Independent Study Application and Guidelines

**ACC, BA, BCOM, BE, BL, ES, FIN, MKT, MO, STRATEGY, TO**

**course numbers 399 (undergraduate) or 750 (graduate)**

This course designation allows students to earn credit for an independent research or action-based learning project supervised by a faculty member. Only Juniors and Seniors may enroll in a 399 course. Graduate students may enroll in a 750 course. Please carefully read all portions of these guidelines and complete pages 4–5.

**Academic Research Projects** address a specific research question (e.g., how is globalization affecting a particular industry or sector in a particular country). A literature review on a specific topic in an academic business field would typically be included. The main component of the paper will be an analysis of the research question, based on the literature review as well as the student’s own research and examination of the issue(s). As such, the focus of the student work will be research-based and the final written report will be carefully crafted with results documented and citations to academic research papers (see below).

**Action-Based Learning Projects** allow a student to undertake a substantial project addressing an actual business problem and propose concrete solutions through a significant deliverable, such as a consulting report or action plan. These are academic projects that are required to have the same level of rigor, student workload, and deliverable as in a classroom setting. The project will be an analysis of a business problem along with an application of business tools and principles leading to a set of conclusions and recommendations. The work should be based on the student’s own research and examination of the business issues. As such, the focus of the student work will be action-based, but it is expected that the final report will be carefully documented and cited as appropriate for academic research papers (see below).

Under close faculty guidance, these reports could take the form of compare-contrast, extended analysis of a problem with suggested solutions, or another model. The student work and research may spring from the sponsoring faculty’s research or the student’s interests building on a prior class. Note that Independent Study work is not meant to be a research or teaching assistantship, and students are expected to work on their own projects under faculty guidance. The end product will be a polished, academic paper or significant deliverable which must be filed electronically in the University’s **Deep Blue** service within 15 days of a grade being issued.

**Expectations for Academic Credit Earned**

**Regular Meetings:**
Faculty and student(s) should meet in person or online approximately once per week, with the student providing check-point deliverables such as outlines, rough drafts, or components of an action-based project.

**Quantity and Pace of Coursework:**
Each student is expected to complete the appropriate amount of work (e.g. readings, data work, interviews, etc.) per week, proportional to the credit hours to be earned, comparable to a Senior-level business elective. Students should refer to an official syllabus from a Senior-level business elective as a guideline and provide a general timeline of work as part of the proposal.

**Credit Hours:**
Credit hours assigned to such projects correlate to our class work expectations, where, for each credit hour earned, we expect each student to have 12 class contact hours plus three times that in additional student homework/research time for a total of 48 hours. **Total class work per student for an Independent Study project = 48 * # of credit hours (1 min.; 3 max.)**

**Additional Assistance:**

The Ross Business School expects all students to follow careful source citation, following guidelines at [http://www.bus.umich.edu/Academics/Resources/communityvalues.htm](http://www.bus.umich.edu/Academics/Resources/communityvalues.htm) and on the Kresge Library’s resource page: [http://kresgeguides.bus.umich.edu/researchtools/references](http://kresgeguides.bus.umich.edu/researchtools/references). Style and notation standards for research papers may be based on The **Style Manual** (University of Chicago Press).

Students are encouraged to utilize the resources of the Kresge Library when working on their projects. Helpful pages include:
- Research Tools for Getting Started: [http://kresgeguides.bus.umich.edu/researchtools](http://kresgeguides.bus.umich.edu/researchtools)
- Independent Study Specific Guide: [http://kresgeguides.bus.umich.edu/indstudy](http://kresgeguides.bus.umich.edu/indstudy)


**Deadlines**

Independent Study proposals must be submitted within the first three weeks of the semester. No late submissions will be accepted.

Independent Study applications (including the Independent Study form with all appropriate signatures and a 2–3 page description of the project) must be submitted via email to the Ross Registrar’s Office (rossregistraroffice@umich.edu) no later than:

- Spring/Summer 2020: May 26, 2020
- Spring/Summer 2021: May 24, 2021
- Spring/Summer 2022: May 23, 2020
- Fall 2020: September 21, 2020
- Fall 2021: September 20, 2021
- Fall 2022: TBD
- Winter 2021: January 26, 2021
- Winter 2022: January 25, 2022
- Winter 2023: TBD

Students should plan for 10 business days to collect the appropriate 3 signatures indicating approval.

Independent Study proposals for the 2020–2021 academic year need to be submitted via email for electronic signature. NO HARD COPY FORMS WILL BE ACCEPTED. When sending the proposal to the appropriate associate dean, students should also Cc Sandra Fike (fikes@umich.edu).

**Student Process Checklist:**

*This checklist is provided as a tool for you.*

- Identify possible research projects and possible supervising faculty.
- Meet with your supervising faculty to discuss your project. You should also discuss your deliverables, deadlines, and how your work will be evaluated.
- In your own words, write a 2–3 page proposal for the project, which must include a description of the scope of the research project, learning objectives agreed upon with the faculty member, how you will complete the project (methodology), and deliverables—and for group projects, explicitly outline your individual contribution to the completion of the project and deliverables (how work on the project will be divided up)—after discussions with your sponsoring faculty member. You are required to submit a research paper or final project work that reflects the appropriate rigor, sufficient workload for the requested credit, and the projected length in your proposal is to be indicated in the proposal. The proposal should be clearly written with complete sentences and in paragraph, as opposed to bullet point, form. Proposals plagiarized from other sources will be considered a violation of the Ross Honor Code.
- Complete the Registration Application, including the signatures of your faculty supervisor, the appropriate Department Chairperson, and the appropriate Associate Dean. Applications for Independent Study during Fall 2020 and Winter 2021 should be emailed to the appropriate associate dean, with a carbon copy sent to Sandra Fike (fikes@umich.edu). In general, the sponsor must be a regular faculty member in the academic department of the project. Intermittent faculty will want to discuss the implications for supervising Independent Study work with their Department Chair. Note that Ph.D. students and non-Business School faculty do not qualify to support you on Ross 399/750 projects.
- Submit the completed application form and project summary sheet to the Ross Registrar’s Office to complete your registration steps (rossregistraroffice@umich.edu). The Ross Registrar’s Office staff will send you the information you need to register for the course once your application has been processed. Tuition will be charged for the term in which you are registered for the coursework. You must register for independent study project credits during the term in which the work is completed. Independent Study courses are full term courses and cannot be registered on a half-term basis. Please note that if you are requesting partial credit amounts, you will need to have your credits adjusted after you complete registration for the course.

**After registration is complete**

- Make regular progress toward completing the project in consultation with your faculty supervisor.
- Submit your final report to your faculty supervisor no later than the last full day of classes for the semester.

Faculty may submit your final paper to Kresge Library for entry into Deep Blue at rossindependentprojects@umich.edu.
Independent Study Application
Student: Please read and sign this page.

Registration Requirements:

- Each student applying for academic credit in an Independent Study course must submit a completed, independently written application and proposal by the deadlines listed above. The final report for the course must be submitted to the instructor of record no later than the last day of classes. Failure to register for the course in the appropriate term may affect tuition charges.
- Research projects/independent study work are never permitted to be repetitive of, or a substitute for, existing classes, nor can Independent Studies be used to bypass class registration constraints. They are also not permitted to give credit for research or teaching assistance in lieu of compensation. If the student(s) is assisting the faculty with his/her research or teaching, the student shall be employed and paid according to university employment rules.
- Students must register for independent study project credits during the term in which the work is completed.
- Enrollment in the Ross School of Business Independent Study project courses is open only to students enrolled at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor who are in good academic standing (see Ross academic Bulletin).
- The 399 classes are restricted to BBA Juniors and Seniors, enrolled in, or who have completed, their Junior core classes, and to non-Ross undergraduate students who have attained at least third-year standing (55 credit hours) prior to the term in which they will be registering. Undergraduates are not eligible for 750 classes.
- BBA and MBA students may elect one project course per semester, up to a maximum of three over the course of the respective program, not exceeding seven credit hours in total. MAcc and MSCM students are allowed up to three credits of Independent study course work total for their programs.
- SPECIAL NOTE FOR GROUP PROJECTS: Not all group members are required to request academic credit, and as such the Independent Study application is an individual request for academic credit for work on a project. Each group member seeking credit must submit a completed application form with all required signatures and a proposal in his/her own words detailing his/her individual contribution to the project and the final deliverable(s). All students requesting credit for a group project are required to earn the same amount of credit and contribute the same amount of work to the project.

By signing here, I, the student, confirm that I understand and meet all of the criteria listed above.

__________________________________________________________   _______________________
student signature       date

Personal integrity and professionalism are fundamental values of the Ross Business School community. This course will be conducted in strict conformity with the Ross Academic Honor Code, which can be found in iMpact at http://www2.bus.umich.edu/MyiMpact/academics/ross-community-values. The site also contains comprehensive information on how to be sure that you have not plagiarized the work of others. Claimed ignorance of the Statement and relevant Codes and related information appearing on the site will be viewed as irrelevant should a violation take place. Non-Ross students taking the course should also familiarize themselves with the Code as they will be subject to the Code and related policies while in this course.

I pledge to uphold the Ross Academic Honor Code and the Ross Code of Student Conduct in all my work for this course.

_________________________________________   _______________________
signature       date
**Directions for Student:** Your completed application (pages 3–4 of this document and your vetted 2–3 page proposal, along with required signatures) must be attached to this form, receive the required approvals, and be submitted to the Ross Registrar’s Office (rossregistrarsoffice@umich.edu) no later than the deadlines listed above. We recommend that you allow for a minimum of 10 business days to collect the required signatures. **Late applications will not be accepted.**

You will receive communication from the Ross Registrar’s Office regarding steps to add this course to your schedule once your application has been approved.

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<td>Student Signature:</td>
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**Faculty and Associate Deans:** Please refer to the attached checklist when reviewing Independent Study applications/proposals. *The checklist is meant to facilitate the approval process and does not need to be submitted.*

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<td>Associate Dean (printed)</td>
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* Tuition will be charged for the term in which the student is registered for coursework.
## FACULTY INDEPENDENT STUDY CHECKLIST

**Faculty Supervisor:**

- Is this an original research project? Note that Independent Study courses cannot be shadows of existing courses. Also, teaching assistant and research assistant work cannot earn credit under an Independent Study.
- Does the project have a clear framework, question, and scope? Is the proposed project clearly defined and work proportional to the timing of the semester (the student should have a much better handle on the project later in the semester, for instance)?
- Is the amount of work reasonable for the amount of credit requested? If this is a group project, is the work evenly distributed? Note that all students in the group who are requesting credit must earn the same amount of credit.
- Do the student(s) have a deliverable appropriate to the project and the amount of credit to be earned? If it is a group project, are all of the members' contributions to the final deliverable clearly defined?
- Can the student(s) reasonably be expected to complete the project at this point in the semester?
- Have you discussed deadlines with the student(s) and how you will evaluate the work?
- Do you have the time to guide the student’s (or students’) work given your other commitments for the semester? (Note that we expect students to work for 144 hours during the semester if the project counts for 3 credit hours.)

**Department Chair:**

- Is this project eligible for credit under an Independent Study? Note that Independent Study courses cannot be shadows of existing courses and that teaching and research assistant work cannot receive credit under an Independent Study.
- Is this project appropriate for this department?
- Does the project have a clear framework, question, and scope? Is the proposed project clearly defined proportional to the timing of the semester (the student should have a much better handle on the project later in the semester, for instance)?
- Is the amount of work reasonable for the amount of credit requested? If it is a group project, is the work evenly distributed? Note that all students in the group who are requesting credit must earn the same amount of credit.
- Do the student(s) have a deliverable appropriate to the project and the amount of credit to be earned? If it is a group project, are all of the members' contributions to the final deliverable clearly defined?
- Does the project reflect the academic rigor expected by the standards set by your department for the requested amount of credits?
- Knowing the faculty member’s other commitments, would this be a reasonable addition to his/her workload for the semester?
- Is the faculty member eligible to supervise an independent study project? All tenure and tenure-track faculty are eligible. If you have questions about other faculty, please reach out to the Senior Associate Dean and copy the Ross Registrar’s Office (rossregistrarsoffice@umich.edu).

**Associate Dean:**

- Is this project eligible for credit under an Independent Study? Note that Independent Study courses cannot be shadows of existing courses and that teaching assistant work cannot receive credit under an Independent Study.
- Does the project have a clear framework, question, and scope? Is the proposed project clearly defined proportional to the timing of the semester (the student should have a much better handle on the project later in the semester, for instance)?
- Is the amount of work reasonable for the amount of credit requested? If it is a group project, is the work evenly distributed? Note that all students in the group who are requesting credit must earn the same amount of credit.
- Do the student(s) have a deliverable appropriate to the project and the amount of credit to be earned? If it is a group project, are all of the members' contributions to the final deliverable clearly defined?
- Is this project appropriate for this department?
- Does the project reflect the expected academic rigor and amount of work for the requested amount of credits?