

## Independent Study Policy

**Revision History:** Formerly a part of the Grading Policies, Honors, and Specialized Courses policy (now called the Grading, Scholastic and Other Honors, and Specialized Courses Policy) ; established as a standalone policy in October 2023. Review Date: May 2025 (Associate Dean for Research, Student Services Office , and Registrar’s Office)

### A. Purpose

Eligible students with a demonstrated interest in a subject may complete an independent study project under the guidance of a full -time faculty member (“Faculty Supervisor”) with expertise in the subject.

### B. Eligibility

A student must be in good academic standing to be eligible to take an independent study project

and after the student has reviewed samples of past proposals that are available on the Student Services Office portal page.

At a minimum, the Proposal must include:

1. The student's statement that the Proposal was prepared in consultation with the Faculty Supervisor and after reviewing past proposals.
2. A description of a discrete legal question, as opposed to a general topic or issue, that the student wishes to explore or investigate, and an initial thesis or hypothesis regarding this question.
3. An explanation of the academic or professional background that makes the student interested in the question and capable of researching it.
4. An explanation of why the question merits an individual study as opposed to in- depth learning offered by seminars or other elective courses.
5. A brief discussion, in light of the existing academic literature relating to the topic, of the importance of the independent study project,

E. Completing an Independent Study Project

The student is expected to devote the time and resources necessary to complete the independent study project set forth in the Proposal. An independent study project requires 90 hours of work per unit of credit; therefore, two units of independent study project credit require a total of 180 hours of work. The Faculty Supervisor alone will determine whether the student has devoted sufficient time and resources to the project.

At the end of the independent study project, the student must timely submit to the Faculty Supervisor an original paper prepared and written solely by the student. To earn credit, the paper must be of at least 12,000 words, including footnotes, and adequately footnoted, similar to articles published by law journals. The Faculty Supervisor will review and grade the paper, utilizing the same scale used for other courses (e.g., A+, A, etc.) and offering the student constructive comments that explain the grade.

After a grade is assigned and finalized, the student may pursue independent publication of the paper (or some version of the paper) or joint publication with the Faculty Supervisor, if both the student and the Faculty Supervisor agree and the Faculty Supervisor has contributed to the work being submitted for publication. This publication decision belongs to the student alone.

F. Policy Revisions

Southwestern expressly reserves the right to change or modify any aspect of this policy at any time, with or without prior notice.