

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION

Guidelines for Individual Study Courses for all Graduate Students

DEFINITION:

Individual Study – A course in which the student works independently to accomplish an approved objective under the guidance of a member of the iSchool's Graduate Studies Committee or an adjunct instructor approved by the Graduate Advisor. A master's student may count only six credits of Individual Study courses toward the master's degree, e.g., two semesters of INF 381. More than that requires the consent of the full Graduate Studies Committee. There is no effective limit on the number of Individual Study courses a PhD student in good standing may take. (Prerequisites: Graduate standing, consent of the faculty member who will supervise the study, and the consent of the Graduate Advisor.)

CRITERIA:

An Individual Study course should not be authorized unless it satisfies at least one of the following criteria:

- A. The course will be an in-depth study of a problem or topic not offered in a course within the iSchool or another academic unit of the University, and for which no feasible substitution can be made. Such a course ordinarily will culminate in one or more scholarly products.
- B. The faculty sponsor and the Graduate Advisor must determine that the need for the course stems from some special circumstances or opportunity. Acceptable proposals will provide specific information about the proposed study; whether the student is enrolling for one (181), two (281), or three (381) graduate credits; and the outcome, which should be a written report or other scholarly product.

GUIDELINES:

- A. A student accepted for an Individual Study should be in good academic standing.
- B. The work hours involved should be equivalent to those of a graduate course with the same number of semester hours, e.g., circa 125 – 150 hours for the three-credit Individual Study INF 381. Evaluation standards are comparable to those for standard class work.
- C. The product(s) resulting from an Individual Study course must evidence a scholarly approach, demonstrate critical and/or creative thinking, and be in a style and form acceptable to the faculty sponsor. It is common for the product(s) to be of publishable quality.
- D. Prior to the registration period and before the registering for an Individual Study course, the student must:
 - 1. Consult with his/her individual faculty advisor to ascertain the appropriateness of such a course to the student's total program.
 - 2. Consult with the proposed faculty sponsor of the study to develop a proposal that the faculty member agrees to supervise.
 - 3. Prepare a proposal using the attached form and additional sheets as necessary; negotiate the proposal with the faculty sponsor; obtain the signature of the faculty sponsor; and submit the form to the Graduate Advisor. The student should inform the Graduate Advisor by email at this point that s/he is preparing an Individual Study proposal. If the proposal is approved, the Graduate Advisor will sign a copy, inform the student and the supervising faculty member, and forward the proposal to the Graduate Coordinator. The Graduate Coordinator will then register the student for the individual study during the next open registration period.
- E. In ordinary circumstances, faculty members should limit supervision of Individual Study courses to a maximum of five (5) per semester.

REGISTRATION:

- 1. Both the faculty sponsor and the Graduate Advisor must approve and sign the proposal.
- 2. Upon this approval, the Graduate Coordinator will register the student for the course.

Please submit form to:

The University of Texas at Austin
School of Information
Attn: Graduate Advisor
1616 Guadalupe St.
Suite 5.212
Austin TX 78712

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Proposal for Individual Study

Instructions: The proposal must be approved prior to the last day of registration for the semester in which the study is proposed. Most good proposals are one to two double-spaced pages long, c. 250 – 500 words. The student should secure the signature of the faculty sponsor and submit this form to the Graduate Advisor to sign. If the proposal requires work in or cooperation of an organization outside the School, the student should ask the faculty sponsor to request a letter with details of the agreement from a person authorized to speak for the agency. This letter should be obtained before this proposal is submitted.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

UT EID: _____ EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER (W): _____ (H): _____

COURSE AND NUMBER OF CREDITS PROPOSED: _____

UNIQUE NUMBER: _____ FACULTY SPONSOR: _____

SEMESTER IN WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL STUDY WILL BE DONE: _____

BRIEF PROPOSAL TITLE: _____

PROPOSAL

State: (1) the proposed objective, (2) the methods to be employed, and (3) the expected culminating product(s). Attach additional sheet(s) as necessary.

Faculty Sponsor _____ Date _____

Graduate Adviser _____ Date _____

Distribution: 1) Student 2) Faculty Sponsor 3) Graduate Coordinator