

Subject:

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FE10/14

DEFINITION OF FULL-TIME STUDENT

Date of Issue:
8th August 2014

Target Audience:

- Principals / Directors of FE Colleges
- Curriculum Managers
- Chairs of Governing Bodies
- FE College Finance
- Colleges NI

Summary of Contents:

This Circular provides information and guidance on the definition of a full-time student.

Enquiries:

Any enquiries about the contents of this Circular should be addressed to:
Harriet Ferguson re Curriculum issues:
Stephen McGonagle re Coding issues.

Further Education
Department for Employment & Learning
Adelaide House
39 – 49 Adelaide Street
BELFAST
BT2 8FD

Status of Contents:
Information

Related Documents:
FE 13/01

Superseded Documents:
None

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N/A

DEL Website:
www.delni.gov.uk

Tel: 028 90 257425
Tel: 028 90 257708

Email: Harriet.ferguson@delni.gov.uk

Stephen.mcgonagle@delni.gov.uk

INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this circular is to advise of a change in what constitutes a full-time enrolment in a further education college.

BACKGROUND

2. The Further Education Management Information System (FEMIS) manual published in 1994, revised in March 1996, provided the sector with a range of definitions and coding requirements to facilitate the input of data on college information systems. The FEMIS manual, although fifteen years old, remains operational and should be the first point of reference.
3. Chapter 4 'Student / Enrolment Trailer Records' provides a definition of what constitutes a full-time student; Page 84, point 5 states:
To be classified as FE Full-time, a student must attend a course as follows:

- i. for at least 15 hours and at least 7 sessions per week, or for more than 21 hours per week, when no sessional requirement has to be satisfied, but see (ii) below;*
- ii. students attending for between 15 and 21 hours per week and for at least 7 sessions may be classified as full or part-time; and*
- iii. attendance not covered by (i) or (ii) should be classified as part-time*

A session is defined as either a morning, an afternoon or an evening. For the purpose of FESR and Annual Monitoring Survey (AMS) returns, full year students must attend for at least 30 weeks in the academic year.

NEW ARRANGEMENTS

4. Following discussions with the Principals' Group the Department has agreed to remove the '7 sessions' requirement from the definition of a full-time student. From the 2014/15 academic year, the following guidance should now be applied:

To be classified full-time, a further education student must undertake a course for at least 15 hours per week, and for at least 30 weeks in the academic year. Course content may be delivered face to face in the classroom, online or a combination of both.

5. Colleges will be responsible for ensuring that any changes made to the timetable as a result of this guidance will not impact negatively on quality of

provision. Quality will continue to be closely monitored through the Annual CDP process and Performance Packs.

Coding

6. For funding purposes MOA1 and MOA20/21 will remain the only two modes of attendance treated as full-time. With regard to statistical analysis for enrolment and performance statistics this will treat MOA20/21/22 as part time enrolments; this is necessary to ensure accurate statistical analysis, particularly in respect of outcome analysis. One of the performance measures is 'success rate', which is the number of qualifications divided by the number of enrolments. It is essential therefore to record outcomes for all qualifications in the qualification bundle thus ensuring robust analysis in determining performance statistics, such as success rate.
7. If a student is studying 3 qualifications within bundled provision, for funding purposes these 3 enrolments are funded at the full time level and regarded as 1 full time funded enrolment. If this student only obtains 1 or 2 of the 3 potential qualifications, it is not possible to determine whether this one full time 'funded enrolment' should have an outcome of an achievement or not. Therefore for statistical analysis and performance statistics all 3 enrolments would be regarded as part time enrolment and each would be analysed to determine if they have achieved their individual qualification. As such, this revised guidance has no impact on the current Consolidated Data Return (CDR) extract routines.
8. For statistical analysis using the FESR and FELS the following mode of attendance options are treated as full time:
 - 01 Full-time (≥ 30 weeks and > 15 hrs p/w)
 - 02 Full-time (≥ 4 and < 30 weeks and ≥ 15 hr p/w)
 - 03 Sandwich
 - 11 Full-time (< 4 weeks) i.e. short intensive course of at least 15 hrs p/w

Otherwise courses will be regarded as part time.