

UC Berkeley Haas

Independent Study (MBA 293) Information & Application Guide

Questions: email the Academics team at ftacademics@haas.berkeley.edu

If you are interested in pursuing an independent study as part of your full-time MBA program, please read the information below. If you have additional questions or would like to set up an advising appointment to discuss your proposal, please email us!

Quick links & deadlines:

- [Study plan template & previously approved study plan example](#)
- **Spring 2026 Application: January 20 - February 13, 2026**
- Link to the Application form [here](#)

What are Independent Studies?

Independent studies (MBA293s) are designed to support students who would like to research an academic area of interest that is not currently covered in an existing UC Berkeley course. MBA293's:

- Must be taken for a letter grade
- Cannot be dropped once approved and enrolled
- Self-directed with the support & guidance of a faculty sponsor

Applying for an Independent Study would be ideal if your study plan is:

- distinct from other coursework offered through UC Berkeley
- focused on an academic research question (as opposed to a work-related project)

Independent Study would not be appropriate if:

- You want to receive academic credit for GSI/R related tasks, unpaid or paid professional work, co-curricular or club project work
- Your study plan duplicates existing university coursework

Faculty Sponsors must:

- Be a member of the [ladder faculty](#)– listed as some variation of "Professor" **OR**
- Have an [active teaching appointment](#) during the term of registration– lecturers are listed as some variation of "Professional Faculty" and only able to sponsor if they have an active teaching appointment during the term of your MBA293 registration.
- You can search the [faculty directory by topic](#) if you don't have an individual in mind yet.
- Ensure your study plan is distinct from GSI/GSR work or existing class coursework
- Be willing to set appointments with you to check in on milestone deliverables and progress
- Provide written approval of the study plan prior to your application submission
- Agree to review your final deliverable(s) and submit a grade for you by the end of term deadline

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How many units can I receive for a MBA293?

- Students have the option to create 1, 2, or 3 unit Independent Studies:
 - 1 unit = minimum 45 hours up to 89 hours
 - 2 unit = minimum 90 hours up to 134 hours
 - 3 unit = minimum 135+ hours
- You may apply for more than one Independent Study during the program, and apply up to 4 units towards your MBA degree requirements

Can I work on an Independent Study with another student(s)?

- In some cases it is appropriate for FT MBA students to work on an Independent Study together. Please make an [Academic Advising appointment](#) with an Advisor to discuss the process and expectations.

When can I begin applying for Independent Study?

Anytime after you complete your first semester at Haas, during the application period.

How can I ensure my proposed Independent Study will be approved?

1. Establish a sound academically-focused research question and clear comprehensive study plan. *You will find a template as well as an example of an approved Independent Study [here](#)*
2. Get a written approval of your study plan from your faculty sponsor before submitting your application

How do I apply?

1. Use the [study plan template](#) to create the framework for your study proposal
2. Obtain your faculty sponsor's signature on your study plan prior to submitting
3. Submit your application to the academics team through the [MBA293 Independent Study Application](#).

What can I expect after I apply?

1. The Academics team will review your application to ensure:
 - a. Your study adheres to the stated parameters
 - b. You have a confirmed faculty sponsor who has signed off on your study
2. Once approved, the academics team will email you and your faculty sponsor to confirm your enrollment in the appropriate course (MBA293)

Who should I reach out to if I need guidance or have questions?

Email the Academics Team or [make an appointment with an Academic Advisor](#)— we are here to help!