**University of Colorado Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences**

**Guidelines for Independent Study (PHRD 7855-001/002)**

**(Approved by the Curriculum Committee July 5, 2010; Last Updated May 12, 2023)**

These guidelines are for the use of SSPPS students and/or faculty members pursuing approval of a research project or other type of experience for elective credit through the Independent Study elective course.

The Independent Study elective course is intended to provide a mechanism for students to gain additional experience in particular areas of pharmacy practice for which they have a special interest and which may suit their ultimate career goals, or to gain experience in areas with which they are completely unfamiliar but interested in learning more. The Independent Study elective thus provides an opportunity for students to earn academic credit while performing creative work in an area of their choosing. A wide variety of experiences are suitable for Independent Study projects, including (but not limited to):

* basic science research in a laboratory
* clinical research involving a specific therapeutic area of interest
* pharmaceutical outcomes research involving evaluations of medication cost-effectiveness, medication safety, or medication-related healthcare policy
* projects concerning academic activities such as curriculum development or assessment, programmatic assessment, and development or assessment of educational activities or methods
* Completion of externally-offered professional education programs or courses such as the University of Utah School on Substance Abuse and Dependencies or the CVS/University of Oklahoma Summer Leadership Symposium (please note that completion of such programs may require an additional project or assessment in order to fulfill the required time commitment for elective credit)
* Other activities/projects that engage the student in some aspect of pharmacy practice, research, or service

In most cases it will be the student’s responsibility to identify a faculty advisor for a project of interest, but the course director may also be able to assist students in identifying a faculty advisor for some types of experiences (e.g. external course or program). Students or faculty should contact the course director if they are unsure whether a project may qualify for the Independent Study elective.

Some projects will require the student to be present on campus or otherwise in person, whereas other projects may be appropriate for remote work; this must be agreed upon between students and faculty advisors before submitting the application. Either in-person or remote participation is acceptable as long as project requirements can be successfully met. Faculty advisors are responsible for making sure that students receive proper orientation, training (including safety training, if applicable), and resources needed for successful completion of the project. Any expenses related to completion of a project will normally be the responsibility of the faculty advisor. However, in some circumstances (e.g. external courses or programs) costs will be responsibility of the student.

Independent Study projects performed in any one semester typically count toward 2 hours of elective credit, although credit of up to 4 semester hours may be granted with sufficient justification. Independent Study courses may be used to earn up to 4 elective credit hours in order for students to fulfill the Doctor of Pharmacy graduation requirement of at least 8 credit hours of electives. However, no more than 2 credit hours from any one Independent Study course may be applied toward fulfilling the 8-credit hour elective requirement (i.e., an Independent Study project worth 3 or 4 credits is allowed to count as only 2 credit hours toward the required 8 elective credits).

An Independent Study application should be submitted at least 6 weeks prior to the anticipated start date of the project, e.g., May 1 (for summer semester), August 1 (for fall semester) or December 1 (for spring semester). Applications may be submitted after these deadlines but are not guaranteed of being approved and registered before the anticipated start of the Independent Study course for the intended semester.

Approval must be obtained from the Independent Study course director (i) prior to enrolling a student in the Independent Study elective course, and (ii) before the student starts working on requirements of the proposed Independent Study project. Similar to other elective courses, independent study electives are intended to be completed within one semester. However, fulfillment of project requirements may be extended to two semesters with prior approval of the faculty supervisor and the Independent Study course director. Consistent with SSPPS policy, when Independent Study credit is being applied towards the elective credit requirement needed for graduation, the Independent Study must be successfully completed prior to students starting the P4 year.

Using the Independent Study proposal form, the project must be described in sufficient detail that both the student and the faculty member are clearly aware of, and agree on, the nature of the project (i.e. what the student will be doing); project requirements (i.e. what specific activities and responsibilities are associated with the project); measurable endpoints for the project (i.e. how the student and faculty advisor know when the project is completed and a final grade can be issued); and how much time is expected to be devoted to the project in order to successfully complete the project. Independent Study applications must fulfill the following criteria:

1. ***Submission*** - Applications must be submitted for approval by the deadline appropriate for the semester in which the project will be conducted. The application may be submitted by either the student conducting the project or by the faculty supervisor. Applications comprise submission of completed proposal (Independent Study Proposal Form) and approval (Independent Study Approval Form) documents, both found on the school’s web site. The approval form must be signed by both the student and the faculty advisor.
2. ***Proposal*** - The proposal form represents a “mini-syllabus” that should not exceed 4 pages in length, and must include the following information in this order:
   1. The Independent Study title, name of student, name of the supervising SSPPS faculty member who will advise the student, and name of any other key individuals. A list of previous independent studies that the faculty supervisor has mentored should be provided, including dates.
   2. Explicit description of prerequisite knowledge skills and abilities required by students
   3. Statement of the goal(s) of the Independent Study
   4. A list of specific learning outcomes to be met by the student. These outcomes must be well defined and measureable by the supervising faculty member. At least one of these must be from the 14 approved Ability Based Outcomes for the University of Colorado Doctor of Pharmacy curriculum.
   5. A description of the assessments that will be used to determine student achievement of each learning outcome. A description of what represents a pass for each assessment is required. Note: Independent studies are graded as pass or fail only.
   6. A description of supervising faculty members expectations of student in relation to professionalism (e.g., dress code, punctuality, need for preparation)
   7. Number of credit hours proposed and an estimate of time to be devoted to the study (hours/week) and total duration of the Independent Study. Independent Studies are generally 2 credit hours total, but can be up to 4 credit hours with sufficient justification. The time commitment should be 30 to 45 contact hours per credit hour.
3. ***Course grade notification*** - After the student has completed the Independent Study project, the faculty supervisor is required to notify the course director regarding whether successful completion of the project has occurred and what grade (Pass or Fail) should be issued to the student for the elective course. A grade of Incomplete may be issued if the project has not yet been completed but the student is expected to successfully complete the project during the subsequent semester.
4. ***Exclusions*** - The following cannot be used for earning academic credit as an Independent Study elective course: (i) work that the student is using to fulfill requirements of the Honors Program, (ii) work for which the student is receiving payment as part of an internship, work study or other type of paid employment. Finally, if any travel is part of the Independent Study elective course, the student may not be reimbursed *via* the school or campus student professional development or travel programs which are devoted solely to support of extracurricular activities.