# DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**GRADUATE INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSE (ISC) AGREEMENT**

**CRITERIA FOR AN ISC – What it is and what it isn’t**

An ISC is an ‘independent’ study course. It is designed to allow graduate students to explore an area of interest **independently** but with advisory support. A proportion of draft material (20% to 30% max of the word length) may be submitted to advisors but ideas, goals, research and reading plans, progress reports and outlines of the ISC should be the basis for discussion in the 3 scheduled meetings which should be up to 1hr long. In this way the process and skills of researching and writing are explored in depth and provide training for proposal and thesis writing. Students who wish to take two ISC should not work with the same advisor twice unless they are able to provide clear and compelling scholarly justification for doing so.

The topic of interest should not be thesis-driven and can be an opportunity to investigate something beyond the thesis plans. However, ISC can connect with the thesis in a tangential way. For example, a student with less geographical/ disciplinary background can pursue an ISC to catch up or fill gaps in their knowledge and/or relate to technical training which the thesis requires. An examination and analysis of a new area of literature of relevance to the thesis is permissible. For some students, working with an advisor beyond the topic of their thesis can be a productive means to be guided through fresh research areas as part of building wider expertise.

**ISCs are NOT** to be used as part of writing for a thesis. An ISC must be distinct from the actual thesis as the department and faculty will not allow students to receive credit twice for the same work. Hence, for example, it is not to be a draft thesis literature review or chapter.

**CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT – please note this is how your ISC will be reviewed by assessors.**

* General organization of the paper
* Identification of a clear area of debate and analysis
* Integration of ideas
* Ability to sustain an argument
* Creativity/originality in the deployment of secondary material and evidence
* Spelling, typing, presentation and clarity of argument
* Bibliography (accurate and professionally presented)
* Word Limit: 4000-6000 words (6000-8000 group projects)

# FOR GRADUATE STUDENT

ISC course code: GE5660 / GE6660 (please delete accordingly)

Name of student:

# JOINT PROJECT

Please indicate if this ISC is to be part of a joint project/group study with other students: Yes/No\* (please delete accordingly)

* Using Appendix A, please indicate the names of other members of the group and elaborate on the portion of the project that you will claim responsibility for and on which you will be assessed.

# GRADUATE STUDENT DECLARATION & SUBMISSION

I declare that I: have read and understood the requirements pertaining to writing an ISC; will submit the ISC report to the faculty member advising my ISC and send a copy to Ms. Pauline Lee; and have noted the deadline for submission.

**Deadlines for submission of ISC report to ISC advisor:**

* Friday on Week 12 of the semester by 5pm

Name :

Signature & Date:

# FOR ADVISOR OF ISC

If an extension is needed, then the Department should be notified by the beginning of week 12 of the semester. The appointment of a second marker is the responsibility of the Chair and/or Deputy Chair of the GSC, **and NOT** the responsibility of the ISC advisor. The second markers should be anonymous and not engage with any discussion of the ISC prior to grading.

Name :

I have ensured that the student's ISC assignment comprises work that is in addition to that envisaged as part of their research thesis.

Signature (digital signature will suffice):

Date:

# FOR GRADUATE COORDINATOR/DEPUTY COORDINATOR

Name:

Based on the information provided, including that in Appendix A below, I have ensured that the student’s proposed project complies with the requirements of a Graduate ISC in the Department of Geography.

Signature & Date:

**APPENDIX A: PROPOSAL FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSE – use these**

**headlines as your structure.**

**(Proposal should not exceed two pages)‐ font size 12, Times New Roman, single‐spaced**

1. Statement about your thesis – include title and a short paragraph of explanation
2. Title of proposed ISC
3. Abstract of ISC – 200-250 word limit
4. Statement as to what type of focus you will pursue and what the relationship is/is not with your thesis.
5. Schedule/Plan of Work (3 meetings)
6. Advisor’s Role and student’s obligations
7. Contact Hours (between advisor and student)
8. For joint projects please include breakdown of joint and individual assessments.