



OVERVIEW: Information on the guidelines for taking an Independent Study or Directed Study

OFFICE/DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE: Office of Registration and Records

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Independent Study and Directed Study are frequently confused with one another. Both offer the opportunity to study individually with an instructor on a contractual basis, but they differ in intent. **Directed Study** is designed to be a substitute for a course that is needed for the student's program of study but is not available in a particular semester. The material covered in such courses is essentially the same that is covered in the traditional course.

Independent Study, on the other hand, is intended to be an extension, or "spin-off," of an existing course. It provides the student with an opportunity to pursue/research a subject in more depth, and in a more independent manner than would be possible in a traditional course.

At the undergraduate level, to be eligible for either Directed Study or Independent Study, a student must have:

- A. Upper-division status (54 or more completed semester hours);
- B. An established Brockport cumulative index (in other words, you must have completed one semester at The College at Brockport) and be currently matriculated at Brockport;
- C. A cumulative index of 2.0 or higher.

There is one exception. If you're a lower-division student (have completed fewer than 54 credits), you may register for a maximum of one Independent Study per semester, if you have met the other criteria listed above and obtain the approval of the department chair. You must support your request with a statement in which you demonstrate your ability to undertake the work and also explain the advantage of taking an Independent Study as a lower-division student. Lower-division students are not eligible for Directed Study.

At the graduate level, Independent Study courses permit graduate students to pursue previously studied topics in greater depth. A content outline for each independent study course is developed through consultation between the student and the instructor/sponsor to suit the needs and interests of the student, and the special competence of the instructor. To be eligible for Independent Study at the graduate level, a student must: (1) have completed six credits of course work at the graduate level; and (2) be able to demonstrate adequate background for the area in which the course is to be taken. No more than nine credits of Independent Study courses may be

included in a graduate degree program. Requests to waive any of the above requirements or restrictions should be made through the department to the dean.

General guidelines for Independent Study and Directed Study:

- A. Students may carry no more than two Independent Study courses in a regular semester and no more than one Directed Study course per semester.
- B. Students may carry no more than one Independent Study course and one Directed Study course during a summer session.
- C. Both Independent Study and Directed Study courses are only possible by arrangement and at the discretion of the instructor and/or the department. Please remember that these opportunities are a privilege, not a right. Also, be aware that the student may be expected to do this work with much less instructor supervision than is customary for a standard course.
- D. Independent Study courses will be designated as liberal arts (A) credit. Directed Study courses will be designated either as liberal arts (A) or as professional credit (B) depending upon the regular course's catalog entry.
- E. Credits earned in Independent Study courses may not exceed six credits per semester.
- F. Credit assigned for a Directed Study course will be set equal to the credit value of the regular course for which it is to be substituted.

Students can pick up an application for Independent and Directed Study (same form) at department offices or at the Office of Academic Advisement.

Along with the *Directed Study Application*, you must submit a statement signed by the course instructor and your academic advisor, justifying the request for a Directed Study course. For Independent Study, you need to submit a course outline and bibliography, developed by you and your instructor/sponsor.

You will submit the completed application with its support documents when you register for the relevant semester.

Applying for Independent or Directed Study may seem, on paper, a complicated business. It really isn't, and the pleasure of being able to take a course that appeared impossible to fit into your schedule, or the delight of in-depth study/research in a field that really interests you, should more than compensate for the paperwork required.
