

Annex H: Counting student activity

This annex gives the definition of a year of programme of study and explains how to count them in HEIFES14. The way years of programme of study are counted differs between Table 6 (for student number control purposes) and all other tables. This annex includes the criteria for being able to count a year of programme of study in HEIFES14, the definition of standard and non-standard years of programme of study, a flow chart to aid with determining how years of programme of study should be counted, and guidance on counting some short courses that are sometimes known as 'summer schools'.

What is a year of programme of study?

1. Students study towards qualifications over a period of time. This period can be split into one or more years of programme of study. The first year begins when the student starts studying towards the qualification; the second and subsequent years start on or near the anniversary of this date (allowing for minor variations in term dates).
2. A student may only be returned on HEIFES once for each year of programme of study they undertake. This is referred to as counting years of programme of study. When a student becomes countable on HEIFES depends on how their activity falls within each year of programme of study.

Further notes on years of programme of study

3. Exceptionally, a student may be on two courses at the same time, aiming for two independent recognised HE qualifications. If this is the case, the student should be treated as if they were two students, each aiming for one of the qualifications.
4. Where a student completes a foundation degree and then undertakes a foundation degree bridging course to enable them to join the final year of an honours degree, the foundation degree bridging course should be treated as an independent course which will generate its own year of programme of study as explained in paragraphs 47 and 48 of this annex.

Counting years of programme of study

5. To be counted, a student within the HEIFES14 student population must also meet all the following criteria.
 - a. A tuition fee is charged for the year of programme of study. Exceptionally, this fee may be waived for individual students based on their particular circumstances. It should not be waived for all students on a course, and the criteria which determine whether the fees may be waived should not be tantamount to waiving them for all students.
 - b. The full-time equivalence (FTE) for the year of programme of study is at least 0.03.
 - c. The student is not writing up a thesis or similar piece of work for the whole of the year of programme of study. Students are writing up where they have

completed their research work and will not undertake any significant additional research. It is common practice for such students to receive a small amount of supervision, and they may still have access to other facilities at the institution. However, such students should still be treated as writing up.

d. The student has not withdrawn, and is not forecast to withdraw, within two weeks of starting their programme of study.

6. In some cases a fee may not be charged in the current year because a fee for the activity has already been paid in a previous year. This should not be treated as a fee waiver; rather, the student should be treated as having been charged a fee for the year.

Good practice

Written evidence of fee waivers

7. Where the fee has been waived for an individual student, evidence of the reason for this waiver must be retained.

Removing duplicate records

8. Data held on the student record system should be reviewed before they are extracted for the return, to check for duplicate records. This should be normal practice throughout the year, particularly when new student records are being set up on the system. Exceptionally, there may be genuine reasons why a student has two records, and these will need to be established. Where it is not correct for a student to have two records, the student record system should be amended at the earliest opportunity.

How to count years of programme of study in Tables 1 to 5

9. The guidance in paragraphs 10 to 16 of this annex applies to Tables 1 to 5 **only**. For guidance on how to count years of programme of study in Table 6, see paragraphs 21 to 38.

10. If a student has withdrawn from their year of programme of study on or before 1 November 2014, their year of programme of study should not be returned.

11. For students in the HEIFES14 student population, there are two types of year of programme of study: standard and non-standard.

a. A **standard year** is one where all activity for the year of programme of study is entirely within one academic year (1 August to 31 July). Most undergraduate students are on standard years of programme of study.

b. A **non-standard year** is one where all activity for the year of programme of study is **not** entirely within one academic year – that is, where the activity for the year of programme of study crosses from one academic year into the next.

Students whose years of programme of study are normally standard but who in one year undertake a period of work experience should not be treated as non-standard solely because the work experience spans academic years.

12. In both standard and non-standard years of programme of study, students become countable at the start of each year of programme of study. The FTE returned should be the FTE for the whole year of programme of study.

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- a. For students on standard years of programme of study, the FTE for the whole year of programme of study will usually be the same as the FTE for the academic year.
- b. For students on non-standard years of programme of study, the FTE for the whole year of programme of study will not necessarily be the same as the FTE for the academic year. The final academic year during which the student is active will not usually generate a countable year of programme of study. It will do so, however, if a student undertakes a short period of activity after the anniversary of their commencement date and that activity ends in the same academic year.

The flow diagram in Figure H1 can be used to determine whether or not a year of programme of study should be counted in HESES14 Tables 1 to 5, and if so, whether it should be returned in Column 1 or 2 of Tables 1 to 3.

Example 1

13. A student starts a degree programme on 22 September 2014, with each year of the course finishing at the end of June. The student becomes countable on 22 September 2014 and, depending on when the activity for the year starts, on or around the anniversary of this date each subsequent year.

Example 2

14. A full-time student starts a degree programme in January 2015 and the first year of the course finishes in November 2015. This student would be included in Column 2 of Table 1 in HEIFES14 for their first year of programme of study, and similarly in Column 2 of subsequent HEIFES returns as they continue their studies.

Example 3

15. A full-time Higher National Diploma (HND) course starts on 6 October 2014 and runs from 6 October to 30 June each year. A student starts the HND programme late, on 3 November 2014, but intends to catch up with the rest of the students on the course and follow the same pattern of activity as them. That student's year of programme of study starts on 3 November 2014 and on the anniversary of that date in subsequent years. The student should be included in Column 2 of Table 1 in each year.

Example 4

16. A full-time student starts in September 2014 intending to study eight modules before June 2015. At the end of the first semester in February 2015, having completed four modules, they interrupt the course and return 12 months later to complete the remaining four modules by June 2016. The first year of programme of study becomes countable in September 2014 and is therefore returned in Column 1 of Table 1 of HEIFES14. The data entered in Column 3 of Table 1 of HEIFES14 should reflect a forecast of such students entered in Column 1 or 2 who will intermit (and therefore non-complete) after 1 November 2014. The second year of programme of study becomes countable at the start of the year of programme of study in September 2015 (and not in February 2016 when the student returns), and is therefore returned in Column 1 of Table 3 of HEIFES15 (because the activity in this second year of programme of study does not meet the criteria to be classed as full-time as set out in paragraph 1 of Annex M).

New entrants

17. For Table 5, students should be classed as new entrants when they first generate a countable year for the programme of study and have not been active at the same broad level (undergraduate or postgraduate) at the institution in either of the two previous academic years. Students repeating the first year of a course should not therefore be included as new entrants, whereas those entering directly into the second or later year of a course could be. The definition of new entrants in Table 5 differs from the definition of the population counted in Table 6.

Example 5

18. A HEFCE-fundable student studies full-time for a foundation degree at a further education college (FEC) in the academic years 2012-13 and 2013-14, then tops up to a full-time bachelors degree directly funded at the college in 2014-15.

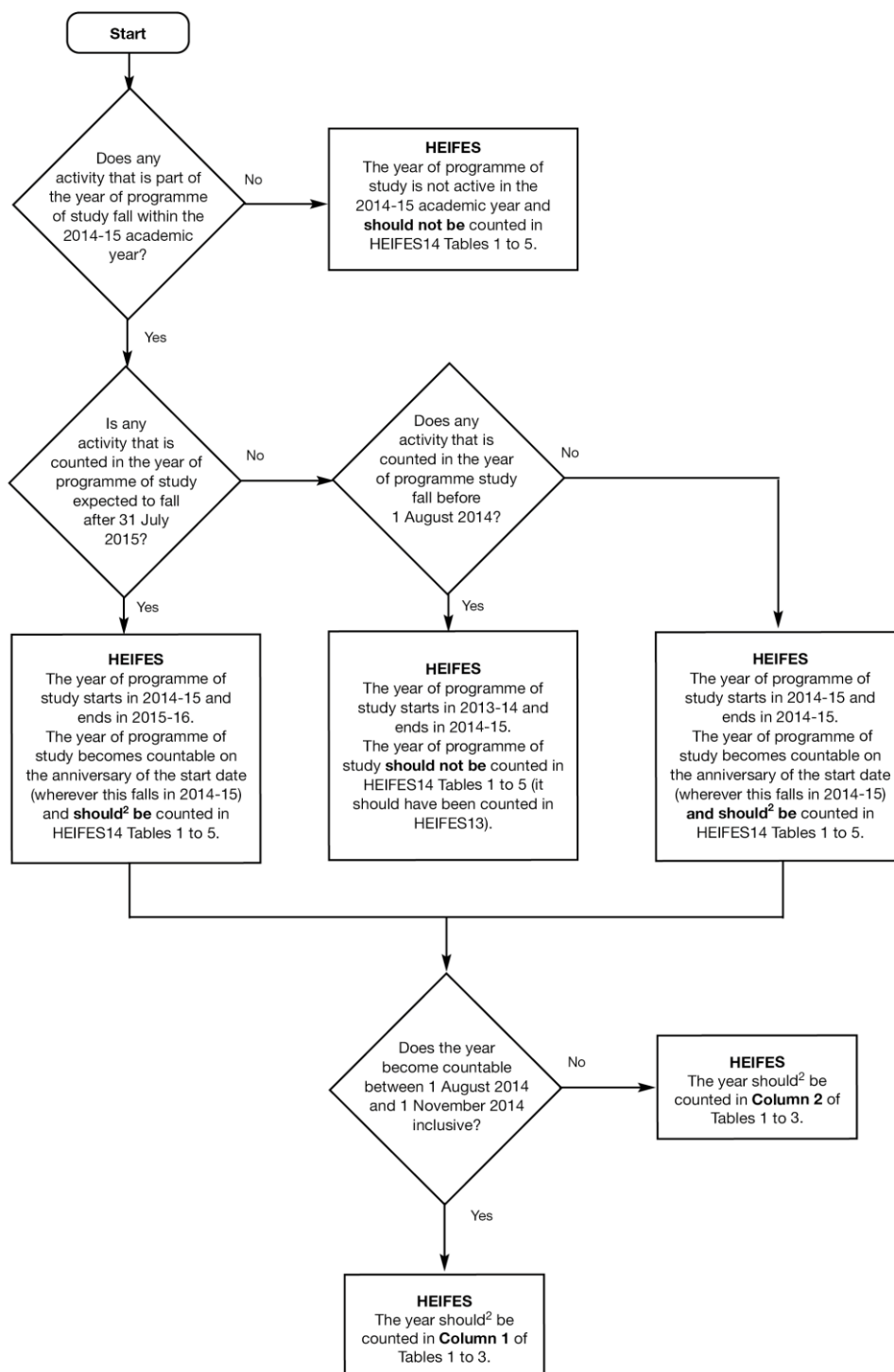
a. If the foundation degree was delivered by the FEC under a franchise arrangement from a higher education institution (HEI), then the student would be considered to be a student of that HEI for 2012-13 and 2013-14 and the FEC in 2014-15. Because the study is not at the same institution, the student should be reported as a new entrant on Table 5 when they top-up to a bachelors degree in 2014-15.

b. If the foundation degree was not delivered under a franchise arrangement, but was funded directly at the FEC, then the student would be considered to be studying at the same institution (the FEC) and at the same broad level throughout the period 2012-13 to 2014-15. Therefore they should **not** be reported as a new entrant for 2014-15 in Table 5.

Example 6

19. A student commenced studying towards an HND on a part-time basis in 2012-13. In 2014-15 they switch to full-time study. The student is considered to be studying at the same institution and at the same broad level throughout the period 2012-13 to 2014-15. They should not therefore be reported as a new entrant for 2013-14 in Table 5, although they may be recorded as such on Table 6 (see paragraphs 21 to 38 of this annex).

Figure H1: Flow chart for determining whether a year of programme of study should be returned in Tables 1 to 5 of HEIFES14 and whether Column 1 or 2 in Tables 1 to 3



Notes

¹ For this purpose, periods of work experience that would cause the year of programme of study to span academic years should be ignored.

² Subject to meeting the other conditions required to be counted in HEIFES.

2014-15 student number control population and how to count years of programme of study in Table 6

20. The guidance in paragraphs 21 to 38 of this annex applies to Table 6 **only**. For guidance on how to count years of programme of study in other tables, see paragraphs 10 to 16 of this annex.

21. Table 6 collects information on a subset of the years of programmes of study in the HEIFES14 population (as described in Annex F paragraphs 1 to 4). The subset counted in Table 6 differs from the subset counted in the other tables. Years of programme of study meeting the criteria in paragraphs 22 and 23 define the students who we are monitoring at the sector level for student number control purposes. All of these years of programme of study should be reported on Table 6, but for most institutions only a subset will count against the student number control allocation.

Full-time undergraduate students, and part-time undergraduate students in receipt of full-time student support

22. Years of programme of study which meet all the following criteria should be included in Table 6.

- a. They are for HEFCE-fundable undergraduate students active in the academic year 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2015.
- b. They are for students who are either full-time, or part-time but in receipt of full-time student support (as defined in Annex M paragraphs 7 and 9).
- c. They are for students who have not been HEFCE-fundable or employer co-funded undergraduate students, either full-time or part-time in receipt of full-time student support, at the same college in either of the preceding two academic years (that is, between 1 August 2012 and 31 July 2014)³.
- d. They are for students who have not withdrawn from their year of programme of study within two weeks of starting.

Full-time students, and part-time students in receipt of full-time student support, aiming for a postgraduate initial teacher training qualification, such as a PGCE

23. Years of programme of study which meet all the following criteria count against the 2014-15 student number control allocation.

- a. They are for HEFCE-fundable students aiming for a postgraduate initial teacher training qualification such as a PGCE (whether a Postgraduate or Professional Graduate Certificate in Education) or a Postgraduate Diploma in Education commencing a programme of study in the academic year 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2015.

³ Students from countries which accede to the European Union (EU) who were studying as full-time undergraduates at the institution while meeting the definition of overseas students in either of the previous two academic years will not be counted against the 2014-15 student number control allocation when their residential status changes to Home and EU following accession. For 2014-15 this may apply to students from Croatia, which acceded to the EU on 1 July 2013.

- b. They are for students who are either full-time or who are part-time but in receipt of full-time student support (as defined in [Annex M](#) paragraphs 7 and 8).
- b. They are for students who have not withdrawn from their programme of study within two weeks of starting.
24. The terms used in paragraphs 22 and 23 are defined as follows.
- a. **Part-time students in receipt of full-time student support.** To fall into this category, a student must be eligible both for a full-time tuition fee loan and for grant or loan support for maintenance, and must be in receipt of at least one of them during the year. Students who are on 'full-time distance learning' courses, and who are therefore not eligible for maintenance support, should not be counted in this category. A student may be in receipt of full-time student support without meeting the HEIFES requirement for full-time attendance. Such cases include (but are not restricted to):
- students on a designated full-time course who are returning after intermission, where the year of programme of study when they return does not involve attendance of 24 weeks or more;
 - students on a designated full-time course who are repeating part of it on a part-time basis for a year of programme of study, or who are otherwise temporarily switching to part-time study while still claiming full-time student support;
 - students attending the final year of a designated full-time course which is ordinarily completed in less than 24 weeks.

We do not expect many of these to count towards the student number control allocation, because such students will commonly have undertaken full-time study in the previous two years.

b. **Students who have not been HEFCE-fundable or employer co-funded full-time undergraduate students (or part-time undergraduate students in receipt of full-time student support) in either of the preceding two academic years.** These are students who, during each academic year 2012-13 and 2013-14, have undertaken neither full-time undergraduate study nor part-time undergraduate study during which they were in receipt of full-time student support; or who, if they have, withdrew (on each occasion) within two weeks of starting the programme of study; or who were otherwise 'dormant' during that period. In this context, 'full-time' study includes study that, had it been finished, would have been full-time.

c. **The same institution.** This refers to the 'registering' institution responsible for reporting the student in the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record or Skills Funding Agency individualised learner record (ILR). Where teaching has been franchised out, the associated year of instance or programme of study is attributable to the franchiser, not the franchisee.

25. For the purposes of determining mode for Table 6, the following apply.
- a. If a student begins studying full-time but switches to part-time study during the year of programme of study then, unless the mode switch occurred within two weeks of the year of programme of study's commencement, they should be treated as full-time.
 - b. If instead, a student commences a part-time year of programme of study but switches to full-time study during this year of programme of study, then the following apply.
 - i. If the switch to full-time study has not occurred early enough in the year for the whole year of programme of study to meet the definition of full-time (according to the definition in Annex M), this year of programme of study should be treated as part-time and excluded from Table 6.
 - ii. If the switch to full-time study occurred early enough in the year of programme of study for it to be instead classed as full-time for the entire year of programme of study (according to the definition in Annex M), this year of programme of study should be treated as full-time.
26. Students studying full-time on a recognised HE course as part of a Higher or Advanced Apprenticeship should be included in Table 6 when they commence their full-time study on that HE course and where they also meet the other criteria for inclusion.
27. Within Table 6, students should be disaggregated between:
- a. Those who are HEFCE-fundable. This category should be further disaggregated between:
 - undergraduates in the exempt population
 - undergraduates not in the exempt population
 - students aiming for a postgraduate initial teacher training qualification such as a PGCE.
28. For most institutions, students are in the exempt population if they are in categories defined in the 2014-15 'exemptions list' on our web-site at www.hefce.ac.uk/data/year/2013/snccxempt1415. For one specialist institution in the performing and creative arts (Hereford College of Arts), the only category of exemptions that applies is for students topping up from a foundation degree or HND to an honours degree programme not exceeding 1.3 years of full-time study, who have been full-time students (or part-time students in receipt of full-time student support) at any institution in either of the preceding two academic years. For this institution, all other students should be treated as not in the exempt population.
29. In determining whether a student comes within the exempt population, colleges should disregard any duplication of the same qualification type in the same subject, such as AS-levels and A-levels, or where students re-take A-levels. In disregarding such duplication, colleges should ignore the qualification with the lower tariff points. For these purposes, A-levels in both Maths and Further Maths should not be treated as duplicates. Further guidance on the treatment of duplicate qualifications is provided on the HEIFES

frequently asked questions web page at www.hefce.ac.uk/data/datacollection/heifes/ under 'Frequently asked questions'.

Good practice

Entry qualifications

30. Colleges should take reasonable steps to test the accuracy of the entry qualifications reported by their students, taking into account the availability of other sources of information such as data from UCAS, the Learning Records Service, application forms and students' certificates. This does not require a college to test the qualifications achieved by all its students. For many students, the data provided by UCAS through the awarding body linking will be sufficient. However, this will not apply in some cases, such as students who achieved their Level 3 qualifications some time ago, or whose qualification types are not included. In these circumstances we expect colleges to verify entry qualifications using the Learning Records Service. Otherwise, colleges should use a random sample to test the overall accuracy of their entry qualifications data, plus selective samples where doubts may exist about the entry qualifications reported by individual students.

31. Where entry qualifications are unknown, undergraduate students should be recorded on Table 6 as **not** in the exempt population. Where colleges know the entry qualifications of students forecast to start after 1 November 2014, they should use them to determine whether or not students are in the exempt population. When colleges do not know the entry qualifications of students, typically because the students have not yet been recruited, they should use evidence to estimate the number of students who will be in the exempt population. In all cases, evidence should be kept for audit purposes for five years.

Example 7

32. A HEFCE-fundable student studies full-time for a foundation degree at an FEC in the academic years 2012-13 and 2013-14, then tops up to a full-time bachelors degree directly funded at the college in 2014-15.

a. If the foundation degree was delivered by the FEC under a franchise arrangement from an HEI, the student would be considered to be a student of the HEI for 2011-12 and 2012-13 and the FEC in 2013-14. Because the study is not at the same institution, the top-up to the bachelors degree in 2013-14 should be included in Table 6 in the FEC's HEIFES13 return. However, as the foundation degree was completed in the last two years, the student should be included in the exempt population, on the basis of the exemptions list.

b. If the foundation degree was not delivered under a franchise arrangement, but was funded directly at the FEC, then the student would be considered to be studying at the same institution (the FEC) throughout the period 2011-12 to 2013-14. They should therefore not be included in Table 6 when they top up to the bachelors degree.

Example 8

33. A student commences a HEFCE-fundable full-time undergraduate course in September 2013, having never been registered at the college before. However due to illness the student withdraws from the course in December 2013, and returns in September 2014 to re-start the course.

a. The first year of programme of study (where the student withdrew) **will have counted** against the 2013-14 student number control allocation because the student was full-time and HEFCE-fundable in the academic year 2013-14 (even though they studied for less than 24 weeks) and therefore should have been included in Table 6 of HEIFES13.

b. The second year of programme of study **will not count** against the 2014-15 student number control allocation, because the student was a full-time HEFCE fundable student in the academic year preceding 2014-15, and therefore should not be returned in Table 6 of HEIFES14.

Example 9

34. A student commences a HEFCE-fundable full-time undergraduate bachelors degree course in September 2011 which concludes in June 2014. The student then commences a HEFCE-fundable, full-time PGCE at the same institution in September 2014. The year of programme of study commencing in September 2014 **will count** against the 2014-15 student number control allocation (regardless of any previous study at the same institution) because the student is commencing a HEFCE-fundable full-time PGCE in the 2014-15 academic year, and should therefore be returned in Table 6 of HEIFES14.

35. Table 6 counts years of programme of study differently from the other tables. This means that some years of programme of study counted in Table 6 in HEIFES14 may not be counted on the other tables. This can occur where students withdraw from their year of programme of study before 1 November 2014.

36. Not all students included in Table 6 will be 'entrants' to the college (as defined in paragraph 17). Exceptions will include students who have previously studied part-time, and students previously on programmes of study that were not fundable by HEFCE, such as those funded by the NHS or the National College for Teaching and Leadership.

Example 10

37. A student commenced a full-time undergraduate bachelors degree course in September 2013, having never been registered at the college before. For the first year of programme of study, as the student is aiming for an equivalent or lower qualification (ELQ) and is not exempt from the ELQ policy, the student is classed as non-fundable. They decide not to study for the bachelors degree, so in September 2014, at the start of the second year of programme of study, they change their stated qualification aim to a foundation degree. They are therefore exempt from the ELQ policy, and as a result are now classed as HEFCE-fundable. The second year of programme of study should be included in Table 6 of HEIFES14 because the student was not classed as HEFCE-fundable in the 2013-14 academic year.

Example 11

38. A HEFCE-fundable student commences a part-time undergraduate course in September 2013, having never been registered at the college before. At the beginning of the second year of programme of study in September 2014 they switched to studying this course full-time. The second year of programme of study should be included in Table 6 of HEIFES14, because the student was not studying full-time in the 2013-14 academic year.

Summer schools

39. Four types of short course are sometimes referred to as 'summer schools'. They are described in more detail below.

Summer schools for potential HE students

40. These are intended for potential HE students to experience a short period of study in an HE environment, normally in the summer vacation. Such students are not included in the HEIFES population because the provision is not at HE level.

Access provision

41. In some cases, institutions offer short preparatory or access courses for individual students to facilitate progression to an initial HE qualification. These courses are taken immediately before the start of their HE qualification. Where such provision is an integral part of a recognised HE course, the students are included in the HEIFES population: see paragraphs 6 and 7 of [Annex G](#) for when such provision is considered integrated. The short access course and the first year of the HE course will typically count as one year of programme of study. This may result in the year of programme of study being counted as long, as defined in [Annex O](#).

42. If the access provision is not an integrated part of the recognised HE course, it is not at HE level and the students are not part of the HEIFES population.

Within-course periods of study in vacation time

43. These are short periods of study within a course which generally take place in vacation time, and are normally for students to catch up with others on the course. They are usually between the normal periods of activity for years of programme of study, but within a course. They are counted as part of the preceding year of programme of study and may result in that year of programme of study being counted as long, as defined in [Annex O](#).

44. Where the short period of study occurs during the summer vacation, this may cause students who would normally be following standard years of programme of study to generate a non-standard year for the year that includes the short period. However, for data collection purposes these should be treated as standard years of programme of study.

Example 12

45. A student studies full-time for a degree over three years, with activity for each year of programme of study running from October to July. Between the second and third years, a short period of study, running from 25 July to 5 September, is undertaken to bring the student up to the standard of others on the course. This short period of study counts as part of the second year of the degree.

46. Such short periods of study should be returned on the ILR in the same way they are returned on HEIFES. That is, they should be included as part of the year of programme of study preceding the short period of study.

Foundation degree bridging courses

47. These are short courses that come after a foundation degree has been completed, but before the final year of an honours degree course. They are not an integral part of the course from which they are bridging. Progression is assured from successful completion of a foundation degree bridging course to the final year of an honours degree. For the purposes of HEIFES, such a course is counted as a separate year of programme of study and is returned as part-time with an FTE of 0.3. If the bridging course spans two academic years, it should be recorded in the academic year in which the bridging course begins.

48. Any foundation degree bridging courses should be returned as a separate record in the ILR 2014-15 return with:

- student load returned as 30 (Student Instance FTE = 030.0), except where the course spans two academic years, when the load should be proportionally split between them
- mode returned as part-time (Mode of Study = 03)
- a link to a learner aim on the Skills Funding Agency's learning aims search with a 'learner aim type' code of 6001, 'Foundation degree bridging course' (it may be necessary to request a specific learner aim for the bridging course)
- a learner aim with appropriate Learndirect information on the Skills Funding Agency's learning aims search
- a separate Student Instance Identifier (NUMHUS).