

Attendance Tracking After the Census Date for Converted Online Classes

This document applies to classes that were originally scheduled as traditional (seated), hybrid, or blended and are moving to fully online starting March 30 due to the COVID-19 situation.

Please note that **all Mini-Session II classes** need to follow special, separate [instructions for handling students' entry dates during the census period](#) (Mar 30 – Apr 3). After that, the instructions below apply.

Classes that were originally scheduled as fully online do not need to follow the instructions in this document or make any changes; these classes can continue taking attendance as normal.

External Requirements (Why we have to do this)

- Federal and state regulations require that attendance in online courses be based on **student submission of an activity or assignment**. Colleges must **maintain records** of student submissions that verify attendance and be able to show these records to auditors upon request.
- A student logging in to the Sakai site, watching a video, or reading something does NOT constitute attendance. There needs to be evidence that the student submitted something.

Planning Attendance Activities

- **Every week, your online course must contain at least one activity that students “submit”.**
 - You don't have to set up a special assignment just for attendance. Simply be sure that there is something for students to “do” (submit) each week of the course – so there's some way to know if they are participating and to generate some kind of evidence of that.
- There are many online activities that can count for attendance. (Rules are more strict for “entry dates” during the census period – we are past the census period, so for the rest of the semester, there are more options.)

Student activities that can count as attendance include (but are not limited to):

- Submitting a forum post or reply in Sakai
- Taking a quiz or test in Sakai
- Submitting an assignment in Sakai
- Submitting a file in the Dropbox in Sakai
- Participating in a Chat Room in Sakai
- Submitting activities or assessments on a publisher platform
- Sending an email to the instructor that relates to course content (e.g. asking a question about course content, sending homework, etc.)
- Attending an online meeting in Sakai – there are special considerations:
 - Attending an online meeting can count for attendance even though the student isn't “submitting” anything. These meetings are synchronous (“live”) meetings and similar to a face-to-face meeting.
 - If the instructor records the session, the students' attendance can be verified through the meeting's Statistics (located in the Recording tab of Meetings). These statistics are not available

if the meeting is not recorded. If not recording, the instructor would need to note who is in the meeting for attendance purposes and save those notes.

- Be aware that if a student misses the meeting (perhaps due to technical problems) **watching the video cannot count for attendance** – because there is no evidence and no way to tell if they watched it. Instructors can create a quick activity (quiz, forum, email) through which students verify they watched the video, which will provide evidence.
 - Bottom line: If using Meetings for attendance, it is recommended that you also have some other activity that students can submit as evidence of attendance, in case they cannot join the meeting due to technical issues.
- The grade the student receives on an activity does not matter for attendance. (In fact, the activity can be something that doesn't receive a grade at all.)
 - For example, a student could post a really poor answer in the forum and be counted as present. They might earn a zero for that assignment, but they still "attended".
 - Or a student could submit a practice quiz that doesn't count towards the grade. It can still count as evidence of attendance.
 - **Be clear with your students** that they must do/submit something to be counted as "present" for the week – that logging into the course site doesn't count. Let them know that they will be counted absent for the week if they do not submit something (or attend an online meeting, if you are using that) during the week.

Determining Who Attended

- Attendance in online courses is taken weekly.
 - If the student submits an activity during the week, they've attended!
 - If the student submits nothing that week, they are absent for the week.
- It is recommended that you use Monday - Sunday as your week.
 - If the student submits an activity at any time during a Monday - Sunday period, they've attended for that week!
 - If the student submits nothing during that Mon-Sun period, they are absent for the week.
 - If the student submits this week's assignment late – i.e. they turn it in next week – that counts as attendance **for the week when they turned it in**, not for the week it was due.
- Submission of ANY activity by the student during the week means the student was present for the week. It doesn't have to be the specific activity you may have "pointed them to". Examples:
 - You could have 3 activities in a given week that students must submit. If the student did only one of the three, they are present for the week.
 - A student could submit nothing, but send an assignment to you through email or could email you with questions about the course content. This can still count as attendance.
- **It boils down to this... to determine if a student was "present" this week, ask yourself:**
 - Did the student participate in the class this week in any way?
 - Is there any evidence to support this?

- Keep records.
 - If the student is submitting something in Sakai, the records will be in Sakai. (You're covered.)
 - If the evidence of attendance activity is through email, save those emails.
 - If the attendance activity is on a publisher platform, save those records.

Marking Attendance in WebAdvisor (Web Attendance)

- Attendance for all curriculum classes is recorded using Web Attendance in Web Advisor. Once the census date has passed (E date is marked), instructors record only absences in Web Attendance.
- For classes converted to online, the attendance roster (in Web Attendance) still shows the specific dates the class was scheduled to meet (e.g. Tues and Thurs).
- However, with the shift to weekly attendance, when a student submits nothing during a particular week, the instructor can **choose one day** (e.g. Thurs) in that week on which to mark the student's absence. (It's arbitrary, just pick one.)
- Some classes have multiple attendance rosters for the same class. For example, this occurs when there is a class and a lab, or if the class was originally hybrid or blended. To keep things simple, instructors can simply **mark the absence on one of the rosters**.
 - Note that when you mark an "A" (absent) on one of your attendance rosters, you are marking the student absent for that entire week, for both the class and lab.
- For help with WebAttendance, see the [instructions for using WebAttendance](#), or contact Terra Bikah at bikaht@durhamtech.edu

FAQs

- **So I just need one activity per week in my class? (Even if my class met M and W before?)**
One submission per week is sufficient for attendance tracking purposes. However, you'll need more than that for instructional purposes. Your online class should contain a combination of material, activities, assignments, etc. as needed to cover the same instructional content and learning outcomes as before (as well as possible given the unusual circumstances).
- **Does the activity have to be submitted the day of the week the class would normally meet?**
No, it does not. It can be submitted on any day within a given instructional week.
- **What if the student submits the assignment late?**
If a student submits an assignment late – i.e. they turn it in the following week – that counts as attendance for the week when they turn it in, not the week it was due. If they submitted nothing at all (for any activity in the class) the week the assignment was due, then they are absent for that week.
- **My class was hybrid before... I thought we needed 2 attendance points per week -- one for hybrid and one for physical class ... and now both are online.**

Since all of your instruction will now be online, you will only need to track attendance on the online roster for your course. A student is only absent if they submit nothing during a given week. And you can choose the day within that week on which to mark that absence on the online roster in WebAdvisor. You can stop marking the “physical class” roster.

- **My class has three attendance rosters, which includes two seated classes and one lab. Should I only take attendance once a week?**

Yes, one student submission of any kind is sufficient to show the student attended for the week. However, as noted above, your online class should contain more than just one activity per week – you’ll need a combination of material, activities, assignments, etc. to cover the same instructional content and learning outcomes as before (as well as possible given the unusual circumstances).

- **Do I need to let students know that a specific assignment/activity/etc is to gather info on their attendance?**

To clarify, you don’t have to set up a special activity or assignment designated for attendance. Most weeks, you’ll probably have several activities, and submission of any one of them means the student attended for that week. Be clear with your students that they must do/submit something to be counted as “present” for the week – and that logging into the course site doesn’t count. Let them know that they will be counted absent for the week if they do not submit something during the week.

- **What about for contact hour classes vs membership classes?**

Both types of classes should follow the rules laid out in this document.