

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Division of Adult and Career Education

GUIDELINE NO. 26.01  
July 3, 2023

SUBJECT: GUIDELINES FOR ADULT EDUCATION INDEPENDENT STUDY

- I. Introduction
- II. Background
- III. Scope
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I. INTRODUCTION

This Guideline supersedes Guideline No. 26 issued April 13, 2015, and reflects changes in Division policy for Adult Independent Study administration and revisions to the California Education Code.

Key changes include:

- III.F: Additional Guidance regarding pupils with IEPs
- V.B: Electronic file maintenance and storage

II. BACKGROUND

Independent study is an optional alternative instructional strategy for K-12 programs made possible by 1976 legislation (SB 1501 and SB 1591). Subsequent revisions in the law (SB 1563 in 1989) allow the District to offer independent study options to students enrolled in adult education in order to fulfill graduation requirements for the adult high school diploma. Authorization for independent study is found in California Education Code, Article 5.5, Section 51745-51749, and California Code of Regulations, Title 5.

III. SCOPE

The policy stipulated in this bulletin applies to District community adult schools, skills centers and employment preparation centers providing high school instruction leading to the adult high school diploma.

- A. Independent study is an educational alternative in adult education that is responsive to the academic, personal, and social needs of individual students. This option allows students the freedom to develop skills based on their individual needs and interests by

studying outside the regular comprehensive classroom setting. Independent study may be used by students who are motivated and mature enough to achieve academic success by studying independently.

- B. A student must be willing to complete work independently and to keep scheduled appointments, with his or her supervising teacher (5CCR P11702[b]).
- C. All students enrolled in independent study are entitled to all existing services and resources to enable them to complete their independent study successfully and shall receive the same access to all existing services and resources that are available to all other students enrolled at community adult schools, skills centers and employment preparation centers in the District (EC 51746).
- D. No student shall be required to participate in adult independent study. All students shall have the alternative of at least one classroom instruction option (EC 51747[c] [7]).
- E. No temporarily disabled student may receive individual instruction through adult independent study pursuant to Education Code, Section 48206.3 (EC 51745[d]).
- F. An individual with exceptional needs, as defined in EC 56026, may not enroll in adult independent study unless his or her individualized education program (IEP) specifically provides for such enrollment (EC 51745[c]).

The pupil's inability to work independently, need for adult support, or need for related special education services shall not preclude the individualized education program team from determining that the pupil can receive a free appropriate education in independent study (amendment to EC 51745[c]).

- G. Students who are suspended or expelled from instruction in the District may not be enrolled in adult independent study. Students whose expulsions have been suspended, pursuant to Education Code, Sections 48915 or 48917, may enroll in adult independent study only if they are also offered the alternative of at least one classroom instruction option (EC 51747[c] [7]).
- H. The adult independent study by each student shall be coordinated, evaluated, and notwithstanding subdivision (a) of Education Code, Section 46300, shall be under the general supervision of an employee of the school district who possesses a valid certification document pursuant to Section 44865, registered as required by law (EC 51747.S[a]). (The principal of the adult school will designate this employee in writing).

#### IV. PROCEDURES

##### A. Enrollment

1. Any adult student may request enrollment in adult independent study if it is available at the school of attendance.
2. Although the adult independent study option is available to all students, students should be counseled as to whether adult independent study is the appropriate option when they lack the motivation, skills, and support systems required for

success. Recommendation by the supervising teacher will also be considered in choosing the appropriate mode of instruction for the individual student (EC 51746[b] [1] [2]).

#### B. Enrollment for Concurrent Students

1. In cases where funding for the AIS teacher is provided by an allowable K-12 source, any parent may request enrollment of his or her concurrently enrolled high school student in adult independent study if it is available at the local community adult school, subject to limitations on concurrent education and space availability (EC 52500.1[a] [b]).
2. To maintain the instructional integrity of the adult independent study program, enrollment of concurrent students is restricted by the guidelines delineated in Chief Instructional Officer, Division of Instructional Services, BUL-1758.0, May 31, 2005, Adult School Academic Course Options for Concurrently Enrolled Students.

#### C. Staffing

1. The District employee supervising, evaluating, and coordinating independent study must be in possession of an appropriate academic teaching credential (EC 51747.5[a]).
2. The hours assigned to an adult independent study class are determined by each adult school. It is recommended that the teacher be supported by a teacher assistant or instructional aide. To maintain the comprehensive audit trail, it is recommended that a portion of the independent study teacher's assignment be used for record keeping.
3. The Individualized Instruction Lab and instruction for independent study must take place separately. Separate materials, space, and section numbers must be maintained.

### V. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

#### A. Independent Study Master Agreement

1. A written Master Agreement is required for all students enrolling in adult independent study in the District. The Master Agreement for adult independent study serves as authorization to substitute the student's performance or study for the student's presence in a classroom (EC 51747).
2. Prior to the signing of the Master Agreement, the Assistant Principal, Adult Counseling Services, or principal's designee, will implement appropriate screening procedures to ensure that the necessary level of understanding, maturity and preparation exist to meet the conditions of the adult independent study Master Agreement (EC 51746[b]).

3. The Master Agreement, Record of Assignment form(s), Evaluation and Certification form, and pupil work product samples must be maintained on file for three school years after the school year in which it originated, along with the assignments and samples of the work product of each subject assigned (51747). It must include but is not limited to the following (51747 [c]):
  - a. The approval signatures of the student, the student's parent/guardian if the student is less than 18 years of age or concurrently enrolled, the certificated teacher responsible for the general supervision of adult independent study, and any other persons who have direct responsibility for helping the pupil (51747[c] [8]).
  - b. The manner, time, frequency, and place for submitting a pupil's assignment and for reporting his or her progress (51747 [c] [1]).
  - c. The objectives and methods of study for the pupil's work and the method utilized to evaluate the pupil's work (51747[c] [2]).
  - d. The specific resources which will be made available to the student in order to attain the objectives (51747[c] [3]).
  - e. A statement reflecting the Board of Education policy that the maximum length of time which may elapse between the date an assignment is given and the date by which the assignment is due shall be four weeks (51747[c] [4]).
  - f. A statement reflecting the Board of Education policy that the number of missed consecutive assignments which will be allowed before an evaluation is conducted to determine whether it is in the best interest of the student to remain in adult independent study, or whether the student should return to the regular school program, shall be two consecutively missed assignments (51747[c] [4]).
  - g. The duration of the independent study agreement shall not be valid for a period longer than one school year from the beginning and ending dates for the pupil's participation under the agreement (51747[c] [5]).
  - h. A statement of the number of course credits to be earned by the pupil upon completion (51747[c] [6]).
  - i. A statement that adult independent study is an optional educational alternative in which no pupil may be required to participate. In the case of a pupil who is referred or assigned to any school, class or program pursuant to Education Code, Section 48917, the agreement shall also include the statement that instruction may be provided to the student through adult independent study only if the student is also offered the alternative of at least one classroom option (51747[c] [7]).
  - j. Enrollment in adult independent study does not take place until a valid Master Agreement is on file (51747[c] [8]). No Attendance or ADA may be claimed from independent study until the written agreement is completed (EC sections 46300.7, 51747[g][9], and 51749.6[b][1])

## B. Independent Study Records

Signed written agreements, supplemental agreements, assignment records, work samples, and attendance records assessing time value of work or evidence that an instructional activity occurred may be maintained as an electronic file. An electronic file includes a computer or electronic stored image of an original document, including, but not limited to, portable document format (PDF), JPEG, or other digital image file type, that may be sent via fax machine, email, or other electronic means (51747[g][9][B]) and (51747[g][9][C]). Refer to *the Division of Adult and Career Adult Independent Study Program Handbook* for policy and procedures on electronic file storage.

1. All permanent records shall be kept digitally by the adult school of attendance at the adult independent study site and shall show credits attempted by and awarded to each student per Master Agreement (5CCR 11703).
2. Required records for adult independent study audits must be kept at the adult independent study site and shall include, but not be limited to the following:
  - a. A copy of the adopted school board policy and procedures reflective of current Education Code and California Code of Regulations requirements (5CCR 11703).
  - b. A file of all Master Agreements to be maintained a minimum of three years (5CCR 11703) (EC 51747[c]).
  - c. A daily or hourly attendance register that is separate from classroom attendance records, maintained on a current basis as time values of pupil work products judged by a certificated teacher. Guidelines delineated in Division of Instructional Services, BUL-6779.5, August 29, 2022.
  - d. Regular assignment records (student contracts and documentation packets) and work records indicating the following (5CCR 11703):
    - (1) Dates assignments are given and due
    - (2) Description of the assignments
    - (3) Dates assignments are completed
    - (4) Representative samples of evaluated student work (Representative samples must include the following information: score/grade, time value, date, teacher initials)
    - (5) Teacher evaluation of assignments
    - (6) Course titles and credits attempted and earned
  - e. A written record of grades and other evaluations made pursuant to missed assignments issued to each student in adult independent study for any missed assignment (5CCR 11703).

### C. Apportionment

1. Each District adult school may claim no more than ten percent of its average daily attendance (ADA) for adult independent study apportionment (EC 51745[b]).
2. Independent study attendance is based on student product rather than physical presence. When the student submits or demonstrates evidence of completed assigned work by the due dates established in the Master Agreement and the work has been evaluated, the teacher credits the student by determining the time value of completed assignments (EC 51747).
3. Attendance or ADA for apportionment is based on the time value of pupil work products or a combination of time value of the work product and participation in synchronous instruction (EC Section 51747[5] [b]).
4. Attendance credit for adult students in independent study is based on apportionment equal to a maximum of three hours per calendar day, five days per week. Attendance credit may not exceed 15 hours per student, per week.
5. The limit on teacher-student ratio allows no attendance or ADA revenue to be earned from the ADA of students in independent study when the ratio exceeds the equivalent ratio for all other instructional programs of the District (EC 51745.6).
6. English as a Second Language, non-academic electives, High School Equivalency preparation and vocational education courses are not eligible for apportionment in adult independent study (EC 46300.4, 51225.3, 51745, 52505).

### D. Course of Instruction

1. Adult independent study courses must be contained in the Catalog of Authorized Adult Courses, must have a current Division authorized student contract available, and meet the criteria delineated in this bulletin. Expansion beyond this scope must be in accordance with the adult independent study educational opportunities described in the Education Code (EC 52523[a]) (EC 51745).
2. No courses included among required courses for the adult high school diploma shall be offered exclusively through adult independent study (EC 51745).

### E. Instructional Materials

1. Adult schools offering adult independent study classes shall have necessary and appropriate instructional materials, including books and media available for home use by adult independent study students (EC51747 [c] [3]). The books and other instructional materials used for adult independent study are to be available to the student separate and independent of the materials available in Adult Individualized Instruction Labs.

F. Academic Credit

1. Credit may be granted only for completion of courses of instruction listed in the Catalog of Authorized Adult Courses, meeting the criteria for adult independent study delineated in this document. Any expansion beyond this established scope must be in accordance with the independent study educational opportunities described in the Education Code (EC 51747[c] [b]).
2. The permanent record of every adult independent study student must show the subjects attempted, as well as credits and grades awarded to each student (5CCR 11703, 16023).

G. Diplomas

1. Adult independent study students must complete the same diploma requirements as students enrolled in any District community adult school or employment preparation center (EC 46100, 51225.3[b]).
2. The diploma must be issued by and bear the name of the school at which the independent study student was enrolled (ECS1748).

**RELATED  
RESOURCES:**

- Division of Instruction Bulletin 6779.5 dated August 29, 2022
- Division of Adult and Career Education Guideline No. 26 dated April 13, 2015
- Division of Adult and Career Education Bulletin 24 dated June 3, 1996

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