

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS DIRECTED STUDY

STUDENT INFORMATION

Why Do a Directed Study?

Students in a Bachelor of Applied Science major program are encouraged to complete a Directed Study project. It is an option for all students enrolled in Undergraduate Programs. Students usually plan a Directed Study project after completing most of the required major courses. It is an experiential opportunity to apply key principles, concepts, and skills from the curriculum and supplement that knowledge with a self-designed project.

There are many valid reasons for undertaking a Directed Study project.

- Learn material not covered in an existing course.
- Utilize research techniques in novel ways.
- Work closely with a faculty member whose interests match yours or whose work you especially admire.
- Engage in learning opportunities associated with an internship or other kind of field experience.
- Get knowledge that is usually delivered in the classroom (after obtaining instructor cooperation).

The Structure of a Directed Study

The Directed Study project is a contract between you the student, the faculty member, and your degree program. You must negotiate the details with the faculty member. Before you register, you will need to fill out a [Student/Faculty Agreement form](#). This form is available as a link to print out from this website, or get it from your academic adviser. You may prepare a rough draft in advance.

The Agreement form must be signed by you and the faculty member, and then submitted to the Undergraduate Programs office for processing and final approval. When the processing is completed, the program office will provide you with a registration permission number. You and the faculty member will each receive a copy of the approved Agreement. If it does not receive final approval, you and the faculty member will each receive a copy with specific suggestions for revision of the project.

Developing a Directed Study Project

It takes a considerable amount of work to develop an effective Directed Study project. First, you should define the learning objectives as clearly as possible. You may want to begin by discussing the project with faculty members and your academic adviser to help clarify your objectives, assist with identifying project topics related to those objectives, and help you become sufficiently prepared to approach a faculty member who will serve as your faculty adviser. It will help if you have already put considerable thought into the nature of the project. A faculty member or your academic adviser may be able to assist you in identifying an appropriate faculty adviser.

Once you have identified the desired “deliverables,” you can develop a project management plan that identifies the steps, amount of time required, and deadlines for meeting the learning objectives. A project management plan is not required, but it will be an opportunity for you to use the knowledge gained in a project management course to clarify the project scope within resource limitations such as time. Using a project management plan can help you clearly establish and limit the scope of the Directed Study project and enable you to design, manage, and finish in a timely manner.

Time Commitment

A Directed Study project requires at least [42 hours of learning activity for each credit](#) (3 hours of work per week in a 14-week semester). You may choose to earn 1–4 credits in one academic term (fall semester, spring semester, or 13-week summer term).

Directed Study Projects Based on Community Service

While you may not receive Bachelor of Applied Sciences credit for experience alone, an academic project may be designed around a field learning experience such as a community service project. The field work will serve as one of the resources used to achieve the learning objectives of the Directed Study project. It is best for you to familiarize yourself with the community service project before designing a Directed Study proposal. You will need to understand the required day-to-day activities and responsibilities before fitting them into the Directed Study project proposal. You will have to think clearly about what the project can help you learn and then find ways to relate that learning to some appropriate discipline-based theories, topics, or themes.

Internships

If you wish to receive credit for a field learning experience within a workplace, you should consider an internship. An internship is an academic project designed around either a new position which you obtain, or a significant learning experience developed within your present workplace. Internship course titles for each Bachelor of Applied Science major are as follows:

- Construction Management: CMgt 4196 – Construction Management Internship
- Information Technology Infrastructure: INet 4596 – Internship
- Manufacturing Operations Management: MM 4596 – Internship

Finding a Faculty Member

You will be putting in a considerable amount of time on this project; establishing a good working rapport with a faculty member is key to making this rewarding and valuable. Finding a faculty member can be challenging. Demands on faculty time are great. In many cases, you have to “sell” your project idea to the faculty member. This is most likely to be successful if it is a faculty member you know already (particularly if your project grows out of material you have studied in a course offered by that person) or if it is a faculty member whose career work parallels your Directed Study interest and who feels he/she can help you have a rewarding and productive experience. We suggest that you visit the [website](#) of your major and view its Faculty page for more information.

It is not impossible to approach a faculty member “cold,” but this is the most challenging situation. You will have to convince him or her that you are highly motivated, capable of working independently, and already have some sophistication about the area of your project. Never approach a faculty member with a simple statement that you need extra credits. Approach them with a worked-out proposal that focuses on the learning you seek that is not represented in the available curriculum. Make sure it matches the interest area of the faculty member. Keep in mind that this is a voluntary activity on the part of faculty. Be prepared to negotiate. If the faculty member you approach is unable to help you, don't take it personally. Most faculty have a heavy load of responsibilities. If you are turned down, be sure to ask for the names of other faculty who might be able to help you.

Working One-on-one with a Faculty Member

Once you have found a faculty member, prepare for your initial meeting. Know your focus, and identify and outline your learning objectives. You do not need to have everything fully prepared—designing the project is why you are asking for help. Use the Student/Faculty Agreement as a guideline for your discussion.

When you have decided what you are going to do, work out procedures for reporting back periodically. Regular meetings will keep you working at a steady pace. As your project progresses, modifications may become necessary and you will need faculty permission. An established meeting schedule will facilitate this.

Working with faculty on an individual basis is a unique experience at the undergraduate level; take full advantage of it. The faculty role in a student's Directed Study project is to be a resource at every stage of your project. For example, the faculty member can be consulted when you have related questions; encounter problems and would like to discuss options; or when you want referrals to resources. Faculty may expect to spend about three to six hours during the term directing your study project, including contact such as e-mails, telephone conversations, face-to-face meetings, and grading.

Project Evaluation

The finished product of a project can take many forms. Research papers, IT project journals, or oral presentations are all valid deliverables. Aside from department requirements, there are no restrictions. You and your faculty supervisor may contract for whatever end result best fits your project's learning objectives.

Directed Study Project Planning and Completion—Sample Timeline

A. Directed Study Planning Phase

1. Student comes up with idea for Directed Study project and identifies specific learning objectives.
2. Student approaches faculty member to request supervision for the project.
3. Student and faculty member discuss and agree on the learning objectives, and methods to achieve them.
4. Faculty member proposes expected results (deliverables).
5. Credit load is determined.
6. Student/faculty consensus is obtained, and Student/Faculty Agreement form is completed and signed by both.
7. Signed form is submitted to the Undergraduate Programs program administrator. The administrator will submit it to the faculty director for approval.
8. If it is not approved, the form will be returned to the student and faculty member with specific suggestions on revision. Student may renegotiate the Agreement with the faculty member and resubmit.
9. After approval, the student receives a permission number from the Undergraduate Programs administrator.
10. Student registers for the Directed Study project (ABus 4993, CMgt 4193, INet 4193, or "Other" if a classroom course is being taken in a Directed Study format.)

B. Directed Study Completion

1. Student develops a detailed project management plan (or work plan) more clearly outlining the project's design and scope. The plan should
 - (a) include specific steps and deadlines that will help keep the student on target for completing the project during the term, and
 - (b) describe exactly how and when the faculty member will provide feedback.
2. Student discusses the project management plan with the Directed Study faculty member, and negotiates steps, if necessary.
3. Student begins project and submits work by agreed-upon plan deadlines.
4. Faculty member provides regular feedback as agreed in the project plan.
5. Student completes project and submits all deliverables.
6. Faculty member evaluates project work and submits course grade.