



Student Directed Seminars Student FAQs

- **How is this different than a directed studies course?**

The Student Directed Seminars program is an enhanced version of a directed studies course. As the Student Coordinator, you will choose a topic, design, and develop your own seminar with the support of faculty and staff, and then facilitate the seminar with a small group of your peers. All students, including the Student Coordinator will receive 3-credits upon completion of the seminar.

- **How can I increase my chances of being approved for a SDS?**

It is strongly recommended that you attend one of the information sessions offered. Registration for these sessions is available on the website [here](#). In addition, you are encouraged to find a faculty sponsor as early as possible, before starting your application. Your faculty sponsor can provide guidance on choosing a topic, as well as developing a high-quality proposal.

- **Is there a limit to how many students can register in a SDS course?**

Yes, there will be a maximum of 15 students permitted in each seminar.

- **Are there examples of past successful applications?**

This will be the first year for the Student Directed Seminars program, so we do not have any examples of successful applications. If you have any questions while working on your proposal, or would like some feedback, please feel free to contact the curriculum office by emailing fasscurriculum.ubco@ubc.ca.

- **When does the seminar start?**

Seminars approved in June 2022, will run January – April 2023 (also referred to as 2022W T2).

- **What training is available for Student Coordinators?**

If your seminar is approved, you will receive a combination of training and mentorship from your faculty sponsor, the Centre for Teaching and Learning, and staff from the Dean's Office.

There will be mandatory training offered in the fall prior to the seminar starting. Training will focus on a range of topics, including developing learning outcomes, designing assessments, and facilitating inclusive and respectful dialogue.

- **How do I choose a faculty sponsor?**

When choosing a faculty sponsor, you will want to make sure it is someone that can offer support and guidance in the topic you choose. Ideally, they will also be a tenured faculty member that has the capacity to commit to you and your seminar. You can refer any interested faculty member to the faculty sponsor section of the SDS [website](#) and the FAQ page [here](#).

- **How does grading work?**

When designing your seminar, it will be up to you and your faculty sponsor to decide how much peer-grading there will be and how much you will ask your faculty sponsor to grade. For example, you might choose to have all assignments except the final project be peer-graded. Regardless of what you decide, your faculty sponsor will be required to sign off on all final grades at the end of the term. Strategies for peer-grading and assessments will be part of the mandatory training for Student Coordinators.

- **Can students from outside FASS participate?**

Yes, students from any faculty across campus are welcome to register in the seminar as long as they meet the seminar prerequisites, if any. However, students outside of FASS should refer to their own program's requirements to determine if these seminars are applicable.

At this time, only students registered in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences can propose a seminar and become a Student Coordinator.

- **Does the SDS have to be discipline-specific? What if I have an idea for an interdisciplinary SDS?**

When proposing your seminar, you will be asked to select a course code (i.e. ANTH, SOCI, PSYO, etc.). However, it is recommended that your topic have interdisciplinary appeal, as we hope these seminars will offer opportunities for multi-disciplinary collaboration. In your application, you are encouraged to expand on how your topic can be critically viewed through various disciplinary lenses.

- **When are SDS applications approved?**

All applicants will be notified of whether their seminar is approved by late June 2022.

- **Do the faculty sponsor form and faculty recommender form need to come from the same person?**

Your faculty sponsor and faculty recommender can be the same person, but it can also be two different faculty members. Ideally for your faculty recommender, you will want to choose someone who can speak to your academic background, leadership experience, and suitability to coordinate a seminar. Whereas your faculty sponsor should be an expert in the field of your proposed topic, someone who can provide guidance and support as you design your seminar and put together a reading list.

- **How can I make sure the topic I'm proposing isn't already offered at UBCO?**

When deciding on the topic you want to propose, please review the UBC Okanagan Academic Calendar and look under the list of course descriptions, which you can find listed by course code [here](#). If you have reviewed the list of course offerings and you still aren't sure, we encourage you to further discuss your topic idea with your faculty sponsor.

- **Are Student Coordinators expected to teach their seminar?**

As a Student Coordinator, it is imperative that you understand your role as a facilitator and not as an instructor. It is not your role to teach the seminar, rather you are taking a lead role in designing, coordinating, and facilitating the seminar week-to-week for you and your peers. You are considered equal to your fellow peers and are expected to complete all assignments.

- **How do I integrate learning outcomes into my seminar?**

As part of the proposal, you are asked to provide 3-5 learning outcomes for your seminar. If you are unsure on how to write these, we encourage you to review the Centre for Teaching and Learning's website [here](#). If you still need further assistance or would like feedback, you can contact your faculty sponsor or the curriculum office by emailing fasscurriculum.ubco@ubc.ca.

- **How should I promote my seminar?**

Once your seminar has been approved, the curriculum office will discuss next steps and options for promoting your seminar. The goal is to have a minimum of 5 students registered in your seminar. Some options for promoting could be done via social media, posters, and course unions.

- **What support and/or resources are offered to Student Coordinators?**

Once your seminar is approved, the curriculum office will discuss next steps for training and ongoing support. From approximately August 2022 to April 2023, the three key places you will receive support from are your faculty sponsor, the Centre for Teaching and Learning, and the curriculum office in the Dean's office. During the mandatory training you will also learn about additional resources across campus that are available to you and your fellow peers registered in your seminar.

- **Does the student coordinator receive credit for the seminar as well?**

Yes, the Student Coordinator and the students registered will receive 3-credits upon completion of the seminar.

- **Is the SDS open to graduate students?**

Graduate students interested in the SDS can email fasscurriculum.ubco@ubc.ca.

- **How can I find out if my potential faculty sponsor is tenured?**

A list of faculty and their status can be found on each department page:

Community, Culture and Global Studies: <https://ccgs.ok.ubc.ca/about/contact/>

Psychology: <https://psych.ok.ubc.ca/about/contact/>

History and Sociology: <https://hs.ok.ubc.ca/about/contact/>

Economics, Philosophy and Political Science: <https://epp.ok.ubc.ca/about/contact/>