



## JISC RSC Scotland South & West Case Study @ South Lanarkshire College

<p><b>Case study title</b></p>	<p><b>Electronic Attendance System</b></p>
<p><b>Summary</b></p>	<p>The attendance system at South Lanarkshire College (SLC) is a combination of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Honeywell Winpak - Access System for recording attendance transactions.</li> <li>2. Tribal - SITS Vision Student Records System, which records student enrolment.</li> <li>3. Novell Identity Management - which provisions the cards from the data in the student records system to the Winpak System.</li> <li>4. An in-house software development links all three of the above databases together and writes the 'confirmed' transactions to the attendance database.</li> </ol> <p>By tying all these processes together, the e-Attendance Systems allows SLC the ability to create verified attendance reports. These reports are generated and used internally to provide information to inform the Bursary processes. Reports are also created and sent to external agencies such as Construction Skills, Employers and schools as required.</p>
<p><b>About South Lanarkshire College</b></p>	<p>Formerly spread across three campuses in Cambuslang and East Kilbride, the College marked its 60th anniversary In March 2008 with a move into the new £35m State of the art learning facilities and resources in the Scottish Enterprise Technology Park in East Kilbride. This exciting new campus offers the very best student learning resources in a bright, modern learning environment. A wide range of full time and part time vocational and leisure courses can be studied in East Kilbride or in the outreach classes which are delivered in local and rural areas.</p>

<p><b>The challenge</b></p>	<p>The learner population of the College is largely comprised of students who are in receipt of some form of funding or on day release where there is a requirement on the college to produce accurate and timely reports for funders, employers, schools or stakeholders. Most students fall into one or more of the following groups, all of whom require attendance statistics prior to releasing funding or other entitlement to students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employed and are on day release</li> <li>• On taster sessions from school</li> <li>• Funded by national bodies or federations</li> <li>• Recipients of Bursaries/hardship loans/child support/travel fund and Education Maintenance Allowance</li> <li>• Overseas students on a student visa</li> </ul> <p>The challenge for the College was to devise an automated system that would provide weekly reports to external agencies e.g. Construction Skills, Employers &amp; Schools and internally provide information to inform the Bursary processes. SLC ran the old paper based attendance recording system in parallel with the online system for a year, but now they are fully electronic.</p>
<p><b>The activity</b></p>	<p>The Electronic Attendance System that is now fully employed by South Lanarkshire College came about as the result of considerable consultation within the College and the support and encouragement from Senior Management. A working group was set up at the outset with members comprising of staff from each of the 3 Faculties - Business, Care and Construction (4 or 5 representatives because it affected them more). Also in the working group were staff from Student Services, Funding (Bursary), Information Systems &amp; Support Manager, Linda Young and Depute Principal Angus Allan.</p> <p>Meetings were held weekly for 18 months and worked really well, engaging staff in the design and roll out processes. Some meetings were only 15 minutes while others lasted over an hour, depending on need. In addition to excellent consultation and communication, priority was given to staff information sessions and training in the system. Each of the 3 faculties had the availability of 1 on 1 or small groups training during system roll out.</p> <p>As a result of this on-going collaboration and consultation, the Electronic Attendance System at SLC is a custom made solution, tailored to suit staff across the college. This bespoke system created in-house by Linda Young and her Information Systems &amp; Support team, links several databases and records student</p>

attendance while also providing a vital reporting facility from the data gathered.

Using a swipe card system of “Human Interface Device” (HID) proximity cards from Honeywell, this system is able to identify staff and students and allow appropriate access throughout the college. From swipe entry to the car park, swipe access to corridors and to classrooms this linked system effectively tracks and records the movement of staff and students on campus from arrival to departure.

Card readers are positioned at doorways that lead into corridors and near the lecturer’s desk in each classroom. The onus is on the student to swipe their cards as they arrive at class to record their attendance while lecturers are responsible for confirming the student’s attendance or absence on the system. There are different codes used for noting students on work placement, arriving early/late, absent or on directed study leave.

The system covers the curriculum management and attendance modules. At the start of a class, lecturers log into the system and have limited access to student records, in keeping with Data Protection policy. Students’ pictures are on the screen at attendance and serve as a visual check that the person who swiped is indeed the student in the room.

**Bursary & Finance payments are triggered by:**

- 1) Register transactions – student swipes card
- 2) Lecturers confirm on the system that the student is in class and can visually confirm from swipe and student photo on system
- 3) When confirmed the notice goes to bursary and the student gets paid. The record is then locked and no changes made.

**Recording of student location and room allocation:**

The system records time & location when swiped pinpointing a student’s location when in class. This has been useful for contacting students in an emergency. In the event of a fire, records would be available of how many students were in certain parts of the building at any given time. A spin off from this system is that it is also a record of room utilization and may allow for better use of labs and rooms available.

**Automated withdrawal process or early warning:**

SLC are looking to use results from their e-Attendance System as a possible early warning detection to reduce student drop out. The system could be tweaked to flag up students with poor attendance for early intervention and hopefully this will reduce levels of early dropout.

**UK Borders Agency:**

The College provides reports to UK Borders Agency and there had been some discussion regarding using this system for early detection of overseas students not attending class who are on a student visa.

**Time keeping records for ESF funded staff:**

The College are looking to use the time keeping information on the system as evidence for ESF funded courses. Transactions of staff on the system could be tracked and a report generated as evidence that staff were in that class, at that time. This would ease the amount of paperwork required for ESF funded course and would be much simpler to execute.

**Weekly Attendance Reports are generated for:**

**Employers:** Require attendance information on students including late card, employment attendance, class attendance, comments, late back from break.

**Construction Skills Training Board (CITB):** Report required for funded students - attendance record spreadsheet for the week is generated for construction skills.

**Schools:** Students come in from local feeder schools (Calderglen, Duncanrig, Cardinal Newman High etc.) and attendance records are essential.

**End of Session Reports are generated for:**

Possible/Actual/Percentage attendance reports for the entire session are created and are sent to:

- Construction Skill
- Employers
- UK Borders Agency for international students
- Scottish & Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation (SNIPEF).
- Bursary Report – export to Excel to make bursary payments – child support/hardship funds/travel fund/EMA (Education Maintenance Allowance)
- Students get a record of their attendance for the year.

The speed and accuracy of generating reports has won over even the most technophobic of lecturers in the college. Time consuming paper based recording systems have been replaced by one integrated system that can create attendance and time keeping records for each individual student throughout the year and allows for other information to be added. These may be notes of approved

<b>The outcomes</b>	<p>absence, poor time keeping, late back from breaks etc. These details are required by employers, funders and schools and often had to be recorded and reported each week for individual students and supplied to the various external bodies. They can now be produced and sent in a fraction of the time by the lecturer using the reporting facility on the system.</p> <p>Next academic term: The college is looking at allowing students web portal access which will show students their own records, subjects, results and attendance. Any errors in timetabling or credit will be picked up by the students and reported back to ensure they are in the right course with the correct course code and any errors or omissions on the system will be quickly rectified. In addition, students will be able to access to their own e-portfolio of work throughout the year. At present students are given a DVD at the end of the year with all their materials on it, instead of a massive folder of evidence. This coming academic year it will all be stored digitally by the college and students will be able to access their portfolio whenever they choose. SLC invested in solid state disc storage which is widely considered to assure storage is “future proof”.</p>
<b>Useful links</b>	<p><a href="http://www.south-lanarkshire-college.ac.uk">www.south-lanarkshire-college.ac.uk</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.rsc-sw-scotland.ac.uk/best_of_the_west/BoW.htm">www.rsc-sw-scotland.ac.uk/best_of_the_west/BoW.htm</a></p>
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