**Instructions for the New College Independent Study**

Go to <https://ncis.as.ua.edu> to propose a New College independent study project. The process is mostly self-explanatory, but here are a few pointers on how to get started and about what is expected:

1. **Make sure you pick the right contract type for the work you want to do.** The independent study program is flexible. You can use it for:

* Research on an academic subject or other academic project;
* Internships / externships / shadowing;
* Creative projects (*e.g.*, music, creative writing, visual art, sculpture, etc.); or
* Skills-based or service-based learning.

**NOTE**: Independent study credit is not available for travel.

1. **Find someone to help direct your work**. No matter which contract type you select, someone will still have to agree to be your Contract Director.

* It is your job to propose a structure to your Contract Director ***before beginning work on a project.*** If you need help getting started, contact John Miller at [jmiller@as.ua.edu](mailto:jmiller@as.ua.edu), or the faculty member you intend to ask to serve as your Contract Director, but **you should do the vast majority of the work on the proposal**.
* You cannot ask someone related to you by blood or by marriage to oversee your work.
* If you ask someone who isn’t on faculty at UA to be your Contract Director or Internship Supervisor, ask that s/he email Prof. John Miller at [jmiller@as.ua.edu](mailto:jmiller@as.ua.edu) to confirm his / her role.
* Additional paperwork and approval will be required if you want someone not on UA faculty to act as your Contract Director. Further, she or he must have eighteen or more graduate hours in the subject area of the independent study in order to assess your work (this requirement does not apply to Internship Supervisors).

1. **How do I put together a proposal?** The form you will download from the online system has instructions, but for the most part, it’s just like a syllabus – you have to:

* Propose 3-5 things you want to learn (at least one has to refer to your reading);
* Explain what methods you’ll use to learn those things;
* List the resources you’ll use to learn them (see downloadable form for more info); and
* Explain how your work will be assessed.

**NOTE: All proposals must include relevant reading and writing of some kind.** The writing requirement may be fulfilled by research papers, reflective essays, journaling, or other forms of writing.

1. Any contract can be taken pass/fail, but **internships and skills- or service-based contracts must be taken pass/fail**. You may not alter the way a contract is assessed once you enroll in it.
2. **How do I calculate the number of credit hours?** The general rule is that at least 40 hours of non-repetitive, engaged learning equals one credit hour. Repetitive tasks, for example, answering phones or filing, do not count toward credit hours.

* Do your best to come up with a good-faith count of the total number of hours and consider how much of that figure will be new learning.
* Even a full-summer internship may only be worth three hours, or the same as a class. If you want more hours, you have to show that you’re doing more work than a class.

1. **When do I need to do this?**

* You must obtain written approval for a proposal from New College **before** you can earn any academic credit for an independent study. **Retroactive credit will not be approved**.
* The deadline to enroll an independent study each semester is before the last day to withdraw from a class with a “W”. Since the proposal has to be approved before it can be enrolled, make sure you start well in advance of that date.

1. **What if something changes?** Remember, this is your syllabus. Make sure that all changes are agreed to in writing by your Contract Director, and if relevant, your Internship Supervisor.
2. **What information can I give the person(s) I’m asking to oversee my work?** The list of duties below should help address most questions:
3. **Student Responsibilities:**
4. Propose a written learning contract of what and how you want to learn.
5. Develop a schedule for completing the learning project. Make a commitment to yourself that you will complete the learning experience by the estimated completion date.
6. Meet with your Contract Director / Internship Supervisor as needed – call or email to make an appointment.
7. If you are having problems with the contract, are stuck, or need more information or feedback, contact your Contract Director / Internship Supervisor or [jmiller@as.ua.edu](mailto:jmiller@as.ua.edu). Take the initiative to get assistance when you need it.
8. **Contract Director Responsibilities:**
9. Assist the student in developing the proposal to ensure that it is complete and of good quality.
10. Recommend learning resources – books, journals, people, agencies, etc.
11. Be a resource for information, but do not assume the responsibility of teaching the student in the manner of a traditional classroom.
12. As appropriate, meet the student to review progress, share ideas, and provide motivation.
13. Evaluate the student’s work as described in the proposal.
14. Report the final grade to New College (either to the student’s advisor or [jmiller@as.ua.edu](mailto:jmiller@as.ua.edu)).
15. Provide a copy of work submitted in support of the contract (or other evidence of contract work) to the New College office or [jmiller@as.ua.edu](mailto:jmiller@as.ua.edu). Feel free to ask the student to provide you with photographs, videos, or other evidence, as appropriate.
16. **Internship Supervisor’s Responsibilities to New College:**
17. Please respond to communications from New College personnel regarding the performance of the student during his or her internship.
18. At the end of the internship period, please inform New College personnel whether the intern has satisfactorily completed his or her responsibilities in the internship by email to [jmiller@as.ua.edu](mailto:jmiller@as.ua.edu).
19. Please briefly describe (a paragraph or two at the most) the intern’s performance during the internship.

***Please note***: in order to receive academic credit for internship experience, New College students may not be paid for their work as interns; nor may they work for persons related to them by blood or marriage.

1. **I have a question that isn’t answered here. What do I do?** Email Prof. John Miller: [jmiller@as.ua.edu](mailto:jmiller@as.ua.edu).