

## BIOLOGY 1999 / 3999 / 4999 - Independent Study APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First MI

Penn ID # \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Applying for BIOL 3999/4999:

1. If your sponsor (the person in whose lab you are working) is not a member of the undergraduate Biology department, you will need a **Biology faculty member to be your co-sponsor**. Your co-sponsor will also need to sign this form and proposal. Biology faculty members are not obligated to co-sponsor a project.
2. Registration for BIOL 3999 and 4999 is by permit only. The Biology Academic Office in Leidy 102 will issue section numbers for those permitted to enroll in the course. **If your project proposal is approved, the academic office will follow up with you with further instructions to enroll in the course.**
3. Attach a description of your proposed project to this form. **See BIOL 3999/4999 Proposal Guidelines** for more information. **Your sponsor must sign both this form and the project proposal.**

### Guidelines for BIOL 3999/4999:

Prior to enrollment in independent study, the **sponsor, biology faculty co-sponsor** (if applicable), and **student** must agree to the following policies by signing this document.

1. **Faculty sponsors and co-sponsors must agree that the student can use all data generated during the project in preparing the required research paper and, potentially, an honors thesis.** BIOL 3999/4999 students cannot work on projects in which data will be withheld due to commercial agreements or any other barrier to free dissemination of research information.
2. Projects that have a strictly clinical focus are usually not suitable for BIOL 3999/4999 credit. If your project is clinically focused, please apply to enroll in BIOL 1999. Please note that a BIOL 1999 project is not eligible for an honors thesis.
3. If relevant to their projects, students must be trained in laboratory safety, radiation safety, and care of animals. The faculty sponsor is responsible for ensuring that the student receives this training.
4. **A research paper is required** at the end of all BIOL 1999, 3999 and 4999 projects. **Sponsors and co-sponsors are not able to waive this requirement.**
5. The research paper is to be in the format of a journal article summarizing the student's research and any relevant background literature. **The paper should describe the research question and its importance, what methods were used, what results (data) were collected, and the significance of the results.** All of the above information should be presented in the student's own words. **Students must explicitly state who is responsible for any data, graphs, photographs, or technical information included in their paper.** If a BIOL 3999 student has spent most of the semester working out problems with their methods—meaning that very little data may have been collected—then emphasis in the paper should be placed on a description and analysis of the experimental approaches used and any modifications made to the original research plan.

6. A student is normally expected to devote 10 – 20 hours/week to the project. This time should include reading, research time, meetings with research mentors, and paper preparation. **While the department does not monitor the time you spend in the lab, this recommendation is based off the average amount of work that is required to gather enough data and produce a good research report.**
7. The department will be offering five workshops each semester to assist you in the course and in writing your final paper. **As of Fall 2023, students who enroll in an independent study course with the intent to apply for departmental honors will need to attend at least three of these workshops to be eligible.**
8. **A project period generally ends on the last reading day of the semester. Students should aim to submit the research paper by this deadline. However, the specific due date can be determined in consultation with the sponsor and co-sponsor and can extend past the last reading day, if necessary. Sponsors and co-sponsors should refrain from extending independent study beyond the end of the exam period.**
9. **The research paper must be submitted to both the sponsor and co-sponsor.** Grades for BIOL 3999/4999 will be decided in consultation with the Biology department faculty co-sponsor. A grade of “A” signifies truly outstanding work during the semester and an outstanding research paper.
10. Sponsors may not waive any of the above requirements.

**We acknowledge and agree to follow the policies outlined above.**

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Student Signature

**Sponsors:** Please send an e-mail to the academic office ([bio-undergraduate@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:bio-undergraduate@sas.upenn.edu)) and to the project co-sponsor describing the nature of the student’s research, any reading that the student will be doing, and the frequency and nature of contact between you, other project overseers, and the student. Your email should also state whether or not you employ the student, and if so, explain how you will differentiate the work for which the student will be compensated from the student’s unpaid Biol 3999 or 4999 research. **Please note that credit will not be awarded if there are restrictions on the circulation of the final paper (or honors thesis) among the faculty of the Biology department.**

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Sponsor's Name and Position/Department  
(must be Penn faculty)

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Signature

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Sponsor’s e-mail address

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Co-Sponsor's Name (if applicable)

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Signature

**This completed form, along with the project proposal, is due by the end of the day on Tuesday, January 21st, and should be submitted to the following [link](#).**