



James Cook University

Digitizing attendance and access for
compliance and convenience



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Located in the heart of Singapore, James Cook University (JCU) is a branch of the Australian university and is known for its strong international programs. With more than 75% of its student body comprised of international students, JCU Singapore must comply with strict government regulations that mandate daily attendance tracking to maintain visa and accreditation requirements.

"We're not just tracking attendance for academic requirements. For many students, their visa and academic future are directly tied to these records," explains Hari Sampath, Senior Manager for Software Applications at JCU.

But as their campus expands, so does their need for solutions that meet their growing needs.

A history of innovation

In 2013, the team replaced manual, paper-based tracking with biometric fingerprint readers to improve accuracy and reduce proxy sign-ins. But after years of use and the arrival of COVID-19, the contact-based system became unreliable and unsuitable due to hygiene concerns, audit delays, and proxy attendance.

"We needed to move away from touch-based systems, especially post-COVID," says Hari. "Gallagher offered the contactless, real-time data and central control we were looking for."

The Business Value

JCU Singapore selected Gallagher for its ability to deliver a simple yet powerful solution to a complex challenge — managing attendance and access control in a high-compliance environment. With thousands of students and staff accessing various facilities daily, the university required a system that could reduce administrative overhead, ensure real-time data visibility, and support future growth. The decision to implement Gallagher wasn't just about replacing outdated technology; it was about choosing a system that aligned with the university values of innovation, accountability, and student success.

Smart technology, seamless transition

With minimal disruption to their existing infrastructure, JCU Singapore installed Gallagher's C7000 Single Door Controllers and T15 readers across the campus. Students now use the readers to check in on campus, in classrooms, and in shared spaces such as cafeterias and study hubs. Attendance is synced in real-time to JCU's custom-built portal, enabling administrators and faculty to access reports by the hour rather than the day.



“

What excites us is the ability to expand. Whether it's lockers or syncing credentials between Singapore and Australia, Gallagher gives us the foundation to keep growing.

”

Rengalakshmi Sivabalan, James Cook University,
Assistant Manager for Infrastructure Support

In just two months of post-rollout, the university issued over 4,000 mobile credentials, enabling seamless digital identification and reducing reliance on physical ID cards.

The Gallagher readers have achieved an impressive 99.98% availability, ensuring near-continuous access for students and staff across all monitored entry points.

“It used to be a painful, manual process. Now, attendance processing that took a day can be done every hour,” Hari says. “If there’s an issue with a reader, Command Centre alerts us immediately. We don’t have to wait for an email - everything is visible in one place.”

Beyond attendance: smarter campus access

Gallagher’s flexibility supports more than just attendance. Mobile credentials now give students and faculty digital ID verification, helping lecturers confirm student identity with confidence. Temporary access is also streamlined for visiting faculty and part-time lecturers, a group that numbers around 100 each trimester.

“We use Gallagher to restrict access to the gym, faculty lounges, and other sensitive areas,” adds Assistant Manager for Infrastructure Support, Rengalakshmi Sivabalan. “It helps ensure that people only go where they’re authorized.”

Critical for compliance

The shift to digital attendance is more than operational - it’s essential to JCU’s accreditation. As a private institution, the university is subject to rigorous audits under Singapore’s EduTrust certification. Gallagher’s integration with JCU’s in-house system enables

timely alerts when students fall below required attendance thresholds, allowing the university to take proactive action. Since implementing the new system, attendance-related support tickets have dropped by 40%, demonstrating increased system reliability and reduced maintenance burden that helps improve attendance team’s work efficiency by helping them focus more on student engagement and success.

“We send warning letters automatically if students drop below 75%,” says Hari. “Also, we can easily demonstrate attendance, pull records for audits, or even assist with police investigations when needed.”

Looking forward

The Gallagher platform has already proven reliable, with virtually no teething issues during rollout. Looking ahead, JCU is exploring additional use cases such as locker management and seamless staff credentialing across international campuses.

“What excites us is the ability to expand,” says Rengalakshmi. “Whether it’s lockers or syncing credentials between Singapore and Australia, Gallagher gives us the foundation to keep growing.”

Fast facts

Industry: Education

Business type: University

Number of employees: 120

Number of students: 3500+

Site size: 1 campus

Number of readers: 100



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