

Independent Study Guide

for Academic Credit

for high school, undergraduate, and graduate studies



North Carolina Outward Bound School

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ACADEMIC CREDIT

North Carolina Outward Bound School (NCOBS) is not a credit awarding institution. Over 250 secondary schools, colleges and universities offer direct credit for Outward Bound based Independent Studies. If you cannot receive direct credit from your school, you may arrange for credit transfer from another institution which is willing to do so.

One option to receive credit is through Appalachian State University (ASU), Warren Wilson College (WWC), or Western State College of Colorado (WSC). Per an agreement with NCOBS, ASU grants four (4) semester credit hours of graduate or undergraduate credit for courses 21 days or longer. WWC grants twelve (12) semester credit hours of undergraduate credit for courses 55 days or longer. WSC grants between three (3) and twelve (12) semester credit hours for courses between 14 and 78 days in length. For further information on academic credit through ASU, WWC, and/or WSC call the NCOBS Student Services Department at 1-800-878-5258. It is your responsibility to arrange for academic credit. The cost of credit varies with each institution.

If you are attending a college that does not accept transferred credits, or if you are a high school student or a teacher obtaining re-certification, another option to receive academic credit for a North Carolina Outward Bound course is to develop a program of Independent Study. The following are guidelines to aid you through the process.

Independent Study Guidelines

DEFINITION

An Independent Study is an opportunity for students to receive academic credit while pursuing personal interests outside the traditional classroom setting. Under faculty supervision, the student develops a course of study and culminating project--in this case, the study would relate to an Outward Bound course. The focus of an Independent Study can be broad or very specific and can relate to many and varied subject areas (see Appendix B).

CANDIDATES

High School students, undergraduate and graduate students, teachers fulfilling recertification requirements, or individuals on sabbatical from traditional education may be able to earn credit from an Outward Bound based Independent Study. An Independent Study is challenging, requiring self-motivation and personal commitment. An Independent Study based on an Outward Bound course can be extremely demanding. Be sure to consider the amount of time and effort you are willing and able to invest.

ARRANGEMENTS

1. Confirm with a teacher, counselor or registrar's office that credit is available through your own school or transferable from an outside institution.
2. Read NCOBS information (this packet and our general catalog). Be sure you have an understanding of the following: course components; course geographic area; and NCOBS mission and academic outline (see Appendix A).
3. Choose a subject (see Appendix B). Outline a preliminary proposal for a course of study and culminating Independent Study project.
4. Choose a sponsor (see SPONSOR'S ROLE, next page). Share the information you have gathered with your sponsor. Discuss and develop your proposal. Determine an agreement to the value, realistic scope, and execution of your study.
5. Establish a contract with your sponsor. Consider the following:
 - How does your Independent Study complement your current field of study?
 - What reading will you undertake to support your study?
 - What will you do before and after your course to complete your study? An Outward Bound day is full from beginning to end--we do not provide free time for academic study or writing. Most

students find a journal, sketch pad, or a camera to be an essential element of their study. Portable computers are not rugged enough to survive the rigors of an Outward Bound course and are not permitted on our courses.

- How is the success and completion of your study to be measured?
 - How will your cumulative project be presented?..a written or oral report, a slide show, a set of sketches, the completion of readings, or the demonstration of some newly-found skills?
 - How will it be evaluated?
 - The outcome of an Outward Bound course is unpredictable. If your interests change dramatically, contact your sponsor when you return to school.
6. If you are seeking transferable academic credit from an outside institution, follow your school's standard policy.

SPONSOR'S ROLE

Your sponsor will play an important role in the success of your study. S/He can be a teacher, a counselor, an advisor, a department head, or anyone at your school who will monitor the quality and completion of your study. It is also the responsibility of your sponsor to help you develop an Independent Study which achieves the required criteria of the credit awarding institution. S/He should also ensure that you receive credit when those criteria are met. Acting as an objective liaison between you and the involved institution(s), your sponsor must be willing to invest considerable time and effort into your Independent Study: choose him or her carefully.

SAMPLE STRATEGY

Independent Studies have been developed around a wide variety of subject areas (see Appendix B). The following example is a successful model.

1. Establish a Goal: "I will develop an Independent Study on the subject: *Teamwork, Leadership and Maturity.*"
2. Define specific Learning Activities:
 - Before the course I will:
 - Read The Secrets of Dynamic Communication; Zap the Power of Empowerment; Leaders, the Four Keys of Effective Leadership; Leadership is an Art.
 - Define those qualities common to a successful team.
 - Define the qualities of a leader.
 - Define maturity.
 - During the course I will:
 - Document specific examples of teamwork, leadership and maturity. What are the visible clues? Who are the leaders? When do they lead? When do they follow?
 - Document how styles of leadership change. Is the same person always in charge? Who is in charge when the going gets tough? Who is in charge when it's time to pitch camp? Who does the dirty work? Who always seems to be absent when it's time to clean up?
 - Document examples of my crew's team efforts. What worked? What didn't? What is my instructor's role?
 - Document examples of behavior I would define as *mature* and *immature*.
 - Document what aspects of leadership, teamwork and maturity I would like to take away from my course.
 - After the course I will:
 - Interview a local community leader.
 - Document current observations and findings and how they relate back to the community.
 - Present my findings.

MEASURING THE OUTCOME

How is the success and completion of your Independent Study to be measured? How is its quality to be evaluated? The following are some suggestions:

- Present your sponsor with a copy of your course certificate.
- Complete your Independent Study by submitting a paper to your sponsor defining teamwork, leadership and maturity and how they manifest themselves on an Outward Bound course. Discuss what you learned and how it relates to every day existence.
- Evaluate your project with your sponsor; submit relevant photographs, sketches, or journal entries.
- Submit the completed Independent Study project to the appropriate institution for evaluation, acceptance and credit.

APPENDIX A

Mission and Academic Outline

MISSION

Deliver a safe, adventure-based learning experience that is challenging, affirming and significant, and results in personal growth, self-reliance, compassion, a commitment to serve, moral courage, and respect for the environment.

OBJECTIVES

North Carolina Outward Bound School's key course objectives are to broaden enthusiasm for and understanding of self, others and the environment and to enhance interpersonal communication and cooperation. The following are specific objectives:

1. Personal Development. To extend the student's self-awareness by identifying personal limits, clarifying needs and goals, and helping them recognize a role in society. To acknowledge a responsibility to self and others. To have fun!
2. Interpersonal Effectiveness. To expand the students' capacity of responding to others, to encourage open and effective communications, and to construct cooperative relationships around common projects and commitments.
3. Environmental Awareness. To enhance the students' understanding of the fragile nature of our world and to increase a sense of responsibility for its care and preservation.
4. Learning. To create and maintain an environment and an attitude in which the emphasis is on experimentation and participation in experiential learning.
5. Philosophy and Values. To provide situations and experiences in which the students can test and refine their personal values and which will stimulate them to examine and articulate their basic beliefs.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. Philosophical:
 - One reveres life for having experienced it in real, dramatic terms.
 - From experience one learns to respect self.
 - From respect of self flows compassion for others.
 - Compassion for others is best expressed in service to humankind.
2. Operational:
 - Persons have more resources and are more capable than they think they are.
 - A small heterogeneous group has the resources within it to successfully cope with significant physical and mental challenges.
 - Individuals are capable of critical decision making and responsibility.
 - More can be learned by presenting problems rather than solutions or methods.
 - A time for reflection on experience contributes to the formulation of personal goals and a philosophy of life.
 - Stress and shared adventure are important catalysts in the self-discovery process.
 - The most important determinant of a person's future is one's self-perception.
 - Significant, long-lasting learning can be achieved through an intensive, short-term experience.

RATIONALE

Like all schools, North Carolina Outward Bound stimulates human growth by concentrating on cognitive, psychomotor, and affective development. The following are our percentage breakdowns of these components and a sample of activities, which foster their development:

1. Cognitive (35%)
 - Navigation by map and compass
 - Expedition planning
 - First Aid and emergency preparedness
 - Natural history
 - Geology
 - Ecology
 - Field Sanitation
2. Psychomotor (35%)
 - Backpacking
 - Rock climbing and rappelling
 - Leave No Trace camping
 - Canoeing
 - Sea Kayaking
 - Mountain Biking
 - Rafting
 - Alpine Mountaineering
3. Affective (30%)
 - Group decisions
 - Group discussions
 - Journal entry
 - Solo time
 - Service project

CURRICULUM

1. Students are expected to refrain from the use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs while on the course.
2. Each Outward Bound crew may form and be trained as a search and rescue unit available for public service.
3. During the first portion of the course, the student may experience the following:
 - A statement from the Course Director outlining the underlying purposes of Outward Bound
 - Individual fitness training, conditioning and fitness assessment through such daily activities as running, hiking, or related activities
 - Instruction in:
 - Specialized safety training to cope with the specific course environment
 - Field food planning and preparation
 - Care and use of equipment
 - Search, rescue and emergency evacuation and first aid procedures
 - Map and compass navigation and route finding
 - Traveling skills appropriate to the environment
 - Expedition planning
 - Environmental studies
 - The use, care and protection of the environment
 - Interactions with an instructor
 - Training and assessment in group effectiveness, teamwork and leadership, through activities such as initiative tests, training expeditions, discussions, briefings and related activities.
4. After successful completion of the initial training phase, students may be involved in the following experiences:

- Expeditions appropriate to the environment and accompanied by the instructor
 - Rock climbing and rappelling (mountain courses only)
 - Paddling
 - Solo--a period of solitude ranging from a few hours to three days and nights
 - A final expedition of up to four days duration with a minimum of instructor supervision consistent with the environment and prevailing conditions.
 - A marathon-type event appropriate to the environment where weather and other conditions permit
5. Every student will be encouraged to keep a journal throughout the course.
 6. A focus on a service ethic throughout the course.
 7. Periodic readings or discussions will be offered to help students interpret the values underlying the course.

ELEMENTS

In carrying out its mission and expressing its purposes, the North Carolina Outward Bound School provides adventure experiences for personal growth which contain the following elements:

1. A commitment to do one's best
2. A series of increasingly difficult challenges in an unfamiliar environment
3. Understandable stress
4. Service to others
5. Small group experiences to foster teamwork and participation
6. Individual diversity within each group
7. Acquisition of new skills as a success-oriented activity
8. Time for reflection on experience to explore the integration of the Outward Bound experience into one's life.

MEASUREMENT

In keeping with our program objectives and methodology, we place the responsibility for evaluation on the student. Objectives are met when students achieve and/or surpass their goals.

The instructor's role is to help students clarify and test conclusions, providing observations when appropriate. It is the student's responsibility to determine the kind and amount of growth toward the stated objectives.

APPENDIX B

A Sample of Independent Study Subject Areas

ART

While on your course, create a notebook of sketches, poems, reflections, adage, and photographs that develop a personal theme.

ENGLISH

Adventure literature--both fiction and non-fiction--is an important genre. Read a number of books on adventure (Admiral Byrd's Alone, Shackleton's Endurance, Huckleberry Finn, Moby Dick, Treasure Island, The Way West, Exodus, Little House on the Prairie). Write a paper on Moby Dick as a theodicy, or another well-developed theme. What parallels can you draw between these literary adventures and your own?

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

There are numerous state and federal agencies charged with a wide variety of environmental goals and objectives. Which agencies manage your course area? Describe their mission. How is it being realized? Describe the future of land management in America. What are the primary issues? Who are the big stakeholders? How should the complexity of the environmental discussion be successfully resolved? Who wins? Who loses?

FIRST AID/SAFETY

During your course, strict safety policies must be followed. Identify and review these policies. Choose a policy used in rock climbing or first aid and describe the origin of the policy, its application, and its effect. Were the policies well thought out? Are they open to inspection or written in stone? How do the safety policies used on your course apply to the management and welfare of all people?

GEOGRAPHY/GEOLOGY

Describe how the geography of the land impacted the first native cultures in your course area. How does the geography impact other life?

HISTORY

The history of the Environmental Movement in America is rich in lore and controversy, intrigue, political corruption, heroism, failure and magnificent success. How has this movement impacted your course area? What are the major environmental concerns influencing your course area today? Who are the agencies responsible for land use in your course area? Who are the major environmental players impacting your area?

NATURAL HISTORY

Study animal tracking before your course. Identify possible animals in your course environment. Document what you see and learn about animal habitat, eating problems, life cycles, and animal behavior.

NUTRITION

Make a list of all foods available during your course. What are their nutritional compositions? How many calories do you estimate you burn while a rest compared with the amount burned for each mile covered on foot? What is the source of these calories? How does nutrition contribute to optimal performance?

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Keep a record of the physical conditioning you did to get ready for your course. Describe your program and an ideal program. Document during your course a record of your physical activity. Record the number of miles traveled per day and the estimated number of calories burned. Note body changes. Document which muscles

are used and how. Describe what activity you will need to do to maintain fitness after the course. Define fitness and health. Discuss motivation, fat, muscle, health adaptation, exercise, training, rest and nutrition.

PSYCHOLOGY/SOCIOLOGY

The development of your crew into a working and functioning team is a major component of your course. Read Abraham Maslow's Towards a Psychology of Being and identify his Hierarchy of Needs as one perspective on group dynamics and development. Consider how decisions are made in light of these needs. Discuss your instructor's roles.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Many people find spiritual awareness in the wilderness. Describe your personal spirituality and how the wilderness reflects this vision.

SERVICE

Service is a fundamental element of every Outward Bound course. Define the word *service* and provide examples. Describe examples of service on your course. Reflect upon the school's motto: *To Serve, To Strive, And Not To Yield*. What place does service play in your life? Read Hess's The Journey to the East. Fox's A Spirituality Named Compassion; and Greenleaf's Servant Leadership.