

INDEPENDENT STUDY CREDIT

Background

Updated February 2011

The New Brunswick *Department of Education and Early Childhood Development* recognizes the importance of providing students with opportunities for working independently and accepting responsibility for their own learning. Such experiences help students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning.

Independent study credits are intended to:

- provide increased opportunities for individualization of programming
- recognize and provide credit to students who initiate and assist in the development of courses tailored to their needs, abilities and interests
- provide opportunities for greater flexibility in the high school program at grades 11/12

It is expected that schools will provide appropriate opportunities for students who wish to earn an independent study credit. Independent study credits are an option for **all** students who can fulfill the responsibilities noted in these guidelines.

1. Definition

Independent Study may include:

- a prescribed course in the province of New Brunswick.
- a topic or theme that extends the curriculum of a prescribed course.
- a topic or theme chosen by the student including work that combines a number of disciplines.

2. Guidelines

1. One independent study credit may count towards graduation requirements including compulsory course requirements.
2. Independent study credits may be granted for successful completion of grade eleven and twelve courses developed cooperatively by the student and the supervising teacher, approved by a) the Principal, b) the district Superintendent and Director of Education and c) the *Department of Education and Early Childhood Development*.
3. A student may receive an independent study credit in addition to credit for a course in the same subject at the same grade level when the independent study credit extends the curriculum of a given course. For example, a grade 11 history student may wish to do an in-depth study of the Holocaust, a grade 12 physics student may wish to do an in-depth study of

quantum mechanics, a grade 11 English language arts student may wish to do an in-depth study of Aboriginal literature.

4. Students will receive an evaluation for independent study credits which will be recorded in the same manner as other courses in the school.
5. Courses developed as independent study credits require a similar effort in terms of content and rigour as prescribed N.B. courses.
6. An independent study course may not be used to upgrade marks in a course already taken.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

1. Permission for a student to pursue an independent study credit is granted at the discretion of the school within *Department of Education and Early Childhood Development* guidelines. The student's application to pursue an independent study credit must be approved by:
 - the supervising teacher (whose name must appear on the application)
 - the principal (whose signature must appear on the application [or a vice principal acting on behalf of the principal])
 - the district (Superintendent/Director of Education signatures are required)
 - the *Department of Education and Early Childhood Development*
2. It is the responsibility of the student to
 - cooperate with the supervising teacher in developing a plan for completing the independent study credit course
 - organize and complete the learning experiences and activities involved in this plan
 - demonstrate an ability to work independently with minimal direction
3. It is the responsibility of the school and supervising teacher to:
 - work with the student in developing a plan and determining the criteria for successful completion of the independent study credit course within the above guidelines (i.e., the student and teacher will cooperate in developing outcomes, learning experiences, and assessment strategies)
 - provide initial instruction as necessary to prepare the student for independent study
 - assess and evaluate the student's work

4. Components of the Application for Approval of an Independent Study Credit Course Request

Applications should include the following components:

- all required signatures
- student's name
- name of supervising teacher
- name of course, grade level
- date of application for approval
- intended dates of commencement and completion
- rationale (identifying the broad goals and learning needs that will be met by independent study)
- summary (overview) of the independent study course
- course outline
 - expected learning outcomes
 - course content and organization with timelines
 - learning resources to be used
- detailed learning and assessment plan
 - learning experience to be undertaken
 - strategies/requirements for record keeping, e.g., learning log, portfolio, video
 - assessment and evaluation procedures: strategies for assessing processes and products; timeline for work to be submitted; demonstration of results of learning, e.g., performance tasks; sharing products with an audience; keeping a portfolio of work; written reflection on learning attained through independent study, criteria for evaluation (awarding of the final mark)

4. Course Coding for Student Transcripts

The *Department of Education and Early Childhood Development* will designate a course code that uniquely identifies the course.