

SelfDesign-ISK Frequently Asked Questions

If you do not reside in British Columbia, please go to <http://www.selfdesign.com/selfdesign-isk.html>

What is SelfDesign-ISK?

SelfDesign-ISK is an accredited, independent, distributed learning (online) program offering a full BC graduation program. And more.

What is the philosophy of SelfDesign-ISK?

Our high school graduation program is based on a sensibility that considers humans and humanity from an *integrated, holistic perspective*. Our learning approach is *inquiry based* and our courses are designed to cultivate critical thinking, self and social awareness, wellness, and engagement in collaborative, creative problem solving. Students will learn to value their own ideas, perspectives, questions and analyses - as well as those of others, as they develop their skills of discovery, examination, introspection and evaluation.

What is offered?

A full high school graduation program including unique electives such as *World Religions* and *Peace Studies*, as well as independent study opportunities that invite learners to create their own course!

Courses other than Independent Studies will be offered in either an online Learning Group or workshops (combination of online and in-person work in a seminar format), both with the support of an accredited teacher/mentor. [Click here](#) for a full list of courses offered.

Who may take courses?

- All B.C. learners aged 14 to 18
- Grade 9 learners interested in taking courses may send an email inquiry to admissions@iskhighschool.org
- Community members may enroll in courses for a \$200 registration fee by calling 250-354-1310.

How do I register for courses?

First, enroll with SelfDesign-ISK by filling out enrollment forms then register for courses. [Click here](#) for enrollment and course registration forms. Learners will be notified of successful enrollment and contacted by a learning group mentor. **Learning Group and workshop courses** begin the week of Feb 9, 2009.

Do I have to pay for courses?

No, the courses are funded for B.C. residents through the Ministry of Education. Community members pay a \$200 registration fee per course.

What are the courses like and do they go towards my graduation?

All of the courses are offered online and are part of the SelfDesign-ISK B.C. Ministry of Education certified Graduation program. They are each worth 4 credits towards high school graduation. All of the courses have been written by SelfDesign-ISK from a holistic, peace-centered perspective; many are Waldorf inspired*. Courses that have B.C. provincial exams are more content-specific so that learners are well prepared for exams.

** The majority of our courses are Waldorf inspired, following the pedagogical insights of Rudolf Steiner who created the curriculum for the first Waldorf school. The Waldorf school movement is the largest independent school movement in the world. Waldorf education fosters the capacities of the soul-filled, spirit-imbued, free-thinking human being.*

What are the requirements to receive a B.C. High School Graduation Diploma?

The B.C. high school diploma is called the Dogwood Diploma. To receive it, learners must:

- be a resident of B.C.
- complete courses adding up to 80 high school credits. Of the 80 credits 48 must be in **foundation courses**, 28 from **BAA elective courses** and at least 4 credits from Planning 10 and either Graduation Portfolio or Graduations Transitions
- write 5 B.C. Provincial exams, one at the Grade 12 level.

[Click here](#) for more information.

What is the difference between Foundation Courses, BAA Courses and Independent Studies?

Foundation Courses are required for the completion of the BC Graduation Program. They are designed to meet the BC Ministry Learning Outcomes but are delivered in a manner unique to SelfDesign-ISK values and philosophy.

BAA Courses are designed and developed by Boards of Education or Independent school authorities to meet student needs and interests. They function like electives.

Independent Studies are unique 'courses' initiated, designed and completed by a learner in consultation with a mentor - for credit.

Who will lead the courses?

Every course is facilitated by a mentor who is a certified teacher with the B.C. College of Teachers or the B.C. Superintendent of Independent Schools.

How is learner work assessed?

Each course is assessed by portfolio, which is created as a unique result of mentor and learner conversation and collaboration.

What is the time frame for the courses?

Online courses and local workshops (a mix of online and in-person, on location) are offered in **4 Seasonal Semesters**- Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall, over 12 - 14 weeks.

Individual learners who wish to take courses independent of a learning group and semester can register for specific courses and work at an individual pace with support of a mentor (depending on availability).

What are the technological requirements of taking a course?

Learners need access to a computer and the Internet.

After course enrollment is confirmed, learners will receive guidance in accessing course materials and interacting with course mentors and classmates. Learners will require a (free) Skype account to participate in online discussion. [Click here](#) for access to the Skype site to set up an account.

How many courses can a learner take?

Each course will require about 5 to 8 hours of attention/engagement per week; we recommend 4 to 5 courses per semester as a maximum number. If a learner is new to online learning, taking a course or two is probably a good approach. Registering in Independent Study is a great way to engage in a self-directed learner with the support of a mentor.

What about prior learning and/or challenging a course?

Learners can request **credit for prior learning** or can **challenge a course**. Contact admissions@iskhighschool.org.

How do SelfDesign-ISK courses differ from those offered in a different educational setting? (e.g. public school Distributed (internet based) Learning programs)

SelfDesign-ISK courses *are* unique, offering a focus on holistic learning, learner centeredness and flexibility. Specifically, in enrolling in one or more SelfDesign-ISK courses all learners can expect:

- to discover that **their opinions, ideas, and (unique) intelligences will be welcomed and encouraged**
- to engage with fellow learners and course mentors in a **self-respecting, progressive and positive environment**
- to participate in a learning environment where **self-responsibility, self-determination, self-awareness and openness** (to new ideas, especially) **are emphasized**
- to receive the **invaluable support** of one-on-one mentoring toward their learning goals

For those enrolling in the *SelfDesign Praxis Course*:

What is a Learning Consultant?

A Learning Consultant is a SelfDesign-trained, B.C. Ministry-certified teacher whose main role is to work in cooperation with the learner and family to support and help account for learning. The Learning Consultant (LC) does this through the collaborative creation of an individual Learning Plan, through weekly contact with youth both individually and in small groups (called Learning Circles), and through development of a comprehensive portfolio to document work done both independently and through mentor-led courses. A Learning Consultant will be chosen by youth when they register for the SelfDesign Praxis course (see course listing).

If I enroll in the *SelfDesign Praxis* course, how will I get to choose my Learning Consultant?

We will provide a roster listing available Learning Consultants and their biographical profiles on our website from which learners will be able to select their first, second and third choices. We encourage learners to make such a choice based on what they perceive as a "good fit."