

Comprehensive Guide for Prospective New Students of IISERK

Batch of '29
24MS

Eklavya
24MS

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Chapter 1

Everything you need to know before joining

1.1 Campus Accessibility and Basic Facilities

1.1.1 First things first - How to get to campus?

The campus is well connected to Kolkata and surrounding towns/cities through road and rail networks.

1. *Local Railways*

You can just take a local train from Sealdah, Dum-Dum, Bidhannagar etc towards Kalyani (Kalyani Simanta - Sealdah Local, for example. This train is usually less crowded.) From there, you can take an auto or E-rikshaw to "Saat number" or "Gate 7". Alternatively, you can ask the driver to drop you near AIIMS Kalyani. However, most drivers will understand when you say gate 7 and get you to campus. This is the cheapest way to get there, costing around **40 to 80 Rs./person**.

2. *Taxi*

You can take a taxi from Sealdah, Howrah or directly from the Airport. This is an expensive method of travel, costing anywhere between **2000 to 3000 Rs.**

Note 1.1.1.1

If you are coming from **Howrah**, **Santragachi**, etc, you will have to get to Sealdah or Dum Dum to reach campus.

You will need to take either -

- **Metro** - Take the metro from Howrah to Dum Dum, and then take a local train to Kalyani.
- **Taxi** - Take a taxi from Howrah or Santragachi etc. to Sealdah or Dum Dum, and then take a local train to Kalyani.
- **Bus** - Take a bus from Howrah or Santragachi to Sealdah or Dum Dum, and then take a local train to Kalyani.

The Dum Dum and Howrah metro stations are beside the respective railway junctions. Metro is a valid option only if you reach metro before 9 PM.

1.1.2 How much time does it take to go from main city to Campus?

It takes around 2 to 3 hours to go from Campus to main city, depending where you want to go. Getting to Dum-Dum is the fastest, followed by Sealdah, and lastly Howrah. This is since the campus is around 60 kms away from Kolkata city.

1.1.3 Accessibility to Markets and Healthcare

1. Healthcare

- **IISERK Medical Centre**

There is a medical facility within the campus, with ambulances and basic first aid amenities. The facility is available 24x7, and ambulances can be called at any time from the security guard desk at any building within the campus.

- **Mind Care and Wellness Centre**

There is a medical centre focused on the mental wellbeing of students. It operates out of the **Visitor's Hostel** within the campus.

- **AIIMS Kalyani**

AIIMS Kalyani is one of India's finest medical institutions, and is within walking distance from Gate 7 of the campus. IISERK students can get referrals for AIIMS through the medical centre and consult doctors. In case of emergencies, IISERK ambulances are authorised to take students directly to the AIIMS emergency facility.

- **Medical Shops and Pharmacies**

There are a number of pharmacies and medical shops right outside the campus gate, where students can get all the medicines they may require.

2. Daily Needs

- **Hygiene, Laundry**

You can get all required items such as buckets, brooms, dustbins, laundry detergents, soaps, toothpaste from within the campus basement shops. You can also buy mattresses and such from here. Alternatively all these things are available outside Gate 7.

- **Food, drinks and snacks**

Food, soft drinks, and snacks are all available within the campus. You can buy everything you need from the basement or Bimal Da (Food Court within campus). There is also a vegetarian restaurant inside campus known as Tulsi. While attending classes, you can eat from the Lecture Hall Canteen.

Outside campus, there are multiple places to get food and snacks, differing in price ranges and also in types of cuisines offered.

- **Cycles**

There is a cycle shop just outside gate 7, if you want to buy a cycle to get around within campus. Many people require cycles since the campus is quite large and you will not want to walk everywhere all the time.

- **Clothes and Sports Goods**

To shop for clothes, you can go to Kalyani in a rickshaw and shop from there or take the local train to Kanchrapara, which is a hub for cloth markets. You can go to **Maidan Market** in Kolkata to get things you may need to play sports, such as racquets, jerseys, balls etc.

- **Textbooks and Notebooks**

You will probably never need physical copies of textbooks, and everything else, from writing tools to notebooks can be easily found in the basement shops.

3. Online Markets

Most online markets deliver to the campus, including **Amazon, Flipkart, Zomato, Swiggy**. However, services which offer fast deliveries like **BlinkIt, Zepto** etc are absent.

1.2 Academics

1.2.1 Courses, grading, and what you can expect

I will now explain the basic formulae for calculation of grades, SGPA and CGPA. Note that the grading system is different for different courses, and you will have to check with your professors for the exact grading scheme.

Note 1.2.1.1

Grade is measured using SGPA and CGPA. Every course has a number of credits assigned to it. This roughly corresponds to the importance of the course in your grade.

The grade points obtained in a course is calculated with reference to the following schema in case of **Absolute Grading** (All marks out of 100)-

1. < 40 - F - 0 G.P.
2. ≥ 40 - D - 5 G.P.
3. ≥ 50 - C - 6 G.P.
4. ≥ 60 - B - 7 G.P.
5. ≥ 70 - B+ - 8 G.P.
6. ≥ 80 - A - 9 G.P.
7. ≥ 90 - A+ - 10 G.P.

Definition 1.2.1.1

SGPA and CGPA

Let x_i represent the grade points obtained in the i^{th} course and let c_i represent the credits associated with the same. Let the number of courses in the semester be n_s . Let the total number of courses taken be n_t . Then the SGPA is defined as -

$$SGPA = \sum_{i=1}^{n_s} x_i c_i$$

Then similarly, the CGPA is defined as -

$$CGPA = \sum_{i=1}^{n_t} x_i c_i$$

In case of **Relative Grading**, the professor will shift the grade boundaries mentioned above to more accurately represent the course difficulty and class performance. Note that not all professors will do this, regardless of course difficulty or poor performance of the class. Sometimes, the grade boundaries may even be shifted upwards, making it more difficult to get higher grades.

For BSMS in Natural Sciences only - All students must mandatorily study 5 theory courses along with 2 lab courses in their first semester. The detailed teaching plans can be found on the IISERK official website. The subjects included are -

- ***Physics 1 (PH1101)*** - The first semester physics courses focuses mainly on elementary mathematical methods used to solve physics problems. This includes limits, basic differential and integral calculus, ODE's of 1st and 2nd order. After developing mathematical knowledge, the course moves to and culminates with proving Kepler's Laws. **Note that this course is mostly computational and not very rigorous in nature.**
You can expect absolute grading for this course.
- ***Chemistry 1 (CH1101)*** - The first semester chemistry course focuses mainly on Quantum and Inorganic chemistry. This course is also quite computational in nature, with not a strong emphasis on rigour or proofs. You can expect relative grading in this course.
- ***Mathematics 1 (MA1101)*** - The first semester mathematics course focuses on set theory and calculus. It covers basic set theory, relations, functions, limits, continuity, differentiability etc. This course is very formal and rigorous and you can expect heavy relative grading in this course.
- ***Biology 1 (LS1101)*** - The first semester course biology course is foundational in nature. It focuses on ecology and evolution. It is a very basic course, especially for those who have studied the same topics during their 11th and 12th. Absolute grading is probable in this course.
- ***Earth Science 1 (ES1101)*** - This course focuses mainly on the foundations of Earth Science. It moves through basic minerology and plate tectonic theory. Many of the topics in this course are raised again in the next semester. You can expect relative grading in this course.
- ***Lab Courses*** - You will have 2 lab courses in your first semester, including a mandatory CS course and one from the core subjects. No relative grading can be expected in labs. Everything else is done similarly to labs that you have done during school days.

Note 1.2.1.2

Note that the course contents are subject to change. A change of professor usually means there will be a difference in the overall course and references. For a full list of courses, visit <https://www.iiserkol.ac.in/teaching-plan/>.

1.2.2 Course Structure and Exit Policies

As of now, 2 programmes are offered by IISERK, both being integrated BS-MS programs, one in natural sciences and the other in computational and data sciences.

Both are 5 year programmes. The exact structure and policies for computational and data sciences are not yet known. However, the BSMS in Natural Sciences programme follows the following structure -

- Year 1 - Students must study 5 core subjects (ES, BIO, MATH, PHYS, CHEM) and have 2 lab courses (1 from the Core Subjects and 1 mandatory lab course).
- Year 2 -
 - Sem 3 - Students must choose any 3 out of the 5 core subjects as premajors. You will do mandatory courses in all the 3 subjects, with no option for electives.
 - Sem 4 - Students must choose any 2 out of their 3 premajors as core subjects for Sem 4. Mandatory Courses in both subjects, with no option for electives.
- Year 3 onwards - At the start of Year 3, students must choose a major subject. There will be a set number of mandatory courses and options for limited number of electives, both from the department of your major and other, non-departmental electives. Note that electives may have prerequisite course requirements. The number of credits to achieve a major and minor differ for different subjects. To obtain a minor in a subject, you must complete enough credits as specified by IISERK regulations through electives in that subject. Note that you can audit any number of courses, and decide which ones to convert to electives. No credits are given for an audited course even if you give all exams and pass the course.

Exit Policies

Students may exit the course at any point in accordance with the New Education Policy. You can take -

1. BSc Exit - Exit after 3 years with a BSc degree.
2. BS Exit - Exit after 4 years with a BS degree.

1.2.3 Fees and Scholarships

The fee structure for IISERK is available on the official website, here - [Fee Structure](#).

Now, not all students will be equipped to pay the fees. As such, there exist a number of scholarships, both government and private, which you can look into. I will provide a small list of scholarships that you can check your eligibility for. Note that the list is not exhaustive, and neither do I know the process of application for all of them. You will have to do your own research on the scholarships you are interested in.

- **Government Scholarships** -
 - PM USP Yojana CSSS - The scholarship offers 12000 Rs. per annum. It is a popular and reliable central government scholarship. You can apply for it through the National Scholarship Portal (NSP).
 - PM YASASVI for OBC/EBC/DNT and for SC/ST - The scholarship offers a full waiver of tuition fees. It is a relatively new scholarship, and no reliable information is known to me. Refer to NSP for more details.
 - ISHAN UDAY SCHOLARSHIP for students of North-East. It's a central scholarship for students pursuing UG in both general and professional courses. Providing 5600/- and 7800/- respectively.

• Private Scholarships -

- Reliance Foundation Scholarship - The Reliance Foundation offers a scholarship for students pursuing UG in science and engineering. The scholarship offers Rs 2Lakhs over the duration of the course, and is a popular choice among students. Refer - [Reliance Foundation Scholarship](#).
- Kind Circle Scholarship - Variable amount, depending on the financial need of the student. Refer - [buddy4study](#). You can use buddy4study to search for other scholarships as well.

Note 1.2.3.1

Note that the popular INSPIRE scholarship is most probably not available for students from your batch and onwards.

Also note that each scholarship has different eligibility criteria, date of application, and process etc. Check the official website of the scholarship for more details. You will also have to set up a personal bank account, most probably in SBI, to receive the scholarship money, especially if you are applying for government scholarships.

You can also apply for scholarships from the respective state governments. Check with the Academic Office once you join if they handle applications for your scholarship or not.

1.2.4 Seniors, Peer Groups, and Shared Resources

You will be able to easily get and utilize notes prepared by the seniors. This is needed although most professors provide their own class notes and resources. The resources prepared by seniors and your peers will be helpful during exam times and for solving mandatory assignments.

1.2.5 Professors, Lab Culture, Internships and an Overview of Academic Facilities

Professors and Internships

Professors are generally approachable, and will help you with the course content and if you ask properly will guide you in areas of your interest. As many people inquire about joining labs from the first year, generally, you can not expect to join a lab in first year. However, you can get relevant internships from the end of your first year and reading projects from professors within the first year.

For more details, you can simply come and ask seniors in campus.

Labs and academic facilities

The labs are housed in the Research Complex Building. You have labs in differing areas of differing subjects, such as -

- Physics -
 - CESSI - For space and solar research.
 - High Energy Physics Labs
 - Optics Labs

- Chemistry -
 - Materials and Polymers Research Labs
 - Organic Synthesis - including Catalysis, etc
 - Spectroscopy Labs
- Biology -
 - Ecology Labs and Animal Research Centers
- Earth Sciences -
 - Seismology Labs
 - Minerology Labs
 - Geophysics and Meteorology Labs

Library - The library is built on 3 floors. It is open 24/7 except on holidays as mentioned in the academic calendar or conveyed through email. It has ample space for using laptops and for studying during exams. The library is air conditioned 24/7.

Computer Centres - There are 2 Computer Centers, helpful for people who do not have personal laptops. Computer Centres and all other computers on campus run Ubuntu Linux. Both computer centres are air conditioned 24/7.

1.3 Co-Curricular

1.3.1 Sports and Fitness Facilities

IISERK students engage in a number of different sports, with active clubs and IISM (Inter IISER Sports Meet) participation. Each sport has its own club, and there are also clubs for fitness and yoga. The sports which are actively played in campus include

-

- **Cricket** - The Cricket Club is one of the most active clubs in campus, with regular matches and tournaments. The club has its own cricket ground, and there are nets for practice.
- **Football** - The Football Club is also very active, with regular matches and tournaments. The club has its own football ground, with goals and nets for practice.
- **Basketball** - The Basketball Club has its own basketball court. The club is active, with regular matches and tournaments.
- **Badminton** - The Badminton Club has two courts, both indoor. The club is active, with regular matches and tournaments.
- **Table Tennis** - The Table Tennis Club has its own room in the SAC Building. The club is active, with regular matches and tournaments.
- **Volleyball** - There are 2 volleyball courts, both outdoor. The Volleyball Club is active, with regular matches and tournaments.
- **Tennis** - There is 1 tennis courts, outdoor. The tennis club is decently active but does not see as much participation as the other clubs.
- **Athletics** - There is a dedicated ground for athletics. The club holds events and selection tournaments for IISM.

- **Swimming** - There is a swimming pool in campus, which you can use by registering and paying a small fee. Note that you will have to buy the required swimming gear, such as a swimsuit, cap, and goggles. Swimming is not a club, but you can find people to swim with. There is no swimming event in IISM.
- **Kabaddi** - There is currently no dedicated room or ground for Kabaddi, but the club is active and holds events and tournaments. The club might be assigned a room in the SAC Building in the future.
- **Kho-Kho** - There is currently no dedicated ground for Kho-Kho, but the club is active and holds events and tournaments. The club might be assigned a room in the SAC Building in the future.
- **Chess** - The Chess Club is active, with regular matches and tournaments. There is a dedicated room in the SAC Building for the Chess Club.
- **Carroms** - The Carroms Club is active, with regular matches and tournaments. There is a dedicated room in the SAC Building for the Carroms Club.
- **Yoga and Fitness** - There is a Yoga and Fitness Club, which has a dedicated room in the SAC Building.
- **Gym** - There is a gym in the SAC Building. The gym is free to use. You can use the gym at the timings as mentioned by the gym club. The gym is equipped with basic gym equipment.

Note 1.3.1.1

Most of the sports facilities are free to use, except for the swimming pool. Most facilities available for use 24/7, except for those in the SAC Building, or the Badminton Courts (one in SAC Building and one in the Lecture Hall Building). The SAC Building is open from 6 AM to 12AM.

1.3.2 Cultural Clubs and Activities

IISERK has a vibrant cultural scene, with a number of clubs and activities. The clubs are active and hold events throughout the year. IISERK has a nice record of winning IICM (Inter IISER Cultural Meet). The clubs include -

- **Dance** - The Dance Club is active, with regular practices and performances. The club has a dedicated room in the SAC Building. The club participates in IICM and other cultural events.
- **Music** - The Music Club is active. You can book the music room in the SAC Building for practice. The club has a number of instruments, such as guitars, keyboards, and drums. The club participates in IICM and other cultural events.
- **Drama** - The Drama Club participates in IICM and other cultural events. The club uses rooms in the SAC Building for practice.
- **Photography** - The Photography Club is active, with an active community of photographers and a dedicated instagram handle. The club also takes part in IICM and other cultural events.

- **Arts** - The Arts Club is active, with an active community of artists. The club has a dedicated room in the SAC Building for practice. The club participates in IICM and other cultural events.
- **Literary** - The Literary Club is active, with an active community of writers and poets. You are welcome to share with the club any of your writings.
- **Film** - The Film Club is active, with an active community of film enthusiasts. The club holds weekend movie screenings.
- **Quiz** - The Quiz Club is active, with an active community of quizzers. The club holds regular quizzes and participates in IICM and other cultural events.
- **Singularity** - Singularity is the Astronomy and Astrophysics Club of IISERK. The club is active, with an active community of astronomers and astrophysicists. The club holds stargazing sessions and talks with established scientists and researchers.
- **Coding and Design** - The Coding and Design Club is active, with a community of programmers, designers. The club holds workshops related to relevant topics and sometimes organizes events such as competitive programming contests.
- **Gaming Club** - The Gaming Club is active, with a community of gamers. The club holds gaming nights with personal wifi to bypass the intranet restrictions. You can play any game of your choice on your device, or play common games such as FIFA, etc on a projected screen.

Note 1.3.2.1

Note that all clubs are open to all students. You can join any club of your choice. The clubs are run by students, and you can take part in the management of the club if you want to by running in the elections for the title of office bearer of the club.

1.3.3 Festivals and Events

IISERK has a student organized festival known as **Inquivesta**. There are a number of events and competitions held during the festival, such as quizzes, coding contests, dance competitions, music competitions, drama performances, and more. The festival is held yearly, usually in January or February.

Apart from this fest, there are multiple events held throughout the year, such as **IISM** (Inter IISER Sports Meet), **IICM** (Inter IISER Cultural Meet), which are organized jointly by all IISERs. These events are held in different IISERs every year, and students from all IISERs participate in them.

There are also a number of events held by different clubs throughout the year, such as workshops, talks, and competitions. These events are open to all students and are a great way to learn new skills and meet new people.

Fresher's and Prom - The Fresher's party will be organized by the students in our batch, for the batch of '30 (25MS), i.e., you all. There is also a prom event, but I will not spoil the surprise for you. You will get to know about it in due time :).

Note 1.3.3.1

There are other sporting events organized by the sports clubs. I will not mention them here (save something for you to discover).

Since IIIT Kalyani is a new institute, they hold their own events, such as hackathons, in our campus. You can participate in these events if you want to. Note that all events are open to all students, and you can participate in any event of your choice.

1.4 Hostels, Mess and Life in Campus

1.4.1 Hostels and Accommodation

IISERK is a residential campus, and all students are required to stay in hostels. I will not comment on general hostel life, as you will experience it yourself.

There are 3 hostels in campus. Namely -

- **Nivedita Hall** - This is where you will be staying. The hostel accommodates all first year and second year students. You will be assigned a room in this hostel.
 - **Number of People per Room** - There are 3 people per room in most rooms. However, there will be some rooms with 2 people depending on the size of the room in question.
 - **Facilities** - The hostel has -
 - * **Common washrooms** - Washrooms are cleaned regularly by hostel staff. They will stay as clean as you keep them.
 - * **Washing Machines** - There are washing machines in the hostel, which you can use by paying a small fee through an online app. The washing machines are available 24/7.
 - * **Fridges** - There are common fridges in the hostel, which you can potentially use to store food and drinks.
 - * **Personal Provisions** - You will get a bed, a study table, a chair, and an almirah for your personal use.
- **ICVS and NSCB** - These are the other two hostels in campus. They are for the 3rd year and above students. You will not be staying in these hostels, but you can visit them, and as such they are of no concern to you now.

Note 1.4.1.1

Note that whatever extra stuff you will need for hostels will be intimated to you by us in the future, once you have frozen your offer to IISERK. You will be provided with a list of things you are recommended to bring to campus, and we will also help you with the process of getting here and staying while physical verification is going on.

Also note that -

There are no restrictions on when you can enter or leave the hostel.

You can leave the hostel at any time of the day or night, and you can come back at any time of the day or night.

1.4.2 Mess and Food

The mess is monitored by the students. As such, students are responsible for the quality of food and cleanliness of the mess. This ensures high quality of food, cleanliness, and

hygiene in the mess. The mess committee is elected by the students, and they also decide the variation in menu. The students have a say in the menu, and can suggest changes to the mess committee.

The mess is open for breakfast, lunch, snacks and dinner. The mess operates on a pay and eat basis, and you can pay the exact amount for the food you eat. This means that there is no fixed monthly fee for the mess, you can pay according to your needs. However, you will have to pay small establishment fees for the mess, as mentioned in the fee structure. The mess provides ample variety in both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food, and is reasonable in pricing.

Note 1.4.2.1

Note that your Institute ID Card will be used to pay for the food in the mess. You will have to recharge your ID Card with money (with your roll no. as the reference). You can then scan the barcode on your ID Card to pay for the food.

1.4.3 Life in Campus

IISERK offers a vibrant and active campus life, or a quiet one, depending on your choice. You can choose to be a part of the active clubs and events, or you can choose to focus on your studies and research. The campus is peaceful and quiet, with ample space for studying and relaxing. The campus is safe and secure, you can roam around the campus at any time of the day or night.

There is no ragging on campus, and seniors will be friendly and helpful. You can approach any senior for help, and they will be happy to help you. The seniors are also a great source of information about the campus and the institute, and they will help you settle in. **Be sure to maintain a friendly and respectful attitude towards seniors, and fellow batchmates. This will help you make friends and build a good network. Try to interact as much as you can once you are in campus. A good relationship with seniors can help you navigate college life better.**

Rest of the campus life, should be experienced by you, and I will not spoil it for you. You will get to know about the campus life once you are here.

1.5 A List of Relevant Links

- [IISERK Official Website](#) - The official website of IISERK, where you can find all the information related to the institute.
- [Teaching Plan](#) - The teaching plan of IISERK, where you can find the courses offered in each semester, and the credits associated with each course.
- [Fee Structure](#) - The fee structure of IISERK, where you can find the fees for each semester.
- [Academic Calendar](#) - The academic calendar of IISERK, where you can find the important dates for each semester, including start, end, exams, and holidays.

Chapter 2

Everything you need to know after joining

2.1 Patience is key

Be patient, this section is under construction. You will get to know more about what you must bring to campus, what you must do after and before joining, and other important information once you have frozen your offer to IISERK.

You will also get to know about the process of physical verification, and we will do what we can to help you with the process. This includes the details of your travel, and stay in nearby hotels.

We will also provide you with a headstart on meeting all of us, and your future batch-mates, by putting as much of you as possible in a whatsapp group. The link for the verification group will be shared on relevant platforms, like reddit, discord, and telegram, a few days before the counselling process starts, so stay tuned.

We are also working on resources to help you with your studies, once you have settled in. This includes resources for the courses you will be taking, and resources for the exams you will be giving. You will find the public repository links once you have joined the said whatsapp group.

2.2 What if you have any questions?

If you still have any questions, you can reach many of us through reddit or telegram. You can join the whatsapp group we have created for the verification process, which is open to all aspirants who might get an offer or have preferred IISERK. We will be happy to help you with any questions you may have.

2.3 Final Note

I hope this document has been helpful in answering your questions and providing you with the information you need to make an informed decision about joining IISERK. We are excited to welcome you to our institute, and we look forward to seeing you on campus. 24MS, signing off.