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**Policy Name:** Independent Study

**Policy Number:** None

**Functional Area(s) Responsible:** Academic & Student Affairs

**Owner(s) of Policy:** Academic & Student Affairs

**Most Recent BOT Approval Date:** September 9, 2024

**Most Recent Review Date:** Spring 2024

**Most Recent Review/Revision Type:**  none  minor/non-substantive  substantive/extensive

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**Policy Statement:**

Finger Lakes Community College provides students with the opportunity to pursue coursework independently under the guidance of a faculty member. Independent Study is not intended as a substitute for an existing course. Students pursuing Independent Study must obtain sponsorship of a faculty member who will provide guidance, formative assessment, and final evaluation of the student's work.

Guided study is to be used in unusual circumstances and is not an alternative to inadequate planning or inconvenient timing. It is expected that only instructors who normally teach the course will be responsible for a guided study course.

Credit hours for an Advanced Study project will be determined jointly by the student, faculty sponsor and department chairperson to accurately reflect the time and work involved.

**Reason(s) for Policy:**

Independent study occurs in two formats: advanced and guided. Advanced study and guided study are frequently confused with one another. They are similar in that they both offer the opportunity to study individually with an instructor on a contractual basis, but they differ in intent.

**Applicability of Policy:**

None

**Definitions:**

**Advanced Study** is intended to be an extension of a traditional course. It provides the student with an opportunity to pursue advanced study/research a subject in more depth and in a more independent manner than would be possible in a Catalog course.

**Guided Study** is an instructional format for a section of a Catalog course required for a student's program of study that is not available in a particular semester. The learning outcomes covered in such course sections are the same as what is covered in the department syllabus for the Catalog course.

**Related Documents:**

None

**Procedures:****General Requirements:**

To be eligible for advanced (independent) study a student must have:

- a) 12 or more completed semester hours
- b) Cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher
- c) No more than six credits of advanced study toward their degree.

Guided/Tutorial Study is available to students under circumstances including but not limited to:

- a) a course needed for graduation that is not available during the student's final semester
- b) a prerequisite course that is not available

No more than one advanced study in a semester. All such courses must be included within the standard course load.

Both advanced study and guided study courses are only possible by arrangement and at the discretion of the instructor and/or the department and must be approved by the AVP of Instruction.

An instructor must first agree to teach an Advanced Study course and the AVP of Instruction must approve the creation of the Advanced Study course.

Students who wish to take an advanced study course should begin the process well in advance of registration since published registration deadlines apply to these courses. The credit hours earned from an Advanced Study or Guided Study course will be included in the student's regular semester load and will not be treated differently for graduation requirements. An Advanced Study course is transcribed with the special topics number (e.g. 199 or 299) and with a 65 section number.

Guided Study for existing courses must follow the department syllabus and course learning outcomes.

Advanced Study requests for a special research project must identify the student learning outcomes and the expected credit hours to be awarded. Advanced study requires an outline form, developed through consultation between the student and the instructor/sponsor, which serves as the official course description.

**Independent Study Approval Process:**

Advanced and Guided study uses the same approval form. For a Guided Study attach the rationale for the guided study and the Course Outline based upon the Master Syllabus. All applications must be signed by the student, the instructor/sponsor, and the department chairperson prior to being sent to the AVP of Instruction for approval.

1. Obtain a program evaluation and complete an Independent Study Approval Form from the One Stop Center.
2. For a Guided Study attach a rationale for the tutorial and a course outline based upon the Master Syllabus and includes the required elements from the course outline template.
3. For an Advanced Study the faculty member and student will work together to complete the Advanced Study Outline which will include:
  - a. Prefix of sponsoring department,
  - b. a brief descriptive title,

- c. the reason for the Advanced Study,
  - d. objectives of study/experience,
  - e. learning outcomes,
  - f. frequency of contact with faculty,
  - g. the number of credit hours for the course, a recommended guide for credit allocation is one credit hour for the equivalent of every forty-five sessions of student academic activities of 50 minutes duration each (37.5 clock hours).
  - h. method of assessing and evaluating student performance, and
  - i. date of completion.
4. The faculty will first obtain the student's signature and then obtain approval from the Department Chair before sending to the AVP of Instruction

After approval,

5. Once the form is complete, it is sent to the Student Records Office for processing. A course section is assigned, and form is returned to the AVP of Instruction and a copy is sent to the faculty member and student's academic advisor.
6. At the conclusion of the Advanced or Guided Study the faculty assigns a grade in accordance with instructions and established academic calendar deadlines communicated by the Student Records Office.
7. The AVP of Instruction confirms a grade has been issued and notifies payroll to compensate the faculty based on the relevant employment contract.
8. All documents will be retained by Student Records and stored in accordance with the record retention policy.

**Forms/Online Processes:**

None

**Appendix:**

None