

Moodle Quick Start Guide: Recording Attendance Using the Attendance Activity

You can obviously record student attendance using a paper chart or an Excel spreadsheet. However, Moodle's Attendance Activity offers not only comparable features, but also several advantages over those possibilities:

1. With Moodle's Attendance activity, you can set up all the possible days at the same time.
2. Moodle allows you to see the attendance record for a particular student for a particular month.
3. Moodle allows the *student* to see his/her attendance history as you have recorded it.
4. Moodle allows you to set point values for Present, Excused Late, and Absent (usually 2, 1, 1, and 0 points, respectively), and Moodle sums the score for you and adds the total to the Gradebook.

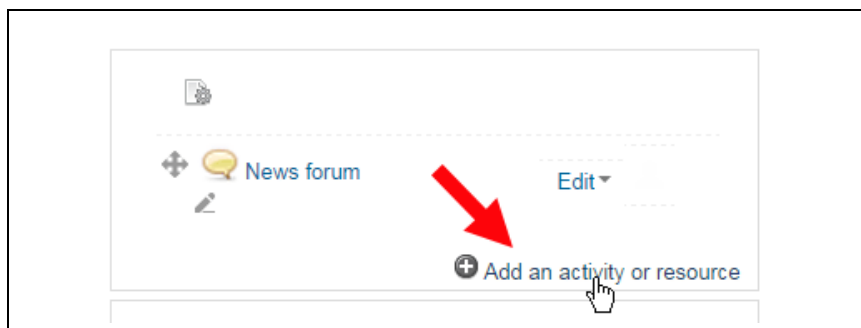
Creating the Attendance activity, adding sessions for which to record attendance, and then recording attendance are three separate steps, which we will describe separately:

I. Creating the Attendance Activity

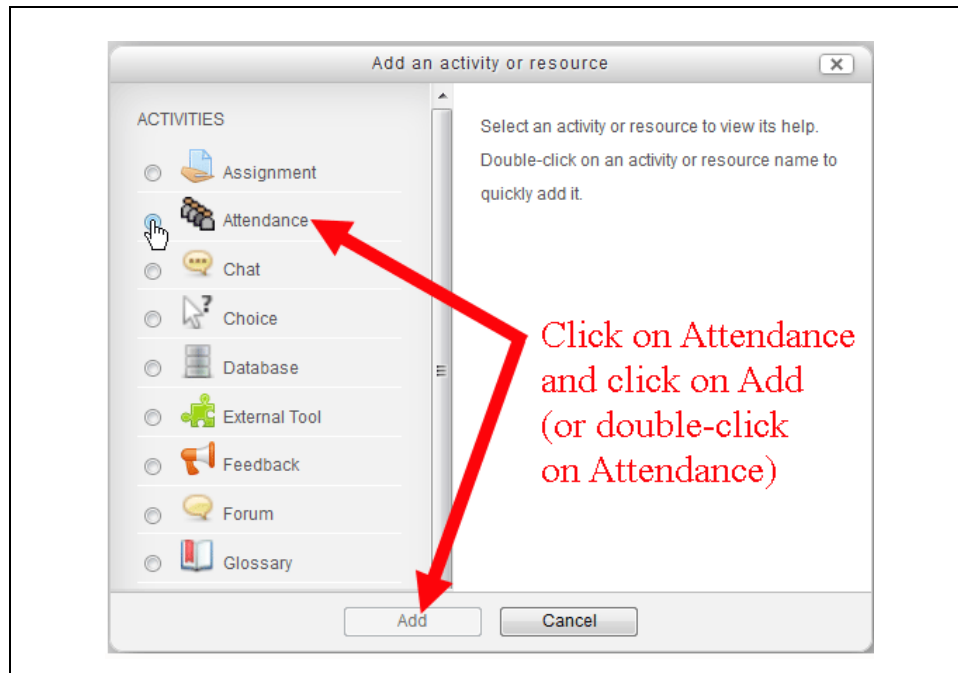
1. If the Edit Mode is currently off, click on the button at the top-right corner of your window to allow you to make changes to the course content:



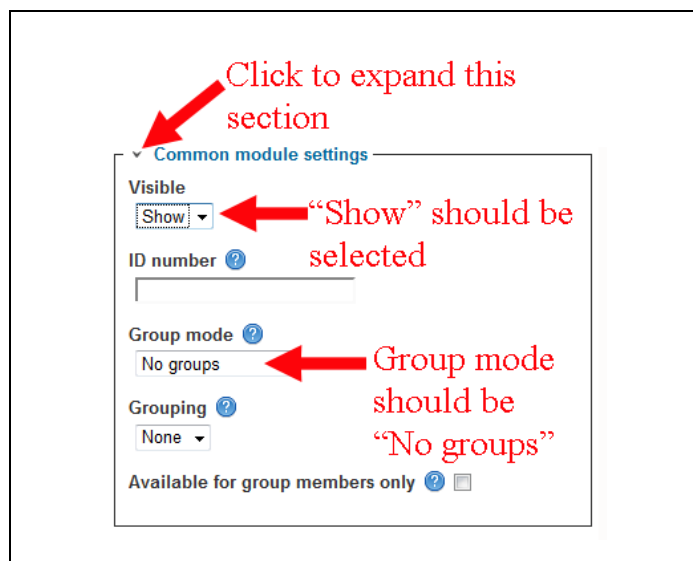
2. You'll need to decide which topic area in your course will contain the Attendance activity. Since Attendance is such a fundamental activity, we recommend adding Attendance to the "zero block" at the top of the page. Move your mouse to the bottom-right corner of the zero block, so that the "Add an activity or resource" link appears, and click on that link:



3. Among the list of possible Activities (arranged in alphabetical order), find the link for Attendance (the second from the top), and click on that link and then click on the Add button, or double-click on the Attendance link:



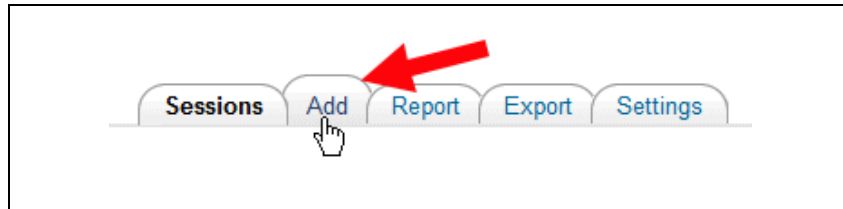
4. In the General section of the “Adding a new Attendance” page, you’ll see “Attendance” already entered as the name and a default point scale of 100 selected. Those default settings are usually fine. However, you’ll want to click on the “Common module settings” area to expand that section. Make sure that the Visible option is set to “Show” and that the Group mode is “No groups”:



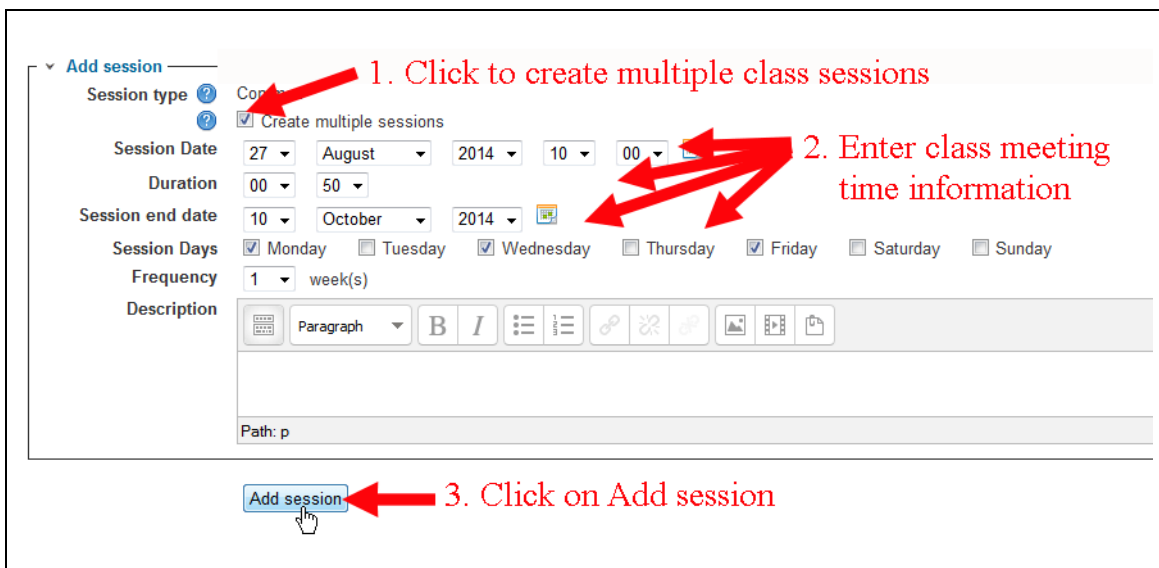
- When you have finished with the “Restrict access” section, click on the **Save and display** button to finalize the Attendance activity options and begin the process of adding sessions during which you will take attendance.

II. Add Sessions During for Which You Will Take Attendance

- If you clicked on the “Save and display” button for the previous step, you should be at a page for your Attendance activity, with today’s week displayed. If you clicked on the “Save and return to course” button instead, you just need to click on the link for the Attendance to get to that page. At this point, your Attendance activity has no sessions, so click on the “Add” tab at the top of the page:



- You will most likely want to create sessions for the entire semester, although you can also choose to create sessions up to the first vacation break. Click in the “Create multiple sessions” check box, and then enter the time information for when you class meets. The “Session Date” should be the day (and time) of your first class session (during which you will be recording attendance). The Duration is the length of the class. The “Session end date” could be the day of the first vacation break, or it could be the last day of classes for the semester. The “Session Days” are obviously the days of the week your class meets, and the frequency should be 1 week, since your class meets weekly :

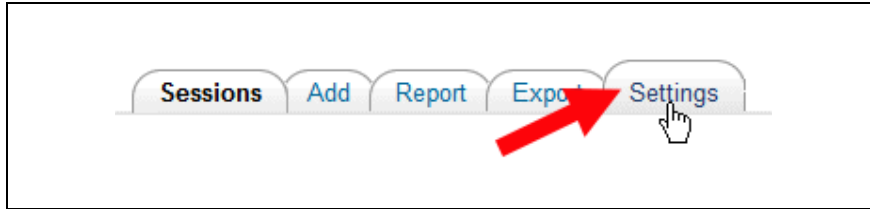


1. Click to create multiple class sessions

2. Enter class meeting time information

3. Click on Add session

- Once you have entered the class meeting time information, click on the “Add session” button to save your changes.
- If you chose the first day of a vacation as the “Session end date,” you’ll need to repeat Steps 1 through 3 above to add additional sessions for when your class meets after that vacation.
- Once you have added all the class sessions for the semester, you’ll want to click on the “Settings” tab at the top of the page:



- By default, the values you can use for recording attendance are “Present,” “Excused,” “Late,” and “Absent.” Present has a value of 2 points; Excused and Late have values of 1 point, and students who are Absent get 0 points for that session. You can decide to remove the Excused and Late categories or to change the way points are allocated, or you can keep those default values. If you do make changes, you’ll need to click on the “Update” button:

My Variables

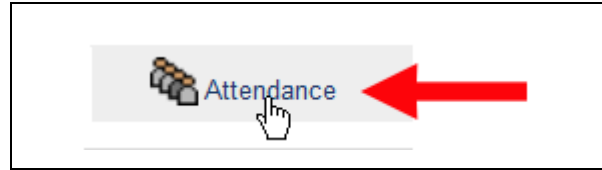
#	Acronym	Description	Grade	Action
1	P	Present	2	
2	E	Excused	1	
3	L	Late	1	
4	A	Absent	0	
*				<input type="button" value="Add"/>

- At this point, you have finished setting up the Attendance activity, and you can use the “bread-crum trail” to return to the main page for your course:

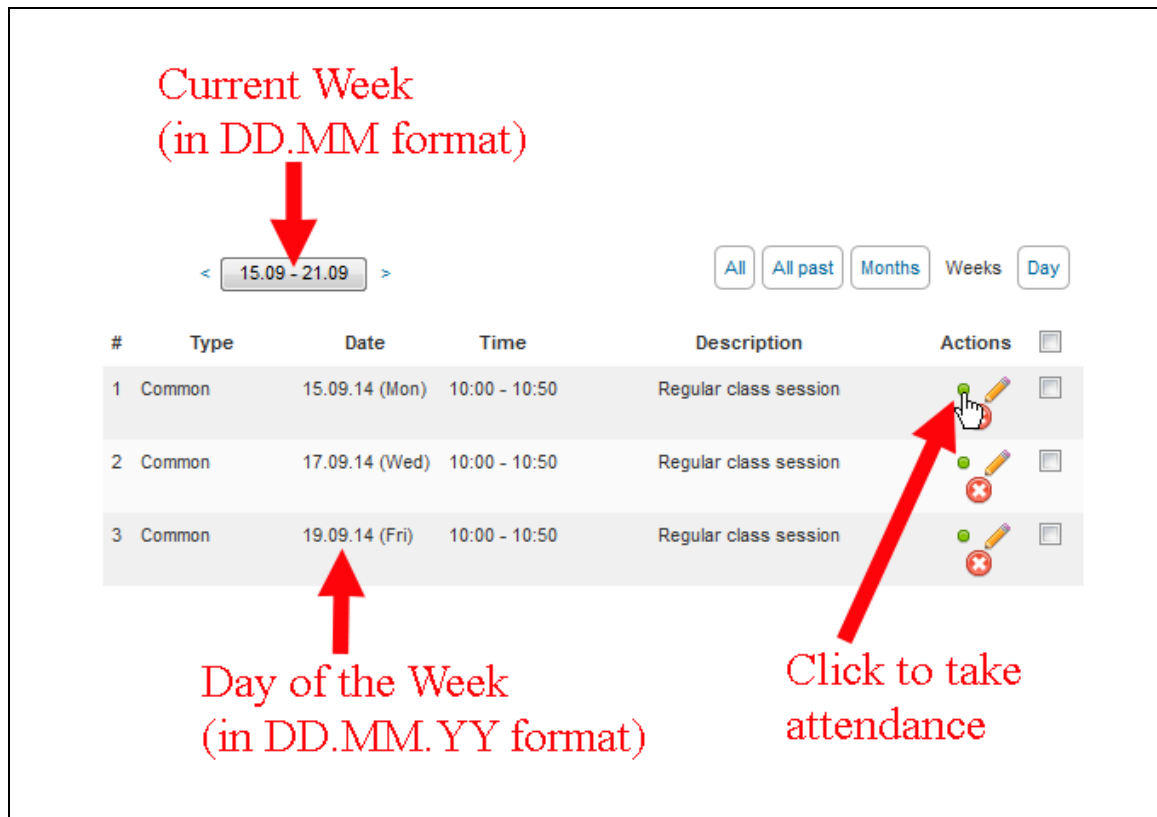


III. Recording Attendance

1. For each class session, you will need to keep track of attendance. To do that, click on the link in your course for the Attendance activity:



2. The Attendance module has various oddities related to Moodle's Australian origin and use throughout the world. When you click on the Attendance activity, you will see your sessions for the current week. The week will display in DD.MM format, and the class sessions will be listed in MM.DD.YY format with the time based on a 24-hour clock. You'll want to click on the green button in the Actions column at the far right to record attendance for a particular day:



Current Week
(in DD.MM format)

< 15.09 - 21.09 >

All All past Months Weeks Day

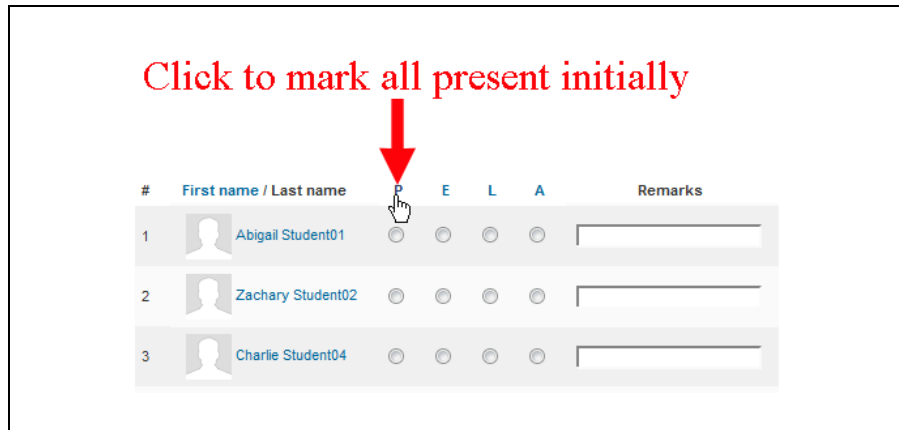
#	Type	Date	Time	Description	Actions
1	Common	15.09.14 (Mon)	10:00 - 10:50	Regular class session	
2	Common	17.09.14 (Wed)	10:00 - 10:50	Regular class session	
3	Common	19.09.14 (Fri)	10:00 - 10:50	Regular class session	

Day of the Week
(in DD.MM.YY format)

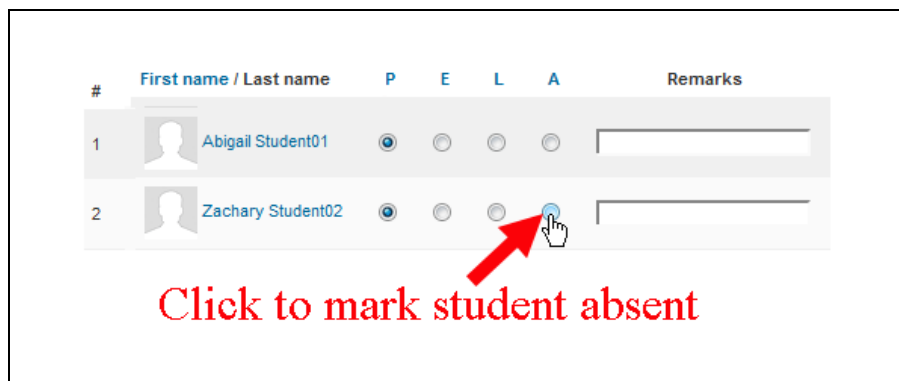
Click to take attendance

Detailed description: This screenshot shows the Moodle Attendance interface. At the top, a date range '15.09 - 21.09' is displayed in a grey box, with a red arrow pointing to it from the text 'Current Week (in DD.MM format)'. To the right are filter buttons: 'All', 'All past', 'Months', 'Weeks', and 'Day'. Below is a table with columns: '#', 'Type', 'Date', 'Time', 'Description', and 'Actions'. The table lists three 'Regular class session' entries for dates 15.09.14 (Mon), 17.09.14 (Wed), and 19.09.14 (Fri). A red arrow points to the 'Date' column with the text 'Day of the Week (in DD.MM.YY format)'. Another red arrow points to the 'Actions' column of the first row, which contains icons for marking attendance (green dot, pencil, red X) and a checkbox, with the text 'Click to take attendance'.

3. You will be taken to an “Attendance for the course” page, with columns for the attendance categories you chose and rows for the students enrolled in the course. Usually, most students are present in class, and only a few are absent. To make recording the absences more efficient, you can click on the “P” at the top of the grid, which will mark everyone initially as “Present”:



- To change the setting for a student who was actually absent that day, click in the “A” radio button in that student’s row, to mark him/her absent:



- Continue to click in the “A” radio button for all students who were absent. When you are done, scroll down to the bottom of the page, and click on the **Save attendance** button to save your changes.
- The “Attendance for the course” page will re-appear. In the “Actions” column at the far right, in the row for the day for which you took attendance, the icon you clicked on to take attendance will now look like a green arrow, which you could click on later if you need to make changes:



- You can use the bread-crum trail again to return to the main page for your course.