

Independent Study: Introduction

In conducting this study, you can expect to develop:

- Deeper understanding of the chosen development issue or opportunity
- Integration of course learnings and research
- Improving academic writing skills: Experience with various research methods and information sources; Skill in presenting your knowledge in a clear, concise, well-organized manner.
- Critical analysis of current development literature
- Contribution to body of knowledge, concrete recommendations for your organization

Method

- Classroom sessions: general guidelines
- Discussion with Advisor who will assist you to focus your topic, develop research questions and provide constructive feedback.
- Learning groups: share ideas

Evaluation

- Participation
- Work completed and presented on time

Independent Study Requirements

- 25-35 pages (6,000-8,000 words)
- Minimum of 10 information sources consulted and referenced
- Follows required structure (5 sections)
- Ideas presented clearly
- Evidence of critical analysis & original thought
- Time expectation: 90 hours
- 5-6 meetings with advisor

Independent Study Structure

Section I: Introduction (3-4 pages)

- Purpose of the Study
- Nature of the Development Issue / Opportunity
- Vision and Mission of your Organization
- Your Position and Experience

Section II: Problem Situation / Opportunity (6-8 pages)

- Detailed description of issue or opportunity (including both local and structural dimensions)
- Develop 3-4 key questions. These will provide the focus for your reading and research.

Section III: Source Review (10-15 pages)

- Review of literature & information sources used (minimum of 10 sources consulted)
- Presents critical analysis of key ideas or lessons learned from research

Section IV: Conclusion & Recommendations (5-7 pages)

- Relevance of learning & transferability of ideas
- Connections with other learning at Coady (journal)
- Implications for practice
- Recommendations

Section V: Reference List

- Information sources appropriately acknowledged

Plagiarism

What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is "the act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts or passages of his [or her] writings, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the product of one's own mind" (*Black's Law Dictionary*).

**A student found to have plagiarized will receive zero for the work concerned.
(St. Francis Xavier University Academic Calendar)**

Examples of Plagiarism:

- Copying information from a book without a reference
- Copying information from a website, "cut & paste"
- Getting a friend to write a paper for you

How to Avoid Plagiarism

- Always credit the source of information or ideas that you borrow from others.
- Check the Independent Study webpage for tutorials on citing references and avoiding plagiarism.