




LOYOLA
UNIVERSITY
NEW ORLEANS

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND NATURAL SCIENCES, OFFICE OF THE DEAN

July 15, 2010

To: Department Chairs, HNS

From:  Jo Ann H. Cruz, Dean, HNS

Enclosed is a packet of materials describing the process by which faculty gain teaching credit for conducting Independent Studies. For Independent Study courses, Directed Readings courses or Research Projects, please ask your faculty to fill out the enclosed form, which also needs to be signed by the student and the department chair. These forms should be logged in and kept in the departmental office to enable faculty to apply for a course release after having accumulated 18 IS credits (see the attached description). Such course release must be planned in consultation with the department and taken within a semester mutually agreed to by the faculty member and the department. Approval of the Dean's Office is required for the course release.

This form is also a mechanism for clarifying for the students the faculty member's expectations in the course. Gail Reynolds will forward to you, next week, an electronic version of the form.

This policy was recommended by the College Planning Team to the Council of Chairs, which passed it at its May meeting. I would like to thank Chris Chambers for his background research on and writing up of this proposal.

Please let me know if you have any questions, and please inform your faculty with regard to this policy.

Instituting Course Credit Allocations to Faculty for Independent Study Work

The HNS faculty has a long-standing history of engaged work with students through Independent Study (IS) projects. IS work affords junior or senior-level students opportunities to pursue otherwise unavailable advanced work in their major or minor. It also affords students exposure to advanced study for graduate school.

While the importance of independent study is recognized in the College and in the University, there is no formal process within departments and acknowledged by the College, to provide faculty members with course load credit for independent study supervision. There is a need to develop a process for awarding faculty credit for IS oversight and guidance.

Independent Study is defined as follows: a contractual agreement between a student and a professor intended to extend learning beyond courses already in the curriculum. An Independent Study shall function as a for-credit course of instruction in which the student takes the initiative for learning in a format approved by the instructor.

IS projects for which faculty are seeking credit must be reviewed and approved prior to the initiation of the IS. Credit is registered after the IS grade has been submitted to the registrar.

Upon accumulation of eighteen IS credits (one IS credit for each credit hour multiplied by the number of students enrolled in IS), a faculty member will be afforded the opportunity to receive a course release. Such course release must be planned in consultation with the department and taken within a semester mutually agreed to by the faculty member and the department. Approval for this release must also be forthcoming from the Dean's Office. A faculty member should, in most instances, be granted a course release within one year of their request with documentation.

What is an Independent Study?

The independent-study allows a student to create a course with an instructor, which will in all cases culminate with a substantial academic project.

Independent study is normally set up as a one- to three-credit course to be completed during a single semester, with one faculty member and one student, for students who wish to pursue academic interests not available in regularly offered courses; students use independent study to explore topics of personal interest that are not offered or not covered in depth in currently offered courses.

Who is eligible?

Students must have completed twenty-four credits and have a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Student must have sponsorship by a faculty mentor who is currently working on a research project and who has invited the student to participate in the project, or a faculty mentor who has agreed to direct the student's proposed independent study.

How many credits/courses of independent study may a student take?

Students may apply for up to twelve hours of Independent Study toward graduation requirements; normally only one independent study project may be completed per semester.

Who approves independent study applications?

All independent study courses taken by students require prior approval by the Department Chair.

How are independent studies graded and assessed?

The student must submit a substantial paper or report at the conclusion of the course that is graded in the same way regular courses are graded. Independent study courses may not be taken pass/ fail.

What restrictions are there on independent studies?

Independent study courses are subject to the same add and drop deadlines as catalog courses. An independent study may not be used to satisfy Common Curriculum requirements.