Independent Studies Program
Faculty Info Sheet

What is the Curricular Resource Center?
The Curricular Resource Center (CRC) is a center of the Dean of the College office which helps students engage with Brown's curriculum and utilize its academic resources. We achieve this primarily through **peer academic advising** and building a community of support for students. The Independent Studies (IS) Program is one of the programs housed under the CRC.

What is the Independent Studies (IS) Program?
Brown offers a variety of courses in several disciplines, but naturally it is impossible for a curriculum to cover all possible areas of academic interest. The IS Program allows students to explore topics not covered by a class offered at Brown by creating their own courses i.e. "independent studies." There are three types of studies:
1. **ISPs, Independent Study Projects**: credit-bearing courses done individually.
2. **GISPs, Group Independent Study Projects:** credit-bearing courses done in a group of 2-15.
3. **AIs, Academic Internships:** combination of an independent study with outside work experience for which a student gets course credit.

In order to do an Independent Study students have to apply the previous semester and have their applications approved by the College Curriculum Council.
For the Spring semester, the deadline is the first Friday in November; for the Fall, the first Friday of April..

What is your role?
As a Faculty Sponsor, you guide the student(s) through the process of creating the course and then executing it e.g. pointing them to resources like readings and books, and ensuring that they are on track with their syllabus. As part of the application process, you will have to fill out a short faculty sponsor statement (~1-2 paragraphs) expressing your support for this course. During the course of the Independent Study, you are responsible for evaluating the students when they take the course and for giving them a final grade.

In a (G)ISP or AI, your role is more advisory in nature than in a traditional course where the professor is the driver.

What are the IS program's expectations from Faculty Sponsors?
We understand that faculty members have intense schedules and that the Independent Studies they sponsor are on a voluntary basis. Keeping that in mind, we have very minimal requirements from Faculty Sponsors:
- Sit in on 5 meetings in the semester with the (G)ISP or AI students
- Evaluate at least a midterm and a final assignment, and submit grades for each registered student.
- Attend the end-of-the-semester (G)ISP Talks + Dinner where students will present work done in their (G)ISP[1]
- Complete a brief evaluation of the (G)ISP overall for the Chair of the CCC subcommittee on IS.

How can you be supportive of your GISP/ISP/AI?
- Agree on your availability and involvement with the students early on
- Check-in regularly with the progress of their application (the semester before) and during the actual course
- Clarify and communicate to the students how they will be evaluated

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[1]as long as there are no scheduling conflicts, in which case faculty members are not obliged to attend.