

Attendance Rules for Online, Hybrid, and Blended Classes

This document provides information to help instructors who teach online, hybrid, and blended courses plan course activities and maintain attendance records that meet regulatory requirements. It includes the steps to determine students' **course entry dates**.

These rules apply to credit classes and to non-credit classes that have a funding method of "membership hours". (They do not apply to non-credit courses with a funding method of "contact hours".)

Background (Why Do We Have to Do This?)

A combination of state and federal regulations requires that attendance in online courses and in the online portion of hybrid/blended courses must be based on student submission of an activity or student attendance in an online meeting.

State compliance officers are especially concerned with verifying **each student's exact date of "entry"** into a course – which is the exact date a student submits their first activity or attends their first online meeting. Federal rules specify that online activities used for attendance must be academically related.

Colleges must maintain records of student submissions that verify attendance and be able to provide these records to auditors upon request – typically one to two years after the class took place. Following the steps below will help ensure that your attendance records are accurate and meet audit requirements.

Set Up Course Entry Activities in Sakai

All online, hybrid, and blended courses – whether asynchronous, synchronous, or some combination -- must have an activity **IN SAKAI** available from the course start date through the course **census date***. The activity (or activities) must be in the **Forums** tool, **Tests & Quizzes** tool, or **Assignments** tool in Sakai.

Examples of acceptable activities for course entry include a quiz about the course syllabus or a discussion prompt asking what students hope to learn in the class.

For courses delivered synchronously -- and for any course using online meetings:

- Student attendance at a "live" **Sakai Meeting** *does* count for course entry.
 - **IMPORTANT:** During the census period, the Sakai Meetings tool must be used for online meetings (not Zoom, Teams, or other tools).
- In addition, **the instructor must provide a course entry activity that students can submit in Sakai**. This offers a fallback for any students who are unable to join a live online meeting during the census period due to technical or other difficulties. It also provides consistent rules and messaging for students who may be taking a variety of classes (synchronous and asynchronous).
- A student viewing a recorded meeting *does NOT* count for attendance, because there is no record to substantiate it.

* CENSUS DATE:

- The **census date** can vary from one section to another based on term length, delivery method, etc. To find the exact census date for each section you are teaching, log in at selfservice.durhamtech.edu, then click **Faculty** (near the bottom). Census dates are listed to the right of each section.

IMPORTANT:

- **Student submissions or meeting attendance prior to the section's start date cannot count for attendance or course entry.** Therefore, if you publish your Sakai site before the start date, you must set all activities to be "unavailable" to students until the start date.

Communicate Course Entry Requirements to Students

In your syllabus and course site, communicate the entry requirement statement to students:

STATEMENT FOR ONLINE CLASSES

Students must complete an online activity in Sakai between the class start date and [insert your class census date] in order to officially "enter" the class. Students who do not complete an online activity in Sakai between these dates will be dropped from the class as a "no show" and will not be eligible for a refund. If receiving financial aid, the student may be required to reimburse tuition and fees.*

**Online activities that qualify for course entry are submitting a forum post or reply in Sakai, submitting a quiz or test in Sakai, submitting an assignment in the Assignments tool in Sakai, and attending a "live" online meeting in Sakai (in classes that use this). Viewing a recorded meeting does NOT qualify for course entry.*

STATEMENT FOR HYBRID AND BLENDED CLASSES

Students must complete an online activity in Sakai between the class start date and [insert your class census date] in order to officially "enter" the online portion of the class. Students who do not complete an online activity or attend the seated portion of the class between these dates will be dropped as a "no show" and will not be eligible for a refund. If receiving financial aid, the student may be required to reimburse tuition and fees.*

**Online activities that qualify for course entry are submitting a forum post or reply in Sakai, submitting a quiz or test in Sakai, submitting an assignment in the Assignments tool in Sakai, and attending a "live" online meeting in Sakai (in classes that use this). Viewing a recorded meeting does NOT qualify for course entry.*

Run a Report in Sakai to Determine Student Entry Dates

After the census date, instructors will run the *Student Entry Date for Online/Hybrid/Blended Courses* report in Sakai to determine each student's entry date (first day of attendance).

This report lists all submissions students made in Forums, Tests & Quizzes, and Assignments in Sakai and all Sakai Meetings students joined (within a specified time period). By using this report, you will determine each student's earliest activity for recording in the attendance system.

FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS TO RUN THE REPORT

- [How to Run the Student Entry Date Report in Sakai](https://go.durhamtech.edu/sakai-entry-date-report)
[https://go.durhamtech.edu/sakai-entry-date-report]

Record Entry Dates in Self-Service Attendance

Each student's earliest activity date, as listed in the *Student Entry Date for Online/Hybrid/Blended Courses* report in Sakai, is the student's **official entry date** for attendance purposes.

For each student, the instructor will **mark the student "PRESENT" on that student's official entry date** in the attendance system at selfservice.durhamtech.edu.

For details, see [Self-Service Web Attendance Guide](https://go.durhamtech.edu/selfservice-attendance) [https://go.durhamtech.edu/selfservice-attendance]

If you have questions about attendance in Self-Service, please contact Terra Bikah, Coordinator of Data and Compliance at bikaht@durhamtech.edu

IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT NO SHOWS

If a student does NOT appear in the *Student Entry Date* report in Sakai, this means the student did not submit anything in Forums, Tests & Quizzes, or Assignments or attend a Sakai Meeting during the specified period.

- **For online classes**, students not listed in the report are “no shows.”
- **For hybrid/blended classes**, students who do not appear in the report are “no shows” **only** if they also did not attend the seated portion of class by the census date.

For each "no show", instructors will check the "never attended" box in the Grading area of Self-Service. For details, see [Self-Service Web Attendance Guide](https://go.durhamtech.edu/selfservice-attendance) [https://go.durhamtech.edu/selfservice-attendance]

Manage Ongoing Attendance after Course Entry

After the census date, **only absences are recorded**, and the way attendance is handled varies depending on delivery mode.

For online asynchronous sections and hybrid/blended sections with asynchronous online component

ATTENDANCE ACTIVITIES

- Each week of the course, there must be at least one activity that requires student submission and can be used to determine attendance for the week.
- After the census date, instructors have greater flexibility in choosing the types of activities that will be used for attendance. These weekly activities can be...
 - **in Sakai** (preferred), using any tool in Sakai that facilitates submission of student work (Forums, Tests & Quizzes, Assignments, DropBox, Blogs, Student Pages, etc.)
 - **on a publisher-provided platform** (if applicable)
If activities used for attendance are outside of Sakai, the course site on Sakai must clearly indicate what each week’s activity is (e.g. title or topic) and where it is located (e.g. name of publisher site). An auditor visiting the Sakai site must be able to see that there was an activity or assignment **each week** and where it took place (if not in Sakai).

MARKING ABSENCES AFTER COURSE ENTRY

- Instructors must choose a consistent day of the week on which to mark absences. For example, if online activities are due each Friday, then for students who did not submit any activities in a particular week, the instructor would mark them "Absent" on Friday of that week in Self-Service Attendance.

For online synchronous courses

ATTENDANCE ACTIVITIES

- Student attendance at scheduled online meetings is the basis for determining for attendance.
- A student missing a meeting and viewing a recording does not count as attendance; however, it is a good way for students to make up missed work.

MARKING ABSENCES AFTER COURSE ENTRY

- If a student does not attend a scheduled online meeting, the instructor will mark the student "Absent" on the date they missed in Self-Service Attendance.

For all classes, instructors are expected to log in to Self-Service and update attendance information once a week to keep records up to date.

Additional Information

Durham Tech has several procedures and policies regarding attendance that instructors are expected to follow. The list below may not be all-inclusive.

- [Self-Service Web Attendance Guide](https://go.durhamtech.edu/selfservice-attendance)
[https://go.durhamtech.edu/selfservice-attendance]
- [College Catalog Information on Attendance, Withdrawals, and Class Absences](https://www.durhamtech.edu/catalog/studentrights.htm#attendance)
[https://www.durhamtech.edu/catalog/studentrights.htm#attendance]
- [Class Absences Policy and Procedure](https://www.durhamtech.edu/policies-and-procedures/class-absences)
[https://www.durhamtech.edu/policies-and-procedures/class-absences]
- [How to Run the Student Entry Date Report in Sakai](http://go.durhamtech.edu/sakai-entry-date-report)
[http://go.durhamtech.edu/sakai-entry-date-report]