



# Post Graduate Diploma in Fisheries Law and Policy (PGDFLP)

## Dissertation Guidelines (as on 01.04.2026)

### 1. Purpose:

The goal of the dissertation is to enable participants to critically analyse a legal or policy issue in the fisheries sector and to provide practical and scholarly insights through independent research and legal reasoning.

### 2. Selection of Research Topic:

#### 2.1. Scope and Area of Research:

- Select a specific topic within fisheries law or policy that can support a clear research question.
- Begin by pinpointing a particular legal or policy issue, such as a gap in enforcement, overlapping jurisdictions, or conflicts between conservation goals and livelihoods, and transform it into a clear, answerable question with specific objectives. It is also an emerging need owing to changes in technology, climate, international norms, etc., (e.g. public support to fisheries sector in view of WTO Fisheries Agreement).
- Specify the jurisdiction(s) (national, state/provincial, or regional), the governance layer (domestic statutes/regulations, case law, administrative rules, or international instruments), and the time period you may analyse.
- Avoid themes and research problems that are too broad (e.g., “IUU fishing in Asia”) that hinder thorough analysis; instead, focus on narrowing by species, gear type, fleet segment, protected area, or a single regulatory instrument and institutions.

#### 2.2. Nature of Research and Feasibility

- Primary research can involve fieldwork or direct engagement with coastal communities, fishworker unions, enforcement agencies, port authorities. Typical activities include stakeholder mapping, purposive interviews, and document collection.
- Secondary research focuses on doctrinal and policy analysis: mapping statutes, rules, notifications, and case law; reviewing treaty obligations; benchmarking against regional or international instruments; and drafting model provisions or policy options.
- Verify the availability of statutes, subordinate legislation, policy framework, judicial or tribunal decisions, administrative circulars, white papers, treaty texts, and credible secondary sources and availability of data.
- Decide whether your research methodology is based primarily doctrinal (textual analysis of laws, cases, judicial decisions and policy documents) or socio-legal (including interviews, implementation audits, or compliance assessments), and ensure the method aligns with the question you’re asking.



### 2.3. Novelty

- Conduct a quick literature and policy review to identify existing work and find opportunities for your dissertation to contribute clarifying an unresolved legal interpretation, comparing two regulatory frameworks, assessing compliance results, or drafting model provisions.
- Align the topic with sector priorities (e.g., small-scale fisheries, safety at sea, labour rights, marine biodiversity, climate adaptation, sustainability context).

### 3. Suggested/Indicative focus areas

- *Transboundary fisheries governance*: Diagnose legal gaps in hot pursuit, joint patrols, or mutual legal assistance; propose procedures for evidence sharing and repatriation.
- *Fishers' rights*: Assess alignment of national laws with ILO conventions and human-rights standards.
- *Comparative frameworks*: Compare licensing, closed seasons, bycatch, or VMS mandates. *IUU fishing*: Evaluate port-state controls, catch documentation, and sanctions; PSMA, and compliance systems; *IUU fishing*: Implementation pathways for the Bay of Bengal RPOA-IUU
- *Fisheries MCS*: Effects of traceability and trade compliance systems on small-scale fisheries participation; Digital traceability, fisheries data systems, and AI/DPI applications
- *Safety at sea*: Audit compliance with safety equipment, training, and distress protocols; propose enforceable inspection checklists and incentives; Small-scale fisheries safety, decent work, and social protection
- *National policy analysis*: Track policy coherence across fisheries, environment, labour, and coastal regulation zones
- Students are encouraged to consider other priority areas, an indicative list is given below:
  - EAFM operationalisation and fisheries management reform
  - Fisheries value chains, trade, post-harvest loss, and enterprise upgrading
  - Regional ocean governance and transboundary cooperation in the Bay of Bengal
  - Monitoring, indicators, and verification methodologies
  - Gender and inclusion in fisheries systems
  - Subsidy reform and political economy of fisheries governance
  - Technology adoption, remote sensing, and innovation ecosystems



#### 4. Approved Guides

- Approved Guides:  
Dr. P. Krishnan, Director, BOBP-IGO, Chennai  
Dr. Amirthalingam S, Professor of Law, TNNLU, Tiruchirappalli.
- Students may propose either of the above approved guides based on their nature of research work, in their synopsis. The University will allot the guide and communicate the approval to the students.
- Students can schedule a scoping meeting to discuss and finalize the research question, scope, and method, then agree on a working plan that includes milestones (proposal, chapter drafts, revisions).
- Ahead of each meeting, email your latest document and a brief agenda, clearly outlining questions and the 2–3 specific outcomes you want to achieve, at least 48 hours beforehand so your guide can prepare. Keep meetings focused on actions, track agreed tasks and deadlines, and share clean, version-controlled drafts.

#### 5. Additional Support from BOBP-IGO

- Students who opt to undertake his/her dissertation on regional issues in the priority areas of Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO), will be provided mentorship by a team comprising Prof. (Dr.) A. David Ambrose, Prof & Head (Retd.), Department of Legal Studies, University of Madras, Chennai and BOB Honorary Fellow; Mr. Rajdeep Mukherjee, Policy Analyst, BOBP-IGO; and Law Professionals serving as Research Fellows at BOBP-IGO, who will be available for counselling and dissertation guidance/support, at pre-scheduled timeslots

#### 6. Timeline

The dissertation must be submitted within the timeline prescribed by the University, and only those students who submit the dissertation within the stipulated time shall be permitted to appear for the presentation and viva voce.

Further instructions, if any, regarding the submission procedure, evaluation process, and the schedule for the presentation and viva voce will be communicated separately.

Particulars	Timeline
Submission of synopsis*	15 April 2026 (Wednesday)
Approval of Synopsis by TNNLU	20 April 2026 (Monday)
Submission of Dissertation**	25 July 2026 (Saturday)
Final Viva-Voce	29-31 July 2026 (Wednesday to Friday)

\**Template for Synopsis is attached in Annexure - I*

\*\**Dissertation Guidelines has been attached in Annexure - II*



## Annexure - I

### Synopsis Guidelines

- The synopsis shall be **brief, focused, and not exceed four (4) pages**, excluding the title page and references, if any.
- Structure of the Synopsis
  - **Title:** The title should be specific, clear, and reflect the central legal or policy issue proposed to be studied.
  - **Background and Rationale:** Briefly explain the context of the study, the fisheries law or policy issue involved, and why the topic is important. The problem must be situated within a defined jurisdiction, regulatory framework, or institutional setting.
  - **Research Problem / Research Question:** Clearly state the precise legal or policy problem to be examined. The synopsis must identify one or more focused and answerable research questions.
  - **Objectives of the Study:** Set out the main objectives of the dissertation in clear terms. These should flow directly from the research problem.
  - **Research Methodology:** Indicate whether the study will be doctrinal, comparative, socio-legal, or interdisciplinary in approach. Briefly mention the proposed sources of data/materials, such as statutes, case law, treaties, policy documents, reports, interviews, or field-based inputs.
  - **Brief Review of Literature:** Provide a short note on key literature, legal materials, or policy sources relevant to the topic, showing awareness of existing work and the gap the proposed dissertation seeks to address.
  - **Tentative Chapter Plan:** Provide a tentative outline of chapters with brief headings to indicate the likely structure of the dissertation.
  - **Proposed Guide:** The student may propose a guide from the approved guides. A serving professor from an academic organization, who is a subject matter expert may be suggested by the student for serving as co-guide. In such cases, the student shall submit the detailed resume of the proposed professor and a letter of consent from the concerned professor.

The synopsis shall be typed in Times New Roman, 12-point font, with 1.5-line spacing in the main text. Margins and general formatting shall, as far as applicable, follow the dissertation guidelines. Footnotes, if used, shall be in 10-point font.

Citations shall follow either Bluebook or JILI style, and the same citation style must be used uniformly. The synopsis shall be submitted within the timeline prescribed by the University. Approval of the synopsis is mandatory before proceeding with the dissertation. The topic, scope, and methodology once approved shall not be changed without prior permission.



## ANNEXURE-II

### Dissertation Guidelines

- **Word Limit:** A dissertation should normally be between 30,000 to 35,000 words (excluding preface and annexures).
- **Abstract:** The students are advised to attach one page abstract of their dissertation work in the preface to the dissertation with 5-7 key words.
- **Font:** Use 'Times New Roman' Font sizes: for Title: 24 Pt. For Headings: 16 Pt; for sub- heading 14 Pt and for body 12 pt. The font size of footnote, bibliography and appendix shall be 10 point and the information fed in tables or a figure shall be 10 points.
- **Margin:** A margin of 3.75 cm (1 1/2 inch) is to be given on the binding edge, while on the other side it is to be 2.5 cm (1 inch).
- **Line Space:** The line spacing in the text of the dissertation must be one and half line spacing. Double line spacing shall be used while connecting two consecutive paragraphs. Further, **single line** spacing shall be observed for abstract, quotations, declaration, foot notes and references.
- **Citations and References:** Bluebook or JILI. The mode of citation must be uniform across the entire dissertation. <https://www.legalbluebook.com/bluebook/v21/quick-style-guide/whitepages>
- **Quotations:** Quotations must be kept to a minimum and should not exceed 100 words for each quotation.
- **Page Numbering:** The page numbers of the text of the dissertation should be in Indian numerals (1,2,3,4,5...) and should be centred at the bottom of the pages. The preface to the dissertation shall be in Roman numerals (i, ii, iii,...).
- **Plagiarism:** The permissible limit of similarity shall be 10%. The plagiarism check should start from the first page of Chapter 1 and continue throughout the text till end. The students are advised to use the generic account created using the Turnitin software to ensure the text is free from plagiarism.
- **Printing:** All the pages must be printed on a single side. The students are advised to follow the model attached to the guidelines.
- **Paper Quality:** The copy of the dissertation to be submitted to the University should be durable. It is advised to use 80/85 GSM paper or more.
- **No. of Copies:** The students are advised to submit five copies of the dissertation (in soft-bound) to the Examination Section after getting a signature from the concerned guides. No dissertation will be accepted without the signature of the guide and the student.