

CSE/ITE/ISY 4100 - Undergraduate Research Project (Proposal)
Student Handbook

Dear Research Student:

We are very pleased to welcome you to CSE/ITE/ISY 4100 - Undergraduate Research Project (Proposal). This course is a fourth year, first semester course intended for students pursuing the four year full time Computer Science/Information Technology/Information Systems programme. The course will provide you with a general introduction to the research process and will equip you with the skills necessary to prepare a research proposal.

This handbook provides guidance about the structure of the course and serves to amplify course regulations and rules. All research students should be conversant with the handbook and apply its principles in full.

We wish you the very best in your research endeavours.

Regards

Final Year Project Committee

Course Assessment

Your project will be assessed as follows:

- Written Project Proposal (70%)
 - Your research proposal will justify the need to study your research problem and present the practical ways in which you will conduct the study. A problem statement, background to the problem, preliminary literature review and methodology are the key elements of a research proposal.
- Project Proposal Presentation (20%)
 - This will be an oral presentation of your project proposal. You will be expected to summarize key points of your proposal and convince the panel that you have a worthwhile research project that you can competently complete.
- Supervisor Interaction/Engagement (10%)
 - Your participation in classes and meetings with your supervisory team is extremely important. You will be partially assessed on your diligence in meeting with supervisors and the overall quality of your participation in classroom activities.

See Appendix A for the course outline.

Important Points to Note:

- There is no final examination. You will be *continuously assessed*.
- To keep you on target, smaller submissions will be required at different periods of the semester e.g. background to the problem, statement of the problem, research objectives/questions/hypotheses, literature review etc.
- Submission guidelines and the rubric for assessments will be provided and discussed in advance to ensure that you are aware of what is expected and how they will be graded.
- You will not be allowed to make a Formal Proposal Presentation if your primary supervisor is not present.
- The Formal Proposal Presentation will be recorded (video and/or audio).

Research Supervision

Within the first month of the course commencing, you must propose at least two (2) research supervisors who have indicated their willingness to guide you and closely monitor your project. Your primary supervisor must be a lecturer within the department of Computer Science. Your non-primary supervisors may also be lecturers in the department, but can include external academics/professionals with expertise relevant to your area of research. Your proposal for supervision will be reviewed by the Final Year Project Committee who will approve or reject with fair justification for the latter.

As this may be your first attempt at research, intensive guidance is crucial. Frequent interaction with your supervisors is very important and as such you are required to meet with your primary supervisor at least once per week to discuss your progress and any other research-related matters. These meetings should ideally be face-to-face, however, video conferencing is acceptable if your supervisor agrees to this. Note, your supervisor is at liberty to increase the frequency of your meetings (in cases deemed necessary) and your attendance will be mandatory.

If you cannot attend a session, you must inform your supervisor as soon as possible and make alternative arrangements. Failure to attend meetings and otherwise maintain assiduous communication will result in deductions from your course grade - up to 10% deduction based on the extent of your absenteeism.

You are also obligated to communicate with non-primary supervisors (secondary, external) and provide frequent progress reports. If your research is in any way modified under the guidance of your primary supervisor, you must inform all other supervisors in writing.

It will be beneficial to you if you establish with your supervisory team the type of guidance and feedback which you find most helpful, and, as early as possible agree on the scheduling of your meetings.

It is recommended that you create an online repository to organize and share all relevant research papers, reports etc. with your supervisor/s. In addition, your writing e.g. documents, presentations etc., must be shared via a collaborative medium to allow your supervisor/s to provide comments as you progress.

Your Responsibilities

While supervisors will guide you, check your work and provide feedback, you are entirely responsible for your project. Successful completion of this course will, therefore, heavily rely on your personal self-direction and motivation. Your main academic responsibilities are as follows:

- You must come up with a project idea (independently or in collaboration with a potential supervisor) and discuss it with potential supervisors. Once your idea has been submitted and approved by the final year project committee, you must plan and refine your work under the guidance of your supervisory team.
- In the case of your project idea being rejected, it is your responsibility to refine your idea by working along with the final year project committee and potential supervisors. Note that re-submission of new/improved ideas does not guarantee extension of subsequent deadlines or automatic acceptance. You will have to put in extra work to remain on schedule. Pay attention to the comments and suggestions made by the Final Year Project Committee and work closely with your supervisory team.
- Ensure you have a clear view of the aims of your research and the research process. It will be necessary to study both specific and general literature so that you can discuss your work within a wider context.
- Submit parts of your proposal throughout the course as outlined in the course schedule (see Appendix B). To avoid penalties you must, of course, meet these deadlines. It is therefore very important that you plan your work ahead of time - making provisions for receiving and acting on feedback from your supervisors.
- Schedule meetings with your supervisors and maintain constant communication with them. The onus is on you to arrange and attend these meetings, and to be adequately prepared for them. It is important to discuss your recent work and next moves. You should ensure that notes are taken at each supervisory meeting and that you agree on actions and deadlines.

Academic Misconduct

Research is a core activity of any university, and high standards and expectations are applied to all its members. Failing to meet these standards and engaging in academic misconduct damages the researcher, his/her colleagues, the reputation of the university and the general community. It is a serious offence that can result in immediate withdrawal from the course and expulsion from the university. Academic Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, collusion, complicity, cheating and fraud. Please refer to the University of Guyana's guidelines on Academic Misconduct. `

Communicating with External Bodies

You may need to communicate with external agencies and personnel on matters related to your research. For example, you may need to gather data, set up interviews, recruit research participants etc. For quality assurance purposes and to add more support for your requests, all correspondence to external agencies and/or personnel must be signed and approved by your primary supervisor and the Final Year Project Committee. Failure to comply with this protocol may have ethical and professional implications.

A formal request must be made via email to the final year coordinator/s and copied to at least your primary supervisor. The email must detail the purpose of your project, the reason for your request (data collection, interviews, research participants etc.) and the organization (name, contact person and their role or position, physical address, email address if known etc.) that will be involved in your study. You must ensure a sufficient level of detail is provided. For instance, if you require participants from a school, state the grade level, number of participants, period you will require to interface with the individuals, in what way you will require their assistance (observation, interviews, testing etc.) and how you will be using the information you gather from them. A letter will then be prepared by the Final Year Project coordinators, which should carry the Department of Computer Science's letterhead and stamp.

Note: You may be required to share your findings with the organization that is involved in the study.

Financial Support

Financial support from the Faculty of Natural Sciences is available to students for some project-related expenses. Projects may be granted up to \$60,000 GYD. Project-related expenses can include the printing and binding of your thesis, printing of posters (in case of exhibitions or conferences), purchasing of research-related hardware and/or software and out-of-town travel for research purposes. A breakdown of the project's expenses along with quotations must be submitted as part of the project proposal. In cases where hardware, software or digital artefacts must be procured, the student must state in what capacity the items will support the research project.

Before making any project-related purchase, consult with your primary supervisor for approval. Failure to do so may prevent you from making a claim for refund. You must save all relevant receipts if you wish to make a claim for refund.

Any non-consumable project related purchase remains the property of the Computer Science Department.

Application for Refunds

To apply for refunds the student must write a letter to the Head of Computer Science and copy to the Final Year Project committee and supervisors. The letter must specify the list of items procured and cost. All original invoices and receipts must be attached.

Students will be notified on whether or not the refund was approved.

Submission of Project Artefacts

Time management is critical in this course. You will be given very specific deadlines for each submission of your proposal/thesis/presentation. You may consult the project schedule for more information on this (schedule is subject to change). You are, of course, expected to meet all deadlines.

If there are valid circumstances preventing you from meeting a deadline, you can request an extension in writing via email or print and submit it to the Final Year Project Committee no later than three (3) days before the deadline (weekends are not included in the three (3) days). You will need to provide a description of the circumstances, which you feel support your request and produce supporting evidence in some cases.

Note that submitting a request for an extension does not guarantee it will be accepted. Extensions are granted at the discretion of the Final Year Project Committee.

If you make submissions after a scheduled submission date (and no extension has been granted), a penalty may be applied to your final mark based on the project guidelines for penalties.

Penalties for Late Submission

Submission	Deductions				
	Same day- late	1 Day Late	2 Days Late	3 Days Late	>4 Days Late
Project Idea - Round 1	1%	2%	3%	4%	100%
Project Idea - Round 2	1%	2%	3%	4%	100%
Background	5%	10%	15%	20%	100%
Background, Problem Statement, Research Objectives/Questions	5%	10%	15%	20%	100%
Literature Review	5%	10%	15%	20%	100%
Methodology, e-copy of Presentation	5%	10%	15%	20%	100%
Presentation	Apply for supplemental				
Formal Proposal	5%	10%	15%	20%	100%

Attendance

- Not meeting 75% attendance at research talks and actively participating will incur a 5% deduction
- Not meeting regularly with primary supervisor (as determined by supervisor) will incur a 5% deduction

'At Risk' Procedure

If you are not making submissions in a timely manner or not progressing satisfactorily, you may be advised to withdraw from the course. You will be called in for a meeting, given 2 weeks to catch up and if you are not proving yourself you will be advised to withdraw.

Note The Final Year Project Committee reserves the right to add, modify or delete any section/clause in this handbook.