

SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

OCTOBER 2024

Research Mandate and Objectives

Established in 1955, the School of International Studies (SIS) is the oldest school of the University. In the last seven decades, the School has established itself as the premier institution in the country for the study of International Relations and Area Studies. Research on various facets of international politics, economy, society and culture is undertaken in the School. These programmes encourage interdisciplinary research on both historical and contemporary issues.

The research mandate of SIS may broadly be categorised as:

- Understanding national and international systems, institutions and processes.
- Understanding the interactions between state, non-state and international actors.
- Understanding ideational exchanges at the global level, both historical and contemporary.
- Understanding India's engagement with the world.

In selecting a topic and conducting doctoral research, students may locate their research problem in one or more of the above domains.

The School encourages:

- Theoretical research that is empirically grounded.
- Contributions to pure theory (for example, in economic theory).
- Case Study and Comparative Case Studies, using qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods for data analysis.
- Applied/Empirical research that is theoretically informed.

SIS as a multidisciplinary institution

As a discipline, International Relations draws from Political Science, Sociology, Economics, History, Law, and Geography. Scholars in the School come from various disciplines of Social Sciences, Humanities and even Sciences. This allows interdisciplinary research and the School encourages scholars to extrapolate concepts, methods and approaches from one discipline to others. Over the years the School has evolved into a truly interdisciplinary institution.

There are advantages to having an interdisciplinary approach given the wide range of issues that contribute to a phenomenon. For example, a study of diaspora communities as a factor in foreign or security policy must refer to scholarship in demographic studies, sociology as well as economics and history. Multidisciplinary approaches often lead to novel research questions and hypotheses which may present radically new perspectives on old issues. A research problem in economics may, for example, draw on other social sciences like political science, psychology or aspects of law.

Structuring of Research at SIS

The School is structured around two kinds of Centres.

1. Area Study Centres which focus on the issues arising in a specific geopolitical unit or region.

The School is the first institution in the country to promote “Area Studies” and to develop expertise on various countries and regions of the world. Areas Studies in India was conceived as an arm of policy making and the orientation of research has been linked, on the whole, to studying aspects of other states or international institutions that have an impact on India’s foreign policy and strategic interests.

However, the emerging imperatives of globalization and India’s growing outreach have led scholars to rethink notions of areas, constituencies and objectives of Area Studies. Area Studies research conceptualizes areas not just as nations or states but also as regions or even as functional parts of the world system. The idea of “strategic interests” is redefined to include transformations in politics, economy and society within and across nations and not just issues related to conventional aspects of conflict. The scope of area studies scholarship has also widened to include a range of new actors.

The School encourages scholars to understand issues from a regional perspective. While in-depth understanding of language, culture and society is vital for research in area study programmes, for better insights, cross-cultural comparison across areas are also encouraged.

The following suggestions might be helpful in undertaking research in the Area Studies:

- Areas can be conceptualized as independent entities or a functional part of the global system.
- A study of a singular unit or a comparison of units within the Area or across the Areas is acceptable.
- Understanding transformations in social, economic and political structures within the Area.
- India's strategic interests and engagement with the Area.
- Enhancing one's familiarity with scholarship and conceptual categories from the Area. The use of comparative approaches to Area Studies is helpful in overcoming the danger of cultural and political prejudices.

2. **Functional Centres** such as Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament, International Law, Centre for Comparative Politics and Political Thought, Centre for the Study of the World Economy conduct research on issues that cut across geographical regions - such as global politics, governance and economics, growth and development, environment, international institutions, human rights regimes, international security, international law, comparative politics, intellectual histories, contemporary thought especially from the global South, global trade and investment and so on.

Research Design

The research design for a Ph.D. thesis at SIS will vary according to the theme of the research and the Centre at which the research is located, and will be arrived upon in consultation with the Centre's faculty. In this section we discuss some of the ways in which you can start thinking about your research and how to go about it. Arriving at a research topic involves extensive review of literature as a primary step. It requires a commitment to do original research and not just rely on reinterpreting the existing work.

Originality of research

Here are some suggestions on how to do this:

1. Think of a research question or puzzle that requires a novel answer.

You may begin with something that puzzles you about your area of interest. This research could take the form of a question – for example, you may be interested in knowing the reasons for a country's specific foreign policy, or you may ask the question why mass movements arise over some issues and not others in a particular region. You may choose a case or a region in a comparative framework to answer the puzzle. Theories can also be helpful in answering the puzzles.

2. Think of proposing a new theory or using an existing one which has not been used.

Existing theories are often helpful in explaining a specific problem. You may find one or more of these helpful in framing your own research questions and research design. This will require a comprehensive knowledge of the existing literature and methodological tools as well as how to collect and analyse data. Testing the existing theory with the help of your case is also an important contribution to the literature.

3. Think of collecting or using new data for your research.

Doctoral theses based on secondary or limited primary sources are inadequate. It is important for you to consider widening the scope of both secondary and primary sources of data. For instance, you may consider consulting archival data or historical material, or interviewing experts and stakeholders including communities. Your training in survey methods and interviewing techniques will help you in collecting primary data. Ph.D. research must include sufficient primary data to make an important contribution.

4. Consider applying a novel methodological design for your research.

You may consider applying a new methodology for your research. Extrapolation of methods from one discipline to other is also often helpful. You may apply qualitative or quantitative or hybrid methods/mixed methods depending on the type of data and your methodological requirement.

5. You may after extensive reading, identify an area of research that is new or understudied.

6. We also encourage variable oriented scientific research. You may arrive at a research proposal that is designed around the investigation of relationships between variables A

variable is usually a measurable factor, characteristic, or attribute of an individual or a system.

To summarise, originality in research can consist of one or more of the following:

- a) Outlining a new field of research and/or coming up with a new theory.
- b) Asking a new question of an existing field.
- c) Adding more information along different dimensions to an existing field.
- d) Working on declassified documents or archives which have not been researched before and can add value to the existing literature.
- e) Testing the validity and usefulness of existing theory/theories in relation to specific issues, areas or themes.

Pluralism of Methods

A good research project should be clear about the method to be used. There is no one method that can be prescribed for all research. A decision on method is contingent upon the research question, creative imagination, type of data, and your methodological training. We advocate methodological pluralism. For data analysis, both qualitative and quantitative techniques are useful in Social Sciences. Therefore, the courses in Research Methods at SIS (both at MA and Ph.D. levels) aim to equip students with rigorous training in one or more methodological approaches.

While we encourage scientific research, we are open to other critical approaches. For example, in Economics it could be Classical Economics or Heterodox theories; for others, it can be Realism, Liberalism, Critical Theory or Post-structuralist approaches. These are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Over the past few decades, the conceptual universe of the Global South as an important paradigm has also gained currency.

Primary and Secondary Sources

A Ph.D. thesis is expected to make a contribution using primary sources. The distinction between **primary and secondary sources** varies from one discipline to another.

In social science, primary data can be a) government and official documents b) material produced by the researcher through interviews in the field c) material produced by the researcher through study of Census reports and other official documents d) for histories

of ideas, primary material can be archival materials and historical texts.

In other disciplines such as Economics and Geography, primary data refers to the original data that are collected by the researcher often through field surveys, interviews, and experiments. Secondary data are those that have already been collected by someone else and are available in public domain or through authorized access to government and private databases, statistical handbooks, journals, and websites. You may use a wide variety of online sources blogs, comments, social media handles, movies, documentaries, art work. They need to be properly cited following the recommended reference style.

A good thesis will draw inferences by analysing both primary and secondary data. Primary data are not free from prejudices, and therefore, should not be treated as irrefutable facts. Simply paraphrasing official documents or reporting interviews is not research. All such primary material must be interpreted, analysed critically and contextualized in socio-political and historical terms as well as in terms of existing scholarship.

All field work must be carefully planned especially when it involves politically sensitive issues or geographically challenging settings. When the researcher is engaged in fieldwork for data collection, it is mandatory to have clearance from Institutional Ethics Review Board (IERB, JNU at <https://www.jnu.ac.in/ierb>) and ensure that informed consent of participants is taken.

Ph.D. Synopsis

The Synopsis acts as a road map for your research and is expected to be cleared in a stipulated timeframe, within a year of completion of coursework. A student is expected to have a good comprehension of the existing literature in her/his chosen field of research before writing a synopsis. The length of the synopsis should ideally be around 12 pages (excluding bibliography) in A4 with Times New Roman Font 12 and 1.5 line spacing. The synopsis must follow the following structure:

Section 1: Background (2 pages)

The student must briefly posit the broad context of her/his research problem. The statement of the problem that the study aims to investigate and the objective of the study should also be stated.

Section 2: Review of the Literature (6 pages)

The literature should be organised in a thematic structure and not as a listing of summaries of important references. Try to structure the literature review in a manner which highlights the issues relevant to your thesis and identify the gaps therein. Note that more than one corpus of literature might be of relevance to your study.

Section 3: Definition, Rationale and Scope of the Study (1½ pages)

Based on the critical survey of the relevant literature, you should clearly define novel concepts and variables used; provide an academic justification of your research differentiating it from the existing literature; and provide the scope of the research in terms of temporal and spatial coordinates.

Section 4 a): Research Problem/Research Questions (1/2 page)

Formulate your research questions bearing in mind that the answers to these should not be already known to you. Your research question should be genuinely open ended, leading you to look for answers.

4b) Hypothesis or Hypotheses

You may in addition formulate a hypothesis or hypotheses based on your research questions and theoretical statements. At the end of your research, hypotheses may be validated or rejected.

Section 5: Research Methods (1 page)

This section should contain a clear description of how the student intends to answer their research question(s). We expect a rigorous exposition of the research methods to be employed. Statements like “the study is descriptive/ analytical” will not suffice. In this section the student may identify variables, primary sources of different kinds depending on the kind of research being undertaken, and the methods that will be used to analyse the data.

Section 6: Tentative Chapters (½ page)

The student must give a list of tentative chapter headings with a brief description (not exceeding 5 lines) of the content of each chapter. The first and the last chapter must be called Introduction and Conclusion respectively.

Chapter 1 (Introduction) should contain a clear exposition of the context and rationale of

the study, the research question(s), the method/s to be followed and an outline of the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2 should provide an extensive review of existing theoretical and empirical literature. It may also provide a historical background of the study.

Chapter 3-5 should be substantive chapters based on original research. Substantive chapters can be more than three depending on the research design.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion - The final chapter must briefly restate the research problem and summarise the main findings based on testing of hypotheses. It should also state implications of the study and future directions of research. (Appendix 1)

References

The student should list all the texts and sources cited in the synopsis in alphabetical order by surname, following the citation style of the latest edition (**currently 18th**) of **Chicago Manual of Style (AUTHOR/DATE)**:

https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html

Please note the Chicago Manual of Style has another style as well. Please use Author/Date style.

Ph.D. Thesis Format

Layout, Font and Structure

The thesis must be printed on one side of A4 paper only, with a margin of 1.5 inches on the left-hand side of each page and 1 inch on the right side. The top and bottom margins should also be an inch.

The main text should be in Times New Roman Font 12 with 1.5 spacing. Long quotations (running over two sentences) should be single spaced and left indented. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that the print of the thesis is clear and legible.

Use British spellings rather than American spellings except in direct quotations, proper names and source titles. In other words, use "defence" and "labour" normally, but "U.S. Department of Defense" and "U.S. Department of Labor" when referring to these specific bureaucracies. The thesis should be in third person and use academic language.

The thesis will have the following sequence of items:

1. Title page; (Appendix 2)
2. Declaration and Certificate page (Appendix 3)
3. Acknowledgements
4. Contents
5. List of tables, figures, abbreviations (if applicable)
6. Chapters of the thesis
7. References

Citation

SIS follows the Chicago Manual of Style (Author/Date):

https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html

Please note the Chicago Manual of Style has another style as well. Please use Author/Date style.

The purpose of citation is to indicate clearly the sources from which

1. You rely on factual information or data.
2. You need to quote verbatim.
3. You use others' ideas, interpretations, analyses or conclusions even if you summarize or paraphrase in your own language.
4. You organize or structure your argument using somebody else's distinctive structure, style or method.
5. You state in passing another person's work.

When in doubt, cite – over-citation is better than under-citation. The key to effective citation is to give the reader enough information to locate the source in a clear and consistent manner.

Your thesis will have to go through a plagiarism check before submission. When using exact words of another author, put them in quotation marks and when you paraphrase ensure you cite relevant sources. For further clarification on citation and reference consult the Chicago manual.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for research

Some of you may use AI for your research, but we would advise you to be careful. The rules of plagiarism will also apply to AI generated words, paragraph, content, translations, tables and images. Library uses software to detect plagiarism which includes AI generated content. As per existing UGC guideline, the university prescribes less than 10% similarity index.

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APPENDIX 1: Title page of the Ph.D. Synopsis

Ph.D. Synopsis

Title of the Synopsis

Submitted by

Name of the Ph.D. candidate

Under the Supervision of

Name of the Supervisor



Division Name (if applicable)

Centre Name

School of International Studies

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

New Delhi-110067

YEAR

APPENDIX 2: Title page of the Ph.D. thesis

Title of the Thesis

***Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
for the award of the degree of***

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

NAME OF THE CANDIDATE



Division Name (if applicable)

Centre Name

School of International Studies

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

New Delhi-110067

YEAR

APPENDIX 3: Declaration and Certificate

Date:

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled “.....” submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

NAME OF THE CANDIDATE

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

NAME OF THE CHAIRPERSON

Chairperson, Centre Acronym

NAME OF THE SUPERVISOR

Supervisor