

Frisco ISD's Independent Study & Mentorship Program (ISM)

What is ISM?

Independent Study and Mentorship (ISM) is a rigorous, challenging course offered at Frisco ISD high schools. This program is designed for academically gifted and high achieving students who are juniors or seniors. It receives weighted credit (5.5 points).

Students who want to take ISM go through a selection and application process and are chosen to participate in this exciting, rigorous elective. They select careers or topics of study, and the ISM teacher helps students narrow down and focus this topic of study. Students conduct informational interviews with professionals in this chosen field and from this process, they carefully choose a mentor with whom to work for the remainder of the year (usually second semester).

The ISM teacher guides and helps the students with this important interview and mentor selection process. The course includes intense research, original idea generation, original product design, and written analysis of research. Furthermore, the ISM teacher works with the students on professionalism, time management, effective oral and written communication, interpersonal skills, interviewing, resume writing, and goal setting to help prepare these students for success in their mentorship experience and in life after high school. The ISM teacher follows each student's progress closely, communicates often with mentors, and makes sure each student stays task committed.

What is encompassed in the ISM curriculum?

- Intense Research
- Topic-related Product Development
- Original Idea Generation and Product Design
- Public Speaking and Presentations
- Resume Writing
- Interviewing Skills
- Business and Social Etiquette
- Hands-on experiences in real work environments
- Participation in District Events
- Written assessments of research at highest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy

*What topics are students studying this year?**

- Pediatric Oncology
- Entrepreneurship/ small business
- Computer Software Design
- Graphic Design
- Entrepreneurship/ small business
- Landscape Architecture
- Sports Photography
- Museum Curator
- Marketing
- Elementary Education
- Astronomy
- Marine Biology
- Writing
- Veterinary Science
- Constitutional Law
- Cardio-Thoracic Surgery
- Culinary Arts
- Criminal Law
- Cardiology
- Quantum Physics
- Ballet Company Administration
- Engineering
- Neo-natal nursing
- Archeology
- Optometry
- Green Energy

*Topics change every year based on what the ISM students choose to research.

What is the application process for ISM?

1. Students must submit an application on time and then interview for inclusion in this rigorous course. This process occurs on each high school campus during the spring semester. Applications are available in the school's counseling office when the application window opens.
2. The application process includes teacher recommendation forms that need to be completed by all of the applicant's teachers. Students are responsible for providing these recommendation forms to their teachers.
3. The recommendation forms ask teachers for their opinion regarding an applicant's level of trustworthiness and integrity as well as his or her task commitment.

What kind of student thrives in ISM?

Being a student in Frisco ISD's ISM course is a privilege. ISM is a highly-visible program on campuses, in our district, and at mentors' places of business in Frisco and other surrounding communities. Mentors give freely of their valuable time, expertise, and resources. Because of this, ISM students must be trusted to conduct themselves professionally and properly in many different situations both in and out of school. Students who thrive and are happiest in ISM embody the following characteristics:

- have integrity and can be trusted to leave campus to conduct interviews and visit mentors during the school day

- are highly intelligent and academically driven because the curriculum and schedule are demanding
- are responsible and meet deadlines
- can work independently
- have a strong worth ethic
- are committed to task completion
- already have a strong interest in a field and possibly have already done some preliminary research in that topic or done volunteer work in that area
- are mature
- make good choices