

INTRODUCTION

THE DERRYFIELD SCHOOL INDEPENDENT SENIOR PROJECT PROGRAM (ISP)

To The Student

Since 1985, seniors have had the opportunity to participate in an independent senior project program (ISP). Your first task is to begin thinking about whether or not you should undertake an ISP. Think about whether your skills and interests can best be developed in the classroom or by practical experience. Consider the advantages of continued classroom work in your discipline and those of independent study. **Do not make a decision, however, until you have considered possible ISPs in relation to classroom opportunities and spoken about these with several people.** . Your decision should be part of a process of thinking about your own education. Do not decide before you have been through this process.

The most important factor to keep in mind is that you, the student, are responsible for the project you undertake. For the ISP to be most effective you should take time to think about the activities you might like to do, explore the resources available for such activities, and speak to your parents, faculty, and others who might be helpful. They may be able to help you sort out the possibilities of independent study and help you clarify your areas of interest. In the end, the greatest benefit will come when you exercise your own initiative, responsibility, curiosity, perseverance and discipline.

If you do an ISP you should ask a faculty member to be your advisor; they will have specific responsibilities in guiding the application process and keeping an eye on the execution of your project. The person you ask may not be able to advise the project, as this is a major time commitment and each faculty member may only have two ISP advisees. In such a case, be prepared to ask someone else. You will also need an on-site advisor.

ISP GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

- 1) Participation in this project is optional.
- 2) Duration: The project occurs during the second half of spring term with a time commitment of 30 to 40 hours per week. The ISP may be shortened to accommodate AP exams or extended to accommodate special requests. Application for project extensions must go through the Curriculum Committee.
- 3) Program options: Your project may be one of the following. A course counts as 8 hours and a sport as 10 hours.
 - Project
 - Project plus school sport
 - Project plus one course
 - Project plus two courses
 - Project plus school sport and one course

Keep your schedule to a maximum of 40 hours per week, otherwise, you may overextend yourself. Your project will consume more of your energy than you expect.

4) Suggested categories: Volunteer social work, medical research at local hospitals, business/legal/political, communications internships, academic or non-academic independent study. Tracey Perkins in the Alumni Office may know of opportunities to work with alumni, and Susan Grodman can help with community service opportunities.

5) Eligibility: Seniors must have no grades below a C- in all year-long courses, or at midterm. They must not have exceeded the maximum number of absences or tardies. They must also receive approval from their classroom teachers.

Courses required for graduation may not be dropped to participate in the program, nor can a spring elective in science or computer.

6) Math and the ISP: Before you "drop" your math course, please consider this message from the Math Department:

“The Pre-Calculus course serves as a pre-requisite for college calculus. Dropping this course for the final half-term will make the transition to first-year college calculus difficult. Dropping AP Calculus or AP Statistics for the final half-term will make it very difficult to begin a second-level course next year. Finally, dropping the course will have an adverse effect on the Math AP exam in May. If the AP exam is an issue, we suggest continuing the math course until the exam.”

7) Students will need one project advisor and one "on-site" advisor.

8) Completion requirements: (Requirements for academic independent study will differ slightly.)

- Daily journal
- Weekly meeting or phone conversation with faculty advisor
- Fifteen-minute final meeting with the ISP Committee
- A short presentation by participants to the school community in an assembly
- Three to five-page typed evaluation of your project detailing the following:
 - a) A description of your program and how it was put together.
 - b) The duties you had and what you learned. How did the project differ from what you expected?
 - c) What changes would you have liked to have made in your project and why.
 - d) Your recommendation of this program for a future senior.

9) You may not receive money for your work and you may not work for a family member.

10) **Successful completion of the project is a graduation requirement.**

11) DATES FOR 2007 ISPs

Project Period: April 23- May 26 at the earliest (may extend to June 1)

Preliminary Application Deadline - Monday, February 5

Final Application Deadline – Wednesday, March 7