



Simplifying Classroom Attendance with Ex Libris campusM

Executive Summary

Background

Universities and colleges are operating in an increasingly complex and competitive environment due to socio-economic and technology changes, such as the rising cost of educationⁱ, financial independence, declining completion ratesⁱⁱ and declining state fundingⁱⁱⁱ.

In addition, the drive to recruit, retain and ensure success for all student is making institutions look for innovative ways to understand their cohorts and their respective levels of engagement. Through this, institutions will be better equipped to compete and succeed.

Attendance data – identifying whether students are attending their academic classes and pastoral events – provides a strong indicator of student engagement and success. Gump summarizes thus:

“...attendance should be one of the easiest variables for students to control. Students who wish to succeed academically should attend class and instructors should likewise encourage class attendance”^{iv}

With Bevitt, Baldwin & Calvert elaborates further:

“Level of attendance at non-lecture classes was a predictor of academic achievement and the early intervention strategy was associated with improvements in attendance”^v

This can be especially important for first year students, where attrition rates are at their highest and where study habits are developed as part of the transition from college to higher education. Bevitt, Baldwin & Calvert resolve that:

“A strong steer at the start of a university career may help to counter stereotypical assumptions about attendance and help to encourage good study and attendance habits from the start.”^{vi}

This leads to the conclusion that measuring student attendance and providing mechanisms to identify which students to constructively intervene with will lead to improvements in retention, progression and success.

The Challenges of Capturing Student Attendance

Finding the right attendance system can be challenging – they can be expensive to install, difficult to maintain, disconnected from your campus systems, disruptive to the classroom and it can be hard to make the most of the data generated.

The drastic changes seen within the digital landscape over a relatively short period of time has transformed the way students access services and changed business practices across all aspects of the university. The evolution of smart phone technology and the impact this has had on the services and applications that sit on this powerful device has revolutionized the opportunities to enhance experiences and streamline processes.

“no other device has had the same commercial and societal impact as the smartphone”^{vii}

For students, the impact of this has been profound and beneficial to both their social and academic lives.

This is reflected in a recent survey commissioned by Ex Libris, with 88% of students reporting that they would struggle to complete their studies without technology and 74% couldn't live without their smartphones^{viii}.

It is clear that the ideal attendance solution is one that works alongside vital student services like timetables and location information as part of your campus app, giving students the most integrated experience possible. This should be delivered through the device of their choice, one that is considered essential to their study and is therefore always with them. And delivered in a way that minimizes efforts and disruptions within the teaching environment.

In addition, the accuracy and timeliness of the intervention is essential. Being able to track attendance in real time, collating and identifying students who are not in class and then acting on this information is key in preventing attrition in student numbers.

The campusM Solution

campusM already enables institutions to give students access to essential campus services and key information throughout their study. Our aim has always been to transform the student experience and streamline student administration through our powerful mobile and web platform. And now we are simplifying classroom attendance tracking as part of that campusM platform, delivering a fully integrated, personalized attendance solution.

We have developed a solution that provides an integrated experience that builds on our student-focused mobile experience and directly addresses the key challenges associated with traditional attendance monitoring.

It is quick to deploy, requires no additional hardware installation and is simple to use for students, lecturers and administrators. The impact on classroom teaching is minimal, but the data gathered is powerful.

Our workflow is simple - the student initiates and the technology validates each check-in.

We can provide students with useful and helpful notifications to remind them of the upcoming classes. When the student gets to their class, they simply open the app and check in through our intuitive campusM attendance experience. The app then utilizes the available technologies to validate the check in and register the attendance. This is all done in seconds and with minimal disruption to the teaching flow. And within their campusM app students are able to access their attendance data.

Our multifactor approach enables a range of geolocation and micro-location technologies, along with cloud-based pattern analytics, to add the required assurances that the student has logged a valid check-in.

This check-in data is then passed immediately back to the cloud, where it is immediately available in real-time to the institution, automatically collated with event information and validation status. The agile access to the data enables lecturers and administrators to take timely, meaningful intervention as needed.

Benefits of campusM Attendance

campusM Attendance comes as part of the campusM subscription package, key benefits include:

- *No additional cost*
- *Easy to manage and configure*
- *Quick to deploy*
- *No additional hardware*
- *Real-time analytics from the start*
- *Flexible and sustainable*

ⁱ <https://www.cornerstone.edu/blogs/lifelong-learning-matters/post/a-college-degree-is-worth-it/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/prestoncooper2/2017/12/19/college-completion-rates-are-still-disappointing/#295d077e263a>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.acenet.edu/the-presidency/columns-and-features/Pages/state-funding-a-race-to-the-bottom.aspx>

^{iv} Steven E. Gump (2010) The Cost of Cutting Class: Attendance As A Predictor of Success, *College Teaching*, 53:1, 21-26, DOI: [10.3200/CTCH.53.1.21-26](https://doi.org/10.3200/CTCH.53.1.21-26)

^v Debbie Bevitt, Chris Baldwin & Jane Calvert (2015) Intervening Early: Attendance and Performance Monitoring as a Trigger for First Year Support in the Biosciences, *Bioscience Education*, 15:1, 1-14, DOI: [10.3108/beej.15.4](https://doi.org/10.3108/beej.15.4)

^{vi} Debbie Bevitt, Chris Baldwin & Jane Calvert (2015) Intervening Early: Attendance and Performance Monitoring as a Trigger for First Year Support in the Biosciences, *Bioscience Education*, 15:1, 1-14, DOI: [10.3108/beej.15.4](https://doi.org/10.3108/beej.15.4)

^{vii} <https://www.deloitte.co.uk/mobileuk/>

^{viii} <http://bit.ly/stdntsLife>