**Independent Concentration (IC) | Proposal Outline**

Dear potential IC-er,

Welcome to the IC process! We’re glad you’re on your way to creating your own concentration and are interested in designing an integrated and intentional path of study. To make the application and revision processes as smooth as possible, here are a few guidelines to help you think about and frame your proposal.

Each section of the application is meant to clarify a key aspect of your concentration, from the field as it exists in the world to the specific ways you can achieve your personal learning goals through courses at Brown. These questions are meant to help you think about the scope and feasibility of your IC. The committee wants to hear your ideas in full. The answers to these questions are not meant to be extra work—reflecting on these questions and articulating your thoughts clearly are key to the formation of your idea as a full-fledged concentration at Brown, and many of the ideas you have fleshed out with advisors, peers, and IC coordinators are what the committee is most interested in. With that said, **you must meet with at least one IC Coordinator and the IC Dean** before submitting a proposal. To allow time for open discussion and thoughtful revisions, this should be done well in advance.

Try to sketch out before you start writing:

* **What** is the interdisciplinary field you want to study? What are your learning goals and how can you achieve them through coursework available? Be sure to define your terms thoroughly and avoid relying on jargon/field-specific language. Have you thoroughly considered how your IC idea differs from [Brown’s standard concentrations](https://www.brown.edu/undergraduate-programs)?
* **How** do you plan on studying the IC field through Brown’s course offerings? What fields are you intending to integrate? How are you intending to integrate them? Think about bridge courses.
* **Who** are you able to study with here? What is a focus area, or topic you want to explore more deeply via advanced coursework and your capstone/thesis? What methods course will prepare you for this self-directed project?

Here are some **key concepts** IC-ers must be familiar with to submit a successful proposal:

* **Learning goals** refer to objectives you have in pursuing your IC at Brown. These are not the broad goals of the field or a goal someone might have if they pursued a similar degree, these are specific points that are referenced throughout the proposal. Your learning goals are the compass of the IC. They give direction, purpose, and cohesion throughout the proposal. Your learning goals should be discrete but connected.
* **Bridge courses** bring different fields within your IC in conversation with each other to fulfill your learning goals. If you use a Venn diagram to represent the way different fields, topics, or goals interact with each other, these bridge courses would lie in the intersections. A single bridge course does not fulfill every one of your learning goals; rather, with multiple bridge courses building on one another, they should help guide you to the specific focus of your IC.
* **The methodology/methods course(s)** for your IC should consider the skill(s) for which you want to achieve competency and utilize in your senior capstone project.

Here are a few **logistical requirements** to keep in mind:

* You must submit your **first IC proposal by the last deadline of your 5th semester**, either on November 1st (May graduates) or April 1st. (December completers). Your IC must receive final, full approval by the end of your 6th semester. Proposal deadlines are February 1st, March 1st, April 1st, October 1st, and November 1st.
* Your IC is yours! **Make sure the proposal is worded in the first person** to convey how this is personalized to your interests as they can be formed into a concentration. While standard concentrations often have separate tracks individual students can choose, your IC should have a “track” of its own. Instead of saying “a concentrator in [IC] might take [ ],” say “I will take [ ] to better understand [your own learning goals].”
* Upload your completed application using [this Google form.](https://forms.gle/dvtZ1x6xSDTaUVoE6)

Before submitting a proposal, please review these links. In particular, look at approved proposals from the most recent graduating class as examples of effective ways to address the questions—you can request them from the IC Database. All three links will help guide your IC creation and revision process and provide clarity on how to build a meaningful and creative IC. And remember, stop by IC coordinator open hours listed on our website!

* [IC Website](http://www.brown.edu/academics/college/advising/curricular-resource-center/independent-concentrations/independent-concentrations)
* [IC Database](https://sites.google.com/a/brown.edu/crc-database/ic-database?pli=1)
* [IC Evaluation Rubric](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fiA_TDSH9vmsPD2I2X33JgNrUvrIh7obXaZ4zkxs3eE/edit?usp=sharing)

Happy writing, and see you in the CRC!

*IC Coordinators*

*http://go.brown.edu/ic*

**[Type Concentration Title Here]**

By [Student’s Full Name] & [Optional: Pronouns currently in use]

Proposed [Semester, Year]

**\*\*\*YOU ARE EXPECTED TO USE THIS TEMPLATE FOR YOUR APPLICATION\*\*\***



|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Banner ID:** | **B\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** | **Expected Date of Graduation:** | **20\_\_** | **Current** **Semester Level:** |  |
| **Email:** |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Degree:**A.B. or Sc.B. | (A.B. / Sc.B.) | **Is this a revision of a proposal submitted earlier?** | (Yes/No) |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Will this concentration **replace** one previously declared |  | **If, yes, which?** |  |
| Will it be in **addition** to one previously declared |  | **If, yes, which?** |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Faculty Sponsor:** |  | Sponsor’s **Department:**  |  |
| Sponsor’s **Title:**  | (Senior Lecturer, Distinguished Senior Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor) |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Elevator Pitch for the IC:** | (Provide a 1-2 sentence description of the concentration’s focus in simple, jargon-free language. This is a challenging exercise to be specific, clear, and concise in describing your intellectual project. Please consider it carefully and run it by people to ensure it is accessible!) |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Have you met with an IC Coordinator \*and\* the IC Program Director /Dean Prior to Submission? | (Yes/No) | Please list the IC Coordinators you met with: |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The Curricular Resource Center maintains an archive of approved IC proposals to allow prospective IC-ers to get a sense of past work. Proposals are made available upon your graduation. **“X” here if you DO NOT want your IC proposal to be made available in the IC archive upon graduation.** |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Signature:**  |  | **Date:**  |  |

**(Concentration Title)**

**An Independent Concentration by (Student Name), Class of (20\_\_)**

Contents: (take care to paginate your IC proposal copy)

I. Overview………………………………………..………………………………..…… [page #]

II. What…………………………………………..………………………………..….….. [page #]

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VI. Courses (Annotated)………........………………………………………..….. [page #]

VII. Thesis/Capstone…………………………………………………………………. [page #]

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**Independent Concentration (IC) | Proposal Outline**

**0. Cover Letter** - *If this is a resubmission, please outline committee feedback and changes made to this revised version of your application. The committee will not review a revision without the Cover Letter. (If this is your first application, please leave blank.) Also, throughout the proposal, highlight your changes in yellow.*

(Please type your answer here)

**1. Overview and Learning Goals** - *Provide a summary of the proposed field’s key questions/debates, its reason for existing as an IC at Brown, and a summary of why you are proposing it. Provide a clear description of the proposed concentration’s academic goals and trajectory, reflecting on what skills a concentrator in this field would learn.* ***~250 words***

• Think of the Overview like the “*Description*” paragraph you see describing traditional concentrations on the Undergraduate Concentrations website [https://www.brown.edu/undergraduate\_concentrations].

*• Think of the Learning Goals like the bullet-pointed “Student Goals” section in the Concentrations website. Keep in mind that learning goals are your own, not the goals of the field in general. You can find an example of clear learning goals in the IC Rubric.*

(Please type your answer here)

**2. What** - *Describe the context of the concentration outside of Brown and define key terms* ***~500-750 words***

• *If the concentration exists at other undergraduate liberal arts institutions comparable to Brown, describe the similarities and differences between the IC and those programs. Consider reaching out to members of those programs for details.*

*• If the concentration does not exist elsewhere but is a clearly established field of study, describe the state of the field, bring in resources from active scholars (use citations), and discuss how your concentration will connect with the larger field. Consider consulting leading journal or contacting some of the relevant scholars for guidance.*

*• If the concentration does not (yet) exist as a field of study, provide a very compelling description of its necessity, relevance, and academic merit.*

(Please type your answer here)

**3. How** - *How do scholars in this interdisciplinary field come to know what they know? How do they collect and analyze data and/or engage in creative practice?* ***~500-750 words***

*• What are your concentration’s forms of inquiry, paradigms, viewpoints, key skills, and analytical research methods? Specifically discuss the role of your methods course(s) and the tools you will use to interact with the information in your field. (See Question 5 for more on the methods course.)*

*• How do the different parts of your concentration come together, interact, and build on each other to create something unique and independent? How will you use resources at Brown to accomplish your learning goals?*

(Please type your answer here)

**4. Why** – *Provide a personal statement of justification for doing this concentration and an explanation of why the curriculum could not be pursued in a standard concentration at Brown.* ***~1000 words***

*• Include a brief statement of personal interest in this topic and how you came to declare this IC.*

*• If the IC is similar to any other concentration(s), describe their differences - which should be significant enough to merit the creation of a new concentration. Why is this path necessary?*

*• Please refer explicitly to the existing concentrations as they appear on the* [University Bulletin](https://bulletin.brown.edu/the-college/concentrations/)*, which changes frequently! Be sure to reference standard concentrations accurately and mention advising conversations you have had with other advisors from those programs.*

*• Read and consider various educational philosophies, including the* [Liberal Learning Goals](https://college.brown.edu/design-your-education/explore-open-curriculum) *and the philosophy outlined in* [“Draft of a Working Paper for Education at Brown University”*.*](https://library.brown.edu/libweb/papers/BrownCurriculum.pdf) *Describe which educational goals the IC fulfills and how it will do so.*

(Please type your answer here)

**5. Courses** - *List the courses required for the concentration.*

• *AB concentrations should include* ***at least 11 Core Courses****, including* ***1 methods course****, and* ***1 departmental******independent study course (DISP)*** *for your* ***capstone******or 2 DISPs for an honors thesis.***

• *ScB concentrations usually include* ***between 12–17 Core Courses,*** *with two courses generally used for lab research, whether for a capstone or a thesis. Also identify* ***1 methods course.***

*• The course list should include a balanced mix of introductory, intermediate, and advanced courses, logically building on conceptual knowledge essential to completing capstone-like work. Adapt the “categories” column to best explain the flow and relationship between courses.*

*• Consider the conceptual knowledge and skills that are integral to the field.*

*• All ICs must have methods delving into the keyways of knowing and doing in the field. For many, this is how people in the field collect and analyze information (e.g. data, narratives), translating theory into practice. For some ICs with a technique- or production-related focus, a production-related methods course is also needed (e.g. a course on how to write non-fiction narrative). Your methods class should prepare you for your senior thesis or capstone project. It may be qualitative, quantitative, theoretical, creative, practical, etc., and more than one course may be required depending on your IC field.*

*• If you plan to double concentrate, bear in mind only two (maybe three) courses can overlap between the two concentrations; please note which courses overlap with your other concentration.*

*• Specify the* [Writing Requirement course](https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/degree/curriculum/writing-requirement) *you intend to take as a junior or senior, either within or outside your IC.*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Stud. Sem.** | **Acad. Sem, Yr.** | **Course Code** | **Course Title** | **Instructor** | **Category** |
| (1-8) | (i.e., Fall 20xx) |  |  |  | (Intro, Advanced, Methods, etc. & IC conceptual knowledge areas) |
|  |  |  |  |  | (Tab to enter new rows) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

**[Optional--Related courses:]**

**6. Courses** **Annotations**- *Describe how each of your courses supports the concentration* ***~2-3 sentences each***

*• Divide this section into categories that demonstrate the logical progression of the courses.*

*• Describe how each will contribute to the concentration’s depth as well as breadth, relating the academic material to the concentration’s field and learning objectives.*

*• Strongly consider including a diagram (flow chart, Venn diagram, etc.) of courses to illustrate the coherence of the IC. For your diagram, consider using miro.com, canva.com, or a PowerPoint slide to help you.*

(Please type your answer here)

**7. Capstone/Thesis Concept** - *Outline the culminating project for the concentration* ***~250 words***

• *All ICs must include a final project to tie together the knowledge and skills of the concentration. Describe the format, content, and methodologies of the intended Capstone or Honors Thesis (details on the* [IC Info Sheet](https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/advising/curricular-resource-center/independent-concentrations/independent-concentrations/resources-current-icers) *and the [Thesis Guidelines).](https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/advising/curricular-resource-center/independent-concentrations/independent-concentrations/resources-current-icers)*

*[•](https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/advising/curricular-resource-center/independent-concentrations/independent-concentrations/resources-current-icers) A thesis/capstone gives the student the opportunity to explore at least one of their learning goals in depth, using their chosen analytic or creative method.*

*• For first years and sophomores, this should be a rough outline of what the final project might entail. Juniors should have a clearer idea of what specific questions the Capstone or Thesis will investigate and the resources necessary.*

(Please type your answer here)

**8. Annotated Bibliography/Reference List** - *Provide an annotated list of scholarly works that are relevant to the concentration and support the contents of your proposal* ***At least 10 works, 1-2 sentences each***

* *Works should be either central to the concentration or necessary to fully understand its existence. Describe how each relates to the concentration. Do not simply provide a generic summary.*
* *Be sure to have as most of your sources ones that are scholarly texts and articles; references from mainstream/popular culture should be kept to a minimum.*

(Please type your answer here)

**9. Faculty Sponsor Letter** - *Attach a letter of support from the Faculty Sponsor*

*• The Faculty Sponsor Info Sheet, including the instructions for this letter, can be found at the bottom of the* [“Developing an IC”](https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/advising/curricular-resource-center/independent-concentrations/ic-proposal-submission/ic-proposal) *section of the CRC’s website.*

(Please type your answer here)