

**SENIOR INDEPENDENT STUDY GUIDELINESS
FOR BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND ECONOMICS
2012-2013**

I. Introduction

The honors or independent study (IS) research is a summary of the student's experience as a business or economics major. Affirming the mission of the college, the business and economics department enables students and faculty to collaboratively research and understand complex research questions. The idea is for students and professors to use appropriate theories and empirical methods to foster an active engagement with local and global communities.

These guidelines are prepared to help both the professors and students' understanding of IS to allow both parties to achieve the best possible goal while conducting research. These guidelines provide you with information necessary to make research a rewarding experience.

***Do we want to include guidelines for students e.g. including detailed information on choosing a topic, requirements, formats, citation style, plagiarism, etc.**

*****Students should read it thoroughly and understand its contents; if you have any questions about it, ask your advisor. The guidelines serve as a detailed reference on such items as format, citation style and evaluation.*****

II. Independent Studies

These should follow the QEP/Pathways guidelines:

- Plan – develop a learning contract that both the faculty mentor and the student sign
- Product – the project should result in a paper or some kind of product
- Showcase – the project should be developed into something that can be public (e.g., oral presentation, poster presentation, website)
- Reflection – students should write a reflection paper on what they learned (note: you can get the DEAL model guidelines from Julie)

III. Suggested Mentor Responsibilities:

- Professors should have weekly meetings with students to observe and direct their progress.
- Professors should assist with:
 - Developing a learning contract, which includes scope of the project, learning goals, and proposed timeline (see student/faculty research QEP/Pathways model for suggested format)
 - Assisting with the literature search
 - Assisting with the final topic development by discussing ideas and narrowing down the a reasonable project
 - If human subjects are involved, ensuring that proper IRB forms are completed and that proper human subjects procedures are followed
 - If this is an empirical project, mentor students on the proper cleaning and formulating the final dataset
 - Assist with data analysis
 - Provide feedback on drafts of the paper (see below for suggested format)
 - Facilitate communication between student and committee members, including approving a final draft to send to the committee
 - Provide feedback on the student’s practice presentation

IV. The General Structure of the Independent Study Paper

Final Paper to be Submitted to Committee Before Honors Defense – (Note: the structure of the paper may vary by discipline and by type of project. This is a suggested format for those without a strong preference.)

- 1) Title Page
- 2) Abstract
- 3) Introduction / Literature Review
- 4) Methods (this includes the type of data collected and from whom)
- 5) Results (this includes the analysis of the data)
- 6) Discussion
 - a. Summary of the findings
 - b. Discussion of the findings (e.g., What do the findings mean? How do you explain unexpected results? Interpret the findings in light of the literature review).
 - c. Limitations
 - d. Future Research Directions
 - e. Practical Implications
- 7) Conclusion
- 8) References
- 9) Appendices

V. Comments, Suggestions and Caveats

i) Goals:

- For committee members to be involved throughout the process
- To evaluate honors projects consistently
- To provide adequate supervision and mentoring throughout the process

ii) Proposed Solutions:

- Early semester:
 - Student should submit a learning contract that includes the goals for the project and the proposed timeline.
 - Student should schedule a proposal meeting at the beginning of the semester (may need to specify, within the first 3 weeks of the semester) so committee members can comment on the direction of the student's project and provide input.
 - Student should revise the learning contract and receive signature of the honors advisor.
- Mid-semester:
 - Student should provide brief weekly reports to the committee members on the progress of the project (method of doing so to be determined by the committee; e.g., inquire, email updates, blog, Google group)
- End of the semester:
 - Student should submit the final paper to the committee at least 3 days before the Honors defense. See recommended structure below (modify based on the standards of the field).
 - Student may create either an oral presentation with slides or a poster. This decision should be made in consultation with the honors advisor.
- Use rubrics to assess both the written paper and the oral presentation
 - Rubrics determined by each program's assessment plan
 - Economics will use the Economics written communication and oral communication rubrics
 - Business administration will use the Business Administration written communication and oral communication rubrics
 - Each committee member should be encouraged to complete the rubrics on the day of the presentation
 - Rubrics do not need to be used in determining the grade, yet provide a way of assessing the quality of the student's project compared to the college-wide standard. Rubrics should be turned in to the assessment coordinator for the program (either Allie or Julie).
- Determining whether Honors in the Major distinction is given
 - If a student's project (both written paper and oral/poster presentation) are of A or A- quality, the committee can set the grade immediately.
 - If student's project is not A or A- quality but if it has the potential to reach that level with revisions to the paper, the committee may assign a "revise and resubmit". The student will receive an Incomplete on the Honors project pending completion of the requested changes. The committee should decide whether the advisor is the only one who needs to see revisions or if all committee members need to see revisions before assigning a grade.
 - If the student's project is not A or A- quality and will not be unless significant work is required, the committee should assign an appropriate grade below A-, and the student will not receive Honors in the Major distinction. The Honors course will be converted to an Independent Study course on the student's transcript.
- Honors advisors should schedule a recurring weekly meeting with the Honors student.

- Committee members should be available to meet with the Honors student, at the request of the student or the honors advisor.