Guidance on Recording Attendance 2020/21

As we move into an academic year in which teaching and contact with students will be blended, we have looked to update our guidance on recording attendance and engagement. Whilst engagement with on-line content via Canvas will be the first means of identifying where students may be struggling to engage with teaching and learning (and therefore may require support), recording attendance at face-to-face and on-line synchronous teaching and contacts will also play a crucial part. This will support student welfare/academic interventions that may be needed to help students; meets compliance requirements (e.g. for UKVI); and it will support the requirements for Public Health England's Track and Trace system.

Whilst fuller guidance is provided for colleagues running engagement and attendance processes, the below is brief guidance for teaching staff on recording attendance in the current context.

Downloading the Sussex Mobile App will likely be a useful tool in many situations, please see below.

What to Record:

- Following your normal School policy, please record attendance via Sussex Direct for any taught sessions or other student contacts that you would normally do so (whether 'in-person' or synchronously on-line).

- In addition, where normal School policy doesn't include this, attendance at any type of contact that is delivered 'in-person' or blended should be recorded on Sussex Direct. This will help to support Public Health England's Track and Trace system.

  For example, all students in lectures/seminars scheduled on a rotational (in-person/on-line) basis, or delivered simultaneously on-line and in-person; academic advising; etc.

- Academic Advisors are also encouraged to record attendance on Sussex Direct for academic advising meetings; given the challenging circumstances of this semester it will be especially helpful to include this to understand the overall support/contact individual students are accessing.

How to Record Attendance Registers:

For Health and Safety in relation to COVID-19, **attendance recording cannot use physical registers that are circulated between or come into contact with multiple participants.**

Instead, alternative means of recording attendance on Sussex Direct are advised. The essential element is the attendance is recorded on Sussex Direct. Whilst this is not prescriptive, and ways of recording attendance will be kept under review to share good practices during the year, below are some suggested ways of recording attendance (either for 'face-to-face' or synchronous on-line sessions):

1) Staff can use the University of Sussex Mobile App to generate a PIN code during a class (e.g. verbally, writing the code in a Zoom chat, projecting on screen, etc.). Students would then need to enter this code into their own Sussex App. We are encouraging students to download the Sussex Mobile App in case staff choose to use this method, and IT Services are activating this functionality across the University.

   Once created by the tutor, the PIN will be active for a limited duration (10 mins), during which time students can enter it into their own App. Once they do this, attendance data is automatically entered into Sussex Direct (registers can still be manually updated by the tutor).

   Fuller guidance on using the Sussex Mobile App for attendance recording is provided as a separate attachment alongside this document and copied below).

   This may be particularly useful for larger group teaching.

2) The tutor could hold a single register (e.g. with gallery view) as either a physical document, without circulating it to students, or using the class Sussex Direct register on-screen.

   The tutor would then complete this during the class. Using a gallery of students or through a roll-call could be ways of doing this.

   The tutor will then need to ensure that this register is manually inputted into Sussex Direct.

   This may be particularly relevant for smaller group teaching.

3) For synchronous on-line sessions, using a Zoom/Teams participant list or the Sussex App with PIN (a) would be exemplar options.

Guide to recording lecture attendance via the Sussex Mobile App (for staff) 2020-21

PLEASE NOTE: The Attendance function on the Mobile App is currently being rolled-out and will be available by the beginning of teaching (28th September 2020); it may not be visible until then. It will also be kept under review for functionality during the Autumn Semester.

The Sussex Mobile App offers a potential way of recording student attendance without the need for circulating paper registers amongst students (which must be avoided at this time for health and safety). You may wish to use this for 'face-to-face' teaching or on-line synchronous teaching.

It is a tool that may be useful in some scenarios (e.g. larger group teaching), but you may alternatively prefer to record attendance manually in Sussex Direct (e.g. for smaller group teaching.

How does the app work?

1. Open the Sussex Mobile App. You should see a tile called 'Attendance (Tutor)' – open this during your teaching session.

Please note that this tile will only be visible to you once the phase including your module(s) has begun.

As well as using the Mobile App on a device, it is also possible to access it through a website (e.g. on desktop PCs) by going to:

https://sussex.ombiel.co.uk/

If using this, it may be useful to create a shortcut on your desktop screen with the link, which should then be visible when you log-in to teaching rooms PCs.

We are exploring the possibility of installing a link to the Mobile App on PCs in lecture theatres and/or posting a reminder of this link on lecterns.
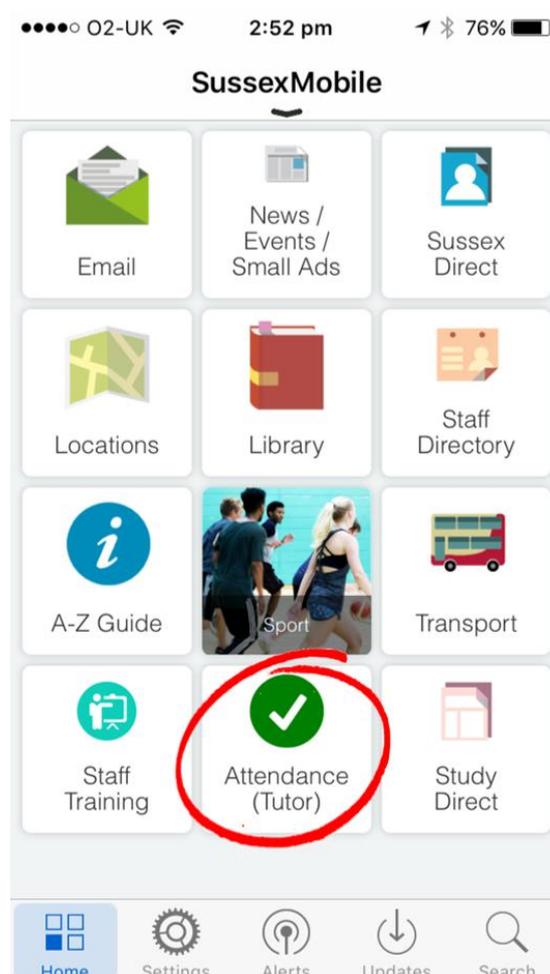
2. You should now see the date, time, module code/title and location of your current teaching session, with a 'Create PIN' button beneath - pressing this will generate a four digit PIN code.

Please note that if you have two versions of a module running simultaneously (e.g. if you have students on an elective), you will see two 'Create PIN' buttons – you must press both of these, one after the other. Both codes will be the same to avoid confusion.

3. Once you have generated the PIN and told your students what the code is (e.g. verbally, by projecting on a screen, writing on a board, etc.), they will have **ten minutes** to enter code, also using the app, to confirm their attendance.
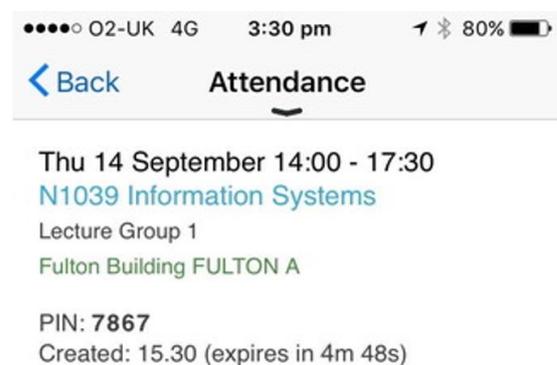
Frequently asked questions

When is the best time during my lecture to record attendance?

You can choose to create the PIN at any time during your lecture, but please note that **you cannot do so during the last 10 minutes of the session** - this is because students may need a full 10 minutes to enter the PIN.

If your lecture is due to finish at 11.50 am, you must create the PIN by 11.39.59 am.

How can I view and amend attendance records after a lecture?

After your lecture has finished, you can view attendance records through Teaching Records on Sussex Direct. All students who have successfully entered the PIN during the lecture will be marked as 'Present'.

Anyone who hasn't entered the PIN will be left with a blank status. You will see options to 'Backfill as absent N (notified)' and 'Backfill as absent' – clicking either of these buttons will immediately backfill all students who have blank statuses.

What if I have problems using the system?

If you have trouble accessing the app through your phone or tablet, you should use the PC in the teaching room to use the browser version.

What if my students have problems using the system?

If a student is present but has problems entering the PIN or accessing the app, they will need to contact you after teaching and you will be able to update their status manually in Sussex Direct. You should also prompt them to let you know if you they have any issues and record their names during teaching, if possible.