

ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
College of Liberal Arts
INDEPENDENT STUDY - Instructions/Guidelines

PURPOSE

An Independent Study allows a student to pursue an area of academic or research interest that goes beyond existing course work. To receive academic credit for an Independent Study, a student must submit an Independent Study Proposal (ISP); have the ISP approved by a faculty sponsor, the chair of the student's home department, the chair of the academic department in which the Independent Study is being offered, and the Dean (or Dean's delegate) of the College of Liberal Arts; and, complete the work described in the proposal for an official course grade.

To receive academic credit for General Education, the student, with the advice of his or her faculty sponsor, must complete section six (6) of the proposal indicating the General Education Student Learning Outcome met by the independent study. If seeking General Education credit, then in addition to signatures from the department chair and dean's office, this proposal must also be approved by the college representative to the General Education Committee, the chair of the GEC, and the Provost's representative to GEC (Faculty Advocate for General Education). The General Education credit can only be used for electives and within an immersion, but not for a Perspective.

PROCESS

1. The student should meet with a faculty sponsor, who must be a fulltime faculty member in the College of Liberal Arts, to discuss the Independent Study concept and to outline key elements for inclusion in the ISP.
2. The student should prepare the ISP according to the sections and format described below. The ISP will ordinarily require the student to work with the faculty sponsor to make necessary revisions, and so appropriate time should be afforded to this step in the process.
3. The student should submit five (5) copies of the ISP with an approval form (see Attachment A). All required signatures must be secured prior to submission for final approval by the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts.
4. Once all signatures are obtained, the student should work with the COLA Office of Student Services to ensure that he/she is enrolled properly.

ISP CONTENT

The content of the ISP must include the following five sections. (Please use the form attached.)

1. Abstract

The *Abstract* offers a condensed summary of the topic area, activity, and outcome sought through the independent study. The abstract should be 250 words or less.

2. Statement of Objectives

The *Statement of Objectives* should include a list of the intended purposes or outcomes of the independent study. Each objective should be written in the infinitive form: e.g. "To acquire..." "To learn..." "To know..." "To discover..." "To develop..." "To create..." In

other words, this portion of the proposal should present the specific reasons why the student wishes to engage in this study in terms of the outcomes to be achieved by the student.

3. Description of the Independent Study

The *Description of the Independent Study* provides a 1-2 page detailed description of the project itself. This includes a description of the actual work to be done by the student and the role of the faculty sponsor in guiding this work. This section may include a description of the following:

- readings to be accomplished;
- tasks to be achieved;
- identification of regular meetings with the faculty sponsor or others;
- research techniques to be employed; and,
- specific written assignments to be completed.

4. Methods of Evaluation

The *Methods of Evaluation* section must include specific detail as to how the student work will be evaluated by the faculty sponsor, including the percentage of the grade affected by each task or expectation.

For example:

Activity	Percentage of Grade
Participation in weekly discussion with faculty	20%
Project journal entries	20%
Readings and discussion reflection papers	30%
Final paper	30%
TOTAL	100%

5. Bibliography

The Bibliography section should include a list of references that may be used for successful completion of the Independent Study. The Bibliography should certainly include any assigned readings for the Independent Study, but may also include optional texts or articles that may help the student complete his/her work.

6. General Education Component

If you are not seeking general education credit, do not include this section. If you are seeking General Education credit, you must fill in Attachment B.

CONCLUSION

This document outlines the key requirements associated with the development and approval of an ISP. Any questions regarding the approval process content of this document can be directed to the Assistant Director of Student Services in the College of Liberal Arts. Arts Office of Student Services. Any questions regarding ISP content or development can be directed to the faculty sponsor and/or Liberal Arts Chair.

College of Liberal Arts

**INDEPENDENT STUDY
Proposal Form**

Student:

Proposal Title:

1. Abstract (a brief summary of the proposed Independent Study Project – no more than 250 words)

2. Statement of Objectives

3. Description of Study to be Undertaken

4. Methods of Evaluation

5. Bibliography/List of references

6. General Education Learning Outcome (if applicable) If you are seeking General Education credit for this course, complete and include Attachment B

ATTACHMENT A.
**ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
 COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
 INDEPENDENT STUDY APPROVAL FORM**

STUDENT NAME: STUDENT ID NUMBER: _____ STUDENT GPA (must be 2.7 or higher) _____	STUDENT'S HOME DEPARTMENT/MAJOR: Undergraduate or Graduate?
TITLE OF PROPOSAL:	
FACULTY SPONSOR:	FACULTY SPONSOR'S DEPARTMENT:
ACADEMIC TERM:	NO. OF CREDITS:
APPLICATION DATE:	Subject code for course:

This course will be used for Liberal Arts:

Elective: _____ Immersion: _____ Minor: _____ Major: _____

REQUIRED SIGNATURES

Student: _____ **Date:** _____

Faculty Sponsor: _____ **Date:** _____

Department Chair

For the Course: _____ **Date:** _____

Student's Home

Department: _____ **Date:** _____

COLA Dean's

Office: _____ **Date:** _____

Note: Submit this form with five (5) copies of your Independent Study Proposal. Independent Study Proposals should be completed no later than 1 week before classes begin. If general education credit is being requested, the proposal must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the start of classes.

Attachment B
General Education Criteria

Preliminary Notes:

According to NYSED, “The liberal arts and sciences comprise the disciplines of the humanities, natural sciences and mathematics, and social sciences.” Although decisions about the general education status of RIT courses are guided by this categorization and the details provided at the NYSED web site ([click HERE](#)), RIT recognizes that a general education course might not fit neatly into any one of these categories. Course authors from all areas are encouraged to read not only the NYSED web site, but also the mission statement at RIT’s General Education web site ([click HERE](#)).

This appendix is meant to highlight those facets of a course that are directly relevant to its General Education status, and if applicable, to provide course authors with an opportunity to elaborate on aspects of the course that locate it in one or more of the Perspective categories. The course description, course goals, and course learning outcomes (sections 2, 3, and 4 of the course outline) should clearly reflect the content of this appendix.

Information provided here will also be used to identify appropriate courses for inclusion in RIT’s General Education Outcomes assessment cycle.

I. Nature of the Course:

After reviewing the NYSED web site ([click HERE](#)) and the RIT description of general education ([click HERE](#)) describe how this course fits the definition of general education.

II. General Education Essential Outcomes:

The Academic Senate approved the following proposal at the meeting of 16 April, 2015.

Communication and critical thinking are essential to the general education of every student at RIT. Going forward, every course designated as general education by GEC will provide learning experiences designed to achieve at least one student learning outcome from each of these domains (Communication and Critical Thinking).

The approved student learning outcomes are listed below.

a. Communication

a.1 Check at least one of the following student learning outcomes:

	Express oneself effectively in common college-level written forms using standard American English
	Revise and improve written products
	Express oneself effectively in presentations, either in American English or American Sign language
	Demonstrate comprehension of information and ideas accessed through reading

a.2 In the space below, explain which aspects of this course lend themselves to the Communication outcome(s) indicated above, and how student achievement will be assessed.

b. Critical Thinking

b.1 Check at least one of the following student learning outcomes:

	Use relevant evidence gathered through accepted scholarly methods and properly acknowledge sources of information
	Analyze or construct arguments considering their premises, assumptions, contexts, and conclusions, and anticipating counterarguments
	Reach sound conclusions based on logical analysis of evidence
	Demonstrate creative and/or innovative approaches to assignments or projects

b.2 In the space below, explain which aspects of this course lend themselves to the Critical Thinking outcome(s) indicated above, and how student achievement will be assessed.