

MBA STUDENT GUIDE

Independent Study

What is an Independent Study?

- **Self-sourced project** to apply your MBA studies, skills, and critical thinking
- 600-level course aligned to the academic department of the faculty member you source to be your advisor¹
- 2 (60 to 80 hours) OR 4 credits (120 to 160 hours) per quarter
- CR/NC graded; not in cumulative GPA
- Max 8-credits allowed toward your degree (*includes BA578 consulting project credits*)
- Eligible to apply as an individual or team up to four, in which all students must register for the same number of credits with clear evidence of equitable contribution by all

Academic Independent Study

Secure and complete a relevant course syllabus from a different university

[APPLY HERE](#)

Research Independent Study

Conduct research and create a [Harvard-style teaching case](#) to illustrate concepts

[APPLY HERE](#)

Applied Independent Study

Secure and complete a business sponsored or entrepreneurial project

[APPLY HERE](#)

Requirements for success...

- **Own your experience and drive the project** using the resources available to you
- **Secure a faculty advisor** with aligned expertise and availability to offer you support while also assigning a CR/NC grade upon completion
- **Submit the correct Independent Study application** for approval and registration once you've secured a faculty advisor¹ using the appropriate link above
- **Meet with your faculty advisor a minimum of 3 times** as you execute your project
- **Present your outcomes and submit your written deliverable(s)** to your project stakeholders, faculty advisor, and the MBA Program Office by the end of the quarter

¹ Faculty commitment for independent study projects cannot be guaranteed. Students are responsible for securing a faculty advisor based on their availability, interest, and expertise, and should be factored into the application.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Academic Independent Study

SECURE AND COMPLETE A RELEVANT COURSE FROM ANOTHER UNIVERSITY SYLLABUS NOT OFFERED

- Secure a Foster Faculty Advisor with relevant expertise to advise your execution syllabus
- Submit an [Academic Independent Study Application](#) with the course syllabus for approval and registration
- Complete the syllabus and requirements (if an exam is specified, must define a paper with your faculty advisor and submit instead)
- Submit a paper evaluating the course:
2 credits = 10 pages or 4 credits = 20 pages
 - Explain how the curriculum applies to the Foster MBA and supports your degree
 - Double-spaced, 11/12-point font, 1" margins, and standard grammar and citation format consistent with MBA-level teaching materials
- Deliver 10-minute presentation to your faculty advisor

Research Independent Study

CONDUCT RESEARCH AND DEVELOP A [HARVARD-STYLE TEACHING CASE](#) TO ILLUSTRATE CONCEPTS

- Secure a Foster faculty advisor with relevant expertise to advise your project execution
- Submit a [Research Independent Study Application](#) for approval and registration
- Execute the scope and submit a detailed case report: 2 credits = 6 pages or 4 credits = 12 pages minimum
 - Description of research study intent and context, with supporting analysis included
 - Teaching notes (appx. 4 to 10 pages) with explanation of case synopsis and organization description, as relevant
 - Double-spaced, 11/12-point font, 1" margins, and standard grammar and citation format consistent with MBA-level teaching materials
- Deliver 10-minute presentation to your faculty advisor

Applied Independent Study

SECURE AND COMPLETE A SPONSORED OR ENTREPRENEURIAL PROJECT WITH A DISCRETE, ACHIEVABLE SCOPE

Business Sponsored Project²

Address a real-world challenge for a company, requiring an interdisciplinary scope, research, and critical thinking to define recommendations

Entrepreneurial Project

Execute design and implementation activities for your own startup company, requiring research, analysis, and critical thinking

- Define your project scope and approach and agree expectations with your business sponsor, as applicable, or consider reviewing your scope with the [Buerk Center for Entrepreneurship](#) team
- Secure a Foster Faculty Advisor with relevant expertise to advise your execution
- Submit an [Applied Independent Study Application](#) for approval and registration
- Execute the project scope, following the guidance provided at the time you secure your project
- Deliver a 10-minute presentation to your business sponsor, as applicable, other industry practitioners, and your faculty advisor
- Submit a final written report of the project findings and recommendations to your business sponsor, as applicable and your faculty advisor no later than two days after the presentation

² You may not engage in a project: 1) for the company you're currently employed unless the project is substantially different from your current role and the sponsor is not in your reporting structure, or 2) when you are getting paid.