1. Determine with your sponsoring faculty if your project is an academic research or action-based learning (ABL) project. (See next page.)

2. Prepare a one-page summary of the proposed project, including a description of the research or ABL project and deliverables, after discussions with your sponsoring faculty member. For an academic research project you are required to submit a research paper. For an ABL project, the deliverables can vary (e.g., a business plan or case study), but they must also reflect academic rigor.

3. Complete the Application for Registration in Research Projects, including the signatures of your faculty sponsor, the appropriate Department Chair person and the Associate Dean, indicating they have approved the project. Be sure that the approving individuals both print and sign their names. In general, the sponsor must be a regular faculty member. Note that Ph.D. students and non-Business faculty do not qualify to support you on Ross 399/750 projects.

4. Bring the completed application form and project summary sheet to Academic Services to complete your registration steps. Walk-in assistance is available Monday - Friday, 9:30 am to 11:00 am and 2 pm to 3 pm. (Evening MBA students should contact rossacadservices@umich.edu for assistance.) The Academic Services staff will help with the information you need to register for the course, including: course number, section number and number of credits, all of which you will use to register for the course. Tuition will be charged for the term in which the student is registered for the coursework. Students must register for independent study project credits during the term in which the work is completed.

5. Submit your final research paper or ABL deliverable(s) to your faculty sponsor no later than during final exam week. Be sure to allow enough time for your professor to read your paper, write an evaluation, and assign a grade. Provide your instructor with both a hard copy and electronic copy of your project deliverables.

6. Have your instructor submit your final paper (electronically) to our Kresge Library. These documents will be stored using the University's Deep Blue service.

Contact Academic Services if you have any questions about these procedures.

734/647-4933 // rossacadservices@umich.edu

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Independent Study Project Guidelines

Ross research projects may be either academic research or action-based learning projects.

**Academic Research Projects** address a specific research question (e.g., how is globalization affecting a particular industry or sector in a particular country). A literature review with an intellectual focus on a specific topic in an academic business field would typically be included. The main component of the paper will be an analysis of the research question, based on the literature review as well as the student's own research and examination of the issue or issues. As such, the focus of the student work will be research-based and the final document will be carefully documented as appropriate for academic research papers. Credit hours assigned to such projects correlate somewhat (but not exclusively) with this guideline:

- 45-65 hours of research = 1.0 credits
- 65-85 hours = 1.5 credits
- 85-135 hours = 2.0 credits
- 135+ hours = 3.0 credits

Under faculty guidance, these research papers could take the form of compare-contrast, extended analysis of a problem with suggested solutions, etc. The paper may spring from the sponsoring faculty's research base or the student's interest building off a prior class. The end product will be a polished, academic paper ready to be filed electronically in the Kresge Business Library.

**Action-Based Learning Projects** will have wider varieties of methodology and end products. Some typical examples include:

- Developing a business plan for a new venture, including all facets (feasibility, marketing, financing, communication, sustainability)
- Developing a competitive analysis of two (or more) current marketplace contenders, with summary predictions based on financial analysis.

Under faculty guidance, these action-based learning projects will typically generate a summary paper or case study, a professional-level presentation, a software product, etc. The end product will be filed electronically in the Kresge Business Library.

For either type of project, sponsoring faculty and student(s) should meet in person or online approximately once per week, with the student providing check-point deliverables such as rough drafts, outlines, or components of an action-based project.

**Notes:**

1. Enrollment in the Ross School of Business independent study project courses is open only to students enrolled at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor who are in good academic standing. Non-Ross undergraduate students must have Junior or higher standing in order to register for our 399 classes. Undergraduates are not eligible for 750 classes.

2. BBA and MBA students may elect one project course per term, up to a maximum of three over the course of the program, not exceeding seven credit hours in total. MAcc students are allowed up to three credits of Independent Study course work.

3. The faculty member submits the paper electronically to the Kresge Business School Library.

4. Completed projects include (in this order): Cover page (including title, student name, date,
course information – e.g., MKT 750), project content, and project sources documentation.

5. Style and notation standards for research papers may be based on either The Style Manual of the University of Chicago Press or A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, by Kate Turabian. Please follow the guidelines of either of these resources.

6. Ross Business School expects all students and faculty to follow guidelines for careful citation of sources. Guidelines to avoid plagiarism can be found at http://www.bus.umich.edu/Academics/Resources/communityvalues.htm