

Global COE Scientific English Program: Developments in 2009

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The Global COE Scientific English Program based at the University of Shizuoka offers English courses to graduate science students throughout the academic year. The courses give students training in essential practical skills required for successful communication in scientific contexts. The number of courses offered by the program has steadily expanded, with *Oral Communication* and *Academic Writing* started in 2007, *Academic Presentations* and *Independent Listening for Scientists* introduced in 2008, and *Student-led Scientific Discussion* and *Manuscript Editing Tutorial* added in 2009. In addition, short-term *Special Presentation Workshops* are frequently held for graduate students presenting in English at international meetings. The Scientific English Program was also completely digitalized in 2009, when all course materials became available to students online through the program's Moodle course management system, and wireless internet access became available in all classes.

Oral Communication covers typical conference and laboratory situations. Students participate in role plays, discussions, and debates in pairs and small groups. In 2009, 90% of students rated the course “very worthwhile.” The *Student-led Scientific Discussion* course, added last year, builds on the skills established in *Oral Communication*, with students choosing the topics to be discussed and leading the discussion. 100% of students rated the course “very worthwhile.”

Independent Listening for Scientists is a listening skills course carried out entirely online. Students use iPods to listen to science podcasts available on the internet when they have free time in their laboratories or when they commute. Special support materials have been developed to help students listen effectively to the difficult scientific content. 67% of students rated the course “very worthwhile.”

Academic Writing covers the drafting and careful editing of scientific articles, posters, e-mails, and CVs. Students are given detailed corrections and feedback by the instructor. In 2009, the course was rated “very worthwhile” by 100% of students. *Manuscript Editing Tutorial*, added last year, builds on the basic skills covered in *Academic Writing*, offering students individual editing sessions with the instructor. Several of the student papers edited in the course have since been published in academic journals. The tutorial was also rated “very worthwhile” by 100% of students.

Academic Presentations covers the key presentation skill areas of written preparation, slide design, verbal and nonverbal communication, and Q&A sessions. Video of student presentations is used to compare pre- and post-course presentation skills. 100% of students rated the course “very worthwhile.”

In 2009, six *Special Presentation Workshops* were held to prepare students for international meetings, including oral presentations given at the 37th Annual Meeting of the Controlled Release Society in Copenhagen and the 36th International Congress of Physiological Sciences in Kyoto.