

Directed Research Guidelines

Purpose

The following guidelines are intended to be for EE students who wish to enroll in Directed Research (DR). Undergraduate students may enroll in EE 490, which carries a letter grade. Graduate students may enroll in EE 590 (MS), EE 690 (Engineer/Special Projects), or EE 790 (PhD), which is graded CR/NC. These guidelines clearly state your responsibilities as a student and the responsibilities of the faculty member supervising the DR.

Course Description

The catalogue definition of DR is any research leading to a given degree. DR can be original research on a defined topic, assisting faculty and their graduate students with their research, or any other research learning experience that is appropriate.

The research assignment for DR is mutually agreed upon by the faculty member and student. DR requires personal one-to-one interaction between faculty and student. Interaction can be by telephone, email, office visits, or any form of electronic communication. If deviations from a research plan occur during the semester, the faculty member and student must both agree to changes to the plan. Students can also carry out DR in groups with permission from the faculty member. For BS and MS students, the faculty member will expect the work to be presented at the end of the semester typically in the form of a final written report. They will also require you to communicate with them on a regular basis throughout the semester so they can guide your work and monitor your progress.

DR may be taken for 1 to 12 units, depending on the degree objective (the exact limits for each level of DR are specified in the catalogue). For BS students, a maximum of 16 units of DR may be counted towards your degree (12 units maximum from any one department). For MS students, entering in Fall 2017 and later, a maximum of 4 units of DR may be counted towards your degree. For students who entered in Spring 2017 and earlier, a maximum of 6 units of DR can be counted towards your degree. For PhD students, there is no limit as to how many units of DR may be counted towards your degree.

In order to receive approval to register for DR, faculty may ask you for a copy of your STARS report and unofficial transcripts prior to agreeing to the DR. The number of DR units agreed upon by the faculty member and student should have a workload equivalent to the specified number of units of a regular course (i.e. a 3-unit EE course typically requires 10 hours per week of study and preparation time).

Steps to Register for Directed Research

1. As a student, you are responsible for finding a faculty member to work with you on a proposed DR topic. A list of all EE faculty and their research interests can be found here: minghsiehee.usc.edu/directory/faculty/. After contacting the proposed faculty member, you will need to receive their verbal approval that they will supervise your DR.
2. When you receive the faculty member's approval, fill out the online DR application form at myviterbi.usc.edu. Be sure to include a project plan that briefly defines the topic, the approach, and the outcomes that are expected. Once your DR application has been submitted, faculty are sent an email directing them to approve/deny your proposed DR project.
3. If a faculty member approves your DR request, notify EE Student Services located in EEB 102 via e-mail, phone, or in person, and we will provide you with D-clearance for the appropriate DR course.
4. Once you receive D-clearance for DR you may register for this course on Web Registration.

Please note: EE 490, 590, 690 and 790 are offered every semester and follow the regular registration deadline. If you plan to take DR during the summer semester, please be sure to check the session codes published on the Schedule of Classes, as some classes may have an early registration deadline.

Academic Integrity

All USC academic integrity rules apply to DR. Your work and final report should be your own ideas and in your own words. Oral presentations are an effective way to communicate the work performed, and may be required by the faculty member in lieu of or as a supplement to the written report.