

## Annex J Full-time equivalence for part-time students

1. This annex explains how full-time equivalence for part-time students should be calculated. This includes guidance on how to treat students who are exempt from part of a course and full-time students who change mode within the year of programme of study to become part-time students.
2. FTE for part-time students is defined with reference to an equivalent full-time course. For the purposes of determining FTE, the number of guided learning hours the student undertakes is irrelevant. In general the comparison with an equivalent full-time course should be based on the number of years or terms taken to achieve the qualification compared with a student studying full-time. Where such a full-time course does not exist, a reasonable academic judgement of FTE should be made through comparison with other qualifications in a similar subject and at the same level. In this case, evidence of the courses used and the reasoning behind the judgement should be kept by the college for audit purposes.
3. The table below shows the FTE per year for most recognised HE courses, depending on the number of years over which the course is taken. It also shows the total FTE for the course. For a part-time course, the FTE summed over the whole course should be equal to that shown in the table below.

Qualification aim	Total	Duration in years									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Degree	3			1.00	0.75	0.60	0.50	0.43	0.38	0.33	0.30
Foundation degree	2	1.00	0.67	0.50	0.40	0.33	0.29	0.25	0.22	0.20	
HND	2	1.00	0.67	0.50	0.40	0.33	0.29	0.25	0.22	0.20	
DipHE	2	1.00	0.67	0.50	0.40	0.33	0.29	0.25	0.22	0.20	
HNC	1	1.00	0.50	0.33	0.25	0.20	0.17	0.14	0.13	0.11	0.10
CertEd/DTLLS	1	1.00	0.50	0.33	0.25	0.20	0.17	0.14	0.13	0.11	0.10
Taught masters	1	1.00	0.50	0.33	0.25	0.20	0.17	0.14	0.13	0.11	0.10
HNC to HND top-up	1	1.00	0.50	0.33	0.25	0.20	0.17	0.14	0.13	0.11	0.10

4. The FTE for a foundation degree bridging course, as defined in Annex H paragraphs 39 to 40, is 0.3.
5. The table above may not be appropriate where the qualification offered differs significantly from the norm for qualifications with that title. This is particularly true for DipHE and CertEd, where the practice varies across colleges. Where colleges believe that the FTE should be different to that listed above, they may return a different FTE, but must keep a record of how it has been derived. In cases of difficulty, colleges are

advised to contact us for guidance. If colleges wish to use an FTE different to those listed above, with the exception of CertEd and DipHE, they must contact us before doing so. In particular, we would not expect the FTE for a part-time degree to be calculated with reference to a four-year programme.

6. Where a student repeats a year or enters the second, or later, year of the course directly, the total FTE returned for that student should be increased or decreased to reflect this (see examples 2 and 3 (paragraphs 10 and 11) in this annex).

7. Where a student does not complete a year of programme of study, the FTE should not be recorded on HEIFES. This is not consistent with the FTE returned on the ILR student record. When comparing the ILR student record with HEIFES, we will make adjustments to the FTE returned on the ILR to reflect years not completed.

8. Where students change mode within the year of programme of study to become part-time students (see Annex M, paragraph 10), their FTE should be calculated in the usual way, by comparison with the equivalent full-time course.

#### **Example 1**

9. A student studies for a degree over five years. The FTE returned each time the student becomes countable is 0.60; the student becomes countable five times, so the total FTE returned over all years is  $5 \times 0.60 = 3$ .

#### **Example 2**

10. As in example 1, but the student resits year two. The FTE returned each time the student becomes countable is still 0.60; the student becomes countable six times, so the total FTE returned over all years is  $6 \times 0.60 = 3.6$ .

#### **Example 3**

11. As in example 1, but the student has accredited prior learning and enters directly onto year two. The FTE returned each time the student becomes countable is still 0.60; the student becomes countable four times, so the total FTE returned over all years is  $4 \times 0.60 = 2.4$ .

#### **Example 4**

12. A student who starts off as full-time but changes to part-time in the second term of the 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, 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, totalling 0.67 for the year of programme of study.

### **Audit issue**

#### **Incorrect returning of student FTE**

13. The table above containing FTE per year should be used to determine the FTE of a part-time course. The sum of the total FTE allocated to a part-time student should be equivalent, over the duration of the course, to that allocated to a full-time student. We

found examples where this was not the case, as a result of many factors, including a lack of understanding of what FTE is meant to represent and incorrect calculations of part-time FTE.