

Irvington High School: Frank H. Morrell Campus
Guidance Department
1253 Clinton Avenue, Irvington, NJ 07111
(973) 399-6987 ext. 1808/1814



Independent Study/Option II: A Guide for Students and Parents

PATHWAYS TO GRADUATION...GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS:

In order for a student to graduate and receive a high school diploma from Irvington High School, he/she must:

- Pass the state-mandated high school assessments
- Fulfill the minimum 125-credit graduation requirements.

CREDIT ATTAINMENT PATHWAYS:

A student may meet the 125-credit requirement through one or a combination of pathways.

I. Option I (Traditional Path of Studies)

A student earns credits by successful completion of the required courses. Credits are awarded for student participation in a class period of instruction. This is called “in-the-seat” class time. A class that meets routinely for one year, for one block on alternate days, yields 5 credits.

II. Option II (Alternate Path)

This option permits a student to earn credits in a more personalized and independent manner- rather than “in the seat.” Option II offers alternative paths to credits that meet or exceed the New Jersey Student Learning Standards and are based on student interests or career goals. Students may elect to apply for IHS credits or advancement of a course level through distance learning, independent study, college coursework or coursework taken outside IHS. **All learning opportunities as allowed by Option II must be pre-approved by the school counselor, academic area supervisor, the Supervisor of Guidance, and the Principal, under N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)** 1.II Several stipulations exist for students wishing to complete high school course work in an academic setting other than IHS.

Option II Courses Must be Pre-Approved:

A completed Option II approval must be submitted, along with syllabus/curriculum to IHS (page 9). The student must have received approval prior to the first instructional meeting of the course. Late application forms will not be accepted.

Deadlines:

If the deadline falls on a weekend, school holiday or inclement weather day, the deadline will be moved to the next scheduled school day. There are no extensions for coursework end dates for course transcript/verification dates.

Semester:	Application due date:	Drop Deadline date:	Coursework end date:	Course transcript/ verification date:
Summer	June 1	July 15	August 15	August 30
Fall	August 15	November 15	January 15	January 30
Spring	January 15	April 1	June 15	June 30
Full Year Course	August 15	January 15	June 15	June 30

Course Completion:

It is expected that each Option II opportunity will be completed during the time specified. Deadlines are firm. If a student does not drop or complete the course before the deadline, a grade of "F" will be reported on the transcript.

Option II Courses Must be from an Accredited Institution:

The accreditation must be from a United States Department of Education recognized national, regional, specialized and/or professional accrediting organization. For distance learning, the accreditation must be from a United States Department of Education recognized national, regional, specialized, and/or professional accrediting organization. Advanced Placement courses must be approved via an AP Audit conducted by the College Board.

Option II Courses Must Meet NJ Student Learning Standards:

Learning opportunities based upon specified instructional objectives must meet or exceed the NJ Student Learning Standards and be certified Content Area Supervisor and the Principal.

Students Must Show Minimum Proficiency to Earn IHS Credit:

A student must earn a minimum grade of 65% in any Option II course and show proficiency on the designated assessment with a minimum grade of 65% to earn IHS credit. If credit is awarded through Option II, the student may not enroll in the equivalent IHS course. IHS must receive an official transcript clearly showing successful completion of the course work. Final credits and a transcript grade will be awarded based on the number of instructional hours per week.

A student can apply for a maximum of five credits per academic year (July 1 – June 30). Note: Option II programs may consist of 2 parts and require a student to take both (2.5 credit each) to meet the full 5.0 credit requirement. Example: Creative Writing and Expository Writing equal a 5.0 course.

In addition, students are limited to a maximum of 5 credits per subject area/graduation requirement throughout their entire high school career.

The following Requirements Apply to All Option II Coursework:

- Course extensions will not be granted.
- Successful completion of an Option II course is only awarded if the student passes both the course and the IHS Equivalent Assessment/Cycle Exam (if an assessment is stipulated).
- Passing an Option II course does not guarantee that a student is well equipped to pass the equivalent District course assessment. Please be familiar with the IHS curriculum of the content equivalent course and recognize, based on recent statistics, that not all students pass the District final exam.
- Students should appropriately pace themselves to complete Option II courses, in order to sit for any necessary IHS assessments, earn appropriate credits, complete graduation requirements and make needed schedule changes.

If applicable students may take a higher-level Option II course, provided they met the criteria for that level course during the regular academic school year. For example, if a student qualified for an Honors course, by way of their semester one-course average or through the review process during the regular academic year, they may take an Honors level Option II course in the summer if they identify an opportunity to do so.

Note: Option II courses are not calculated into the GPA, nor do they have any weighting unless they are an IHS Independent Study course.

Option II coursework cannot begin until a student has successfully completed 9th grade (2020-2021 and beyond). For the 2019-2020 school year, only Juniors and Seniors will be eligible for Option II.

Passing an Option II course, as well as the IHS final exam in that course, does not guarantee that a seat will be available in the next course. It is possible for an Option II student not to have a seat in the next sequential course, due to master schedule limitations.

Optional II courses cannot be retaken:

If a student fails an Option II course, he/she cannot retake the course or a like course via Option II. The student may, however, take a similar course offered by the District.

NCAA Eligibility:

NCAA Eligibility Rules have changed with regard to software-based credit recovery, virtual, online, independent study and correspondence courses, effective August 2010. These types of courses, which are identified by the NCAA Eligibility Center as non-traditional courses, must meet new guidelines in order to be used for college-bound student athletes who are planning to attend an NCAA Division I college or university. The rule change was enacted to ensure that acceptable non-traditional courses provide opportunities for students to demonstrate that their work was completed in a manner consistent with the intent and design of the core-course curriculum requirements. This legislation will allow the NCAA Eligibility Center to determine which courses and institutions are acceptable to satisfy initial-eligibility standards, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that prospective student athletes are enrolled in quality courses that satisfy the intent of the core-curriculum requirements and prepare prospective student athlete for college academic work.

NOTE: ALL COURSES MUST BE APPROVED BY NCAA. ALL INSTITUTIONS MUST BE APPROVED BY NCAA

The following Subject Area Requirements Apply to all Option II Coursework:

- World Language courses must include a regularly scheduled speaking component.
- Science courses must include a regularly scheduled laboratory component. Only site-based distance learning courses will be approved for lab sciences.
- Art/Music Courses must include the creation of a portfolio, including multiple works of art / music.
- All non-traditional courses (e.g. online) must include ongoing access between the instructor and student, as well as regular interaction for purposes of teaching, evaluating and providing assistance. This may include: exchanging of emails between the student and teacher, online chats, phone calls, feedback on assignments and the opportunity for the teacher to engage the student in individual instruction.

RESPONSIBILITY:

As a student and his/her parents/guardians engage in discussion about Option II, there should be conversation about the number of Option II courses and studies a student should take, and the additional

academic responsibilities that a student will feel as a result of these decisions. **Students are limited to one Option II experience (5 credits) per school year.**

OPTION II APPROVAL PROCESS:

1. The student completes the application (page 9) and includes course descriptions and syllabus, when applicable. This is not necessary for IHS Independent Study courses.
2. The counselor reviews the application with student and, attaches his/her high school transcript to ensure the student has a minimum of a 2.8 GPA. The counselor will print out the student's attendance. Students must have a 95% attendance rate. If all is in order, the counselor signs the application and forwards it to the grade level Assistant Principal.
3. The Assistant Principal prints out the student's discipline record. If the student has a satisfactory discipline record, the Assistant Principal will forward the application to the content area supervisor if the Option II course is from another institution other than Irvington High School. The Assistant Principal will forward the application to the Supervisor of Guidance if the course is an Irvington High School Independent Study course.
4. The content area supervisor examines the application, based on the student's rationale and the criteria outlined in the instructions, and determines the number of credits which should be awarded. Once approved by the supervisor, the application is forwarded to the Supervisor of Guidance.
5. Upon final approval, the student and parent/guardian will receive notification of the decision by the student's school counselor. A student may appeal the decision by providing a thorough explanation to his/her counselor. The counselor will review and share the explanation with the supervisor of guidance and the academic supervisor. The Principal will have the final approval. The student will be contacted after all parties review and a decision is made.
6. If approved, the student completes the work during the time specified in the timeline listed on page 2. Please note that some courses require additional assessments.
7. If students are required to complete cycle assessments, the student will be notified by the supporting teacher. Tests will be administered at 3:00 p.m. after the traditional school day. Students must confirm the testing date with the supporting teacher prior to sitting for the test. Tests must be completed on or before the coursework end date found on page 2. Students must make certain they are available for testing dates prior to submitting Option II for approval.
8. Finally, the student provides the supporting teacher with the proof of experience by the dates indicated.

ASSESSMENT:

In addition to passing the course, the student will also need to pass the IHS cycle exam and final exam and achieve the mastery score established by the department supervisor.

When a student will be assessed:

- Students will be notified of the testing time and location.
- Students will need a photo ID and two No. 2 pencils.
- A graphic calculator will be needed for math and science exams.
- Most final exams run 90 minutes with science taking up to 2 hours including lab setup.
- Students will be notified of the testing results by the appropriate academic supervisor or supporting teacher as soon as possible.

PROOF OF EXPERIENCE/ GRADING:

Students must provide the final transcript for outside of the District learning experiences. Final transcript must be submitted to the Guidance Department no later than two weeks from the completion of the course.

If the Option II experience is not an Irvington High School Independent Study, grades will be recorded as a Pass/Fail and will not be calculated into the student's GPA.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS:

(pages 8-11)

Irvington High School
1253 Clinton Avenue, Irvington, NJ, 07111
(973) 399-6897

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PRE-APPROVED COURSES

If students would like to apply for a subject area that is not listed, they should contact the school counselor directly to discuss.

Department	IHS Course	Outside Course	Provider	Notes/Proctor required?	Link	Credits
English	Creative and Expository Writing	Creative and Expository Writing	IHS Independent Study	Supporting Teacher Assigned	TBD	5.0
Social Studies	Psychology	Psychology	IHS Independent Study	Supporting Teacher Assigned	TBD	5.0
Social Studies	African American History	African American History	IHS Independent Study	Supporting Teacher Assigned	TBD	5.0



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Frank H. Morrell Campus

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Phone (973) 399-6897 Ext. 1820

Fax (973) 399-2702

Dear Student and Parent/Guardian:

We understand that you are considering taking an Option II/Independent Study course while attending Irvington High School. Option II/Independent Study courses are available only to students who have demonstrated the ability to work independently to complete course work and have passed their courses with a minimum 2.8 GPA, has a 95% attendance rate, and has a satisfactory record of discipline.

Please be aware of the following requirements:

(Parent/Guardian and Student must initial each box)



Students must have reliable access to a working computer with internet access for the entire time that they are enrolled in the Option II course.



Students must utilize self-discipline when taking courses through Option II; all course requirements must be fulfilled according to the deadlines stipulated in order to earn credit.



Students must submit applications according to the deadlines without exception. It is the student's responsibility to: (1) complete the course by the stated deadline; (2) ensure that the materials are forwarded to the assigned teacher or institution; (3) Option II documentation and transcripts outside of IHS must be turned in to the guidance department within two weeks of course completion; (4) students will check with their counselor to make sure all documentation has been received, and (5) confirm with the counselor that the student's schedule has been appropriately adjusted based on the completion of the Option II experience.



1. The student completes the application (page 9) and includes course descriptions and syllabus, when applicable. This is not necessary for IHS Independent Study courses.
2. The counselor reviews the application with student and, attaches their high school transcript to ensure the student has a minimum of a 2.8 GPA. The counselor will print out the student's attendance. Students must have a 95% attendance rate. If all is in order, the counselor signs the application and forwards it to the grade level assistant principal.

3. The assistant principal prints out the students discipline record. If the student has a satisfactory discipline record, the assistant principal will forward the application to the content area supervisor if the Option II course is from another institution other than Irvington High School. The assistant principal will forward the application to the supervisor of guidance if the course is an Irvington High School Independent Study course.
4. The content area supervisor examines the application, based on the student's rationale and the criteria outlined in the instructions, and determines the number of credits which should be awarded. Once approved by the supervisor, the application is forwarded to the supervisor of guidance.
5. Upon final approval, the student and parent/guardian will receive notification of the decision by the student's school counselor. A student may appeal the decision by providing a thorough explanation to his/her counselor. The counselor will review and share the explanation with the Supervisor of Guidance and the academic supervisor. The Principal will have the final approval. The student will be contacted after all parties review and a decision is made.
6. If approved, the student completes the work during the time specified in the timeline listed on page 2. Please note that some courses require additional assessments.
7. If students are required to complete cycle assessments, the student will be notified by the supporting teacher. Tests will be administered at 3:00 p.m. after the traditional school day. Students must confirm the testing date with the supporting teacher prior to sitting for the test. Tests must be completed on or before the coursework end date found on page 2. Students must make certain they are available for testing dates prior to submitting Option II for approval.
8. Finally, the student provides the supporting teacher with the proof of experience by the dates indicated.

Please sign below to indicate your understanding of the requirements. This letter must be signed and submitted to the Guidance Department where all of the approvals must be obtained before your enrollment form can be signed.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

The student transcript and attendance record has been attached. The student has a minimum of a 2.8 GPA and a 95% attendance rate.

School Counselor Signature

Date

The student discipline record has been attached. The student has satisfactory discipline.

Assistant Principal Signature

Date

If applicable, the syllabus for the Option II program has been reviewed and approved. The Option II course should be approved for _____ credits. The course title should appear on the transcript as follows:

Content Area Supervisor Signature

Date

All requirements have been met for the student to be enrolled in the specified Option II Course.

Supervisor of Guidance

Date