

GUIDE TO INDEPENDENT STUDY AND UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH COURSES

Virginia Tech offers several types of courses that can be tailored to the needs of individual students. By allowing students to pursue topics in which formal courses are not available and to engage in supervised research projects, these directed and independent courses provide greater academic flexibility for undergraduate students at Virginia Tech.

Independent Study (2974/2974H, 4974/4974H) courses generally involve extensive reading and tutorial sessions with the faculty supervisor and also may involve written papers or other learning assessments. The subject of Independent Study usually is a continuation in greater depth of a topic covered in a regular course, allowing students to study topics of particular individual interest.

Undergraduate Research (2994/2994H, 4994/4994H) courses are individual research projects carried out by students under faculty supervision. The student defines the research topic, proposes a methodology, carries out the research, and creates a tangible deliverable such as a paper, presentation, or technical product.

Steps to Enrolling in a Directed or Independent Course

1. Consult with your academic advisor or faculty mentor about your interests and goals. She or he can provide you with advice about selecting the appropriate course, writing the course description, selecting the credit hours (typically 1–3), and choosing the grading method (A–F or P/F).
2. Obtain the Request Form for the appropriate course (available on the Office of Undergraduate Research website [here](#) and by request) and fill out the required information. You will need to consult the Time Table of Classes to determine the Course Prefix (i.e., PHS, BMVS), Course Number and Course Request Number (CRN).
3. Obtain all necessary signatures other than the signature of the Director of the program offering the course. Without this signature, submit your Request Form to the appropriate program representative no later than the last day to add classes in the current semester. For Population Health Sciences (PHS), submit to Becky Jones (bjones57@vt.edu). For Biomedical and Veterinary Science (BMVS), submit to Andrea Green (green15@vt.edu). Upon approval of the request, the course will be added to your schedule – you will not need to add it in Hokie SPA.

Important Considerations for a Directed or Independent Course

- Start early! It takes some time to plan your course and complete the Request Form. If you wish to do a course in the fall, it is best to consult with your advisor or faculty mentor at the end of the previous spring semester.
- If your course will fulfill an experiential learning requirement for your major, be sure to consult the policy of your home department. Some departments require additional paperwork to count your course towards experiential learning. This is a separate process from the course request.
- Work with your course instructor to write a clear and cogent course description. The course request will be declined if the justification is weak, the methods are unclear, the assessment lacks rigor, or the credit hours are inconsistent with the effort involved in the course.



Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine
 205 Duck Pond Drive
 Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

Deadline: last day to add a class

INDEPENDENT STUDY REQUEST

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This form serves as registration for Independent Study courses when all proper approvals are obtained. Requests WILL NOT be accepted after the last day to add a class for the relevant semester.

Name: _____ Student ID#: _____
 VT Email: _____ Local Phone: _____
 Primary Major: _____ Secondary Major (if applicable): _____
 Overall GPA: _____ Total Hours Passed: _____ Semester Hours Planned (incl. this request): _____
 Research Credit Hours Requested For: Fall Spring Summer 1 Summer 2 Winter Year: _____
 Department Offering Course: _____ Course #: 2974 2974H 4974 4974H CRN: _____
 # of Credit Hours Requested: _____ (NOTE: Each credit should entail a minimum of 45 hours of instruction, supervision, and student effort during a 15-week semester.)
 Grading Method: A - F P/F Instructor Name: _____
 Title of Study: _____

(NOTE: You must attach a study plan that includes the following: (1) scope of the study, (2) learning objectives, (3) learning activities/approach to accomplishing methods, (4) expected outcomes/deliverables, and (5) method of learning assessment/performance evaluation)

Date Conflict of Interest Training Completed: _____

Conflict of Interest training is required by every student participating in an externally funded undergraduate research. Explanation of this requirement can be found at <https://www.research.vt.edu/conflict-of-interest.html>. Registration for training can be found at <https://www.citiprogram.org/>.

SIGNATURES OF APPROVAL (obtain in order):

(NOTE: By signing below, the student and the instructor acknowledge that any research compliance training required by the university and/or a granting agency will be completed by the student prior to undertaking the project.)

1. Student: _____ Date: _____
2. Instructor: _____ Date: _____
3. Instructor's Department Head: _____ Date: _____
4. Student's Advisor: _____ Date: _____
5. Student's Program Director: _____ Date: _____
6. Director of Program Offering Course: _____ Date: _____



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Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH REQUEST

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This form serves as registration for Undergraduate Research if all proper approvals are obtained.

Requests WILL NOT be accepted after the last day to add a class for the relevant semester.

Name: Student ID#: VT Email: Local Phone: Primary Major: Secondary Major (if applicable): Overall GPA: Total Hours Passed: Semester Hours Planned (incl. this request): Research Credit Hours Requested For: Department Offering Course: Course #: CRN: # of Credit Hours Requested: Grading Method: Instructor Name: Title of Project:

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6. Director of Program Offering Course: Date: