Directed Study Information

Design your own project. Work one-on-one with a faculty member to make it happen
You can earn credit by working in a lab or field setting under a faculty member’s guidance. Before starting your research, find out how earning credits for the project may fit into your program of study. Speak with your advisor and instructor about registering for directed research or directed study course.

Register for directed research or study course
To earn credit for a directed research or study project, talk with the faculty member and then fill out a Directed Activity Contract online. The contract is an agreement between you and your instructor. It will help you to establish expectations, credits, and the grading basis for your work. Complete the contract before you register. You must be an active undergraduate or nondegree student to use the form.

You will need to complete a contract for each semester you plan to do a research project for credit (per University policy). For a project that lasts multiple semesters with the same mentor, you will need to renew your contract by submitting a new one each term.

How to complete a Directed Activity Contract
1. Submit a Directed Activity Contract. Do this after you talk with your instructor about your project. To fill out the contract, you will need:
   a. Instructor’s UMN Internet ID (the first part of their email)
   b. Year and term of the project
   c. Course subject, number, and possibly the section number
   d. Number of credits
   e. Grading basis
   f. The title and description of your project
   g. A description of methods, resources, and strategies you may use
      i. Note: For more information on the above Directed Activity Contract and how to submit it, please see the Directed Activity Contract Workflow Guide. This is an excellent resource for students and faculty as they work through the process of completing and submitting the contract.

2. After you submit the form, wait for the next steps via email.
   a. There are 3 stages of review after you submit it: your instructor (varies), an academic approver (Lauren Matushin, the department administrator, who will work with the department head), and a final approver (Lauren Matushin, the departmental administrator, who will then issue the permission number). They
will each be automatically prompted to review the contract when it is their turn. You should respond quickly to any emails you receive about your contract.

3. Lastly, you will receive a confirmation email when the contract is approved. You should register for the directed activity class as soon as possible using the permission number in your confirmation email. If needed, learn how to enter a permission number.

For more information on the University policy, visit Directed Study, Directed Readings, and Directed Research Courses.

**Specifics for Plant Science Students**
The Directed Study and Directed Research courses available to Plant Science students are HORT/AGRO/PLSC/FDSY 3093, PLPA 3993; HORT/AGRO/PLSC/FDSY 3094, and ENT 3294. Students should work with their faculty instructor to decide whether a Directed Study or Directed Research is better suited to their focus. For Plant Science students, a single directed study/research may be for no more than 3 credits.

A directed study/research should carry the number of credits deemed necessary by the University of Minnesota academic workload policy (3 hours of work per week per credit for undergraduate students). View the University policy on directed study credits. For example, a 1-credit directed study/research would entail 3 hours/week x 16 weeks in the semester for a total of 48 hours of work connected with the course.

A directed study/research should culminate in a report (typically written, but could be delivered using alternative methods such as web pages, etc.) that communicates the results of the directed study/research to the advisor. Credit will only be granted for a directed study once this project is completed.

**Specifics for Food Systems Students**
The Directed Study and Directed Research courses available to Food Systems students are HORT/AGRO/PLSC/FDSY 3093, PLPA 3993; HORT/AGRO/PLSC/FDSY 3094, and ENT 3294. Students should work with their faculty instructor to decide whether a Directed Study or Directed Research is better suited to their focus. For Food Systems students, a single directed study/research may be for no more than 3 credits.

A directed study/research should carry the number of credits deemed necessary by the University of Minnesota academic workload policy (3 hours of work per week per credit for undergraduate students). View the University policy on directed study credits. For example, a
1-credit directed study/research would entail 3 hours/week x 16 weeks in the semester for a total of 48 hours of work connected with the course.

A directed study/research should culminate in a report (typically written, but could be delivered using alternative methods such as web pages, etc.) that communicates the results of the directed study/research to the advisor. Credit will only be granted for a directed study once this project is completed.

**Specifics for Graduate Students**

As a note to graduate students and graduate advisers, the Directed Study/Research course numbers available to graduate students are HORT 5093 (Directed Study), HORT 5094 (Directed Research), PLPA 8090, and ENT 8594. Graduate students - including MPS, APS Ph.D., APS M.S. - do NOT need to complete the online Directed Activity Contract. The procedure for graduate students to enroll in a directed study or research is as follows:

1. The student identifies a faculty mentor for their directed study or research.
2. The student and faculty mentor meet to establish the focus, goals, projects, and any assignments for the directed study, including how the student will achieve their grade and the number of credits. A contract contains all of the above information must be signed by both parties.
3. The faculty mentor, cc'ing the student, emails the departmental administrative staff (Lauren Matushin, matushin@umn.edu) to request a permission number for the student to register for the designated directed study course.
4. The student enrolls for the designated course for the agreed-upon semester and credits.
5. The student completes any/all directed study coursework under the guidance of their faculty mentor.
6. Immediately upon full completion of the directed study, the faculty mentor emails the student’s final grade to the departmental administrative staff (Lauren Matushin, matushin@umn.edu) for entry.