

Annex O Long years of study

1. This annex explains how to determine if a year of instance should be classed as 'long', both for full-time and part-time years of instance. It also contains guidance on how to treat learning in the workplace and work experience when determining the length of a year of instance, as well as examples of how to treat mixed-length courses.

Full-time students

2. For full-time courses, the year of instance will be classified as 'long' if:
 - a. Students are normally required to attend for 45 weeks or more within that year of instance, or
 - b. The year of instance includes a within-course short period of study, awarded as a summer school through a bidding exercise for additional student numbers (ASNs) and explicitly notified by HEFCE.
3. When determining length, students are deemed to be attending the institution if they are actively pursuing full-time studies towards the qualification. Years of instance that are not long are referred to as standard length.
4. If the year of instance is 45 weeks or more in length because of a period of work-based study, then the year of instance is not counted as long. This applies to both learning in the workplace and work experience. Sandwich years-out cannot therefore be recorded as long, and we would also not generally expect foundation degrees to be recorded as long.

Example 1

5. A full-time student on a foundation degree studies for 47 weeks in the year of instance, but 10 of these weeks are work-based study. The year of instance is not counted as long, because without the work-based study the number of weeks studied within the year of instance is 37. Similarly a full-time student on a foundation degree studies for 47 weeks in the year of instance entirely in the workplace. The year of instance is not counted as long.

6. For undergraduate students, long courses will typically be accelerated programmes where the qualification is achieved in a much shorter period than is normal for that qualification. The number of credit points studied in the year is not a criterion in the definition of a long year of study.
7. For postgraduate students, most long courses will be for higher degrees.

Part-time students

8. For part-time courses, the distinction will depend on the length of each year for an equivalent full-time course. The number of weeks attended within the year of instance for part-time students is irrelevant in determining whether the year of instance is long. The equivalent full-time course used should be the same as that used in calculating the FTE. If an equivalent full-time course does not exist, the method for determining

whether a part-time year of instance is long should be consistent with the approach taken to determine the FTE following the guidance in paragraph 3 of Annex J. The rationale for such a judgement should be recorded for audit purposes.

Example 2

9. A full-time, one-year course has a 30-week year of instance; the equivalent part-time course lasts for two years, each with a 45-week year of instance. The part-time course would not be long. Conversely, if each year of the part-time course lasts for 30 weeks, but the year of instance for the full-time course is 45 weeks, then the part-time course is classified as long. The FTE for the part-time course would be 0.5 in both cases.

Example 3

10. A student completes a two-year, full-time foundation degree, then chooses to undertake a foundation degree bridging course over the summer in order to enrol full-time on the third year of an honours degree. In this case both years of the foundation degree and the third year of the honours degree should be recorded as standard length. The foundation degree bridging course should be recorded separately as a standalone, part-time course with an FTE of 0.3.

Mixed-length courses

11. In some cases a full-time course may have one or more years of instance which are long, with one or more standard-length years. When determining which FTE to return as long for the equivalent part-time course, the following two principles should be applied:

- a. The FTE over the entire course should be identical to that of the full-time course.
- b. The proportion of the FTE recorded as long should be the same on both the full-time and part-time programmes.

Example 4

12. A two-year, full-time course has year one long and year two standard length. The equivalent part-time course runs over four years. The first two years of the part-time course should be recorded as long, with the remaining two recorded as standard length. The FTE would be 0.5 in each of the four years.

Example 5

13. A two-year, full-time course has year one long and year two standard length. The equivalent part-time course lasts two-and-a-half years. If the FTE is 0.8, 0.8 and 0.4 in the three years respectively, then the principle in sub-paragraph 11b of this annex means that 50 per cent of the FTE should be recorded as long. This can be achieved by recording all first-year students as long, and half of the final-year students as long, with the remaining year recorded as standard length.