HESA

RECORDING FTE: UPDATED PROPOSAL (SUPPORTING INFORMATION)

BACKGROUND

During the 2019/20 (Data Futures) specification consultation, we put out a proposal for how the full-time equivalence for a student could be recorded. Based on feedback we received, we have since been looking at better ways for this to be returned.

HESA convened meetings with HE providers, OfS and HEFCW to discuss the problems involved and to come up with another proposal comprised of three approaches, as detailed below.

Minutes from the meetings are available in the Recording FTE blogpost.

1. **STULOAD at the end of the Student course session:** This approach envisages the collection of FTE at the end of the Course session once all activity is complete.

Benefits	Limitations
No increase in burden to the providers from the current collection.	Possible minimal effect, but likewise it is possible it is not. For example, courses that start or end at the start or end of reporting periods (for example around Easter) may have cohorts whose FTE is not included one year and double counted the next.
Accuracy is high.	Measure of activity not available in a timely fashion. For a Course session that is twelve months long, a measure of activity that relates to what occurred in the first reference period will not be available for up to 16 months (more likely 10 months) after the start of the Course session.

2. **Planned FTE updated at each reference point:** This approach envisages providers returning the FTE the student plans to undertake in that Course session and updating it as necessary. Analysis could be undertaken by considering the planned FTE across a cohort at a census date, or an assumption of consistent intensity made to allow for the FTE to be calculated for activity from one date to another (e.g. the old HESA reporting period). In the final reference period of the Student course session this would likely be equivalent to STULOAD.

Benefits	Limitations
Timeliness is leveraged.	Census date would not result in a consistent time series with the previous collection (more likely that planned FTE will decrease rather than increase through a Course session). Were FTE calculated from one date to another (where both dates occurred prior to

	the end of most recent reporting period) and used in aggregate fashion it is likely to result in consistency with time series.
(And possible limitation) For providers with traditional provision, the burden is only marginally more as providers make assumptions about student's FTE for planning purposes. For part-time and flexible provision, it may not be possible for providers to plan the behaviour of a single student and so significant effort to develop reasonable estimates may be required. This will impact on accuracy (see next point) while introducing an incredibly high burden on providers.	May not align with business process in significant chunks of the sector, resulting in a decrease in data quality. Statutory Customers do not want to depend on an FTE value a provider considers entirely speculative when coming to regulatory decisions.

3. Reference period FTE: This approach envisages the collection of an FTE value within a reference period for the Student course session. Providers would be able to return up to 4 reference period FTEs for each Student course session.

Benefits	Limitations
Most likely to result in consistency, as assumptions are minimised (subject to limitation - see right)	Due to high burden, it is difficult for providers to adopt this approach. The information presented back to a provider does not necessarily tally with their understanding of the world, and their ability to confirm the value is potentially compromised. Although this methodology can produce a high level of precision, this is not the same as accuracy.
Timeliness is leveraged.	Providers with traditional provision believe the burden is incredibly high. However, providers such as the Open University believe this approach is far more preferential to a planned FTE as it works more closely with their business processes.

4. Derive the FTE value: This approach envisages that the FTE figure will be calculated based on either the student's Module data or using the planned FTE value.

PROPOSED CALCULATION OF STUDENT FTE DERIVED FIELD

First introduce the concept of student FTE at specified date (in the past):

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Look at the FTE of all modules undertaken by the student which are active on specified date (excluding APEL – Wales only field – and RESIT only)

ModuleDelivery.MODSTARTDATE – date on which the delivery of this module started
ModuleDelivery.MODENDDATE – date on which the delivery of this module ended / due to end
ModuleInstance.MODULESTARTDATE – date on which the student started the module
Module.FTE – proportion of a full-time equivalent year attributable to the module

(If using MODENDDATE (or potentially MODOUTENDDATE) this logic does not work if the end date includes an assessment that happens significantly after teaching activity finishes since FTE per day will be underapproximated)

ModuleLength (days) = **ModuleDelivery.MODENDDATE** - **ModuleDelivery.MODSTARTDATE**

Proportion of FTE year attributable to the module per day:
ModuleDayFTE = **Module.FTE / ModuleLength**

Active modules undertaken by student on specified date:
MODDELID for which
ModuleInstance.MODULESTARTDATE<= Specified date
ModuleDelivery.MODENDDATE>= Specified date

Student course session FTE on specified date:
SUM (Module.FTE/ ModuleLength) for all active modules undertaken by student on specified date

Calculate this Student course session FTE rate for each day in the specified reference period and SUM for all days across that period to give total Student course session FTE in that reference period.

This assumes that every day is equal but there is no other information available to avoid this assumption and this aligns with current module FTE guidance.

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