

Special Projects Proposal
Approved by Academic Senate, May 28, 2020

Curriculum and Instruction Workgroup for Special Projects/Independent Studies Courses: Kristina Allende, Jamaika Fowler, Dianne Rowley, Om Tripathi, and Michelle Sampat. Christina Estrada and Irene Pinedo provided insight on Banner coding and administrative procedures.

Recommendations were approved by Curriculum & Instruction and forwarded to Senate where they were approved on May 28, 2020.

Recommendation 1: All special project courses be titled “Special Projects in ...”. Title and method of Instruction should include Independent Studies selection.

Rationale: It is difficult to differentiate between courses that are special projects or independent studies versus traditional courses. It is currently not clear if courses titled Special Projects, Special Studies, Specialized Studies, Research, Special Issues, Special Topics, and Specialized Topics are independent Studies courses.

Recommendation 2: All special project courses be numbered 99. When the 99 course number has been used, consider 99A, 99B, 99C.... The Instruction Office can verify if the 99 course number has been used in a previous course offering. All independent studies be courses will be numbered 99i.

Rationale: It is confusing to identify Special Projects (Independent Studies) courses when majority of Special Projects (independent Studies) course are listed as AGAG 99, AHIS 99, ANAT 99 (approximately 30 classes), but newly created courses are listed as ARTD 91, ARTD 97...(approximately 10 courses). This is starting to create inconsistency in identification of Special Projects (Independent Studies)

Recommendation 3: Add “Prerequisite: Approved Learning Contract” to all Independent Studies courses.

Rationale: All students must have permission to register for Independent Studies courses. However, this is not listed consistently on the course description or course prerequisite. Students are required to sign an approved Learning Contract.

Recommendation 4: Recommend faculty use “Offers selected students recognition for their academic interests and ability and opportunity to explore their disciplines in greater depth”.

Rationale: The boilerplate sentence stating “various departments from time to time offer Special Projects courses” is not relevant to students since Special Projects (Independent Studies) courses are not repeatable.

Recommendation 5: Create recommendation guidelines for faculty to review as they propose or modify Independent Studies courses. Faculty are not compensated for enrollment and may want to consider the level of quality they can provide with different class size limitation. Rationale: The majority of Independent Studies courses show class size of 5 students while some courses list 10 students. There should be consistency.

Recommendation 6: Method of Instruction for all Independent Studies courses should include Independent Studies.

Rationale: Independent Studies methods of Instruction currently vary among Lecture, Lab, Lab/Studio/Activity, Lecture/Lab, Lecture and Independent Studies, Independent Studies, and Work Experience. There should be consistency.

Recommendation 7: Independent Studies courses should be listed in the schedule of classes so that this option is accessible to all students for the term the course is offered. Schedule hours can be listed as To Be Arranged (TBA). Students and faculty determine meeting dates and times that are agreed upon with the learning contract.

Rationale: Most Special project courses are not listed in Mt. SAC's schedule of classes. Students find out about special projects course if a faculty member mentions this option to a student. In some cases faculty ask that Special Project courses be listed in schedule of classes because they want student to know the specific required meeting dates.