

INDEPENDENT STUDY POLICY

Responsibility of	Academic Planning Committee/Seminary Team
Reviewed by	Academic Planning Committee/ Seminary Team
Approved by	Faculty Senate September 7, 2018
Reviewed	February 19, 2021; May 15, 2025
Next Review	2030

POLICY OVERVIEW

This policy outlines the considerations and process in the approval, design, and administration of independent studies.

PRINCIPLES

This policy is guided by the principles of integrity and transparency.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students and faculty of Briercrest College and Seminary.

POLICY STATEMENT

Independent Studies (IS) are courses designed to allow a student to complete course requirements under the supervision of a faculty member but without a class attendance requirement. There are four different situations that would warrant an IS:

1. a student requires a course to graduate that is not being offered in-class prior to the student's projected graduation date;
2. a student has an area of special interest where formal study would enhance her or his overall education; and the course is consistent with the student's current program requirements and contributes to his or her educational goals;

3. two required courses conflict with each other on the course timetable (and the same criteria in #1 apply);
4. a scheduled semester course is reformatted as an independent study due to low enrollment.

Further considerations for the use of Independent Studies include:

- The student has the ability to learn with minimal direct supervision;
- A faculty member is available and willing to develop a study of appropriate rigor and provide supervision to the same.
- The student has not exceeded the limit of three independent study courses. Courses that fall under situation #4 above do not count toward the three-course limit.

PROCEDURES

Independent Study Approval Process

1. Except in the event that the administration initiates a course change, students must consult with their Program Coordinators regarding Independent Studies. If approached by a student, faculty members should direct the student to the appropriate Program Coordinator.
2. In consultation with a Program Coordinator, students complete an "Independent Study Request Form" which includes a request for a faculty instructor.
3. When the form is completed, and both the student and Program Coordinator have signed it, the form must be forwarded to Academic Services for review. For college courses, the deadline for "Independent Study Request Forms" in any given semester is the add/drop day.
4. The Registrar and Student Finance Office will conduct Academic and Financial reviews respectively.
5. If approved by the Registrar's Office, the Registrar will forward the request to the Office of the Dean of the College or the Office of the Dean of the Seminary for review, as is appropriate.
6. The Dean of the College or the Dean of the Seminary will consult with the requested faculty supervisor to determine:
 - a. whether this proposal represents the best use of institutional resources;
 - b. the faculty member's willingness and ability to meet the demands of supervising an Independent Study.
7. If the appropriate Dean approves the course and the requested faculty supervisor is agreeable, the faculty supervisor will develop a syllabus for the study. The deadline for college independent study syllabi is one week after the add/drop date in a given semester. Syllabi are to be submitted to the assistant of the respective Dean (College or Seminary). The appropriate Dean's assistant will then forward the request form to the Academic Services Office for registration.

It is the responsibility of the professor to give a syllabus to the student. The independent study will be administered and tracked through the Academic Services Office. Faculty members will be required to submit a final grade to the Academic Services Office and will be compensated at the current rate for independent study upon submission of a final grade.

Syllabus Development

Faculty members are required to develop a new syllabus (or revise a current syllabus) suitable for the independent study. In addition to meeting normal course requirements and including relevant academic calendar policies, an independent study syllabus should demonstrate:

- Course objectives that fulfill the stated course description;
- Course requirements should represent a time investment of approximately 120-150 hours at the undergraduate level and 150 hours for a seminary course;
- Delivery of course content in a manner suitable for the subject matter and type of study;
- Specific activities/assignments that are designed to take the place of in-class instruction time;
- Significant interaction with instructor either in person or by other appropriate means keeping in mind the primary learning in the course will occur independently. Interaction could include regular meetings discussing specific topics/issues in the course, email correspondence on similar subjects, response papers from the student on a topic pertinent to the study returned with clear, specific and generous comments from instructor or other similar activities. Syllabi must specify how this interaction will take place;
- A time frame during which the course will be completed along with intermediate goals as necessary.

An independent study syllabus should follow the same basic outline as used for on-campus courses as much as possible, using the college or seminary syllabus template.

APPENDIX A

Related Forms/Policies	Workload Policy, Credit Hour Policy
Where is this policy published	Faculty Handbook, Academic Calendar (College and Seminary)
Contact Information	Dean of the College, Dean of the Seminary