

*CMU – Off-Campus Programs*

# **MSA Independent Study Guide**

## **INDEPENDENT STUDY**

*Independent Study* is the student's self-directed pursuit of a quality academic endeavor in as autonomous a manner as the individual is able to exercise at the particular time of the learning experience. This learning experience should develop the student's ability to plan, organize, research, and report as well as to develop specific skills beyond the classroom activity.

### **PURPOSE**

The *Independent Study* is used to supplement courses transferred or earned, such as Prior Learning credit, with less than three credits each.

### **DEFINITION**

*Independent Study*, as defined in this guide, includes Readings and an appropriate paper.

Credit is awarded as MSA 691 (1-2 credits).

### **READINGS**

Participants may pursue areas of special interest through a series of readings. The study will include completing a predetermined number of readings from an established bibliography, and writing an appropriate paper. The paper that the student submits for evaluation should demonstrate new knowledge acquired and the ability to use this information in an appropriate manner.

## **GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES**

*Independent Study* provides the student with another opportunity to fulfill the curricular study requirements outlined in the *Off-Campus Programs Bulletin*. *Independent Studies* are not to duplicate the content of courses listed in the current bulletin, but are intended to supplement those offerings.

### **GUIDELINES**

- A. *Independent Study* credit is not required. It is available if the student desires it and if the academic advisor believes that there is a specific need for the student to undertake such a project.
- B. The *Independent Study* must be directly related to the graduate student's area of concentration and should be specifically tailored to meet the student's program objectives. The academic advisor and the academic program director must approve the applicability of the *Independent Study* for the student's Program Plan.

- C. The *Independent Study* should be Readings and an appropriate paper.
- D. Evaluation of the *Independent Study* will be assigned to a faculty member monitor who has expertise in the area of study. The faculty member may consult field practitioners when their advice is needed for evaluation.
- E. All *Independent Study* courses are subject to the approval of the academic advisor, the *Independent Study* monitor and the MSA director.
- F. All *Independent Studies* must reflect the academic level of the student's degree program. Cognitive tasks must be specifically designed to relate directly to the degree or job goals of the student.
- G. It is expected that a minimum of 45-50 clock hours shall be spent on *Independent Study* for every 1 semester hour of credit.

## PROCEDURES

- A. Student  
The student desiring an *Independent Study* will submit an "MSA 691 *Independent Study Request*" to his/her academic advisor. The application will contain a detailed explanation of the proposed study including the goal of the study and a bibliography. The student may suggest the name or names of an *Independent Study* monitor.
- B. Academic Advisor  
The academic adviser will review the proposal to determine the acceptability of the proposed Study to the student's program. The academic advisor will recommend approved, approval with modification, or disapproval of the proposed Study to the MSA director. The criteria the academic advisor will use in reviewing the Study are as follows:
  - 1. The *Independent Study* is directly related to the student's area of concentration,
  - 2. The student cannot obtain equivalent experience through a regular course, and
  - 3. The proposed Study is of the quality and level expected on the student's degree program.

The academic advisor may work with the student in designing an *Independent Study* proposal and may also recommend a monitor. If the academic advisor approves the proposed project for the student's program, the academic advisor will so indicate on the application and forward it to the MSA director. The MSA 691 is available for 1-2 hours.

- C. MSA Director
1. The MSA director is responsible for reviewing the application to insure that all aspects of the proposal are clearly stated and that the scope of the study is appropriate for the number of credits requested.
  2. The MSA director will consult with the coordinator/Faculty Contracts, if a monitor has not yet been identified or a more appropriate monitor must be found.
  3. If approved by the MSA director, the coordinator, faculty assignments, will contract the *Independent Study* monitor.
- D. Independent Study Monitor  
*Independent Study* monitor will be responsible for providing guidance to the student throughout the Study and for evaluating the student's work at the end of the Study.
- E. This approval process will take from 30 to 60 days. The student must allow sufficient time for the approval steps to occur.
- F. The student will be informed of the approval of his/her *Independent Study* by receipt of a copy of the application confirming the monitor for the course, the amount of credit permitted for the course, the course number and the fee for registration.
- G. After registration is completed, the student has the responsibility of contacting the *Independent Study* monitor.
- H. The student must complete registration for the Study by sending a completed "Registration Form" and payment to the program center office. If the student does not complete registration within 90 days, the *Independent Study* approval will be cancelled.
- I. When the Study is complete, the *Independent Study* monitor will assign the grade through normal procedures.