

PSYC 4960 Independent Study Process and Procedures Mentor Guide

Credits and Time Requirements:

- A student may take up to 6 credit hrs total in PSYC 4960.
- 3 credit hrs can be applied to Additional Perspectives or Psychology Electives
- Each credit hour is considered 30 - 50 hrs of work. Thus, typically the expectation for the student is approximately 90 - 150 hrs/semester for 3 credit hrs. Readings and related work outside the lab are included in the required number of hours.
- Students may take fewer than 3 credit hrs. If they take only 1 or 2 credit hours, it can count toward Psychology Electives.
- Credit in 4960 cannot be given for the same project as a FUSE award.

Steps for Setting Up an Independent Study:

- If a student wants to take PSYC 4960 with you, discuss the procedures, project, and expectations.
- If you agree to mentor the student, have them fill out the Approval Form.
- The approval form has two written sections. One for the student work description and the other for the evaluation procedure that will lead to the student's grade. Each section will be a half page typed no smaller than 11 pt font.

Work Description:

- If you have a work description or evaluation procedure that is identical across students, you may use the same wording for multiple applications. Simply add that information in quotes and/or italics to the forms.
- It is expected that students write individualized components of the project on the form in addition to any copied statements. This will give them the opportunity to state specific details about their own aspect of the work. They do not need to restate the copy/pasted general information.

Evaluation Procedure and Grading:

- Set written expectations for what the student needs to accomplish for grading purposes. These can be brief bullet points or longer explanations. It is strongly recommended that the expectations clearly indicate how they translate into a grade. The expectations might include:
 - Specification of the project objectives and final product to be completed.
 - For example, the final product might be a written paper, poster presentation, recording of a presentation, creation of materials for dissemination, etc.
 - Changes to project objectives and products are not uncommon, but should be discussed and the written plan revised as needed with signatures from the supervising faculty member and student. The changes do not have to be approved by the Undergraduate Program Committee.

Form Processing

1. Once the form is complete with student and faculty signatures (electronic (within pdf) signatures are sufficient), put the student last name as the first word in the file name and email the form to the Psychology Undergraduate Program Committee Chair, currently Dr. Suzanne Sollars ssollars@unomaha.edu
2. The mentor and the student will be contacted with a course permit number as soon as approval is complete.

Recommended Guidelines:

- Meeting requirements.
 - Scheduled check-ins with the student are highly recommended and can be used as a component of grading. Check-ins might happen in meetings, email, or other correspondence.
- Tracking procedures.
 - Students may track hours or progress towards project objectives. Tracking hours is not required but is very useful if there is an issue with grading.
- Training required (if indicated).
 - It is highly recommended that CITI Training is completed by the student if they have not yet received certification. Other ethics trainings (Plagiarism <https://plagiarism.iu.edu/certificationTests/>, IACUC) are recommended where appropriate.
- Provide monthly updates to the student with evaluative feedback to help with final grading. This can be during regular meetings with the student or in the form of a brief email to the student.
- If the work is not completed within a semester, you may assign an IP. Meet with the student to write a set of written expectations for completing the grade. It is typically expected that work will be completed in the following semester. Extensions beyond the following semester can be approved by the faculty mentor. In these cases, a written agreement between the student and mentor should be created and signed by both parties.
- No later than finals week for regular semesters or the last week of the session for summer, send a letter grade (or IP specification) to the Psychology Department Chair.

If you have any questions or encounter problems you would like to discuss, feel free to contact Dr. Suzanne Sollars ssollars@unomaha.edu Psychology Undergraduate Program Chair, Psychology Program.