



UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

Policy Manual

Policy #:	ACD-1601	Policy Title:	Undergraduate Independent Studies Policy
Effective:	06/01/2019	Responsible Office:	Registrar
Date Approved:	05/18/2019	Approval:	Executive Vice President & Provost
Replaces Policy Dated:	02/17/2017	Responsible University Official:	University Registrar

PURPOSE:

This policy outlines expectations for Undergraduate Independent Studies at the University of Richmond.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to the University of Richmond and all of its Affiliates. As used in this policy, the term “Affiliates” means organizations or entities in which the University owns a controlling interest or has the right to elect the majority of the entity’s governing board.

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POLICY STATEMENT:

ACD-1601.1 – Policy

An Independent Study is a course for academic credit which offers a student an individualized educational experience.

At the University of Richmond, schools and academic departments have wide latitude in determining the objectives of independent studies and the amount of credit awarded. In all cases, credit is commensurate with the hours involved and the quality of the learning experience and is determined by the credit-awarding school or academic department. Academic credit is awarded when the student fulfills the objectives set by the school or academic department.

ACD-1601 – Undergraduate Independent Studies Policy

Independent studies at the undergraduate level must conform to the following parameters:

1. **Approval:** Each independent study requires approval of the supervising instructor along with that of the relevant school or department.
2. **Faculty:** Work must be accomplished under the supervision of a faculty member with appropriate experience related to the topic. The supervising faculty member should be within the school or academic department sponsoring the independent study.
3. **Course Content/Quality:** An independent study will not typically duplicate available course offerings in the term taken or be used as a replacement for required courses, but instead consist of work done by the student that explores new material or clearly advances the student's knowledge beyond previous experience. Each independent study must provide a rigorous academic experience with learning objectives and scope comparable to any other undergraduate course.
4. **Time Required/Meeting Schedule:** In addition to a minimum requirement of individual effort, the student is expected to meet with the instructor on a regular basis. Total effort should approximate that required for a typical undergraduate course. For one unit of credit, students should be expected to complete a minimum of 150 hours of work during a 15-week semester (the equivalent of 10 hours/week). For each one semester hour of credit, students should be required to complete a minimum of 45 hours of work during a 15-week semester (the equivalent of 3 hours/week).
5. **Final Product:** The student must be expected to produce a final academic or artistic product (or series of academic/artistic work) to be completed during the semester for which he/she is registered for the course.
6. **Grading:** The instructor will evaluate the work, including the final product, associated with the independent study and submit a grade by the end of the semester.
7. **Credit toward Major or Minor:** Each school or academic department will determine whether an independent study course successfully completed will count toward the major or minor.
8. **Limits:** Each school or academic department will determine and publish appropriate limits for independent studies in those subjects within the school or department.

ACD-1601.2 – Applicable Regulations & Accreditation Standards

SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, 10.7 Policies for Awarding Credit

RELATED POLICIES:

ACD-1001 – Academic Credit Policy

ACD-7201 – Academic and Professional Preparation Requirements for Faculty

POLICY BACKGROUND:

2017 policy approved by University Faculty Senate, February 17, 2017

Current policy reviewed by Deans on January 14, 2019; President's Cabinet on January 28, 2019; and approved by Faculty Senate on April 26, 2019 before approval by Executive Vice President & Provost on May 18, 2019

POLICY CONTACTS:

University Registrar