

Japan university gives away iPhones to nab truants

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In this product photo provided by AAA, the AAA Discounts iPhone app is seen. (AP Photo/AAA)

(AP) -- A prestigious Japanese university is giving away hundreds of iPhones, in part to use its Global Positioning System to nab students that skip class.

Truants in [Japan](#) often fake attendance by getting friends to answer roll-call or hand in signed attendance cards. That's verging on cheating since attendance is a key requirement for graduation here.

Aoyama Gakuin University in Tokyo is giving Apple Inc.'s [iPhone](#) 3G to 550 students in its School of Social Informatics, which studies the use of Internet and [computer technology](#) in society.

The gadget will work as a tool for studies, but it also comes with GPS, a satellite navigation system that automatically checks on its whereabouts. The university plans to use that as a way check attendance.

Students who skip class could still fake attendance by giving their iPhone to a friend who goes to class. But [youngsters](#) aren't likely to lend their mobile phones, which are packed with personal information and e-mail, according to the university.

U.S. universities use the iPhone for various, other purposes. At Stanford University, students have developed iPhone applications in a course. At Duke University, the gadget is used to get around the campus and find information about course listings and other events.

Aoyama Gakuin signed a deal earlier this month with Softbank Corp., the exclusive vendors of the iPhone in Japan.

The number of students using the iPhone is expected to reach 1,000 in the program - the first time the iPhone is being used on such a scale at a Japanese university.

The iPhone will be used to relay course materials, lecture videos and tests. The university hopes students will develop software applications and other lifestyle uses for the cell phone.

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