

Policies for Undergraduate Independent Academic Work

Independent Work is a serious learning activity with standards of accomplishment similar to those of traditional academic courses. Establishing the context of Independent Work and the terms and conditions under which it is to be carried out requires the active cooperation of a student and a faculty member willing to serve as the instructor/mentor.

Definitions:

Independent Study: (Courses numbered 450) (NOT part of the regular curriculum)

Definition: Academic inquiry into an area not covered in any established course, and carried on outside the usual instructor/classroom setting.

Credit: Variable, 1 to 4 (1 to 3 in the Inamori School of Engineering)

Eligibility: Good Academic Standing.

Individual Project in Art (ART 392-398)

Definition: Project or media based independent study. Elective credit only; does not apply to sophomore, junior or senior studio requirements for the BFA.

Credit: Variable 2 to 4

Eligibility: Junior or Senior BFA candidate in Good Academic Standing

Regular Course Taken Independently:

Definition: Courses offered in the baccalaureate curriculum (listed in the catalog) but completed outside of the usual classroom setting. (This option is available only when students do not have access to the scheduled classroom course within a reasonable time frame and when there is a compelling educational reason for this experience.)

Credit: as stipulated in the current AU catalog.

Eligibility: Good Academic Standing.

Credit Limits for Independent Work:

- No more than 4 credit hours of Independent Work may be taken in one term.
- No more than 16 credit hours of Independent Work, in any combination, may be counted towards completion of a baccalaureate degree.
- Any exceptions must be approved by the appropriate Division or Program Chair/Director and College/School Dean.

Guidelines for Determining Credit Hours when Credits are Variable:

The instructor will determine with the student the appropriate credit hours to be earned (within the allowed range) based on the *type* of study to be pursued and the *time* commitment, in lieu of classroom time, required for the student to meet the learning objectives. A sound approach is to translate the comparable hours of actual classroom time that would be required into independent study credit hours. Conference and research time are similar to classroom lecture time for this purpose (1 credit hour for each 1 hour of "classroom" time per week), while time spent on "practice" is similar to lab time (1 for 2). For example:

- A theory-only oriented study might involve a 3-hour per-week commitment for the student in conference time and research, and, in addition, about 6 hours per week of expected individual "study time." The recommended credit hours for registration would be three (3) credit hours.
- A theory/practice combination study to be divided into 1 hour of conference, 2 hours of research and two hours of "hands-on" practice per week, plus about 8 hours per week of expected individual study time, would be (4) credit hours
- A studio practice independent project or study would be expected to earn 1 credit hour for each 1½ to 2 hours per week of studio time.

The approximate division of the time commitment into the areas of conference vs. research vs. practice should be included in the Plan of Study. How the time is scheduled over the course of the term is worked out between instructor and student.

Procedures:

- Students should first identify a faculty member willing to supervise the independent work. If in doubt, consult the Division Chair/Program Director or Dean.
- The terms and conditions for Independent Work are set down in a formal Plan of Study which requires the written agreement of the student and the instructor. The Plan of Study must then be approved by the student's Academic Advisor, the Division Chair/Program Director (when applicable), and the Dean of the student's College/School.
- Plan of Study forms are available in the Student Service Center in Seidlin Hall. The student is responsible for writing out the Plan of Study, coordinating its completion, and seeing to it that copies are distributed.
- When the Plan of Study is completed and signed by all parties, the student must register by submitting the completed Plan Study to the Student Service Center in Seidlin Hall. (BannerWeb registration is *not* available for Independent Work.)