

A blurred photograph of a classroom. A male teacher in a dark suit stands at the front, gesturing towards a whiteboard. Students are seated at wooden desks, viewed from behind. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a modern educational environment.

Considering implementing a digital attendance monitoring system?

Here's what you need to know.

Introduction

How will this guide help you?

With the rise of blended learning and students being taught and studying both face-to-face on-campus and online, traditional attendance capturing systems no longer align with an institution's requirements.

This guide looks at some of the common objections to implementing both a traditional and digital attendance system and highlights some of the key benefits which counteract those objections. The guide also runs through key success factors you should be considering and how York St John University have rolled out myday Attendance as their digital attendance system – highlighting the huge success of that project. Finally, there's some technical product information about myday Attendance which should contribute to your strategy and overall architecture.

We hope you find this guide useful but don't hesitate to contact us to discuss how your institution and students can benefit from a digital attendance management system.

Common objections to attendance management

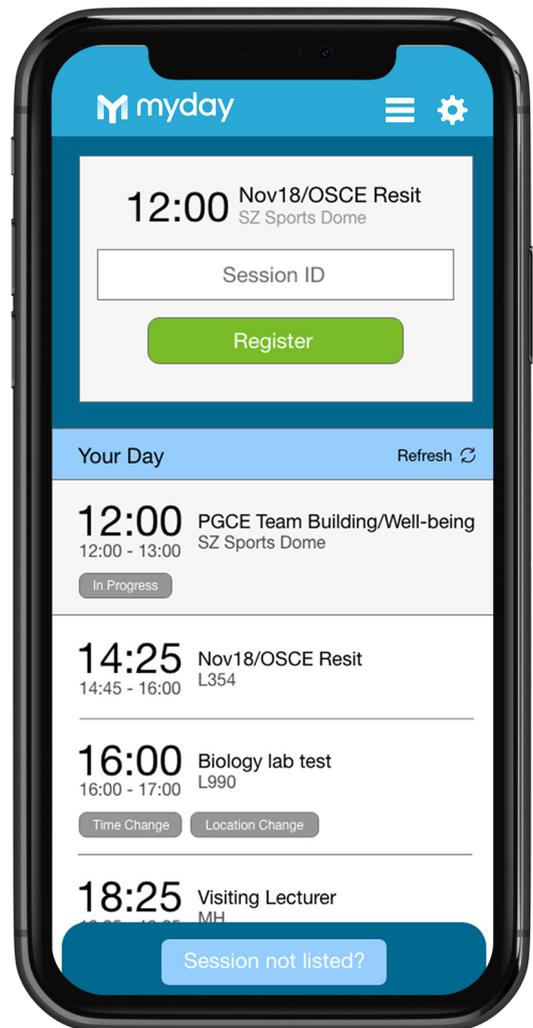
- Takes time away from teaching if a manual register needs to be taken or late-comers need to be added to the register.
- Manual registers can be onerous for teaching staff to complete, as well as requiring additional time to follow up with unauthorised absences.
- Legacy systems can be open to abuse. Students can give their friends their student ID cards and not attend the session although the card reader will have recorded their attendance.
- Academics may feel like they are being monitored by proxy.
- Students can feel like they are being monitored and are not trusted to take responsibility for their learning.
- Data is often held in unsafe, outdated, and unmaintained systems leading to potential data breaches and unnecessary risk to personal data.
- Traditional methods of recording attendance are not flexible or adaptable to change such as the shift to blended learning.
- Attendance systems are perceived as taking a long time and being difficult to set-up and once installed, either expensive to change or unable to be adapted.

Key benefits of myday's digital Attendance system

Problem statement	Key Benefits of a digital system
The impact of losing a first year student, is not only the loss of fee income over the course of the degree but also the effect on university rankings and student satisfaction scores	Track engagement and identify disengagement early via a digital attendance system utilising rich Analytics, therefore being able to intervene and retain
Current systems don't allow for identifying at-risk students and for pro-active engagement	Digital Analytics allows for identification of at-risk students, to spot patterns and engage early
Compliance with legal and regulatory requirements to track attendance for UKVI and PRSB compliance	A digital system has many validation methods and allows for both primary and secondary validation of data across all session types. Digital attendance systems like myday offer a rich Analytics platform as well as being a compliant (audited) solution
Students need systems and tools which give them ownership and control, enabling them to take complete responsibility for their learning	Gives students personal reporting dashboard so they can see their own attendance and be able to take responsibility for their own academic success
Attendance policies are often unique to departments, faculties and schools and need to be standardised to ensure consistency in reporting and student experience	Single unified and centrally managed policies and central enforcement tool with flexibility e.g. Professional programmes and apprenticeships – peace of mind for senior leaders and those accountable for the courses
Monitoring attendance across both physical and digital teaching sessions is very difficult and often not possible to do in a consistent, reliable, and efficient way	Capturing attendance can be completely standardised across all session types and reported on in a consistent and reliable manner. Driving both efficiency and effectiveness of the reporting
Attendance data must be reliable with a high degree of accuracy	Multiple digital validation methods ensures data integrity without any expensive additional systems or hardware
The shift to blended learning has rendered traditional attendance monitoring hardware systems useless when most students are not on-campus	Digital systems are available regardless of the physical location of the session. They work on-campus and off-campus capturing attendance data across a large variety of session types including lecture, seminar, lab work, workplace, field trips, and many more
Valuable learning spaces are under-utilised as bookings are not cancelled at the last minute but can't be monitored and assessed for actual usage	Assists with resource utilisation reporting. Room availability information is at your fingertips therefore resources are more efficiently and effectively used and able to be reported on and optimised
The institution has invested in attendance monitoring hardware which easily becomes outdated	A digital attendance monitoring system has multiple uses, for example, it could be used to assist with track and trace policies, monitor resource utilisation and monitor academic compliance. A digital system has a roadmap of validated features and is fully maintained and supported throughout its lifecycle

Success Factors

- A successful attendance management system needs to be flexible and easy to implement and have the ability to be adopted rapidly by both students and teaching staff.
- The chosen system needs to be able to capture attendance anywhere, anytime – whether that's physically on-campus or virtually.
- The system needs to be easy to use and intuitive and not reliant on third party tools such as student cards. It should be where your students spend most of their time, on their digital devices.
- Data should be easy to consume and understand – implementing an attendance monitoring system helps create a powerful retention and engagement strategy – leading to increased insight into the student journey.
- An effective attendance management system helps your institution succeed in complementary areas, helping you to improve your data and local processes for example.



- ✓ Support student outcomes
- ✓ Improves student engagement
- ✓ Fully GDPR compliant



Code inputted into myday Attendance app



Attendance code displayed for students



Attendance Captured and logged

York St John case study

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UNIVERSITY

York St John University rolled out myday Attendance capture and management in their myday app and portal 'myYSJ.' In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic attendance capture was required to be in place by the start of the university term for both online and face to face teaching.

myday Attendance capture replaced a physical tap-in system using RFID. Queues formed outside university rooms as students waited to check themselves in and the system obviously wasn't suitable for online teaching. The back-office software Connect can continue to capture data from hardware systems as a secondary validation option, if required.

The system is used for session attendance capture and reporting and absence management. Students self-register via a code displayed in their session but attendance can also be taken manually by the session leader. It's very easy and straightforward for the students to use and doesn't rely on them having a smartphone (although 99% of students do) as it can also be used on the browser dashboard.

Attendance capture integration with myYSJ helps the university to capitalise on the myday app adoption as it is now mandatory for all students to record their attendance. This means the app is ubiquitously used across the university. This has prompted the university to plan future developments to fully utilise the platform and plan new additions.

The majority of changes to sessions are driven through the timetabling system. However, the system does allow YSJ to make short-term changes to sessions such as:



Edit or
View Register



Edit
Date/Time



Edit
Location(s)



Edit
Academic or
Course Leader



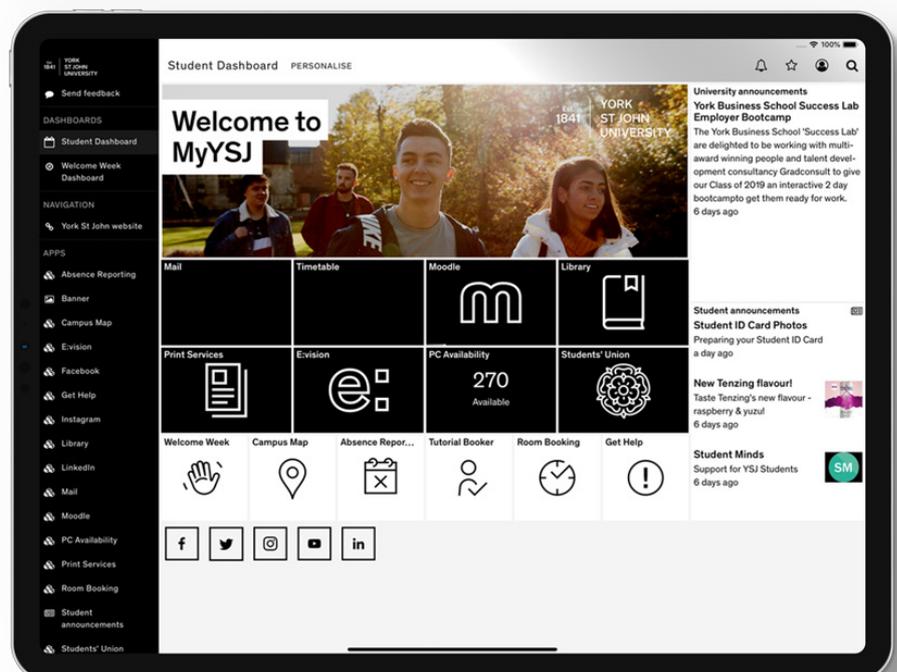
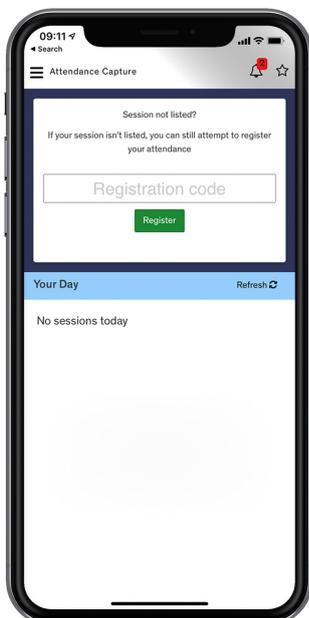
Edit
Student(s)



Edit Session
Type



Cancel
Session



York St John case study

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Effective absence management is key to the integrity of attendance data. myday Attendance allows the institution to define any number of absence types and decide whether that absence type is part of their overall attendance calculation or not. An administrator can also retrospectively review unauthorised absences and update.

Data

- ✓ Available to download data to Excel
- ✓ Open to third party tools and Power BI

“The most flexible, easy to implement HE attendance monitoring system.”

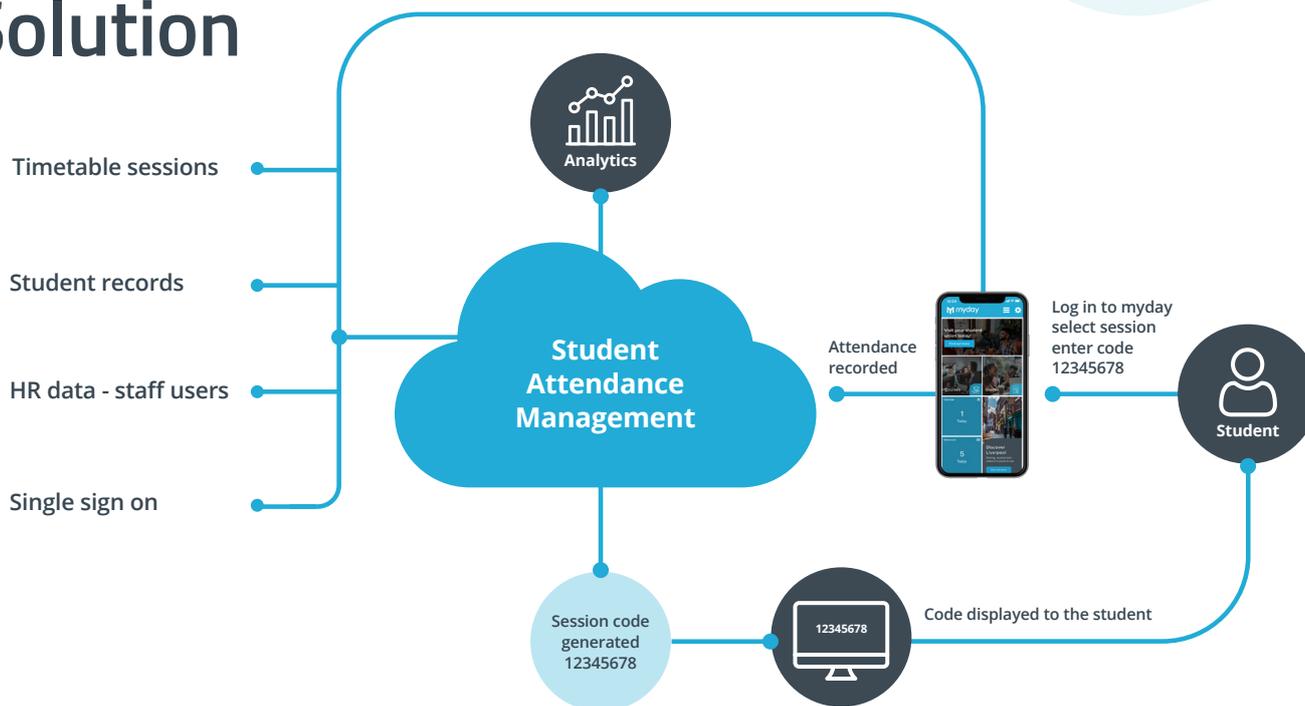
“We needed an attendance system in place for the start of term [September 2020] to capture both online sessions as well as face to face. It was all-hands on deck to make it happen in the 6-week time-frame we had, but we achieved it and it's a successful project thanks to the product being easy and straightforward to use. To help us capitalise on the MyYSJ platform [web and app] - all students are able to register attendance online so we have ubiquitous blanket usage across the institution. As a result of this we have seen increased engagement with other MyYSJ resources. Whilst the platform has replaced the legacy RFID capture system it still allows for staff to take manual registers and make changes, to ensure the integrity of our data.”

- Phil Vincent, Applications and TEL Manager, York St John University

Which stakeholders need to be involved/brought on board?

- Academics to understand the challenges they face
- Business system owners to identify and resolve data issues
- Faculty Administrators to support students and manage the student attendance
- Communications teams to support the project rollout

The Technical Solution



Learn more about myday at
myday.collabco.com

please call **0800 048 9515**
or email sales@collabco.com

Collecting the data

The process is as simple and easy to use to ensure the integrity of the data. Whilst the system is technology agnostic i.e. A student ID can be obtained from any hardware source e.g. RFID, bar code, NFC, Bluetooth Beacon etc. the optimal and most cost-effective choice is for the student to self-register via myday.

Collecting the Data

From the myday app students can see what sessions they are timetabled for that day. The student selects the session and is asked to enter a code to self-register. The code is provided by the Academic and is unique to that session. This can also dynamically change if required. Once the student enters the code they are shown as being present at that academic session. The academic or administrator always has the capability to override if required.

Academic Driven

In the instance of a student not having access to a smart phone the academic can also take attendance via the application by marking students as present, absent, or late. This can be done via laptop, tablet, or mobile device.

Secondary validation

myday Attendance allows the academic or administration staff to validate all student entered attendance data using several different options including GPS data, other system participation or registration data and in-lecture marking. These options can be undertaken at any time and in real-time to ensure the integrity of the data.

Session Data

The software has been designed to make not only the collection of data simple but the administration of the process as user friendly as possible.

Time Stamped

When a student is marked as present, the 'booking' is date and time stamped and the user definable settings determine if that is late or absent.

- A student can register before a session starts depending on user setting.
- Students who are not expected on the session can also register. That attendance is marked as present but not expected.
- If a student has an authorised absence this will show up on the register for the academic to view with the reason for the absence.