

Attendance Verification Fact/FAQ Sheet

Introduction

The U.S. Department of Education requires that all institutions of higher education receiving Federal financial aid funds verify that students began attending all of the courses for which they were paid federal financial aid. Beginning in Fall 2012, Sinclair Community College began meeting this requirement by initiating the Attendance Verification process. Faculty are asked to record and verify that students established attendance during the first 14 days of the term to meet this federal mandate.

Reporting a student as "not attending" will likely result in the reduction of financial aid for that student. As a result, accurate attendance verification is crucial to the ability of many of our students to pursue their educational goals.

Timeline for attendance verification

Attendance is verified

Days 1- 14 of the
term.

Example: If the term begins on Monday, August 19th, any student who establishes attendance from Monday, August 19th through Sunday, September 1st should be reported as attending.

Attendance is reported

Days 8-14 of the
term.

Example: If the term begins on Monday, August 19th, attendance reporting will be available from Monday, August 26th through Sunday, September 1st.

Attendance verification closes on the 14th day after the start of the term - if an instructor fails to submit that attendance was established by this date, students' financial aid for the term may be reduced!

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why does Sinclair require faculty to verify attendance in the first two weeks of classes?

The U.S. Department of Education requires that institutions verify that students established attendance in each of the courses for which they receive federal financial aid. This is not only a Sinclair requirement, it is required by the federal regulations. Failure to comply with these federal regulations could impact Sinclair's ability to participate in federal financial aid programs.

Do all Sinclair sections need to verify attendance?

The following sections are required to verify attendance:

- Full-term sections
- A term section
- B term sections
- "Late Start" sections (a large group of sections that start a couple of weeks into the regular term)

Flex sections, however, are not required to submit attendance verification. If a section has a start date other than full-term, A term, B term, or the "Late Start" group of sections, attendance will be established using the final grade.

During what period of time can a student be verified as establishing attendance?

The general rule is that students must establish attendance by participating in an academically related activity within the first 14 days of the class to be considered attending. However, beginning with the Spring 2015 term, an exception may be granted by the Financial Aid & Scholarships office if the student can document extenuating circumstances.

When is attendance reported to the college?

The reporting tool for attendance verification will become available one week after the start of classes, and will remain open during the next seven days. **Reporting of attendance verification must occur during this period for all sections where it is required.**

How does a student establish attendance?

According to the Department of Education, students must engage in at least one “academically related activity” to establish attendance. Below are the Department of Education guidelines regarding “academically related activities”:

“Academically related activities include but are not limited to —

- physically attending a class where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and students;
- submitting an academic assignment;
- taking an exam, an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction;
- attending a study group that is assigned by the school;
- participating in an online discussion about academic matters; and
- initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course.

Academically related activities **do not** include activities where a student may be present but not academically engaged, such as —

- living in institutional housing;
- participating in the school's meal plan;
- logging into an online class without active participation; or
- participating in academic counseling or advisement.”

Note that In online sections students must submit an assignment, take an exam, participate in an online discussion, or be otherwise engaged in an “academically related activity” as described above to be counted as having attended the section.

What constitutes an extenuating circumstance?

- The student had a severe illness that prevented him or her from attending all classes during the first 14 days of the course and he or she provided documentation from a medical doctor or hospital, and a financial aid staff member agrees that attendance in the first 14 days of the course was not possible;
- The student suffered the death of a close family member and provides a copy of the death certificate;
- A campus closure (inclement weather or an act of God) cause the student to miss classes, and in addition, the student can document extenuating circumstances that prevented him or her from establishing attendance during the remainder of the 14 day period;
- The student attended the wrong section of the course but did establish attendance during the first 14 days of the course in that section as evidenced by the instructor for that course, even though the student was not registered in that course at the time attendance was verified;
- The instructor ceased teaching the course or is no longer available to submit the attendance appeal form (for example due to death, medical illness or disability, relocating out of state, etc...) and the student has been regularly attending the courses; or
- Any other unforeseen circumstance that a financial aid staff member determines to be extenuating through the use of professional judgment and the student can document that circumstance.

How is attendance verification reported?

How to log in and enter Attendance:

1. Login to my.sinclair.edu on the internet
2. Click on the icon for "Web Advisor"
3. Click on "Faculty".
4. Click on "Grading/Attendance Roster"
5. Click on the small downward arrow by Select Term, chose the term to enter attendance, press submit
6. Click on the small downward arrow by Final Grading / Attendance and click on "Attendance Rosters"
7. Click in the box next to the class / section to record attendance, click on Submit
8. Click on the box in the "Attendance Indicator" column to "check" the box for each student who has attended the class at least once during the first two weeks of class. If a mistake is made, just click on the box again and the check mark will be removed indicating that the student has not attended at all during the first two weeks of class. Use the mouse or tab key to maneuver on the screen. You may also use the space bar to check the box on or off. (HINT: Press Tab to move forward down the column or Shift Tab to move in reverse)
9. Verify you have entered attendance correctly, make any appropriate adjustments and press Submit. The system will process the roster and return to the Web Advisor For Faculty Menu display screen.
10. If there are more sections to mark attendance in then click on the Grading link again, and follow the above steps.
11. When all attendance has been entered, be sure to click on "Log out" to end the session. **You may access the report at any time before the deadline and make any changes that you need to make.** You will receive a confirmation email verifying that your attendance verification report has been received.

If you have successfully submitted the section, you will receive e-mail confirmation indicating that your submission was received. Once the confirmation is received, no additional action is required for that section unless you need to revise your submission.

Can I change my attendance report after it has been submitted?

You can revise attendance reporting any time up until the deadline, fourteen days after the beginning of classes (counting the first day of class). After that time, attendance reporting will be closed and no further revisions can be made.

What should students do if they are reported as non-attending and want to appeal?

The faculty member (not their administrative assistant) must submit the Financial Aid Attendance Appeal form. The appeal form is only available electronically through Forms Central. The electronic form can be accessed under "Financial Aid" in Forms Central, and when submitted will automatically be forwarded to the Financial Aid office for review. *PLEASE NOTE: the Financial Aid & Scholarships office will no longer accept e-mails or hard copy forms for the attendance appeal process.*

<p>What circumstances would warrant submitting an appeal for a student?</p>	<p>Appeals should be submitted if there was an error in the attendance verification report submitted by the faculty. Appeals may also be submitted when the student has an extenuating circumstance that can be documented. Appeals should <u>not</u> be submitted if the student has not met any of the criteria provided above.</p>
<p>What about students who were unable to attend during the attendance verification period (for example, due to hospitalization), but later begin attending class?</p>	<p><u>Due to the policy changes which became effective for Spring, 2015, a student may request that the instructor submit an attendance appeal</u> when extenuating circumstances that can be documented exist. See above for the list of extenuating circumstances that can be documented for student to request an appeal. Students who were hospitalized for the entire first 14 days of the term (or more) will be able to request that an appeal be filed on their behalf</p>
<p>Is attendance verification required in "Seniors" sections?</p>	<p>No. If a section is entirely comprised of senior citizens <u>and</u> all students are auditing the course, no financial aid money is disbursed and there is no need for attendance to be verified.</p>
<p>Why are daily reminders sent to faculty who have not submitted attendance reports?</p>	<p>This is a federal financial aid requirement and failing to verify a student's attendance may result in aid being reduced for that student. Given the impact that failing to accurately report attendance verification can have on students, it is of paramount importance that attendance verification reports are submitted timely. The daily reminders that are automatically sent to faculty help ensure that the necessary attendance verification information is submitted.</p>
<p>Where can I find additional information on the Financial Aid Student Attendance Policy?</p>	<p>Additional information on the Financial Aid Student Attendance Policy can be found at the link below: http://www.sinclair.edu/services/finaid/sourcesandtypesoffinancialaid/federalfinancialaid/studentattendance/index.cfm</p>
<p>Who should I contact if I have questions regarding attendance reporting?</p>	<p>If you have questions, please contact: Jared Cutler Assistant Provost for Accreditation and Assessment Phone: (937) 512-2789 Email: jared.cutler@sinclair.edu</p>

Thank you for your help in ensuring that our students continue to have access to the financial aid funds that many of them need to achieve their educational goals!