

## **Independent Research**

### Overview

The aim of the independent research module is to encourage students to pursue in detail some legal idea of interest to them. Students interested in taking this option must apply in writing or by email to the School of Law for permission to do an independent research project, the application to contain a draft research proposal. The student must have discussed the proposed research with a member of teaching staff who is agreeable to act as supervisor. Permission will be given at the discretion of the School of Law. In the case where the School grants permission, the student shall pursue the research in consultation with the supervisor. This module will be equivalent to a semester course in terms of ECTS value. It is a first semester module.

### Content

The Independent Research and writing project is to be distinguished from the 5,000 word essay, which is also equivalent to a semester course in terms of ECTS value. The essential difference between the two is that while the essay is confined to a literature review and a synthesis or analysis of the main currents of thought in the area, the Independent Research and writing project should evince some independent research, beyond a literature review. It might consist, for example, of a qualitative study, such as an interview or a series of interviews, statistical analysis, analysis of parliamentary debates of a bill, or analysis of the travaux préparatoires of an international agreement. Whatever the focus of the project, the research should be original, or should build upon existing research.

### Length and time-frame

It is required that the Independent Research and writing project should amount to 5,000 words. As the project corresponds to a semester-long subject, it is proposed that students should be allowed 12 weeks to complete the project, from the date of submission of the proposal. Closing date for submission of the completed project is on a date in January/February to be specified by the School of Law office in consultation with the supervisor.

### Format of proposal

The student shall be required to submit a detailed research proposal on the standardised research proposal form attached.

### Extent of supervision

Supervisors will need to meet the student at least twice: once at the beginning to go over the proposal and make recommendations/amendments; and once mid-way through the project, to check on progress and discuss any difficulties the student may be experiencing. However, the emphasis should be on the *independence* of the research project, and it should be made clear to students that they are expected to exercise their own initiative and demonstrate a capacity to work on their own.

School of Law

**Independent Research and Writing Project  
Proposal Form**

**What is your research question? (Please formulate as a question)**

**Explain why you have chosen this research area and what you hope to contribute to this area**

**Outline research methodology (e.g. interview, statistical analysis, analysis of parliamentary debates etc.)**

**Identify sources of primary information (draft legislation, legislation, case law, international instrument etc.)**

**Identify sources of secondary information (parliamentary debates, commentaries, journal articles, policy guidelines etc.)**

**Identify any potential difficulties with the proposed research and how you might respond to them**