Independent Study Option (ISO)

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ISO Coordinator
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About The ISO
What Is The ISO?

A Spring term module option, available for students on:
MSc in Advanced Computing
MSc in Computing (Specialism)

ISO arrangements must be completed by Thursday 21 November 2019
ISO Official Guidance

https://teaching.doc.ic.ac.uk/iso/
ISO = **Independent Study** Option

Individual study on a set topic
Supported by a supervisor
No separate lectures, coursework or examination
(but there is writing involved)
ISO And Lecture Courses

Normally an ISO will be more specialised than a lecture course. It will go to a greater depth on a particular subject.

It is often helpful for ISOs to be in an area introduced in a lecture course.
The ISO Workload

80 hours total (1.5 days per week)

Half an hour formal supervision per week, normally individually with the supervisor
ISO Research

Directed reading
   Advanced text books

Research papers

Analysis - Distinguished ISOs go beyond a mere literature study
ISO Assessment

Written report (20-30 pages)
Oral presentation (with slides) followed by questions (viva)
Submitted at beginning of Summer term
ISO Marking

B is a sound literature survey
A is a well-executed literature survey and critique
A+ goes beyond a survey and includes a novel contribution
Who Should Choose An ISO?

Offered to all MAC and MSc Specialism students
Students interested in doing a PhD
Students interested in original research
Students with a burning desire to investigate an area of advanced computing
ISO Risks

The expectation is that students are proficient academic writers. If not, a standard module may be more appropriate.

An ISO can be used to investigate an area that will be studied further as part of the Individual Project. But the ISO (and its associated written report) must be distinct from the Project.
Students must have completed the Imperial Plagiarism Awareness online course before choosing an ISO
What Do Students Say About ISO?
Would You Still Choose an ISO?

- Definitely: 9
- Probably: 4
- Maybe: 1
- Probably Not: 2
- No: 0

2012-13 Students
Student Comments
“Very exciting and challenging. Learn more than pure project, but also how to think, how to solve problem, how to deliver a academic report and presentation, etc.”
• “It is really good for academic career”
• “I enjoyed it! It's a nice feature of the degree.”
“Best part of the course so far. Made me regret not doing an MRes.”
“There is definitely too much different between the load some people needed to go through. This is severely affecting the concept of having the iso as an exams: in general marks on the other exams are comparable as they are result of the same paper. Iso doesn't have a structure.”
Advice From Other Students
• “It is really helpful if you want to do a research project after to get a hand on hard math concepts that are not studied in class.”
"Spend time on the ISO early so you won't lose time later that you will have to revise for exams"
"Don't be too ambitious in finishing a small project. Documentation of every week is very important, for the final report."
• “Don't be too ambitious in finishing a small project. Documentation of every week is very important, for the final report.”
• “Do not underestimate the difficulty of a proper literature research/survey”
“ISO is really tough, but you can learn a lot of interesting things. My advice is to do an ISO only if you find a topic that you really love, otherwise it’s far better doing another course.”
• “It is not a nice way not do an exams as other thoughts, has to be chosen as a way to approach research.”
“You have to be very self-driven and motivated to conduct your own research and work. It sets you up nicely for writing reports for the summer project, even if the subject material differs.”
Choosing An ISO
Staff Initiated ISO Topics will be available on the Project Portal:

https://project-portal.doc.ic.ac.uk

(likely release time – late October 2019)
Student Initiated ISO Topics

These are possible, but need supervisor agreement:
Write your own proposal
Identify a supervisor
Convince them to supervise you
To Take An ISO…

You **must** meet with a supervisor and get them to agree to take you on

There is no guarantee that you will be take an ISO
ISO Allocation Process

1. Register your interest in a proposal
2. Discuss and agree the project with a supervisor
3. List your choices on the Project Portal, in priority order
Timetable

Deadline for ISO choices:
Thursday 21 November 2019 (week 8)

Everything must be agreed and recorded on the Project Portal by that date
(and you must have completed the Plagiarism Awareness course)
Deadline For Final ISO Report

Thursday 29 April 2020
Useful Information
Useful Contacts

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Links

ISO Information:
https://teaching.doc.ic.ac.uk/iso

Project Portal:
https://project-portal.doc.ic.ac.uk
Any Questions?