

DOCUMENTING ATTENDANCE IN DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES

Changes to Federal financial aid regulations in recent years have highlighted the importance of accurate reporting on student attendance and participation in all courses, including distance education courses (online and hybrid/blended courses).

To quote from the Federal Student Aid Handbook:

In a distance education context, documenting that a student has logged into an online class is not sufficient, by itself, to demonstrate academic attendance by the student.

A school must demonstrate that a student participated in class or was otherwise engaged in an academically related activity, such as by contributing to an online discussion or initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a course-related question.
– FSA Handbook 2013-2014, Volume 5, 5-60.

In order to comply with this federal financial aid regulation, the College is providing the following procedural guidance when filling out your non-participation rosters.

A student attends an online course (or the online portion of a hybrid/blended course) by participating in class or otherwise engaging in an academically related activity. Examples of such activity include but are not limited to: contributing to an online discussion or text chat session; submitting an assignment or working draft; working through exercises; taking a quiz or exam; viewing and/or completing a tutorial; initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a course-related question.

Such academically related activities are readily tracked and documented through the College's learning management system, email system, and in some cases publisher websites.

Documenting that a student has logged into an online class or website is not sufficient, by itself, to demonstrate academic attendance by the student. For example, if a student simply logs into an online course on September 15 and logs out, without any further activity, the student did not attend the online class on that day.