

Heisei Year 30 Niigata University iStep Course Guide

2018 iStep Overview

iStep is an academic English language program that is open to seventy-five highly motivated first year students with positive attitudes toward learning university-level English skills.

The iStep program begins the second term of the 2018 academic year, and is taught by four native English speaking teachers. Undergraduate students from all faculties are welcome to apply. Seventy-two of the seventy-five slots in the iStep program are proportionally divided among the ten faculties so that faculties with larger student populations will have higher representation in the iStep program. These seventy-two students will be admitted on the basis of their Center Test English and Listening scores. Three of the seventy-five slots in the iStep program are reserved for students who were admitted to the university on the basis of a recommendation letter and did not take the Center Test English and Listening tests. These three students will be admitted to the iStep program on the basis of an interview.

iStep is an *intensive* academic English program in three senses of the word. First, iStep courses cover sixteen weeks of material in eight weeks. Second, some iStep courses assign extensive weekly homework. Third, each Strand of the iStep program consists of four mandatory and interrelated courses. Strand 1 consists of Academic Writing (0.5 credits), Academic Reading (0.5 credits), Listening & Speaking (0.5 credits) and Presentation (0.5 credits) courses. Strand 2 consists of Listening & Speaking (0.5 credits), Intercultural Communication (0.5 credits), Oral Communication (0.5 credits) and Presentation (0.5 credits) courses. Strand 3 consists of Academic Writing 1 & 2 (0.5 credits each) and Academic Reading 1 & 2 courses (0.5 credits each). Students who are admitted to the iStep program must register for all four weekly classes at his or her selected Strand.

Furthermore, students who are admitted to the iStep program must select a Strand. Each Strand has a different skills focus. Strand 1 focuses on all four skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) equally. Strand 2 focuses exclusively on speaking and listening. Strand 3 focuses exclusively on reading and writing. Each Strand has a twenty-five student limit. These twenty-five students will take each of the four iStep program classes in their Strand together as a group. The iStep program will not accommodate student requests to be assigned to different Strands.

2018 iStep Class Descriptions

Strand 1:

Academic Writing:

In this course, students will learn how to write an argumentative English essay according to the conventions of Standard English. The course will cover how to organize the essay into paragraphs, how to link the ideas, sentences, and paragraphs with appropriate connections, how to cite and reference supporting material according to APA format, and how to self-edit the essay so that it conforms to academic English writing standards. In each class, students will be expected to either write or edit a portion of their essay.

Academic Reading:

The Academic reading course will help students improve their reading skills through the study and discussion of a variety of reading materials, such as newspaper and journal articles as well as standard academic texts. Emphasis will be on understanding text structure, micro- and macro-reading skills leading to an ability to quickly and efficiently locate important information without the need for translation. In-class activities will allow the students to increase their reading speed, to increase their vocabulary, and to improve their understanding of written English. Students will also be encouraged to read beyond the class texts and formulate opinions and reactions to the content in the materials.

Academic Listening & Speaking:

In this course, students will learn how to listen to academic lectures in English. As such, students will learn key academic vocabulary, listening strategies, and the structure of academic lectures. After listening to short talks on a variety of stimulating topics, students will then discuss and apply what they have learned.

Presentations:

In this course, students will learn how to deliver a basic academic presentation in English. The course will cover how to use the specific language needed to do an academic presentation, how a presentation is structured, and how to deliver the content in each section of a presentation. Students will also learn how to use graphs, diagrams, tables, and photographs in a presentation, and the language needed to talk about and describe slides containing these items. In each class, students will be expected to present in front of an audience.

Strand 2:**Listening & Speaking:**

In this course, students will learn how to listen to a range of academic content areas in English. As such, students will learn key academic vocabulary, listening strategies, and the structure of academic lectures. After listening to short talks on a variety of stimulating topics, students will then discuss and apply what they have learned.

Intercultural Communication:

This course is designed to explore concepts of both culture and communication that will increase students' understanding of areas of conflict and strategies to improve relations between individuals and groups. Students, through experiential activities, will examine their own cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors, and consider how these are perceived both locally and globally. During the class, students will be encouraged to read about, reflect on, and react to a variety of issues that will allow them to become more culturally aware, raise awareness of their own cultural bias, and to improve their ability to communicate effectively in different cultural environments.

Oral Communication:

Oral Communication class is a practical course which focuses on developing speaking and communication skills. The content will cover a variety of stimulating topics designed to engage students and get them thinking deeply about the material. Students will have ample opportunity to speak and express their opinions. A core goal of the course is to build student confidence in communicating in English and to encourage critical thinking.

Presentations:

In this course, students will learn how to deliver a basic academic presentation in English. The course will cover how to use the specific language needed to do an academic presentation, how a presentation is structured, and how to deliver the content in each section of a presentation. Students will also learn how to use graphs, diagrams, tables, and photographs in a presentation, and the language needed to talk about and describe slides containing these items. In each class, students will be expected to present in front of an audience.

Strand 3:**Academic Writing 1 & 2:**

In this course, students will learn how to write an argumentative English essay according to the conventions of Standard English. The course will cover how to organize the essay into paragraphs, how to link the ideas, sentences, and paragraphs with appropriate connections, how to cite and reference supporting material according to APA format, and how to self-edit the essay so that it conforms to academic English writing standards. In each class, students will be expected to either write or edit a portion of their essay.

Academic Reading 1 & 2:

The Academic reading course will help students improve their reading skills through the study and discussion of a variety of reading materials, such as newspaper and journal articles as well as standard academic texts. Emphasis will be on understanding text structure, micro- and macro-reading skills leading to an ability to quickly and efficiently locate important information without the need for translation. In-class activities will allow the students to increase their reading speed, to increase their vocabulary, and to improve their understanding of written English. Students will also be encouraged to read beyond the class texts and formulate opinions and reactions to the content in the materials.

Weekly Schedule for iStep Courses in Term 2, 2018

2018 iStep Course Schedule for Strand 1 Students

	月	火	水	木	金
1 限					
2 限					
3 限					
4 限	Academic Writing Teacher: S. Pryor Credit 0.5	Academic Reading Teacher: S. Pryor Credit 0.5		Academic Listening & Speaking Teacher: M. Ruddick Credit 0.5	Presentation Teacher: M. Ruddick Credit 0.5
5 限					

2018 iStep Course Schedule for Strand 2 Students

	月	火	水	木	金
1 限					
2 限					
3 限					
4 限	Listening & Speaking Teacher: C. Hannah Credit 0.5	Intercultural Communication Teacher: C. Hannah Credit 0.5		Oral Communication Teacher: S. Pryor Credit 0.5	Presentation Teacher: S. Pryor Credit 0.5
5 限					

2018 iStep Course Schedule for Strand 3 Students

	月	火	水	木	金
1 限					
2 限					
3 限					
4 限	Academic Writing 1 Teacher: G. O'Neal Credit 0.5	Academic Writing 2 Teacher: G. O'Neal Credit 0.5		Academic Reading 1 Teacher: C. Hannah Credit 0.5	Academic Reading 2 Teacher: C. Hannah Credit 0.5
5 限					

iStep Information Guidance Sessions

At the time listed below, a guidance session will be held on April 6th, 2017 (Friday). Students who are interested in the iStep program must attend the guidance session. The guidance session will introduce the iStep program, application and registration procedures for undergraduate students, and application and registration procedures for *suisen* students. The guidance will also have a Q & A session. If a student cannot attend the guidance session, please email *Associate Professor O'Neal* before April 6th: george@ge.niigata-u.ac.jp. (Please include "ISTEP" in the subject line of the email.)

Guidance Session

Time: April 6th (Friday) 13:00~14:25

Place: Ikarashi Campus General Education Research Building B Wing 3rd Floor Room B353

Application, Selection, Registration, & Notification Processes for the 2018 iStep Program

● **General Application, Selection, Notification, and Registration Procedures**

- ① First year students who are interested in iStep must attend one iStep guidance session on April 6th (Friday), and fill in all the necessary information into the application form. The application forms will be distributed at the iStep guidance sessions.
- ② Students must submit the completed application form by April 9th (Monday) 17:00 to window three of the administration section on the first floor of the General Education Research Building A Wing.
- ③ Applicants will be selected according to their Center Test English and Listening scores.
- ④ Successful applicants will receive notification of permission to enroll for iStep classes by April 11th (Wednesday) via an email to the students' university email addresses, which are provided by the Academic Affairs Information System (For example: b18p999k@mail.cc.niigata-u.ac.jp). Successful applicants will also be notified as to which Strand (1, 2, or 3) they have been assigned.
- ⑤ Students who receive permission to enroll for iStep classes must register for all four iStep classes of the assigned Strand by April 12th (Thursday) 17:00. Registration for iStep classes is conducted through the online Academic Affairs Information System. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified of open slots in the program if successful applicants later decide to not register for the iStep classes.

● **Application, Selection, Notification, and Registration Procedures for Students who were Admitted to the University on the Basis of a Recommendation Letter and did not take the Center Test English and Listening tests**

※ Students who were admitted to the university on the basis of a recommendation letter and did not take the Center Test English and Listening tests will be admitted into iStep on the basis of an interview that will assess the students' aptitude for the program.

- ① Students who are interested in iStep must attend one iStep guidance session on April 6th (Friday), and fill in all the necessary information into the application form. The application forms will be distributed at the iStep guidance sessions.
- ② Students must submit the completed application form by April 9th (Monday) 17:00 to window three of the administration section on the first floor of the General Education Research Building A Wing.
- ③ Students must be interviewed at the appointed time. Students will be notified of the time and place of the interview through the Academic Affairs Information System.
- ④ Successful applicants will receive notification of permission to enroll for iStep classes by April 11th (Wednesday) via an email to the students' university email addresses, which are provided by the Academic Affairs Information System (For example: b18p999k@mail.cc.niigata-u.ac.jp). Successful applicants will also be notified as to which Strand (1, 2, or 3) they have been assigned.

- ⑤ Students who receive permission to enroll for iStep classes must register for all four iStep classes of the assigned Strand by April 12th (Thursday) 17:00. Registration for iStep classes is conducted through the online Academic Affairs Information System. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified of open slots in the program if successful applicants later decide to not register for the iStep classes.

2018 iStep Continuation Overview

For students interested in continuing their English language education in the iStep program, there are a range of continuation courses on offer in the 3rd and 4th terms. These courses are designed to push motivated students to improve the areas of language learning in which they are interested or require for their current and future academic lives. The courses will be challenging, but it is hoped that the student-centered approach will encourage in-class participation through a variety of individual, pair, and group work activities. The iStep Continuation courses are open to any first-year student who has attained credits from the iStep program. These courses are offered on various days and times, and will allow students to take their language skills to a more advanced level. Each course is a stand-alone unit, which will enable students to take as many courses as they desire (timetable limitations notwithstanding). Class size is capped at twenty-five. iStep Continuation course information can be found in the online syllabi for each course. However, if there are fewer than twenty-five iStep graduates applying for the iStep Continuation courses, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year students (undergraduate, graduate, exchange) from any faculty may also apply for these courses. iStep Continuation course registration is done online through the university's online class registration system.

2018 iStep Continuation Course Lists:

第 2 学期 (ターム 3・4)					
(iStep 修了者優先。余裕がある場合は全学部・全学年の履修も可。定員 25 名)					
科目名	担当教員名	ターム	曜日	時限	単位
iStep Continuation: Academic Writing	G. O'Neal	3&4	火	2 限	1.0
iStep Continuation: Oral Communication	C. Hannah	3&4	月	3 限	1.0
iStep Continuation: Intercultural Communication	C. Hannah	3&4	火	2 限	1.0
iStep Continuation: Oral Communication	S. Pryor	3&4	木	3 限	1.0
iStep Continuation: Academic Reading	M. Ruddick	3&4	水	4 限	1.0
iStep Continuation: Academic Listening & Speaking	M. Ruddick	3&4	月	5 限	1.0
iStep Continuation: Academic Listening & Speaking	S. Pryor	3&4	水	2 限	1.0
iStep Continuation: Presentation	S. Pryor	3&4	月	4 限	1.0
iStep Continuation: Presentation	M. Ruddick	3&4	金	3 限	1.0
iStep Continuation: Pronunciation	G. O'Neal	3&4	金	4 限	1.0