

Independent Study Instructions
ACC, BA, BCOM, BE, BL, ES, FIN, MKT, MO, STRATEGY, TO
course numbers 399 (undergraduate) or 750 (graduate)

This course designation allows students to earn credit for an independent research or action-based learning project supervised by a faculty member. Only Juniors and Seniors may enroll in a 399 course. Graduate students may enroll in a 750 course. Please carefully read all portions of these guidelines.

Academic Research Projects address a specific research question (e.g., how is globalization affecting a particular industry or sector in a particular country). A literature review on a specific topic in an academic business field would typically be included. The main component of the paper will be an analysis of the research question, based on the literature review as well as the student's own research and examination of the issue(s). As such, the focus of the student work will be research-based and the final written report will be carefully crafted with results documented and citations to academic research papers (see below).

Action-Based Learning Projects allow a student to undertake a substantial project addressing an actual business problem and propose concrete solutions through a significant deliverable, such as a consulting report or action plan. These are academic projects that are required to have the same level of rigor, student workload, and deliverable as in a classroom setting. The project will be an analysis of a business problem along with an application of business tools and principles leading to a set of conclusions and recommendations. The work should be based on the student's own research and examination of the business issues. As such, the focus of the student work will be action-based, but it is expected that the final report will be carefully documented and cited as appropriate for academic research papers (see below).

Under close faculty guidance, these reports could take the form of compare-contrast, extended analysis of a problem with suggested solutions, or another model. The student work and research may spring from the sponsoring faculty's research or the student's interests building on a prior class. Note that Independent Study work is not meant to be a research or teaching assistantship, and students are expected to work on their own projects under faculty guidance. The end product will be a polished, academic paper or significant deliverable which must be filed electronically in the University's Deep Blue service within 15 days of a grade being issued.

Expectations for Academic Credit Earned

Regular Meetings:

Faculty and student(s) should meet in person or online approximately once per week, with the student providing check-point deliverables such as outlines, rough drafts, or components of an action-based project.

Quantity and Pace of Coursework:

Each student is expected to complete the appropriate amount of work (e.g. readings, data work, interviews, etc.) per week, proportional to the credit hours to be earned, comparable to a Senior-level business elective. Students should refer to an official syllabus from a Senior-level business elective as a guideline and provide a general timeline of work as part of the proposal.

Estimation of Time Commitment and Credit Hours Earned:

Credit hours assigned to such projects correlate to our class work expectations, where, for each credit hour earned, we expect each student to have 12 class contact hours plus three times that in additional student homework/research time for a total of 48 hours.

Total class work per student for an Independent Study project = 48 * # of credit hours (0.5 credits minimum; 3 credits maximum).

Independent study proposals must include a breakdown of the estimated time commitment for the project, broken down by key timelines/milestones. That will allow us to ensure that the credits requested for the project are consistent with accreditation requirements.

Additional Assistance:

The Ross Business School expects all students to follow careful source citation, following guidelines at <http://www.bus.umich.edu/Academics/Resources/communityvalues.htm> and on the Kresge Library's resource page: <http://kresgeguides.bus.umich.edu/researchtools/refworks>. Style and notation standards for research papers may be based on The Style Manual (University of Chicago Press).

Students are encouraged to utilize the resources of the Kresge Library when working on their projects. Helpful pages include:

Research Tools for Getting Started: <http://kresgeguides.bus.umich.edu/researchtools>

Independent Study Specific Guide: <http://kresgeguides.bus.umich.edu/indstudy>

Application Instructions and Deadlines

***New in Fall 2026*:** Independent Study applications are submitted through a TDx form, which automatically routes to the appropriate approvers and allows students to better track where their application is in the process. The form can be found here:

<https://teamdynamix.umich.edu/TDCClient/134/Portal/Requests/Service/3841/RRO-Ross-Independent-Study-Application/Request>

Independent Study applications are due no later than the add/drop deadline for the term (found here: <https://rossweb.bus.umich.edu/academics/registration-dates/>).

1. Once a student submits an Independent Study application form, it will be automatically routed to the faculty supervisor for approval. The application should include a copy of their proposal (pdf format or typed directly into the form).
2. The faculty supervisor will receive an email notification that they have been assigned to approve a workflow (see example below)

TeamDynamix Workflow Step Assignment (Faculty Supervisor Approval) Inbox x TDx Tickets x

U-M TeamDynamix <teamdynamix@umich.edu> 10:21AM (0 minutes ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮
to me ▾

Workflow Step Assignment

You are assigned to the "Faculty Supervisor Approval" Approval workflow step.

To act on this Approval step, click the link below:
[Faculty Supervisor Approval Workflow Step](#)

Service Request Details

Service Request 10643374
Ross Independent Study Application
Notified
Sarah Beyer < sabeyer@umich.edu >
Description
TEST
Acct/Dept
ROSS SCH Registrars Office 380023
Requested By
Sarah Beyer

To comment on this item, reply to this email.

- In the email, click on the link that reads "Faculty Supervisor Approval Workflow Step".

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Current Workflow Step

Service Request Details

Service Request
10643374: [Ross Independent Study Application](#)

Description
TEST

Approval Step Details

Step
Faculty Supervisor Approval

Assigned To
→ Sarah Beyer

The workflow will move forward once all approvers approve this step.
At present, this step is at 0 of 1 approval vote.

✓ Approve
✗ Reject
↻ Re-send Notification

Requestor

SB Sarah Beyer
sabeyer@umich.edu

- To view the students' application, click the link that says "Ross Independent Study Application"
- Review the students application and proposal, then select Approve or Reject.
 - If approved**, the application will be routed to the appropriate Area Chair. The student will receive a notification of approval.

- b. **If rejected**, the application will be sent back to the student. A page will appear with space to enter comments for the student explaining why the application has been rejected.
 - c. The Area Chair will receive a similar email to the one faculty receive and should follow the same steps to approve or reject the application.
 - d. Once the Area Chair approves, the application will be routed to the appropriate Associate Dean for their review and approval or rejection.
6. Once all approvals have been received, the student is notified and the RRO will issue the student a permission to enroll in the independent study course.

Registration Requirements:

- Each student applying for academic credit in an Independent Study course must submit a completed, independently written application and proposal by the deadlines listed above. The final report for the course must be submitted to the instructor of record no later than the last day of classes. Failure to register for the course in the appropriate term may affect tuition charges.
- Research projects/independent study work are never permitted to be repetitive of, or a substitute for, existing classes, nor can Independent Studies be used to bypass class registration constraints. They are also not permitted to give credit for research or teaching assistance in lieu of compensation. If the student(s) is assisting the faculty with his/her research or teaching, the student shall be employed and paid according to university employment rules.
- Students must register for independent study project credits during the term in which the work is completed. Enrollment in the Ross School of Business Independent Study project courses is open only to students enrolled at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor who are in good academic standing (see Ross Academic Bulletin).
 - The 399 classes are restricted to BBA Juniors and Seniors, enrolled in (or who have completed) their Junior core classes, and to non-Ross undergraduate students who have attained at least third-year standing (55 credit hours) prior to the term in which they will be registering. Undergraduates are not eligible for 750 classes.
- BBA and MBA students may elect one project course per semester, up to a maximum of three over the course of their respective program, not exceeding seven credit hours in total. MAcc and MSCM students are allowed up to three credits of Independent study course work total for their programs.
- **SPECIAL NOTE FOR GROUP PROJECTS:** Not all group members are required to request academic credit, and as such the Independent Study application is an individual request for academic credit for work on a project. Each group member seeking credit must submit an application form and a proposal in his/her own words detailing his/her individual contribution to the project and the final deliverable(s). All students requesting credit for a group project are required to earn the same amount of credit and contribute the same amount of work to the project.