Good Practice Principles for the management of Project and Independent Study modules

University Assessment Policy - Appendix 2 (http://www.worc.ac.uk/aqu/documents/AssessmentPolicy.pdf)

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1   Independent Study (IS) and Project modules should normally include a small number of taught sessions (minimum of four) for the whole cohort to cover practical matters associated with the IS or Project, including refreshers on research methods, ethical approval, supervision, time management, responsibilities etc.

2   Arrangements for the management and supervision of undergraduate final year IS or Project modules must:

- provide guidance and constructive feedback to enable students to develop feasible and manageable projects against the learning outcomes for the module
- foster in students independence in the analysis and/or application of knowledge, and a willingness to take responsibility for their own learning
- ensure student progress is effectively monitored.

3   Management and supervisory arrangements should be transparent and made available in written form via a module, Project, or IS handbook to all staff and students. This could be in the form of a learning agreement, and in all cases should include:

4   There should be clear and published procedures for the choice/allocation of project/IS topics and staff supervisors.

5   Students should be allocated to supervisors who have a generally appropriate academic background and/or research interests.

6   There should be explicit mechanisms for addressing any problems or concerns raised by students which cannot be resolved within the framework of the supervisory relationship, for example, referral to the module leader or the course leader.

7   There should be a clear policy adhered to by all members of a course team engaged in supervision of undergraduate final year Projects or Independent Studies regarding frequency of regular meetings, in the order of, for example, 30 minutes every six weeks (or more frequently if a student is completing over one semester).

8   There should be clarity across the course team and for all parties about the relative responsibility of the student and the supervisor for initiating supervisory meetings, follow-up, and recording of meetings.

9   All text based work must be word processed and submitted electronically in accordance with University policy.

THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1   Reading and putting into practice the guidance in the handbook (noting in particular information on record-keeping and assessment).

2	Observing health and safety, data protection and ethical protocols, including completion of documents related to ethics approval.

3	Planning and managing the time commitment required of the module/Project/IS.

4	Initiating and agreeing a written plan of work and a timetable of meetings with their supervisor.

5	Keeping a Project diary or log-book as a means of monitoring progress and recording the outcomes of meetings.

6	Discussing progress with their supervisor and responding to guidance and constructive criticism, and understanding that the supervisor should not be expected to predict the grade for the IS or Project.

THE SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1	Advising on the student's work plan and agreeing a schedule of meetings (which can be virtual or face-to-face), and responsibilities in initiating and recording the outcome of meetings.

2	Ensuring that students are aware of the role of the supervisor and the anticipated extent of support in terms of providing direction, time allocated to meetings, reading and commentating on drafts, etc.

3	Monitoring student progress and providing timely, honest and constructive feedback, and following up non-attendance at scheduled meetings, if necessary, using the University referral mechanisms.

4	Seeking to ensure that the work is being conducted within agreed protocols (including those relating to ethics and to health and safety).

5	Keeping a brief record of meetings and student progress, which can be stored on SOLE.

6	Complying with policy on providing feedback on draft text, which is normally that a supervisor will read and comment on one draft of specific sections of the IS/Project provided it is submitted for comment within a reasonable time ahead of the submission deadline or by the published deadline for commenting on drafts, or deadlines if submitted in part/s.

7	Being familiar with the formal assessment procedures and criteria.

8	Avoiding giving the student premature or potentially misleading information on marks or grades.

IS or PROJECT HANDBOOKS

The handbook (which is normally provided electronically via Blackboard) should provide the key source of information for students and staff. Module leaders may find useful the

suggested list of contents below (but this is not intended to be prescriptive or comprehensive).

Contents:

- Module aims and learning outcomes.
- Assessment requirements, criteria and procedures.
- Schedule for any taught sessions.
- Topic choice (or allocation) and approval.
- Advisory/supervisory arrangements.
- Securing ethical approval and ethics protocols, including data protection where appropriate.
- Staff and student responsibilities.
- Notes on progress meetings.
- Plan of work, timetable and submission dates(s).
- The characteristics of a good project.
- Structure, format and length.
- Referencing, academic integrity and avoidance of plagiarism.
- Alternative forms of presentation.
- Health and safety: risk assessment.
- Arrangements for extensions and mitigating circumstances.