

FNH 497 (A, B, E) Directed Studies Guidelines

General Course Description

This course provides a means for individual students to undertake customized projects with a supervising faculty member, to develop and strengthen research skills and to accommodate special research interests that cannot be met through other FNH courses. The course may be taken for between 2 and 6 credits and the letter designation on the course code indicates the number of credits (FNH 497A = 2 credits, B = 3; E = 6). There is no set/synchronous time for this course. Instead, the work plan is arranged and agreed to by the student and the supervising faculty member. Students will be expected to spend approximately 50 hours of work per credit (e.g. a 3-credit directed studies course would require approximately 150 hours).

Course Registration

Students should contact the individual faculty member(s) with whom they are interested in conducting a directed studies, well in advance of the beginning of the academic term. For example, students can approach potential supervisors in May or June regarding a directed studies starting in September. Opportunities for conducting directed studies projects are limited. Upon identification of a supervisor and mutual agreement on a research topic between student and supervisor, admission to FNH 497 is facilitated through a course coordinator, and must be recommended by the faculty member who will be supervising the work that the student is to undertake.

Formal registration into the course requires submission of the registration form to the course coordinator. If the project to be conducted is associated with a paid or volunteer position held by the student, care must be taken to ensure that any hours of work on the thesis project are over and above those required by the related position. The supervisor must be satisfied that this requirement has been met. Normally, a minimum of 50% of the work required for the course must be conducted during the session in which the student is enrolled in the course. Exceptions to this requirement may be requested in advance where its application would result in a course overload, unnecessary delay in time to graduation, or the imposition of extra fees.

Course Deliverables

All of the course deliverables are clearly described below, and must be submitted through the course Canvas site. The Canvas site also includes helpful resources for supervisors and students. Examples of each required submission are provided on Canvas as a guide, but the specific structure and content may vary for different projects. Each submission should be created by the student in consultation with their directed studies faculty supervisor. Students must upload all submissions according to the instructions, and by the deadlines posted on Canvas. The required submissions are listed in the table below with typical deadlines.

Item to Submit on Canvas	Due
Copy of the Course Registration Form	Start of the course
Project Timeline	Within 4 weeks of the start of the course
Progress Update*	Mid-point of course
Final Report	End of course

*If applicable, the name of a faculty member who will serve as a second evaluator for the written report should be stated in the progress update.

The **project timeline** should clearly summarize the work plan and is arranged and agreed to by the student and the supervising faculty member. It must be set out in writing and is generally no more than two pages. Typically, the work plan includes time spent on literature search, design of experiments, experimental work and generating reports and presentations. A regular schedule of consultations should be pre-arranged between the supervisor and the student in order to monitor and discuss progress and time spent by the student on the project. If the project is to be conducted totally, or in part, at a location other than UBC, the supervising faculty member will make appropriate arrangements for regular monitoring of student progress and project timeline. This may entail appointment of an on-site co-supervisor.

The **progress update** is typically a 1-2 page written progress report that is shared with the project supervisor approximately halfway through the term. The document should also include the name of a second evaluator for the written report if the report is worth 40% or more of the final grade. If the written report is worth 39% or less, a second evaluator is encouraged but not required. This document should be viewed as an opportunity to reflect on the work plan and adjust as needed. Typically, it will include a short description of the progress to date, a comparison of progress against the originally proposed timeline, any significant changes in the aim or approach for the project, and the remaining experiments that are expected to be completed.

The format for the **final report** for directed studies projects can vary, and it is important for the faculty supervisor to clearly communicate the final report requirements to the student before the course begins. While the report can adopt a format similar to a thesis, it is not mandatory.

Evaluation

The precise breakdown of how the student will be evaluated must be agreed upon by the student and faculty supervisor and included in the course registration form. The grade breakdown must follow the requirements in the table below. Examples of evaluation schemes for FNH 497 can be found on the [course Wiki page](#). The evaluation scheme must include a final written report (worth 20 - 85% of the final grade) and one or more additional forms of assessment. Other forms of assessment may include an oral presentation, evaluation of lab (or

project) work, a research poster, or another form of assessment appropriate for the particular project. Often, though not required, one of the other assessments is an oral presentation, and a 3-hour time slot will be reserved during the final examination period for supervisors that would like to provide students with a venue to present to their peers and other faculty members.

Assessment	Weight
Project Timeline	2.5%
Progress Update	2.5%
Final Written Report*	20 - 85%
One or More Other Assessments (e.g. lab work, poster, oral presentation)	Determined in consultation with supervisor

*If the final report is worth less than 40% of the overall grade, a second evaluator for determining the grade is not required.

Student Responsibilities

- Reach out to potential faculty supervisor(s) who they are interested in working with
- Complete the course registration form in consultation with faculty member supervisor and submit to course coordinator
- Allocate appropriate time to the course (based on the number of credits)
- Take initiative in gaining the necessary background knowledge and skills, and planning and executing the research
- Complete course requirements by the designated due dates (submit via Canvas)

Supervisor Responsibilities

- Select an appropriate research project in conjunction with the student
- Discuss the project objectives, assessment methods and rubrics, and grade breakdown with the student prior to the student completing their course registration form
- Provide suitable laboratory supplies and equipment to perform the work
- Review the student's project timeline and mid-course progress update
- Provide guidance on experimental design, data analysis, and presentation of results
- Schedule regular meetings with the student (e.g. weekly or biweekly)
- Provide feedback on the student's draft of their final report in a timely manner
- Assess student's work and provide feedback

Course Coordinator Responsibilities

- Make sure all required information is correctly included in the course registration form
- Submit approved forms to LFS Student Services to enroll students

- Monitor Canvas site to ensure students have submitted the required activities on time, and send one-time reminder emails if needed
- Coordinate final presentations during the exam period
- Submit students' final grades to LFS Student Services

Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

How does FNH 497 differ from a thesis (FNH 499)?

A thesis requires that a student spend 6 credit hours conducting research, write a formal thesis, and deliver an oral presentation of the project findings. FNH 497 also includes a written report but the structure is more flexible, and a presentation may or may not be required in addition to other possible deliverables. Note that FNH 497 cannot substitute for FNH 425 for students required to complete FNH 425 or FNH 499 in order to graduate.

What are some examples of directed studies projects?

Examples include conducting a:

- Literature review on a topic
- Project with industry or community partner
- Smaller-scale research project that requires 2 or 3 credit hours instead of 6 like a thesis

How do I enroll in FNH 497?

- First, contact the faculty member you would like to work with, to see if they have the capacity to supervise you in a Directed Studies project in the term(s) in which you would like to complete FNH 497
- If a faculty member agrees to supervise you, develop a plan for an appropriate Directed Studies project through discussion with them
- Fill out the registration form in consultation with your faculty member supervisor and submit it to the course coordinator
- If approved, the course coordinator will send your completed form to LFS Student Services who will enroll you in the course
- After being enrolled in the course you will have access to the Canvas course where you will submit your required course activities

Can a 6-credit FNH 497 be conducted in 1 term?

Yes, you can complete a 6-credit FNH 497 project in one term but be prepared to dedicate twice as much time to your project. It is important to consider the nature of your project and whether 3-months is enough time to collect/analyze the data.

Can a 6-credit FNH 497 start in Winter Term 2 and finish in Summer Term 1?

Unfortunately, you cannot sign up for a 6-credit FNH 497 that starts in Winter Term 2 and finishes in Summer Term 1.

APPENDIX

FNH 497 (A, B, E) Directed Studies Registration Form

Student Name:	
UBC Student #:	
Term(s):	
Credit Level:	
Start Date: (if other than the start of term)	
End Date: (if other than the end of term)	
Project Site:	
Site Supervisor: (if applicable)	
Faculty Supervisor:	

Approvals	Electronic Signature	Date
Student		
Faculty Supervisor		
Site Supervisor (if applicable)		
Course Coordinator		

Project description and grade breakdown must be provided on the following page

Project Description and Evaluation

Please fill in each of the sections below. Example project descriptions, evaluation schemes, and grading rubrics can be found on the [course Wiki page](#).

Project description including objectives

Student learning outcomes

Evaluation scheme (review requirements in the FNH 497 guidelines)

Grading rubrics for each assessment method