

The course

An independent study course may be arranged with a faculty member, student, and academic advisor. An independent study course can take many forms (e.g., a course along the lines of a “traditional” elective with similar requirements; a supervised readings course focusing on a specific area; or an experience-based learning opportunity in the form of a hands-on project for a client), the faculty member offering the course must ensure that that it is furthering the education and developing the skill set of the student at a level that is commensurate with the credits being awarded and, more generally, consistent with the objectives of the MBA program. Independent study courses are typically worth 1.5 credits. However, they can be worth more (e.g., 3), but the faculty member is responsible for ensuring that the credits are justified by the work load.

As a general rule, MBA students are allowed to take a maximum of 6 credits of independent study in any one term, and a total of 12 credits during the program. In the event of extenuating circumstances (e.g.: a given student receives an offer of employment with a request to begin employment before the completion of their MBA program) permission may be given for a student to complete up to 12 credits of independent study in one term with the *written* permission of the Director of MBA Student Services and the Chair of MPC. In the event of a request for an independent study course that meets the aforementioned criteria of an extenuating circumstance, the academic and career advisor of the student in question will be required to attach a memo to the Independent Study Request Form wherein the reason for the accommodation will be fully explained.

In addition to the Independent Student Request Form for registration of the course, the faculty advisor and student must put together an Independent Study Contract that specifies the topic, description of the course, the process and deliverables, and evaluation (an example contract format is below). This will serve as a “contract” between the professor and the student, and must be submitted to the academic advisor.

The faculty advisor

Faculty sponsorship is required for all independent study courses. Only full time faculty (both tenure and non-tenure stream) can sign off on an independent study to be taken by one (or more) students under the direction of that faculty member. In the case of part time or adjunct faculty, any independent study course to be offered by that faculty member must be approved by his/her Area Director.

The process

1. Student speaks with faculty advisor to discuss the possibility of an independent study project
2. Student and faculty advisor fill out Independent Study Request Form and Independent Study Contract
3. Student submits Independent Study Request Form and Independent Study Contract to academic advisor
4. Academic advisor submits Independent Study Request Form and Independent Study Contract to Director of MBA Student Services for final approval
5. If approved, academic advisor registers student for the approved credits for the independent study and emails student to confirm registration

The Course

_____ (student) will work under the guidance of _____ (instructor) to do an in-depth exploration of _____ (topic). It will be a _____ credit course and it is expected that all requirements will be completed by _____ (date).

The Project

_____ (student) will be responsible for doing a thorough review of the relevant academic and professional literature on _____ (topic). She/he will organize and distill her/his findings from the literature and develop a “state of the art” review of the field. She/he will use appropriate footnotes and citations and develop a bibliography of her/his findings. Subsequently, she/he will conduct a detailed case study of the current practice of _____ (organization). She/he will then evaluate the current practice of this organization in terms of her/his findings from the literature review. Finally, she/he will reach conclusions about the strengths and weaknesses of the organization’s current practice and make recommendations to improve or reinforce these.

The Process

The student and faculty advisor will meet at least twice during the term. The purposes of these meetings will be to review the student’s progress and to discuss ideas for the next stage or completion of the project. Additional meetings may be required if the faculty or student believe they are necessary. The first meeting will focus on the literature review. This will be conducted when the literature review is well underway or completed. The second meeting will deal with the case study and will be held during the data collection in the focal organization. The student will consolidate findings into a final report that will be submitted to the faculty advisor no later than _____ (date).

The Evaluation

The faculty advisor will assign the student a grade for the independent study course upon the completion of all of the requirements. The evaluation will be based on the following:

- The first meeting to discuss the literature review. The student’s performance in the meeting will be evaluated on how well he has reviewed and integrated the literature and can present her/his findings. (15% of grade)
- The second meeting to discuss the case study. The student’s performance in this meeting will be evaluated on her/his plan to collect and how she/he is progressing in collecting data for the case study. There will be an emphasis on the effectiveness and thoroughness of her/his data collection and how she/he plans to interpret it. (15% of grade)
- The final paper submitted to the faculty advisor. This paper will include the findings from the literature review, the detail from the case study, an analysis of the effectiveness of the organization studied, and some recommendations regarding the effectiveness or potential improvements in the organization’s system. The format for the paper must be approved by the faculty advisor before it is completed. It is expected that the paper will be written in a professional and literate manner. The paper should be focused and properly organized, but there is no page limit. Appendices and figures may be included if appropriate. The paper will be evaluated on the thoroughness of the work, the thoughtfulness of the analysis and the effectiveness of the presentation. These will be judged by the faculty advisor. (70% of the grade).

I agree to the course process, expectations and evaluation as described above.

Student Name	Student Signature	Date

I agree to sponsor the above described course and to submit a grade based on the expectations described above.

Faculty Name	Faculty Signature	Date

Independent Study Request Form

Last Name	First Name	Student ID
Student Signature		Date

This form should be completed if you would like to pursue an independent study while at Katz.

Topic/area that you are pursuing the independent study	Credits
Year/semester that you will be pursuing the independent study	Course

Please indicate the nature and objective of the independent study, the materials to be used, and/or tasks to be completed and the basis for evaluation.

Faculty use only		
Faculty Name	Faculty Signature	Date
Area Director Name	Area Director Signature	Date

Office of Student Services use only	
Approval of the Director of MBA Student Services	Date