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Guidance

16 to 19 funding: planned hours in study programmes

This note provides the latest information on planned hours to assist funded institutions planning study programmes across the individual academic years.

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Funding guidance

This note provides the latest information on planned hours to assist funded institutions plan study programmes across the individual academic years (1 August to 31 July each year).

The contractual requirements for planned hours are incorporated into the [funding guidance](#) each year. The advice on this page is consistent with the contractual advice issued for each individual year.

Study programmes

All 16 to 19 year old students are funded for an individual study programme. Most study programmes have a [core aim](#).

The study programme must be tailored to each student, have clear study and/or employment goals reflecting the student's prior attainment, and include

- substantial qualifications or work experience
- maths and English for students who have not achieved grade A*-C/9 to 4 GCSE in these subjects
- high quality work experience or work preparation
- added value non-qualification activity that supports the students' goals and is integrated into the study programme

Planned hours and funding allocations

Planned hours are a fundamental element of the funding allocation process, which uses data recorded in the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and the school census. They are used to determine the proportion of students in each funding band which, determines the national funding rate per student. Errors in recording planned hours are likely to have an impact on an institution's funding allocation. Institutions must record accurate planned hours so that their funding is calculated correctly.

Planned hours funded by the ESFA

The activities in each student's study programme in an academic year constitute the planned hours. Each student's planned hours are agreed between the institution and the student at the start of their study programme. You must record accurately all the qualification planned hours and the non-qualification planned hours. This data is used to calculate future funding allocations so it must accurately reflect the learning activities being taken by each student.

To count for funding purposes, the planned hours must be timetabled, organised and/or supervised by the institution, and take place in line with the institution's normal working pattern. For example, they can include:

- planned tutor led activity on courses leading to qualifications
- planned hours of tutorials, work experience or work preparation
- planned hours on other activities relevant to the student's study programme that are organised and provided by the institution, such as sport or volunteering

Planned hours in a study programme are categorised as either qualification (planned learning hours) or non-qualification (planned employability, enrichment and pastoral hours). All the hours in both categories need to be recorded accurately on the ILR or school census to avoid problems with future allocations. Both categories are added up to form the total hours of a study programme, and the total hours are used to calculate the funding allocation.

Qualification hours

These are hours of teaching and learning that count towards externally certified qualifications that are approved for teaching to 16 to 19 year olds under Section 96 (qualifications that are not approved under [Section 96](#) cannot be taught in schools).

Qualifications that are funded under the 16 to 19 funding methodology are identified on the [Learning Aim Reference Service](#) (LARS).

Non-qualification hours (employability, enrichment and pastoral hours)

These are hours of fundable activity that are not used to take externally certified qualifications. These hours are also known as planned employability, enrichment and pastoral (EEP) hours.

There are many activities that are defined as EEP and all need to be recorded in your data returns in order to be funded. If you fail to record all the EEP activities in your data returns this may impact your allocation. EEP hours include activities that are relevant to the study programme and:

- do not count towards a qualification as defined above
- are for informal or in-house certificates
- are for tutorial purposes
- are spent on work experience and other work-related activities
- are spent on enrichment, volunteering and/or community activities organised by or on behalf of the institution

Examples of activity that could count towards EEP hours provided they meet the [criteria above](#) are

- tutorials and any one to one sessions such as to plan study or revision
- mentoring and coaching
- revision hours, structured revision, exam test papers
- informal certificates such as citizenship awards or Duke of Edinburgh Award
- work experience and work related activity such as preparing CVs and practicing interview skills and techniques
- field work or a piece of work such as a survey/research which is integral to the study programme, such as a field trip with a task attached
- completing applications for jobs or university where a tutor is supporting and helping the student
- employer visits arranged by the institution
- university visits arranged by the institution
- volunteering activities and community activities
- any activities that offer enrichment to the student such as personal and social development

Examples of hours/activities that are not funded

We do not fund hours that do not meet the criteria for [funding](#) or are not relevant to the student's study

programme, including:

- voluntary extra-curricular activities and clubs delivered during breaks or outside the normal working pattern
- study that is homework or independent study/research that is not timetabled
- time spent in employment and or work experience organised by anyone other than by or on behalf of the institution
- time spent on volunteering and/or community activities that are not organised by or on behalf of the institution

Traineeships and supported internships

Traineeships and supported internships are a type of study programme and are funded in the same way as other study programmes. Both must have work experience as the core aim.

[Planned hours](#) in these types of programmes, therefore, will usually have a significant number of EEP hours as well as qualification hours.

Intensive study programmes

In some exceptional circumstances a study programme can be delivered intensively, for example, long days over a few months. These compressed programmes enable students to complete a significant number of planned hours in a short period of time and should be linked to the student's need to learn in this intensive way. Compressed study programmes are funded at the standard funding rates based on planned hours. We expect compressed study programmes to lead to excellent results, as demonstrated through qualification success rates and positive destinations. We monitor the delivery and value for money of compressed programmes to determine whether or not to take a different approach to such provision in future.

Study programmes delivered in more than one academic year

Some students will need to have study programmes planned over more than one academic year (1 August to 31 July). The [funding band](#) for these students is determined by the number of planned hours assigned to them in each academic year. A student can be funded as full time in one year and part time in the next, or part time in both years. This will depend on the planned hours of the study programme within each academic year. Please refer to the funding bands table below for more information on how each band is calculated.

Study leave and examinations

Planned hours for activity undertaken away from the institution's premises to revise and prepare for exams can be included in a study programme. This study leave must be:

- planned
- explicit in the student's timetable
- supervised and/or organised by a member of staff

Study leave should be time limited. The weekly number of hours should not exceed the student's planned weekly hours for the overall study programme. Planned hours for study leave can be included in each academic year.

The time when a student is taking the exam can also be included in the total planned hours.

Retakes

Planned hours cannot normally be recorded for learning programmes designed to enable students to re-sit or retake examinations and assessments. These are not generally eligible for funding. This is because the institution has already been funded for the study programme including taking exams.

Where there are exceptional circumstances, such as a period of long term sickness, or good educational reasons, then the retake delivery hours for individual students may be included in the funded study programme hours.

Where a student fails to complete a learning aim in the expected time span and stays on for additional time, including revision sessions or re-sits, there is no further funding. No study hours should be included on the ILR or school census for students repeating learning or retaking examinations unless there are good educational reasons for the student to repeat part of their study programme. Retakes in GCSE English and maths are fundable to meet any condition of funding requirements. Please see the 16 to 19 [funding regulations](#) for further information.

Lunch breaks

Lunch breaks are not funded. Institutions should ensure that the planned hours exclude any lunch breaks. For example, if a student is planned to be at the institution from 10am until 4pm, and the institution regularly has a lunch break of 1 hour per student, then the planned hours recorded for that day are 5, not 6.

Bank holidays

Planned hours should not include times when the institution is closed, for example Easter or Christmas breaks. The planned hours must accurately reflect the hours a student is planned to be in learning and that cannot include periods when the institution is closed. However, planned hours should not be adjusted to take out bank holidays that fall within normal term time attendance. We do not expect institutions to reduce planned hours for sessions that fall naturally on bank holidays.

Band		Annual timetabled hours in the academic year	Applies to
5	Full time	540+ hours	16 and 17 year olds. Students aged 18 and over with high needs
4a	Part time	450+ hours	Students aged 18 and over who do not have high needs
4b	Part time	450 to 539 hours	16 and 17 year olds. Students aged 18 and over with high needs
3	Part time	360 to 449	All students

2	Part time	280 to 359 hours	All students
1	Part time	Up to 279 hours	All students

Recording planned hours

FE institutions record planned hours in the ILR and schools and academies record them in the school census. All fundable qualification and non-qualification activity for the academic year must be recorded individually for each student.

Data returns must reflect, as accurately as possible, the hours that are planned for the student at the start of their study programme. These will be the hours clearly recorded on each student's timetable or learning agreement. Planned hours should be recorded for each student even where a group of students are studying similar qualifications. For example, a group may all be studying the same qualification but it is unlikely that other aspects of their study programme will be the same: English, maths, hours for tutorials, or for work experience may all be different. In this instance a blanket number of planned hours should not be recorded for a whole group of students, each must have their own planned hours recorded individually. Following this principle will reduce problems with data and with funding allocations.

Institutions must make sure that the planned hours are realistic and deliverable for each student. They must have evidence of this for audit purposes and have systems in place that enable an easy reconciliation between student timetables and the planned hours recorded on the ILR or school census. The audit process will be quicker and simpler when it is easy to see how the evidence relates to the recorded planned hours.

Further information on audit is available in annex B of the [funding regulations](#).

Timetabled hours for any activities that are not funded by the ESFA must not be included on the ILR or school census.

Recording planned hours in the school census

You should enter the planned hours for each student in the current academic year. Record both planned hours for qualifications and non-qualification activity for each student for one academic year only. Institutions can only record planned hours for the current academic year (not the previous one) in each autumn census.

We have produced an [interactive post-16 school census tool](#) to help schools and academies understand how we use your data to calculate your post-16 funding. The tool will also help you to understand common errors for each funding factor, including funding bands, and how they affect the funding we calculate. We strongly encourage you to use the tool and to work through the examples to support you to complete the census accurately.

Changing planned hours

Institutions should not normally change planned hours during the year once the funding qualifying period has passed. Schools and academies should make sure all planned hours are correct in time for the closure

of the autumn census at the beginning of each academic year as planned hours cannot be changed after this date. One exception is when students do more than one programme in a year. This applies to those who have completed all the activities on their first learning agreement or plan. The student may then start a second study programme and the institution must

- record a new core aim
- change the planned hours to reflect the additional delivery of hours for the new study programme

The other main exception is where errors have occurred. These can be corrected.

Recording planned hours for students who withdraw from their programme

When a student withdraws or completes a learning aim, and the planned hours qualifying period of six weeks for the programme has passed, there is usually no need for the institution to change the planned hours.

When a student withdraws or completes a learning aim and the planned hours qualifying period of six weeks for the funding year has not passed, the planned hours should be changed if the recorded hours are no longer accurate. If the student does not start another qualification in place of the one withdrawn, then the hours must not be included in the planned hours.

When a student withdraws from all their learning aims and leaves the institution altogether, there is no need to change the planned hours if this is past the six week planned hours qualifying period for the funding year. If the student leaves before completing the qualifying period for their programme, they will not count as a start for funding purposes. If they leave after completing the funding start qualifying period, they will not count as retained and the institution's retention factor will be negatively affected.

Students who withdraw from part of their study programme should make up the time with other meaningful activity, either qualification or non-qualification hours.

Recording planned hours for students who transfer from one aim to another

Transferring after the qualifying period

When a student transfers from one aim to another after the qualifying period, the planned hours for the programme must not be changed.

Transferring within the qualifying period

When a student transfers from one aim to another within the planned hours qualifying period, the planned hours can be changed. The new value for the planned hours will include the:

- timetabled hours for continuing or completed aims
- hours delivered for the aim that the student has transferred from

Students who transfer from one institution to another

When a student withdraws from the whole of their study programme at one institution and enrolls at another within the same funding year, the first institution will receive funding as long as the student has passed the programme funding qualifying period. The second institution should record the student's planned hours according to the number of hours in their study programme for the remainder of the year.

Students progressing from one study programme to another

Students who have completed all the activities on their first learning agreement or plan can start a second study programme. The institution must

- record a new core aim
- change the planned hours to reflect the additional delivery for the second study programme

Students who have already done a full time programme, and have therefore received full funding, will not get additional funding for further study programmes in the same academic year when they stay at the same institution.

Students progressing from a traineeship to another study programme

Students who progress from a traineeship to [another study programme](#) are treated in the same way as other students progressing from one study programme to another.

Audit and planned hours

As post-16 education is funded on planned hours, funding auditors will need to see an easy reconciliation between planned study hours on the ILR or school census and the hours on the student's timetable.

Funding audits will continue to focus on the eligibility of the activity in study programmes. For example, they will check planned hours are relevant, planned, supervised, quality assured and organised/timetabled within the normal working pattern of the institution and do not systematically include lunch breaks.

Funding auditors will satisfy themselves that planned hours are credible, deliverable and realistic. Institutions must be able to demonstrate that a robust system is in place for planning student programmes that are timetabled, roomed (where relevant), have resources in place and align with staff timetables. There should be evidence that the significant majority of the students are attending the majority of their planned programme.

It is inevitable that some planned activities will not run and that some student's individual plans will change in year, but we would not expect this to be the case for most students. Institutions should be monitoring, managing and reporting on student compliance with their study programmes and evidence of this should be made available to auditors as part of their programme of work.

Funding auditors will review individual student records and report where records indicate the institution's systems are failing to monitor the delivery of study programmes.

Funding auditors will require changes to planned hours only where activity not eligible for funding is identified, or where systemic issues with determining and recording planned hours are identified. This may affect an institution's funding. Auditors will report to governing bodies any concerns that they uncover in the

way the planned hours are being monitored and managed, and this should feed into a tightening up and improvement of the approach the institution takes for the following year as part of a clear action plan approved by the institutions' audit committee.

We have published 2 examples on how the timetabled planned hours may be summarised to simplify the necessary funding audit evidence in annex B of the [funding regulations](#).

Checklist for planned hours fully eligible for funding

For planned hours to be [eligible for funding](#) they must meet the qualifying criteria. We advise institutions to check that:

- all activities are eligible for funding and that no hours are included unless it can be demonstrated that they are planned, timetabled, supervised and/or organised by a member of staff
- total planned hours should always agree with the respective timetable and/or the Individual Learning Plan (ILP)/Learning Agreement
- the timetable is credible, realistic and deliverable
- correct withdrawal and/or leave dates are recorded so that the qualifying period can be accurately assessed
- the core learning aim, where required, is clearly identified in the data return and in the learning agreement/timetable so that programme cost weightings and retention can be accurately assessed

Queries on planned hours

ESFA enquiries

Contact form

<https://form.education...>

For all enquiries for the Education and Skills Funding Agency

ESFA funding guidance documents

The documents listed below outline the main features of the ESFA funding arrangements and are an integral part of the ESFA's funding agreements for young people aged 16 to 19 and those aged 19 to 24 funded by the ESFA. All these documents should be read in this context, unless specifically stated otherwise. The definitive ESFA guidance for each year is published on these pages with the most recent year at the top of the webpage.

- [funding 16 to 19 detailed guidance overview page](#)
- [funding regulations](#)
- [funding rates and formula](#)

Funding guidance presentations

Presentations for institutions to use internally to audiences who are required to understand the funding procedures and guidance. These cover

- [funding regulations](#)
- [funding rates and formula](#)
- [student eligibility guidance](#)
- [ILR funding returns](#)

AoC Study Programme Central

The [AoC study programme](#) central website has a range of useful information on study programmes for institutions.

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How funding is calculated and allocated, eligibility and conditions, study programmes, student support schemes.

[16 to 19 Funding: how it works](#)

[16 to 19 funding study programmes: work experience](#)

[Review of end of year 16 to 19 study programmes data for 2014 to 2015](#)

Further education funding

Agreements and allocations, performance management rules, funding bands, process for seeking funding.

[16 to 19 funding: maths and English condition of funding](#)

[Funding education for 16- to 19-year-olds](#)

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