

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN COLLEGE OF LAW
INDIVIDUAL DIRECTED RESEARCH (IDR) FAQs AND PROPOSAL FORM

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LAW 495.3 Individual Directed Research

IDR FAQs

1. What is an “IDR”?

IDR stands for “Individual Directed Research” and is used in this context to refer to a 3 c.u. upper year JD Student course. **LAW 495.3 Individual Directed Research** permits a student to undertake an individually directed research project for academic credit under the supervision of a College of Law faculty member.

The University Catalogue course description of the approved course is:

This seminar allows interested students to undertake a substantial research project. Enrolment is limited to two students for each of the professors willing to take on student(s). The course is not timetabled as a convenient meeting time can be arranged to suit the instructors and students concerned. Students must approach individual professors with a research proposal. All proposals must be approved by the Studies Committee.

Note that while the course description refers to it being a “seminar”, it would be very difficult for an IDR to meet the definition of “seminar requirement” under the [College of Law Academic Regulations](#). Note also that the Studies Committee has, in practice, delegated its authority to the Associate Dean Academic.

2. How can I register for an IDR?

Approval is required for registration in an IDR (similar to other application-based courses.)

Students must find a willing supervisor for the project and submit the entire document, including Parts A & B to the Student Services Office law.jdstudies@usask.ca.

Once the student and supervisor receive confirmation the proposal is approved, the student can then drop one 3 CU course in order to add Law 495.3 – Individual Directed Research. This must be done before the University’s [registration deadline](#) following the instructions noted by Students Services in the approval email.

3. What determines whether a proposal will be approved?

IDRs are intended to offer students the opportunity to explore and learn about a legal topic of interest on which the College does not otherwise offer a course or other learning opportunity to students. It is not meant to “lighten the load” or provide a more convenient schedule for students.

While the most common project is a research paper, the catalogue description does not limit the types of projects that can be undertaken. The project must be both “substantial” and a “research project”. The work should be individually directed, as opposed to directed by a faculty member or others.

Further, the project should entail an amount of work roughly equivalent to other 3 c.u. classes. A seminar, for example, will typically have 24 meeting hours during the term, plus 12 hours of assigned readings. Further, in a seminar a student will usually be assigned a major paper in addition to other smaller assignments. Therefore, if the proposed IDR is primarily in the form of a major research paper, it is usually expected that the minimum word count be closer to the maximum word count of a major paper set out in the definition of Major Research Paper in the College of Law Academic Regulations. The definition reads as follows:

‘major research paper’ means the program requirement that requires the completion of a research paper comprised of a single piece of work 7,500 – 12,500 words (exclusive of footnotes, endnotes, title pages, table of contents, and bibliography) which incorporates a substantial element of original analysis by the student and which is valued at between 70% and 100% of the student's mark in the course

The subject of the IDR project should not overlap significantly with materials covered by a course offered by the College of Law (whether the student was enrolled in the course or not) or by other work completed by the student in another course or courses. That said, the proposal may be approved if the project enables the student to explore a topic in a great deal more depth than in an existing course, and the student has made a good case for pursuing the proposed learning goals

4. Who can supervise the project? How do I find a supervisor?

It is up to the student to find a faculty member supervisor. Keep in mind that faculty members are not obligated to supervise IDRs, and may not have the time to take on an IDR in addition to their other work obligations.

The supervisor **must be a faculty member not a sessional lecturer**. Students can refer to the [College of Law website](#) to find a list of faculty members and their areas of research and expertise.

5. What program requirements are met through an IDR?

A student may fulfil the major or minor paper requirement through an IDR provided the paper meets the definition of major or minor paper in the College’s Academic Regulations. It is extremely unlikely that any other requirements (such as the seminar requirement) could be met through an IDR. Please check with the ADA for more information if you would like to use the IDR to meet other program requirements.

6. Can I be working as a research assistant (RA) for a professor and also get IDR credit for the work?

No, work you are doing in your capacity as an RA cannot also count toward your IDR for-credit course.

7. How are IDRs graded/assessed?

The modes of assessment will be set out on the IDR form (Part B) and supplemental syllabus information (if any) provided by the instructor. The grades will correspond with USask's literal grade descriptors in line with the [College of Law's grading system](#).

8. Can I get credit for more than one IDR?

It would be very unusual for a student to be approved for more than one IDR in either/each of their second and third years of their JD program.

9. What is the deadline for applying?

At the very latest, the forms must be submitted by the deadlines as follows:

- Fall Term (T1) = 5 business days before the university's T1 add/drop deadline
- Winter Term (T2) = 5 business days before the university's T2 add/drop deadline

The add/drop deadlines can be found [HERE](#).

Submission by the deadline stated above, however, does not guarantee that there will be sufficient time to approve the proposal before the add/drop deadline ([see the academic calendar](#)), particularly if revisions and/or more information are required. Therefore, students are encouraged to submit their proposals **by the first day of classes if possible**.

AFTER READING, PLEASE REMOVE THE FAQ PAGES ABOVE AND SUBMIT PARTS A AND B BELOW

LAW 495.3 Individual Directed Research

IDR Project Proposal Form (Part A- Student Portion)

➤ **PLEASE COMPLETE AND SEND TO THE FACULTY SUPERVISOR**

Note to students: **prior** to completing this form, you must find a faculty member willing to supervise your project and should have discussed the basic aspects of the project with them.

Basic Information	
1. Student Name and NSID:	
2. Student email address:	
3. IDR semester (Fall or Winter):	
4. Please initial below to indicate that you have read the FAQs included as part of this document, above:	
Project Overview	
5. Research topic: Tentative research question(s):	
6. Brief description of the type of research you will undertake (e.g. case law research, literature review) and how you will gather your data (e.g. CanLII database search):	
7. Will your project require Research Ethics Board (REB) approval? (see https://research.usask.ca/rei/researchers/ethics/human-ethics.php) (Yes or No): _____	
(This might be required if, for example you are collecting empirical data from human subjects. In the unlikely case you are, contact your supervisor.	
If no, proceed to the next question. If yes, then please describe the plan you and your supervisor have in place to attain REB approval:	
Project Learning Goals	
<i>IDRs are intended to cover gaps where a student has a particular interest in an area of law and/or in developing legal skills that is not already covered in the curriculum.</i>	

8. Describe your learning goals with respect to this project and their value to you (that is, why you believe they are important for you to achieve):

Overlap with Existing Course Offerings

9. Please explain why your learning goals could not be met through another course in the College of Law. (For example, if it may appear to others that you could meet your learning goals through another course, why are you instead applying for an IDR?)

10. Have you taken a class or completed coursework that overlaps with the content of the IDR project? If so, explain the extent of the overlap and how this IDR would be distinct from the work you already completed. (Note that your supervisor may want to see other assignments you completed on related topics.)

Form Submission

1. Once you have completed this portion of this form, please send it to the supervising instructor to complete Part B (their portion) and ask that they please return it to you afterwards.
2. Review the full form and raise any questions or concerns with the instructor at that time.
3. Once final and fully complete, it is the student's responsibility to submit to law.idstudies@usask.ca and copy the supervising instructor.
4. You will be notified of the decision of your proposal and if approved, information about registering for the course from the Student Services Office as soon as possible.

LAW 495.3 Individual Directed Research

IDR Project Proposal Form (Part B – Instructor’s Portion)

➤ **PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO STUDENT**

Instructors: Please fill out this portion of the form, after consultation with the student, and once complete, please return directly to the student. The student will then submit both parts of the form to law.jdstudies@usask.ca and copy you on the email. College administration will consider you to have agreed to supervise the project unless you object at this stage.

In addition to being used as part of the IDR proposal/application, **this form (both Parts A and B) will serve as the course syllabus for the IDR.** The form includes information that should be included under the University’s policies, as well as some suggested or examples of wording in brackets, which you may modify as you see fit. The ability to make changes to the syllabus after distribution (here, through returning the form to the student for submission), are limited under University regulations. Contact the ADA to discuss if necessary.

The form below includes information that must be included under the University’s policies, as well as some suggested or examples of wording **[highlighted and in brackets]**. ***Please remove the brackets and highlighting and modify the language as appropriate prior to returning it to the student.***

Finally, please review the student [FAQs section](#) of this document as it sets out some factors that will be considered when determining whether to approve the IDR.

Note the established college policy that faculty members are *not* required to supervise IDRs, and that if they choose to do so, they normally would not supervise more than two IDRs per year.

Basic Information	
1. Course Number: LAW 495.3	
2. Student Name:	
3. IDR Instructor’s name: <i>(note- this must be a College of Law faculty member, not a sessional lecturer)</i>	

4. Academic Year and Semester:
Student-Instructor Meetings
5. Meeting times & location: [add list of dates of meetings OR frequency of meetings and approximate length and the method for determining meeting times]
6. Expectation of students in preparation for and during meetings: [e.g. discussion of readings (assigned by instructor/chosen by student, provision of list or articles or summaries at each meeting)]
7. Describe the consequences of students not attending scheduled meetings and/or meeting the expectations set point 6, above: [e.g., will students lose a certain percentage of their grade for each meeting missed or failing to demonstrate a basic understanding of readings assigned] [If the consequences are set out in the Evaluation section below, please simply note this here].
Major and/ or Minor Paper(s)
8. Will the student be given the option or required to complete a MAJOR or MINOR paper? (Refer to definitions below) Major paper(s): ____ Minor paper(s): ____ Neither major nor minor papers: ____ A major paper must meet the following definition in the College of Law Academic Regulations: ‘major research paper’ means the program requirement that requires the completion of a research paper comprised of a single piece of work 7,500 – 12,500 words (exclusive of footnotes, endnotes, title pages, table of contents, and bibliography) which incorporates a substantial element of original analysis by the student and which is valued at between 70% and 100% of the student's mark in the course; A minor paper must meet the following definition in the College of Law Academic Regulations: ‘minor research paper’ means the program requirement that requires the completion of a single piece of work 4,000 – 12,500 words (exclusive of footnotes, endnotes, title pages, table of contents, and bibliography) which is analytical in nature and includes a research paper, a case comment, drafting exercise or book or literature review and which is valued for at least 25% of the student's mark in the course;

Grading Scheme

9. Students will be assigned a final % grade in accordance with the [College of Law grading system](#) and will be graded according to the [USask literal descriptors](#).

Grading Scheme for the IDR Course

Component	% toward final grade, or pass/fail	Assignment Required vs Optional	Due Date (Cannot be later than the last day of classes in the semester)
[e.g. annotated bibliography]	[x]%		
[e.g. detailed outline]	[x]%		
[e.g. log of research searches]	[e.g. Pass/Fail]		
Final Assessment [e.g. major research paper]	[x]%		

10. Description/instructions for each component assignment [please refer to 8., above, when drafting instructions for major/minor paper]

11. Method of handing in assignments: [e.g. via email to the instructor]

12. [Citation expectations: e.g. full citations are expected in accordance with the most recent McGill Guide (available in the Law Library). If you are in doubt about whether a citation is necessary, either err on the side of including one or speak with me about.]

Extensions and Late Assignments

13. Late penalties

[E.g. All assignments are penalized one letter grade for each 24 hours late or part thereof. Extensions will be granted at the discretion of the instructor. Prior to granting an extension, the instructor may ask for work-in-progress to be handed in to show progress to-date.]

Under the Law Academic Regulations, extensions cannot be granted after the last day of examinations in the semester, and therefore must be referred to the ADA.

14. Extensions

[E.g. Students are expected to be aware of due dates and manage their workload accordingly. However, sometimes students encounter unforeseen circumstances that interfere with their

ability to meet deadlines. In these cases, students are expected to reach out to the instructor as soon as possible to request an extension.

Extensions must be negotiated **prior to the due date** except in exceptional circumstances where the student would not have reasonably been expected to email the instructor requesting an extension prior to the deadline. After one extension has been granted for an assignment, additional extensions will not be granted for the assignment. This policy is consistent with [AES policy](#) and therefore is applicable whether or not the student has an AES accommodation to negotiate extensions has been granted to the student.

When deciding whether to grant an extension, the instructor may require that the student hand in their work-in-progress as an assurance that the request for an extension was not due to poor planning on the part of the student.]

15. Additional criteria to pass the course:

[e.g. 1: The student must hand in assignment x by x date in order to pass the course; e.g. 2: the student must obtain a grade of at least 60% on assignment y in order to pass the course]

Academic Integrity

16. Policy on Academic Integrity

General

The University of Saskatchewan is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity. <https://academic-integrity.usask.ca/>

Students are urged to read [their responsibilities](#) and, the [Regulations on Academic Misconduct](#) and to avoid any behaviours that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence.

For help developing the skills for meeting academic integrity expectations, see: <https://academic-integrity.usask.ca/students.php>

Students are encouraged to ask their instructors for clarification on academic integrity requirements.

[Use of Artificial Intelligence

Appropriate use of AI must be discussed prior to use with the Instructor. Please refer to <https://academic-integrity.usask.ca/students.php> for resources on using learning technology responsibly.

Student Resources

17. Research and Writing Resources

[The following resources may be helpful to you in this course:

- Law Library list of resources: <https://library.usask.ca/law/#Lawresources>
- Canvas resource on How to Write a Law School Paper: self-enroll through this link: <https://canvas.usask.ca/enroll/4YEDTY.>

18. College of Law Academic Regulations

The following regulations apply to College of Law students:

<https://law.usask.ca/documents/students/jd/2025-usask-law-academic-regulations.pdf>

19. Other Student Resources

In addition to the general resources below, students are encouraged to contact the Associate Dean Academic at ada.law@usask.ca if they are experiencing personal issues interfering with their studies.

Access and Equity Services (AES)

Access and Equity Services (AES) is available to provide support to students who require accommodations due to disability, family status, and religious observances.

Students who have disabilities (learning, medical, physical, or mental health) are strongly encouraged to register with Access and Equity Services (AES) if they have not already done so. Students who suspect they may have disabilities should contact AES for advice and referrals at any time. Those students who are registered with AES with mental health disabilities and who anticipate that they may have responses to certain course materials or topics, should discuss course content with their instructors prior to course add / drop dates.

Students who require accommodations for pregnancy or substantial parental/family duties should contact AES to discuss their situations and potentially register with that office.

Students who require accommodations due to religious practices that prohibit the writing of exams on religious holidays should contact AES to self-declare and determine which accommodations are appropriate. In general, students who are unable to write an exam due to a religious conflict do not register with AES but instead submit an exam conflict form through their PAWS account to arrange accommodations.

Any student registered with AES, as well as those who require accommodations on religious grounds, may request alternative arrangements for mid-term and final examinations by submitting a request to AES by the stated deadlines. Instructors shall provide the examinations for students who are being accommodated by the deadlines established by AES.

For more information or advice, visit <https://students.usask.ca/health/centres/access-equity-services.php>, or contact AES at 306-966-7273 (Voice/TTY 1-306-966-7276) or email aes@usask.ca.

Financial Support

Any student who faces unexpected challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact Student Central <https://students.usask.ca/student-central.php>.

Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre

The Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre is dedicated to supporting Indigenous student academic and personal success. The Centre offers personal, social, cultural and some academic supports to Métis, First Nations, and Inuit students. The Centre is an intercultural gathering space that brings Indigenous and non-Indigenous students together to learn from, with and about one another in a respectful, inclusive, and safe environment. Visit <https://students.usask.ca/indigenous/index.php> or students are encouraged to visit the ASC's website <https://students.usask.ca/indigenous/gorbsc.php>

Other syllabus information

Instructors may use this space to add any other information they wish to have included in the syllabus:

Form Submission

All brackets and light grey highlighting should be removed before the form is submitted.

Once the instructor has filled out this part of the form, please email this entire document back to the student. The student should review it and bring up any questions or concerns with the instructor at that time, resolve them, and then submit the fully completed form to law.jdstudies@usask.ca, copying the instructor.