

Bachelor's Degree for Professionals Program CALIFORNIA LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

Independent Study (1, 2, 3, or 4 credits)

Independent Study opportunities are available for students to work, in consultation with a faculty member, on in-depth research in particular areas of academic interest.

The purpose of Independent Study is for students to conduct research and investigation of an academic topic which is not normally covered in the regular curriculum. The Independent Study provides an opportunity for the student to design his or her own course.

The expectation for Independent Study is that students will spend at least the same amount of time in conducting their research and preparing the research as they would have spent completing a standard college course of equivalent credit value. Therefore, projects are expected to be sufficiently sophisticated and complete to reflect the effort and time which would be invested in a comparable course for the same number of credits.

These general expectations mean that each credit of Independent Study will necessitate 30-45 hours of work. Consequently, a four credit Independent Study results in a paper or project that required 120-180 hours of study and preparation by the student.

Registration for an Independent Study course requires the student to obtain signed approval of the Independent Study Contracts by the:

1. Sponsoring Professor (a full-time or special expertise faculty member)
2. Chair of the Department or Dean of the School in which the study is undertaken
3. Registrar's Office

This must be done on or before the final date to add a course, or according to the deadlines published in a specific academic program. The student should contact the sponsoring professor first to determine if the faculty member has an interest in directing the project.

In order to facilitate the contract development and approval process, students who intend to register for an Independent Study course should meet with their academic advisor, the Department Dean or Chair, and sponsoring professor no less than two weeks prior to the beginning of the semester. The topic of Independent Study in I.S. Contract often requires refinement and several revisions before the final draft is acceptable for approval signatures.

Please note that the sponsoring professor, Department Chair or Dean, and the Registrar's Office all have the right to request revisions before signing the contract. For this reason, many students choose to work on the Independent Study contract the semester before the project will actually begin to insure plenty of preparation time.

A student may earn no more than eight credits of Independent Study and cannot substitute an Independent Study course for a course listed in the University Catalog.

Field Study (2 credits)

Field Study courses are intended to integrate concepts and theories acquired in the classroom with work-related projects. The design and implementation of the project is done in consultation with a faculty/evaluator and a supervisor/evaluator at the work site.

The general expectations for the Field Study are that the projects will be related to specific concepts and theories learned in college courses which the students have already completed. This also means that the project will be sufficiently complex to warrant the award of upper-division credit. Since this is a two unit course, it is expected that the time required to complete the project will be approximately the same amount of time invested in a traditional two unit course (60 plus hours).

Registration for Field Study requires the student to obtain the signed approval of the Field Study contract (available in the ADEP office and online) by the:

1. Sponsoring professor (normally a full-time faculty member)
2. Field Study Supervisor
3. Chair of the department in which the study is undertaken
4. Registrar

This must be done on or before the final date to add or drop a course or according to the deadlines published in a specific academic program. The student should contact the sponsoring professor first to determine if the faculty member has an interest in directing the project.

In order to facilitate the contract development and approval process, students who intend to register for a Field Study should meet with their academic advisor, the Field Study Supervisor and Department Chair at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the semester.

A student may earn no more than eight credits of Field Study and cannot substitute a Field Study course for a course listed in the University Catalog.

Developing Field/Independent Study Contracts

The written Independent/Field Study contract must have the signatures of several people reflecting approval before the registration process for the course can be completed. This necessitates choosing an appropriate topic for your study or project and completing the contract form in time to acquire all of the necessary signatures. This must be done before the last day to add a class in the semester in which you wish to register for the study or project.

It is important for the student and sponsoring professor to understand from the beginning of the study exactly what each expects of the other. Performance standards, data collection activities, methodology, reporting formats, and other details need to be discussed up front – that means before you begin the study.

Picking a Topic

A sound starting point in making a decision about your Independent Study topic is to consider topics which are of particular interest to you or about which you already know something. For example, if you had taken a personnel course and had been intrigued by the concept of performance based compensation, you might do a survey on manufacturers in your geographic area to ascertain the scope of performance based compensation plans.

Alternatively, your study of performance based compensation might take the form of a more traditional literature search and review. In this case, you might simply describe the variation in performance based compensation plans reported in the literature and offer an analysis of the utility of one approach over another, depending on the type of organization or product involved.

If you are deciding on a Field Study topic and have the same interest in performance based compensation, your approach would need to be more applied to your employment setting. For example, your study could be an assessment of the applicability of performance based compensation in your organization.

The selection of a suitable topic, i.e., appropriate for academic credit and one which is manageable within the time constraint of the semester, may be the most difficult part of the study. It is certainly a critical part of the process and deserves your careful attention.

The remaining comments and suggestions relate to the contract form itself and are organized in the order in which the items appear on the contract.

Sponsoring Professor

Leave this section blank until you have had your meeting with your Academic Advisor.

Title of Study

Create a title which conveys the meaning and understanding of the topic covered by your study or project.

Previous Experience

Don't hesitate to include relevant work experience, previous projects, etc., in addition to any work.

Description of Study

This action should read like a course description for a university course. In a short paragraph, include the who, what, how and why. For example: An analysis of performance based compensation programs among the ten largest defense contractors in Southern California. The study includes a description of each compensation program, analysis of effectiveness, identification of key components in each program, and a discussion of the "portability" of the programs to other types of industries.

Objective of the Study

If you have done a reasonably good job of describing your study, writing three or four key objectives should be fairly easy. Using the example of performance based compensation, the objectives could be:

1. Identify and describe the performance based compensation approaches used by the ten largest defense contractors.
2. Identify the salient components for each compensation program.
3. Determine the relative effectiveness of each program.
4. Evaluate the "portability" of the program to other industries.

Methodology

This is your description of how you intend to proceed. The possible methodology for the performance based compensation project might include:

1. Literature review of pertinent articles regarding performance based compensation.
2. Contact and interview personnel and managers in each of the ten target companies.
3. Analyze each compensation program.
4. Construct and apply an "effectiveness" scale.
5. Analyze the "portability" dimension.
6. Write the report.

Conferences Scheduled

Leave this blank until you have met with the Field Study Supervisor (when applicable) and your sponsoring professor. The two of you can decide when to meet during the semester in which you are completing the study. Students and sponsoring professors are encouraged to meet several times over the course of the semester to discuss how the study is progressing, solve any problems that the study has encountered, or to obtain

assistance from other University resources. These ongoing meetings prevent “surprises” and other unanticipated outcomes at the end of the study. Specific meeting dates should be scheduled and noted in the contract.

Bibliography & Other Resources

Completing this section will usually require a fair amount of investigating prior to the approval of the contract. Included here are your working bibliography (author, title, publication, and date), names and addresses of the person you intend to interview and any other resources you will use to complete the study. Producing this section of the contract will put you in a knowledgeable position relative to your proposed study topic. It also means that you are ready to begin the study as soon as the contract is approved.

Form of the Final Work

Specify (as suggested on the contract) the form in which your final work will be submitted for evaluation. If your project is a traditional research paper, say so. Developing a business would require a reporting format significantly different from a study where you conducted a market survey. If the final work is in a different form, be sure to describe it in sufficient detail to preclude any misunderstanding between the sponsoring professor and you.

Grading/Evaluation

Independent studies are graded on the standard grading scale used by the University (A, B, C, etc.). Field studies are graded Pass/No Credit. It may be helpful to also specify the criteria upon which your study is to be evaluated. For example, a project could be graded on the basis of originality and scholarly research. A field study might be evaluated on the basis of usefulness of the project to a specific application in your organization. The basis for the grade needs to be clearly understood **before** the project is undertaken.

Signatures

The ADEP office will assist in obtaining the necessary faculty administrative signatures, although you are ultimately responsible to see that all the signatures are obtained. The easiest way to accomplish this is to make an appointment with the Dean or Department Chair first to get his/her approval and then meet with your sponsoring professor for his/her signature. From there, you may return it to the ADEP office where it will be routed to the Registrar’s Office for signature. You will receive a copy of the approved contract within the first two weeks of the semester in which you register for the study.

Independent Study Reporting Guide

The final Independent or Field Study report should contain several sections. The following format is recommended. However, other variations are perfectly acceptable if approved at the beginning of the study. The report should follow the format most appropriate for your study.

1. Cover Sheet/Title Page
2. Table of Contents
3. Independent Study or Field Study Contract
4. Research Summary – This is a stand-alone section that clearly states the topic studied in the report, problem identifications, analysis, and critical opinions, and/or recommendations. The maximum length is three (3) pages and the entire report is summarized in this section. This section should be written last, after the other parts of the report are completed.
5. Background of the problem, topic, etc., including a review of the literature.
6. Specific problems to be studied, significance of the problems and the analysis to be performed.
7. Data/information collection and presentation.
8. Analysis of data information including a summary of the issue(s), problem(s).
9. Conclusions, recommended solutions, opinions, recommendations, implementation strategies, applications, etc.
10. References and bibliography.
11. Appendices – Includes any information relevant to the problems studied, data collected, or information presented in the report.

California Lutheran University
() Independent/() Field Study Contract

Name of Student: _____

Student ID #: _____ Major: _____

Jr: _____ Sr: _____ Phone: (W) _____ (H) _____

Credit Hours (1-4): _____ CLU GPA: _____ Cumulative GPA: _____

Sponsoring Dept.: _____ Professor: _____

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Name and address where study will be conducted (Field Study):

Name and telephone # of Site Contact or Supervisor (Field Study):

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Beginning Date: _____ Completion Date: _____

Title of Study:

Titles & Credit earned from previous Independent/Field Studies:

Previous Academic/Professional experience related to this study:

Description of Study:

Objective of the Independent/Field Study:

Methodology, Procedures, Activities, Etc.:

Conferences Scheduled:

Bibliography & other Resources:

Form of Final Work:

Evaluation /Grading:



Signature of Student Date

Signature of Sponsoring Professor Date

Signature of Program Director (Bachelor's Degree for Professionals)

Signature of Field Study Supervisor (when applicable) Date

Signature of Department Chair Date

Signature of Registrar Date