FALL 2019 Student Attendance FAQs

Q. What does the fall 2019 semester "soft roll-out" mean?

A: During the fall 2019 semester, we will begin implementation of the attendance procedure, but not yet actually withdraw students.   This will allow us to test the various the systems and work out any issues before enacting the penalty of withdrawal on our students. **This does mean that faculty are expected to begin recording attendance in Starfish this semester.** This semester we will be sending the automated e-mails to students who reach the 10%, 20%, and 30% thresholds, and we will begin aligning support for students with attendance issues, based on what we learn about the timing and volume of reports of students reaching the thresholds.

Q. Where can I find written instructions for entering attendance in Starfish for my face-to face or online course?

A: Step-by-step instructions for entering attendance in Starfish for both face-to-face and online courses can be found on the Starfish Support Center page. To access it from myMCC, select the "Employee" option at the top of the screen, then select the "Starfish" tab from the second row of options.

Faculty members can add an optional note to a student's record while recording attendance. This can be used to indicate when a student is tardy or to add any other additional information. Instructions for doing this can also be found on the Starfish Support Center page.

Q. When do I need to enter attendance?

A: For face-to-face courses, faculty will keep attendance at each class meeting and report at least weekly by end of business on Monday of the following week, using MCC's Starfish system. Faculty can also enter this information more frequently or even daily, if they wish.

For online courses, faculty will record attendance only once for each entire week, based on whether the student completed an "academically-relate activity" at any time during the previous week's Monday through Sunday reporting period. Faculty will report this at least weekly by end of business on Monday of the following week, using MCC's Starfish system.

Attendance in Starfish should be entered for each distinct CRN, except that attendance is not reported for dual enrollment and Workforce Development courses. It is also not reported for some PSTC courses that do not have financial aid.

Q. What is an "academically-related activity"?

A: According to the Federal Student Aid Handbook, acceptable academically-related activities (ARAs) that can be reported as attendance in an online or face-to-face class can include:

> **ACADEMICALLY-RELATED ACTIVITIES (ARAs)**
> i. **Student physically attending a class where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and student;**
> ii. **Student submission of an academic assignment;**

iii. **Taking an exam or submitting an exam for an online course;**
iv. **Documented student participation in an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction;**
v. **Attending a student group that is assigned by the instructor or a posting by the student showing the student's participation in an online study group that is assigned by the instructor;**
vi. **A posting by the student in a discussion forum showing the student's participation in an online discussion about academic matters; and**
vii. **An email or other form of student-initiated contact with a faculty member to ask a question about an academic subject studied in the course.**

Reference: Federal Student Aid Handbook (2018, p. 5-62).

Q. Will I still need to enter attendance in Banner?

A: For this semester, you will still need to enter attendance for any graded course once in Banner to report whether students have ever attended that course. As in the past, instructions will come from Records and Registration. In addition, if you enter a failing grade for a student at the end of the term, you will need to enter the last date of attendance (LDA). The LDA would be the last date that the student physically attended the course or completed an ARA, as appropriate.

For the future, we are exploring whether the attendance records in Starfish can be captured so that a separate Banner report is not required.

Q. Can attendance be considered in assigning grades in my course?

A: Faculty can still have appropriate academic consequences for absences, typically by assigning credit for participation in discussion, in-class assignments, laboratory exercise, internships or clinicals, experiential learning, or other activities that support the course learning outcomes. The policy in no way encourages or stipulates instructors change their current classroom management policies to a "you can miss 30 percent of my classes" policy. The 30 percent threshold only relates to being withdrawn from the class for poor attendance.

Q. What about excused absences?

As stated in the Student Attendance Policy, the instances when absences legally MUST be accommodated include: (1) absences due to pregnancy/related conditions, (2) absences directly related to a disability where an accommodation is flexible attendance and (3) absences due to religious observance.

Absences for other reasons, including extra-curricular activities, court appearances, childcare or transportation issues, and illnesses not listed above as requiring an accommodation should be listed as absences unless the student has made arrangements with the instructor to complete an "academically-related activity." The Student Attendance policy asks that faculty find ways to with with those students to allow them a chance to succeed in the course, as appropriate. If faculty have academic consequences for absences in a course, they can use their discretion, if consequences are applied consistently for all students with similar reasons for absence.

Q. What about students who complete FLEX courses early?

From Jerome St. Croix: Treat the course as if it were a fifteen week course, it is not any different - flex instructors would report that student attended so [financial] aid could disburse at census; then if student received an F, they would report the last date of academic activity. If student successfully completes early, instructor submits the final grade for the student, making further attendance unnecessary.

Q. What about students who arrive late or leave the class early? Should they be marked as "absent?"

For the purposes of this attendance process, student who arrive late or leave early are "present." Faculty can have appropriate academic consequences for both situations, since they fall under the responsibility and scope of the instructor's classroom management.

Faculty members can add an optional note to a student's record while recording attendance. This can be used to indicate when a student is tardy or to add any other additional information. Keeping notes about student tardiness is a faculty choice and is not required.

Instructions for recording notes can be found on the Starfish Support Center page. For staep-by-step information about how to enter notes under a student's attendance, including a note that that a student was tardy, go myMCC, select the "Employee" option at the top of the screen, then select the "Starfish" tab from the second row of options.

Q. Can attendance records for individual students be changed at a later date? For example, an instructor marks the student absent, but after class the instructor discovers the student missed class due to an emergency but continued to work on the lessons.

In general, yes, they can be revised. To edit an attendance record in Starfish:

    i)   From myMCC, select the "Employee" option at the top of the screen, then select the "Starfish" tab from the second row of options.
    ii)   Click the blue Starfish Home icon in the left-hand side of the page, then select far right "Record Attendance" button.
    iii)   In the "Section" dropdown field, select the course section for which you wish to record attendance. On the "Meeting Time" dropdown, choose the date for which you want to edit an attendance record. Choose "Next."
    iv)   The roster of students will appear. Choose "edit" to the right of the message indicating when the attendance was previously recorded.
    v)   Select the corrected attendance status as appropriate.
    vi)   Select "Save."

We will not know exactly how changing the attendance records impacts the automated messaging and withdrawal processes. This will be checked during the soft launch in the fall of 2019.

Q. How can I get additional questions answered about recording student attendance this semester?

Your supervisor may be able to answer some questions. You can also submit additional questions to withdrawal@monroecc.edu .

August 25, 2019   Dr. Andrea C. Wade, Provost and VP, Academic Services

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