

### Criteria for an Independent Study Project in Finance

Applications for an Independent Study Project (ISP) in Finance must meet the following criteria. First, the student must negotiate the content, project design, deliverables and deadlines with a member of the standing faculty of the Finance Department. Second, ISPs in Finance are intended to give students the opportunity to study a particular topic in greater detail than is covered in the Finance curriculum. Third, the application for an ISP must be submitted within the first three weeks of the semester in which credit is sought. Fourth, the application for an ISP should outline a plan of study that requires at least as much work as the typical upper-level Finance course that meets twice/week, requires a substantial amount of reading, and may include exams, case studies, problems sets and/or short papers. Although the structure of an ISP is unlikely to be like a typical upper-level Finance course, the workload should be no less.

In short, the Finance Department does not grant upper level Finance credit for consulting projects or work on part-time jobs. ISPs should have substantial academic content and should not be based on proprietary data that cannot be replicated or on team work in which the individual contribution of the student seeking credit cannot be evaluated with confidence.

In order to try to maintain consistent standards across the Finance Department, the Undergraduate Advisor or the MBA advisor (as appropriate) must sign-off on each student's proposal that must include:

1. The signature of the member of the standing faculty who has agreed to supervise and grade the ISP.
2. A statement of the problem to be studied or a course outline in case of a reading course.
3. A bibliography containing some substantial academic research or course material.
4. A description of the methodology to be employed or learning goals.
5. In case of data analysis, a description of the data to be employed with a presumption that most of the data could be made publicly available to anyone who wishes to replicate the project.
6. A description of the output to be delivered and the due date for each deliverable.

Students must also confer with an Advisor in Wharton Graduate or Wharton Undergraduate as appropriate.

The forms for ISP applications may be downloaded from the Finance Department website under Course ISP's/Course Applications. - <https://fnce.wharton.upenn.edu/programs/course-applications/>