

## **GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING AN INDEPENDENT STUDY**

### **Graduate Programs in Education**

### **University of Lethbridge**

*(Approved Education Council, May 12, 2004)*

Independent Studies in the Faculty of Education are intended to provide the student with an opportunity to study a topic that is not otherwise offered in regular course offerings. In evaluating the appropriateness of the proposal, it must be determined that the Independent Study will fit within the student's program, and has substantial academic merit. Proposals must provide evidence of a level of work and sophistication of content consistent with a graduate-level elective in the Faculty of Education. Normally, 3-credit courses involve 39 hours of instruction, and twice that number of hours in reading, studying and/or assignment completion. Proposals that do not provide evidence of sufficient rigor, or that do not meet evaluation standards consistent with a graduate-level elective, will not be approved.

Independent Studies may be undertaken only in areas not covered by courses offered by the University of Lethbridge. A **maximum of two** Independent Studies may count toward requirements for the graduate degree. Graduate students are advised to register in Independent Studies for the semester in which the work is expected to be completed. Normally an Independent Study will be completed within one semester.

#### **A. Preparation of Proposal**

1. **Exploratory Meeting.** The student meets with a faculty member who might supervise the study and obtains tentative agreement. Together they outline preparatory work necessary to generate a two or three-page proposal for the study.
2. **Student Preparatory Work.** The student does the required preliminary reading and other preparatory work and generates a two or three-page proposal for the study. (A proposal ought to include a title, a question, a description of what will be done, with timelines why and how, the form the final product will take, a bibliography, and evaluation procedures for the final product. APA format is required. *See Proposal Contents below.*)
3. **Supervisor Approval.** The proposal is discussed with the potential supervisor, modified as necessary, and approved by the supervisor.
4. **Ethics Review.** If applicable, the student completes the requirements for Ethics Review by the Faculty of Education Human Subjects Research Committee.

#### **B. Proposal Contents**

The Independent Study proposal must contain the following:

1. **Title.** The title for the study must clearly demonstrate uniqueness from existing courses within the Faculty of Education. Students are not normally allowed to conduct an Independent Study of a course that is regularly offered in the Faculty. Please consult the calendar to make sure that the proposed Independent Study does not replicate an existing course within the Faculty of Education.
2. **Purpose and/or Rationale.** The purpose of the study includes an explanation of why the student wants to complete an Independent Study, and the purpose of the study is clearly explained.
3. **Course Learning Objectives.** What the student hopes to learn or how the student hopes to benefit from the study. Students commonly provide three or more specific objectives.

4. **Course Readings.** A list of readings must be provided, with full reference citations that will guide the work. These represent the required readings for the course. In the course of completing the assignments, it is expected that the required readings will be expanded upon.
5. **Evaluation.** Name and describe each proposed assignment or evaluation component and indicate the proposed weight for each component. If special criteria are to be used for the grading of a component, provide the grading criteria. In most cases, the grading rubric will be determined in consultation with the faculty supervisor.
6. **Supervisory contact.** Indicate the frequency and the mode of contact that will occur between the supervisor and the student.

#### **C. Registration Process**

1. The student completes and signs *Approval and Registration for Independent Study Enrolment* form and attaches the study proposal.
2. The student obtains the signature of the supervisor indicating approval of the proposal and agreeing to serve as supervisor.
3. The student submits a copy of the proposal and signed approval form to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research in Education for approval by the Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies and Research in Education and the Dean of Education.
4. The Office of Graduate Studies and Research in Education forwards the signed form to the Registrar's Office and Student Services (ROSS) in order to complete the registration process. Normally students would be expected to complete the study within one semester.

#### **D. Conducting the Study**

The student carries out the activities outlined in the proposal. It is primarily the responsibility of the supervisor and the student to ensure the quality of the study. The student presents a copy of the final product to the supervisor by the date indicated in the proposal.

#### **E. Final Grade**

1. Upon the receipt of the final report or product, the supervisor evaluates the document based on the degree to which the student has met the objectives using the evaluation procedures agreed upon in the proposal, including the following:
  - The student's ability to define, delimit and describe the study
  - The comprehensiveness of treatment of the study
  - The originality of ideas inherent in the study
  - Other criteria specified by the supervisor
2. The supervisor submits the grade.