

HKS Reading and Research Courses

What is a Reading and Research Course (RAR)?

RAR courses are independent research courses offered at the discretion of the faculty, who may accept or decline a student's request to have them supervise an RAR. The usual outcome of an RAR is a major research paper, 25 – 35 pp in length. Faculty are expected to meet regularly with the student during the term to discuss the work in progress, and are responsible for overseeing the thorough completion of the RAR Contract (see **Procedures and Guidelines** below).

Who may supervise an RAR course?

RARs may be supervised only by HKS faculty at the ranks of Assistant, Associate and full Professor, and Lecturer. Students who wish to work with faculty not in one of these categories or outside of the Kennedy School must obtain permission from the Office of the Registrar. Students are not permitted to complete RARs with non-Harvard faculty.

Approved RAR courses taken at other Harvard faculties require a cross-registration petition, and will count toward your 2-credit per semester cross-registration limit. Students are only permitted to do an RAR or Independent Study with a faculty member at another Harvard School only if that school offers RAR's (or the equivalent) and they have received approval from the HKS Office of the Registrar. To get approval for a RAR or the equivalent with a non-HKS faculty at another Harvard School, students need to complete and submit a course pre-approval petition to the Office of the Registrar.

Procedures and Guidelines for HKS RARs

RAR courses are graded "Sat/Unsat" only, and may be taken for a full term for 1.0 credit. Module-length or 0.5 credit RAR's are not allowed. Students are required to complete an "RAR Contract", which is a formal agreement between the student and the faculty member outlining the work the student must accomplish to receive a grade. RAR courses are identified by the prefix "RAR" and the faculty member's 3-digit RAR number (i.e. RAR-001), which may be obtained from the Registrar's Office. All RARs supervised by the same faculty member receive the same course number, even though they may be working with several different students.

Contracts for HKS RARs are due to the Office of the Registrar by that semester's Add/Drop deadline (please refer to the academic calendar). The deadline for completion of work for an RAR is the last day of classes. Should you receive an Incomplete for an RAR, its completion must be overseen by the faculty member you began your research with (exceptions to this rule may be made in extenuating circumstances). You may not be paid for the research associated with an RAR, and there can be no benefit to a particular organization from your work.

