

INDEPENDENT STUDIES LEARNING CONTRACT

The process to conduct an independent study should start **well before** the semester in which the independent study is to be performed. Students must have the approval of the faculty member directing the independent study, and of the Department Chair. If you desire that the independent study replace a regularly scheduled course in your emphasis area, you must also have the approval of the emphasis area leader. Students are responsible for ensuring that the independent study appropriately fits into their program of study.

If the independent study extends beyond the semester in which the student initially enrolled, a grade of Incomplete may be given upon consultation with the supervising faculty member. All coursework for the independent study must be completed within one academic calendar year or the grade in the course will default to "F."

Instructions to Edit and Print:

If you would like to make any changes, click the 'Go Back and Edit' button at the bottom of this page.

If all the details you have filled in are correct, click the 'Proceed and Finish' button at the bottom of this page. This action will send the completed form to your email address (**not** Student Services) and will print a hardcopy that you can use to obtain the necessary signatures.

Student Name	Any Student
Student Number	123456789
Email Address	Your-email@umkc.edu
Mailing Address	Any Street
City	Kansas City
State	MO
Zip	64110
Phone	816-235-2215
Degree Program	MBA
Emphasis Area (if Applicable)	None
Academic Semester/Year	Spring 2008
This Independent Study will:	Replace a course in your emphasis area
Course Number	ACTG 5597
Credit Hours	3

The reason why you want to pursue an independent study rather than enroll in a regularly scheduled course

This independent study is necessary for me to complete my MBA from the University of Missouri–Kansas City. Regular enrollment and attendance on campus is not an option as a result of a job transfer, by which I relocated to Atlanta, Georgia. I have been in direct contact with Student Services dating back to October of last year, working on a strategy that would help me complete my MBA at UMKC. I am prepared to complete the final portion of study and graduate in May from this institution.

A description of the independent study

The project will explore, via a written research report, several strategic tools of accounting that can be used to better manage a business. The tools are: 1-Total quality management – The costs of quality, how to account for the costs, cost trade-offs, and the effect quality costs can have on the bottom line 2-Activity-based costing (ABC) – Problems with traditional costing systems (i.e., over- and under-costing of products/services), fundamentals of ABC, and advantages and problems associated with implementation 3-Customer profitability analysis (CPA) – Identifying limitations of traditional profitability analysis, how to fix the problems, how CPA is an extension of ABC, and what are the challenges and where are the opportunities associated with CPA 4-Balanced scorecards – What are they, how and why strategy must be considered in the design process, benefits, and problems of use These topics will cover issues that affect both manufacturing and service industries, more so the latter, and include relevant company examples.

Your learning goals (include your present level of expertise in the study area)

The intent of this project is to gain a thorough understanding of how accounting is used as a strategic management tool. My professional career has focused primarily on purchasing and supply chain positions, so my direct experience with the paper's subject matter has been limited to a handful of issues. (Thus, I have virtually no knowledge of the preceding topics.) However, I feel that in order to reach the next level in my career or fulfill the ultimate goal of running my own company, accounting knowledge and the ability to use it strategically will be necessary. Upon completion of this project, my accounting and management knowledge will be greatly improved.

The study's learning activities (such as readings, literature search, site visit, interview, field study)

An independent study requires the same amount of time commitment as a traditional classroom setting. A typical three-credit class requires 40 hours of in-class instruction as well as 80 hours of devotion out of class. The estimated time required for this project is approximately 120 hours; however, it is possible that this time will be extended once research is started. Research will include textbooks, industry literature, white papers, case studies, and websites found through the resources and libraries of Georgia State University, Georgia Tech University, Emory University, the Atlanta Public Library System, Amazon.com, the World Wide Web, and others. A portion of this project's direction is unsettled at this time, such as the direction of some sub-topics. As the project progresses, I intend to confer with Dr. Smith to get approval and as a result, there could be other types of research that may be added (e.g., interviews with corporate executives).

The assignments, deliverables (e.g., paper, presentation), related due dates, and how the grade will be determined

I will present a detailed outline of my paper to Dr. Smith by February 15 and upon his approval, will commence the writing process. To assure that my presentation and writing styles are acceptable, I intend to submit the first five pages of the paper for feedback on or around March 7. Making modifications where needed, these pages will be rewritten and will serve as the front-end component of what is anticipated to be a 35-40 page research paper. That paper will have a contemplated submission date of April 30 and will serve as the basis for my course grade.

The expected frequency of meetings between the faculty member and the student

Unlike students who are located on campus (again, I have moved to Atlanta), I am unable to meet with Dr. Smith every three weeks or so as he requested. In place of regularly scheduled face-to-face meetings, I will keep an open line of communication with Dr. Smith via emails and telephone conversations to inform him of my progress, and to address any format or content questions we both may have.

Any unusual conditions related to the arrangement

None

I agree with all components of this learning contract.

Student Signature

Date

Faculty Signature (directing study)

Date

Faculty Signature (emphasis area leader, if needed)

Date

I have read this learning contract and agree that the contract meets the standards for an independent study in the Bloch School.

Department Chair Signature

Date

This form must be fully completed and all signatures obtained before the end of the first week of classes, prior to enrollment in the Independent Study course. Return the form to the Bloch School Student Services Office, room 115.