

Use of the campus “Chat Room” by students with accommodations to compensate for a limited number of missed classes

Plan

From the Spring semester of 2020 we will begin a new policy that we hope will help students, who have had formal accommodations drawn up for them by the Support Center for Students with Disabilities (SCSD), successfully complete their studies in the IE Program. This policy will allow proof of participation in “Chat Room” sessions at the university’s Chat room (http://web.iec.aoyama.ac.jp/chat_room/top) to be used to make up for a limited number of missed IE classes.

Background

Over the past several years we have had increasing numbers of students at the university, and in our department, who may be on the autism spectrum, have debilitating psychological/ emotional issues, or who have a physical disability or chronic illness. Partially due to the fact that some of these students have difficulty attending classes regularly and punctually, repeated failure in IE classes is not uncommon, with some students repeating all three of the IE courses (Core, Writing, and Active Listening) more than 6 times. IE classes are particularly a problem for such students as the grades for the three IE classes are tied together— with an average, composite grade calculated at the end of each semester. A score under 50 in any one of the three classes requires students to retake of all of them.

The Chat Room

The Chat Room is a physical facility (not a virtual one) on the first floor of Building 3 on the Aoyama Campus where chat facilitators, made up mostly of international and exchange students, lead structured discussions not only in English, but also in Chinese, Korean, French, German, Italian, etc., depending on the demand from students and the availability of Chat Leaders. There are 30- and 40-minute sessions available, which students can sign up for online. Proof of participation can be provided if they print out a “stamp sheet” (available at the Chat Room’s website) in advance and have it stamped at the beginning of their session. Students must follow the rules of the Chat Room. Those who are more than 10 minutes late for a 40-minute session or more than 5 minutes late for a 30-minute session will have their session canceled and it will be filled by students on a waiting list.

Proposed use of the Chat Room in the IE Program

We propose that IE students in IE Core, IE Writing, and IE Active Listening, who have their condition and accommodations documented at the SCSD, will be able to have up to five absences excused if they attend ten 40-minute Chat Room sessions. This means that two sessions are worth one missed class. The students are responsible for providing proof of participation in the Chat Room sessions by showing their stamp sheet to their teacher. The teacher of the IE class for which a student is trying to make up must sign and date the appropriate number of stamped squares so that students will not be able to use them more than once. It

will also be helpful for teachers to indicate the class for which the stamp was allocated.

Note that if official accommodations are created for students they will be shared with the relevant teachers, through the Student Center, close to the beginning of the academic year or semester. A confidential memo will be circulated for the teachers' perusal which they are asked to return to the Student Center after reading.

[See attached Chat Room stamp card sample.]