

## Independent Concentration (IC) | Proposal Outline

Dear potential ICer,

Welcome to the IC process! We're glad you're on your way to creating your own concentration. To make the application and revision processes as smooth as possible, here are a few guidelines to help you think about and frame your proposal.

Each section of the application is meant to clarify a key aspect of your concentration, from the field as it exists in the world to the specific ways you can achieve your personal learning goals through courses at Brown. These questions are meant to help you think about the scope and feasibility of your IC. The committee wants to hear your ideas in full. The answers to these questions are not meant to be extra work—reflecting on these questions and articulating your thoughts clearly are key to the formation of your idea as a full-fledged concentration at Brown, and many of the ideas you have fleshed out with advisors, peers, and IC coordinators are what the committee is most interested in. With that said, **you must meet with at least one IC coordinator** before submitting a proposal. To allow time for open discussion and thoughtful revisions, this should be done well in advance.

Try to sketch out before you start writing:

- **What** is the interdisciplinary field you want to study? What are your learning goals and how can you learn them through coursework available? Be sure to define your terms thoroughly and avoid relying on jargon / field-specific language.
- **How** do you plan on studying this? What fields are you intending to integrate? How are you intending to integrate them? Think about bridge courses.
- **Who** are you able to study with here? What is a focus area, or topic you want to explore more deeply via advanced coursework and your capstone/thesis? What methods course will prepare you for this self-directed project?

Here are a couple **key concepts** ICers must be familiar with to submit a successful proposal:

- **Learning goals** refer to objectives you have in pursuing your IC at Brown. These are not the broad goals of the field or a goal someone might have if they pursued a similar degree, these are specific points that are referenced throughout the proposal. Your learning goals are the compass of the IC. They give direction, purpose, and cohesion throughout the proposal. Your learning goals should be discrete but connected.
- **Bridge courses** bring different fields within your IC in conversation with each other to fulfill your learning goals. If you use a venn diagram to represent the way different fields, topics, or goals interact with each other, these bridge courses would lie in the intersections. A single bridge course does not fulfill every one of your learning goals; rather, with multiple bridge courses building on one another, they should help guide you to the specific focus of your IC.

Here are a couple **logistical requirements** to be aware of:

- You must submit your **first IC proposal by the last deadline of your 5th semester**, either on November 1st or April 1st. Your IC must receive final, full approval by the end of your 6th semester. Proposal deadlines are February 1st, March 1st, April 1st, September 1st, October 1st, and November 1st.

- Your IC is yours! **Make sure the proposal is worded in the first person** to convey how this is personalized to your interests as they can be formed into a concentration. While standard concentrations often have separate tracks individual students can choose, your IC should have a “track” of its own. Instead of saying “a concentrator in [IC] might take [ ],” say “I will take [ ] to better understand [your own learning goals].”
- Email your completed application to [independent\\_concentrations@brown.edu](mailto:independent_concentrations@brown.edu).

Before submitting a proposal, please review these links. In particular, look at approved proposals from the most recent graduating class as examples of effective ways to address the questions—you can request them from the IC Database. All three links will help guide your IC creation and revision process and provide clarity on how to build a meaningful and creative IC. And remember, stop by IC coordinator open hours listed on our website!

- [IC Website](#)
- [IC Database](#)
- [IC Evaluation Rubric](#)

Happy writing, and see you in the CRC!

*IC Coordinators*

# (Type Concentration Title Here)

By (Student's Name)  
Proposed (Semester, Year)

**\*\*\*YOU ARE EXPECTED TO USE THIS TEMPLATE FOR YOUR APPLICATION\*\*\***

<b>Banner ID:</b>	B _____	<b>Graduation Year:</b>	20__	<b>Semester Level:</b>	
<b>Email:</b>					

<b>Degree:</b> <u>A.B. or Sc.B.</u>	(A.B. / Sc.B.)	<b>Is this a revision of a proposal submitted earlier?</b>	(Yes/No)
Will this concentration <b>replace</b> one previously declared		<b>If, yes, which?</b>	
Will it be in <b>addition</b> to one previously declared		<b>If, yes, which?</b>	

<b>Faculty Sponsor:</b>		<b>Sponsor's Department:</b>	
<b>Sponsor's Title:</b>	(Must be above the rank of Instructor or Lecturer)		

<b>Cocktail Party Description of the IC:</b>	(Provide a 1-2 sentence description of the concentration's focus in simple, jargon-free language. This is a challenging exercise to be specific, clear, and concise in describing your intellectual project. Please consider it carefully and run it by people to ensure it is accessible!)
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The Curricular Resource Center maintains an archive of approved IC proposals to allow prospective ICers to get a sense of past work. Proposals are made available upon your graduation. <b>"X" here if you DO NOT want your IC proposal to be made available in the IC archive upon graduation.</b>	
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<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
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# (Concentration Title)

An Independent Concentration by (Student Name), Class of (20\_\_)

## Contents:

- I. Overview.....
- II. What.....
- III. How.....
- IV. Why.....
- V. Courses.....
- VI. Courses (Annotated).....
- VII. Thesis/Capstone.....
- VIII. Bibliography.....
- IX. Faculty Sponsor Letter.....

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**0. Cover Letter** - *If this is a resubmission, please outline committee feedback and changes made to this revised version of your application. If this is your first application, please leave blank.*

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(Please type your answer here)

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**2. Overview and Learning Goals** - *Provide a summary of the proposed field's key questions/debates, its reason for existing as an IC at Brown, and a very brief summary of why you are proposing it. Provide a clear description of the proposed concentration's academic goals and trajectory, reflecting on what skills a concentrator in this field would learn. ~250 words*

- *Think of the Overview like the "Description" paragraph you see describing traditional concentrations on [Focal Point](#).*
  - *Think of the Learning Goals like the bullet-pointed "Student Goals" section on Focal Point. Keep in mind that learning goals are your own, not the goals of the field in general. Find an example of clear learning goals in the IC Rubric.*
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(Please type your answer here)

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**3. What** - *Describe the context of the concentration outside of Brown and define key terms ~500-750 words*

- *If the concentration exists at other undergraduate liberal arts institutions comparable to Brown, describe the similarities and differences between the IC and those programs. Consider reaching out to members of those programs for details.*
  - *If the concentration does not exist elsewhere but is a clearly established field of study, describe the state of the field, bring in resources from active scholars, and discuss how your concentration will connect with the larger field. Consider consulting leading journal or contacting some of the relevant scholars for guidance.*
  - *If the concentration does not (yet) exist as a field of study, provide a very compelling description of its necessity, relevance, and academic merit.*
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(Please type your answer here)

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**4. How** - *How do scholars in this interdisciplinary field come to know what they know? How do they collect and analyze data? ~500-750 words*

- *What are your concentration's forms of inquiry, paradigms, viewpoints, key skills, and analytical research methods? Specifically discuss the role of your methods course(s) and the tools you will use to interact with the information in your field. (See Question 5 for more on the methods course.)*
- *How do the different parts of your concentration come together, interact, and build on each other to create something unique and independent? How will you use resources at Brown to accomplish your learning goals?*

**NOTE:** If you are interested in participating in the [Engaged Scholars Program](#) as an independent concentrator, please include an additional description of your interest in the program and how it will relate to your proposed concentration.

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(Please type your answer here)

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**5. Why** – Provide a personal statement of justification for doing this concentration and an explanation of why the curriculum could not be pursued in a standard concentration at Brown. **~1000 words**

- Include a brief statement of personal interest in this topic and how you came to declare this IC.
  - If the IC is similar to any other concentration(s), describe their differences - which should be significant enough to merit the creation of a new concentration. Why is this path necessary?
  - Please refer explicitly to the existing concentrations as they appear on the [University Bulletin](#), which changes frequently! Be sure to reference standard concentrations accurately and mention advising conversations you have had with other advisors from those programs.
  - Read and consider various educational philosophies, including the [Liberal Learning Goals](#) and the philosophy outlined in "[Draft of a Working Paper for Education at Brown University](#)". Describe which educational goals the IC fulfills and how it will do so.
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(Please type your answer here)

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**6. Courses** - List the courses required for the concentration.

- AB concentrations should include **about 11 Core Courses**, including **1 methods course**, and **1 departmental independent study course (DISP)** for your **capstone** (students who wish to complete a thesis or and Sc.B. capstone will have a minimum of 12 courses, as 2 DISPs are required). Most ScB concentrations include **about 17 Core Courses**.
- The course list should include a mix of introductory, intermediate, and advanced courses, logically building on earlier knowledge essential to completing capstone-like work. Adapt the "categories" column to best explain the flow and relationship between courses.
- Consider the knowledge and skills that are integral to the field. You may find it useful to list as alternative courses that accomplish similar intellectual goals (For example, if you plan to take 2 from a list of 5 courses).
- All ICs must have methods delving into the key ways of knowing and doing in the field. For many, this is how people in the field collect and analyze information (e.g. data, narratives), translating theory into practice. For some ICs with a technique- or production-related focus, a production-related methods course is also needed (e.g. a course on how to write non-fiction narrative). Your methods class should prepare you for your senior thesis or capstone project. It may be qualitative, quantitative, theoretical, creative, practical, etc., and more than one course may be required depending on your IC field.
- Specify the [Writing Requirement course](#) you intend to take as a junior or senior.

**NOTE:** If you wish to join the Engaged Scholars Program, remember to list 2 [Engaged Courses](#), the .5 credit ESP reflection seminar or equivalent, and your practicum.

Stud. Sem.	Acad. Sem, Yr	Course Code	Course Title	Instructor	Category
(1-8)	(i.e. Fall 2014)				(i.e. Intro, Advanced, Methods, etc.)
					(Tab to enter new rows)

**7. Courses Annotations-** Describe how each of your courses supports the concentration ~2-3 sentences each

- Divide this section into categories that demonstrate the logical progression of the courses.
- Describe how each will contribute to the concentration's depth as well as breadth, relating the academic material to the concentration's field and learning objectives.
- Strongly consider including a diagram (flow chart, Venn diagram, etc.) of courses to illustrate the coherence of the IC.

(Please type your answer here)

**8. Capstone/Thesis Concept -** Outline the culminating project for the concentration ~250 words

- All ICs must include a final project to tie together the knowledge and skills of the concentration. Describe the format, content, and methodologies of the intended Capstone or Honors Thesis (details on the [IC Info Sheet](#) and the [Thesis Guidelines](#))
- A thesis/capstone gives the student the opportunity to explore at least one of their learning goals in depth, using their chosen analytic or creative method.
- For sophomores, this should be a rough outline of what the final project might entail. Juniors should have a clearer idea of what specific questions the Capstone or Thesis will investigate and the resources necessary.

(Please type your answer here)

**9. Annotated Bibliography -** Provide an annotated list of scholarly works that are relevant to the concentration and support the contents of your proposal **At least 10 works, 1-2 sentences each**

- Works should be either central to the concentration or necessary to fully understand its existence. Describe how each relates to the concentration. Do not simply provide a generic summary.
- Be sure to have as the majority of your sources scholarly texts and articles; references from mainstream/

*popular culture should be kept to a minimum.*

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(Please type your answer here)

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**10. Faculty Sponsor Letter** - Attach a letter of support from the Faculty Sponsor

- The [Faculty Sponsor Info Sheet](#), including the instructions for this letter, can be found on the CRC's website.
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