

A. Undergraduate Research Track..

a. Student tasks:

- i. Select a full-time BU faculty member as a research mentor
- ii. Take an introduction to research course through the major or Honors if the major does not offer one
- iii. Take two semesters of Independent Study through Honors to complete the research
- iiii. Apply for PEGs or funding if needed
- v. Write the optional paper (if research mentor requires)
- vi. Create poster, present at NCHC, NRHC, or other conferences by spring of Senior Year

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH TRACK

Honors Independent Study (HIS) differs from Independent Study available in departments in that it is guaranteed and not limited by availability of faculty or funds (other than in those cases where research is a component of the major requirements). Additionally, HIS CAN BE facilitated by a preparatory Honors research course (Introduction to Research) that helps the student set up a HIS project. Lastly, HIS requires the additional professional step of the submission of a written product and the public presentation on that project

Following successful completion of 08-300: Introduction to Honors Research OR the approval of a faculty member to help develop a specific proposal, students take two “semesters” of Honors Independent Study. Each semester of HIS counts for three credits, for a total of six credits, in this portion of the Program. Semesters can include summer sessions and do not have to be sequential. Honors Independent Study offers students the opportunity to design and complete a substantial scholarly and/or creative project, carried out under the tutelage of a

faculty mentor. Research projects chosen for Honors Independent Study should reflect extensive effort to gain in-depth knowledge of a particular subject, area, or problem, and to contribute original insight, discovery, or argumentation within that field of study. Creative projects should reflect artistic depth, maturity, and complexity substantially beyond that expected of a class assignment.

Students in the Honors College select their own faculty Honors Mentors, subject to the approval of the Honors Director. It is not required that the mentor be from the student's major department. However, the mentor should be someone who has significant expertise in the area of the student's project and someone with whom the student can work comfortably and purposefully over an extended period.

To a marked degree, a successful Honors Independent Study experience depends on the selection of the right mentor. Honors students have generally found that the most effective mentors are those who remain actively involved in the student's project, encouraging steady progress and work of the highest quality. Students should meet frequently with their mentors to discuss any problems, formulate approaches, try out arguments, review completed work and shape the overall direction and focus of the project. If a student encounters problems with his/her mentor and cannot work them out, he/she should consult the Honors Director for advice and assistance.

The following section gives answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about Honors Independent Study.

When should I start the HIS sequence?

The Honors College is encouraging students to take Intro to Research as early as possible but only after they are "ready" to do independent work. The earliest start is the second semester of the sophomore year; the latest is the second semester of the junior year (for the 4 year

undergraduate). The Program encourages these start times as it allows for HIS 2 to be completed prior to the final semester of a student's undergraduate career. In this way loose ends can be tied up and high quality written products and oral presentations will result. In addition starting early allows the student to present his/her findings at regional and national conferences (see below). Students in majors with off campus components (internships and student teaching) are specifically encouraged to start HIS early.

How do I find a mentor for my project?

The best advice is for you to identify a faculty member who you respect and who has a track record of successful projects with students. Do not be shy about asking tough questions. Also consult with the Honors director, members of HAC, and most importantly students who are currently doing or have completed HIS. Faculty are knowledgeable about the productivity of their peers and students know who is good (and not so good) to work with.

Must the HIS project be in my major area of study?

No. You may choose an Honors project in some area of study other than your major. However, you should consult with your academic advisor regarding the suitability of your choice. If you do elect to conduct your project outside your major area of study, your mentor may request that certain courses be completed prior to your Independent Study. Some of the best projects have been done outside of the student's major.

I am in Art. Can I elect an "artistic" project?

Yes. Students in art, theater, music and other creative disciplines are encouraged to conduct Honors Projects that pursue creative endeavors. A recent HIS project involved the writing of a short play and the "oral presentation" was a staged reading of that play.

I am in Education. Can I do a classroom project?

Very emphatically, yes. In fact a common route for education majors is to study an educational idea in HIS 1, put it together as a teaching unit for HIS 2 and then put it into play in student teaching. In these instances an R grade may be assigned for HIS 2 to make sure the project is implemented in student teaching. Education majors have to complete HIS a minimum of one semester prior to anticipated graduation because of student teaching.

May I have different topics for my two Independent Studies?

It is possible that your topic could be modified after Independent Study I. However, these modifications are generally minor and are suggested by the results of the Independent Study I project. It is not advisable for students to select totally different topics as one of the major objectives of your Honors project is to explore an idea or topic in depth. Such explorations require more than a single semester. In any case this switch would have to be justified in the HIS 1 Progress Report (see below).

What if I can't complete my project in two semesters?

The University allows the assignment of the grade R for students who have "Research in Progress." The grade R remains on the student's transcript until he/she can complete the project.

Can I apply Honors Independent Study to the requirements in my major?

The two semesters of Honors Independent Study may fill several different upper-level requirements within your major. Utilizing university waiver forms, a student may be able to apply either or both semesters of Honors Independent Study to upper-level free electives, departmental independent study requirements, or other, more specific requirements within the various majors. You should discuss any substitution options with your academic advisor, Honors mentor, and Department Chairperson.

Will I have to present my thesis/project at a conference or meeting?

The Program encourages students and faculty to present the results of their research at some appropriate meeting within their discipline. This is not required but does enhance the value of the Honors project and the undergraduate resume. The Honors College typically can support a significant portion of the cost of attending regional or national meetings. The student does have to present his/her project in lay terms to an audience consisting of the Honors director, members of HAC, other interested faculty, Honors students and interested guests.

Independent Study Course Numbers

Course numbers depend upon department or college of the faculty member that is the mentor for the student project. In most Business, Humanities, and Social Sciences departments, Honors Independent Studies are scheduled under "09" while Biology, Chemistry, Geology, Math, Psychology (first independent study semester) and Professional Studies use their own course numbers. The Honors College will be responsible for assigning the correct course number when the proposal is forwarded for approval.

09-476 Business Independent Study I (3 credits)

09-477 Business Independent Study II (3 credits)

09-491 Humanities Independent Study I (3 credits)

09-493 Humanities Independent Study II (3credits)

09-496 Social Sciences Independent Study I (3 credits)

09-498 Social Sciences Independent Study II (3 credits)

50-493 Biology Independent Study I & II (3 credits)

51-493 Geography/GeoScience Independent Study I & II (3 credits)

52-493 Chemistry Independent Study I & II (3 credits)

53-492 Math Independent Study I (3 credits)

53-493 Math Independent Study II (3 credits)

54-494 Physics Independent Study I & II (3 credits)

79-431 Professional Studies Independent Study I (3 credits)

79-432 Professional Studies Independent Study II (3 credits)

The Role of the Honors Faculty Mentor

If a student chooses either the research or internship track, the student must have an attentive mentor who supervises and guides the project. The role of the faculty mentor is analogous to that of a dissertation director - a trusted advisor who will guide a student's work to completion.

The duties of a faculty mentor are likely to include:

- ◆ Show a genuine interest in the educational pursuits of the Honors advisee.
- ◆ Help the advisee assess his or her Independent Study proposal, improve it, and evaluate its feasibility.
- ◆ Monitor the academic performance of the advisee & meeting on a regular basis.
- ◆ Help the advisee understand the nature of the field, how research and scholarly pursuits are accomplished in it, what methods are used, and so on.
- ◆ Encourage and enhance the creative potential of the advisee.
- ◆ Assist the advisee in conforming to University and community regulations when applicable. *For example:* shepherding the student through IRB procedures when needed.
- ◆ Assist the advisee with time management, so that the project can be completed without adversely affecting the advisee's other coursework and goals.
- ◆ Help the advisee identify sources of funding to promote Independent Study objectives.
- ◆ Remain open to advisee ideas and opinions concerning what they would like to do.
- ◆ Evaluate the advisee's research on a timely basis, and responding with critical comments that will enable the advisee to improve and complete the project on time in order to graduate with Honors.

Honors Independent Study Process

Introduction to Honors Research: Developing and Writing a HIS Proposal

The first course in the HIS sequence is a one credit pass/fail course. The end result of this course is a student Honors Independent Study Proposal that is written for both HIS 1 and HIS 2. IF THE FACULTY MENTOR PREFERS THAT THE STUDENT COMPLETE THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL DIRECTLY WITH HIM DURING HIS 1, THE STUDENT MAY WORK WITH HIS ADVISOR. This course is now offered in both semesters. It is never too early to start thinking about Independent Study and especially identifying a faculty member that will be a mentor for the project. Intro to Research: helps the student to get a mentor (if the student has not already decided on one); guides the student to write a proposal; informs the student about the HIS process; and gives the student a realistic view of what to expect given the previous experience of Honors students.

The final HIS proposal should follow the format below:

Final HIS I Proposal

Title of Proposal

Name of Student

Under the Direction of: Mentor name and department

HIS 1 – indicate semester (including summer)

HIS 2 – indicate semester (including summer)

I. Introduction

II. Statement of Purpose

III. Background Research

IIII. Techniques and Methodologies

V. Timeline and Chronology

VI. Resources and Funding

VII. Project Evaluation and Presentation

VIII. References

Project Evaluation and Presentation

- The Honors Independent Study sequence should culminate in a final paper or other tangible project*and an oral presentation to the Honors College. (Additional presentations at meetings are highly encouraged.)
- The awarding of grades for the HIS projects is at the discretion of the faculty mentor.
- The Honors Director and HAC determine whether or not the completed work is of a quality that entitles the student to graduate with Honors, whether further work is required before Honors will be awarded, or whether the work is insufficient to merit the Honors designation.
- The written and oral products are typically presented in the semester in which the HIS 2 component is undertaken, although extensions can be given for students who are not graduating.
- The Honors College reserves the right to put a hold on the records of a student who has not submitted a final HIS written product (and had this approved) and/or has not given a final oral HIS presentation.