



**BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY**

University Policy 3050

## Independent Study and Directed Research

---

### **Effective Date**

July 1978

### **Last Revision Date**

April 2010

### **Responsible Party**

Dean of the Graduate College, (208) 426-3647

### **Scope and Audience**

This policy applies to all graduate and undergraduate students.

---

## **1. Policy Purpose**

To provide students the opportunity to exhibit scholarly competencies on an independent basis. Independent Study and Directed Research allows the student to explore in depth a specific aspect of a discipline or professional field.

## **2. Responsibilities and Procedures**

### **2.1 Undergraduate Independent Study (496)**

#### **2.1.1 Availability**

Independent Study (496) is available to all upper-division students.

### 2.1.2 Restriction

An Independent Study cannot be substituted for any departmental course requirement, nor can Independent Study credits be used to improve a grade in a course the student has already taken. The Independent Study must be conducted in the semester in which the grade is awarded.

### 2.1.3 Department Authorization

Any department of the University that offers a baccalaureate degree is authorized to offer Independent Study (496) credit.

### 2.1.4 Maximum Credit Allowed

Upper-division students are eligible for one to four credits of Independent Study in one semester. Independent Study may be repeated for a maximum of nine credits towards graduation with no more than six in an academic year.

### 2.1.5 Undergraduate Independent Study Identification

The letter prefix attached to the number representing an Independent Study must identify the discipline in which the study is being done and be consistent with the course designation code listed in the Boise State University Catalog. For example, an Independent Study in History would be designated HIST 496.

### 2.1.6 Application Procedures

Students are expected to take the initiative in developing their Independent Study plans. A student should first consult with the faculty member who will supervise the Independent Study to ensure that the description of the activity is accurate and complete. The student then completes the Independent Study form, secures the appropriate signatures, and submits the form to the Registrar's Office. Independent Study (496) forms are located on the Registrar's Office website and also may be obtained directly from the Registrar's Office. Applications are accepted by the Registrar's Office up to the last day to add Independent Study credits, as indicated in the Academic Calendar.

### 2.1.7 Student Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the student to initiate, conduct and complete an Independent Study. The phrase "Independent Study" means that the student proceeds independently with only periodic checks with the supervising professor. Periodic contact between the student and professor ensures satisfactory student progress. At the end of the semester or session, the

student submits to the professor the completed study. Grades are based on the quality and scholarship of the completed work and are determined by the professor who directed the study.

## **2.2 Graduate Independent Study (596) and Directed Research (696)**

### **2.2.1 Availability**

Independent Study (596) is available to graduate students and to senior undergraduate students with an approved Permit for Seniors to Take Graduate Courses form. Directed Research (696) is available only to graduate students.

### **2.2.2 Restriction**

Independent Study or Directed Research credits cannot be substituted for any graduate program course requirement, nor can independent study credits be used to improve a grade in a course the student has already taken. The Independent Study or Directed Research work must be conducted in the semester in which the grade is awarded.

### **2.2.3 Departmental Authorization**

Graduate Faculty, Adjunct Graduate Faculty, and Affiliate Graduate Faculty in any academic unit are authorized to offer Independent Study (596) or Directed Research (696) credit, subject to departmental approval.

### **2.2.4 Maximum Credits Allowed**

The cumulative number of graduate credits generated by Independent Study (596) and Directed Research (696) that are applied toward a degree may not exceed the aggregate restriction on undergraduate, pass-fail, and university-wide credits. No more than six credits of Independent Study or Directed Research may be obtained in any one semester. Only three credits of Directed Research and/or Internship may be applied to the MBA degree requirements.

### **2.2.5 Independent Study and Directed Research Identification**

The letter prefix attached to the number representing an Independent Study or Directed Research must identify the discipline in which the study is being conducted and be consistent with the course designation code listed in the Boise State University Graduate Catalog. For example, a graduate Independent Study in History would be designated HIST 596.

### **2.2.6 Application Procedures**

A student should first consult with the faculty member who will supervise the Independent Study or Directed Research to ensure that the description of the activity is accurate and

complete. The student then completes the Independent Study (596) or Directed Research (696) form, secures the appropriate signatures, and submits the form to the Graduate College. Forms are located on the websites of the Graduate College and the Registrar's Office. They may also be obtained directly from the Graduate College. Applications are accepted up to the last day to add Independent Study or Directed Research credits, as indicated in the Academic Calendar.

### 2.2.7 Student Responsibility

#### 2.2.7A Independent Study

It is the responsibility of the student to initiate, conduct and complete an Independent Study. The phrase "Independent Study" means that the student engages in advanced study of a specialized topic. The student works independently with only periodic checks with the supervising professor, who must have Graduate Faculty, Adjunct Graduate Faculty, or Affiliate Graduate Faculty status with the university. Periodic contact between the student and professor ensures satisfactory student progress. At the end of the semester or session, the student submits to the professor the completed study. Grades are based on the quality and scholarship of the completed work and are determined by the professor who directed the study.

#### 2.2.7B Directed Research

To obtain Directed Research credit the student conducts an original investigation of a topic appropriate to the discipline. This involves the development of a hypothesis or proposition, review of the literature or scholarly field, collection and analysis of data or other scholarly evidence, and interpretation of the results in a written document, which is graded by the supervising professor. The research cannot be part of the student's thesis or dissertation. The supervising professor must have Graduate Faculty, Adjunct Graduate Faculty, or Affiliate Graduate Faculty status with the university.

---

## Revision History

March 1992; July 1995; April 2010