

# Policy on Independent and Special Study Courses

## Policy Memorandum No. 187

Approved by Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies: February 18, 1998

Approved by University Council: May 4, 1998

Approved by the President: May 4, 1998

Effective Date: Fall 1998

The University Council on recommendation of the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies, unanimously approved a resolution concerning the policy on independent and special study courses.

Following is the text of the resolution as adopted by University Council.

**WHEREAS**, As programs keep pace with advances in rapidly developing fields they need more flexibility to use special study courses to offer the state of the art material, and

**WHEREAS**, this has led to an increased number of requests to exceed current limits on total hours of independent study (5974) and special study (5984) courses for advanced degrees, so that an upward adjustment of the number of such courses allowed on programs of study for advanced degrees seems appropriate, and

**WHEREAS**, all Master's degree programs requiring more than 30 hours total have been consulted in the process of formulating new guidelines, and

**WHEREAS**, the new guidelines proposed below in no case restrict the use of 5974 and 5984 more than the existing rules, and

**WHEREAS**, individual departments and programs that desire lower limits on the use of these courses for their students may impose additional restrictions for their own programs, and

**WHEREAS**, there do exist 6974 and 6984 courses in some programs, and students coming through the 5 year combined B.S. - M.S. program may also use 4974 and 4984 courses toward their graduate programs of study, and

**WHEREAS**, well-justified exceptions to any limits can be granted at the discretion of the Dean of the Graduate School,

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the policy limiting the use of independent study and special study courses on programs of study for advanced degrees be changed to the following, effective Fall 1998:

The use of independent study courses (hours of 4974, 5974 and 6974 combined) and special study courses (hours of 4984, 5984 and 6984 combined) on programs of study for advanced degrees is subject to the following limits:

For Masters degree programs requiring no more than 33 total hours, a maximum of 6 hours of independent study courses and a maximum of 6 hours of special study courses, with the total for both

independent study and special study courses of no more than 9 hours, may be used on the program of study;

For Masters degree program requiring more than 33 but no more than 48 total hours, a maximum of 9 hours of independent study courses and a maximum of 9 hours of special study courses, with the total for both independent study and special study courses of no more than 12 hours, may be used on the program of study;

For Masters degree program requiring more than 48 total hours, a maximum of 9 hours of independent study courses and a maximum of 9 hours of special study courses, with the total for both independent study and special study courses of no more than 18 hours, may be used on the program of study;

For the Ph.D. degree, a maximum of 12 hours of independent study courses and a maximum of 12 hours of special study courses, with the total for both independent study and special study courses of no more than 18 hours, may be used on the program of study.

PET:sws

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President's Policy Memorandum

**URL: <http://purl.vt.edu/vtdocs/policies/ppm187>**