

Guidelines for verifying the attendance of students in an online course

The following instructions from Claflin University are available to ensure compliance with federal financial aid regulations when participating in online courses.

The participation of students in course activities determines their attendance. By taking online courses (or hybrid/blended courses with an online component), students are engaging in academic activities. Take an exam, complete a quiz, participate in an online discussion, submit a project, access and/or complete a tutorial, or contact your professor with a question.

Instructors can utilize Moodle's user reporting and activity completion features to track the academic activities of their students.

A student's login to a course or website is not evidence of academic attendance. A student who logged into an online course on Oct. 11 and left without completing any activities had not been attending that day's course.

- Distance-learning students cannot prove attendance solely by logging into an online course. In order to determine whether a student has never taken an online or hybrid course, or whether they have stopped taking such a course, Claflin University will follow the federal guidelines listed below. Student must demonstrate that he or she has participated in class or conducted an academically related activity, such as participating in an online discussion or asking a faculty member a question regarding the course. [FSA Handbook 2013-2014, Volume 5, pages 5-60.](#)
- Furthermore, academic attendance includes participating in an online discussion, text chat or assignment, completing exercises, taking quizzes, writing papers, and viewing or completing tutorials. Alternatively, students may contact faculty members for course-related assistance.

What is an acceptable indication of attendance?

The Federal Student Aid Handbook specifies the following acceptable indications of attendance in an online course:

- Submission of an academic assignment by a student
- Submission of an exam by a student
- Providing documentation of student participation in interactive tutorials or computer-assisted instruction
- A student's participation in a study group assigned by the institution is documented by a posting
- An online discussion about academic matters in which the student participates in a discussion forum
- A student's email or other documentation showing that the student first contacted a faculty member to ask a question about an academic subject studied in the course.

What does NOT sufficiently indicate attendance?

- This statement states, "In a distance education context, merely logging into an online course is insufficient to demonstrate academic attendance by a student" (Federal Student Aid Handbook, 2016, p. 886). To be documented as having attended an online course, a student must do more than just "log in."

Resources:

<https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/fsa-handbook/pdf/2020-2021>