

## RETURNING FULL TIME EQUIVALENCE (FTE) DATA - PROVIDERS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

As part of the HESA student return providers must record students' full-time equivalence (FTE).

This represents the provider's best academic judgement of the full-time equivalence of the student for each Student course session.

### APPROACHES TO RETURNING FTE

For providers in England and Wales, there are three methods within the HESA Student Return of recording Student FTE and providers can choose which of these approaches to use. A provider does not have to be consistent across their submission(s) in the approach, for example they could use approach 1 for some students and approach 2 for others.

These approaches are outlined below.

A single Student course session must have at least one full approach returned in order to record FTE.

#### Approach 1: Recording FTE by reference period

Each year of submission is split into three reference periods with the following dates:

Reference period 01: 1 August - 15 November  
Reference period 02: 16 November - 31 March  
Reference period 03: 1 April - 31 July

Approach 1 requires the provider to record a student's FTE by reference period with the return of the FullTimeEquivalence entity associated with their Student course session(s).

To record the Student FTE for a given Student course session a FullTimeEquivalence entity would be returned for each reference period in which the Student course session falls with the following fields:

- FullTimeEquivalence.REFPERIOD: This records the reference period (01, 02 or 03) that the FTE is being recorded for e.g. the reference period running from November-March would be 02.
- FullTimeEquivalence.YEAR: This records the year 1 of the reporting year (running from 1 August-31 July) in which the relevant reference period falls. For example, the reference period running from 1 August 2019-15 November 2019 would have 2019 recorded here. The reference period running from 1 April 2020-31 July 2020 would also have 2019 as it falls within the 2019/20 reporting year.
- FullTimeEquivalence.FTE: This records the Student FTE for the reference period identified by the above two fields.

The number of Full time equivalence entities that need to be returned for a given Student course session therefore depends upon the number of reference periods that the Student course session spans.



## EXAMPLES

### Student 1

Student one is on a three-year programme, where each Student course session runs from September-June.

They would therefore have three Student course sessions, one for each Course session of their programme and each Student course session would span three reference periods.

Year 1: 2019/20			Year 2: 2020/21			Year 3: 2021/22		
RP1	RP2	RP3	RP1	RP2	RP3	RP1	RP2	RP3
Student course session 1			Student course session 2			Student course session 3		
RP: 1 Year: 2019 FTE: 33	RP: 2 Year: 2019 FTE: 33	RP: 3 Year: 2019 FTE: 34	RP: 1 Year: 2020 FTE: 33	RP: 2 Year: 2020 FTE: 33	RP: 3 Year: 2020 FTE: 34	RP: 1 Year: 2021 FTE: 33	RP: 2 Year: 2021 FTE: 33	RP: 3 Year: 2021 FTE: 34

Three FullTimeEquivalence entities would be returned per Student course session, one for each reference period, this is shown in the final row of the diagram above.

The FullTimeEquivalence.REFPERIOD and FullTimeEquivalence.YEAR fields indicate which reference period the FTE is being recorded for and so are a unique combination of year and reference period for each FullTimeEquivalence entity returned.

The FullTimeEquivalence.FTE field records the student's FTE for that reference period. The sum of the FTE returned for each Student course session adds up to 100 to reflect the student's full-time activity in each year.

### Student 2

Student two is on a two-year programme where each year runs from January- December.

They would therefore have two Student course sessions, one for each Course session of their programme and each Student course session would span four reference periods.

Year 1: 2019/20		Year 2: 2020/21			Year 3: 2021/20		
RP2	RP3	RP1	RP2	RP3	RP1	RP2	
Student course session 1				Student course session 2			
RP: 2 Year: 2019 FTE: 20	RP: 3 Year: 2019 FTE: 35	RP: 1 Year: 2020 FTE: 35	RP: 2 Year: 2020 FTE: 10	RP: 2 Year: 2020 FTE: 20	RP: 3 Year: 2020 FTE: 35	RP: 1 Year: 2021 FTE: 35	RP: 2 Year: 2021 FTE: 10

Four FullTimeEquivalence entities would be returned per Student course session, one for each reference period, this is shown in the final row of the diagram above.



The FullTimeEquivalence,REFPERIOD and FullTimeEquivalence.YEAR fields indicate which reference period the FTE is being recorded for.

In this example, reference period 2 of the 2020/21 year spans both Student course sessions and so the FTE undertaken in this reference period would be split between the two Student course sessions. Two FullTimeEquivalence entities are therefore returned for this reference period, one associated with each Student course session.

The sum of the FTE returned for each Student course session adds up to 100 to reflect the student's full-time activity in each year.

### Approach 2: Predicting the FTE for a Student course session

Approach 2 requires that a predicted FTE is returned for each Student course session at the start in the StudentCourseSession.PREDICTEDFTE field.

If this prediction changes, the value recorded in StudentCourseSession.PREDICTEDFTE would be updated.

At the end of each StudentCourseSession the StudentCourseSession.STULOAD would be returned to record the actual FTE undertaken by the student during the StudentCourseSession.

The StudentCourseSession.PREDICTEDFTE does not need to be updated at the end of the StudentCourseSession because at this stage the StudentCourseSession.STULOAD would record the accurate FTE.

### Examples

#### Student 1

Student one begins studying on a full-time, full-year Student course session. The student drops out part way through the second reference period.

The below table shows the FTE information that would be returned in each reference period.

Field	Reference period 1	Reference period 2
StudentCourseSession.PREDICTEDFTE	100	100
StudentCourseSession.STULOAD	Not returned	50

The predicted FTE is returned as 100 at the start to show the student is expecting the complete a full-time year.

Once the student drops out, the Student course session is closed and so the StudentCourseSession.STULOAD is returned to record the actual FTE completed by the student during the Student course session.

The StudentCourseSession.PREDICTEDFTE does not need to be updated as the StudentCourseSession has ended and a StudentCourseSession.STULOAD returned.



## Student 2

Student two begins studying on a part-time, full-year Student course session. During the second reference period the student indicates they will be taking an additional module to the number originally expected.

The below table shows the FTE information that would be returned in each reference period.

Field	Reference period 1	Reference period 2	Reference period 3
StudentCourseSession.PREDICTEDFTE	50	75	75
StudentCourseSession.STULOAD	Not returned	Not returned	75

At the start of the Student course session the student was expected to complete half a full-time year's study and so the predicted FTE is returned as 50. In the second reference period, they take on an additional module and so the predicted FTE is updated to reflect that the student is now expected to undertake more activity. At the end of the Student course session, this is confirmed in the StudentCourseSession.STULOAD field being recorded as 75.

### Approach 3: HESA derive the FTE from module data

If a provider does not return FTE data using approaches 1 or 2, HESA will derive the FTE using module data.

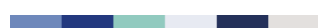
Providers using this approach must return the StudentCourseSession.STULOAD field at the end of the StudentCourseSession.

Please note that providers in England registered with the OfS in the 'Approved' category are not required to return Module data and so if not returning Module data will need to use approach 1 or 2 to record FTE.

### Proposed derivation of Student FTE

The proposed FTE derivation calculates the FTE for a given day of the Student course session using the following steps.

Step	Calculation
Identify all ModuleDeliveries undertaken by a student which are active on a specified date.	Active modules undertaken by student on specified date: <b>MODDELID</b> for which <b>ModuleInstance.MODULESTARTDATE</b> <= Specified date <b>ModuleDelivery.MODENDDATE</b> >= Specified date
Calculate the length of each ModuleDelivery in days	<b>ModuleLength</b> (days) = <b>ModuleDelivery.MODENDDATE</b> - <b>ModuleDelivery.MODSTARTDATE</b>
Calculate the FTE of each ModuleDelivery per day	<b>ModuleDayFTE</b> = <b>Module.FTE / ModuleLength</b>
Calculate the FTE for the StudentCourseSession on a given date.	Student course session FTE on specified date: <b>SUM ModuleDayFTE</b> for all active ModuleDeliveries undertaken by student on specified date



This process would therefore provide a derived FTE for each day of a Student course session.

The sum of all days during a period of interest could therefore provide the FTE during that period, for example the total FTE for the Student course session or the FTE during a given reference period.

Notes:

- For providers in Wales, Modules where ModuleInstance.APEL = 01 or 02 will be excluded from FTE calculation
- This approach assumes that every day during a ModuleDelivery has the same FTE as there is no data available to avoid this assumption
- For step 1, the start and ends dates recorded on the ModuleInstance/ModuleOutcome will be used where these have been returned. Where they have not been returned, the start and end dates of the ModuleDelivery will be used.
- HESA need to consider how fully flexible modules will be taken into account in this derivation.

### WHICH APPROACH WILL BE USED BY HESA?

As there are multiple approaches to returning FTE, the approach that HESA will use for reports, quality assurance and onward uses will depend upon what has been returned by the provider for a given Student course session.

1. If approach 1 has been returned for a Student course session, HESA will use this data.
2. If approach 1 has not been returned for a Student course session and approach 2 has, HESA will use this data.
3. If neither approach 1 nor approach 2 have been returned for a Student course session, HESA will use the derived data based on Module information
4. If neither approach 1 nor approach 2 have been returned for a Student course session, module data and the StudentCourseSession.STULOAD field will need to be returned. If they are not, this will cause a validation issue as there would be no FTE data. At least one of the 3 approaches must be returned for each Student course session.

### WHICH APPROACH SHOULD YOU USE?

The decision to return FTE data using approach 1, 2 or 3 is up to each provider, however there may be some characteristics of your provision to bear in mind when making this decision:

- Approved providers in England: Providers in England registered with the OfS in the 'Approved' category are not required to return module data. Using approach 3 of allowing HESA to derive your FTE would also require you to submit all Module data to allow this derivation to take place accurately.
- Flexible provision: If you have very flexible provision you may not know the activity a student will undertake in a Student course session until it is complete. In this case, you would not be able to use approach 2 and predict the FTE as you not able to predict this in a reliable way.
- Different types of provision: Providers can use different approaches for different provision. For example, if you largely have structured courses with predictable FTE

but offer one flexible course, you could use approach 2 for the majority of your students but approach 1 for the flexible provision.

## FUTHER GUIDANCE ON RECORDING FTE (WHERE USING APPROACHES 1 OR 2)

The following guidance can be used to assist in calculating FTE for providers using approaches 1 and 2.

### General notes

A 'full-time, full year' HESA student should correspond to a full-time student as understood by the regulatory body or funding council.

The regulatory bodies and funding councils have agreed that a common definition of full-time is that years of study must involve a minimum of 24 weeks study (note that this definition does not apply to final year students in providers in Wales).

Where a full-time student completes a full year within a Student course session the StudentCourseSession.STULOAD or the sum of all FullTimeEquivalence.FTE would usually be 100.

The student FTE should not be weighted to take account of any resourcing implications of different courses. For example, both a full time, full year undergraduate student and a full-time, full year postgraduate student would usually have an FTE for a year of 100. A comparison of different full-time, full year programmes of study, for example according to the number of weeks studied or the number of credits taken is not expected.

Part-time students should be returned as a proportion of an equivalent full-time course. The Student FTE of part-time study can be estimated on either a 'credit' or 'time' basis. For example, providers operating a credit points system can use the number of credit points that may be obtained from a Course session of the part-time course compared with the number of credit points that may be obtained from a Course session of a related full-time course. For example, if the number of points that could be obtained was 120 for a full-time Course session and 90 for a part-time Course session then the total FTE for the associated Student course sessions will be 100 for the full-time students and 75 for the part-time students.

Where a student leaves a Course session early, for example if they leave the provider early or transfer to a different Course delivery, their Student course session would be ended, and the FTE recorded would be reduced to reflect their pattern of study.

### Student studying at a greater intensity

Where a student is studying at a greater intensity than is the norm for their qualification aim, providers should return a greater FTE to reflect this.

This would either be reflected through greater values being returned for each reference period in FullTimeEquivalence.FTE or in the predicted and actual FTE fields: StudentCourseSession.PREDICTEDFTE and StudentCourseSession.STULOAD respectively.

The Student course session may have a total FTE of greater than 100 where it is associated with an accelerated program (CourseDelivery.COURSEDELMOEDTYPE = 03) as students on these course deliveries would be studying at a greater intensity than is the norm for their qualification aim. For example, if a Course delivery with the aim of a first degree was two



years long (compared to the usual three years for first degrees) the associated Student course sessions would have a total FTE of 150 to represent this higher intensity.

#### Students who repeat part of a course

For students who repeat part of their course, the sum of all FTE over their Engagement would be greater than usually seen for students studying for the same qualification aim. For example, a student studying a three-year, full-time degree would usually have three Student course sessions, each with a total FTE of 100 and so a total FTE of their Engagement of 300.

If the student had to retake a year, they would have an additional Student course session with a total FTE of 100 meaning the sum of all FTE for their Engagement would be 400.

#### Student who interrupt study

The FTE recorded must be reduced where a student interrupts study.

If you are using approach 1, the FTE recorded for each reference period should reflect the study the student has undertaken. If the student interrupted study part way through a reference period, the FTE would be reduced to reflect this. If the student was not actively studying for the full reference period during an open Student course session, the FTE would be recorded as 0.

If you are using approach 2, you would have recorded a predicted FTE for each student at the start of the Student course session. If the student then suspends study before the end of the Course session and the StudentCourseSession is closed, the StudentCourseSession.STULOAD would reflect the actual FTE completed by the student prior to suspending.

If a student were to suspend and recommence study within the same StudentCourseSession, the StudentCourseSession.STULOAD would reflect the combined total of activity they undertook prior to suspension and following recommencing study.

#### Students on a full year placement

Student course sessions representing a full year's placement should have a total FTE of 100. The load on these students for the purposes of some analysis will be reduced to 50 or 0 and the Office for Students will assume an FTE of 50 in funding calculations.

#### Collaborative or franchise arrangements

Where returning Student course sessions that involve franchise or concurrent collaborative arrangements (i.e. where a student is supervised by more than one provider at the same time), the FTE recorded should not be reduced to reflect this. For example, a full-time, full-year Student course session that is franchised out for the whole year would have a total FTE of 100 (if within the scope of the return). The franchising arrangement would be recorded in the ModuleDeliveryRole entity.

#### Incoming and outgoing exchange students

The FTE recorded for incoming and outgoing exchange students should not be reduced.





## Postgraduate research students

For postgraduate research students where there is no teaching input and an unspecified time for completion, comparisons should be made with the provider's norm for the full-time course, ignoring any extended writing up period.

For example, a provider has a PhD programme where the normal pattern of full-time study is three years of full-time study (FTE = 100 each) and one year of writing up (FTE = 10). Comparisons when assessing the FTE of part-time PhD students should be made with reference to the formal three years full-time study, ignoring the writing up year. A PhD student with six years part-time study would therefore have an FTE for each Student course session of 50.

Where the student is writing up for the full Student course session, the maximum FTE for that Student course session is 10.

## Students with two Engagements

If a student has multiple concurrent Engagements, the FTE recorded for the Student course sessions associated with each Engagement would relate the activity for that Engagement only, not the combined activity of multiple Engagements.

## Students transferring

Where a student transfers between Course deliveries at the same provider, they would have one Student course session returned for each Course session that they engage with. The FTE recorded on each Student course session would relate to the student's activity for that Student course session only.

For example, if you are using approach 2 to return FTE, when a student begins studying on a full-time, full- year Course session, the StudentCourseSession.PREDICTEDFTE would be returned as 100.

If the student transferred having completed half of the Course session, the StudentCourseSession would be closed and the StudentCourseSession.STULOAD would be returned as 50 to reflect the activity the student undertook before the Student course session ended.

A new Student course session would then be created associating the student with the Course session they are now engaging with. The StudentCourseSession.PREDICTEDFTE would be returned as 50 for this new StudentCourseSession as the student is expected to complete half a year of full-time study as part of that Student course session.

