An Equal Opportunity University

Extended Education

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CONTRACT INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSES
For Non-Matriculated Students Only

A Guide for Faculty

You have been asked by a non-matriculated student to serve as his/her faculty member for a contract, a.k.a. independent study, course. A student with non-matriculated status is either not currently admitted to WWU or a regular student who is taking an extended time off from taking classes. The following guidelines provide information on policy and procedure to help you through the process.

POLICY

Western established independent study by contract to allow non-matriculated students to earn credit for special projects which are not part of the regular curriculum or current timetable. Subjects can cover anything “suitable” as determined by you, the faculty member, and agreed upon by your department chair. Examples of past contracts include studies of specific authors, advanced foreign language, art history while traveling abroad, museum internships, and much, much more. Occasionally a student will need a regular Western course during a quarter when it is not being offered on campus. Such courses can also be taught via contract.

This student has come to you because you teach courses in the subject area s/he wishes to pursue. If the course of study proposed by the student has merit and if you will work with this person, please keep reading. If you are not able to help this student perhaps you can suggest a colleague.

PAPERWORK

Blue card:

The student has brought in a blue card (Contract Independent Study Registration Permit) for you to sign. On the card you are asked to choose a course number for the course. In doing so, use the same standards of difficulty and other criteria you would use when deciding on a course level for on-campus classes. You need not choose just 300 or 400 but may select more specific numbers and/or lower numbers, such as 112, 201, 352, etc. If the course is at the graduate level, you will need to get an okay from the program manager in the Graduate Office (x3170) before proceeding.
When assigning an appropriate number of credits, use the standard outlined in Western’s general catalog: 30 hours of work equals one credit.

Unless your department has a strict policy regarding grading mode, you and the student should discuss which mode will work best for him/her and enter your choice in the appropriate spot.

The transcript title is limited to 26 characters. Be as descriptive as possible in this short space.

Your department chair’s signature is also required. You should discuss the student’s proposal with your chair and obtain her/his agreement.

**Proposed contract:**

The second item you will be asked to sign is the proposed contract. In most cases the narrative portion can be kept brief. Goals may be as simple as “I plan to increase my knowledge of 19th century Russian literature.” Learning activities can be, for example: “I will read the following six books [list them], write a critique of each, and meet with my professor for a discussion every two weeks.” Under evaluation you might say, “Grades on the critiques will constitute three-fourths of the final grade and oral discussions will constitute the final fourth.” If the proposal is quite unusual, you may want to go into more detail. If your department chair is new to you or desires more information, you should naturally add more facts. Usually it is the student who fills out this form.

Return all completed paperwork to the student, who will deliver it to the Western Online office.

**FINISHING UP**

Students working on a Contract Independent Study have six months to complete their course work. Most, however, plan to finish in one quarter. At the end of the quarter you will receive a grade roster from the Western Online office. Please return this form to us whether or not the student has completed the course. Do not enter a “K” grade as this is not an option in contract courses. You may call our office at 360-650-3650 or e-mail iLearn@wwu.edu, with the student’s final grade.

You will be compensated at the rate of $133 per credit. Payment will be processed after the final grade has been reported to the Western Online office. Instructors do not submit grades to the Registrar’s office.

*We hope you enjoy this opportunity to work one-on-one with a student. The Western Online staff are always eager to help, and welcome your calls at 650-3650 should you have any questions or concerns.*