



igniting and nurturing
creative, ethical scientific minds
that advance the human condition

Student Inquiry and Research

Parent/Guardian Permission and Student Agreement: Academic Year 2016-17

I, _____, a student at the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA) would like to participate in the Student Inquiry and Research (SIR) program. The SIR program will provide the structure and resources I need to pursue compelling questions of interest which may include conducting original research, bringing ideas to the marketplace, developing businesses, and sharing my work through presentations and publications. I have discussed participation with my parents/guardians and, if accepted into the program, I agree to participate fully.

SIR is a year-long course that can carry into the following summer and/or year; SIR can also begin in the summer. The SIR course bears one academic credit yet it does not count toward the minimum course requirements for graduation. Grading in SIR consists of: "pass complete," "pass in progress," or "fail," assessed by the Director of Student Inquiry and Research in consultation with the student's SIR advisor. Due to the independent nature of this course, active investigations must be communicated to the SIR department, and approved, before the designated date during the academic year/start of summer for credit, or students will not be enrolled in this course. Students may drop enrollment in SIR without penalty (course will be removed from the transcript) before mid-November (see current academic year materials for specific date). Students who withdraw from SIR after that date will receive a "W" or "WF" on their transcript, depending on their standing in the program.

Participation and Absences

- Participation in SIR activities on designated Inquiry Days (I-days), or agreed upon summer schedule, is mandatory. IMSA offers many extraordinary opportunities and students often have to choose among them. Because advisors make a significant commitment to our students and dedicate substantial resources to the program, it must be a priority.
- SIR follows the guidelines for student absences as described in the Student Handbook, but the number of absences is adjusted because participation in SIR on one I-day is equivalent to more than a week of classroom work. Students must have no less than 135 verified hours by the end of the year (special circumstances may apply; additional consideration will be given to students starting later in the academic year). Students may have no more than 2 consecutive unexcused absences and then be placed on SIR probation; however 3 unexcused absences will be cause for dismissal from the course with a grade of "F" or "WF".
- Determination of whether an absence is excused is made by the SIR program Director consistent with the IMSA Student Handbook policies; to help ensure that all students are held to the same standards and expectations advisors may not excuse students from participation and students should not ask them to do so. Requests for excused absences, except in the case of emergencies, must be made by email to the SIR program Director or Administrative Assistant for SIR at least three days in advance (Friday before an I-day) of the requested absence to allow for communication with the advisor and for any necessary adjustments to be made to the busing/meal schedule.
- Students engaged in summer SIR have considerable freedom to pursue their investigations. They should not take this freedom lightly, and are expected to show up on time, every day. The commitment is considered to be full-time (8AM – 4:30PM, or as determined by the SIR advisor) for at least 6 weeks. Students who fail to arrive as expected by the SIR advisor may be terminated by the SIR advisor at his or her discretion.
- Students are not allowed to leave their SIR site without permission from the Director of SIR (except for lunch and bus pick up). Students are permitted to leave their SIR site for lunch (within walking distance) and must always use "the buddy system" having no less than one other person with them at all times off site; lunch should be no longer than 30 minutes in length. Leaving an SIR site without permission is a Tier II-B infraction and will be handled according to the Student Disciplinary Policy.
- Students are expected to go immediately to their SIR site upon departing the SIR bus, or other transportation means, and should not make other stops along the way without permission from SIR staff. Doing so is a Tier II-B infraction and will be handled according to the Student Disciplinary Policy.

Requirements

- Students are expected to work within the pre-agreed guidelines of the most recently updated SIR Student Manual.

Safety Review

- Students will complete a safety review with their advisor during the initial meeting. Occasionally students may encounter, or work more frequently with, chemical, biological, physical, and/or radiation hazards that they don't normally encounter during coursework at IMSA. Hazards and safety training will be documented and information will be sent home to parents/guardians.

Transportation

• Some students may participate in off-campus SIR activities. IMSA provides transportation for students to prearranged drop-off and pick-up points to many off-campus sites. Students are responsible for being on time for the bus to and from IMSA. If students miss IMSA-provided transportation, they will be responsible for their own transportation to their SIR as well as the cost. Should they miss the bus and cannot arrange other transportation the absence will be documented as unexcused. Under special circumstances, with prior approval of the program director and written parental consent, alternative transportation arrangements may be made; however once a student commits to either taking the bus or making other transportation arrangements, this will be irrevocable as the disruption in bus schedule causes difficulty for the bus company as well as other students. It is expected that students will take IMSA-provided transportation unless special arrangements are made at least three days in advance of Inquiry Wednesdays (by the previous Friday). Students who are late for bus pick-up place other students at risk. If this occurs, especially if repeated, the student may not be eligible for a passing grade and may fail SIR. If a student misses the bus home, there may be cause for said student to take public transportation home if another bus is unable to retrieve them. During this time, a parent may also be called to pick up their child. Once again, it is the responsibility of the student to be on time to the bus pick up location.

Supervision and Behavior

• All students participating in SIR are subject to the joint supervision of IMSA and their advisor(s). Students are expected to behave in accordance with all IMSA student discipline and behavior policies, IMSA Academic Honesty guidelines, SIR expectations, and rules of behavior established by the institutions they are visiting. Students will be dropped from the program if conduct is inappropriate; termination from the program will also result in a failing grade. Students in violation of Tier II infractions and above will be referred for formal disciplinary action.

Health Emergencies

• In the event that accident, injury, or illness occurs during participation in SIR, IMSA will secure treatment at a proper facility where emergency medical treatment would normally be administered, including, but not limited to the emergency room of a hospital, doctor's office, or medical clinic.

Parent/Guardian Communication

- Student records will be maintained in PowerSchool.
- Pertinent information, as needed, will be mailed or emailed to parents/guardians.
- SIR program and student updates, concerns, and interims may be posted on Moodle and also communicated by email.
- SIR program staff members are available by email and phone as well as meetings by appointment.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(student)

I, _____, have read and discussed with my child the guidelines for SIR and agree to their participation in the program.
(parent)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(parent/guardian)

Parents: In the event students miss the buses to off-campus SIR locations, they have the option of providing their own transportation or taking public transportation (with the understanding they will cover cost and return to IMSA at the same designated time). Please initial below if your student has your permission to take public transportation only in the event they should miss the bus.

Please initial only one selection.

_____ My student *is* permitted to take PT to SIR.

_____ Please *call* to discuss whether my student may take PT to SIR, *if* they miss the bus.

_____ My student *is not* permitted to take PT to SIR.

Questions and Inquiries

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