Sample Course Outline  
UNIV\*2800 / UNIV\*3800 / UNIV\*4800: Independent Research

Course Description

Student-initiated experiential learning opportunity developed as a credit course in consultation with a supervising faculty member.

This course offers students in any program the opportunity to pursue credit for relevant research experience (paid or unpaid) with the addition of course assignments either during the research experience or in a following semester. Details of the learning outcomes and requirements will be outlined in a learning contract initiated by the student and approved by a faculty supervisor by the third week of the research semester. Open to students in any undergraduate program. Students should consult their program counsellor to determine how the course will count toward their program.

Students are expected to work a minimum of 420 hours over at least 11 weeks during the research semester prior to enrolling in the course. Students must confirm commitment to this course by the second Monday in the semester of the research experience.

In addition to a work supervisor, students interested in this course must find a faculty member to act as the academic supervisor for the course. The faculty supervisor may also function as the work supervisor.

Details of the activities included in the experience will be outlined in a learning contract initiated by the student. The learning contract must be approved by the end of the third week of the research semester of the research experience by the work supervisor and faculty supervisor.

**Course level:** Undergraduate

**Semester Offering:** F, W, S

**Credit Value:** 0.50

**Pre-Requisite(s):** 4.00 credits, 60% minimum cumulative average

**Restriction(s):** Instructor consent required

**Academic department or campus:** Office of the Associate Vice President (Academic)

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Apply knowledge, skills and methodologies gained during their research semester to identify problems, evaluate ideas, interpret research data information, and propose solutions in the research environment.
2. Accurately and effectively communicate ideas, arguments, and analyses through face to face meetings with the work supervisor, written work, oral presentations and other media.
3. Describe, evaluate and articulate personal and professional goals and growth that occurred within the research setting.

## Teaching Team

Faculty Supervisor – students are required to find an advisor prior to submitting the Internship Application Form

## Course Schedule

Students must present their proposed schedule to the Course Coordinator by the end of the third week of work (Typically the 3rd week of the research semester). If the proposal is not submitted by the identified deadline, the student will be removed from the course. At the end of the work experience, students will present their projects and discuss their experiences to a peer audience.

## Course Resources

* CourseLink
* Code of Conduct
* Academic Integrity and Learning Outcomes website
* [University of Guelph Learning Outcomes rubric](https://www.recruitguelph.ca/cecs/sites/uoguelph.ca.cecs/files/public/U%20of%20G%20RUBRICS%20-%20Learning%20Outcomes.pdf)

## Course Content

The following topics will be highlighted throughout the course:

* Communication Strategies
* Project Management
* Reflection
* Problem Solving
* Employability Skills

## Course Policies

For the learning experience to qualify for this credit, the following criteria must be met:

1. The research activity must comprise no less than 420 hours and at least 11 weeks in duration
2. The experience must involve a sustained research experience (volunteer or paid) with clear responsibilities
3. A work supervisor\* has been identified, who is a qualified staff or faculty member with expertise in the research field to which the experience relates.
4. The research activity/project must be outlined in the learning contract.
5. The work supervisor, faculty supervisor and student have all agreed to and signed the learning contract.

\*The faculty supervisor may serve as the work supervisor

Late submission of assignments - 10% reduction for every day the assignment is late. The submission deadline is 11:59 pm on the day that the student indicated in their timeline for each assessment.

## Methods of Assessment

Evaluation will be based on assignments relating to work duties and intellectual engagement with the overarching topic area of the research experience. A sample schedule of assignments and weights follows. The sample schedule corresponds to a summer research term, with coursework to follow in either the fall or winter semester.

The sample outline may be used and/or modified at the discretion of the faculty member overseeing the course, ideally with input from the student.

## Sample Schedule of Assignments and Weights

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **Due** | **%** | **Description (Learning Outcomes)** |
| Declaration of Intent | May 4 | N/A | The student must have written consent from the work and faculty supervisor that the student has secured a research position which they have agreed to oversee. |
| Learning Contract | May 15 | 10% | The Learning Contract is a student-initiated (faculty and work supervisor-approved) document in which the student outlines the nature of the experience, required course assignments, a draft meeting schedule and a list of readings. (2) |
| Making the Most of your URA/USRA | Summer | 2.5% | Attend and reflect on “Making the most of your URA/USRA” seminar from the URA/USRA S19 Programming offering. (2,3) |
| Connecting your URA/USRA to Life After Graduation OR  Translating your experience | Summer | 2.5% | Attend and reflect on one of two URA/USRA S19 Programming offering. (2,3) |
| Journal reflections | Summer, weekly | 10% | The student will write up to 10 weekly reflections – these can be short, bullet-point format. This is an opportunity for the student to outline accomplishments/leanings/questions about the research work/ideas about research solutions. The reflections will be marked weekly by the faculty or work supervisor. (2,3) |
| Oral Presentation | Last week of May | 10% | Students enrolled in UNIV\*XXXX will prepare 2-3 slides to accompany a 5-minute presentation, outlining their summer research topic and expected experience. Students will present their research topic and project to other students enrolled in UNIV\*XXXX at the start of the summer. (1,2,3) |
| Check-in meetings | Summer | 10% | In conjunction with the faculty and work supervisor, the student will have outlined a meeting schedule. The faculty and work supervisor will confirm the student has checked in on a regular basis and that the conversations were substantive. The faculty/work supervisor will discuss the student’s progress towards their learning goals. The student will document these conversations as an addendum to the weekly reflections. The student and faculty/work supervisor(s) are encouraged to meet at a frequency and duration to provide maximum opportunity for the student to implement any constructive feedback from the supervisor(s). (2,3) |
| Research duties | Summer | 20% | Using the Learning Contract description of the experience and expected student tasks, the work supervisor will evaluate the student’s performance in the research environment, confirming that the student has satisfactorily completed the research work and met expectations. (1,2) |
| Poster Presentation | 2nd Wednesday in August | 10% | The UNIV\*XXXX students will present their research poster for faculty judging/feedback. The student must be prepared to answer questions related to their research and poster. (1,2) |
| Literature Review | Fall (or Winter) | 10% | Based on the list of readings, the student will complete a brief literature review (5-10 pages). (1,2) |
| Major Project | Fall (or Winter) | 15% | The student will analyze an aspect of their summer research project and communicate the research results in the form of a written project (10-15 pages). The project may (but will not necessarily) take the form of a research paper, written according to journal specifications selected by the faculty supervisor. (1,2) |