

Annex J: Full-time equivalence for part-time years of instance

This annex explains how full-time equivalence (FTE) for part-time years of instance should be calculated in HESES14. This includes guidance on how to treat students who are exempt from part of a course, and full-time students who change mode within a year of instance to become part-time students.

1. Student FTE recorded in HESES14 should relate to the years of instance being counted. In some cases this may not be consistent with the FTE returned on the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record. However, it should be consistent with HESA data when summed over the instance.
2. The FTE for a part-time course is calculated by comparison with an equivalent full-time course, where such a course exists. If an equivalent full-time course does not exist, a reasonable academic judgement should be made of the FTE relative to a full-time student. Where such a judgement is made, the rationale should be recorded for audit purposes.
3. Calculation of the FTE can be based on either of the following:
 - duration of the course
 - credit points studied.

In both cases, when viewed as a whole, the total FTE for a part-time course should equal the total FTE of the equivalent full-time course. Where duration of the course is used, the calculation should be based on the number of years of instance. 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 Example 3 in this annex at paragraph 10).

4. Accredited prior learning modules should be excluded from the calculation of the FTE. This may mean that a student is on a full-time programme but due to accredited prior learning may be studying only at a part-time rate.
5. The FTE for a foundation degree bridging course is 0.3 (as defined in [Annex H](#), paragraphs 52 and 53).
6. Where a student does not complete a year of instance, their FTE should not be recorded on HESES. This is not consistent with the FTE returned on the HESA student record. When comparing the HESA student record with HESES, we will make adjustments to the FTE returned to HESA to reflect years not completed.
7. Where students change mode within a year of instance to become part-time students (see paragraph 9, [Annex M](#)), their FTE should be calculated in the usual way, by comparison with the equivalent full-time course.

Example 1

8. **Duration of the course:** A full-time course is studied over three years, so has a total FTE of 3. The equivalent part-time course is studied over six years, and so would have an FTE of 0.5 in each year.

Example 2

9. **Credit points:** A full-time course is studied over three years, with 120 credits taken each year. The equivalent part-time course lasts six years. Ninety credits are studied in each of the first three years and 30 credits in each of the final three. The FTE would be 0.75 in each of the first three years and 0.25 in each of the final three.

Example 3

10. As in example 1, but the student has accredited prior learning and enters directly onto year three. The FTE returned each time the student becomes countable is still 0.5. The student becomes countable four times, so the total FTE returned over all years is $4 \times 0.5 = 2$.

Example 4

11. A student starts off as full-time but changes to part-time in the second term of the year of instance, studying at the same rate as a part-time student with an FTE of 0.5 per year of instance. 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 instance.

Example 5

12. A 1-FTE part-time course is normally studied over two years. However, each year a small proportion of the students take three years to complete. If there are 100 students on the course and 10 take an extra year to complete, the FTE should be $((90 \times 0.5) + (10 \times 0.33)) \div 100 = 0.48$ and not 0.5.

Good practice

Student FTE

13. Where standard load factors are used, there must be clear evidence that, on average, students study at these levels of activity. Use of standard part-time load factors is common, because the nature of the study may mean the part-time student activity for the year has not been ascertained by the census date. This is acceptable practice only as long as these standard load factors accurately reflect actual activity for the year.

14. Some students may study at a lower rate than is the norm for a course. This should be reflected in the FTE. Where students are able to vary the intensity of study during the year, we expect institutions to reflect this in their estimates of part-time FTE (see Example 5).

15. 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 their activity for the whole year of instance, and their FTE reflected correctly.