(Give this form to your intended Independent Concentration Faculty Sponsor)

To the IC Faculty Sponsor:

The College Curriculum Council (CCC) Subcommittee on Independent Concentrations has prepared these comments to help faculty understand their essential role as sponsors of Independent Concentrations (ICs).

Description of the IC Program and its Role at Brown

Independent Concentrations serve the interests of highly independent and motivated students whose programs build on but are autonomous from standard concentrations. The program provides an opportunity for students compelled by a unique disciplinary inquiry that cannot be easily undertaken within an existing concentration. Each Independent Concentration is both Independent and a Concentration; it is a construction of the student’s own design and also a field of study in its own right. As an outgrowth of this student-driven exploration of new disciplines, Independent Concentrations have often heralded the emergence of new standard interdisciplinary concentrations, such as Environmental Studies, Ethnic Studies, and more recently Behavioral Decision Sciences and Contemplative Studies. In this way, they have been useful to the curriculum as a measure of curricular evolution.

Faculty Sponsor’s Role

Eligible sponsors must be regular faculty member at or above the rank of Senior Lecturer; this includes Distinguished Senior Lecturer, Assistant, Associate, and full Professor. (Lecturers, Adjuncts, Clinical Professors, Visiting Professors & Professors of the Practice cannot serve as IC faculty sponsors.)

In addition to being the student's primary advisor, the faculty sponsor of an Independent Concentration often serves as a supervisor for the thesis or capstone. A student may instead choose to have a distinct capstone or thesis advisor. The thesis or capstone advisor must be available during the semester – or in the case of an honor's thesis, the two semesters – during which the culminating project is being completed. Logistics withstanding, faculty who have sponsored ICs in the past have found this to be a very rewarding experience.

As you think about sponsoring an Independent Concentration, consider the following questions:

• Will you be able to supervise the work adequately? How and why will you be particularly helpful to the student proposing the concentration? Will you be on campus and available to the student during the time the work is being undertaken?
• Does the proposal show an integrated approach? Does it develop a coherently focused theme using a distinctive methodology? Does it have disciplinary rigor? What can you offer to the student’s proposed study, thematically and methodologically?
• How do the courses relate to one another and represent a cohesive field of inquiry?
• What is the nature of the final project? Does the student describe it in depth? Is the project feasible? Can you properly advise it?
• Is this an Independent Concentration or is it simply a modified standard concentration? Or a topic of study rather than a field of study?

The IC Committee has found it most effective when the students and faculty consult at length during the development of the proposal. The student benefits also by consulting widely in the development of their ideas and should be encouraged to refer to approved Independent Concentration proposals on file in the Curricular Resource Center website (http://brown.edu/go/ic), and to consult with the IC Dean in the Dean of the College office.
Sponsor’s Statement

Please provide a letter of support for the student and the Independent Concentration, detailing the ways in which you plan to advise, supervise, and participate in the concentration. The student should submit your statement by the proposal deadline (Sept. 1, Oct. 1, Nov. 1, Feb. 1, March 1, or April 1).