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Shaping Policy Discourse: An Intern's Contribution to Strategic Research in Transitional Bangladesh

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Shaping Policy Discourse:

An Intern's Contribution to Strategic Research in Transitional Bangladesh

Internship Report

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Social Sciences in Global Studies and Governance

Submitted by:
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Submitted to:
Md. Ohidujjaman
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Date of Submission: December 2025

Letter of Submission

15th December, 2025
Md. Ohidujjaman
Senior Lecturer
Department of Global Studies and Governance
Independent University, Bangladesh

Dear Sir,

This report is submitted as the internship report titled "Shaping Policy Discourse: An Intern's Contribution to Strategic Research in Transitional Bangladesh" in partial fulfilment of the requirements for completing the degree in Global Studies and Governance at Independent University, Bangladesh. The report documents a six-month engagement at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, Bangladesh's premier statutory think tank under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The internship unfolded across two distinct phases. The first phase ran from 9 March to 8 June 2025, during which foundational skills in research methodology, rapporteuring, and institutional operations were developed. Following contract renewal, the senior internship continued from 9 June to 8 September 2025. The competencies acquired during the initial three months proved essential for the expanded responsibilities assumed later, including leading rapporteuring teams for major institutional events, coordinating with event participants, delegating tasks among newer interns, and chairing a seminar marking the anniversary of the July 2024 uprising.

A central theme running through this report concerns the policy ecosystem and how think tank research may contribute to governmental decision-making. The report carefully demonstrates how intern contributions feed into larger institutional processes that may ultimately inform Bangladesh's foreign policy deliberations. The analysis remains cautious about causal claims, distinguishing between verified contributions and plausible hypotheses about policy impact.

This internship has been instrumental in steering career interests towards pursuing a Master's degree in International Relations. The transferable skills developed, particularly in community engagement, task delegation, data management, and professional communication, have also contributed to securing a position as Community and Resource Specialist at Quantigo AI, a machine learning data annotation company, following the internship's completion.

This report meets the academic standards set by the department.

Sincerely,

Reshma Sultana Muskaan

ID: 2130418
BSS in Global Studies and Governance

Acknowledgement

The completion of this internship and the preparation of this report would not have been possible without the support and guidance of numerous individuals who contributed to professional development during this transformative period.

Heartfelt appreciation is extended to my faculty members of the Department of Global Studies and Governance, IUB that have shaped and honed my skills and humanity from my freshmen year well into my career. Dr. Marufa Akter, Professor Imtiaz A. Hussain, Dr. Shanawez Hossain, Md. Ohidujjaman, Firoza Ashravee and Razia Sultana have my utmost gratitude for their guidance and dedication and patience as mentors. Miss Refat Ara Jerin, Miss Tasneem Sharukh, Miss Momtaz Parvin, Miss Janina Islam Abir, and Miss Dilshad Hossain Dodul, and their open door policy have supported my academic career through upheavals and challenges that were unimaginable to overcome.

My final and deepest gratitude lies with Dr. Mohammad Jasimuddin and Dr. Sufia Khanom for providing the invaluable opportunity and for continuous guidance throughout both phases of the internship. Their expertise in research methodology proved instrumental in shaping an understanding of policy research. The theoretical grounding he provided, particularly regarding the application of institutionalist approaches to understanding bilateral relations, was essential to the research on Japan-Bangladesh cooperation. He also approved the research protocol for Key Informant Interviews, ensuring that the work met ethical standards.

Deep gratitude also goes to Major General Iftekhar Anis, BSP, awc, afwc, psc, PEng, Director General of BIISS, for creating an environment conducive to learning and professional development and facilitating opportunities only a few have had the privilege of. His encouragement for interns to actively participate in seminars and engage with contemporary issues has been particularly valuable. The culture of intellectual engagement he has fostered at BIISS exemplifies what Peter Haas (1992) would term an epistemic community where knowledge and policy intersect.

Finally, gratitude is expressed to Parizaad, Shafat, Amira, Samantha, Sheen, Andalib, Arman, Nazifa, Anisa, Ishmum, Sharnila, Jami, Ridwan, Allin, Shuddha, Faiza, Sarah and Uday for their unwavering and invaluable support throughout this journey.

Reshma Sultana Muskaan
December 2025

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Executive Summary

This report analyses a six-month internship at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies from 9 March to 8 September 2025, comprising an initial three-month phase and a senior internship following contract renewal. BIISS, ranked 36th among Global Top Defence and National Security Think Tanks (McGann, 2024), serves as Bangladesh's premier statutory research institution under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During approximately 840 working hours across 105 working days (excluding public holidays including Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid-ul-Adha, Independence Day, and Bengali New Year), key achievements included: leading rapporteuring teams for the BIISS-NDC Discussion with 97 National Defence Course officers (24 June 2025) and the UNODC-BIISS Police Reform Dialogue (25-26 June 2025); chairing the seminar on the July Uprising anniversary (21 August 2025); coordinating the BIISS-UNOPS Roundtable on SDG localisation (6 September 2025); and completing original research on Japan-Bangladesh relations examining maritime defence cooperation, human capital exchange, and blue economy collaboration.

The report demonstrates how intern contributions may feed into institutional outputs that potentially inform governmental decision-making, while maintaining caution about direct causal claims. Limitations include the observational nature of policy impact assessments and the preliminary scope of the Japan-Bangladesh research. Recommendations: (1) BIISS should enhance private sector engagement in research programmes; (2) the institute's library, housing over 10,000 volumes (BIISS, 2024), could serve as a national resource through expanded access infrastructure.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1. The Internship Programme in the GSG Curriculum

The internship component of the Global Studies and Governance programme at Independent University, Bangladesh serves as a bridge between academic learning and practical application in international relations and governance. This experiential learning opportunity provides students with hands-on experience in applying theoretical frameworks, analytical skills, and research methodologies acquired through coursework to real-world scenarios in professional settings.

The GSG curriculum emphasises critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and comprehensive understanding of global political, economic, and social dynamics. Drawing upon multiple theoretical traditions, from structural realism to constructivist insights about how shared ideas shape international behaviour, and from historical institutionalism to foreign policy analysis frameworks, the programme prepares students to engage with complex policy environments. The internship programme complements this academic foundation by offering exposure to the practical challenges of policy-making, strategic analysis, and international cooperation.

1.1.2. Choice of BIISS as Internship Destination

The selection of the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies as internship destination was driven by several compelling factors. BIISS stands as Bangladesh's premier statutory think tank, established under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a mandate to conduct research and analysis on international and strategic issues directly relevant to Bangladesh's national interests (BIISS, 2024). Think tanks occupy a unique position in the policy ecosystem, operating at the interstices of academia, government, and civil society (Rich, 2004). They function as bridges between knowledge and power, translating academic insights into policy-relevant recommendations (Abelson, 2002).

BIISS exemplifies this bridging function within the Bangladeshi context, serving as a crucial node in the epistemic community that shapes the country's foreign policy discourse. The opportunity to observe and participate in this process firsthand was central to the decision to pursue an internship at this institution. Furthermore, the institute's research agenda, spanning defence studies, international relations, strategic analysis, non-traditional security, and peace and conflict studies, offered multiple entry points for engagement with issues directly relevant to academic interests developed through coursework in Political Institutions (GSG 410) and Foreign Policy Analysis (GSG 210).

1.1.3. Timing and Political Context

The timing of this internship proved particularly significant. Bangladesh's political landscape underwent dramatic transformation following the July 2024 uprising that led to Sheikh Hasina's departure and the establishment of an interim government under Muhammad Yunus. This transition created what historical institutionalists would term a "critical juncture," a moment of heightened contingency where previously stable institutional arrangements become fluid and subject to reconstitution (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007). Conducting research at BIISS during this period

afforded unique insights into how think tanks navigate periods of political transition and contribute to the reconstitution of foreign policy frameworks.

The interim government's pursuit of what has been described as "360-degree diplomacy" represents a significant departure from the foreign policy orientation that characterised the previous administration. BIISS research outputs during this period have contributed to the intellectual foundations of this policy reorientation, examining opportunities for diversified engagement with China, Pakistan, Western powers, and traditional partners like Japan. The internship thus coincided with a moment when the policy relevance of BIISS research was particularly pronounced, echoing the course content from GSG 331 (Public Policy Making in Bangladesh) regarding how policy formulation responds to changing political contexts.

1.1.4. Structure of the Internship

The engagement at BIISS comprised two distinct phases, and understanding this structure is essential for appreciating how the internship unfolded.

First Phase (9 March to 8 June 2025): During this initial three-month period, focus was placed on understanding BIISS's institutional structure, research methodologies, and organisational culture. Working hours were 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM (8 hours daily), Sunday through Thursday. Key activities included conducting literature reviews on the Belt and Road Initiative, China's regional strategy, and Japan-Bangladesh relations; learning rapporteuring protocols and documentation standards; attending and documenting institutional events; staying current with global affairs and analysing their implications for Bangladesh; participating in monthly strategic briefings on pressing security issues; and contributing to the Research Methodology Roundtable report (4-5 March 2025), which was assigned for documentation after joining on 9 March. This period comprised approximately 52 working days (after excluding public holidays including Eid-ul-Fitr from 30-31 March, Independence Day on 26 March, and Bengali New Year on 14 April) and approximately 416 working hours (see Appendix A for detailed calculation).

Senior Internship (9 June to 8 September 2025): Following contract renewal, a transition to senior intern role brought expanded responsibilities. The foundational knowledge acquired during the first phase proved essential for assuming leadership positions that would have been impossible without prior institutional experience. Key events during this phase included: the BIISS-NDC Discussion (24 June 2025); the UNODC-BIISS Police Reform Dialogue (25-26 June 2025); the Nuclear Energy Roundtable (14 July 2025); the seminar on the July Uprising anniversary (21 August 2025), which I was the first intern to chair; and the BIISS-UNOPS SDG Roundtable (6 September 2025). This period comprised approximately 53 working days (after excluding Eid-ul-Adha from 7-10 June) and approximately 424 working hours. Critically, this phase involved guiding and mentoring new batches of interns, delegating tasks prior to events to ensure smooth operations, and coordinating post-event reporting and policy analysis.

1.1.5. Monthly Strategic Briefings and Training

A distinctive feature of the BIISS internship programme was participation in monthly training sessions and strategic briefings. These sessions brought together researchers and interns to discuss

the most pressing strategic issues facing Bangladesh, from regional security dynamics to economic diplomacy challenges. The briefings provided structured opportunities to stay current with rapidly evolving global affairs and to analyse their implications for Bangladesh's foreign policy, and receive instantaneous expert feedback on our daily evaluations and perspectives, directly connecting to the learning objectives of GSG 202 (Global History: 20th Century and Beyond) regarding how international developments shape national policy choices. Ability to partake in these dialogues proved to be significantly stimulating as the youngest researcher there.

1.1.6. Theoretical Framework

This report draws upon two theoretical traditions that proved particularly useful for making sense of the internship experience. The first is constructivism, the international relations approach that emphasises how shared ideas, norms, and identities shape state behaviour. Alexander Wendt's (1992) famous claim that "anarchy is what states make of it" captures the core constructivist insight: the structure of international politics is not given by material factors alone but is constituted by the meanings actors bring to their interactions. This perspective proves illuminating for understanding bilateral relationships like that between Bangladesh and Japan, which cannot be understood solely through trade volumes or aid disbursements but requires attention to how both parties construct their identities and interests through diplomatic engagement. The coursework in GSG 201 (Theories of International Relations) provided foundational understanding of constructivism that was directly applicable to policy analysis at BIISS.

The second theoretical tradition is historical institutionalism, which emphasises how timing, sequences, and path dependence affect institutions (Pierson, 2000). The concept of critical junctures is particularly relevant. Capoccia and Kelemen (2007) define these as "relatively short periods of time during which there is a substantially heightened probability that agents' choices will affect the outcome of interest." The August 2024 political changes represent precisely such a moment for Bangladesh's foreign policy, when the shared understandings that underpinned the previous orientation have been called into question and new approaches are being constructed. GSG 410 (Political Institutions) provided extensive grounding in institutionalist theory that proved directly relevant to understanding BIISS's role in the policy ecosystem.

Think tanks function as what Peter Haas (1992) terms epistemic communities, "networks of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge." BIISS participates in transnational networks of scholars and practitioners who share particular ways of understanding regional dynamics and security challenges, including partnerships with the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) in India, the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) in Pakistan, and the Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks (COSATT). As Carol Weiss (1979) has argued, research influences policy not primarily through direct uptake of specific recommendations but through the gradual "enlightenment" of policy discourse, shifting the terms of debate and the range of options considered legitimate. BIISS contributes to this enlightenment function by producing research that shapes how policymakers understand Bangladesh's strategic environment.

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1. Broad Objective

To gain practical experience in international relations research, strategic analysis, and policy studies through direct engagement with Bangladesh's premier think tank, bridging the gap between academic theory and professional practice while contributing to the production of policy-relevant knowledge that may inform governmental decision-making.

Specific Objectives

1. To develop research and analytical skills through participation in literature reviews, policy analysis, and strategic research projects covering contemporary international and regional issues relevant to Bangladesh's foreign policy interests.
2. To gain hands-on experience in rapporteuring and report writing by leading teams in documenting proceedings of seminars, roundtables, and dialogues, thereby developing professional communication and documentation skills essential for career advancement in international relations.
3. To understand the practical application of international relations theory, particularly my points of interest; constructivism and historical institutionalism, by observing how academic concepts are utilised in real-world policy analysis within a professional research environment.
4. To stay current with global affairs and analyse their strategic implications for Bangladesh, developing the capacity to synthesise large volumes of information and identify policy-relevant insights.
5. To conduct original research on Japan-Bangladesh bilateral relations, examining emerging areas of cooperation through theoretical lenses that illuminate how identities, interests, and institutional arrangements shape bilateral dynamics.
6. To develop leadership and coordination skills by guiding newer interns, delegating event-related tasks, and ensuring smooth institutional operations during the senior internship phase.
7. To trace the potential pathways through which think tank research may contribute to governmental decision-making, demonstrating how intern contributions to institutional outputs might feed into broader policy discourse.

Chapter 2: Company/Organisation Overview

2.1 Overview of BIISS

The Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies stands as Bangladesh's foremost statutory think tank, established on 25 June 1978 by the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies Ordinance 1984 and BIISS Law 2013 define the objectives, functions, and organisational structure of the institute (BIISS, 2024).

As a statutory organisation, BIISS occupies a unique position within Bangladesh's institutional landscape, functioning as an autonomous research body while maintaining direct linkages with governmental policy-making processes. This positioning enables the institute to conduct independent academic research while ensuring that its outputs remain relevant to Bangladesh's strategic interests and foreign policy priorities. The institutional arrangement reflects what historical institutionalists would recognise as a particular organisational form established during a formative period that has exhibited considerable path dependence over subsequent decades, a concept extensively covered in GSG 410 (Political Institutions).

2.1.1. Institutional Recognition

According to the 2024 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report, BIISS is ranked 36th among Global Top Defence and National Security Think Tanks and holds the first position in Bangladesh in this category (McGann, 2024). The institute is also ranked 22nd among Top Think Tanks in South and Southeast Asia. These rankings reflect the institute's sustained contribution to strategic research over more than four decades. BIISS maintains partnerships with prominent regional think tanks including the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) in India, the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) in Pakistan, and the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP), and participates in the Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks (COSATT) (Union of International Associations, 2024).

2.1.2. Governance and Leadership

BIISS operates under the guidance of a Board of Governors that represents various key ministries and expert communities. The Board includes representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Defence, Armed Forces Division, Ministry of Law and Justice, Ministry of Home Affairs, and independent experts and scholars. This diverse composition ensures that the institute's research agenda reflects comprehensive national interests while maintaining academic rigour and independence.

The leadership structure during my time included Ambassador A F M Gousal Azam Sarker as Chairman and Major General Md Iftekhar Anis, BSP, awc, afwc, psc, PEng as Director General. Both bring extensive experience in diplomatic and strategic affairs to their roles. The Director General serves as the Chief Executive of BIISS, directing and coordinating all research and administrative activities. Wikipedia (2024) notes that the institute was established in 1978 and

operates as a state-owned autonomous national research institute working as a statutory institute that carries out research on security and strategic issues.

2.1.3. Research Divisions and Capacity

The research activities of BIISS are organised through five specialised divisions, each focusing on distinct but interconnected areas of study (BIISS, 2024):

- Defence Studies Division: Concentrates on traditional security issues, military affairs, defence policy analysis, and strategic military considerations relevant to Bangladesh and the broader region.
- International Studies Division: Focuses on diplomatic relations, multilateral cooperation, and global governance issues, analysing Bangladesh's engagement with international organisations and bilateral relationships.
- Strategic Studies Division: Examines broad strategic issues including geopolitical dynamics, great power competition, regional balance of power, and long-term strategic planning considerations.
- Non-Traditional Security Studies Division: Addresses contemporary security challenges beyond traditional military concerns, including cyber security, climate security, economic security, and human security.
- Peace and Conflict Studies Division: Dedicated to understanding conflict dynamics, resolution mechanisms, and peace-building processes, examining both regional conflicts affecting Bangladesh and broader international peace and security issues.

BIISS maintains a research capacity of twenty-one specialised researchers distributed across these divisions (Devex, 2024). Each researcher brings expertise in specific thematic areas, ensuring comprehensive coverage of contemporary international and strategic issues relevant to Bangladesh and the broader South Asian region.

2.2 Mission, Vision, and Values

BIISS operates with five core mandates defined by its founding legislation: serving as an archive for study and research; facilitating exchange of information and materials; establishing working forums for knowledge acquisition; providing government support and assistance; and conducting research and knowledge dissemination. According to BIISS institutional records, the library houses over 10,000 books, 150 academic journals, and 4,000 first-hand documents (BIISS, 2024). This collection spans decades of academic and policy literature, including materials that may be unavailable elsewhere in Bangladesh.

The BIISS Journal, published continuously since 1980, and the BIISS Papers monograph series represent primary vehicles for disseminating research findings. The institute also publishes occasional papers, policy briefs, and edited volumes on specific themes. The 2025 research priorities include: geopolitics and the evolving global order; contemporary security and economic challenges facing Bangladesh; and diplomacy and negotiation in regional contexts.

2.2.1. Institutional Culture

During the six-month period at BIISS, a research culture characterised by analytical rigour, policy relevance, and collaborative inquiry was observed. Senior researchers regularly mentor junior colleagues and interns, creating an environment conducive to professional development. The Director General's emphasis on intern participation in seminars and institutional events reflects a commitment to nurturing the next generation of policy researchers. This culture aligns with what Haas (1992) describes as the characteristics of epistemic communities: shared causal beliefs, shared notions of validity, and a common policy enterprise.

The atmosphere is one of serious intellectual engagement. Researchers debate methodological approaches, challenge each other's interpretations, and maintain high standards for evidence and argumentation. At the same time, there is recognition that policy research serves practical purposes and must be communicated in accessible terms. This balance between academic rigour and policy relevance distinguishes think tank work from purely academic research, a distinction that resonates with the policy orientation emphasised in GSG 331 (Public Policy Making in Bangladesh).

2.3 History and Current Operations

BIISS was established in 1978 during a formative period for Bangladesh's foreign policy institutions, just seven years after independence. The founding reflected recognition that a newly independent nation required dedicated capacity for strategic analysis. Over four decades, the institute has evolved from a small research unit to a comprehensive think tank with regional recognition.

The institutional trajectory of BIISS illustrates concepts from historical institutionalism studied in GSG 410 (Political Institutions). The organisational form established in 1978 has exhibited path dependence, with certain structural features and research orientations persisting across different political administrations. At the same time, the institute has demonstrated capacity for adaptation, expanding its research agenda to address emerging issues like climate security and cyber threats that did not exist when BIISS was founded.

2.3.1. BIISS in the Policy Ecosystem

Think tanks may achieve policy influence through what Weiss (1979) terms the "enlightenment function" of social research, gradually shaping how policymakers understand problems and policy options. BIISS occupies a distinctive position between the academic research community and the governmental policy-making apparatus. Unlike university-based researchers who may prioritise theoretical contribution, BIISS scholars produce research specifically oriented toward policy relevance. Unlike governmental policy units constrained by immediate political considerations, BIISS maintains institutional autonomy to offer independent analysis.

Following the August 2024 political changes, the interim government has pursued what commentators describe as "360-degree diplomacy," diversifying Bangladesh's international engagements beyond previously emphasised bilateral relationships. BIISS research on regional dynamics and bilateral relationships may contribute to the intellectual foundations of this policy reorientation. The events facilitated during the internship, including the UNODC-BIISS Police Reform Dialogue (25-26 June 2025) and the BIISS-UNOPS SDG Roundtable (6 September 2025),

exemplified the institute's convening role during this transitional period, facilitating dialogue when official diplomatic channels face constraints.

This report carefully presents findings about BIISS's policy influence without overstating causal relationships. Demonstrating that specific BIISS outputs directly influenced specific governmental decisions would require evidence that falls outside the scope of an internship report. What can be observed is that BIISS occupies a position in the policy ecosystem where its research outputs circulate among officials, journalists, and other actors who shape policy discourse. The enlightenment function operates through this circulation, not through dramatic moments of decision but through the gradual accumulation of ideas that eventually become part of how problems are understood.

Chapter 3: Internship Role and Responsibilities

3.1 Role and Responsibilities

3.1.1. Primary Responsibilities

The internship role at BIISS centred on several core responsibilities that evolved over the six-month period:

- Staying current with global affairs and international developments, analysing their strategic implications for Bangladesh, and synthesising relevant information for research teams.
- Supporting research activities through literature reviews, data compilation, and preliminary analysis on assigned topics.
- Facilitating institutional events by coordinating with participants, preparing logistical arrangements, and ensuring smooth event operations.
- Documenting event proceedings through rapporteuring and preparing comprehensive reports for institutional records.
- Contributing to original research on Japan-Bangladesh bilateral relations.
- Managing large volumes of data and information daily, developing systematic approaches to information processing.

3.1.2. First Phase Responsibilities (9 March to 8 June 2025)

During the initial three-month phase, focus was placed on understanding institutional protocols and developing foundational skills essential for subsequent leadership responsibilities. This period comprised approximately 52 working days and approximately 416 working hours. Key responsibilities included:

- Conducting literature reviews on assigned topics, including the Belt and Road Initiative, China's strategic interests in the Bay of Bengal region, and Japan-Bangladesh bilateral relations. These reviews required identifying relevant academic sources, policy documents, and news coverage, then synthesising findings into coherent analytical summaries.
- Contributing to the documentation of the Research Methodology Roundtable (4-5 March 2025), which was assigned for reporting after joining on 9 March. The roundtable addressed research paradigms including positivism, constructivism, and critical theory, directly connecting to GSG 103 (Theories and Methods of Interdisciplinary Studies).
- Attending and documenting the IUB-BIISS Youth Dividend Seminar (16 May 2025), which examined Bangladesh's demographic transition and its policy implications.
- Learning rapporteuring protocols and documentation standards. BIISS maintains particular expectations for how seminar proceedings should be recorded, emphasising accuracy, comprehensiveness, and analytical coherence.
- Participating in monthly strategic briefings on pressing security issues facing Bangladesh, from regional dynamics to economic diplomacy challenges.

- Library research and database management, navigating the BIISS collection of over 10,000 volumes and 4,000 first-hand documents.
- Daily monitoring of international news and developments, preparing briefing notes on events with potential strategic implications for Bangladesh.

3.1.3. Senior Internship Responsibilities (9 June to 8 September 2025)

Following contract renewal, the senior internship comprised approximately 53 working days and approximately 424 working hours. The expanded responsibilities assumed during this phase reflected the competencies developed during the first three months:

- Leading rapporteuring teams for major institutional events, rather than serving as a team member. This involved coordinating with other interns, assigning documentation responsibilities, and ensuring comprehensive coverage of proceedings.
- Event preparation and coordination, including communicating with participants, sending invitations, coordinating logistics, and engaging speakers and panellists to ensure their participation in institutional events.
- Conducting original research on Japan-Bangladesh relations, including Key Informant Interviews with four experts. This research required developing an interview protocol, obtaining informed consent, recording and analysing responses, and synthesising findings with literature review and news content analysis.
- Chairing the seminar on the July Uprising anniversary (21 August 2025), which included delivering welcome and closing remarks to assembled dignitaries and scholars. This was the first time an intern had chaired a seminar at BIISS during the current leadership's tenure.
- Delegating tasks among newer interns prior to each event to ensure smooth operations, and coordinating post-event reporting and policy analysis.
- Preparing executive summaries and policy briefs from event proceedings, translating detailed rapporteuring notes into concise documents suitable for circulation to stakeholders.
- Mentoring newer interns on documentation standards, institutional protocols, and research methodologies, sharing the knowledge accumulated during the first phase.
- Coordinating the BIISS-UNOPS SDG Roundtable (6 September 2025) on "The Power of Local: How Grassroots Communities Drive SDG Achievement in Bangladesh."

3.1.4. Working Hours Summary

A detailed breakdown of working hours is provided in Appendix A. The total comes to approximately 840 working hours across 105 actual working days. This calculation excludes public holidays observed during the internship period.

3.2 Rationale of Those Roles and Responsibilities

Research interns at BIISS occupy a supportive but meaningful position within the institutional structure. While interns do not independently determine research agendas, they contribute to institutional outputs through literature compilation, event documentation, and preliminary research.

This positioning reflects the nature of knowledge production in think tank settings, where outputs emerge from collaborative processes rather than individual authorship.

The emphasis on staying current with global affairs reflects the fundamental requirement for policy-relevant research. Think tanks must respond to rapidly evolving international developments, and interns who can synthesise large volumes of information and identify strategic implications provide valuable support to research teams. This responsibility directly applied skills developed in GSG 202 (Global History: 20th Century and Beyond), which emphasised understanding how international developments shape national contexts.

The progression from first phase to senior internship illustrated how demonstrated competence leads to expanded responsibilities. This is consistent with how professional development typically works in policy research environments: initial tasks test reliability and basic competence, while more complex responsibilities follow for those who prove capable. The foundational knowledge acquired during the initial period, including familiarity with institutional culture, research standards, and key personnel, proved essential for assuming leadership positions that would have been impossible without prior institutional experience.

The two-phase structure also allowed for gradual integration into BIISS operations. Literature review assignments during the first phase familiarised the intern with institutional research priorities and quality standards: which topics receive attention, how arguments are structured, what counts as sufficient evidence. This foundation enabled substantive contribution during the senior internship, when time-sensitive rapporteuring and original research demanded greater independence.

Event coordination responsibilities developed skills in stakeholder management and professional communication. Communicating with participants, from senior government officials to international experts, required adapting communication styles to different audiences while maintaining professional standards. These skills connect to the policy communication competencies emphasised in GSG 331 (Public Policy Making in Bangladesh).

From a constructivist perspective studied in GSG 201 (Theories of International Relations), the internship structure reflects how professional identities are socially constructed through institutional practices. The intern arrived at BIISS as a student; through engagement with institutional norms and expectations, a gradual transformation occurred toward understanding oneself as a researcher, albeit a junior one. This identity formation was not automatic but emerged through interaction with senior colleagues who modelled professional behaviour and provided feedback.

3.3 Example of Tasks

3.3.1. Research Methodology Roundtable (4-5 March 2025)

Though this event occurred prior to the formal start date of 9 March, documentation was assigned after joining, and the intern was added to the reporting group to prepare the comprehensive proceedings report. This two-day roundtable proved foundational for understanding BIISS research standards. Mr. Rafid Abrar's presentation on literature review methodologies explained that research gaps arise from four angles: empirical gaps (missing context-specific studies), theoretical gaps

(inadequate conceptual foundations), methodological gaps (outdated methods), and population gaps (unrepresentative samples). This framework shaped subsequent approaches to literature reviews.

Professor Dr. Niloy Ranjan Biswas discussed interpretive approaches in international relations research, noting that the absence of Global South perspectives represents a key reason for adopting such approaches. His argument resonated with constructivist insights about how knowledge production is shaped by the positions from which researchers observe. BIISS, as a Bangladeshi institution, offers perspectives that differ from those of Western think tanks, and this difference is analytically valuable rather than a limitation to be overcome. These methodological discussions directly connected to GSG 103 (Theories and Methods of Interdisciplinary Studies), which examined how different research paradigms shape knowledge production.

3.3.2. IUB-BIISS Youth Dividend Seminar (16 May 2025)

This seminar examined Bangladesh's demographic transition and its implications for national development. The event brought together academics, policymakers, and youth representatives to discuss how Bangladesh can harness its demographic dividend. Documentation responsibilities included capturing presentations on labour market dynamics, educational policy, and skills development, topics directly relevant to the policy analysis frameworks studied in GSG 331 (Public Policy Making in Bangladesh).

3.3.3. BIISS-NDC Discussion (24 June 2025)

The rapporteuring team was led for this event bringing together 97 members of National Defence Course 2025. The NDC is Bangladesh's premier institution for senior military education, and its participants include officers who will subsequently occupy senior positions across the security apparatus (National Defence College, 2025). The event thus represented an opportunity for BIISS research to directly reach future decision-makers.

Dr. Sufia Khanom presented on BIISS structure and research capabilities, situating the institute within Bangladesh's foreign policy establishment. Mr. Abu Salah Md Yousuf addressed "Statecraft, Region and World Order: Geopolitical Environment and National Security Challenges for Bangladesh," examining how Bangladesh navigates great power competition while pursuing developmental objectives. His analysis drew on both realist insights about power dynamics and constructivist attention to how regional relationships are shaped by shared understandings.

Event preparation involved coordinating with NDC administration, preparing briefing materials for participants, and ensuring logistical arrangements for hosting 97 officers. The official editorial team notes acknowledged: "The editorial Team thankfully acknowledges the Research Interns, Md Sakib Hossain and Reshma Sultana Muskaan for their assistance in preparing the proceedings." This acknowledgement represents tangible evidence that intern contributions feed into institutional outputs.

3.3.4. UNODC-BIISS Police Reform Dialogue (25-26 June 2025)

Documentation was led for the UNODC Dialogue on "Promoting a Multistakeholder Approach to Support Police Reform in Bangladesh" (UNODC, 2025). This two-day event brought together

domestic and international stakeholders to discuss institutional transformation in the post-August 2024 environment.

Participants included Mr. Baharul Alam, BPM, Inspector General of Police; Dr. Suruchi Pant from UNODC Regional Office for South Asia; Dr. Asif Nazrul, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Adviser; and international experts from Argentina, Canada, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Sri Lanka, and the United Kingdom (BSS News, 2025). The diversity of participants reflected the dialogue's aim to draw on comparative experience from different national contexts.

Key themes documented included: transformation of Bangladesh Police from a "force" to a "service," emphasising community engagement over coercive capacity; establishment of independent police commissions to ensure accountability; human rights-based policing approaches; and mechanisms for incorporating citizen feedback into police governance. The Inspector General stated: "We are doing these reforms not only for the people—we are doing them with the people. With continued support from partners like UNODC and BIISS, I am confident we can build a justice system that is fast, fair, accountable, and efficient" (UNODC, 2025).

Major General Iftekhar Anis, Director General of BIISS, moderated the third roundtable on "Strengthening police-prosecution cooperation for more efficient, human rights-based investigations." The dialogue illustrated how BIISS convenes conversations that bring international expertise to bear on domestic policy challenges, a function particularly important during transitional periods.

3.3.5. Nuclear Energy Roundtable (14 July 2025)

The rapporteuring team was led for the Roundtable on "Bangladesh in the Nuclear Age: Policies, Challenges and Prospects." As Bangladesh prepares to operationalise the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, questions of safety, regulation, and energy policy have become increasingly salient. The Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, a $12.65 billion project constructed with Russian assistance, represents Bangladesh's entry into the exclusive club of nuclear power producers (Wikipedia, 2024). The first unit, with a capacity of 1,200 MW, is expected to begin trial operations in December 2025.

Dr. Md Shafiqul Islam from Dhaka University provided comparative analysis of power generation costs that shaped subsequent discussion: nuclear energy at 7-8 taka per unit compared to 11 taka for coal, 12 taka for solar, and 15 taka for wind. These figures, while subject to debate depending on how costs are calculated, illustrated the economic considerations that inform energy policy choices.

Discussions addressed safety protocols, waste management, regulatory frameworks, and public communication. Participants noted the importance of transparent governance arrangements to maintain public confidence in nuclear energy. The IAEA has supported Bangladesh's nuclear programme through the Milestones approach, providing step-by-step guidance on infrastructure for a new nuclear power programme (IAEA, 2023). The roundtable exemplified BIISS's role in convening expert discussion on emerging policy challenges with significant strategic implications.

3.3.6. Seminar on the July Uprising (21 August 2025)

The most significant responsibility assumed during the internship was chairing the seminar on "July Uprising: Understanding the Expectations and Realities," marking the one-year anniversary of the July 2024 movement that led to political transition. Major General Md Iftekhar Anis attended as Chief Guest. This was the first time an intern had chaired a seminar at BIISS during the current leadership's tenure.

The welcome address reflected on the significance of the movement, noting how what began as a demand for fairness in government job quotas evolved into a nationwide awakening that transcended its initial scope. The seminar aimed to facilitate scholarly analysis rather than political advocacy, creating space for rigorous examination of a recent and still-contested event.

Panellists offered diverse perspectives on the uprising's origins, dynamics, and implications. Closing remarks synthesised key themes: emphasis on expanding trade opportunities and economic diversification; awakening of civic consciousness among youth; concerns about erosion of law enforcement morale requiring institutional attention; and the importance of managing expectations during transitional periods. Chairing this seminar required synthesising complex discussions in real-time, a skill that classroom learning cannot fully develop.

Event preparation for this seminar was particularly intensive, involving coordination with multiple panellists, preparation of briefing materials, communication with dignitaries, and delegation of tasks to newer interns to ensure comprehensive documentation. The experience demonstrated the importance of advance planning and clear task allocation for successful event execution.

3.3.6. BIISS-UNOPS SDG Roundtable (6 September 2025)

Coordination responsibilities were assumed for the roundtable titled "The Power of Local: How Grassroots Communities Drive SDG Achievement in Bangladesh," organised in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The event highlighted the critical role of community-led initiatives in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 (The Bangladesh Today, 2025).

Major General Iftekhar Anis, Director General of BIISS, emphasised in opening remarks: "Real progress lies in the hands of our local communities. Their lived experiences and solutions are invaluable in shaping policies that truly leave no one behind." The EU Ambassador noted: "Involving local communities is paramount. The EU has consistently supported Bangladesh in localizing the SDGs, with women at the center." The discussion concluded with a collective call to strengthen local data systems, improve financing mechanisms, and advance deeper collaboration among government, development partners, and civil society to accelerate SDG progress.

3.3.7. Original Research: Japan-Bangladesh Relations

A significant achievement was completing original research titled "Reimagining the Future of Bangladesh-Japan Relations: Emerging Areas." This study investigated three emerging avenues of bilateral cooperation: maritime defence technology cooperation, large-scale manpower and educational exchanges, and blue economy collaboration.

3.4. Research Design and Methodology

The research employed qualitative methodology combining three data collection approaches:

- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with four experts conducted during July and August 2025. Interviewees were selected through purposive sampling based on expertise in Japan-Bangladesh relations, maritime security, or development cooperation. Selection criteria included: professional engagement with bilateral issues; academic or policy expertise in relevant domains; and willingness to participate.
- Literature review of academic sources, JICA reports, Ministry of Foreign Affairs documents, and policy papers from both Bangladeshi and Japanese institutions.
- News content analysis of bilateral coverage in Bangladeshi and Japanese media outlets, examining how the relationship is framed in public discourse.

3.5. Interview Protocol and Ethics Statement

Semi-structured interviews lasting 45-60 minutes were conducted in person and via phone call conference. The interview protocol covered: perceptions of current bilateral relations; assessment of emerging cooperation areas; barriers to deepened engagement; and recommendations for policy direction.

All interviewees provided informed verbal consent prior to interview commencement. The purpose of the research was explained, including how findings would be used, and participation was confirmed as voluntary. Interview notes were stored securely on password-protected devices and transcripts were anonymised to protect interviewee identities. Dr. Mohammad Jasimuddin, institutional supervisor, approved the research protocol prior to data collection.

Data analysis involved identifying themes across interview transcripts, then triangulating interview findings with insights from literature review and news content analysis. This triangulation approach strengthened confidence in findings by demonstrating convergence across different data sources.

3.6. Limitations

- Small sample size (n=4) limits generalisability of findings to broader expert populations.
- Research represents preliminary exploration; substantial development, including additional interviews, is required before publication.
- Potential selection bias in purposive sampling may exclude contrary perspectives.
- Time constraints of the internship period limited depth of analysis possible.
- The research should be understood as hypothesis-generating rather than hypothesis-testing.

3.6 Key Findings

Maritime defence technology cooperation with Japan offers a credible pathway for Bangladesh to enhance maritime domain awareness capabilities. Japan's non-coercive approach to defence cooperation makes it particularly attractive for Bangladesh, which seeks capacity enhancement while avoiding entanglement in great power competition (Hornung, 2014). The Free and Open Indo-Pacific

strategy provides a framework for cooperation that aligns with Bangladesh's interest in maintaining freedom of navigation in the Bay of Bengal.

Human capital and educational exchange programmes align with complementary needs: Japan's demographic challenges create demand for skilled workers, while Bangladesh's youth bulge creates supply (JICA, 2020). Expanding existing technical training programmes could benefit both countries while creating people-to-people connections that strengthen bilateral ties over the long term.

The blue economy represents an untapped domain for sustainable development cooperation. Bangladesh's extensive maritime zone and Japan's advanced marine technology create opportunities for collaboration on fisheries management, marine resource extraction, and ocean governance (Hossain, 2022). This area has received less attention than traditional development assistance but may offer significant mutual benefits.

The research will continue to be developed with the aim of submission for BIISS publication and external publications after completing additional interviews and obtaining formal ethical clearance from appropriate review bodies.

Chapter 4: Key Learnings and Experiences

4.1 Important Learnings

4.1.1. Understanding Security and Strategic Foundations of Policy Formulation

The most significant learning from this internship concerned how security and strategic considerations inform governmental policy formulation. BIISS research operates at the intersection of academic analysis and policy relevance, producing outputs that may shape how decision-makers understand Bangladesh's strategic environment. Observing this process first-hand revealed dimensions of policy-making that textbook accounts cannot fully capture.

Policy formulation in security and strategic domains requires balancing m ultiple considerations: immediate threats and long-term positioning; domestic political constraints and international expectations; resource limitations and aspirational goals. BIISS researchers navigate these complexities by producing analysis that is rigorous enough to withstand scholarly scrutiny yet accessible enough to inform busy policymakers. This balance between analytical depth and practical utility represents a distinctive competence that the internship helped develop.

The monthly strategic briefings provided regular exposure to how BIISS researchers analyse emerging security challenges. From regional dynamics in the Bay of Bengal to economic diplomacy with major powers, these sessions demonstrated how theoretical frameworks translate into practical assessments of policy options. The emphasis on identifying implications for Bangladesh connected academic analysis to governmental concerns, illustrating the enlightenment function that Weiss (1979) describes.

4.1.2. Theoretical Insights in Practice

The internship demonstrated how theoretical frameworks from international relations find practical application in policy research. Constructivist insights about how shared ideas shape state behaviour were not abstract concepts but tools that researchers applied when analysing bilateral relationships. Wendt's (1992) assertion that "anarchy is what states make of it" took on practical meaning as researchers examined the socially constructed nature of international relationships, attending to diplomatic discourse, institutional norms, and identity formation rather than focusing exclusively on material factors.

Historical institutionalist concepts proved equally relevant. The emphasis on timing and sequences, studied extensively in GSG 410 (Political Institutions), helped explain why the post-August 2024 moment matters: choices made during critical junctures can establish path-dependent trajectories that constrain subsequent options. BIISS research during this period was not merely documenting events but contributing to the construction of new foreign policy orientations that may persist for years.

The concept of epistemic communities (Haas, 1992) illuminated BIISS's position in the policy ecosystem. The institute functions as a node where particular ways of understanding regional dynamics circulate among researchers, officials, and journalists. Policy influence operates not through dramatic moments of decision but through this gradual circulation of ideas, the enlightenment function that Weiss (1979) describes.

4.1.3. Research Skills Development

The internship substantially enhanced research capabilities across multiple dimensions:

- Literature review: Moving from academic assignments to professional research revealed different expectations. BIISS literature reviews must be comprehensive yet focused, identifying not just what has been written but what gaps remain and why they matter for policy.
- Qualitative research design: Developing the interview protocol for the Japan-Bangladesh research required translating research questions into specific queries that would elicit useful information from experts with limited time. Balance between structure and flexibility was essential, allowing interviewees to share insights not anticipated in advance.
- Source evaluation: Policy research requires assessing sources for credibility, bias, and analytical utility. A think tank report from a partisan organisation differs from peer-reviewed scholarship; both may be useful, but their limitations must be understood.
- Data management: Daily engagement with large volumes of information, from news monitoring to document review, developed systematic approaches to information processing that proved essential for research productivity.
- Synthesis and argumentation: The most challenging skill was synthesising diverse sources into coherent arguments. This requires not just summarising what others have written but identifying patterns, contradictions, and implications that may not be explicit in any single source.

4.1.4. Leadership and Coordination Skills

The senior internship phase provided extensive experience in leadership and coordination. Guiding newer interns required articulating tacit knowledge about institutional expectations and providing feedback that supported learning without being discouraging. Delegating tasks prior to events demanded clear communication about responsibilities and deadlines, while post-event coordination required ensuring comprehensive documentation even when multiple interns contributed.

Event coordination developed stakeholder management skills. Communicating with participants ranging from senior government officials to international experts required adapting communication styles to different audiences while maintaining professional standards. Pre-event preparation, from sending invitations to confirming logistics, revealed the extensive behind-the-scenes work that enables successful institutional events.

4.1.5. Professional Communication

Leading rapporteuring teams developed communication abilities that classroom learning cannot fully provide. Real-time documentation of seminars required active listening, rapid comprehension of complex arguments, and accurate transcription under time pressure. Speakers do not pause for note-takers; essential points must be captured while simultaneously processing what comes next.

Chairing the July Uprising seminar demanded public speaking skills in a high-stakes setting. With the Director General in attendance and the subject matter politically sensitive, competence and neutrality had to be projected while facilitating substantive discussion. The experience was challenging, but it built confidence that will serve in future professional settings.

4.2 Rationale of Learnings

These learnings emerged from the specific context of think tank work rather than being generic professional skills. The emphasis on security and strategic foundations of policy formulation reflects BIISS's mandate to inform governmental decision-making on international and security issues. Understanding how research connects to policy requires immersion in an environment where that connection is actively pursued.

The emphasis on theoretical application reflects BIISS's commitment to grounded analysis; researchers are expected to draw on academic frameworks rather than offering purely journalistic commentary. Research skills developed through assigned literature reviews and the Japan-Bangladesh study align with BIISS's mandate for policy-relevant research, which requires different competencies than purely academic work.

Communication competencies emerged from the practical demands of rapporteuring and event participation. Unlike academic settings where written communication predominates and revision is possible, think tank work often requires rapid synthesis and verbal presentation alongside documentation. The ability to capture complex discussions in real-time, then transform raw notes into polished proceedings, represents a distinctive skill set.

The two-phase structure of the internship facilitated developmental progression. First phase activities built foundational competencies; senior internship responsibilities required applying and extending those competencies in more demanding contexts. This progression mirrors how professional development typically works: demonstrated reliability on basic tasks earns opportunities for more complex work.

4.3 Connection with Academia

The internship illuminated both connections and tensions between academic knowledge and professional practice. Theoretical frameworks from GSG coursework proved directly applicable to policy research in ways that enriched both understanding and contribution, whilst simultaneously revealing limitations in how academic paradigms translate to institutional realities shaped by hierarchical structures and security imperatives.

GSG 201: Theories of International Relations

This foundational course provided the theoretical architecture for understanding BIISS's analytical approaches. The distinction between realism, liberalism, and constructivism shaped how researchers frame questions about Bangladesh's strategic environment. Wendt's constructivism, emphasising how shared ideas constitute international reality, proved particularly applicable to understanding how bilateral relationships like Japan-Bangladesh are shaped by identity constructions rather than

material factors alone. The course's emphasis on social constructivism provided tools for analysing how the post-August 2024 transition is reshaping Bangladesh's foreign policy identity.

However, the internship revealed a crucial insight that tempers purely constructivist analysis: realist assumptions about power, hierarchy, and strategic calculation frequently predominate in institutional practice. BIISS operates under the direction of senior military leadership, with Major General Iftekhar Anis serving as Director General. This organisational structure reflects what structural realists would recognise as the enduring salience of security imperatives and hierarchical authority in shaping institutional behaviour. The military background of senior leadership brings considerable strategic expertise and governmental connections, yet it also introduces particular organisational dynamics that differ markedly from purely civilian research institutions.

The Military-Academic Interface: Disciplinary Culture and Research Methodology

The presence of serving military personnel in senior leadership positions creates what might be understood as an institutional hybrid: a research organisation operating within frameworks of military discipline and hierarchical authority. This arrangement generates productive tensions between research methodologies and military organisational culture that merit careful analysis.

Military discipline emphasises adherence to established protocols, clear chains of command, and decisive action within defined parameters. Academic research, by contrast, thrives on intellectual autonomy, methodological pluralism, and the freedom to challenge established assumptions. At BIISS, these different institutional logics coexist, sometimes harmoniously and sometimes in productive tension. The emphasis on rigorous documentation standards and systematic approaches to knowledge production reflects military precision applied to research contexts. Event coordination, rapporteuring protocols, and institutional procedures exhibit the thoroughness characteristic of military organisations, ensuring quality control and institutional memory.

Simultaneously, this disciplinary framework can constrain the exploratory dimensions of research that purely academic settings might encourage. Research agendas necessarily align with governmental priorities and institutional mandates in ways that reflect BIISS's statutory position under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The autonomy to pursue purely theoretical questions without immediate policy relevance, common in university settings, operates within narrower bounds at BIISS. This is neither a limitation nor an advantage but rather a defining characteristic of think tank research within governmental ecosystems.

The experience of navigating this institutional culture revealed how realist insights about hierarchy and authority remain salient even in organisations ostensibly dedicated to ideas and analysis. Constructivism helpfully illuminates how shared understandings shape bilateral relationships and policy discourse, yet realism more accurately captures the internal dynamics of institutions where formal authority and strategic imperatives structure daily operations. This represents an important learning that nuances the theoretical foundations studied in GSG 201: international relations theories apply differently to analysing interstate relations versus understanding the institutional contexts where such analysis occurs.

GSG 410: Political Institutions

This course's treatment of historical institutionalism, path dependence, and critical junctures proved directly relevant to understanding BIISS's role and the current political moment. Pierson's (2000) concept of increasing returns helped explain why certain institutional arrangements at BIISS persist across changing political contexts. The comparative institutional analysis methods learnt in this course informed assessment of how BIISS compares to similar institutions in other countries. Bell's (2017) work on comparing political values, included in the course readings, provided frameworks for understanding how "eastern" versus "western" institutional values shape think tank operations.

The internship revealed how BIISS's institutional form, established in 1978 with military representation in senior leadership, exhibits precisely the path dependence that historical institutionalism predicts. Once established, this organisational template has proven remarkably durable across different political administrations, suggesting that initial institutional choices create self-reinforcing mechanisms. The benefits of governmental access and strategic expertise that military leadership provides create incentives for maintaining this arrangement, even as the research environment evolves. Understanding these path-dependent processes proved essential for comprehending why BIISS operates as it does rather than conforming to purely civilian think tank models prevalent in some Western contexts.

GSG 210: Foreign Policy Analysis

This course's emphasis on distinguishing between domestic and foreign policy determinants proved essential for understanding BIISS research. Hopf's (1998) article on constructivism in IR theory, and Houghton's (2007) work on constructivist approaches to foreign policy decision-making, provided analytical tools for understanding how Bangladesh constructs its foreign policy identity. The course's treatment of the agent-structure debate (Friedman & Starr, 1997) illuminated how BIISS researchers navigate between structural constraints and agency in their policy recommendations.

The practical application of these frameworks revealed their analytical power whilst simultaneously demonstrating their limitations when confronting institutional realities. BIISS researchers must account for how Bangladesh's strategic environment constrains policy options, yet they must also identify spaces for agentic choice that could shift trajectories. This navigation between constraint and possibility operates within an institutional context where senior military leadership brings particular perspectives on what constitutes viable policy options. The agent-structure debate thus unfolds not merely as an abstract theoretical question but as a daily practical challenge in policy research.

GSG 331: Public Policy Making in Bangladesh

This course's comprehensive treatment of Bangladesh's policy-making processes provided essential context for understanding BIISS's position in the policy ecosystem. The course's emphasis on evidence-based policy formulation aligned with BIISS's analytical approach. Bardach's (2009) framework for policy analysis, included in the course readings, informed approaches to synthesising

research findings into policy-relevant conclusions. The course's attention to how political transitions affect policy continuity proved directly relevant during this post-August 2024 period.

The internship illustrated how policy-making operates through formal and informal channels that academic treatments sometimes underemphasise. BIISS's convening capacity, bringing together officials, researchers, and international experts, creates spaces where policy ideas circulate and evolve through dialogue rather than solely through written recommendations. The military leadership's networks within governmental structures facilitate this convening function in ways that might be unavailable to purely civilian institutions, demonstrating how institutional positioning shapes policy influence.

GSG 311: Political Ideologies

This course's treatment of nationalism, ideology, and identity formation provided conceptual tools for understanding how Bangladesh positions itself in regional and global contexts. Howard's (1989) article on ideology and international relations, included in the course readings, illuminated how ideological frameworks shape foreign policy orientations. The course's attention to individualism versus collectivism, and to how ideologies evolve through industrial transformations, offered perspectives on Bangladesh's developmental aspirations and their implications for foreign policy.

The post-August 2024 transition brought questions of national identity and ideological orientation to the foreground in ways that made this theoretical grounding immediately relevant. BIISS research during this period engaged with fundamental questions about how Bangladesh should position itself internationally, what values should guide its diplomacy, and how to balance competing visions of national interest. These are not merely technical policy questions but reflect deeper ideological commitments about Bangladesh's place in the world.

GSG 310: Introduction to International Law

This course's treatment of sovereignty, treaties, and international organisations provided frameworks for understanding Bangladesh's multilateral engagements. The law of the sea, covered extensively in this course, proved directly relevant to research on maritime cooperation with Japan and Bangladesh's interests in the Bay of Bengal. Understanding how international legal frameworks constrain and enable state behaviour enriched analysis of Bangladesh's foreign policy options.

The Japan-Bangladesh maritime cooperation research drew heavily on legal frameworks governing exclusive economic zones, continental shelf rights, and maritime boundary delimitation. Bangladesh's extensive maritime zone, secured through international legal processes including the 2012 ITLOS judgment resolving maritime boundaries with Myanmar and the 2014 PCA arbitration with India, represents a critical asset for blue economy development. Understanding these legal foundations proved essential for analysing cooperation possibilities with Japan in maritime domain awareness and ocean governance.

GSG 202: Global History: 20th Century and Beyond

This course's treatment of how 20th century developments shape 21st century choices provided historical depth for understanding Bangladesh's strategic environment. The course's attention to imperialism, decolonisation, and the emergence of new states informed understanding of Bangladesh's foreign policy identity as a relatively young nation navigating established international structures. Huntington's (1991) concept of democracy's "third wave" provided context for understanding Bangladesh's current political transition.

Bangladesh's 1971 independence and subsequent foreign policy evolution cannot be understood without attention to these broader historical patterns. The country's emergence from colonial rule and liberation war created particular sensitivities about sovereignty and non-interference that continue to shape diplomatic approaches. The internship revealed how historical memory informs contemporary policy debates in ways that abstract theoretical frameworks sometimes miss without proper contextualisation.

GSG 103: Theories and Methods of Interdisciplinary Studies

This course's treatment of research paradigms, including positivism, constructivism, and critical theory, provided methodological foundations that proved directly applicable to BIISS research. The distinction between quantitative and qualitative approaches (Bryman, 2015) informed research design for the Japan-Bangladesh study. Klein's (2008) work on evaluating interdisciplinary research shaped understanding of how BIISS integrates insights from multiple disciplinary perspectives.

The Research Methodology Roundtable (4-5 March 2025) provided practical demonstration of these paradigmatic differences in action. Discussions about interpretive versus positivist approaches, about the value of Global South perspectives in international relations research, and about appropriate methods for different research questions all reflected the methodological pluralism that GSG 103 examined theoretically. This practical engagement deepened understanding of how methodological choices shape research outcomes and policy relevance.

Tensions Between Academic and Professional Research

At the same time, the internship revealed differences between academic and policy research that reflect institutional contexts as much as methodological preferences. Academic work often prioritises theoretical contribution, asking how findings advance scholarly debates. Policy research asks different questions: what does this mean for decision-makers? What options are available? What are the likely consequences of different choices? These questions require translating academic insights into actionable terms, a skill that requires practice beyond what coursework provides.

Research methodology training from academic courses proved foundational. Understanding research design, sampling strategies, interview protocols, and analytical approaches allowed approaching the Japan-Bangladesh research with methodological awareness. Articulating why purposive sampling was appropriate for this study, what limitations it entailed, and how triangulation across data sources could strengthen findings, all drew on academic preparation.

The internship also revealed gaps in preparation. Limited experience with rapid-turnaround research, where findings must be produced quickly to remain policy-relevant, required adjustment. Academic timelines allow for extensive revision; policy research often does not. Learning to produce quality work under time constraints was a significant development. Moreover, the hierarchical nature of institutional approval processes, reflecting the military-influenced organisational culture, meant that research outputs required navigation of formal clearance procedures uncommon in purely academic settings. This represented neither obstruction nor censorship but rather the institutional reality of research organisations operating within governmental frameworks where accountability and coordination matter.

Synthesising Theoretical Insights with Institutional Realities

The most profound learning concerned how different theoretical traditions illuminate different dimensions of the same institutional reality. Constructivism proves invaluable for understanding how ideas, norms, and identities shape international relations and policy discourse. Historical institutionalism explains why organisational forms persist and how critical junctures create opportunities for change. Yet realism, often dismissed in academic settings as theoretically unsophisticated, captures essential truths about how hierarchical authority, security imperatives, and strategic calculation structure institutional behaviour.

BIISS operates simultaneously as an epistemic community producing shared understandings about regional security (constructivism), as an institution shaped by path-dependent choices made at its founding (historical institutionalism), and as an organisation where military hierarchy and strategic priorities shape daily operations (realism). Effective analysis requires drawing on multiple theoretical traditions rather than privileging one paradigm. This theoretical pluralism, emphasised in GSG coursework, proved not merely academically defensible but practically necessary for understanding complex institutional realities.

The experience suggests that students preparing for policy research careers should resist the temptation to adopt single theoretical frameworks as comprehensive explanations. Different theories illuminate different aspects of political reality, and the art of policy analysis involves knowing which theoretical tools apply to which analytical problems. Constructivism for understanding diplomatic relationships; historical institutionalism for explaining organisational persistence; realism for comprehending how power and hierarchy structure institutional life. Sophisticated analysis requires theoretical flexibility rather than paradigmatic orthodoxy.

4.4 Examples

4.4.1. Application of Constructivism

When analysing Japan-Bangladesh relations, constructivist insights about how identities shape interests and behaviour proved directly applicable. Rather than treating Japanese investment as purely material calculation, analysis examined how both countries construct their bilateral relationship through diplomatic discourse and institutional engagement. Japan's self-understanding as a non-coercive development partner differs from China's approach; this identity shapes how Tokyo

engages with Dhaka, independent of material considerations. Bangladesh, for its part, constructs its identity as a developing nation seeking to graduate from LDC status, which shapes how it approaches bilateral relationships with various partners. This analytical approach directly applied concepts from GSG 201 (Theories of International Relations) and GSG 210 (Foreign Policy Analysis).

4.4.2. Historical Institutionalism in Practice

The August 2024 political transition represented a critical juncture in Bangladeshi foreign policy. Observing how BIISS researchers analysed potential path-breaking changes illustrated how theoretical frameworks translate into analytical practice. Researchers asked: which institutional arrangements established under the previous government exhibit path dependence that will constrain the interim government's options? Which arrangements are more contingent and susceptible to reconstitution? These questions, drawn from historical institutionalist theory studied in GSG 410 (Political Institutions), guided empirical analysis of specific policy domains.

4.4.3. Professional Growth Through Challenge

Chairing the July Uprising seminar pushed beyond comfort zones in ways that proved developmentally valuable. Preparing remarks required synthesising complex material into accessible terms. Managing panel discussions demanded real-time judgment about when to intervene and when to let discussion flow. Closing remarks required synthesising diverse perspectives into coherent themes without misrepresenting any panellist's position. These capabilities cannot be developed through academic exercises alone; they require practice in authentic professional contexts.

4.4.4. Data Management and Synthesis

Daily engagement with large volumes of information developed systematic approaches to data management. Monitoring international news, reviewing documents, and synthesising findings required efficient information processing systems. These skills, while not explicitly taught in coursework, proved essential for professional productivity and will transfer to any information-intensive career.

Chapter 5: Critique and Reflections

5.1 Critical Evaluation

5.1.1. Institutional Strengths

BIISS possesses considerable strengths that enable effective mandate fulfilment:

- Statutory position under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides access to governmental processes and policy networks that purely independent think tanks may lack. This positioning enables BIISS outputs to reach decision-makers directly.
- The quality and commitment of twenty-one researchers across five thematic divisions ensures comprehensive coverage of strategic issues. Researchers bring diverse expertise, from military affairs to climate security, allowing the institute to address multidimensional challenges.
- Convening capacity demonstrated through events like the BIISS-NDC Discussion, UNODC-BIISS Police Reform Dialogue, and BIISS-UNOPS SDG Roundtable brings together diverse stakeholders in settings conducive to substantive exchange. This convening role may be as important as research outputs for BIISS's policy influence.
- International partnerships with institutions including IDSA (India), ISSI (Pakistan), KIEP (Korea), and membership in COSATT enable cross-border knowledge exchange and comparative analysis.
- The supportive environment for interns, with encouragement for active participation in events and research, reflects commitment to developing future policy researchers. This investment in human capital strengthens Bangladesh's analytical capacity over the long term.
- Monthly strategic briefings and training sessions provide structured opportunities for professional development and ensure researchers and interns stay current with rapidly evolving security dynamics.

5.1.2. Areas Requiring Attention

Private Sector Engagement: BIISS research programmes draw upon governmental, academic, and civil society inputs, yet business perspectives remain relatively underrepresented. Given the interim government's emphasis on economic diplomacy and the importance of trade facilitation for Bangladesh's development trajectory, enhanced private sector engagement would strengthen research on commercial dimensions of international relations. Business actors possess knowledge about supply chains, investment climates, and market dynamics that could enrich BIISS analysis.

Methodological Diversification: While qualitative analysis remains essential for understanding the ideational and institutional dimensions of international politics, incorporating quantitative methods more systematically could illuminate patterns in trade flows, investment trends, and other phenomena amenable to statistical analysis. This would require investment in researcher training and methodological infrastructure. Furthermore, the institute mostly uses Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

more than field research, quantitative research and other primary research methodologies which produce larger datasets and have a higher validity.

5.1.3. The Library: Asset and Opportunity

The BIISS library represents the institute's most valuable yet underutilised asset. According to BIISS institutional records, it houses over 10,000 books, 150 academic journals, and 4,000 first-hand documents (BIISS, 2024). The collection spans decades of academic and policy literature, including materials potentially unavailable elsewhere in Bangladesh. First-hand documents from diplomatic engagements and policy processes constitute an archival resource of considerable historical value.

However, the library's potential remains incompletely realised. Access is largely limited to BIISS researchers and staff, with occasional accommodations for visiting scholars. Enhanced utilisation through expanded access infrastructure could position the library as a national resource for the broader research community. Digitisation of archival materials, improved cataloguing, and structured access programmes for university researchers and graduate students could extend the library's reach without compromising security for sensitive materials.

5.2 Learning from Challenges

The internship presented several challenges that proved instructive for professional development:

Time Management: Balancing multiple responsibilities during the senior internship, including rapporteuring leadership, original research, seminar preparation, and intern coordination, required developing effective prioritisation skills. Learning to distinguish between urgent and important tasks, to allocate time realistically, and to communicate proactively when competing demands created conflicts proved essential. These skills will serve in any professional context where multiple responsibilities must be managed simultaneously.

Information Overload: Managing large volumes of data daily, from news monitoring to document review, required developing systematic approaches to information processing. Learning to identify what matters, to skim efficiently, and to maintain organised records of reviewed materials represented significant adjustments from academic research patterns.

Research Constraints: Conducting original research within internship time constraints necessitated accepting limitations. The small sample size for Key Informant Interviews (n=4) reflects practical constraints rather than ideal research design. Learning to acknowledge limitations honestly, rather than overclaiming, represents an important research ethics principle. The Japan-Bangladesh research should be understood as preliminary exploration that requires further development before publication.

Professional Communication Under Pressure: Chairing the July Uprising seminar involved public speaking in a high-stakes setting with limited preparation time. The experience was uncomfortable, but discomfort often accompanies growth. Adequate preparation, clear structure, and genuine engagement with the material can compensate for nervousness. The positive feedback received afterward suggested that internal discomfort was less visible than it felt.

Navigating Institutional Culture: Every organisation has unwritten norms that newcomers must learn. Understanding how BIISS operates, who to approach with different questions, how to frame requests, when to take initiative and when to defer, required observation and occasional missteps. This tacit knowledge is essential for effective performance but cannot be conveyed through orientation materials alone.

Delegation and Coordination: Learning to delegate effectively during the senior internship required balancing trust in others' capabilities with responsibility for outcomes. Providing clear instructions without micromanaging, and following up appropriately without undermining autonomy, represented skills that developed through practice rather than instruction.

5.3 Overall Reflection

Reflecting on the six-month experience, the internship exceeded initial expectations in several respects. The opportunity to chair a seminar (a first for an intern under current leadership), lead rapporteuring teams, conduct original research, and guide newer interns went beyond typical intern responsibilities. The progression from first phase observer to senior intern leader illustrated how demonstrated competence can lead to expanded opportunities.

The experience clarified the relationship between academic study and professional practice. While GSG coursework provided essential foundations, the internship revealed additional dimensions of professional competence that classroom learning cannot fully develop: navigating organisational dynamics, managing time under pressure, communicating effectively with diverse audiences, processing large volumes of information, and producing quality work rapidly. These capabilities can be developed through experience but not acquired through study alone.

The timing of the internship during Bangladesh's political transition added significance to the experience. Observing how BIISS researchers analysed unfolding events, contributed to policy discussions, and navigated uncertainty provided insights that would not have been available during more stable periods. Critical junctures create both challenges and opportunities; think tanks play important roles during such moments by providing analytical frameworks for understanding change and options for responding to it.

This internship has been instrumental in steering career interests towards pursuing a Master's degree in International Relations. The direct exposure to policy research, combined with the realisation that academic preparation provides genuine but incomplete foundations for professional practice, has clarified the value of advanced study. A Master's programme would provide deeper theoretical grounding while developing additional research competencies.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This six-month internship at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies has bridged academic learning and professional practice in international relations research and policy analysis. The experience unfolded across two phases, initial foundation-building followed by expanded senior responsibilities, each contributing distinctively to professional development.

6.1. Summary of Key Achievements

- Completing original research on Japan-Bangladesh bilateral relations, examining maritime defence cooperation, human capital exchange, and blue economy collaboration. While preliminary, this research identified emerging cooperation areas that merit further investigation.
- Chairing the seminar on the July Uprising anniversary (21 August 2025), including delivering welcome and closing remarks to assembled dignitaries and scholars. This was the first time an intern had chaired a seminar at BIISS during the current leadership's tenure.
- Leading rapporteuring teams for major institutional events, including the BIISS-NDC Discussion (97 NDC officers), UNODC-BIISS Police Reform Dialogue, Nuclear Energy Roundtable, and BIISS-UNOPS SDG Roundtable. These events reached diverse stakeholders and contributed to policy discourse on important issues.
- Coordinating event logistics, communicating with participants, and delegating tasks among newer interns to ensure smooth institutional operations.
- Contributing to documentation of multiple events and participating in monthly strategic briefings on pressing security issues facing Bangladesh.
- Being acknowledged in official BIISS publications for contributions to institutional outputs, providing tangible evidence that intern work feeds into the institute's knowledge production.
- Progressing from first phase foundation-building to senior intern leadership responsibilities, demonstrating capacity for professional growth within a think tank environment.

6.2. Lessons Learned

The internship yielded important lessons about policy research, professional development, and Bangladesh's strategic environment:

- Security and strategic considerations form essential foundations for foreign policy formulation. Think tank research may shape how policymakers understand Bangladesh's strategic environment and the options available for addressing challenges.
- Policy impact operates through enlightenment rather than direct uptake. Think tank research influences how policymakers understand problems over time, not through dramatic moments of decision.
- Theoretical frameworks from academic study prove genuinely useful in professional settings when appropriately applied. Constructivism and historical institutionalism were not abstractions but analytical tools that guided BIISS research.

- Professional competence requires capabilities beyond what classroom learning provides. Time management, communication under pressure, data management, and navigation of institutional culture must be developed through experience.
- Bangladesh's foreign policy environment is more complex and contested than textbook accounts suggest. The post-August 2024 transition created genuine uncertainty about future directions, with multiple possibilities remaining open.
- Coordination and delegation skills are essential for leadership roles. Guiding newer interns and ensuring smooth event operations required clear communication, appropriate trust, and systematic follow-up.

6.3. Career Implications

This internship has been instrumental in clarifying career direction. The experience confirmed interest in pursuing a career at the intersection of academic research and policy analysis, steering attention towards pursuing a Master's degree in International Relations. Whether through further graduate study, think tank employment, or governmental service, continued engagement with the questions that animated this internship remains a priority: how ideas shape policy, how institutions constrain and enable action, and how Bangladesh positions itself in a complex regional and global environment.

The Japan-Bangladesh research will continue to be developed with the aim of submission for BIISS publication after completing additional interviews and obtaining formal ethical clearance from appropriate review bodies. This represents a concrete next step that extends the internship's contribution beyond the six-month period.

Chapter 7: Implications

7.1. Applicability of Academic Learning

The internship demonstrated that academic preparation in Global Studies and Governance provides genuine foundations for professional practice in think tank environments. Theoretical frameworks, particularly constructivism and historical institutionalism, proved directly applicable to policy analysis tasks. Research methodology training translated into practical capability for literature review and primary research. Writing skills developed through academic assignments provided foundations for professional documentation.

At the same time, academic preparation alone proves insufficient. The internship revealed additional competencies that professional practice demands but classroom learning cannot fully develop: professional communication, time management, data management, organisational navigation, coordination skills, and the ability to produce quality work under time constraints. These capabilities must be developed through experiential learning.

7.2. Organisational Impact

Intern contributions at BIISS feed into larger institutional processes through several mechanisms. Rapporteuring work becomes part of institutional records, informing future research and potentially reaching stakeholders who could not attend events. Literature reviews contribute to research projects that may ultimately inform policy discussions. Original research, while preliminary, may develop into publications that circulate among relevant audiences.

Demonstrating direct organisational impact remains challenging because the pathways from intern contribution to policy outcome involve multiple steps and numerous intervening factors. What can be observed is that BIISS occupies a position where its outputs circulate among actors who shape policy discourse. Intern contributions, however modest, feed into this circulation.

7.3. Industry Relevance

The think tank sector occupies a distinctive position within Bangladesh's foreign policy ecosystem. BIISS research may contribute to governmental decision-making through the enlightenment function, gradually shaping how policymakers understand issues and options. For students interested in international relations careers, think tank experience provides valuable preparation for governmental, academic, or international organisation positions.

7.4. Transferable Skills and Career Trajectory

The skills developed through this internship transfer directly to diverse career paths, as demonstrated by subsequent employment as Community and Resource Specialist at Quantigo AI, a machine learning data annotation company. The parallels between BIISS responsibilities and this role are significant:

- Community engagement: Just as BIISS work involved coordinating with diverse stakeholders, from government officials to international experts, the Quantigo AI role requires engaging with communities of annotators and ensuring their effective participation.

- Task delegation and coordination: The senior internship's emphasis on delegating tasks among newer interns and ensuring smooth event operations directly prepared for coordinating resource allocation and task assignment at Quantigo AI.
- Skills development to meet international standards: BIISS's emphasis on maintaining research quality aligned with international think tank standards translates to Quantigo AI's requirement for annotation quality meeting international machine learning benchmarks.
- Data management: Daily engagement with large volumes of information at BIISS developed systematic approaches to data processing directly applicable to managing annotation workflows.
- Professional communication: Experience communicating with diverse audiences, from senior officials to newer interns, prepared for stakeholder communication at Quantigo AI.

This career trajectory illustrates how think tank experience, while seemingly specialised, develops competencies applicable across sectors. Research, coordination, communication, and data management skills transfer to contexts far removed from international relations, demonstrating the value of policy research internships for diverse career paths.

7.5. Recommendations

For BIISS:

1. Enhance private sector engagement to strengthen economic dimensions of research programmes. Business perspectives could enrich analysis of trade facilitation, investment climate, and commercial diplomacy.
2. Expand library access infrastructure to position this valuable collection as a national resource for the broader research community. Digitisation and structured access programmes could extend reach without compromising security.
3. Continue investing in intern development through active participation in events, research opportunities, and mentorship. This investment strengthens Bangladesh's analytical capacity over the long term.
4. Consider formalising the two-phase internship structure, with explicit progression criteria and responsibilities for senior interns to guide newer cohorts.

For Future Interns:

5. Approach the initial period as foundation-building rather than expecting immediate significant responsibilities. Demonstrating reliability on basic tasks earns opportunities for more complex work.
6. Seek opportunities to contribute to original research rather than limiting engagement to assigned tasks. Initiative is valued in think tank environments.
7. Engage with theoretical frameworks from coursework, looking for connections between academic concepts and professional practice. This integration enriches both domains.

8. Develop systematic approaches to managing large volumes of information. Daily news monitoring, document review, and synthesis require efficient information processing skills.
9. Build relationships with senior researchers and fellow interns. These connections provide learning opportunities during the internship and professional networks thereafter.

For IUB GSG Department:

10. Continue partnership with BIISS as an internship destination given strong alignment with GSG curriculum objectives.
11. Consider incorporating practical research methodology exercises that simulate think tank timelines and expectations, preparing students for the rapid-turnaround nature of policy research.
12. Encourage students to maintain connections with internship supervisors for potential thesis collaboration or future professional opportunities.
13. Develop more explicit connections between course content and professional applications, helping students recognise how theoretical frameworks translate to practical analysis.

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Appendix A: Internship Hours Calculation

Table A.1: Working Hours Calculation

First Phase: 9 March to 8 June 2025

Total calendar days: 92 days

Weekends (Fridays and Saturdays): 26 days

Working weekdays: 66 days

Public holidays during this period:

- Independence Day (26 March): 1 day
- Eid-ul-Fitr (30-31 March): 2 days
- Bengali New Year (14 April): 1 day
- May Day (1 May): 1 day
- Buddha Purnima (11 May): 1 day
- Eid-ul-Adha preparation (7-8 June): 2 days

Total public holidays: 8 days

Adjusted working days: 66 - 8 = 58 days

Working hours per day: 8 hours (9:00 AM to 5:00 PM)

First Phase Total: 58 days × 8 hours = 464 hours

Senior Internship: 9 June to 8 September 2025

Total calendar days: 92 days

Weekends (Fridays and Saturdays): 26 days

Working weekdays: 66 days

Public holidays during this period:

- Eid-ul-Adha (9-10 June): 2 days
- Ashura (6 July): 1 day
- National Mourning Day (15 August): 1 day
- Janmashtami (16 August): 1 day

Total public holidays: 5 days

Adjusted working days: 66 - 5 = 61 days

Working hours per day: 8 hours

Senior Internship Total: 61 days × 8 hours = 488 hours

Combined Total

Total adjusted working days: 58 + 61 = 119 days

Total working hours: 464 + 488 = 952 hours

Note: Some variation may occur due to occasional schedule adjustments. This calculation represents the standard working pattern. The final conservative estimate accounts for occasional early departures and is approximately 840 hours across 105 actual working days.

Appendix B: Internship Logbook

Table B.1: Internship Activity Logbook

Date	Period	Activity	Mode
9-20 Mar 2025	First Phase	Orientation; Research Methodology Roundtable report	In-person
21-31 Mar 2025	First Phase	Literature review: BRI, China studies	In-person
1-30 Apr 2025	First Phase	Literature review: Japan-BD relations; monthly briefing	In-person
1-31 May 2025	First Phase	IUB-BIISS Youth Dividend Seminar (16 May); rapporteuring training	In-person
1-8 Jun 2025	First Phase	Event preparation; transition planning	In-person
9-23 Jun 2025	Senior	Senior intern transition; BIISS-NDC preparation; participant coordination	In-person
24 Jun 2025	Senior	BIISS-NDC Discussion (led rapporteuring, 97 officers)	In-person
25-26 Jun 2025	Senior	UNODC-BIISS Police Reform Dialogue (led rapporteuring)	In-person
27 Jun-13 Jul	Senior	KII interviews for Japan-BD research; monthly briefing	In-person/Virtual
14 Jul 2025	Senior	Nuclear Energy Roundtable (led rapporteuring)	In-person
15 Jul-20 Aug	Senior	Research writing; seminar preparation; intern coordination	In-person
21 Aug 2025	Senior	July Uprising seminar (chaired event, first intern to chair)	In-person
22 Aug-5 Sep	Senior	BIISS-UNOPS SDG Roundtable preparation; final documentation	In-person
6 Sep 2025	Senior	BIISS-UNOPS SDG Roundtable coordination	In-person
7-8 Sep 2025	Senior	Exit briefings; handover documentation	In-person