

# Independent Learning Handbook

## Table of Contents

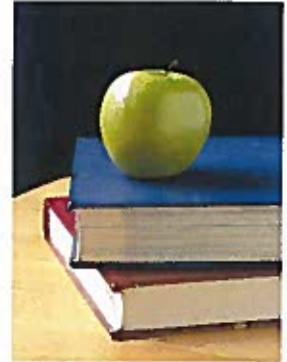
What is Independent Learning?	2
Getting started	2
Instructor contact and other requirements and resources	4
Time frames	4
Financial Aid and Independent Learning	5
Advising	5
How to succeed in an Independent Learning class	6
Is Independent Learning for me?	7
Application to Take Independent Learning Classes	8

# Frequently Asked Questions about NWIC Independent Learning Classes

## What is Independent Learning?

### What is an Independent Learning class?

Independent Learning (IL) classes are available for students who are unable to take particular courses on campus, at a site, or online. IL courses offer equivalent information to other types of courses, but the plans of instruction are based around self-paced learning units. There are few, if any, set class or instructor meetings. After you register you are sent a syllabus for each class. The syllabus gives instructions about the work required for that particular class. You must contact your instructor once you enroll. Most IL classes are text based with a focus on reading and writing assignments.



### What is a learning contract?

Learning contracts are available for classes arranged individually between the instructor and the student. Most of the time, these are used when a class you need is not offered. You must register for the class (using LC as the section code on a paper enrollment form) and complete a learning contract form with your instructor. (You can get a learning contract form from the Individualized Studies office.) The contract gives details of the class, including grading. You will not be officially registered for your actual class until you complete the learning contract and it is signed by your instructor, yourself, and sent to the IL office for final signature.

## Getting started

### How do I get started?

- If you live near a site, then contact the Site Manager.
- If you are off campus and not near a NWIC site, contact:  
The Individualized Studies Office. Explain your goals and situation. We will advise you, send you placement tests for English and math, and an enrollment form.  
The Admissions and Enrollment Services Office. They will send you further information about NWIC, such as financial aid information, forms, and a college catalog.

### How do I contact the Individualized Studies office?

Please phone, fax, write, or e-mail us.

**Katrice Shuler** (Available Tuesday, Thursday, Friday)

Phone: (866) 676-2772 x 4264 (toll free) or (360) 392-4244 (direct)

E-mail: [kshuler@nwic.edu](mailto:kshuler@nwic.edu)

**Alma (Warbus) Jefferson, Program Assistant**

Phone: (866) 676-2772 x 4341 (toll free) or (360) 392-4341 (direct)

E-mail: [awarbus@nwic.edu](mailto:awarbus@nwic.edu)

Individualized Studies  
Northwest Indian College  
2522 Kwina Rd.  
Bellingham, WA 98226

Fax: (360) 752-2464

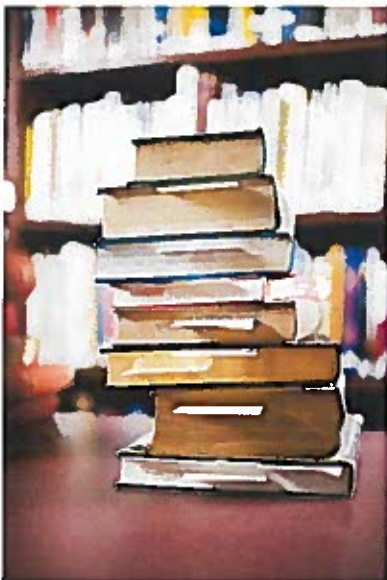
### How do I sign up for an Independent Learning class?

If you are at a site, then you can sign up for an IL class with your site manager on JICS (the computerized system for enrollment). You can also sign up with a paper enrollment form. When you enter the information on the form, the section code is IL. (This is important so you get registered for the right class and so our office knows to get you syllabus and other information.) Also, complete an [Application to Take Independent Learning](#) classes and send this along with your Enrollment form or send it directly to our office.

### How do I get my syllabi and textbooks?

**Syllabi:** The Independent Learning Office mails or e-mails your course syllabi to you. You may also access the syllabi on line at the NWIC website ([www.nwic.edu](http://www.nwic.edu)).

Once you get your syllabi, *read them carefully*. The syllabus is your guide for how that particular class will be structured.



**Books:** You can now order your books online. In order to access the online bookstore, go to the [NWIC website](#). Click on "Online Bookstore." With your student ID and authorization number, you order your books. *If you are on Federal Financial Aid you will be sent the authorization number via email. If you have moved recently, be sure that Enrollment Services has your current address or you may miss getting this essential information. Or you can use your credit card.*

If you have difficulty accessing the system, Cheryl Toler of the NWIC bookstore, can help you. You can reach her toll free at 1-866-676-2772 x 4337 or directly at 1-360-392-4337.

You may also order your books from other bookstores, including online options such as [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or [www.half.com](http://www.half.com). (*If you do, be sure you get the right edition.*) The NWIC online bookstore is only available during the beginning weeks of the quarter. If you register late and the bookstore is no longer open, you will have

to obtain your books elsewhere.

## Instructor contact and other requirements and resources

### How do I contact and work with my instructors?

Independent Learning instructors may be on or off Lummi campus. The syllabus for each class will tell you how to reach your instructor via phone, mail, and email. *Be sure to ask your teacher about how to send in your work.*

The details of how Independent Learning students interact with the instructor may differ greatly depending on the student, the instructor, and the class. Some students simply send the required work to the instructor and wait for a response. Others prefer to contact the instructor occasionally via phone, e-mail or in person. When instructors and students live in the same area, they sometimes meet to discuss assignments. Your best bet for success, no matter the course, though, is to send in your work throughout the quarter instead of waiting until the end!

*If your syllabus is not clear about how to reach an instructor or if you have not gotten a response to your work, please call or e-mail one of us in the Individualized Studies office for help in making contact.*

### Are there other materials required for Independent Learning Classes?

For a few cases, yes.

- Some classes require that you rent videos or view a recent movie.
- You may have to purchase easy-to-find supplies for home laboratory experiments or take a picture of a place you visited on a field trip.
- Other courses may require that you purchase supplies for art projects.

Check your syllabus or your instructor for information about this sort of thing.

### Is there any way I can use the NWIC library?

You may borrow materials via mail from the NWIC library. If you have online access, check the library pages on the [NWIC web page](#). The library pages will give you access to the book catalog. Electronic databases also may be accessed through the library page.

If you do not have online access, call or write the library and explain what you need. Toll free library phone numbers are: 1-866-676-2772 extensions: 4214, 4204, or 4218.



## Time frames

### How much time do I have to complete an Independent Learning class?

**One quarter.** (If you've taken IL classes in the past, note that this is a change. Y and V grades are no longer given.) If you complete 70% or more of your work within one quarter, you can request an Incomplete from your instructor. If you and your instructor agree that this option is a feasible one, then you both will sign, complete, and send in an Incomplete form.

### **When is the best time to register for Independent Learning Courses?**

*As early as possible.* If you are off campus, getting your materials to you can take time.

### **What do I do if I want to drop or add a class after I've registered?**

Contact the Individualized Studies Office, the Enrollment office, or your site coordinator to obtain an add/drop form. You must complete and return it to be officially withdrawn from classes. If you drop a class *before* the end of the third week, it will not appear on your transcript. If you drop a class *after* the third week it will appear as a "W" (Withdrawal) for the grade.

In order to be eligible for a book refund from NWIC's online bookstore, the books must be returned in new condition within the first twenty (20) days of a quarter. Books that have been written in, highlighted or damaged will not be accepted as returnable.

## **Financial Aid and Independent Learning**

### **Will taking Independent Learning classes decrease my federal financial aid?**

**Possibly.** If you *only* take IL classes, then federal financial aid will pay books and tuition for up to 6 credits. If you take a combination of IL, online, or face-to-face courses, then federal financial aid will be distributed in full. (This financial aid policy has changed in the last year.) For more information on how this may affect you, please contact the Financial Aid office.

### **Are there any other requirements for federal financial aid?**

**YES.** You must make contact with your instructors in order to be funded. This means you should make contact with your instructors in the week after you enroll. The financial aid office will contact your instructors before funding you.

## **Advising**

### **If I'm not on Lummi campus, who will help me decide what classes to take?**

NWIC advisors meet with students at many NWIC sites. If you are not at or near such a site, Katrice Shuler in the Individualized Studies office will advise you via phone, e-mail, or on campus.

## Do I need an advisor? Can't I just take what interests me?

If you are working toward a degree or certificate, advising is crucial. If you take the wrong classes, you may have a hard time reaching your goal. An advisor can help you stay on track by keeping your degree plan updated, recommending the appropriate courses, making sure that you have taken prerequisites, and help you if you are planning to attend a four-year college. If you take too many unnecessary classes, you may use up your available financial aid before you graduate.

## How do I know which English or math class to take?

If you have had recent college level courses in these subjects, we can use them to determine your placement. Otherwise, you will have to take an assessment.

If you are an off campus student, contact your site coordinator or the Individualized Studies Office to arrange for this.

## How to succeed in an Independent Learning course

### What is the biggest challenge for an Independent Learning student?



**Procrastination.** When you don't have to go to class and no one forces you to get to work, you may find it easy to put off class assignments. You may wake up one day and realize the quarter is almost over and it's too late for you to finish. If you are receiving financial aid, this can result in your losing your award. **Don't let this happen!**

### How can I help myself succeed in Independent Learning classes?

- *It is a good idea to schedule your study time as though you are attending a class.* If you consistently follow through on your time commitment, you are almost assured of succeeding.
- If you live near other students, you may find study (or support) groups helpful.
- Use the new Moodle bulletin board or e-mail system to make contact with other students in your classes and give each other support online.
- For a subject that is particularly difficult for you, you might seek the aid of a tutor.
- Stay in touch with your instructor, especially if you are experiencing difficulty in the class or if you run into personal challenges.

### What about academic integrity?

The policies on academic integrity, including plagiarism, are the same for students taking IL classes as it is for students taking other modalities of classes. Please see the NWIC catalog for more information.

## How much time should I schedule for an Independent Learning Class?

In general, for each one credit of a class you should set aside three hours of study. For a three-credit class you would schedule nine hours of class work per week. For a five-credit class you would schedule fifteen hours per week.

## How can I communicate with other students taking IL classes?

When you register for an IL class you will be entered into the Moodle database for Independent Learning Classes. A link to this online classroom can be found on [NWIC's website](#). This will *allow you* to make contact with the whole community of students taking classes in this way. The addition is *an enrichment* and *not* a requirement for your classes.

You can access the Moodle website with a login and password. This login and password may be sent to you via your student email. If it is not, then you can contact Jason Myers (866-676-2772, ext. 4274).



## Is Independent Learning for me?

### What are the advantages of taking Independent Learning classes?

- You can study when it is convenient. This is a huge bonus for people with jobs and families.
- You can gain a deeper knowledge of a subject because you have to focus intensely on the assigned work.
- You can take courses even if you do not live near a site or have computer access.
- You have greater control about the timing of doing your work. You can choose to finish them quickly or slowly – whatever fits your current life style.

### Are Independent Learning Classes a good choice for everyone?

**NO!** These classes work best for students who are able to work alone without set class times, frequent teacher contacts, or the social support of others actually attending the same face-to-face class. If these things are important to you for your academic success you do well to explore other options or learn new ways of operating.

## Application to Take Independent Learning Classes

Name:

Address:

Phone number:

Fax Number:

E-mail address:

Tribal affiliation:

Is there a NWIC site or campus near you? If so, which one?

Advisor or Site Manager:

How many credits do you plan to take on campus, on site, or online?

How many IL credits do you want to take per quarter?

Please explain your reasons for taking IL classes:

Student Signature:

Site Manager or Advisor Signature\*:

.....  
\* REQUIRED for all students at sites or on Lummi campus. Without the signature you will not be registered.