

Policy on Independent Studies in Teacher Leadership Coursework

An independent study (IS) is an individually-designed course that is completed during a fall, spring, or 6-week summer term under the supervision of an Elmhurst College professor.

IS courses are indicated as such on the official transcript and should be pre-approved by an educator's school district given that they will not conform to traditional or hybrid course formats (i.e., IS courses typically have more on-line components). All course readings, assignments, and clinical experiences will be the same or equivalent substitutions for IS courses. Graduate students may not have more than one IS course on their official transcripts.

IS courses should be planned and approved in advance so that they can be placed on the official schedule and staffed. An independent study must be formally requested in writing to the MTL Program Director at least 90 days in advance of the term in which the independent study is desired.

An IS course may not be requested:

1. as a 3rd "overload" course;
2. for required courses to complete the Bilingual, ESL, or LBS1 endorsements;
3. if the student's course plan originally indicated that the course sequence would require a leave of absence;
4. if the graduate student has not been continuously enrolled in coursework (i.e., at least 1 course during fall, spring, and summer terms);
5. if the graduate student has previously enrolled in and dropped the course;
or
6. if the graduate student is repeating a course.

When requesting an IS course, graduate students should base their rationale on one of the following reasons:

1. **Course Scheduling Conflict.** Two planned courses in the same term have a scheduling conflict, such as:
 - a. Courses are scheduled at overlapping times; including during the summer when taking both courses would require 6 hours of class time on the same days;
 - b. The course schedule would force the graduate student to take 3 courses in a term to complete endorsements or degree requirements and none of the 3 courses is offered again within the subsequent two terms.

2. **Disruption in Studies.** The graduate student is forced to take a leave of absence because there are no courses being offered in a term to continue with the endorsement or degree. And this LOA was not part of the original course plan.
3. **Advisor Recommendation.** The graduate student's academic advisor has determined that an IS course will be needed. In this situation, the faculty member should submit in writing the reasons for supporting the independent study as well as work with the student to find a professor who will conduct the IS.

Independent studies are not guaranteed as professors must first agree to teach the course in the requested term (i.e., there may not be an instructor for the course or the requested semester may not be available for an independent study). Graduate students are encouraged to discuss possible IS courses with their academic advisors and potential IS professors prior to making a formal request.