Independent Study Learning Contract Proposal

An independent study provides qualified M.Ed. students with opportunities to broaden and deepen their knowledge of academic and professional curriculum through creative, self-directed projects as guided by School of Educational Studies faculty.

An independent study is based on this formula for credits: 30 hours of work = 1 credit; 60 hours of work = 2 credits, and so forth. Students are encouraged to create a proposal that takes into consideration the breadth and depth of the chosen topic and a realistic expectation of hours for accomplishing the study. Students should carefully consider the development of the proposal because the completed study will be evaluated according to the evidence of learning strategies and goals as listed in the learning contract.

An independent study may be taken for 1-6 credits although because of the time commitment, students often limit their independent studies to one or two credits. (Note: A one-credit independent study should be taken in combination with other courses, as the university must charge tuition for two credits.)

In the previous quarter, the student must speak with a faculty member, who will be a guide and evaluator, to find out if he/she is available and is willing to sponsor the study in the following quarter. A conversation about the topic of study and possible resources may occur before a specific learning contract is developed. In the quarter the study is conducted, a student should be ready to commence the agreed upon work.

After the student and the faculty member reach agreement about the study's focus and elements, the student will submit one copy of a typed learning contract proposal to the faculty sponsor for approval. When approved, the faculty member should notify the School of Educational Studies office to send the student a registration code for BEDUC 592. As per the learning contract, the faculty member also will provide information about the number of credits and if the study will be taken for a grade or credit/no credit.

All independent study contracts must have the following information:

Student’s Name:
Date:
Quarter for Registration:
Title of Independent Study:
Number of Credits:
Faculty Evaluator:

1. Background & Purpose: Setting the scene so the evaluator learns about the context for your contract and what you want to accomplish as an educator and possibly the contribution that you want to make for a school, other educational site, the community, or learners.

II. Goals: Your learning objectives, what you will be able to know or do after you complete this contract.

III. Learning Strategies: What you will do in order to meet your objectives, e.g., readings, development of curriculum, observations, interviews, attendance at workshops, teaching. This section should include specific references to articles, books, and/or conferences and district-sponsored professional development courses.

IV. Evidence of Goals: What you will present to the evaluator so that your learning can be demonstrated, e.g., combinations of conceptual papers, literature reviews, journal article critiques, evaluations from your students or colleagues, description and rationale of the curriculum you developed, reflection on learning from an in-service or district-sponsored professional development.