

## **Overview of Independent Study - Department of Human Services**

M.S. in Aging Studies and M.S. in Human Services

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### ***What is an Independent Study?***

An Independent Study allows you to learn about a subject area that is related to your academic and career interests and has not been covered in your courses. An Independent Study allows you to pursue more depth and breadth in your knowledge of a subject area related to your academic and career interests. Students select a specialized topic area for the Independent Study and create a plan for developing the Independent Study. The proposed topic and plan are outlined in the *Application for Independent Study* form completed by the student and submitted for approval to the Graduate Coordinator by the set deadlines in the semester before being enrolled in the Independent Study.

### ***How many credits is an Independent Study, and how much time is required?***

Once approved, you will be registered for the requested 1 to 6 credits of the Independent Study. Most students complete a 3-credit Independent Study; however, the 4-, 5, or 6-credit Independent Study is an option. If students are interested in spreading out the Independent Study over two or more semesters, this is an option that can be requested.

A 3-credit Independent Study is the equivalent of 120 clock hours of work or about 7.5 hours/week over 16 weeks in the fall or spring semester. A 6-credit Independent Study is the equivalent of 240 clock hours of work or about 15 hours/week over 16 weeks in the fall or spring semester. Each 1 credit hour is equal to 40 clock hours of work. In the summer 8-week session, a 3-credit Independent Study would be the equivalent of about 15 hours/week of work, and a 6-credit Independent Study would be the equivalent of about 30 hours/week. For 1, 2, 4, or 5-credit independent studies, calculations will be based on the 40 clock hour equivalencies and the duration of the Independent Study during the enrolled semester and part of the term.

### ***Benefits and Examples of Independent Studies***

An Independent Study is a solid match for students who are self-motivated with strong time and organizational management skills. Some students may write research papers, and other students may have an idea for developing a new project for a community site or their current place of employment. Creativity and flexibility are advantages of choosing from a wide variety of topics and types of approaches to planning, development, and implementation of the Independent Study. You are encouraged to think big and broadly and envision outcomes that spark your passion for learning more about a topic. An Independent Study should contribute to your own professional development and directly or indirectly benefit others in the short- or long-term future with your final product and accomplishments.

### ***Examples of an Independent Study include, but are certainly not limited to the following.***

- Review of literature research paper on a specialized topic
- Small-scale research project that involves quantitative or qualitative data collection and analysis from a sample group or in the form of a case study
- Designing a curriculum for a new or existing program in a professional setting
- Developing a new project for an academic or other professional setting (e.g., plan for recruiting new students or participants, creating a community needs assessment, creating videos or other types of online or print media, creating an awareness and educational campaign)
- Annotated, comprehensive resource list
- Other as agreed upon by the student, Graduate Coordinator, and/or Faculty Supervisor