INTRODUCTION TO INDEPENDENT STUDY MODULES (ISMS)

ISMs, or Independent Study Modules, provide opportunities to obtain a personalised specialization on a specific topic.

All USP ISMs are pegged at level 3000 or higher. ISMs can be done either individually or in groups (of no more than seven students).

You will need to do a minimum of one to a maximum of three ISMs to fulfill the USP Inquiry Tier requirements (counts to either the Humanities & Social Sciences or Science & Technology Domain). ISMs may be used towards fulfilling major requirements: check with your department on the exact number you can/should do, and the level they should be at.

Graduation requirements do not change: should you use your ISMs to fulfill both your major and USP requirements, you may still need to use the freed up modular credits to take additional modules to fulfill the necessary 160 MCs requirement.

USP students granted the ISM requirement waiver will not be allowed to read any ISMs to double-count towards their major/faculty requirements. ISMs read can only fulfill USP requirements only. A USP ISM must have a module code of UIS% to be considered as an USP module.

For example, ESP3902, a non-USP module, is double counted as fulfilling USP Inquiry-tier and ISM requirements. It does not, however, fall into the minimum USP module requirement count.

TWO main ISM options are offered across all faculties:

1. Newly-designed ISMs
   Design an ISM in consultation with your ISM supervisor, who will determine the assignments and research required for your project. You will be required to write a culminating essay or report at the conclusion of the module.

2. Ride on an existing level 3000/4000 module or UROPs-based ISMs under the ISM framework.
   You will still attend the same lectures as your non-ISM-taking coursemates, and take the same exam as them (the exam will constitute a smaller percentage of your overall assessment). You will have to undertake 20% more work (such as attending additional tutorial sessions with your mentors, covering more material at greater depth). Greater emphasis will be placed on continual assessments, e.g., projects and term papers, which pay particular attention to your active involvement and independence.
FACULTY REQUIREMENTS
AND MODULE MAPPING

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (FASS)
• You may read up to 2 newly-designed ISMs, which can count towards your major.
• Specific requirements differ, but ISMs typically require a 4000 to 5000 words individual report. Individual reports must be submitted even for group ISMs.
• You must complete 100MCs of credits to complete a level-4000 ISM.
• You must complete 28MCs in your major to undertake a level-3000 ISM. Individual departments may have their own restrictions; please check with your department ISM coordinator.
  • For example, ELL students cannot pursue more than one USP ISM at level-4000, while History students are not allowed to do level-4000 USP ISMs.
  • Departmental ISMs (preclusion to HT) and Independent Research Program (IRP) are not allowed to be double-counted as USP ISMs. Examples of departmental ISMs are with module codes of EC4660; HY4660; PL4660, PL3231.

BUSINESS SCHOOL (BIZ)
• You may read up to 3 USP ISMs, either newly-designed or ride-ons. Newly-designed ISMs fulfill USP requirement and cannot be double counted towards your specialisation.

FACULTY OF SCIENCE (FOS)
• You may read up to 3 ISMs in place of regular Inquiry modules.
• You may read 3 types of ISMs: newly-designed ISMs, ride-on ISMs, and UROP-based ISMs. Instead of selecting projects straight from the UROPS listing, you should plan your own UROPS and work independently as much as possible. For UROPS-based ISMs, whether the module will count towards your major requirements will depend on your department's policy regarding the use of UROPS.
• Students who are in both SPS and USP can count SP3172 towards fulfilling the ISM requirement. If you read and pass an ISM riding on a regular department module or a UROPS-based ISM, you will be deemed to have passed the relevant module.

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING (FOE)
• You may read up to 3 newly-designed ISMs. Individual reports must be submitted even for group ISMs.
• The Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (UROP) (EG2605) cannot be used to fulfill a USP ISM, as it is assessed on an S/U basis. However, you can independently pursue a topic listed in UROP as a graded USP ISM.
• A newly-designed ISM generally will be read as an Unrestricted Elective. Engineering Science Program students can read ESP3902 and ESP3903 as USP ISMs substituting for S&T Inquiry modules.
SCHOOL OF DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENT (SDE)

Please refer to the SDE website for specific USP-SDE requirements. Some major modules are double counted as fulfilling USP ISM requirement:

• P&FM major- PF2303 Materials Technology
• RST major- RE3102 Advanced Topics in Urban Planning or RE3103 Real Estate Development
• ID majors - ID4121 Project Research and ID4106 Design Thesis Project
• Architecture major- AR3102 Design 6 and AR4102 Design 8 QL AR4104 Architectural & Tech Design 2 QLIA4702 MLA Studio City QLAR4142 Research Report (depending on the tracks of study).

The double counting of ID and Architecture majors towards USP ISM requirements will be deemed as fulfilling 2 HSS and 2 ST USP Inquiry requirements. In addition to your project requirements, you will need to submit an additional research project as a consolidation of your research and findings.

FACULTY OF LAW

You will take 1 Law Directed Research (DR) and 1 Common Module as ISMs in your 3rd or 4th year. They may not be done in a topic you have studied previously, or which you have done a substantial dissertation on.

The word limit for the DR is 8000 words (excluding footnotes, appendices etc). It is due on the last business day of Week 12 of the semester in which your DR is registered.

Submit an electronic copy of your DR on a CD-ROM, preferably in a PC-compatible format, in a common word-processing format such as MS Word.

SCHOOL OF COMPUTING (SOC)

Only level 3000/4000 modules that you have converted into ISMs will be given USP module codes (instead of SoC ones) and satisfy your ISM requirements. You can use your ISMs to satisfy both USP and SoC requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF ISM</th>
<th>COUNTS AS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (UROP)</td>
<td>2 USP ISMs</td>
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<tr>
<td>CS2306S Problem Solving in Computing II</td>
<td>1 USP ISM</td>
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<tr>
<td>CP3106 Independent Project</td>
<td>1 USP ISM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convert existing module into ISM with instructor's permission</td>
<td>Considered on a case-by-case basis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department specific ISM modules</td>
<td>Please see below</td>
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<tr>
<th>DEPARTMENT</th>
<th>ISM MODULE</th>
<th>COUNTS AS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Business Analytics</td>
<td>CP3208*</td>
<td>1 USP ISM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>CS3201 &amp; CS3202 or other approved modules</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer Science: Turing Program</td>
<td>CP3208 &amp; CP3209 / CS3281 &amp; CS3282</td>
<td>2 USP ISMs</td>
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<td>Computer Science: Von Neumann Program</td>
<td>CS3281 &amp; CS3282</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Systems</td>
<td>CP3208 &amp; CP3209**</td>
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*In place of Capstone Project module BT3101 in Core modules requirement
**In place of IS Team Project module 153102
PREPARING FOR YOUR ISM

GENERAL GUIDELINES AND TIPS

1. Start formulating a topic of interest well in advance and approach your prospective supervisor.

2. Meet with your supervisor to discuss your ISM topic and assessment details.

3. Upon agreement with your supervisor, apply for your ISM using the USP-Home Faculty qj: USP ISM contract form.
   
   You will need to write a proposal in the form - ensure that you receive your supervisor's approval before submission.
   
   If you wish to change the topic after it has been approved, you have to obtain a new approval from your supervisor and submit a new form.

4. Obtain endorsement from the relevant departmental ISM co-ordinator.
   
   Life Sciences students should obtain endorsement from both their supervisor's department and a representative from the Life Sciences Undergraduate Programme Committee.

5. Submit the endorsed ISM application form to your faculty Dean's Office before the deadline.*

6. Successful applications will receive an ISM module code (UIS%) by week 4.
   
   Science students will be pre-allocated your module for newly-designed and UROPS ISMs. You must bid for the regular module in CORS if you are undertaking a ride-on module.
   
   Computing students must bid and secure the regular module (eg CP3208, CP3209) via bidding in CORS.
   
   Upon approval, the module code will be assigned to the regular module that students have registered via CORS.

7. After you have submitted your ISM application to your relevant Dean' Office/department, there is no need to submit a copy to USP Office.

8. Please check with your supervisor and ISM co-ordinator if there is a need to submit for IRB approval. The estimated review process is at least 30 days before you can commence your research. Therefore you are required to submit your proposal early if IRB approval is required.
   
   The objective of IRB is to protect the rights and welfare of human research activities conducted by NUS students and researchers.

9. ISMs registered with FASS, Business School and Law are deemed as HSS modules while ISMs registered with FOE, FOS, and SoC are deemed as S&T modules.

10. Cross faculty ISMs** are to be registered with USP. These ISMs will be given the relevant domain, either HSS or S&T, depending on the topic/supervisor.

   If you encounter any difficulties when embarking on a cross-faculty ISM, you may approach the USP office for assistance. Always ask when in doubt!

   *Please refer to your respective faculty's website below for specific application deadlines.

   **Cross faculty ISMs are ISMs supervised by non-faculty members. For example, a FoS student is deemed to be reading a cross faculty ISM if his/her supervisor is from USP or FASS.

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<tr>
<th>FACULTY</th>
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<tr>
<td>FASS</td>
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<td>Please refer to your individual department pages.</td>
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<td>SDE</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sde.nus.edu.sg/acad/SDE_Usp.htmlSDE-USP.htmlSDE-usp.REQUIREMENTS+MODULEMAPPG">http://www.sde.nus.edu.sg/acad/SDE_Usp.htmlSDE-USP.htmlSDE-usp.REQUIREMENTS+MODULEMAPPG</a></td>
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