

Annex M: Mode of study

This annex explains how to determine for the purposes of the Higher Education in Further Education: Students survey 2014-15 (HEIFES14) the mode of study for a year of programme of study (full-time, sandwich year-out or part-time), including guidance on how to treat learning in the workplace and work experience when determining mode of study. In general, all students on a given course with a broadly similar pattern of activity, for a given year of programme of study, should be recorded as having the same mode.

Full-time

1. A year of programme of study is counted as full-time if it meets **all** of the following criteria:
 - a. The student is normally required to attend the college, or elsewhere, for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks within the year of programme of study; and during that time they are normally expected to undertake periods of study, tuition, learning in the workplace or sandwich work placement that does not meet the criteria to be sandwich year-out, which amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week. (Guided learning hours should not be used in isolation to determine how many hours each week a student spends studying. All guided learning hours count towards this total, but it is expected that higher education students will spend a significant amount of time each week in self-led individual learning, and an estimate of this time should also be included.)
 - b. Full-time fees are chargeable for the course for the year. These include the following.
 - i. Regulated fees of up to £9,000 (or £6,000 for colleges without a relevant access agreement with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) for undergraduates and postgraduate initial teacher training students who are '2012 cohort students'.
 - ii. Regulated fees of up to £3,465 (£1,380 for institutions without a relevant OFFA access agreement or students treated as starting prior to 2006-07) for undergraduates and postgraduate initial teacher training students who are not '2012 cohort students'.
 - iii. Regulated fees of up to £1,725 (£680 for institutions without a relevant OFFA access agreement or students treated as starting prior to 2006-07) for undergraduates on courses provided in conjunction with overseas institutions that are not taken under the Erasmus+ programme, where study at the home college is for less than 10 weeks, and who are not '2012 cohort students'.
 - iv. Regulated £0 for undergraduates on outgoing Erasmus+ years abroad who are not '2012 cohort students'.

- v. Regulated fees of up to £1,350 (£900 for institutions without a relevant OFFA access agreement) for undergraduates who are '2012 cohort students' on courses provided with overseas institutions (whether or not taken under the Erasmus+ programme) where study at the home institution is for less than 10 weeks.

For the purposes of these criteria, a full-time year abroad and Erasmus+ years are defined in Annex P. '2012 cohort students' is defined in the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 (SI 2011 No. 1986) as amended. In broad terms, '2012 cohort students' are those who entered from 2012-13.

2. Exceptionally, all or part of the fee may be waived for individual students based on their particular personal rather than course-related circumstances. This does not include cases where fees are reduced because students are studying less intensively than is normally expected for a full-time student. It should not be waived for all students on a course, and the criteria that determine whether fees may be waived should not be tantamount to waiving the fee for all students.

3. The full-time category includes all full-time, sandwich and year-abroad students, other than those falling within the definition of 'sandwich year-out' given below.

Sandwich year-out

4. A year of programme of study is counted as sandwich year-out if the programme of study includes a period of work-based experience and meets the following criteria.

- a. The course falls within the definition of a 'sandwich' course in Regulation 2 (10) of the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 (SI 2011 No. 1986), as amended or is an Erasmus+ year abroad spent working.
- b. It is a year of programme of study:
 - i. During which any periods of full-time study are in aggregate less than 10 weeks; or
 - ii. For which, in respect of that year of programme of study and any previous year(s) of programme of study, the aggregate of any one or more periods of attendance which are not periods of full-time study at the institution (disregarding intervening vacations) exceeds 30 weeks.
- c. A reduced fee is chargeable for the course for the year, compared with what would be chargeable if the student were studying full-time in the year. For undergraduate students subject to regulated tuition fees, these reduced fees are as follows.
 - i. Regulated £0, for undergraduates on outgoing Erasmus+ years abroad who are not '2012 cohort students'.
 - ii. Regulated fees of up to £1,800 (£1,200 for institutions without a relevant OFFA access agreement) for undergraduates who are '2012 cohort students' on sandwich years-out that are not Erasmus+ whole years abroad.

- iii. Regulated fees of up to £1,350 (£900 for institutions without a relevant OFFA access agreement) for undergraduates who are '2012 cohort students' and are on outgoing Erasmus+ years abroad.
- iv. Regulated fees of up to £1,725 (£680 for institutions without a relevant OFFA access agreement or students treated as starting prior to 2006-07) for undergraduates on sandwich years-out that are not Erasmus+ years abroad and who are not '2012 cohort students'.

For the purposes of these criteria, a sandwich year-out year abroad and Erasmus+ years are defined in Annex P. '2012 cohort students' is defined in the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 (SI 2011 No. 1986) as amended and in broad terms means students who entered from 2012-13 onwards.

5. Students spending a full year abroad working, including under the Erasmus scheme, should be returned as sandwich year-out. This includes students under the British Council's Language Assistant scheme.

Part-time

6. A student is counted as part-time if the year of programme of study does not meet the requirements to be either full-time or a sandwich year-out. This includes Higher National Certificate (HNC) students who are expected to complete in one year, but whose course is not subject to full-time regulated fees and student support.

Part-time students in receipt of full-time student support

7. Within the part-time category, there is a sub-category, 'part-time students in receipt of full-time student support'. In this context, full-time student support refers to eligibility for both a full-time tuition fee loan and grant or loan support for maintenance. The sub-category does not, therefore, apply to students on full-time distance learning courses who, under the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 (SI 2011 No. 1986), as amended, are not eligible for maintenance support. For HEIFES Tables 1 to 5, this sub-category should be reported in exactly the same way as all other part-time students. However, this sub-category should be included in HEIFES Table 6 alongside full-time students, when they meet the criteria for inclusion in that table. They should not be included if they were studying for at least two weeks as HEFCE-fundable or employer co-funded full-time undergraduates of the college in either 2012-13 or 2013-14.

8. Part-time students may receive full-time student support when a year of programme of study does not meet the HEIFES attendance requirement to be full-time, but the student is nevertheless still subject to full-time regulated fees and maintenance loans or grants, because of the following circumstances.

- a. They are on a designated full-time course and are returning after intermission, where their year of programme of study does not involve attendance of 24 weeks or more. Such students should not, however, be included in Table 6 if they were studying for at least two weeks as HEFCE-fundable or employer co-funded full-time undergraduates of the college in either 2012-13 or 2013-14 (before their intermission). Where a full-time student intermits after the commencement of a year of programme of study, their mode of study for that year will still be full-time

(but they will commonly be a non-completion, depending on whether, despite the intermission, they have undergone all the final assessments for the year in accordance with the completion definition in [Annex I](#)).

b. They are on a designated full-time course and are repeating part of it on a part-time basis for a year of programme of study, or are otherwise temporarily switching to part-time study while still claiming full-time student support. Such students should not be included in Table 6 if they were studying for at least two weeks as HEFCE-fundable or employer co-funded full-time undergraduates of the college in either 2012-13 or 2013-14.

c. They are attending the final year of a designated full-time course which is ordinarily completed in less than 24 weeks. Such students should not be included in Table 6, if they were studying as HEFCE-fundable or employer co-funded full-time undergraduates of the college in either 2012-13 or 2013-14.

d. They do not meet the HEIFES attendance requirement to be full-time given in paragraph 1a, but are treated as full-time for student support purposes, reflecting the fact that there are some differences between the HEIFES definition and the student support guidance on full-time status. Any such undergraduate students should be included in Table 6 **only** if they were not students of the college in either 2012-13 or 2013-14 studying for at least two weeks as HEFCE-fundable or employer co-funded full-time undergraduates, or as part-time undergraduates in receipt of full-time student support.

Additional guidance on mode of study

9. In some cases a student's mode of study changes between years. For example, the mode of a student on a full-time 18-month course would change from full-time in year one to part-time in year two, if the second year does not have 24 weeks of study.

Students who change from full-time to part-time within a year of programme of study

10. Where full-time students change mode within a year of programme of study to become part-time, the year of programme of study should be recorded as part-time only. This applies only when the student continues to study actively on their year of programme of study, where there is a formal process for agreeing the change in mode, including confirmation by the student and a recalculation of their tuition fee to reflect their part-time status. It may also result in the student losing entitlement to full-time student support. Their full-time equivalence (FTE) should be calculated in the usual way, by comparison with the equivalent full-time course. Students should not be excluded from Table 6 solely on the basis that they have changed from full-time to part-time (see [Annex H](#), paragraph 25 and [Annex I](#), paragraph 2a).

Example 1

11. A student starts off as full-time but changes to part-time in the second term of a year of programme of study, studying at the same rate as a part-time student with an FTE of 0.5 per year of programme of study. They should be returned in the part-time table with an FTE of 0.67. This is made up of 0.33 for the first term and $0.5 \div 3 = 0.17$ for each of the second and third terms, equalling 0.67 in total for the year of programme of study. More guidance on assigning FTE for part-time years of programme of study is given in [Annex J](#). Depending on the circumstances, particularly if this was the first year of programme of study on an undergraduate programme, the year of programme of study may still need to be included on Table 6, because more than two weeks of full-time study were completed.

Treatment of learning in the workplace and work experience for the purposes of determining mode of study

12. For the purposes of meeting the attendance definition for a full-time course, full-time study can include learning in the workplace, where this is a course requirement. Such learning is frequently a feature of foundation degrees and may also occur in other programmes. Learning in the workplace is a structured academic programme, controlled by the higher or further education institution, and delivered in the workplace by academic staff of the college, staff of the employer, or both.

13. Unlike work experience, which is one element of a course such as a sandwich placement (whether for all or part of a year), learning in the workplace is at the heart of a student's learning programme and must be subject to the same level of academic supervision and rigour as any other form of assessed learning. It includes:

- the imparting of relevant knowledge and skills to students
- opportunities for students to discuss knowledge and skills with their tutors
- assessment of students' acquisition of knowledge and skills by the institution's academic staff, perhaps jointly with an employer.

14. Learning in the workplace should be regarded as substituting for learning that under other circumstances would normally take place within the institution. The inclusion of an element of learning in the workplace should not, therefore, extend the normal duration of a course.

15. Institutions should note paragraph 3 of [Annex O](#), which states that if the year of programme of study is 45 weeks or more in length because of a period of work-based study, then the year of programme of study is not counted as long. This applies to learning in the workplace and work experience. Sandwich years-out cannot therefore be recorded as long, nor would we generally expect foundation degrees to be recorded as long.

Good practice

Recording the mode of attendance if a student is only active for part of a year

16. In general, where a student plans to study at a full-time rate for a portion of the year – for example only for the first semester – they will be part-time, even though they are ‘full-time’ for that period of study. The mode of attendance must be established with reference to the intended activity for the whole year of programme of study.

17. Students who are on a full-time programme, but because of accredited prior learning are studying at a part-time rate, should be returned as part-time.