INDEPENDENT STUDY, RESEARCH, AND INTERNSHIP COURSES

Definition: This policy covers Independent Study, Research, and Internship (S-class) courses in which the vast majority of learning will be the responsibility of the individual, to seek out and acquire knowledge.

Authority: The President of the University.

Scope: Those CSUSM academic courses designated as “Independent Study,” “Research,” and “Internship” courses.

Karen S. Haynes, President

Graham Oberem, Interim Provost and VP for Academic Affairs

Implemented: 5/16/2013

Approved by the Academic Senate 05/02/2012
I. DESCRIPTION

Independent Study, Research, and Internship courses involve independent student work as the primary mode of instruction augmented by required interactions with a faculty member acting as an advisor or monitor of the student’s work. The supervising faculty member and the student will document the course topic, learning outcomes, scope of work, number of hours expected for student work, number of credits to be awarded, number and nature of student/faculty contacts during the term and the criteria for evaluating the results of the independent work using the college specific Independent Study, Research, and Internship Contract Form.

II. DESIGNATION

Independent Study, Research, and Internship courses may be appropriate for the following purposes:
(1) directed or independent remedial review;
(2) directed study to address topics not available at CSU San Marcos (student or faculty topics);
(3) directed study for transfer students who have partial course articulations to address specific deficits;
(4) independent supervised study (lab, library, or field work);
(5) enrichment activities/study for advanced students;
(6) academic conference activities/Research projects;
(7) special projects;
(8) interdisciplinary study for students where the CSU San Marcos lacks structured coursework.

III. NAMING

Specific titles can be used at the departmental level where useful. Specific course names may only be submitted to the Registrar for inclusion in official records where external requirements such as accreditation, professional standards or certification require the use of a specific course name. In those cases, the course should be titled “Independent Study: Name of Class” to ensure the clearest possible communication of the work. Such external requirements must be documented at the time the request for assigning a specific title to an Independent Study, Research, and Internship course is submitted to the Registrar.

IV. PEDAGOGY AND USES

When an Independent Study, Research, and Internship course is used, it must be taught as directed/independent study. These course numbers are not intended to provide a mechanism for teaching variable topics in a group instruction format. If there is a need for a topics course, such a course can and should be proposed and approved via the usual course proposal process. The substitution of a group instruction experience is contrary to the spirit of directed study. However, the use of Independent Study, Research, and Internship courses is not restricted to one student and may be used as appropriate for
small groups. Low-enrolled classes taught in a traditional, non-independent-study manner are not to be offered under Independent Study, Research, and Internship course numbering as a substitute for cancellation.

V. APPROVAL OF INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSES
Ongoing courses that use independent study as the mode of instruction should be sent through the standard curriculum process.

VI. COMPLIANCE WITH CREDIT HOUR POLICY
The contract must include a statement on how the course complies with the campus Credit Hour Policy.

VII. APPROVAL OF INDEPENDENT STUDY CONTRACTS
Approval to pursue Independent Study, Research, and Internship courses must come from the student, supervising faculty member, department chair, and the College Dean or designee. The student must agree to the terms and conditions of the contract. After the Independent Study, Research, and Internship Form is approved by supervising faculty member and department chair, it must also be approved by the College Dean or designee who may not be one of the former.