

Independent Study Guidelines

In spite of the existence of the standard contract form for Independent Study courses, students and professors often have expressed a need for more concrete guidelines as to just what can constitute a supervised Independent Study.

The Independent Studies Committee proposes these working guidelines for professors and students jointly engaged in Independent Study projects.

An Independent Studies course is like other courses in that it must have an essential academic character.

Independent Studies can be:

- a) Based entirely on library research, such as a critical review of the existing literature on a particular topic. The results of such research are to be submitted in written form with bibliography.
- b) An empirical piece of research (experimental, correlational or exploratory) should also include evidence of a reasonable acquaintance with the research literature in psychology pertinent to that topic. The results are submitted in the form of a standard written research report.

PRACTICAL WORK

Even though the Independent Study should be academic in nature, work in a clinical or similar setting is not necessarily excluded. However, the principal focus of such an Independent Study must be on library or empirical research. For example, if a student is working as volunteer in a behavior modification project with autistic children, then an Independent Study course could encompass a critical survey of the existing literature on behavior modification with autistic children, or conducting a piece of independent research with children, or some combination of both. The survey or the research would be the primary focus of the Independent Study.

The practical work as a volunteer would be a secondary or supplementary focus, to elucidate the principles learned in the reading and research.

If you wish to do a practicum in an applied setting for academic credit then you must arrange to do this work in PSYC4050 6.0, PSYC4060 6.0, or PSYC 4460 6.0. Such a practicum cannot be done as the sole work of an Independent Study course since Faculty regulations do not allow Independent Study Courses to overlap existing courses.

SUPERVISION

Any full-time faculty member of the Faculty of Health Psychology Departments can serve as an Independent Study supervisor, as can full-time faculty members in the Psychology Departments of Health and Glendon. Retired full-time members of the Psychology Departments can also supervise. No one else can. You cannot be supervised by a part-time member of the department, by someone from another department, or by someone outside of York.

ENROLMENT

When the Independent Study form has been completed and signed by you and your supervisor, you must bring it to the Undergraduate Office, Rm. 291/292 BSB for enrollment into the course.

CHANGES TO INDEPENDENT STUDY AGREEMENT

If you and your professor decide to change your agreement during the course, be sure to prepare a signed supplement to the agreement form and bring this supplement to the Psychology Undergraduate Office.