

# Using Attendance in a Class by a Teacher

## Adding Attendance Activity

After the attendance block and module have been properly installed, you (the teacher) must add attendance as an activity to each course you wish to keep attendance in. This is done by first ensuring that you are in the edit mode and then selecting, "Attendance" from the "Add an activity..." pull-down menu. Note that you may only add the attendance activity once per class and it may be located in any of the section blocks. Because attendance is for the entire course, it seems logical to put it in the top box (the one that always shows).

Once you have added the attendance activity, you are ready to start using the attendance module. However, the section link that was just added in the preceding paragraph is the "clunky way" to work with the attendance module. In fact, it is recommended that you simply hide that link! That way students won't see it cluttering up the section block where you placed it. Of course, we DO want students to be able to view their attendance records, just not with that link. There is a second, better, way to accomplish this. Select "Attendance" from the pull-down menu in the "Blocks" block. This will create a block with teacher options to take attendance, report on attendance, or change the attendance settings. The same block will instead have an attendance report for students.

## Setting Attendance Categories and Grading Options

Now it is time to set your attendance options. Select "Settings" from the attendance block. This brings you to the letters, descriptions, and grade (points) to assign for the four attendance options. By default these are Present, Absent, Late, and Excused.

You may prefer to change the descriptions (e.g., change the word Late to Tardy), change the order, or change the way points are counted so make appropriate changes here to the names, order, and grades. Be sure to click the "Update" button when you are done.

## Adding Sessions

Next it is time to add sessions. Note that there is a restriction here. You can only have one session per day. Since you can only have one attendance activity installed (which means that you cannot have a lab attendance activity and a lecture attendance activity) and can only have one attendance session per day, if you have more than one class session per day you will have to be creative in taking attendance. And if you have more than seven class sessions for a single class in a week--then you are overworked!

To add class sections, click the "Add" tab (second from left) at the top of the page (if you left the attendance page, select any of the three links from the attendance block to return to the attendance page and gain access to the "Add" tab). You have two options here, to add a single session or to add multiple sessions. The single session is self-explanatory as well as time consuming to use when you have many class sessions so I will go straight the more useful option, how to add multiple sessions.

Under the "Create multiple sessions" label choose the date for the first session you wish to add followed by the date for the last session you wish to add. Next select the days of the week on which the class meets. The final option, frequency, may look confusing but it is actually straight-forward. If your class meets every week (the normal situation) then you want a frequency of 1 week which is the default. If your class

meets every other week, then you want a frequency of 2 weeks, and so on. When you click the "Add multiple sessions" button, your sessions will be created and you will see a message indicating this.

## **Taking Attendance**

Now head to the attendance tab. Here you see the list of all attendance sessions you have added. You can delete an individual session by clicking the X to the right of it. (Personal note, it sure would be nice if there was an option to select a few sessions and delete them all at once--I use the multiple sessions option to put my sessions in for the entire semester and then have to go and remove sessions for vacation days one at a time.) You can edit a session (change the date or add a description) with the standard hand icon to the right of the session, or you can take attendance for a session by clicking the green radio button to the right of the session. Sessions where attendance has already been taken do not have the green button, but instead the description is a link that takes you to the screen to modify the attendance record for that session.

You will note that when taking attendance the column headings for attendance state are links. If you click one of these column headings, all students will have their status changed to the status you selected. Thus, if everyone is absent (God forbid!), you merely click the A and it will change everyone's status to absent. If Little Johnny is the only student absent, you would logically click P to set everyone to present and then go down to Little Johnny and change his status to A. Enter remarks as appropriate (e.g., the reason for an absence if known or the minutes late if someone is tardy) and click OK to complete taking record.

## **Additional Session Description Considerations**

I used to spend a lot of time editing each session description to match the description in the syllabus. But then I discovered that the students don't see the descriptions I entered. All they see is "Regular class session" regardless of the session description. Thus I do not recommend spending the time to name the sessions unless you will get confused without them.

## **Reports**

Finally, you have the reports. This is, again, obvious. One of my colleagues prefers to take record on paper and transfer it to Moodle. She suggested printing the monthly report before the start of the month and then taking record on this report. It has an added advantage because you have each student's picture with the record sheet. Of course, that is only useful for students who actually put photos of themselves in for their picture.

A final note here. If you added the attendance block as recommended, you may wonder what it looks like for students. It is completely different--showing a summary of their attendance record and having a single link for them to view the details of their personal attendance. Another reason why I think the attendance block should always be added when you use the attendance module.

Retrieved from "[http://docs.moodle.org/en/Attendance\\_module](http://docs.moodle.org/en/Attendance_module)"

Categories: Contributed code

- This page was last modified 03:07, 10 June 2008.
- Content is available under GNU Public License.