

# Special Courses

A special course may be developed by the student, or by the student with the faculty advisor, as an independent and personal search for information and understanding in a defined area. These courses may

- extend the range of subject matter that the student can explore;
- enable the student to collaborate with a faculty member on work relating to the latter's research or teaching;
- enable the student to use special learning opportunities on and off campus;
- offer the student a chance to test self-teaching capacity and to develop skills.

## Course by Appointment

A course by appointment is a course regularly offered and listed in the catalog. It may only be taken by appointment if circumstances do not permit a student to take the course when it is regularly offered. The Application for Special Courses (signed by the student, the course instructor and the vice president for academic affairs) is due before enrolling the student in the course.

## Course on Demand

A course on demand is a course that is listed in the catalog but is only taken on an individual basis. Examples of courses on demand include Field Experience, Readings and Research, Independent Study, or an advanced topics course.

- **Independent Study** – Ordinarily initiated by the student with the advice of the academic advisor, independent study presumes a special interest that will form the basis for a project in original research. Applicants must have a 3.0 grade-point average when they apply. Application is due 30 days prior to the final day of enrollment and must be presented to the vice president for academic affairs accompanied by a prospective course syllabus. The independent study option is course number 299 or 499 in all departments (1-4 credits).
- **Field Experience** – Field experiences involve observation or participation in vocational and operational activities outside the classroom. Students, often participating without pay and for a single term or less, may or may not bring specific skills to the experience. The field experience option is course number 295 or 495 in all departments (1-4 credits).
- **Readings and Research** – Reading and research courses provide an opportunity to do in-depth study in any field. Such courses, which may be initiated by the student or the instructor, may be undertaken only in the major department and only after the student has earned 12 credit hours in that department. A maximum of eight hours of research/readings credit can be counted toward graduation requirements. The Application for Special Courses (signed by the student, the course instructor and the vice president for academic affairs) is due before enrolling the student in the course. The readings and research option is course number 445 in all departments (1-4 credits).

## Career Connections

The Career Connections program of McPherson College is designed to provide the students with an opportunity to gain hands-on work experience in their major fields of study and to receive academic credit for that experience. Students involved in Career Connections should realize valuable educational gains not obtained in the classroom. This knowledge should, in turn, assist the students' transition from the classroom to the job. Appropriate paperwork must be completed before the student is registered in the experience.

*Important Note:* Academic departments at McPherson College are encouraged to help students develop Career Connection options consistent with institutional guidelines; however, all students considering Career Connection experiences should consult with their faculty advisor to determine whether or not their academic department has additional requirements or requirements different from those that follow.

### Career Connections Internship

Internships are designed to provide students with the opportunity to gain work experience in their major fields of study and to receive college credit for that experience. Internships are normally reserved for students who have completed at least four semesters of study since they are expected to bring an appropriate level of skills into a productive employment setting. The internship option is course number 388 in all departments (1-10 credits).

### Eligible Experiences

In consultation with the Career Connections coordinator, the faculty advisor must approve the student's overall experiential learning plan. Any internship or field placement can make an acceptable Career Connections experience, as long as the student can demonstrate to the advisor and the Career Connections coordinator that it can advance previously determined and agreed upon educational goals. A student's previous work experience, although personally valuable, does not meet the Career Connection criteria of directed, independent, and career-related learning.

### Student Eligibility

To be eligible to enroll for a Career Connection option, a student must have completed 12 credit hours at McPherson College or, if a transfer student, and is a junior classification or above, must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0.

A student may be determined to be unplaceable at any time by either the faculty advisor or Career Connections coordinator. This may result in a student not being placed or termination of a placement.

## **Academic Credit Guidelines**

One (1) credit hour may be awarded for approximately 40 hours of relevant internship or field placement experience. A student may not receive more than four (4) hours of credit per semester or term for any kind of career connection's experience unless otherwise approved by the faculty advisor, Career Services director and the Chief Academic Officer. A maximum of ten (10) hours of credit earned through Career Connections experiences can count toward graduation—six (6) for transfer students.

Complete, fully approved applications for internships are due in the registrar's office before the first day of the experience. The Chief Academic Officer reserves the right to deny approval for any internship or field experience that is not submitted before the experience begins.

Academic credit must be applied to the term in which the internship or field experience is taking place. If Career Connections credits push the student's semester load beyond 16 credits, they are charged the overload fee published in the most recent catalog. Career Connections credit hours cannot be applied to an interterm if the total interterm hours exceed four credit hours.

## **Assessment**

In addition to the 40 hours onsite for each credit hour, Career Connections also requires the student to develop goal/strategy plans and reflective log summary reports that include appendices – items the student created or came in contact with. The work log reports, along with feedback from the employer and the performance appraisal will be the primary device used by the Faculty Advisor for grading the experience. However, the Faculty Advisor may also request other journals, papers, and projects for assessment of the total experience. (See assessment objectives worksheet.)