

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE****Independent Study Module****Guide for Students**

1. **ISMs will involve a maximum of 4 hours of supervision/discussion.** See the next page for more details on supervision.
2. ISMs will be assessed on the basis of the final essay submitted (100%), although individual supervisors may also at their discretion assign presentations and other tasks as part of the total ISM project. It is understood that these other tasks would be intended to advance and feed into the final essay, and thus the essay will still count as 100% of the final grade.
3. **The Final Essay should be between 4,000 and 5,000 words in length.** Students should make sure that the ISM does not exceed the stipulated length. Violation of this limit will incur penalties. An ISM that, after due consideration, is found to violate this limit will have five marks deducted from the total for the first 1,000 words in excess and five marks for every subsequent 500 words.
4. Students should submit their final essays by email attachment to the link **(to be provided at later stage)** not later than 12 noon on **(9 November 2020** for Semester 1, or **12 April 2021** for Semester 2), unless prior permission has been obtained from the Head of Department for late submission.
5. Any **late submission** without prior permission will be viewed seriously and will be subject to the following conditions and penalties, to be deducted from the final grade of the essays:
  - ❖ Deduct 2 marks if it is submitted on the same working day (one hour from the stipulated deadline).
  - ❖ Deduct 5 marks if it is on the next working day.
  - ❖ Deduct 2 extra marks per day for up to a maximum of a week.
  - ❖ Disqualify if the essay is late by more than a week without proper explanation and/or supporting document(s).
6. There will be no cross-marking of ISMs, but in the case of student appeals, the head, deputy head, or honours co-ordinator may review the case and final essay and arbitrate/moderate if need be.

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**  
**HONOURS**  
**Independent Study Module Supervision**

The ISM represents an opportunity to define an area of interest to the student doing it, to read around it, and write a mid-length paper on it. It is weighted at 5 modular credits. **The responsibility for this exercise rests primarily with the student, the emphasis being on the ‘I’ in ‘ISM’.** It is not the supervisor’s task to do any ‘thinking’ for the student; the supervisor’s task is to guide ‘from behind’, *ie* to provide critical response to the direction adopted and the arguments produced by the student.

1. You may expect to consult with your supervisor for up to 4 one-hour sessions. How to allocate those sessions should be decided between you and your supervisor. However, supervision is expected to end by the last day of the 9th week of the semester in which you are submitting your essay; this is to help you prevent trying to finish up your essay at the last minute. **Note that face-to-face meeting is not mandatory, and those meetings may be supplemented by additional interaction through email, etc., depending on what meets your and your supervisor’s needs best.** It is recommended that the supervision time should be used when you have specific issues to discuss: *eg* when you need feedback on a particular problem you have encountered, or when you need feedback on your writing. It would not be productive to meet your supervisor when you do not have specific things to share or discuss; the supervisor should not be expected to give you things to think about or set the issues for you.
  
2. It is the student’s responsibility:
  - to discover his/her particular focus on the chosen topic;
  - to work out how best to articulate his/her argument and divide his/her essay into its component parts;
  - to discover availability of secondary material in the NUS Library and, where desirable, to get the supervisor’s help in obtaining supplementary reading;
  - to ensure that his/her argument is coherent;
  - to ensure that presentation and all references, etc. are in the required form. A stylesheet is provided by the department; please use it;
  - to submit the written work on/by the date stipulated.
  - in the event of illness to acquire the proper medical documentation to submit to the department should an extension be needed.
  
3. It is the supervisor’s responsibility:
  - to be available at the mutually agreed time; in the event of unavoidable indisposition, to be available at the earliest possible date thereafter;
  - to respond to questions asked and to provide suggestions/advice where appropriate;
  - to provide critical comments on the student’s writing in order to draw the student’s attention to weaknesses in the soundness, coherence, integration and presentation of his/her argument;
  - to keep abreast of the student’s progress and discuss with the student any ‘falling behind’ at the earliest possible moment after it has become evident;
  - to inform the Honours Year Co-ordinator about any difficulty the student may be experiencing.
  
4. In the event of the student experiencing a difficulty of whatever kind, it is his/her responsibility to discuss this with the supervisor at the earliest opportunity. If this has been done to no satisfactory effect, or, for whatever reason, the student feels unable to discuss the issue with the supervisor, it is the student’s responsibility to seek the advice of the Honours Year Co-ordinator or the Head of Department at the earliest possible opportunity.