

Guidelines for the Policy Related Supervised Learning Course (PRSL) CPS, IIT Bombay

1. Introduction

CPS is offering Supervised Learning courses under the Policy umbrella at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. These courses will provide students with an opportunity to work on half-semester long policy related LIVE projects. The projects would involve direct interaction with the larger society and require formulation of solutions which could be in the form of policy recommendations based on an analytical understanding of a research topic. These courses offer an excellent opportunity to students who wish to apply themselves as policy analysts, social scientists or consultants in this exciting area of Policy development.

A list of topics offered by faculty from various departments is maintained at www.cps.iitb.ac.in/prsl. These are indicative, and the list will be updated as topics are submitted. However, students, in consultation with CPS faculty (IDPC and Associate) are welcome to propose their own topics.

The projects must address the interests of the Centre for Policy Studies:

- (a) The topic should address core policy issues.
- (b) The project should be in sectors such as information and media economy, nutrition, agriculture, gender, energy, water and sanitation, regulatory governance, healthcare, sustainability, among others.
- (c) The project must have a deliverable output, with desirable stakeholder engagement, who in turn would be interested in the outcome of such a project. These stakeholders could be govt. officials, govt. and private organizations, elected representatives, NGOs or even citizen groups.

Students are expected to closely interact (a meeting once every week is expected) with their chosen advisors (from IDPC and Associate Faculty) and take constant guidance from them. PRSL seeks to provide a platform to students to apply their analytical and synthesizing skills to real life problems that cut across sectoral boundaries and to gain other skills such as project management, leadership, written communication and presentation making that are sometimes difficult to gain in a classroom setting. All this, while creating knowledge for the direct benefit of public policy making. The projects may require field trips and meetings with various stakeholders with the Greater Mumbai region.

Some potential examples of the work could include:

- (a) Data policy of a large organization (such as platforms like Uber or Ola)
- (b) Nutrition policy of districts in Western Maharashtra
- (c) Citizens involved in shaping waste management policy

These projects may involve the use of various tools like GIS, simulations, data collection and analysis. Each of these may require field trips and meetings with stakeholders like urban residents, NGOs, municipal bodies, local hospitals, elected representatives, various government departments, and officials. The final output must be presented to the stakeholders and various policy/decision makers to the extent possible. Concrete actions and interventions could possibly be planned based on the output of the reports.

2. Structure of the course

The courses offered are as follows:

PS 301	03 credits (UG, half semester)
PS 623	03 credits (PG, half semester)

The outcome of the study must have content which is of interest to the stakeholders. All courses will largely involve gathering of data, field work (if required), study and analysis. They could indicate solutions to a "policy situation". Stakeholder participation is essential.

The deliverables required for the project must be very specifically fleshed out. These are:

- (i) Objective and Methodology document at the beginning of the work (by end of first week)
- (ii) Final report and presentation
- (iii) Copy of the presentation (sent to the Supervisor and Faculty coordinator)

Grades will be based on these deliverables and the final presentation. It is expected that the external stakeholders be invited for the final presentation.

3. How to offer a course? (for faculty)

Faculty members (IDPC and Associate Faculty of CPS) are invited to float Supervised Learning project topics under the Policy umbrella. The mechanism is intended to enable faculty members to explore the policy making agenda and to try out various interdisciplinary problems. CPS staff and faculty will help in creating a framework for the project and to guide liaison, create documentation and delivery.

All project topics should satisfy broad criteria:

- i. Topic should address core policy interests.
- ii. The project should be in basic sectors such as information economy, nutrition, agriculture, gender, energy, water and sanitation, regulatory governance, healthcare, sustainability, among others.
- iii. The project must have a deliverable output with stakeholder engagement who would be interested in the outcome of the project. These could be govt. officials, govt. and private organizations, elected representatives, NGOs or even citizen groups.

CPS will match student interests with topics and assist in the execution of the projects in all ways such as providing a framework for execution, reporting and evaluation, providing liaison with NGOs, govt. agencies and providing any logistical support, if needed.

We welcome topics which faculty may wish to offer. If you are interested, please fill out the topic description in the following form here-

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1-ZTQ5TN9CpgMe0lG6wXFRDqzca_qNpvjTJlkmAXXI3U/edit

Please ensure to fill out all required fields.

CPS will compile these topics and upload them on the CPS webpage www.cps.iitb.ac.in/prsl. Students will approach faculty if they find the specific topic interesting. Faculty will assess student interest and capacity carefully. If it is mutually decided to go ahead with the project, then the students will need to fill a form with faculty inputs in order to complete registration for the course.

Deadline for faculty: 28th July 2019

4. How to apply/register? (for students)

Eligibility Criteria: PRSL courses are open to undergraduate students (in their third year and beyond) and postgraduate students of all departments. Since registration is limited, students will be selected by their demonstrated interest and preparation. Applicants must have sound academic record, excellent interdisciplinary skills and motivation. If you are interested in applying for this course, please write a note (500 words) describing your motivation to take up this course and the topic(s) of mutual interest to you and your supervisor.

Please email this to your **guide/advisor** and Prof. Shishir K. Jha by **6nd August 2019**

Email: skjha@iitb.ac.in with the Subject: PRSL Registration.

Students registering for PRSL courses must pass an interview with CPS research staff/faculty. Once selected, you can meet your guide to discuss further the scope of your project. If you mutually agree to go ahead with the project, then you must fill the registration form (<http://www.cps.iitb.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Registration-Form.pdf>) and get it signed from **both** the faculty adviser and the PRSL course coordinator. The registration forms must be submitted by **9th August 2019**.

5. General guidelines for students and faculty

- A 3 credit registration will be required to have 2-3 days of field work and 25 hours of desk work.
- If 2 students work together on a project, then the total number of hours expected to be put into the project would multiply by the same factor. Please ensure that the quantum of work is of this order.
- The guide is expected to develop the methodology and provide the students with an outline of the final report for the project.
- Initial contacts, references etc., must be provided by the guide. It is expected that initial stakeholder meetings should be moderated by the guide so that the student is placed on a correct footing.
- It is recommended that the students set up a fixed weekly meeting time with their guide to discuss the progress of their work.
- Students applying for the courses must submit an Objective and Methodology document within **one week** of the start of the project. This should be a 500 words write up describing the project, location, deliverables, stakeholders, references and methodology. The expectation is that this will form the abstract or the introduction chapter of their final report. An example of such a document is at <http://www.cps.iitb.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Sample-Abstract.pdf>.
- The write up should be uploaded on Moodle within one week of the start of the semester (a reminder email will be sent).
- The final deliverable for all PRSL courses will be a presentation and a report. It is required that the external stakeholders be invited for the final presentation. A list of these stakeholders along with contact information must be submitted to the CPS office before the final presentation. Grade will be allotted largely by the guide and may be moderated by CPS course instructor to maintain parity.

- Grades should be submitted to the instructor in charge (at CPS) within reasonable time so that it may be moderated and transmitted to Academic Office. A day for PRSL presentations will be organized on a suitable day and is unconnected with the grading.
- CPS will help in devising and maintaining the above framework. CPS will be happy to help in liaison, preparation of the above documents and formats, and to facilitate discussions.
- The success of a PRSL (course and grade) will depend on the following: ownership of the topic under study, commitment and initiative, eagerness to go on field visits, proper documentation and analysis, and above all an eagerness to understand the interface between policy and real problems.

Registration Process Flowchart

