Dates of Approvals: 17th November, 2023 (Approved at the 19th IQAC-PGIS)
24th February , 2024 (Approved at the 177th BoM)

# Standard Operating Procedure of the Independent Study Course of the Masters/ Master of Science Degree programme

Postgraduate Institute of Science (PGIS), University of Peradeniya

## 1. Purpose:

To describe the procedure of conducting the Independent Study course of the Masters/ Master of Science (M.Sc.) postgraduate degree programmes.

## 2. Scope:

This SOP outlines the procedure to conduct the Independent Study course of the Masters/M.Sc. Degree programme. It specifies the general structure of the course, study methodology and the overall assessment strategy.

## 3. Responsibility:

**a) Monitoring the SOP:**

Director, Board of Management-PGIS (BoM-PGIS), Coordinating Committee-PGIS (CC-PGIS), Board/s of study-PGIS (BoS-PGIS)

**b) Implementing the SOP:**

BoS-PGIS, Assistant Registrar, Internal Quality Assurance cell (IQAC) coordinator**,** Course coordinators

## 4. Detailed Procedure:

**4.1.** A five-credit Independent Study is a compulsory component of the course work of each Masters/M.Sc. Degree programme. One credit of independent study requires engagement of at least 100 notional hours. The total notional hours of the Independent Study course shall be 500.

**4.2.** The Independent Study shall be carried out in consultation with a supervisor/s appointed by the relevant BoS on recommendation of the Programme Coordinator.

**4.3.** Supervisors are expected to supervise not more than five students of a given programme. However, under special circumstances the relevant BoS may accommodate changes to this condition.

**4.4.** If the independent study involves human or animal subjects or any other ethical issues, clearance should be requested from the Committee for Ethical Clearance at the PGIS. Required forms can be downloaded from the PGIS website (http://www.pgis.lk/) or obtain from the Office of the PGIS.

**4.5.** The Independent Study course may be conducted in various modes as outlined below. Different modes shall be applied in accordance with the requirements of different BoS.

***4.5.1.*** **Mode 1:**

***Review Report:***

Review shall be in the field of the M.Sc. Programme. Review report shall comprise of 10-20 single-spaced A4 pages prepared according to the thesis format of the PGIS (http://www.pgis.lk/downloads/students/info_report_thesis_guide_2018.pdf).

The report includes a review of literature on the project. Students shall develop a concise and professionally written review report; logically present reported results, compose the abstract, the article, and compile the list of references.

Main components of the report: Title page, Declaration, Contents, Abstract, Introduction, Main body with subtitles, Research Questions, Synthesis or Analysis of the literature review, Conclusion/Summary, Acknowledgements, List of References

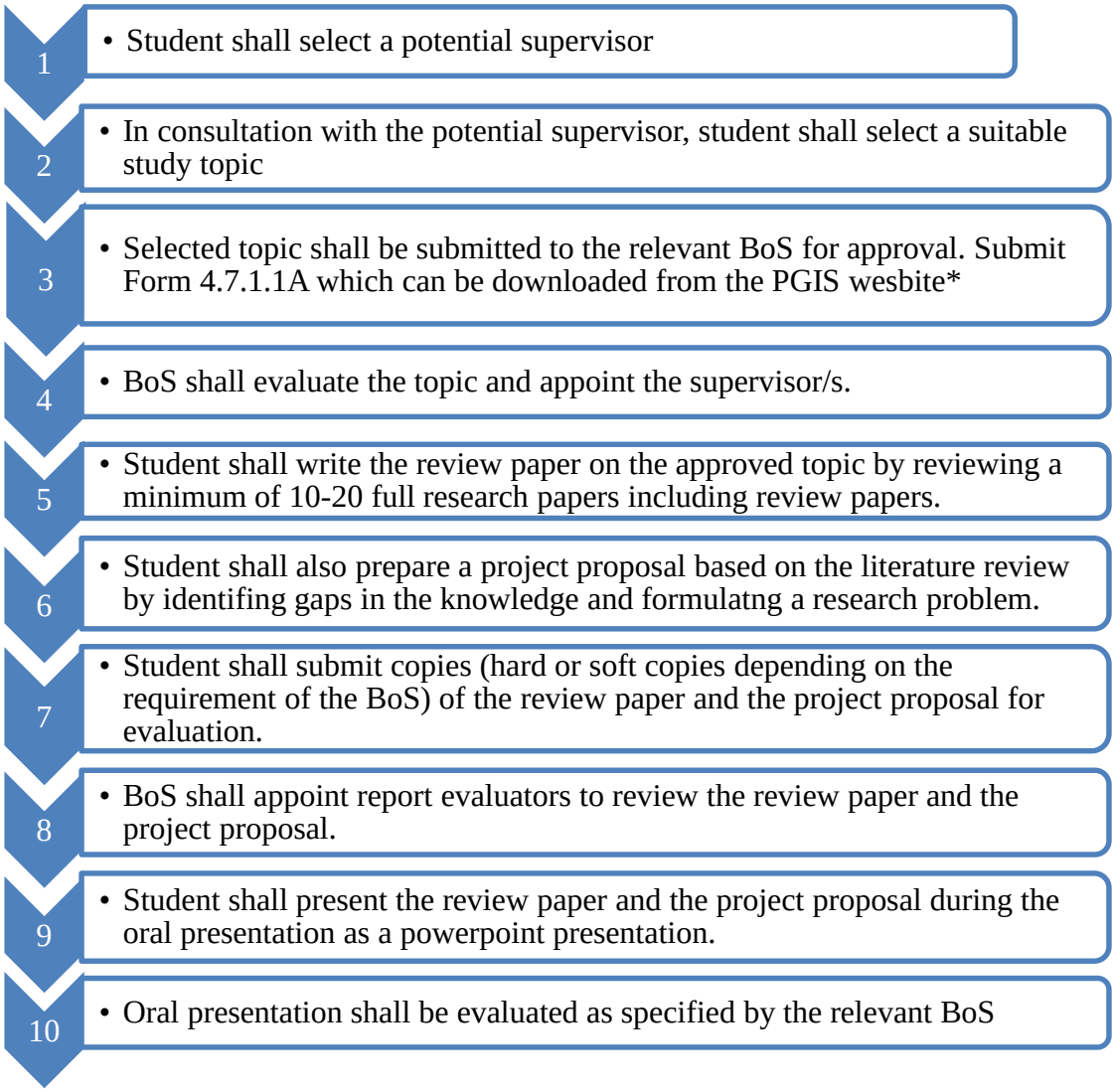
***Proposal Writing:***

Students shall interpret and critically evaluate results of published research and formulate a research problem by identifying gaps in knowledge, demonstrating the understanding of the subject matter and communicating the significance of the proposed study to potential stakeholders. Research proposal template shall be specified by respective BoS.

***Seminar:***

Students shall deliver an oral presentation that is based on the literature review and the project proposal.

The general procedure to conduct the Independent Study course under Mode 1 shall be as follows:




*Form 4.7.1.1A shall be submitted before starting the Independent Study. The submission shall be made within 1 month from the date of commencement of Semester I.

### 4.5.2. Mode 2:

***Mini project:***

Students shall conduct an extensive literature survey on a chosen topic and then proceed to undertake a project centered on the selected topic.

***Project Report:***

Students shall prepare a report based on the project. The report shall be prepared according to the thesis format of the PGIS (http://www.pgis.lk/downloads/students/info_report_thesis_guide_2018.pdf).

***Seminar:***

Students shall deliver an oral presentation that is based on the project they have completed.

The general procedure to conduct the Independent Study course under Mode 2 shall be as follows:

1. Student shall select a potential supervisor
2. In consultation with the potential supervisor, student shall select a suitable study topic/project to work on
3. Selected topic shall be submitted to the relevant BoS for approval. Submit Form 4.7.1.1A which can be downloaded from the PGIS wesbite*
4. BoS shall evaluate the topic and appoint the supervisor/s.
5. Student shall conduct an extensive literature survey related to the project that they work on
6. Student shall present their project progress during the mid-term progress evaluation (assigned evaluators shall assess the progress)
7. At the end of the course the student shall present the total project progress
8. Student shall submit copies (hard or soft copies depending on the requirement of the BoS) of the report for evaluation.

*Form 4.7.1.1A shall be submitted before starting the Independent Study. The submission shall be made within 1 month from the date of commencement of Semester I.

Certain Masters/M.Sc. programmes may deviate from the general procedures outlined above. For instance, some programmes may not assign an individual supervisor. Instead, the process shall proceed with a three-member panel. Such deviations are implemented in accordance with the recommendations of the relevant BoS.

**4.6.** The general procedure for the evaluation of the Independent study course shall be as follow.

***4.6.1. Evaluation of the review paper and the project proposal:***

BoS shall appoint report evaluators to review the submitted review paper and the project proposal. The number of evaluators shall dependent upon the requirements of relevant BoS. Both the evaluators and the supervisor/s shall evaluate the review paper and the proposal. Common criteria to be used for evaluation are outlined below. These may be subject to variations based on specific requirements of each BoS.

- Review paper: Introduction, abstract, analysis and discussion, summary, references
- Research proposal: Introduction and the identification of the research problem, objectives, research methodology, expected outcomes, budget justification, and references

***4.6.2. Evaluation of the oral presentation:***

The oral presentation shall be evaluated by a panel of evaluators (2 or 3 examiners) appointed by the relevant Board of Study based on below criteria:

- Content (Identification of the problem and the background, Organization, Smooth transformation of the information, accuracy of the content)
- Delivery (Clarity, Speed, Audibility, Time management, Confidence, Explain key terms)
- Visual Aid (Quality of the slides, Relevance)
- Question & Answer (Honest effort to understand the question, Give confident and reasonable answers)

***4.6.3. Evaluation of the mini project:***

Certain Independent Study courses may include a mini project. To monitor the progression of the project, a mid-review assessment will be held, during which the students present the progress of the project. Mid-review shall be evaluated by a panel of evaluators (2 or 3 examiners) appointed by the relevant Board of Study. The overall project progress shall be assessed through a final presentation and a project report at the end of the course.

***4.6.4. Continuous Assessment:***

Supervisor/s shall continuously assess the student based on the criteria below:

- Meeting with supervisor/punctuality
- Self-reliance/ability to work independently
- Motivation/enthusiasm
- Critical thinking/self-directed learning ability

***4.7.*** Evaluation schemes to assess the Independent Study course***:***

Different evaluation schemes for evaluating the Independent Study course are outlined below. Each BoS shall select an appropriate evaluation scheme to assess the Independent Study course.

| **Evaluation scheme** | **Component** | **Weightage for the examination (%)** |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Review paper<br>Research proposal<br>Independent learning<br>Seminar | 20 - 30<br>10 - 30<br>20 - 40<br>30 |
| 2 | Research proposal<br>Mid-term review presentation<br>Final project report<br>Seminar | 10 - 15<br>15 - 20<br>30<br>40 |
| 3 | Review paper<br>Research proposal<br>Seminar | 25 - 40<br>10 - 30<br>30 - 60 |
| 4 | Research proposal<br>Mini project and project report<br>Seminar | 10 - 15<br>25 - 30<br>60 |
| 5 | Continuous assessment (Report, Mid Review presentation)<br>Final assessment (Theory, Practical, Seminar, Report, Project) | 20 - 50<br>50 - 80 |

**5. Glossary:**

**a.** ***Notional Hours:*** Direct contact hours with teachers and trainers, time spent in self-learning, preparation for assignments, carrying out assignments and assessments. The need to undertake any or all of these will be considered when a credit is being allocated to a course unit or a module, when the syllabus is designed. It is understood that the combination of

learning activities may vary from one course unit or module to another.

**b.** ***Continuous Assessment:*** The regular evaluation of coursework done during the course where the marks achieved are part and parcel of the overall result. Components of continuous assessment with regards to the Independent Study may include evaluations of laboratory work, project work, critical thinking, motivation, punctuality, and ability to work independently.

## 6. References:

PGIS Student Handbook 2019

PGIS website: Details on Masters Courses (http://www.pgis.lk/Academic/msc.php)