

IDT 592: Supervised Research in IDT

Overview

IDT 592 is a required course for all M.S. students, and an optional course for all others. The purpose of this course is to expose students to the daily activities of conducting research in IDT suitable for presentation and publication. You will spend 3 hours per week per credit working on research. These credits are not intended to provide you with a full research background or training; there are graduate courses (e.g., EFR 509, 515 & 516) that focus on those skills, and you should consider taking those courses if you are interested in becoming proficient. Taking those nine credits constitutes MINIMAL proficiency in conducting research independently; you do not become independently expert until you have taken those courses, written a dissertation, and published at least one article. Obviously, this experience cannot be condensed down into the 2 required credits for IDT 592. So while it is possible for your research experience to be a research study of your own design, that is only so if you have research design and statistical training from previous coursework.

Alternatively, and more commonly, you can work on existing research projects that IDT faculty have. As higher education faculty, we are required to publish and present frequently in order to keep current in our fields, which in turn ensures that we are qualified to provide students with the best learning experiences. Accordingly, we always have a few projects that are ongoing which you can participate in to see what real-world research looks like.

What to Expect

Your experience will constitute jumping in wherever the project is at that particular point in time, and doing whatever is normally done in terms of data collection, research review, statistical analysis, data entry, writing, etc. Your experience will start with the beginning of the semester and run through the end of the semester.

You will in all likelihood NOT see a project from the beginning nor through its end. Projects take many months or years to complete, and what you experience will be only a one semester slice of that full project.

It will not be glamorous. Real research is not glamorous; it is a daily grind of predominantly rote tasks such as searching for and reading articles, entering data, running participants, making copies, etc. If it were easy and fun, everyone would publish articles all the time. It IS rewarding in the long run, and it does make it all worthwhile when you find results that are publishable, but approximately half of the studies we run result in nothing.

You will not be a published author as a result of this experience. The purpose of this class is to provide you with the experience of the process of conducting research. The part of the process that you experience is only one small part of the full process, and the generation of publications based on this work is a completely DIFFERENT process. The work you do is reflected in the credits you earn toward your degree.

Any *presentations* at conferences that arise from this work will have your name on them up to a maximum of six presenters. Order of the names will be determined by contributions to the project (e.g., number of credits/hours, importance of the individual contributions, etc.). This is because when you have more than 6 presenters or authors, the work is almost never cited or used in the literature (people are lazy, and don't like citing 6 names in a paper for one cite—sad, but true).

Later, you may have the opportunity to participate in the writing of articles or chapters. After you have completed the class, and at the discretion of the researcher based on need, opportunity, and your ability to contribute, you may be invited to participate in the generation of published work. This work is not compensated by credits, and requires dedication of your time outside of work and schoolwork to do. If you are able to contribute this time and author significant parts of the manuscript, your effort is reflected in a co-authored publication. Again, the nature of what you do in this process will be determined by your expertise, capability, and the needs of the writing as determined by the lead author, who is the researcher who has conducted the research. If you are able to do the work, you will be listed as a co-author.

You will not learn the same things as other students have. Because every project is different, and because you will be jumping in at whatever point the project is at, your experience will vary from that of others. Again, the purpose of this class is not a common set of competencies, but a common experience of conducting research in the real world. So while one of your peers may be involved in working on running participants, and another on data entry, you may be involved primarily in literature searches. Be assured that your experience is valuable (even if all it does is convince you that you don't like research!) whether you are involved in the “cool” parts or not.