

(Students, please share this with your Independent Concentration Faculty Sponsor before submission.)

Members of College Curriculum Council Subcommittee for Independent Concentrations prepared these comments to help faculty better understand the IC Program and their essential role as sponsors of Independent Concentrations.

Description of the IC Program and its Role at Brown

Independent Concentrations serve the interests of highly independent and motivated students whose programs build on but are autonomous from standard concentrations. The program provides an opportunity for students compelled by a unique interdisciplinary inquiry that cannot be undertaken within an existing concentration. Each Independent Concentration is a construction of the student's own design and a field of study. As an outgrowth of this student-driven learning process, Independent Concentrations have often heralded the emergence of new standard interdisciplinary concentrations, such as Computational Neuroscience, Environmental Studies, Ethnic Studies, and Statistics, and some certificate programs such as Migration Studies. In this way, they have been useful to the curriculum as a measure of curricular evolution.

Faculty Sponsor's Role

**Eligible sponsors must be regular faculty member at or above the rank of Assistant, Associate, or Full Teaching Professor, or Assistant, Associate, or full Professor. Emeritus of any of these ranks is acceptable.*

In addition to being the student's primary advisor, the faculty sponsor of an Independent Concentration often serves as a supervisor for the thesis or capstone. A student may instead choose to have a distinct capstone or thesis advisor. The thesis or capstone advisor must be available during the semester – or in the case of an honor's thesis, the two semesters – during which the culminating project is being completed. Logistics withstanding, faculty who have sponsored ICs in the past have found this to be a very rewarding experience.

As you think about sponsoring an Independent Concentration, consider the following questions:

- Will you be able to supervise the work adequately? How and why will you be particularly helpful to the student proposing the concentration? Will you be on campus and available to the student during the time the work is being undertaken?
- Does the proposal show an integrated approach? Does it develop a coherently focused theme using a distinctive methodology? Does it have (inter)disciplinary rigor? What can you offer to the student's proposed study, thematically and methodologically?
- How do the courses related to one another to represent a new and original field of inquiry?
- What is the nature of the final project? Does the student describe it in depth? Is the project feasible? Can you properly advise it?
- Is the proposal an Independent Concentration or better suited as a standard concentration?

The IC Committee has found it most effective when the students and faculty consult at length during the development of the proposal. The student benefits also by consulting widely in the development of his or her ideas and should be encouraged to refer to approved Independent Concentration proposals online on the Curricular Resource Center website and to consult with the IC Dean in the College.

Sponsor's Statement

Please provide a letter of support for the student and the Independent Concentration, detailing the ways in which you plan to advise, supervise, and participate in the concentration. This statement should be submitted by the student with their completed proposal. For more information about the proposal process and the IC program, visit our website: <https://go.brown.edu/ICsite>.