
UNDERGRADUATE DIRECTED STUDIES, SPECIAL TOPICS & INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSES

Approval Authority	Senate
Responsible Executive	Provost and Vice-President, Academic
Related Policies / Legislation	Undergraduate Course and Program Approval (21)

PURPOSE

To ensure consistency across UFV programs and departments in definition and usage of the terms “directed studies”, “special topics”, and “independent study”.

To establish university-wide procedures regulating the development and scheduling of “directed studies”, “special topics”, and “independent study” courses in undergraduate programs.

To facilitate curriculum flexibility and development through the use of these course programming options, while ensuring that they are used appropriately to enhance student learning.

DEFINITIONS

In this policy, the following definitions apply:

Directed studies: an individualized research, directed reading or project-based course offered on an ad hoc basis and supervised by a faculty member. The directed studies course name and number are included in the UFV calendar (e.g. CHEM 408: Directed Studies in Chemistry).

Special topics: a course section taught by a faculty member on a topic that is not covered in other UFV courses. The special topics course name and number are included in the UFV calendar (e.g. PSYC 491: Selected Topics in Psychology).

Independent study: a course section of an existing course timetabled for a student to learn course material on their own with some guidance from the instructor. Course sections timetabled as independent study are usually offered in formats that differ from the standard course delivery format

POLICY

All directed studies, special topics, and independent study course sections must be approved by the Dean or designate before being timetabled.

The content of directed studies and special topics courses must not replace nor duplicate the content of existing courses in the UFV calendar.

Independent study sections of a course will not be timetabled in the same semester as regular sections of the same course on the same campus.

Only one independent study section (or multiple sections to a combined maximum of six seats) of a single course can be timetabled in a single semester.

An instructor may teach any combination of independent study and directed studies sections in a single semester, as long as the total enrollment of their sections does not exceed six. Under exceptional circumstances the Dean may override this.

REGULATIONS

Directed Studies

- 1) A directed studies course is initiated by a student or group of students, who identify a specific topic of interest to them and obtain the agreement of a UFV instructor to act as a supervisor for the course.
- 2) The student(s) and/or the faculty member must submit a proposal to their department or program head for approval. The proposal must contain the following elements:
 - A description of the topic to be addressed in the course
 - An overview of the project to be conducted
 - A description of the planned format for the outcomes of the project (e.g. journal article, oral or poster presentation)
 - A description of the student and the supervisor responsibility in the course (if not stipulated in the approved department guidelines)
 - An explanation of how student work will be evaluated for grading purposes
- 3) The proposal must be approved in writing by the department or program head and submitted to the Dean or designate.
- 4) A student may not enroll in more than one directed studies course in a single semester without the Dean's permission.
- 5) A student may not enroll in more than one directed studies course with the same instructor. The Dean or designate must approve any exceptions to this policy, and approval must be obtained prior to the student enrolling in the course(s).

Special Topics

- 1) A special topics course is initiated by the instructor, who identifies a topic for the course.
- 2) If the course has not been approved by the Undergraduate Education Committee, an instructor who wishes to offer a new topic in a special topics course must submit a proposed course outline to their department head. The course outline must contain:
 - a. A rationale for the topic (including an explanation of why the subject of the course is appropriate for a special topics course)
 - b. A description of learning outcomes for the topic in accordance with the approved learning outcomes of the course
 - c. A description of how student performance in the course will be evaluated, including weightings for evaluation components
- 3) The approval of the department or program must be obtained for this topic offered in this special topics course.
- 4) Generally, each separate offering of a special topics course will be distinguished with an alphabetical identifier after the course number (e.g. BUS 307A, BUS 307B). If the same version

of a special topics course is offered more than once, the alphabetical identifier previously assigned to that version will be used.

- 5) Departments or programs may limit the number of special topics courses an individual student can take, and/or limit the number of special topics courses an individual student can use for program credit.

Independent Study

- 1) The idea of offering a course in the independent study format should come from the Head who should discuss it with the instructor involved and the Dean.
- 2) The program or department head and the Dean or designate must give their approval for an independent study section to be timetabled.

Course Numbering

For course numbering information, refer to <http://www.ufv.ca/admissions/studentrecords/> in the Student Records Information section.
