your topic.
 - a description of how the project will be conducted, e.g., library research, interviews, data analysis.
3. *Supervising Faculty Member Information:* (Note that most departments allow only full-time faculty members to mentor an independent study course.)
 - Name, Department, and Title
 - Contact information
 - Alignment of your project with this faculty member’s expertise
 - Planned schedule of meetings
4. *Final project(s):* Describe the format of the completed project (e.g., exams, presentations, a 15-20 page research paper, multiple shorter writing assignments, a design portfolio, etc.) and how they will be evaluated.

Do you want to propose an Independent Study for your Concentration? Great! Next Steps:

Submit your proposal with the above information to your assigned Academic Advisor for their screening. When the request is complete, they will forward it to the Academic Director. We recommend you wait for approval prior to registering for the course