

Information Literacy Requirement at IU Northwest

What is the pedagogical purpose of the Information Literacy requirement?

The purpose of the Information Literacy (IL) requirement is to provide students with intensive practice in locating and evaluating information resources, preferably specific to their major field, with substantive feedback provided by an instructor well-acquainted with publications and literature in that discipline, and in conjunction with instruction regarding information resources from an IU Northwest librarian. Departments and schools/colleges will be allowed considerable latitude in defining what sorts of information retrieval and evaluation experiences are most appropriate for their majors, in coordination with an instruction librarian; consequently the sorts of IL courses offered by different units will vary.

The outcomes for the IL requirement provide that IU Northwest graduates will:

- a) Determine the nature and extent of the information and the information sources needed.
- b) Access the information efficiently from a diverse set of information sources.
- c) Evaluate the information sources critically and incorporate selected information into papers and projects.
- d) Utilize information sources ethically and effectively document and communicate acquired information to accomplish a specific purpose.

With the assistance of an instruction librarian, instructors will provide a variety of course activities to accomplish these outcomes and to provide opportunities for students to create relevant research projects and products.

What are the standard guidelines and requirements for IL credit?

To qualify for IL credit, a course must require that students create a research paper or project that documents mastery of the IL outcomes listed above. The paper or project should include scholarly content and a bibliography. The instructor must provide feedback on the information obtained from sources.

What sorts of classes carry IL credit and who teaches them?

Discipline-specific IL courses must be taught at the 200-level or above by a qualified instructor, in consultation with an IU Northwest librarian. In most cases the instructor will be a full-time member of the faculty; under unusual circumstances the instructor may be a visitor or an adjunct faculty with the approval of the department/school.

How big are IL courses and sections?

Classes designated for automatic IL credit should be limited to no more than 35 students.

Should students take IL courses in their majors?

Whenever possible, students should take research oriented IL courses in their major since these courses will be relevant to their future work within that field. IL/research courses are meant to further refine and develop research skills that will have applications across the curriculum, but most specifically in a student's chosen major.

When should students take IL courses, and what are the prerequisites?

Students are expected to have completed W131, which will include an introductory information literacy component.

When is it appropriate for a student to receive a credit for Information Literacy by Special Arrangement?

It is appropriate only in exceptional cases and only with departmental and university approval and prior to enrollment. Students may meet the IL requirement in conjunction with individualized readings courses, supervised research, internships, or senior theses, as long as the use of specialized information resources meets the guidelines for IL credit.

Can a student earn IL credit for a course taken at another university?

IU Northwest will not consider coursework taken at another university for IL, unless the chair/dean in the student's major specifically makes such a request in writing. As evidence that a student has successfully completed research exercises comparable to those employed in the department's own IL courses, the request must be accompanied by a copy of the course syllabus and specialized information literacy products with instructor's comments.

How can faculty develop a new IL class and what do they need to do to get it approved?

As they structure upper level research courses, instructors are strongly encouraged to consult with the library's Instruction Program for sound pedagogical ideas on how to best meet the requirements of the IL outcomes.

Units that wish to offer IL courses should submit requests for a new course or change to an existing course to their school/college curriculum committee. That committee will verify that the proposed course meets the general IL guidelines. A signed copy of the form for a new course or change to the existing course with a syllabus must accompany the request.

Who will approve the IW designation?

A course will be designated as an IL course after the approval by the course originating school/college curriculum committee and then by the IU Northwest Curriculum Committee.