

Important Information about Directed Studies (PSYC 5900 & 6900)

Directed Studies courses make it possible for one or more students to work under the guidance of a faculty member on a **reading** project of mutual interest. Students can enroll in a Directed Studies course *ONLY* when the topic covered in the reading project does not duplicate materials already covered in other Psychology graduate courses or the issue covered in the student's thesis.

The Directed Study should contain an element of originality. Additionally, the course should be based on some issue associated with a topic rather than simply a survey of a topic.

Unauthorized Resubmission of Work

According to The Academic Integrity Policy Section VI.2:

A student shall not submit substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the second submission occurs. Minor modifications and amendments to an essay or paper, such as changes in phraseology, do not constitute a significant and acceptable reworking of an assignment.

This means that the work submitted for Directed Studies credit cannot be used or submitted in whole or part for credit in another course, or in the student's thesis or dissertation.

The Directed Studies application must state how the proposed reading project is different from the student's thesis or dissertation.

Application and course outline

An application form must be completed by the student and signed by the Directed Studies supervisor.

In addition to the form, the student in collaboration with the Directed Studies supervisor must prepare a description of the reading project. Information should include:

1. The issue
2. Method used to find relevant literature (i.e., inclusion and exclusion search criteria)
3. The nature of the report (e.g., word limit of the abstract, word or page limit for the report).
 - a. Identify the target audience when describing the final report. Typically, the audience for research conducted in Psychology is Academe or Government.
 - b. Styles:
 - i. Academic journal article: Each academic journal has an "instructions for author" section that outlines how a submission should be structured. The target journal should be identified and the

“instructions for authors” appended to the application. If the desired outlet is modified, an addendum should be submitted to the Graduate Program Supervisor that outlines changes to the report length and style.

- ii. Technical Report: Provide the outline (e.g., executive summary, headings) for a report that is typical for the target agency/Government department.

Typically, the final report is approximately 30 double-spaced pages (including reference), 12pt Times New Roman, and prepared in accordance with the most recently published APA style manual.

A grading rubric must be submitted along with the project description: Areas to be covered in the rubric may include:

1. Process (e.g., contribution to the project, meeting deadlines, responsiveness to feedback)
2. Quality of the report (e.g., structure, meaningful progression of the argument)
3. General (e.g., writing, sophistication of the project, APA style)

The application and course outline must be submitted to the Graduate Program Supervisor for approval.

Note, the project cannot begin before approval of the Directed Studies proposal is granted by the Graduate Program Supervisor. However, approval can be granted in advance of the term in which the student registers for the course (e.g., approval can be granted in the Fall term for completion in the Summer term).

Recommended Grade & Justification

A “Recommended Grade & Justification” letter needs to be submitted to the Graduate Program Supervisor (email or hard copy) and copied to the Graduate Administrator. This letter should contain both a recommended final letter grade as well as a justification/rationale for the grade. The standard letter is 2-3 paragraphs.

The recommendation of an A+ grade should be reserved for an outstanding written document (which the Graduate Program Supervisor will read in detail) as well as the overall process (which needs to be detailed in the letter provided by the Independent Research supervisor).

Aspects of the process that may be important to consider include, the independence of student work, unique intellectual contributions of the student, responsiveness of the student towards feedback provided on earlier drafts, student ability to meet assigned deadlines, and/or any other factors that you deem relevant. The importance of each aspect of this process may vary somewhat depending on whether the student is in the MA or PhD program (as well as the year within the program).

The Directed Studies supervisor's recommended grade will carry the most weight in assigning the final grade. If the Graduate Program Supervisor feels that a recommended grade should be raised or lowered, the supervisor of the Directed Studies will be contacted to discuss the matter in detail before proceeding.

The Graduate Program Supervisor is ultimately responsible for assigning the final grade.