

Office for
Students



Higher Education Students Early Statistics survey 2024-25 (HESES24)

Guidance for providers

Reference OfS 2024.42

Enquiries to heses@officeforstudents.org.uk

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This document is relevant to higher education providers that have registered with (or applied to register with) the Office for Students (OfS) in the Approved (fee cap) category and are seeking OfS funding for the 2025-26 academic year.

It provides guidance on funding rules and definitions that is relevant to all such providers, but the HESES24 survey is to be completed only by providers that have students registered with them in academic year 2024-25, who are on courses recognised for OfS funding purposes. Other providers registered, or applying to register, in the Approved (fee cap) category are required to complete the Higher Education Students Forecast 2025-26 (HESF25) survey.

The data collected in HESES24 provides an early indication of the number of higher education students studying in 2024-25, and, with data supplied to the Higher Education Statistics Agency and the Education and Skills Funding Agency, will inform the allocation of teaching funds for 2025-26. It will also be used to inform the distribution of some elements of recurrent grant for 2024-25.

Action: Providers should upload returns to the OfS portal. See Table 1 below for timetable.

This document has two parts:

- Part I: Overview of HESES24

This section contains an overview of HESES24, a summary of changes and clarifications since HESES23, and additional information about the HESES24 process.

- Part II: Funding rules and definitions

The annexes in this section define the student population covered by the HESES return and give guidance on what is 'countable' in HESES24, as well as providing information on the rules and definitions that are needed to complete the survey correctly.

Colour coding

We aim to treat all providers fairly and equally; therefore, the vast majority of the guidance contained in this document applies to all providers.

In some specific cases, different guidance will apply. This will be explicitly stated in the text and the relevant paragraphs will be labelled with a coloured band on the left of the page as below:

- a. Guidance that applies solely to **further education and sixth form colleges and academies** (light blue).
- b. Guidance that applies to **all other providers** (red).

Completing the survey workbook

Alongside this document, we are publishing separate, additional guidance, titled 'Completing the HESES24 workbook'. This provides a detailed description of how to fill in the HESES24 workbook and the process of data verification. It is published to help staff at providers who may be completing the workbook for the first time or feel they need a 'refresher' of concepts involved in completing the survey.

We are also publishing separate guidance on submitting representations on multiplication factors. This provides information on when representations should be submitted. It is published to assist staff at providers in making appropriate representations with sufficient information should they wish to do so.

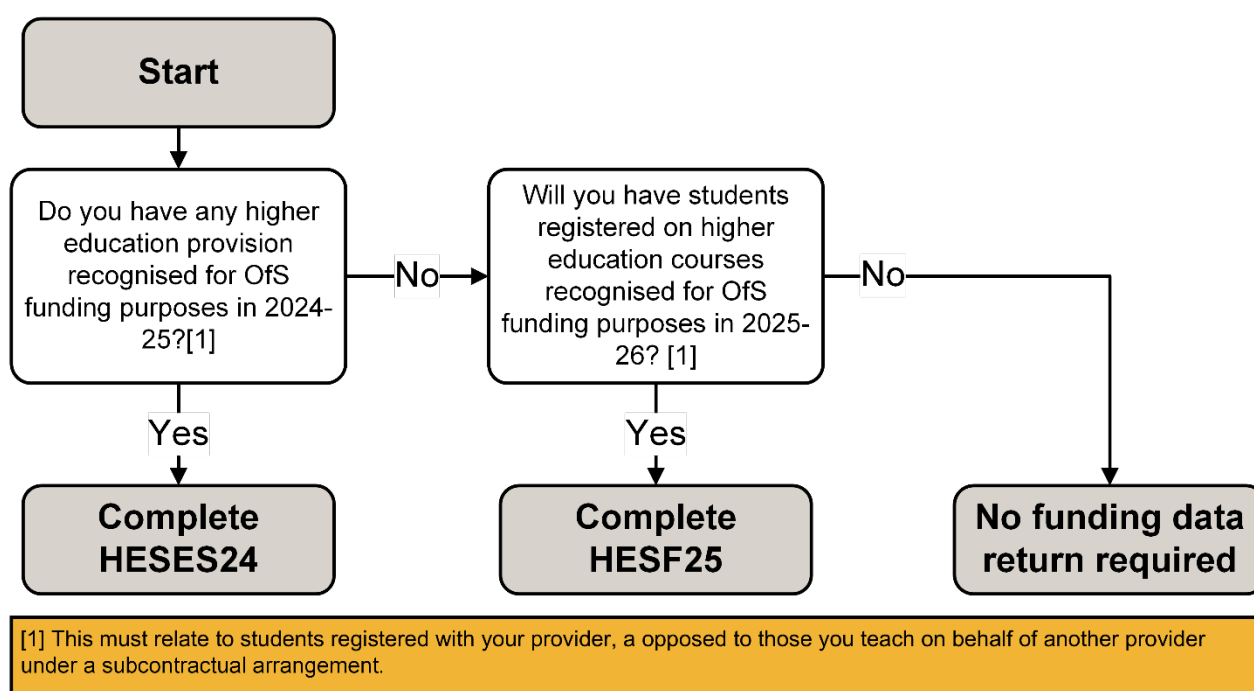
This additional guidance document will also include a number of appendices that will be issued once the workbooks have been released (from October 2024). The appendices provide further technical information to support completion of the HESES24 tables and worksheets, such as specific descriptions of the validation and credibility checks applied within the workbook.

Part I: Overview of HESES24

Purpose

1. To inform the calculation of Office for Students (OfS) grants, all higher education providers that are registered with the OfS in the Approved (fee cap) category must complete a data survey. The data surveys to inform funding for the 2025-26 academic year (1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026) are:
 - a. For a provider that has students registered with it on courses recognised for OfS funding purposes in the 2024-25 academic year, the Higher Education Students Early Statistics survey 2024-25 (HESES24).
 - b. For a provider that does not have students registered with it on courses recognised for OfS funding purposes in the 2024-25 academic year, the Higher Education Students Forecast 2025-26 (HESF25) survey.
2. This document, together with its annexes, describes the HESES24 survey and the funding rules and definitions that apply in completing it. Providers completing HESF25 should also refer to the HESES24 funding rules and definitions when completing that survey. Figure 1 can be used to identify which survey a provider should complete.

Figure 1: Which funding data survey should an Approved (fee cap) provider complete?



3. The data provided in the HESES24 survey will:
 - a. Give an early indication, for purposes including government planning, of the number of higher education students studying in the academic year 2024-25.
 - b. Together with data supplied to the designated data body (DDB) and to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), inform the allocation of teaching funds for the academic

year 2025-26.¹ We also expect HESES24 data to inform the distribution of funding for the Level 4 and 5 provision funding allocation for the 2024-25 academic year.²

4. Information on how HESES data informs funding allocations is in our 'Guide to funding 2024-25'.³ Further guidance on how HESES24 data will be used in calculating funding in 2025-26 will be published later this academic year.

Timetable of events and action required

5. HESES24 workbooks will be available to providers in late October 2024. Providers must ensure that they complete and submit their workbooks on time. The timetable for HESES24 is summarised in Table 1. Actions for providers are in bold.

Table 1: Timetable for HESES24

Date	Action
September and October 2024	HESES24 webinars held and online training material released. ⁴
Late October 2024	HESES24 workbook will be available to download from the OfS portal. This workbook will contain the 2023-24 individualised data from the data checking tool (where available). ⁵
1 November 2024	HESES24 census date for further education and sixth form colleges and academies.
13 November 2024 (noon)	HESES24 submission deadline for further education and sixth form colleges and academies . A valid HESES24 workbook must be submitted through the OfS portal by noon .
From 14 November 2024	Data verification phase, using our credibility checks and data comparisons, begins for further education colleges. Student data contacts are asked to verify, and answer any questions about, the data. This may involve several rounds of queries.

¹ Jisc is the current designated data body and took on the role on 4 October 2022 following the merging of Jisc and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/jisc-to-become-designated-data-body/.

² See 'Recurrent funding for 2024-25', available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/recurrent-funding-for-2024-25/.

³ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/guide-to-funding-2024-25/.

⁴ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-collection/heses/.

⁵ Individualised data means:

- for further education and sixth form colleges and academies, the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) returned to the Education and Skills Funding Agency
- for all other providers, the Student record returned to the designated data body.

Information about the data checking tool is available at: www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-checking-tool/.

Date	Action
1 December 2024	HESES24 census date for all other providers.
11 December 2024 (noon)	HESES24 submission deadline for all other providers . A valid HESES24 workbook must be submitted through the OfS portal by noon .
From 12 December 2024	Data verification phase, using our credibility checks and data comparisons, begins for all other providers. Student data contacts are asked to verify, and answer any questions about, the data. This may involve several rounds of queries.
31 January 2025	Sign-off deadline for all providers . Final HESES24 data must be signed off as correct as at the census date by the provider's accountable officer . ⁶
14 February 2025 (noon)	Deadline for all providers to submit representations on multiplication factors for inclusion in the initial grant announcement for 2025-26. A valid workbook should be submitted by noon . See paragraphs 34-37.

6. We expect to use the HESES24 data to inform the distribution of the funding for the 'Level 4 and 5 provision' allocation for the 2024-25 academic year and to announce this in spring 2025. The timetable for the announcement of recurrent grant for academic year 2025-26 and capital grant for financial year 2025-26 cannot yet be specified, as this depends on the timing and content of statutory guidance from the Secretary of State relating to our funding settlement from government. We will update providers about this as soon as we can.
7. We expect that the data signed off as correct by the provider's accountable officer is the final data that we will use. We will accept amendments after this point only in exceptional circumstances, where errors are widespread and significant and make a material difference to our use of the data. This will be determined through an amendment process.⁷
8. As set out in our 'Terms and conditions of funding for 2024-25',⁸ if the OfS finds (whether through data reconciliations, data audit or any other means) that erroneous data has resulted in providers receiving incorrect funding or student number allocations, then we will adjust these accordingly – subject to the availability of funds. Where data error has resulted in a funding allocation being too high, we will recover the excess funding from the provider for any year informed by the audited or reconciled data (including any consequential effects on funding for subsequent years). If there is evidence that a provider has deliberately not complied with the funding rules or has ignored previous advice and recommendations from the OfS or from our predecessor organisation, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), we may recover funding that relates to a longer period, up to a maximum of seven years. This

⁶ See 'Regulatory advice 10: Accountable officers. Guidance for providers on the responsibilities of accountable officers' (OfS 2018.29), available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-10-accountable-officers-guidance-for-providers-on-the-responsibilities-of-accountable-officers/.

⁷ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/amendments-to-data/.

⁸ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/terms-and-conditions-of-funding-for-2024-25/.

includes years when funding was provided by HEFCE. A provider must repay any funding that is identified as having been overpaid as a result of such recalculations.

9. If data or information has not been provided, or the OfS considers that it is incomplete, incorrect or otherwise not of a satisfactory quality, then the OfS may, at its sole discretion, use its own assumptions or estimates about the relevant data or information for the provider to determine its eligibility for, and level of, funding. This may include assuming that the provider has no eligible activity to count towards the allocation of a particular element of funding and thus that no such funding should be provided to it.

Summary of changes and clarifications since HESES23

10. Those completing HESES24 who previously completed HESES23 should note the following changes and updates that have been made for HESES24. The main changes were set out in 'Changes to 2024 student data surveys to inform funding: Notification of changes'.⁹

Annex B

11. This annex has been updated to reflect the introduction by the ESFA of HECoS codes into the Learning Aim Reference Service (LARS) to replace the LearnDirect Class System (LDCS) codes from 2024-25.

Annex F

12. Our definition of fee eligibility is not changing, in that students are classified as 'Home fee' depending on whether they can be regarded as eligible, as defined in Schedule 1 of the Education (Fees and Awards) (England) Regulations 2007 (Statutory Instrument 2007 No 779), as amended. However, we have updated Annex F to further remind providers that they should annually review both the legislation and how it affects their student population. Changes to legislation may alter their students' fee eligibility status partway through a course (which, from 1 August 2024, includes that students can gain settled status partway through their course, meaning they become eligible for student support for the rest of their course and will qualify for home fee status from that point).

Annex G

13. This annex has been updated to reflect the introduction by the ESFA of HECoS codes into LARS to replace the LearnDirect Class System (LDCS) codes from 2024-25.

Changes in the survey workbook and multiplication factors

14. In 2023-24, we published multiplication factors which would be applied to HESES23 data to derive fundable FTEs for the 2023-24 academic year on the provider portal. We asked providers to submit representations to us if they believed the multiplication factors, based on their historical data, were no longer appropriate.

⁹ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/changes-to-2024-student-data-surveys-to-inform-funding-notification-of-changes/ (OfS 2024.37).

15. Following the representations process, we finalised the multiplication factors for each provider for use in 2023-24. These multiplication factors will also be applied to HESES24 data to determine fundable FTEs for 2024-25.
16. In parallel with the HESES24 collection, we will also be running a representations process for the multiplication factors applied to data in 2024-25. This will be contained within the HESES24 workbook and will allow providers to submit representations to the OfS where there has been significant change in provision between the 2023-24 and 2024-25 academic years which would mean the multiplication factors are no longer appropriate.
17. While we have not made changes to the HESES24 worksheets, the multiplication factors representations worksheets will be included in the HESES24 workbook. These sheets only need to be completed where providers believe the proposed multiplication factors are no longer appropriate.
18. Full guidance on multiplication factors and the representations process can be found on the Multiplication factors tab on the HESES webpages.¹⁰

Before completing your survey

19. In preparation for completing the survey, we recommend that you read this guidance thoroughly. When completing the survey, you will need to follow the definitions given in Part II. To accompany our HESES24 webinar series in the autumn, we are releasing 'Completing the HESES24 workbook' as well as a number of online training materials.¹¹ Depending on your level of experience in completing HESES, you may find it useful to consult this material when reading the rest of this guidance document.
20. Your HESES workbook is a Microsoft Excel (.xlsx) file that will be available to download from the OfS portal (<https://extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/data>) in late October 2024. Please note that before you can access the workbook, the OfS portal user administrator at your provider will need to grant you access. Further information on how to use the portal and the role of the user administrator can be found in 'Completing the HESES24 workbook' (in particular in Appendix 1), which is available on the OfS website.¹²
21. When the survey workbooks are released, we will write to the 'student data contact' that your provider has nominated. This person will be our primary point of contact throughout the HESES process, though it is possible for your provider to nominate alternative contacts. It is important that your contact details are correct. If you want to check or amend them, please contact us at recurrentgrant@officeforstudents.org.uk. We recommend that more than one person is involved with completing the survey so that expertise is spread across your staff.

¹⁰ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-collection/multiplication-factors/.

¹¹ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-collection/heses/.

¹² See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-collection/heses/.

Notes on completing your survey

22. Table 2 lists the worksheets in the HESES24 workbook.

Table 2: Worksheets in the HESES24 workbook

Name of worksheet	Title or description	Action
Information	Workbook information.	Automatically filled
Table of contents	Descriptions of and links to other worksheets.	Automatically filled
Validation	If you upload a workbook with validation errors, the resulting package will include this sheet which will contain details of the errors.	Automatically filled in the results package
Courses	Only visible to further education and sixth form colleges and academies. Countable years of engagement between 1 August 2024 and the census date at course level.	Provider to complete
1_Full_time	Full-time counts of years of engagement.	Provider to complete
2_Sandwich	Sandwich year out counts of years of engagement.	Provider to complete
3_Part_time	Part-time counts of years of engagement.	Provider to complete
4_Year_abroad	Home fee undergraduate years abroad.	Provider to complete
5_Planning	Further student analysis for planning purposes.	Provider to complete
6a_Health_full_time	Full-time counts of years of engagement for home fee students on pre-registration health courses.	Provider to complete
6c_Health_part_time ¹³	Part-time counts of years of engagement for home fee students on pre-registration health courses.	Provider to complete
Comparison tables	Tables in these worksheets summarise your HESES24 data and compare it with previous years (if available). You may be asked questions on large changes between years during data verification.	Automatically filled
Other comparisons	These tables are for information only and are not generally used during data verification. Tables in this worksheet summarise your HESES24 data and compare it with previous years (if available).	Automatically filled

¹³ Note that there is no Table 6b. This table was removed from HESES22. However, we have retained the previous naming convention for Tables 6a and 6c to retain internal consistency with our databases, and externally for any systems providers may use to assist in completing HESES.

Name of worksheet	Title or description	Action
FTE_Table 1: Full-time	Table to review multiplication factors and submit representations for full-time years of engagement.	Provider to complete
FTE_Table 2: Sandwich	Table to review multiplication factors and submit representations for sandwich year out years of engagement.	Provider to complete
FTE_Table 3: Part-time	Table to review multiplication factors and submit representations for part-time years of engagement.	Provider to complete
FTE_Table 6a: Full-time	Table to review multiplication factors and submit representations for home fee full-time years of engagement for pre-registration health courses.	Provider to complete
FTE_Table 6c: Part-time	Table to review multiplication factors and submit representations for home fee part-time years of engagement for pre-registration health courses.	Provider to complete
Indicative funding tables	Table showing the indicative funding for a provider using the 2024-25 funding method based on OfS multiplication factors, and provider representations. This table does not show the funding a provider will receive in 2024-25 or 2025-26.	Automatically filled

23. The HESES survey workbook provides an in-year count of the students on higher education courses recognised for OfS funding purposes at your provider in 2024-25, including a snapshot of your provision on the census date (see paragraph 5). This means that your HESES survey will include:

- a count of the students who have started their year of engagement by the census date
- a forecast of the students you are expecting to start their year of engagement after the census date.

24. When completing the workbook, you may see automatic highlighting of four types:

- Validation errors on Tables 1 to 6c, highlighting where data is not correct (for example, where a negative number is entered in a cell that requires a positive number). Any validation errors must be corrected before the workbook is submitted.
- Credibility warnings on Tables 1 to 6c, highlighting where data is possible, but appears unusual.
- Highlighting on Comparison worksheets 1 to 3. These worksheets contain tables that summarise your HESES24 data and compare it with data from previous years (where available). Any highlighting shows differences that are greater than might be expected.

- d. Multiplication factor representations check on FTE Tables 1 to 6c, highlighting where representations have not been submitted correctly (for example, no explanation has been given for the representation). These should be reviewed to ensure that representations have been submitted correctly and that all required information is available for the OfS to consider.¹⁴

Submitting your survey

25. When you are satisfied that the survey is complete and accurate, you should upload it to the OfS portal. You have until the submission deadline to upload the workbook to the OfS portal.¹⁵

- a. The deadline is **noon on Wednesday 13 November 2024** for further education and sixth form colleges and academies.
- b. The deadline is **noon on Wednesday 11 December 2024** for all other providers.

Please note that the portal usually sees heavy traffic on the days leading up to the deadline and this can cause the upload process to take longer than usual.

26. Please note the following about the submission of HESES workbooks:

- a. Although it is possible to upload your survey to the portal at any time, your final submission must be uploaded after the census date.
- b. It is possible to submit the workbook several times, but we will keep and use only the most recently uploaded version. Please note, if new versions of the workbook are submitted they will need to contain any previous representations on multiplication factors (paragraphs 34-37) that remain relevant.
- c. As noted in paragraph 17, the HESES24 workbook includes worksheets showing your provider's multiplication factors and you can use these to submit representations about them. Representations can be completed as part of the normal submission of your HESES24 workbook, following the data sign-off or in the period between the deadline for the sign-off of your return of 31 January 2025 and noon on 14 February 2025. We recommend submitting representations between 1 February and 14 February 2025. In any event, when representations are considered we will use the most recently submitted version of your workbook.
- d. In order not to breach data protection regulations, you must not submit the HESES workbook by email. Please use the OfS portal.

The data verification phase

27. The data verification phase of the HESES process allows us to:

- gain confidence in the accuracy of your data

¹⁴ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/heses24-multiplication-factors-representations-process-guidance/.

¹⁵ Available at <https://extranet.officeforstudents.org.uk/data>.

- understand any context to the data and how this relates to changes highlighted
- identify and discuss any large or unexpected changes from previous years.

28. The data verification phase starts after the submission deadline and ends on the sign-off deadline (Friday 31 January 2025 for all providers). By this point any queries we have will need to be answered and your data will need to be signed off as correct. The timescale for data verification takes account of the holiday period. It is advisable to have more than one member of staff involved with completing the HESES survey.

Signing off your data

29. When our queries have been resolved and any amendments to your data have been processed, we will ask for your data to be signed off by your provider's accountable officer.

30. We will send you a verification form by email. Please check that the date and version number match those in your most recent HESES workbook. Your accountable officer will need to sign this form, which should then be emailed to dataverification@officeforstudents.org.uk.

31. Under condition of registration F3 a provider must provide the OfS with such information as the OfS specifies at the time and in the manner and form specified.¹⁶ All providers registered in the Approved (fee cap) category that have students registered with them in 2024-25 on courses recognised for OfS funding purposes must submit a HESES24 return. Where a provider fails to submit data on time, or returned data is not credible after verification, we may allocate funds based on our own estimates of student activity.¹⁷ Providers that do not submit credible data on time are more likely to be audited.

32. The multiplication factors representations process is not compulsory and not included in the F3 notice.

33. Providers themselves are responsible for the quality and accuracy of the data they submit to us and other bodies. We do not approve or agree their data submissions, but we monitor the reasonableness and credibility of data, including by comparing and reconciling different datasets and by carrying out audits. We will require providers to amend their data submissions if we believe that they contain errors or inappropriate classifications or forecasts that would significantly and materially affect our use of the data. This may include requiring changes to how providers use subject classifications (whether LearnDirect Class System (LDCS)¹⁸ or Higher Education Classification of Subjects (HECoS) codes) and hence how students are assigned to price groups.

¹⁶ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/deadlines-and-requirements-for-2024-25-data-returns/.

¹⁷ See paragraph 22 of 'Terms and conditions of funding for 2024-25' (OfS 2024.36), available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/terms-and-conditions-of-funding-for-2024-25/.

¹⁸ Up to 2023-24, the LDCS codes were the primary determiner of subject classification on the learning aims database.

Submitting representations on multiplication factors

34. To convert years of engagement into FTEs for funding purposes, we will apply multiplication factors to the HESES24 data. The factors can be viewed on the FTE worksheets within the HESES24 workbook.
35. If you believe the multiplication factors are no longer representative of the provision delivered by your provider, you can submit representations. Representations can be submitted at any point from the census date to noon on 14 February 2025, although we recommend that submissions are made between 1 February and 14 February 2025 to allow providers to base representations on their final signed-off HESES24 data. Full guidance on the representations process has been published on the multiplication factors section of the HESES webpages.¹⁹
36. You will be able to submit representations after your HESES24 data has been signed off. However, if you want to do this before the final HESES24 sign-off deadline of 31 January 2025, you must seek approval from us before you upload your workbook. This is to ensure that no signed off HESES24 data is changed.
37. After the HESES24 deadline, providers will be able to continue to submit representations until noon on 14 February 2025. Following the HESES24 sign-off deadline, any amended HESES data in the workbooks when uploading representations will not be used.

After the data is signed off

38. After the representations deadline, we will consider any valid representations and then start to prepare HESES data for various uses, including the calculation of our 2024-25 funding to support Level 4 and 5 provision, and to calculate recurrent grant allocations for 2025-26. We will publish the HESES data for all registered providers as part of an official statistic.²⁰
39. Shortly after the data verification phase has ended, we will contact you for feedback on the HESES process through an online survey. This feedback helps us to evaluate the effectiveness of the HESES process and will guide any improvements that we may consider for future data collection.

Audit trail

40. You should keep an adequate audit trail between student record systems and the HESES return for at least five years. This should include a record of the basis for estimating non-completions and forecast countable years, along with any relevant electronically stored data, printouts and working papers used in completing the return. Source documents such as registration forms should also be retained, including information on students' detailed study intentions for the academic year and their qualifications on entry.
41. There should be an audit trail to individual figures in the return. In the case of figures based on activity up to the census date, a clear trail from individual students to the figures should be

¹⁹ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-collection/multiplication-factors/.

²⁰ For the OfS official statistics release schedule, see www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/official-statistics/.

retained. During audit we may ask for a sample of these figures to be rebuilt. In the case of estimates and forecasts, there must be a clear and justified rationale for the figures, and backup data justifying what is being returned.

42. Where your provider is involved in subcontractual or other partnership arrangements, your audit trail must contain evidence for the inclusion or exclusion of students (including details of the partnership arrangements between providers), and forecasts relating to such students.

Part II: Funding rules and definitions

The annexes in Part II define the student population covered by the HESES24 return and give guidance on what is 'countable' in HESES24, as well as providing information on the rules and definitions that are needed to complete the survey correctly.

Annex A: Defining the HESES student population

This annex defines an 'engagement' and explains which student engagements should and should not be included in the HESES population. It also explains how to treat provision delivered through subcontractual arrangements.

Annex A contents

Definitions

- The HESES population for 2024-25
- Who is in the HESES population for 2024-25?
- Partnerships between providers

Good practice

Definitions

The HESES population for 2024-25

1. HESES24 records counts of years of engagement for students (regardless of whether or not the student is repeating a year) on a recognised higher education course. References to 'recognised higher education course' mean recognised solely for Office for Students (OfS) funding purposes, according to the definition in Annex B, rather than any wider purpose.
2. For the purposes of HESES:
 - a. 'Provider' means a 'higher education provider' as defined in Section 83 of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA).
 - b. 'The appropriate student record' means the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), or the Student record returned to the designated data body.²¹
 - c. An 'engagement' is a student's commitment to an educational aim (the award of a qualification or credit or the completion of an apprenticeship) and its realisation over time. This shares the same definition as used by the DDB.²² ESFA guidance for recording higher education data notes that several fields in the ILR higher education entity refer to 'instance' and that this can be considered as equivalent to the concept of 'engagement'. For HESES purposes, an engagement can be split into one or more years of engagement.²³ The number of years of engagement recorded by a provider within an

²¹ Since 2022-23 this is the Student record under the Data Futures specification, which has replaced the Legacy Student record and Legacy Student Alternative record.

²² See <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/23056/datadictionary?element=Engagement>.

²³ See <https://guidance.submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/23-24/psm/article/additional-guidance-for-he>.

academic year will be used in determining a measure of how much teaching activity that provider is delivering.

- d. When and how a year of engagement is counted in HESES depends on how providers return individualised data to the DDB or ESFA, reflecting the different specifications used by these data returns. As such, a definition of a 'year of engagement' for further education and sixth form colleges and academies can be found in Annex C1. For all other providers, a definition of a 'year of engagement' can be found in Annex C2.
- e. 'Joint courses' are courses made available by two (or more) providers with degree-awarding powers, in which each provider has responsibility for the provision of education to students and which lead on successful completion to a joint award or dual or multiple awards from each provider involved. Teaching may be provided in varying proportions by the providers involved.
- f. The 'provider with which a student is registered' (for both HESES purposes and the appropriate student record)²⁴ means:
 - i. For all courses, except joint courses, the provider which has the full contractual responsibility to the student for the provision of educational services. This applies whether the provider provides all the teaching for the course or subcontracts out some or all of that teaching to another body.
 1. Where fee payments from the Student Loans Company are concerned, this will also be the provider that collects the student course fee.
 2. Where payments from the ESFA for apprenticeships are concerned, this will be the provider that is paid by the ESFA.
 - ii. For joint courses, the provider to which the student is assigned for data reporting purposes when they start their course. In joint courses, responsibility for the provision of education to a student is held by more than one provider, and there may be variation from year to year as to which of these collects the course fee for a year of engagement. Providers should determine at the outset what proportion of the initial entry cohort should be reported by each provider. Reflecting this proportion, each student should then be assigned to a single provider when they start their course and retain this assignment until they finish it. This approach will support student tracking for performance indicators and other longitudinal studies. Students on courses provided under the Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters scheme should be registered with and reported by the provider with which they initially start the course.
- g. An 'exchange' is defined as a programme offered in partnership with an overseas provider where there is a movement of students in both directions between the providers. The movement of students does not have to be balanced. For an exchange programme:

²⁴ Although this guidance sets out providers' responsibilities in terms of HESES and the appropriate student record, this does not preclude providers' particular responsibilities under the regulatory framework, whether to students registered with them, students they teach or students for whom the provider is an awarding body.

- i. In an 'outgoing' exchange the UK provider sends participants from its registered students to undertake a period of study at a provider abroad or, under the Turing scheme only, a work placement abroad.
- ii. In an 'incoming' exchange, the UK provider receives students registered at a provider abroad, who are undertaking a period of study with them.

Who is in the HESES population for 2024-25?

3. Engagements meeting all the following criteria should be included in the HESES population:

- a. A year of engagement, in which the student is registered and actively pursuing studies with the provider, begins within the academic year (1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025). This:
 - i. Includes outgoing, but not incoming, exchange students.
 - ii. Excludes students who the provider teaches under a subcontractual relationship with another provider, where the latter provider has the full contractual responsibility to the student for the provision of education.
 - iii. Excludes engagements for students who are on school-centred initial teacher training programmes.
 - iv. Excludes engagements that are being returned on any other provider's HESES survey.
 - v. Excludes engagements where no year of engagement for which the student is actively studying with the provider falls even partly in the academic year 2024-25, such as:
 1. Engagements where all years of engagement falling in the year are entirely writing up. Writing up is not considered to be 'study' for HESES purposes.
 2. Engagements where the only activity is assessment. This includes teacher training programmes that consist only of a Qualified Teacher Status assessment.
 - vi. Excludes engagements whose course aim is a research qualification awarded primarily on the basis of published works, unless the engagement involves a significant amount of research at the provider.
 - vii. Excludes graduate and undergraduate internships.
- b. The engagement is for a higher education course recognised for OfS funding purposes (see Annex B). This excludes engagements where the sole outcome of the course is a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), but includes engagements which lead to both a recognised higher education qualification and an NVQ.
- c. No more than half of the active study time for the whole engagement is spent outside the UK (including through distance learning), unless any of the following apply:
 - i. There is a clear academic reason for studying abroad rather than in the UK. Even where such a reason exists, we must specifically sanction the course as eligible.

- ii. The student is temporarily and unavoidably abroad and remains liable to UK tax on their earnings, or is a dependant of such a person. This includes members of HM Forces and their dependants.
- iii. The student is receiving UK student support from the Student Loans Company for the year.

Engagements for sandwich students working abroad and students on a study year abroad as part of an exchange should normally be included in the HESES population, because the year abroad will not constitute most of the engagement.

- 4. All engagements included in the HESES population must be included in the provider's appropriate student record(s), even if this is not normally compulsory under the coverage of the record. This includes where students are in the HESES population but do not generate a countable year in HESES24.
- 5. The responsibility for reporting student data (other than for joint courses) depends on which provider has full contractual responsibility to the student for the provision of education. Students should not, other than in exceptional circumstances, change the provider they are registered with, and no change should be made as to which provider reports data on students who are continuing on the same course without each student's informed agreement. The only case where we expect this to be common practice is in formal collaborative research programmes (such as doctoral training partnerships or centres for doctoral training), where students will often transfer, having completed a Master of Research (MRes) qualification. In reporting student data to us, providers will be confirming their contractual responsibilities for the provision of education to these students.
- 6. The flowcharts provided in Figures A1 to A4 can be used to determine whether a student is included in the HESES population for 2024-25.

Figure A1: Determining the HESES population for 2024-25

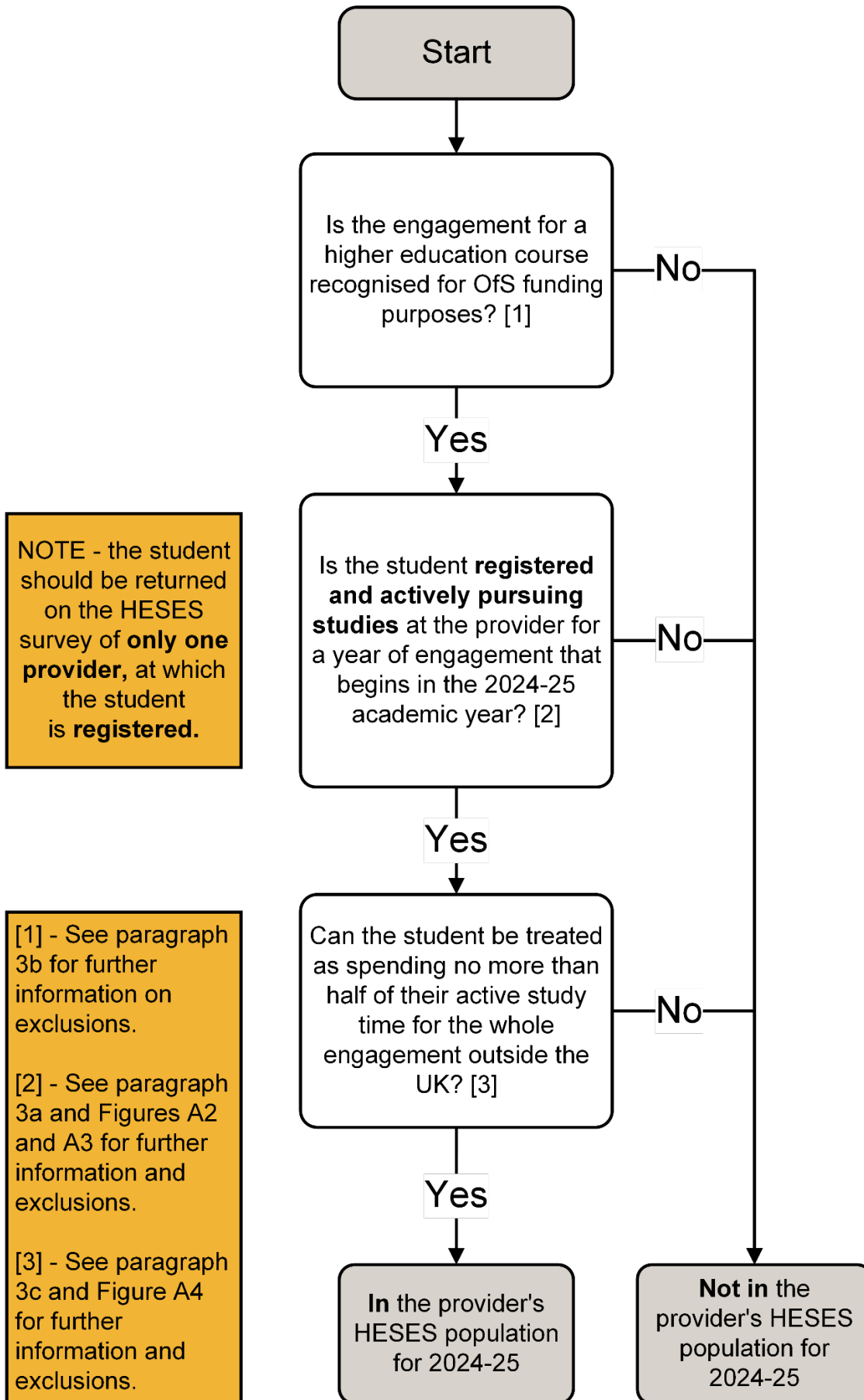


Figure A2: Determining whether a student is registered with a provider

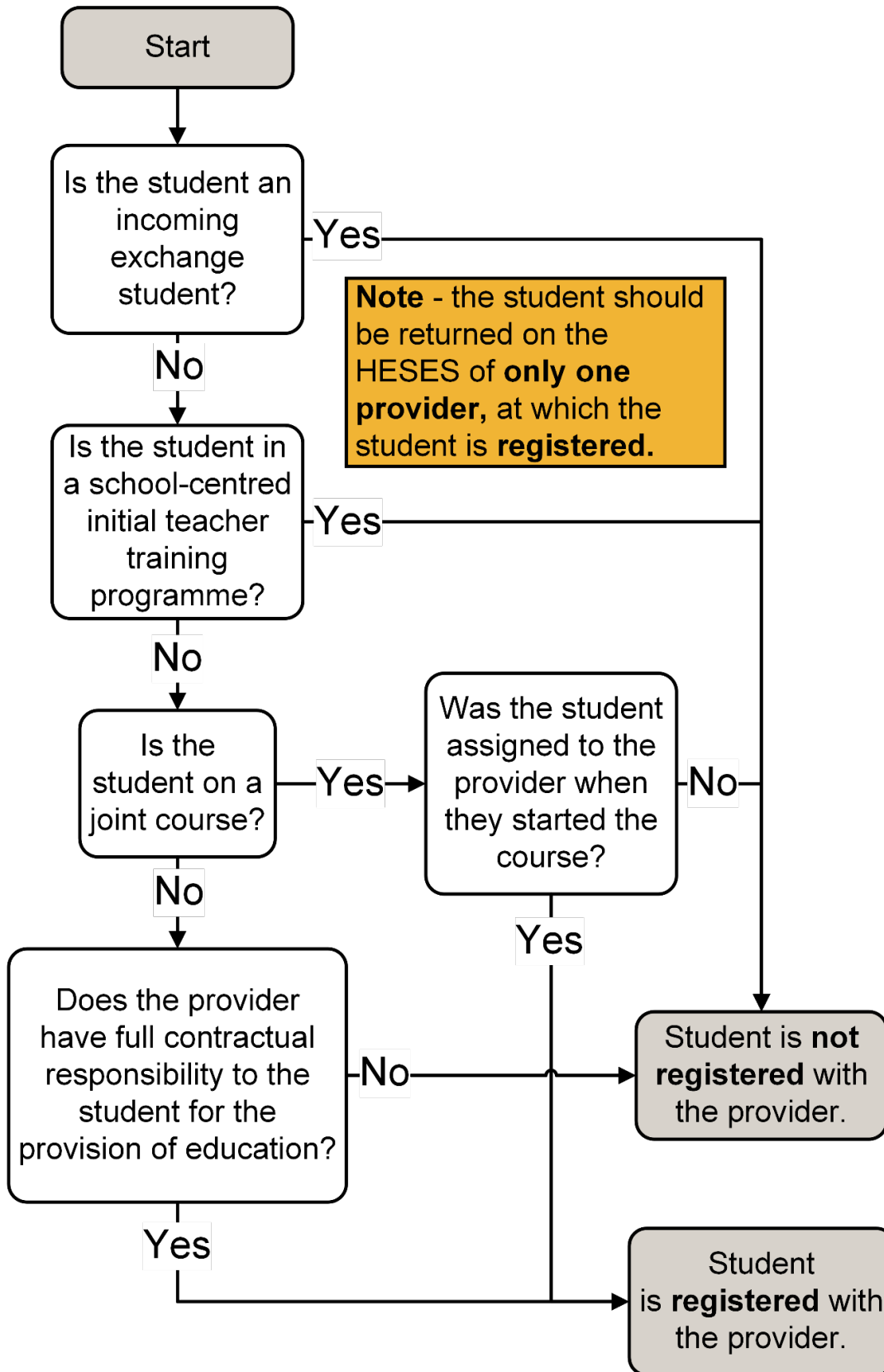


Figure A3: Determining whether a student is actively studying with a provider for a given year of engagement

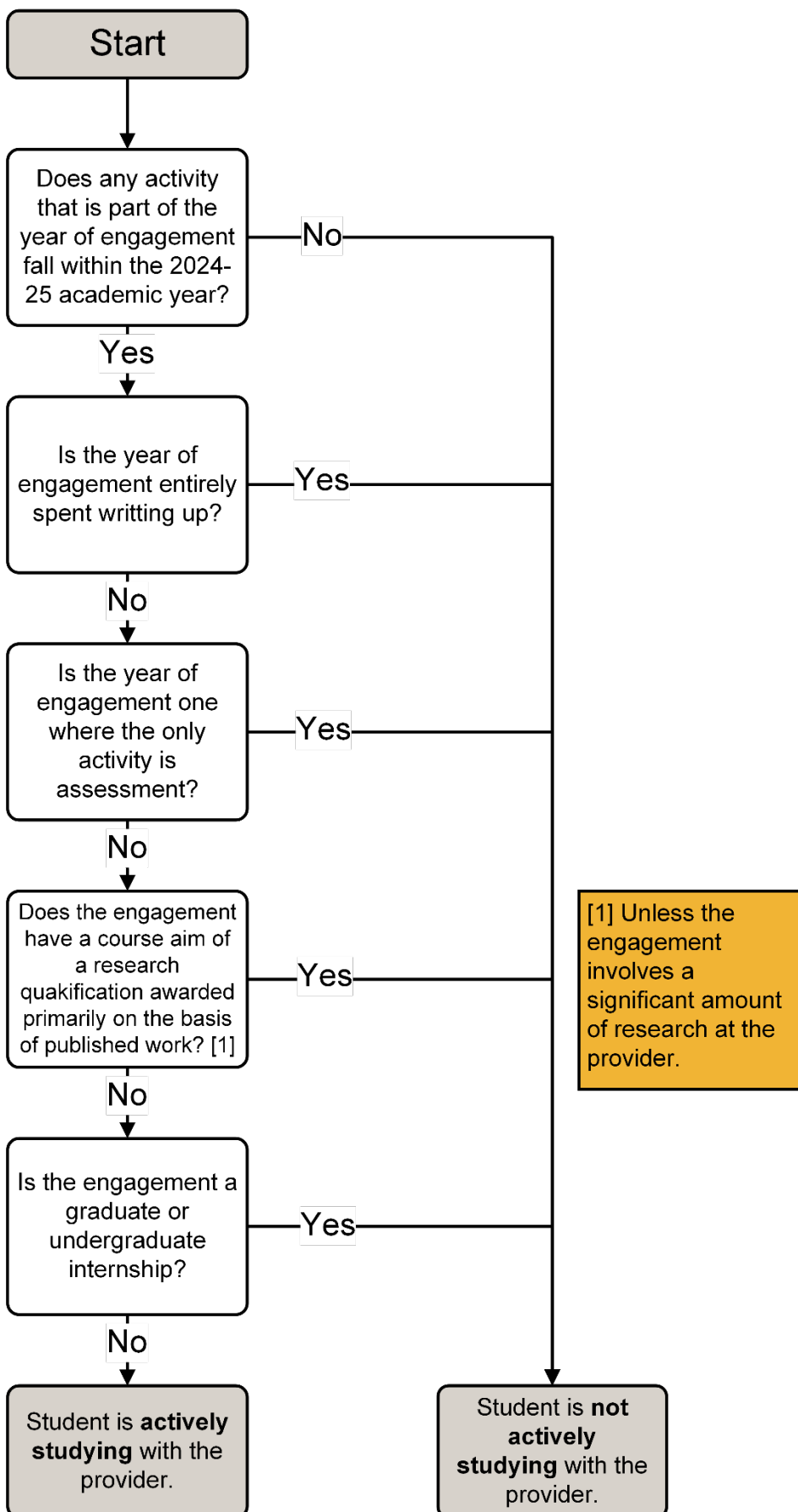
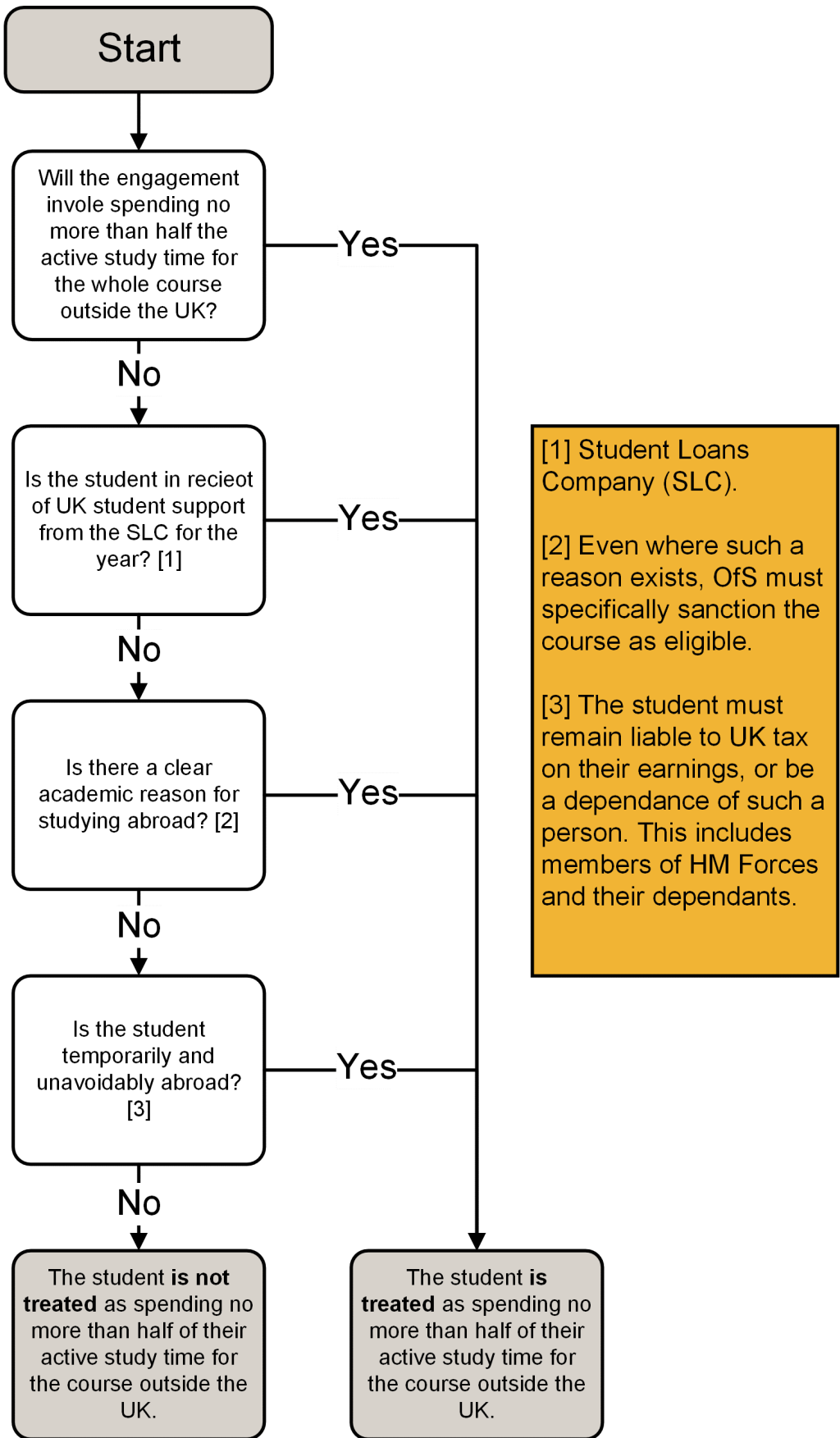


Figure A4: Engagements involving study time abroad



Partnerships between providers

7. Our regulatory framework provides guidance on the definitions of validation and subcontractual arrangements:²⁵

- a. A validation arrangement applies to a course (module or programme) which a degree awarding body approves to contribute to, or lead to, one of its awards. The validated course is delivered by the provider that designed it and students on the course normally have a direct contractual relationship with that provider and not the validating provider. The validating provider remains responsible for the academic quality and standards of the award granted in its name.
- b. A subcontractual arrangement (sometimes described as a 'franchise arrangement') is a relationship, based on a formal contract, in which a body with degree awarding powers (the lead provider) allows another provider (the delivery provider) to deliver all or part of a programme which has been designed, approved and owned by the degree awarding body. The lead provider or subcontracting provider retains overall control of the programme's content, delivery, assessment and quality assurance arrangements.

This does not include informal arrangements that are not governed by contracts between providers, such as those that might exist for shared teaching between constituent parts of the University of London, or for study abroad under the Turing scheme. It may include some exchange programmes, if there is a formal contract between providers.

8. Under an apprenticeship, the provider with whom a student is registered is the one that is in receipt of payments for the apprenticeship from the ESFA (see paragraph 2f of this annex). That provider is responsible for reporting all activity undertaken as part of the apprenticeship on the appropriate student record (which may include on returns by the provider both to the ESFA and the designated data body) and, where the activity is towards a qualification recognised for OfS funding purposes, on HESES. If other providers also deliver training as part of the apprenticeship, they are treated (for both HESES purposes and the appropriate student record) as doing so under a subcontractual arrangement: they should not include the student in their own data returns. This applies irrespective of whether those other providers have their own degree awarding powers and are delivering their own qualifications as part of the apprenticeship. Where the provider responsible for reporting activity as part of an apprenticeship is not registered with the OfS in the Approved (fee cap) category, then students will not be included in any HESES return.
9. While the nature of any partnership arrangement (including for joint courses, as defined in paragraph 2 of this annex) is for providers to decide, we would consider this to be determined by the details of the contract between the relevant providers.
10. A course is considered to be part of a subcontractual arrangement if:
- a. There is a written, legally binding agreement in place between the lead provider and the delivery provider that sets out the conditions of the arrangement.

²⁵ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/securing-student-success-regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/.

- b. The lead provider has a contractual relationship with the student (and the full contractual responsibility for the provision of educational services, as mentioned in paragraph 2f of this annex).
 - c. The fee or fee loan (or in the case of an apprenticeship, payment from the ESFA) is paid to the lead provider.
 - d. The student is registered as a student of the lead provider and is included in its data returns.
11. Providers should be clear on the nature of any partnership agreements and ensure that this is communicated to students.
12. The Student Loans Company requires that students are registered with the validating body before a provider collects the fee for the student. In the case of subcontractual arrangements it should be the lead provider with contractual responsibility that registers the student with the validating body. Where delivery of Higher National Diplomas or Higher National Certificates is subcontracted to another provider, we expect the arrangement to be approved by Pearson PLC. Please refer to Pearson's guidance on collaborative and consortium arrangements.²⁶
13. It is the responsibility of the registering provider to ensure the quality of all the data it returns, including that relating to activity at its subcontractors.

Good practice

14. It is essential that exchanges of information and communications between the partners are frequent, timely, open and effective. In particular, we highlight the importance of a lead provider being told promptly by its partner delivery providers about any changes to students' study, including withdrawing. This may require clear protocols among partner providers regarding the exchange of information.
15. The different roles of each partner in collecting and managing data will vary. The principle applied at audit is that student data should be managed with equal professionalism at all partner providers. When entering into subcontractual arrangements, the systems in operation and the exchange of information should form part of the negotiations and final agreement.
16. It is important that students are returned on the HESES survey and the appropriate student record by the lead provider only. A provider's student record system should contain all subcontracted-out students' records in the same way as it does students taught directly. However, providers' student record systems should clearly identify those students subcontracted out and to be returned by them, and should ensure that those not eligible (including those subcontracted in) are excluded from the survey. This will help to ensure that subcontracted-out students are correctly returned in HESES, and that an audit trail for such students is available.

²⁶ See <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/understanding-our-qualifications/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees.html>.

17. Use of the lead provider's standard processes by partner providers is strongly encouraged – for example for enrolment, module registration, interruption of studies, change of module, change of programme and withdrawal. This helps to identify clearly which provider a student has a contractual relationship with, and is especially important where a lead provider deals with more than one delivery provider. It also ensures that the lead provider is collecting all the data it requires for its own purposes.

Annex B: Recognised courses of higher education for OfS funding purposes

This annex defines the recognised higher education courses which students must be studying if they are to be included in HESES. It also details the treatment of students on higher, degree or advanced apprenticeships which include both recognised higher education and other elements.

Annex B contents

Definitions

- Recognised higher education courses for OfS funding purposes
- Learning aims and learning aims search
- Professional (or similar) qualifications
- Foundation years ('Year 0')
- Recognised higher education provided as part of an apprenticeship

Definitions

Recognised higher education courses for OfS funding purposes

1. To be included in the HESES population and therefore potentially counted in HESES, an engagement must be for a course that meets our definition of recognised higher education for Office for Students (OfS) funding purposes. That is:
 - a. A course that is designated under the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011.²⁷
 - b. A 'course of higher education' as defined in Schedule 6 of the Education Reform Act 1988, other than one leading to a qualification in the Register of Regulated Qualifications.²⁸
2. Study for higher education-level credit (rather than towards a specific qualification) may be included if it meets the criteria in Schedule 6 of the Education Reform Act 1988 and either:

²⁷ The regulations are available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/1986/contents>, but this does not incorporate all amendments in recent years. There have been a large number of amendments included in statutory instruments listed at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/all?text=2011%2F1986>.

²⁸ See <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/40/schedule/6> and <https://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>. The definition of recognised courses of higher education for OfS funding purposes does not incorporate changes (which, at the time of writing, are not yet in force) to Schedule 6 of the Education Reform Act 1988 made, for the purposes of section 83 of the Higher Education and Reform Act 2017, by Section 16(3) of the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 (see www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/21/section/16/enacted).

- it is not credit that may count only towards a qualification in the Register of Regulated Qualifications
 - it is credit that may count towards a course that is designated under the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011.
3. Engagements that do not meet this definition are excluded from the HESES population. References to ‘recognised higher education’ mean recognised solely for our funding purposes, rather than any wider purpose.

Learning aims and the learning aims search

4. Colleges must ensure that all courses for which they intend to return engagements in HESES have valid learning aims, and that the learning aim information for each course (including qualification type and the Higher Education Classification of Subjects (HECoS) code of the subject of the course) is correct.²⁹ The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) provides a ‘Find a learning aim’ service (FaLA).³⁰ This returns the awarding body, qualification type and HECoS codes for a given learning aim. We expect all courses returned in HESES to have valid learning aims and correct learning aim information before the data is signed off.³¹
5. Information regarding how to request or modify a learning aim on the ESFA’s learning aims database is available on the OfS website,³² as well as in paragraphs 34 to 37 of the ‘Completing the HESES24 workbook’ document and paragraphs 6 to 11 of the ‘Courses table information’ document.³³ Colleges should email heses@officeforstudents.org.uk as soon as possible (preferably as soon as any request has been made to the ESFA to amend their learning aims database) where the information for a particular learning aim is incorrect or missing. This will allow us to determine how the course should be returned in HESES24.

Professional (or similar) qualifications

6. Courses leading to professional or similar qualifications will not normally be recognised for OfS funding purposes, because they are likely to be on the Register of Regulated Qualifications and not eligible for student support. However, if these courses also meet the definition given in paragraph 1 of this annex, they will be recognised.

Foundation years (‘Year 0’)

7. Engagements for foundation years, access provision and other provision commonly referred to as ‘Year 0’ will be included in the HESES population only if they are an integrated part of a

²⁹ From 2024-25, the ESFA agreed to add HECoS codes into LARS to replace LearnDirect Class System (LDCS) codes.

³⁰ See <https://submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/find-a-learning-aim/>.

³¹ We reserve the right to reject sign-off of a HESES24 workbook where data has been included for a course or courses without a learning aim. This may include requiring a provider to amend their HESES24 submission to remove any temporary learning aims for courses that are not on the ESFA’s learning aims database by the sign-off deadline.

³² See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/supplying-data/request-or-modify-a-learning-aim/.

³³ Both available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-collection/heses/.

recognised higher education course, as defined in paragraph 1, such that both of the following apply:

- a. Students are already registered for the recognised higher education course at the same provider.
 - b. Progression to the recognised higher education course is guaranteed, subject to satisfactory completion of the foundation year.
8. Free-standing foundation years and other free-standing Year 0 provision are not recognised higher education courses. The requirement that students are already registered for the recognised higher education course at the same provider means that, where the foundation year is taught by a different provider, this will only be treated as integrated – and therefore within the HESES population – if it is done under a subcontractual arrangement from the provider offering the recognised higher education course.

Recognised higher education provided as part of an apprenticeship

9. An apprenticeship is a job with training, through which an apprentice will gain the technical knowledge, practical experience and wider skills and behaviours that they need for their immediate job and future career. The apprentice gains these through formal off-the-job training and the opportunity to apply the skills in a real work environment (in the productive job role) through on-the-job training. An apprenticeship must provide a practical period of work and training that lasts for a minimum duration of 12 months. The minimum duration of each apprenticeship is based on the apprentice working at least 30 hours a week, including any off-the-job training they undertake. If, at the beginning of the programme, the apprentice works fewer than 30 hours a week the expected duration of the apprenticeship must be extended (pro rata) to take account of this.³⁴ Apprenticeships can include education and training at several specific levels, including degree apprenticeships where apprentices study towards an undergraduate or postgraduate degree qualification.
10. Although apprenticeships are funded from a variety of sources, including the ESFA, this does not in itself affect whether years of engagement taken as part of an apprenticeship are included in HESES, or whether Home fee students are reported as OfS fundable or non-fundable. Recognised higher education courses taken as part of an apprenticeship are eligible for inclusion in HESES and may be reported as OfS-fundable, subject to meeting the criteria in Annex F, in the same way as non-apprenticeship courses.
11. The OfS funds providers where such years of engagement meet the criteria for particular grants. OfS funding is treated as complementary to finance provided by the ESFA and employers, which is more analogous to finance that, for other higher education provision, would be provided through course fees or student support.
12. Only the activity within an apprenticeship that meets the definition of a recognised higher education course for OfS funding purposes given in this annex should be included in HESES. This means that a student who has commenced an apprenticeship, but is not undertaking the recognised higher education course element of that apprenticeship during the year of

³⁴ For further information about funding for training and assessing apprentices in England, see www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules.

engagement, should not be included. For the purposes of determining a student's mode of study, only time spent in study or learning in the workplace that directly contributes to their recognised higher education course should be counted towards a student's activity.

13. The main provider delivering apprenticeship training, holding a funding agreement for the purpose with the ESFA, is the lead provider. It has contractual responsibility for students, and should report students in its data.³⁵ Where a recognised higher education course that is part of an apprenticeship is delivered by a different provider, this should be through a subcontractual arrangement with the lead provider (see Annex A for full definition).³⁶
14. Where higher education providers (or their subcontractual partners) are also providing, as part of an apprenticeship, other courses that are not recognised for OfS funding purposes, the lead provider should report the study as follows:
 - a. For further education and sixth form colleges and academies that are lead providers, the recognised higher education course for OfS funding purposes and any other element of the apprenticeship should be returned directly to the ESFA as separate components of the same engagement in the Individualised Learner Record (ILR).
 - b. For other lead providers, both of the following are necessary:
 - i. The higher education element of the apprenticeship should be returned in the appropriate student record.
 - ii. All elements of the apprenticeship (including the higher education element) should be returned directly to the ESFA as separate components of the same engagement in the ILR.

³⁵ The main provider is the organisation holding a funding agreement with the ESFA, through which the ESFA directly routes funds from an employer's apprenticeship service account or government-employer co-investment. The main provider will have the overall responsibility for the training and on-programme assessment conducted by itself and its delivery subcontractors, and have a contractual relationship on behalf of the employer for the end-point assessment conducted by an end-point assessment organisation. The payment for the end-point assessment organisation is through the main provider.

³⁶ If the lead provider of an apprenticeship is not registered with the OfS in the Approved (fee cap) category then these students will not be reported in any provider's HESES return, and no OfS funding will be provided.

Annex C1: Counting student activity for further education and sixth form colleges and academies

This annex gives the definition of a year of engagement and explains how to count them. This includes the criteria for counting a year of engagement in HESES24, the definitions of standard and nonstandard years of engagement, flowcharts to aid with determining how years of engagement should be counted, and guidance on counting some short courses that are sometimes known as 'summer schools'.

We have produced different versions of Annex C to be clear to each provider how years of engagement should be determined and counted.

This annex (Annex C1) applies to further education colleges and sixth form colleges and academies only. All other providers should refer to Annex C2 for guidance on how years of engagement should be determined and counted.

All other annexes apply equally to all providers.

Annex C1 contents

Definitions

- Year of engagement
 - Further notes on years of engagement
 - Withdrawal from an engagement
 - Counting years of engagement

Guidance

- How to count years of engagement
 - Students who withdraw on or before the census date
 - Standard and nonstandard years
- New entrants
 - Recording starters on Tables 6a and 6c
- Assigning modules to years of engagement
- Summer schools
 - Summer schools for potential higher education students
 - Access provision
 - Within-course periods of study in vacation time
 - Foundation degree bridging courses

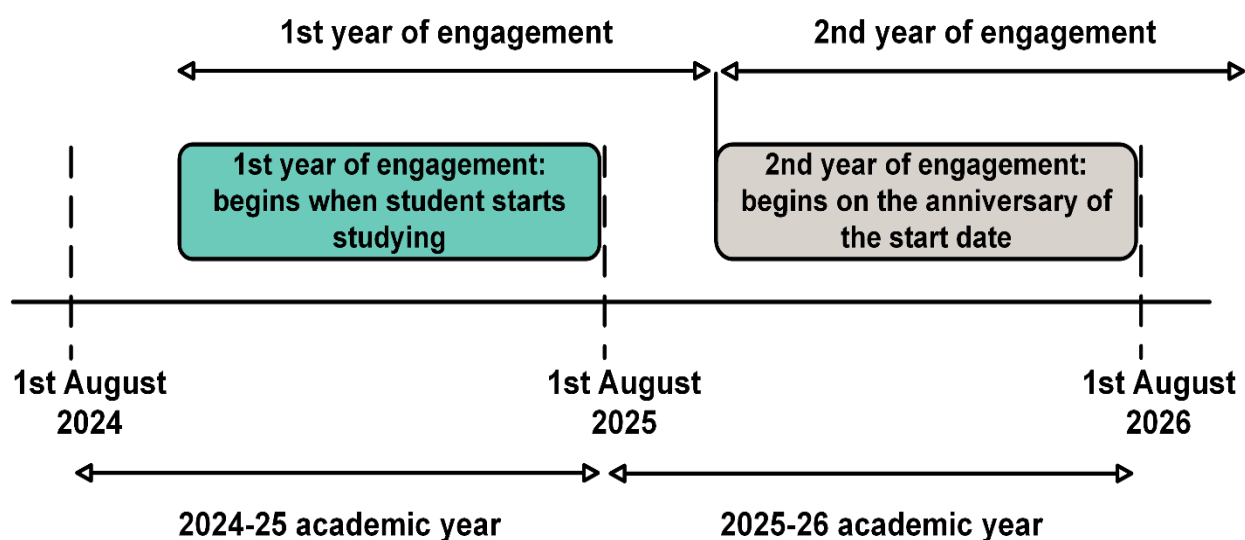
Examples

Definitions

Year of engagement

1. Annex A paragraph 2c defines an 'engagement' as 'a student's commitment to an educational aim (qualification or credit or the completion of an apprenticeship) and its realisation over time. This aligns with the definition used by the DDB but is applicable to all providers. For HESES purposes, an engagement can be split into one or more 'years of engagement'.
2. The first year of engagement begins when the student starts studying towards the qualification, credit or on the apprenticeship; subsequent years start on or near the anniversary of this date, allowing for minor variations in term dates (see figure C1.1). This aligns with the guidance from the ESFA regarding how higher education provision for further education and sixth form colleges and academies will be expected to be returned in the ILR.
3. The start of a year of engagement is determined on an individual student basis and is the date when the student first started studying towards the qualification, credit or on the apprenticeship, or its anniversary. Therefore, a student who starts their course later than others in the same cohort will start each year of engagement later than others on the course throughout their studies.
4. This will be returned based on all teaching activity undertaken within that year of engagement, even where some of the teaching takes place after the end of the academic year (31 July 2025).

Figure C1.1 Years of engagement



5. HESES counts years of engagement for students studying on higher education courses recognised for OfS funding purposes (see Annex B). This is not the same as counting individual students. This approach ensures that the number of students on each course is recorded in order to forecast teaching activity.

Further notes on years of engagement

6. Where a student completes a foundation degree and then undertakes a foundation degree bridging course to enable them to join the final year of an honours degree, the foundation degree bridging course should be treated as an independent course, which will generate its own year of engagement for HESES.
7. Where a student undertakes an initial qualification then immediately progresses (disregarding any intervening vacation) to a second qualification at the same broad level, (undergraduate or postgraduate taught), for HESES purposes these are considered both part of the same engagement and are not considered independent.³⁷ We would therefore usually expect the student to be counted only once in a HESES return for all activity within the relevant year of engagement. Thus, a student studying towards a foundation degree who will progress within the year of engagement to topping up to a degree, or a student taking an HNC who will progress within the year of engagement to topping up to an HND, should be returned only once in the relevant HESES.
8. Exceptionally, a student may be on two courses at the same time, aiming for two independent higher education qualifications. Each engagement then generates its own countable year of engagement. Thus, a student studying towards a PhD and an unrelated undergraduate professional qualification would generate two years of engagement each year. However, a student studying for multiple credits at a provider that could count towards the same final qualification would generate only one year of engagement each year. Usually, independent engagements link to different course identifiers on the appropriate student record, and to different learning aims on the Individualised Learner Record (ILR).

Withdrawal from an engagement

9. For the purposes of HESES, a student has withdrawn from their engagement if they leave before its completion and do not have an intention to return and continue it. Students who suspend studies should not be treated as having withdrawn.

Counting years of engagement

10. To be counted, years of engagement must be generated by a student in the HESES population for 2024-25, and meet all the following criteria:
 - a. A fee is charged for tuition or supervision of research. Exceptionally, this fee may be waived for individual students based on their particular circumstances. Other than for sandwich year out students it should not be waived for all students on a course, and the criteria which determine whether the fees may be waived should not be tantamount to waiving them for all students. Where the fee has been waived for an individual student, evidence of the reason for this waiver must be retained. This criterion does not apply to students taking a higher education course recognised for OfS funding purposes as part of an apprenticeship. In some cases a fee may not be charged in the current year because a fee for the activity has already been paid in a previous year. This should not be treated

³⁷ Foundation degree bridging courses are an exception to this, as explained in paragraph 6 above.

as a fee waiver. Rather the student should be treated as having been charged a fee for the year.

- b. The student is not writing up a thesis or similar piece of work throughout the whole of the year of engagement. Students are considered to be writing up when they have completed their research work and will not undertake any significant additional research. It is common practice for such students to receive a small amount of supervision, and they may still have access to other facilities at the provider. However, such students should still be treated as writing up. Writing up is not considered to be 'study' for HESES purposes; therefore time spent writing up for part of a year of engagement should be taken into account and excluded when determining if a student's year of engagement should be considered full-time or part-time.
- c. The student has not withdrawn, and is not forecast to withdraw, within two weeks of starting their engagement.

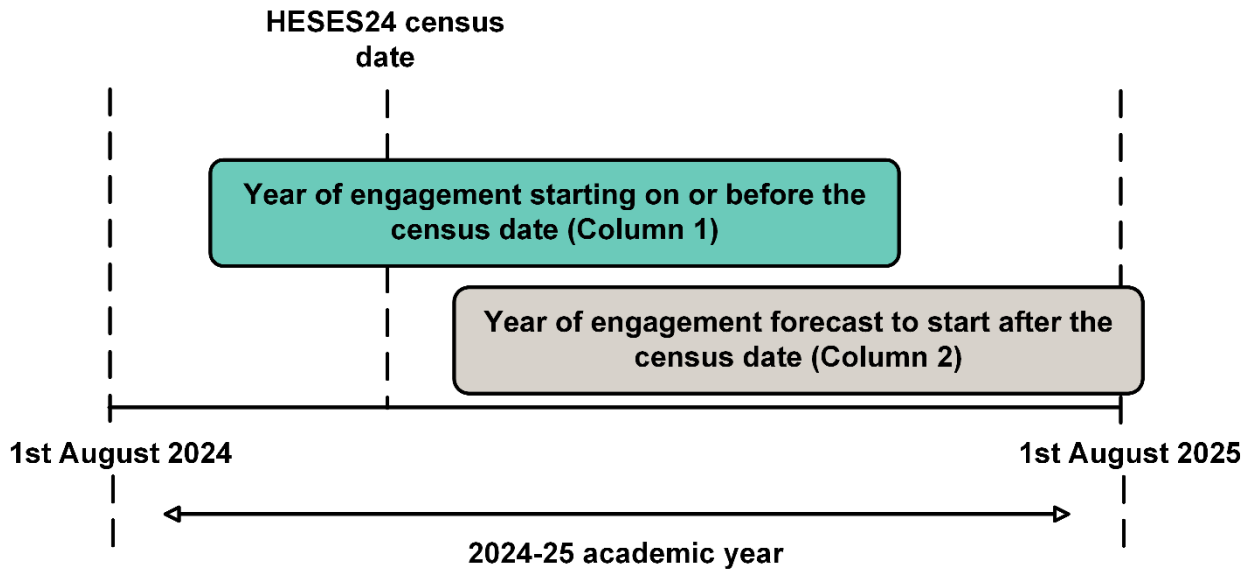
Guidance

How to count years of engagement in the HESES survey

11. To be counted in HESES24, a student's year of engagement must start in the 2024-25 academic year (1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025). The start date for the year of engagement is the date when the student first started studying towards the qualification, credit or on the higher education component of an apprenticeship, or its anniversary. This is compared with the HESES24 census date, which is 1 November 2024 for further education and sixth form colleges and academies
 - a. If a year of engagement starts on or before the census date (between 1 August 2024 and 1 November 2024 inclusive for further education and sixth form colleges and academies) then that year of engagement is recorded in Column 1 of Tables 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6. Column 1 of Tables 1, 2, 3 and 5 will be automatically populated by years of engagement added to the Courses table.
 - b. If a year of engagement starts after the census date (between 2 November 2024 and 31 July 2025 inclusive for further education and sixth form colleges and academies) then that year of engagement is recorded in Column 2 of Tables 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6.

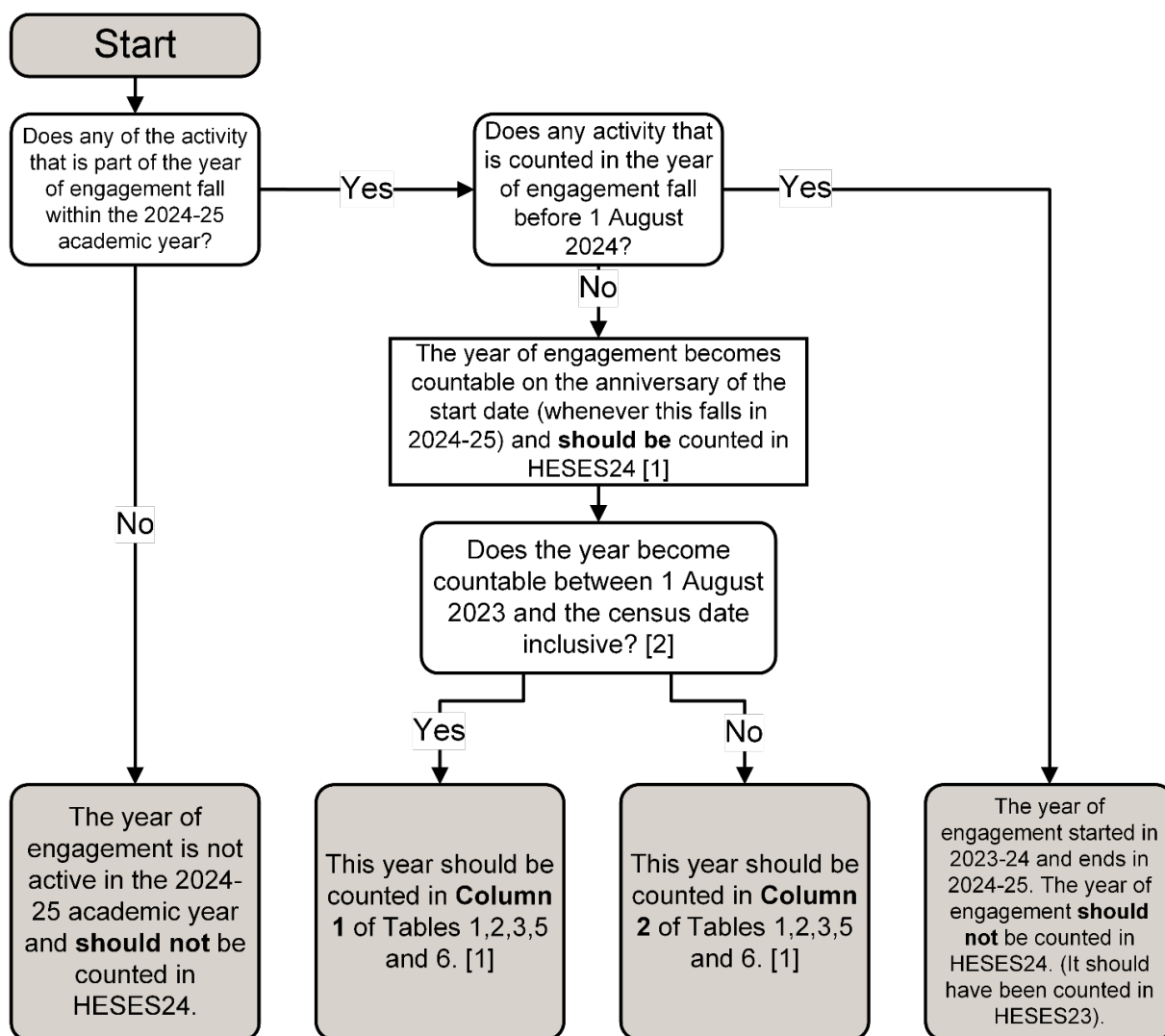
12. Figure C1.2 illustrates this concept.

Figure C1.2: Years of engagement recorded in Column 1 or Column 2



13. The flowchart in Figure C1.3 can be used to determine whether the year of engagement should be counted in HESES24 and, if so, whether it should be returned in Column 1 or 2 of Tables 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6.

Figure C1.3: How to determine whether a year of engagement should be returned in HESES24 and whether in Column 1 or 2 in Tables 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6



[1] Subject to meeting the other conditions to be counted in HESES24.

[2] The census date is 1 November 2024 for further education and sixth-form colleges and academies.

14. Students who have not completed the provider’s registration process for the engagement, and from whom there is no evidence of activity by the census date, should not be included in the Courses table and Column 1 of Tables 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 in the HESES24 return. However, if there is evidence of activity, students should be included in the Courses table and Column 1 of HESES24 Tables 1, 2 or 3 and Table 5 and, where appropriate, Table 6. Efforts should be made to ensure that all eligible students are fully registered by the census date.

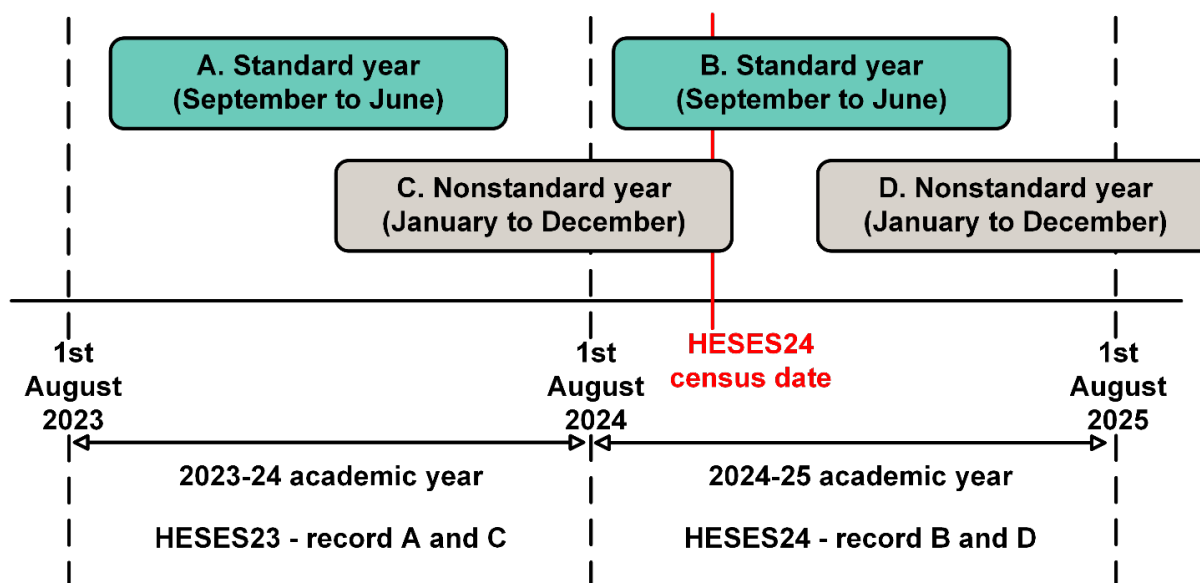
Students who withdraw on or before the census date

15. If a student has withdrawn from their course on or before the census date without completing their study intentions within the year of engagement, they should not be returned.

Standard and nonstandard years

16. There are two types of year of engagement, standard and nonstandard:
 - a. A standard year is one where all activity for the year of engagement is entirely within one academic year (1 August to 31 July).
 - b. A nonstandard year is one where all activity for the year of engagement is not entirely within one academic year – that is, where the activity for the year of engagement crosses from one academic year into the next.
17. Students whose years of engagement are normally standard but in one year undertake a period of work experience should not be treated as nonstandard solely because the work experience spans academic years.
18. In both standard and nonstandard years, students become countable at the start of each year of engagement.
 - a. For students on standard years, the mode of the year of engagement will usually be based on the activity undertaken within the academic year.
 - b. For students on nonstandard years, the final academic year during which the student is active will not usually generate a countable year of engagement. It will do so, however, if a student undertakes a short period of activity after the anniversary of their commencement date and that activity ends in the same academic year.
19. Figure C1.4 shows how to count standard and nonstandard years in HESES24:
 - a. Year of engagement A is a standard year that was completely within the 2023-24 academic year, and should have been recorded in HESES23.
 - b. Year of engagement B is a standard year that starts before the census date in the 2024-25 academic year and is recorded in the Courses table of HESES24 and, where appropriate, Table 6.
 - c. Year of engagement C is a nonstandard year that spans the census date, but started in the 2023-24 academic year. It should have been recorded in HESES23.
 - d. Year of engagement D is a nonstandard year that starts after the census date in the 2024-25 academic year and is recorded in Column 2 of HESES24 Tables 1, 2 or 3 and Table 5 and, where appropriate, Table 6.

Figure C1.4: How to record standard and nonstandard years



New entrants

20. For Table 5, students should be classed as new entrants when they meet both the following criteria:
- a. They first generate a countable year of engagement for a higher education course recognised for OfS funding purposes.
 - b. They have not been active at the same broad level (undergraduate, postgraduate taught or postgraduate research) as a student of the same registering provider in either of the two previous academic years.
21. Students repeating the first year of a course should not therefore be included as new entrants, whereas those entering directly into the second or later year of a course could be. For merged providers the registering provider includes the previous constituent providers that merged to form the current one.
22. Where a student starts more than one engagement at the same broad level in the same academic year, and could be considered as a new entrant for each engagement, they should be recorded as a new entrant for only one. If one such engagement has an earlier start date than the others the student should be recorded as a new entrant for that engagement.

Recording starters on Tables 6a and 6c

23. In general, starters on Tables 6a and 6c are students starting study for the first time on a relevant pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession course in a specific academic year. Please note:
- a. Students who transfer during an academic year onto a pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession course from one that is not should be treated as a starter in the year in which they transfer onto the pre-registration course.

- b. Students who transfer between different types of pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession course should be recorded against the profession that applies to their current course. They should be treated as a starter in the year that their previous course started.
- c. Students repeating the first year of a pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession course should be treated as starters in the year they started the course, and not when they repeated the first year.

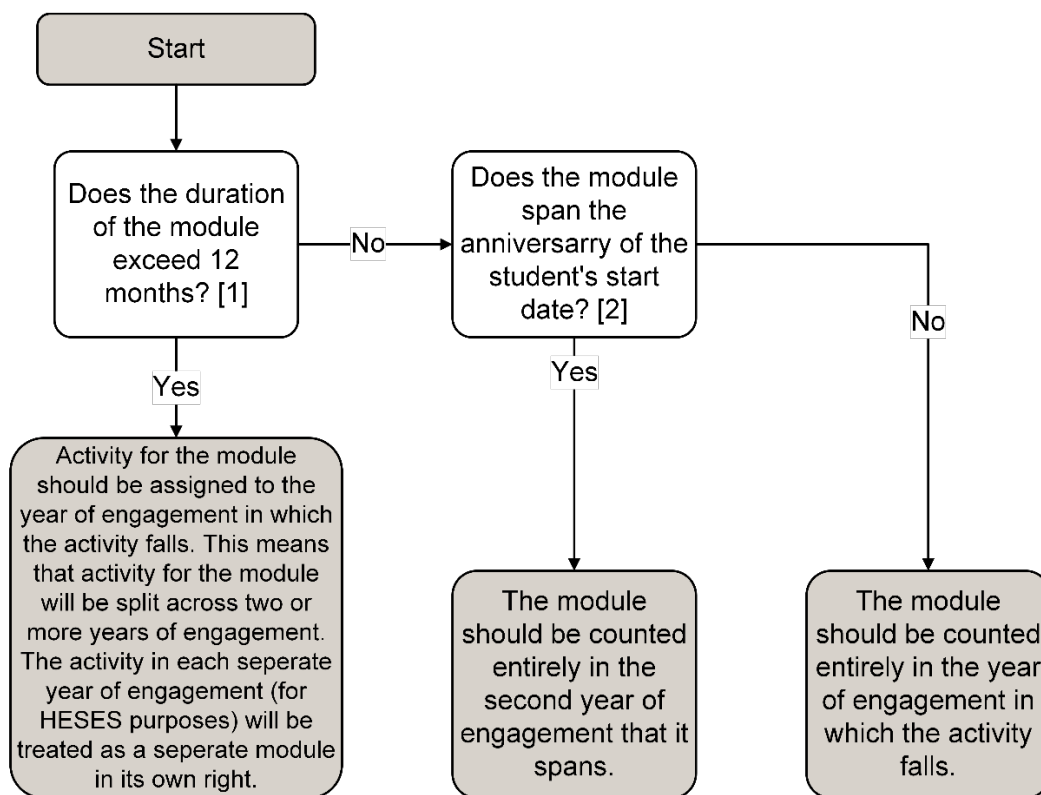
24. Students classified as starters on Tables 6a and 6c in 2024-25 will not necessarily be new entrants on Table 5, though the two populations will overlap significantly.

Assigning modules to years of engagement

25. If a module spans two years of engagement then all activity for that module should be counted in the second year of engagement in which it occurs. Exceptionally, where the duration of the module is greater than 12 months, the activity for the module should be assigned to the year of engagement in which the activity falls. This means that the module is countable across two or more years of engagement. In such cases, and for HESES purposes only, the module activity in each year of engagement will be treated as a separate module in its own right.

26. The flowchart in Figure C1.5 can be used to determine which year of engagement a module should be assigned to.

Figure C1.5: How to assign modules to a year of engagement



[1] Paragraph 2 refers to years of engagement starting 'on or near the anniversary' of the start date. The broad reference to '12 months' should reflect this.

[2] This is the 2024-25 anniversary of the student's start date. Thus, if a student started their studies on 11 February 2024, the anniversary would be 11 February 2025.

Summer schools

27. Four types of short course are sometimes referred to as 'summer schools'. They are described in more detail below.

Summer schools for potential higher education students

28. These are intended for prospective students to experience a short period of study in a higher education environment, normally in the summer vacation. Such students are not included in the HESES population because the provision is not higher education.

Access provision

29. In some cases, providers offer short preparatory or access courses for individual students to facilitate progression to an initial higher education course. They are taken immediately before the start of the higher education course. Where such provision is an integrated part of a recognised higher education course for OfS funding purposes, the students are included in the HESES population: see Annex B paragraphs 7 and 8 for when such provision is considered integrated. The short access course and the first year of the higher education course will typically count as one year of engagement. This may result in the year of engagement being counted as long, as defined in Annex H.

30. If the access provision is not an integrated part of the recognised higher education course, it is not higher education and the students are not part of the HESES population.

Within-course periods of study in vacation time

31. These are short periods of study within a course which generally take place in vacation time, and are normally for students to catch up with others on the course. They usually fall between the normal periods of activity for years of engagement, but within a course. They are counted as part of the preceding year of engagement and may result in that year of engagement being counted as long, as defined in Annex H.

32. Such short periods of study should be returned on the ILR in the same way that they are returned on HESES. That is, they should be included as part of the year of engagement preceding the short period of study.

Foundation degree bridging courses

33. These are short courses which come after a foundation degree has been completed, but before the final year of an honours degree course. They are not an integrated part of the course from which they are bridging. Progression is assured from successful completion of a foundation degree bridging course to the final year of an honours degree. For the purposes of HESES, such a course is counted as a separate year of engagement and is returned as part-time. If the bridging course spans two academic years, it should be recorded in the academic year in which the bridging course ends.

Examples

Example 1: Standard year (Column 1)

34. A full-time student starts a degree programme on 22 September 2024, with each year of course finishing at the end of June: each year is a standard year. The student becomes countable on 22 September 2024 and on or around the anniversary of this date each subsequent year.

35. As the first year of engagement becomes countable between 1 August 2024 and the census date, it would be entered in the Courses table and so automatically included in Column 1 of Table 1 in HESES24. Later years would similarly be returned in Column 1 of subsequent HESES returns.

Example 2: Standard year (Column 2)

36. A full-time student starts a Higher National Certificate programme on 8 December 2024, with all activity completed before the end of July 2025: therefore the year is a standard year.

37. The student becomes countable on 8 December 2024. As the year of engagement becomes countable between the census date and 31 July 2025, it would be included in Column 2 of Table 1 in HESES24.

Example 3: Nonstandard year

38. A full-time student starts a three-year degree programme on 18 January 2025 with each year of the course finishing in December: each year is a nonstandard year. The student becomes countable on 18 January 2025 and on or around the anniversary of this date in each subsequent year.

39. As the first year of engagement becomes countable between the census date and 31 July 2025, it would be included in Column 2 of Table 1 in HESES24. Later years would similarly be returned in Column 2 of subsequent HESES returns.

Example 4: Nonstandard year, final year of course

40. In January 2025, a full-time student begins the final year of a degree programme they started on 18 January 2023. Each year of the course runs from January to December: each year is a nonstandard year.

41. The student initially became countable on 18 January 2023, the date they started their course. As they progressed through the course they were counted on or around the anniversary of this date in each subsequent year.

42. For HESES24, as the final year of engagement becomes countable between the census date and 31 July 2025, the student would be included in Column 2 of Table 1 in HESES24,

as they would have been in HESES23 and HESES22. All activity for this final year would be recorded in HESES24.

43. No activity for this year of engagement would be recorded on HESES25 (for the period from August to the census date), as all the activity would have been returned on HESES24.

Example 5: Standard year, student starting late

44. A full-time Higher National Diploma (HND) course starts on 10 October 2024 and runs from 10 October to 24 June each year. A student starts the HND programme late, on 10 January 2025, but intends to catch up with the rest of the students on the course and follow the same pattern of activity as them.

45. As that student's year of engagement starts on 10 January 2025 and on the anniversary of that date in subsequent years, the student should be included in Column 2 of Table 1 in HESES24, and in Column 2 of subsequent HESES returns as they continue their studies. The student should be recorded with a full-time nonstandard year of engagement from January 2025 to January 2026. This will include activity from the first and second years of the course. Their second year of engagement will consist of the remaining activity for the period 10 January 2026 to 24 June 2026 and will be part-time as it does not meet the definition of full-time as set out in Annex D paragraph 3.

Example 6: Standard year, student who interrupts their course

46. A full-time student starts in September 2023 intending to study eight modules before June 2024. At the end of the first semester in February 2024, having completed four modules, they interrupt the course and return 12 months later to complete the remaining four modules by June 2025.

47. The first year of engagement becomes countable in September 2023 and is therefore returned in Column 1 of Table 1 of HESES23.

48. The second year of engagement becomes countable at the start of the year of engagement in September 2024 (and not in February 2025 when the student returns), and is therefore returned in Column 1 of Table 3 of HESES24 as the activity in this second year of engagement does not meet the criteria to be classed as full-time.

Example 7: Students topping up from a foundation degree

49. An OfS-fundable student studies full-time for a foundation degree at a college in the academic years 2022-23 and 2023-24, then tops up to a full-time bachelors' degree at a university in 2024-25:

- a. If the foundation degree was delivered by the college under a subcontractual arrangement from that university, then the student would be considered to be studying at the same provider (the university) and at the same broad level

throughout the period 2022-23 to 2024-25. They should not therefore be reported as a new entrant for 2024-25 in Table 5.

- b. If the foundation degree was not delivered under a subcontractual arrangement, but was funded directly at the college, then the student would be considered to be a student of the college for 2022-23 and 2023-24, and of the university in 2024-25. Because the study is not at the same provider, the student should be reported as a new entrant in Table 5 when they top up to the bachelors' degree in 2024-25.

Example 8: Students who switch modes

50. A student started studying towards a Higher National Diploma on a part-time basis in 2022-23. In 2024-25 they switch to full-time study. The student is studying at the same provider and at the same broad level throughout the period 2021-22 to 2024-25. Therefore they should not be reported as a new entrant for 2024-25 in Table 5.

Example 9: Students who start a new course at the same provider

51. A student completed an undergraduate degree course at a provider in 2022-23. In 2024-25 they start a one-year masters' course at the same provider. The student is generating their first countable year for that course and has not been active at the same broad level (postgraduate taught) at the registered provider in either of the two previous academic years. Therefore, they should be reported as a new entrant in Table 5.

Example 10: Students who start more than one year of engagement in the same academic year

52. A student is starting the first year of an undergraduate degree course at a provider on 1 September 2024. On 1 March 2025 the student begins the first year of a part-time HNC course with the same provider. The student is therefore starting more than one year of engagement in the same academic year and could be considered a new entrant for each. The student should only be recorded as a new entrant for one course. As the degree course has the earlier start date the student would be recorded as a new entrant for the degree course and not for the HNC course.

Example 11: Within-course periods of study in vacation time

53. A student studies full-time for a degree over three years, with activity for each year of engagement running from October to July. Between the second and third years, a short period of study – running from 25 July to 5 September – is undertaken to bring the student up to the standard of others on the course. This short period of study counts as part of the second year of the degree, and is not a separate engagement.

Example 12: Students who transfer onto a pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession course from one that is not

54. A student studies full-time at a provider for a bachelors' degree in biological sciences in 2022-23 and 2023-24, and completes the first two years. However, in September 2024, the student transfers to a pre-registration midwifery course, studying full-time at the same provider. The student is reported as a 'starter' for 2024-25 in Table 6a. Such a student transferring within a provider would not be a 'new entrant' for the purposes of Table 5.

Annex C2: Counting student activity for ‘all other providers’

This annex gives the definition of a year of engagement and explains how to count them. This includes the criteria for counting a year of engagement in HESES24, the definitions of standard and nonstandard years of engagement, flowcharts to aid with determining how years of instance should be counted, and guidance on counting some short courses that are sometimes known as ‘summer schools’.

We have produced different versions of Annex C to be clear to each provider how years of engagement should be determined and counted.

This annex (Annex C2) applies only to providers that submit individualised data to the designated data body (DDB) only (in the paragraphs below, we will use the term ‘Other’ providers to refer to these providers). Further education colleges and sixth form colleges and academies should refer to Annex C1 for guidance on how years of engagement should be determined and counted.

All other annexes apply equally to all providers.

Annex C2 contents

Definitions

- Year of engagement
 - Further notes on years of engagement
 - Withdrawal from an engagement
 - Counting years of engagement

Guidance

- How to count years of engagement in the HESES survey
- How to count years of engagement
 - Students who withdraw on or before the census date
 - Standard and nonstandard years of study
- New entrants
 - Recording starters on Tables 6a and 6c
- Summer schools
 - Summer schools for potential higher education students
 - Access provision
 - Within-course periods of study in vacation time

- Foundation degree bridging courses

Examples

Definitions

Year of engagement

1. Annex A paragraph 2c defines an 'engagement' as 'a student's commitment to an educational aim (qualification or credit) and its realisation over time. This aligns with the definition as used by the DDB but is applicable to all providers. For HESES purposes, an engagement can be split into one or more 'years of engagement'.
2. For 'Other' providers, a year of engagement will usually be recorded for an engagement based on the latest student course session (SCS) that the student starts, or is forecast to start, in the 2024-25 academic year.³⁸
3. For most students, we would expect only one such student course session to start within the academic year; in such cases recording student course sessions will be broadly equivalent to the 'year of instance' concept used prior to HESES23.
4. HESES counts years of engagement for students studying on higher education courses recognised for OfS funding purposes (see Annex B). This is not the same as counting individual students. This approach ensures that the number of students on each course is recorded in order to forecast teaching activity.

Further notes on years of engagement

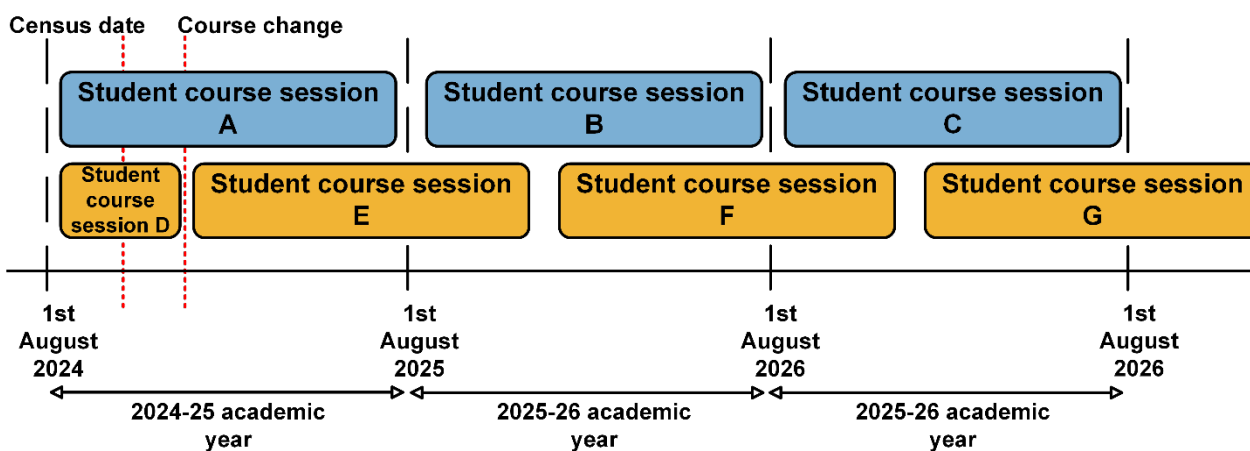
5. Where a student completes a foundation degree during the academic year and then undertakes a foundation degree bridging course, to enable them to join the final year of an honours degree, the two separate SCSs (for the foundation degree and for the bridging course) can be recorded in HESES as two separate years of engagement.
6. Other than for foundation degree bridging courses, where a student undertakes an initial qualification then immediately progresses (disregarding any intervening vacation) to a second qualification at the same broad level (undergraduate or postgraduate taught), for HESES purposes these are considered both part of the same engagement and not independent. We would therefore expect the student to generate only one year of engagement to be recorded in HESES.
7. Exceptionally a student may be on two independent courses at the same time, for example if a student is studying towards a PhD and an unrelated undergraduate professional qualification. As these are two separate engagements, each will generate a countable year of engagement that should be recorded in HESES.
8. Where a student is undertaking a course via a 'fully flexible' arrangement, this will be considered as a single engagement. Within that, each year of the course is a single student

³⁸ Student course sessions are defined in the Student record. See <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/23056/datadictionary?element=StudentCourseSession>.

course session. Providers will therefore be expected to return a year of engagement based on that student course session starting within the 2024-25 academic year in HESES24.

9. Where a student is undertaking multiple short courses (such as modules for credit) at a provider within the same academic year, that could count towards the same final qualification, for HESES purposes this would be considered a single engagement and the student would generate only one year of engagement in HESES.
10. Guidance on when to record separate engagements and student course sessions can be found on the HESA website.
11. Where a student changes course, they may generate a new SCS if their pattern of study and cohort changes. This is illustrated in figure C2.1.

Figure C2.1: Counting student course sessions for students changing course

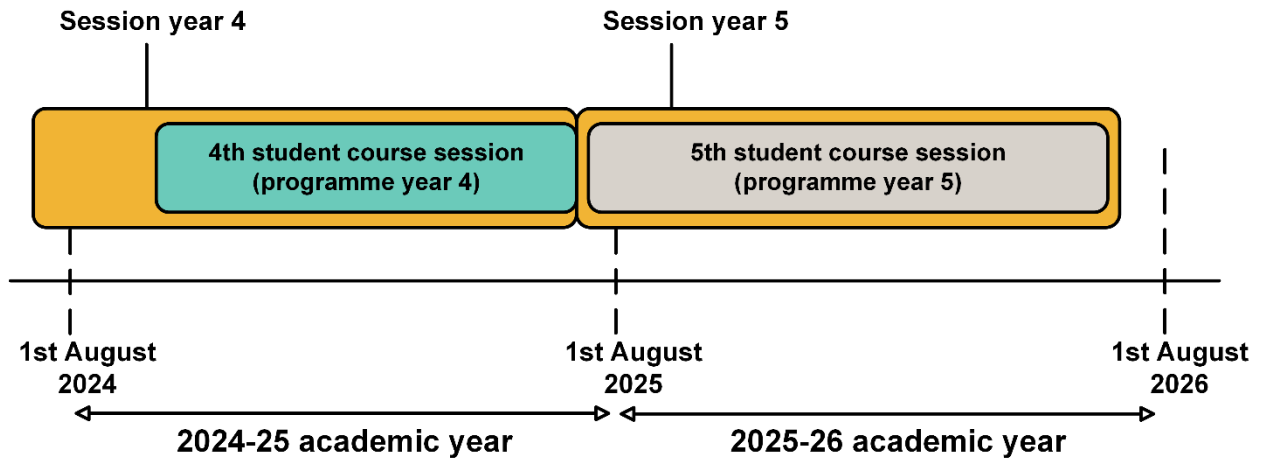


12. In the scenarios shown in figure C2.1, a student starts studying in September 2024 for a BSc in mathematics. In January 2024 the student decides to change to an equivalent course at the same provider, leading to a BSc in physics.
 - a. Scenario A, shown in blue. The student joins a cohort of students that also started in September 2024. A new SCS is not generated in the academic year and SCS A should be recorded in HESES24. The student's study pattern and subsequent SCSs will follow the pattern shown by SCS A, B and C.
 - b. Scenario B, shown in gold. The student joins a new cohort of students starting in January. SCS D would end early and a new SCS (SCS E) would be generated. SCS E would be counted in HESES24 because it is the latest SCS to start within the 2024-25 academic year. In this scenario, SCS E should be recorded in Column 2 because it begins between the census date and the end of the academic year. The student's study pattern and subsequent SCSs will follow the pattern shown by SCS E, F and G.
13. Where a student has multiple SCSs starting within an academic year (1 August to 31 July), but the SCSs are in successive programme years, the SCS in the earlier of the two programme years should be counted so long as all other relevant criteria are met. The SCS in the latter programme year should be recorded in the following year's HESES return. An example of this situation would be where a medical student begins their fifth year clinical placement

immediately after finishing the academic study for their fourth year of study and is illustrated in figure C2.2.

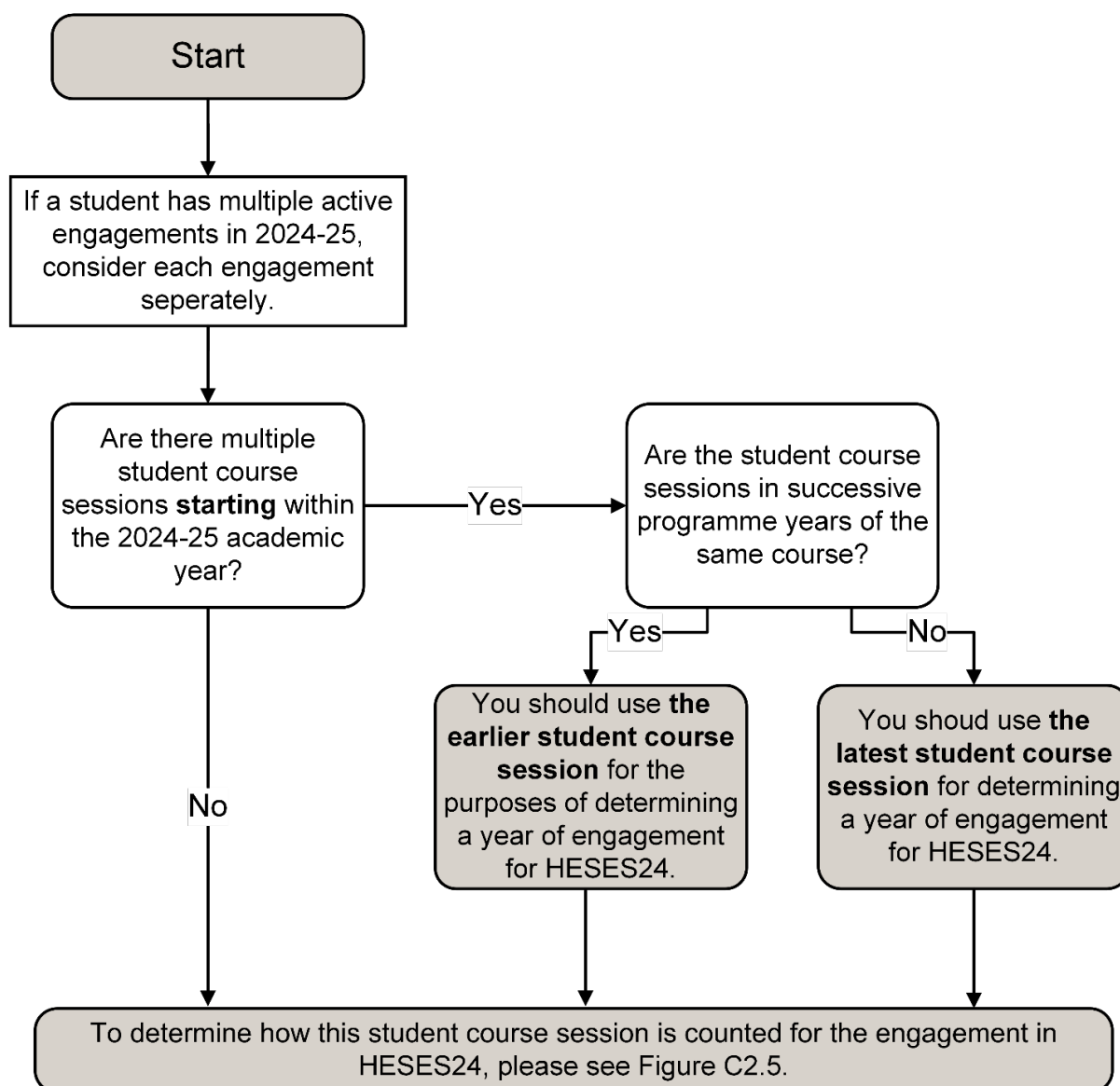
- a. As an exception to the guidance noted in paragraph 13, where a student has multiple SCSs starting within an academic year due to an initial period of access provision, such as a foundation year, the latest SCS that starts should be returned in HESES. See paragraphs 37 to 38 for further information on access provision.

Figure C2.2: Multiple student course sessions within a year of engagement in successive programme years



- 14. The flowchart in Figure 2.3 provides guidance on how to identify the student course that defines a year of engagement when multiple student course sessions start within an academic year.

Figure C2.3: Determining which student course session to consider when multiple start in the same academic year



Withdrawal from an engagement

15. For the purposes of HESES, a student has withdrawn from their engagement if they leave before its completion and do not have an intention to return and continue it. Students who suspend studies should not be treated as having withdrawn.

Counting years of engagement

16. To be counted, years of engagement must be generated by a student in the HESES population for 2024-25, and meet all the following criteria:

- a. A fee is charged for tuition or supervision of research. Exceptionally, this fee may be waived for individual students based on their particular circumstances. Other than for sandwich year out students it should not be waived for all students on a course, and the

criteria which determine whether the fees may be waived should not be tantamount to waiving them for all students. Where the fee has been waived for an individual student, evidence of the reason for this waiver must be retained. This criterion does not apply to students taking a higher education course recognised for OfS funding purposes as part of an apprenticeship. In some cases a fee may not be charged in the current year because a fee for the activity has already been paid in a previous year. This should not be treated as a fee waiver. Rather the student should be treated as having been charged a fee for the year.

- b. The student is not writing up a thesis or similar piece of work throughout the whole of the year of engagement. Students are considered to be writing up when they have completed their research work and will not undertake any significant additional research. It is common practice for such students to receive a small amount of supervision, and they may still have access to other facilities at the provider. However, such students should still be treated as writing up. Writing up is not considered to be 'study' for HESES purposes; therefore time spent writing up for part of a year of engagement should be taken into account and excluded when determining if a student's year of engagement should be considered full-time or part-time.
- c. The student has not withdrawn, and is not forecast to withdraw, within two weeks of starting their engagement.

Guidance

How to count years of engagement in the HESES survey

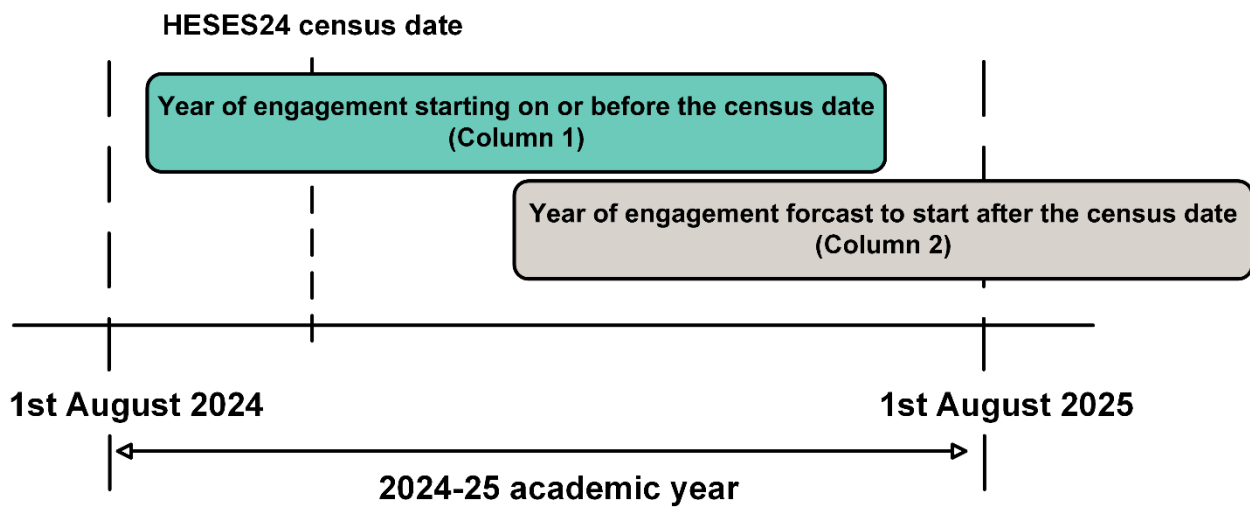
17. To be counted in HESES24, a student's year of engagement must start in the 2024-25 academic year (1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025). The start date for the year of engagement will be the same as the start date for the SCS that defines it. This is the date the student first engages with the structured teaching and learning within the session year.³⁹ This may include any timetabled activity such as classes, lectures or induction, or engagement with online learning content. The start date is compared with the HESES24 census date, which is 1 December 2024 for all 'Other' providers:

- a. If the year of engagement starts on or before the census date (between 1 August 2024 and 1 December 2024 inclusive) then that year of engagement is recorded in Column 1 of Tables 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6.
- b. If the year of engagement starts after the census date (between 2 December 2024 and 31 July 2025 inclusive) then that year of engagement is recorded in Column 2 of Tables 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6.

18. Figure C2.4 illustrates this concept.

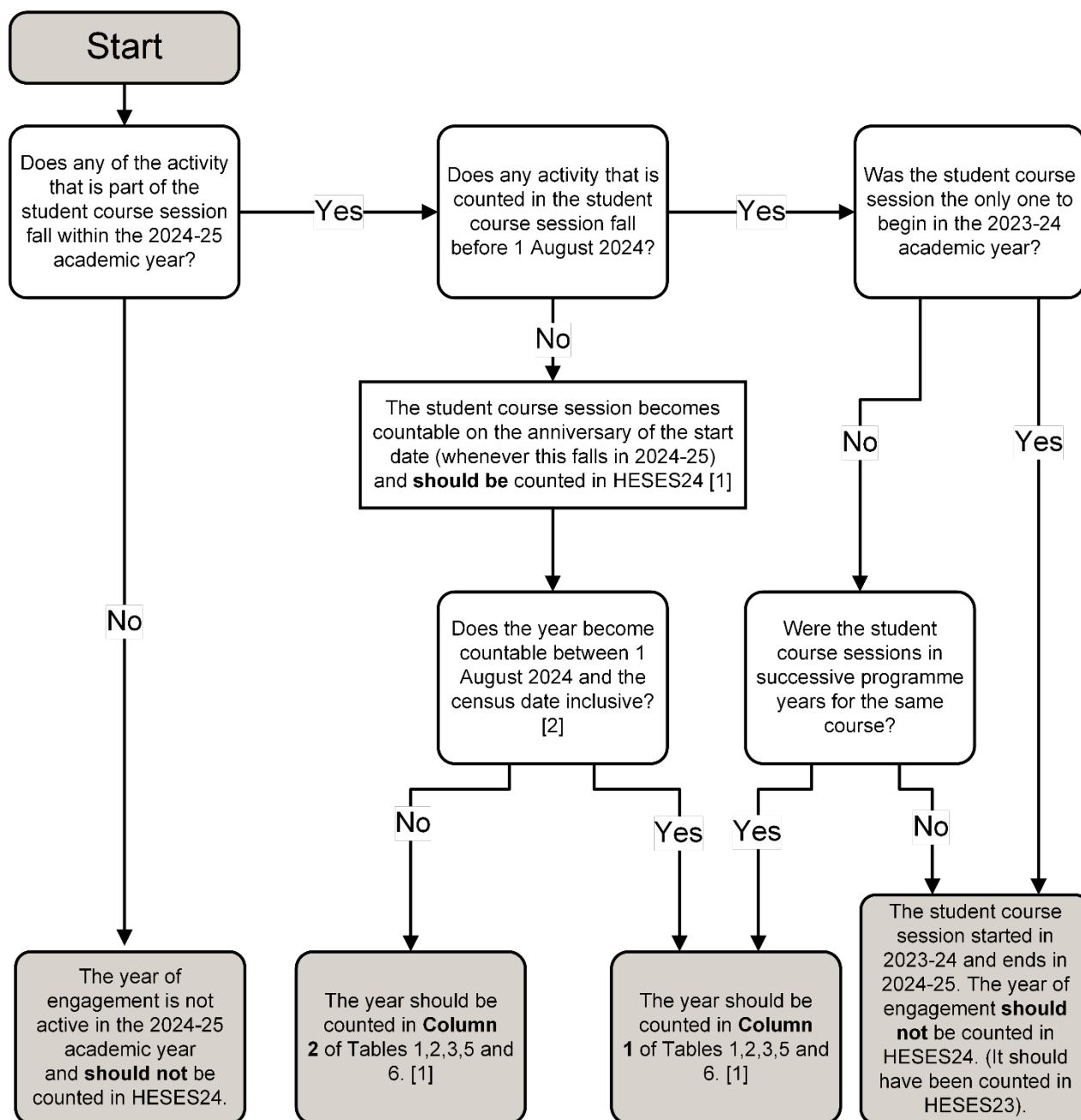
³⁹ Although recording session years will be optional under the 2024-25 Student record specification, they are still relevant to determining which SCS to return in HESES24. For further information on changes to the student record please see <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/records/reviews/student-2024-25>.

Figure C2.4: Years of engagement (or student course sessions) recorded in Column 1 or Column 2



19. The flowchart in Figure C2.5 can be used to determine whether the year of engagement should be counted in HESES24 and, if so, whether it should be returned in Column 1 or 2 of Tables 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6.

Figure C2.5: How to determine how a year of engagement, as defined by an identified student course session, should be returned in HESES24



[1] Subject to meeting the other conditions to be counted in HESES24.

[2] The census date is 1 December 2024 for all other providers.

20. Students who have not completed the provider’s registration process for the engagement, and from whom there is no evidence of activity by the census date, should not be included in Column 1 of Tables 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 in the HESES24 return. However, if there is evidence of activity, students should be included in Column 1 of HESES24 Tables 1, 2 or 3 and Table 5 and, where appropriate, Table 6. Efforts should be made to ensure that all eligible students are fully registered by the census date.

Students who withdraw on or before the census date

21. If a student has withdrawn from their course on or before the census date without completing their study intentions within the year of engagement, they should not be returned.

Standard and nonstandard years of study

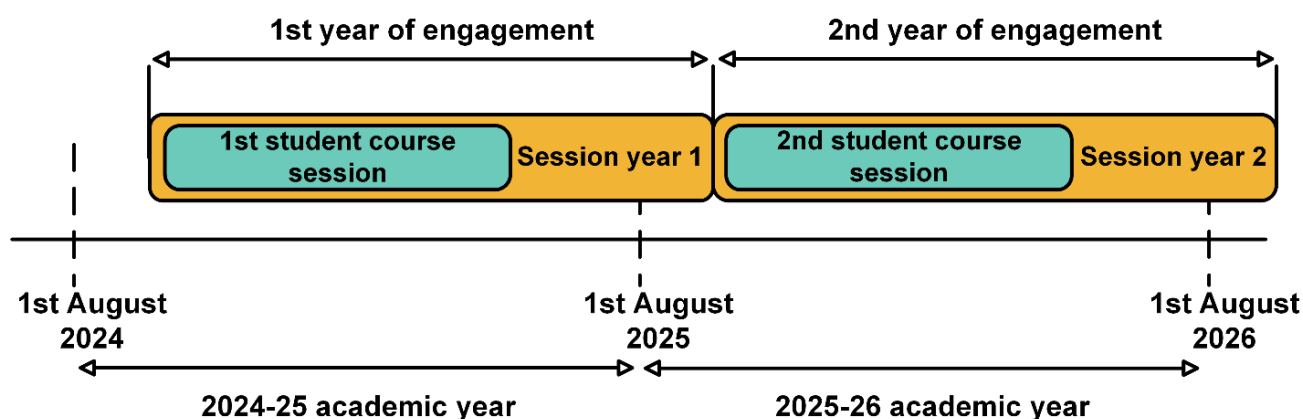
22. For HESES purposes, years of engagement can be separated into two categories, standard and nonstandard years:

- a. A standard year is one where all activity for the student, represented by the SCS, is entirely within one academic year (1 August to 31 July).
- b. A nonstandard year is one where all activity for the student, represented by the SCS, is not entirely within one academic year – that is, where the activity for the SCS crosses from one academic year into the next.

Students whose years of engagement are normally standard but in one year undertake a period of work experience, should not be treated as nonstandard solely because the work experience spans academic years.

23. It is important to note that the SCS used to define the year of engagement, needs to be considered in isolation and not with its corresponding session year. It is possible for a session year to span two academic years but for the appropriate corresponding student course session to be contained within a single academic year. Figure C2.6 illustrates this concept.

Figure C2.6: Student course sessions and session years



24. In both standard and nonstandard years, students become countable at the start of the relevant SCS.

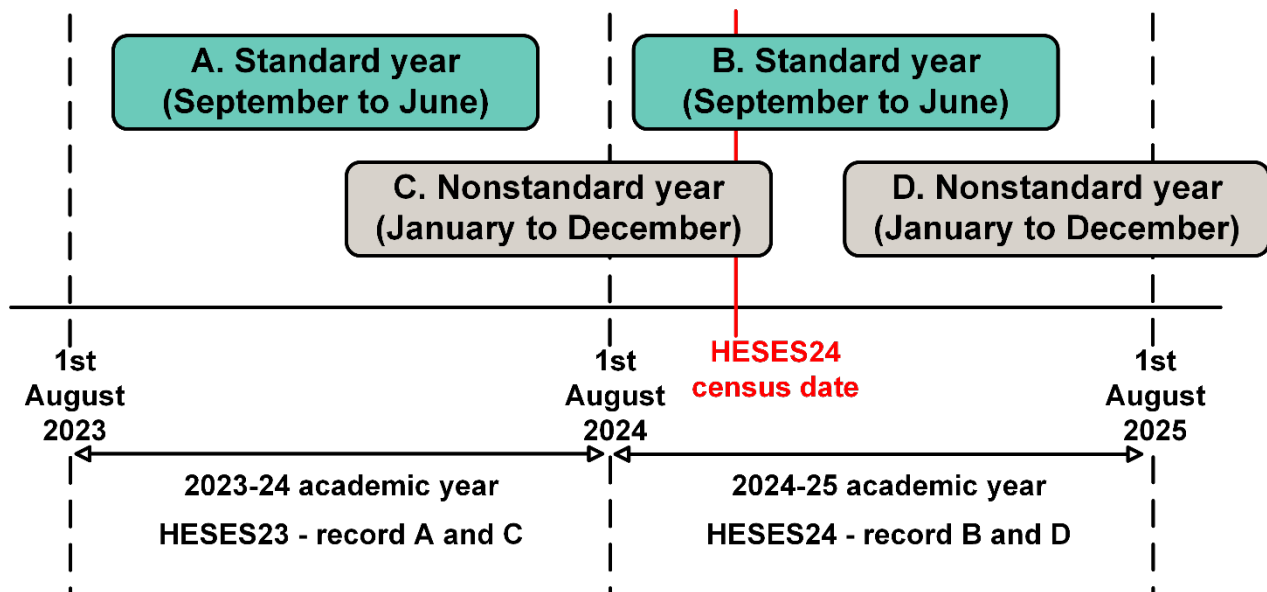
25. For students on nonstandard years, the final academic year during which the student is active will not usually generate a countable SCS.

26. Figure C2.7 shows how to count standard and nonstandard student course sessions in HESES24:

- a. SCS A is a standard SCS that was completely within the 2023-24 academic year. The year of engagement defined by this SCS should have been recorded in HESES23.

- b. SCS B is a standard SCS that starts before the census date in the 2024-25 academic year. The year of engagement defined by this SCS should be recorded in Column 1 of HESES24 Tables 1, 2 or 3 and Table 5 and, where appropriate, Table 6.
- c. SCS C is a nonstandard SCS that spans the census date, but started in the 2023-24 academic year. The year of engagement defined by this SCS should have been recorded in HESES23.
- d. SCS D is a nonstandard SCS that starts after the census date in the 2024-25 academic year. The year of engagement defined by this SCS should be recorded in Column 2 of HESES24 Tables 1, 2 or 3 and Table 5 and, where appropriate, Table 6.

Figure C2.7: How to record standard and nonstandard years



New entrants

27. For Table 5, students should be classed as new entrants when they meet both the following criteria:
- a. They first generate a countable year of engagement for a higher education course recognised for OfS funding purposes.
 - b. They have not been active at the same broad level (undergraduate, postgraduate taught or postgraduate research) as a student of the same registering provider in either of the two previous academic years.
28. We anticipate that there will be significant overlap between students generating new engagements in the Student record and new entrants in HESES. However, a student generating a new engagement in the Student record is not necessarily a new entrant for HESES purposes because a new engagement could be generated for a student at the same provider within two years. Both the criteria outlined above must be met for students to be recorded as new entrants in HESES24.
29. Students repeating the first year of a course should not be included as new entrants, whereas those starting on a course and entering directly into the second or later year of a course could

be. For merged providers, the registering provider includes the previous constituent providers that merged to form the current one.

30. Where a student starts more than one engagement at the same broad level in the same academic year, and could be considered as a new entrant for each engagement, they should be recorded as a new entrant for only one. If one such engagement has an SCS with an earlier start date than the other, the student should be recorded as a new entrant for that SCS and engagement.
31. Where a student is progressing from one course to another across broad levels they should be counted as a new entrant for HESES purposes. For example, if a student finished an undergraduate course and then continues studying at the same provider on a taught masters course, the student should be counted as a new entrant on the taught masters course.
32. A student should not be recorded as a new entrant if they are progressing from one level to another as part of a single course, for example an undergraduate degree with an integrated masters'.

Recording starters on Tables 6a and 6c

33. In general, starters on Tables 6a and 6c are students starting study for the first time on a relevant pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession course in a specific academic year. Please note:
 - a. Students who transfer during an academic year onto a pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession course from one that is not should be treated as a starter in the year in which they transfer onto the pre-registration course.
 - b. Students who transfer between different types of pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession course should be recorded against the profession that applies to their current course. They should be treated as a starter in the year that their previous course started.
 - c. Students repeating the first year of a pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession course should be treated as starters in the year they started the course, and not when they repeated the first year.
34. Students classified as starters on Tables 6a and 6c in 2024-25 will not necessarily be new entrants on Table 5, though the two populations will overlap significantly.

Summer schools

35. Four types of short course are sometimes referred to as 'summer schools'. They are described in more detail below.

Summer schools for potential higher education students

36. These are intended for prospective students to experience a short period of study in a higher education environment, normally in the summer vacation. Such students are not included in the HESES population because the provision is not higher education.

Access provision

37. In some cases, providers offer short preparatory or access courses for individual students to facilitate progression to an initial higher education course. They are taken immediately before the start of the higher education course. Where such provision generates an SCS at the beginning of the academic year, providers should count the latest SCS which starts, or is predicted to start, within the academic year.
38. To be included in the HESES population, this access provision must be an integrated part of a recognised higher education course for OfS funding purposes. See Annex B, paragraphs 7 and 8, for when such provision is considered integrated. If the access provision is not an integrated part of the recognised higher education course, it is not higher education and the students are not part of the HESES population.

Within-course periods of study in vacation time

39. These are short periods of study within a course which generally take place in vacation time, and are normally for students to catch up with others on the course. They usually fall between the normal periods of activity for years of engagement, but within a course. They are counted as part of the preceding year of engagement and may result in that year of engagement being counted as long, as defined in Annex H.

Foundation degree bridging courses

40. These are short courses which come after a foundation degree has been completed, but before the final year of an honours degree course. They are not an integrated part of the course from which they are bridging. Progression is assured from successful completion of a foundation degree bridging course to the final year of an honours degree. For the purposes of HESES, such a course is counted as a separate year of engagement and is returned as part-time. If the bridging course spans two academic years, it should be recorded in the academic year in which the bridging course ends.

Examples

Example 1: Standard year (Column 1)

41. A full-time student starts a degree programme on 22 September 2024. The student's year of engagement will be defined by a student course session that starts on 22 September 2024 and runs until 30 June 2025. The student is expected to have a similar study pattern in subsequent years.

42. As the year of engagement becomes countable between 1 August 2024 and the census date, it would be included in Column 1 of Table 1 in HESES24. Later years of engagement will similarly be returned in Column 1 of subsequent HESES returns.

Example 2: Standard year (Column 2)

43. A full-time student starts a Higher National Certificate programme on 8 December 2024, with all activity completed before the end of July 2025: therefore the year is a standard year.

44. The student's year of engagement is defined by the student course session starting on 8 December 2024. As the year engagement becomes countable between the census date and 31 July 2025, it would be included in Column 2 of Table 1 in HESES24.

Example 3: Nonstandard year

45. A full-time student starts a three-year degree programme on 18 January 2025 with each year of the course running from January to December: each year is a nonstandard year. The student's year of engagement is defined by the student course session starting on 18 January 2025 and on the start date of student course sessions in subsequent session years.

46. As the year of engagement becomes countable between the census date and 31 July 2024, it would be included in Column 2 of Table 1 in HESES24. It is expected that later years would similarly be recorded in Column 2 of subsequent HESES returns.

Example 4: Nonstandard year, final year of course

47. In January 2025, a full-time student begins the final year of a degree programme they started on 18 January 2023. Each year of the course runs from January to December: each year is a nonstandard year.

48. The student initially became countable on 18 January 2023, the date they started their course. As they progressed through the course they were counted on or around the anniversary of this date in each subsequent year.

49. For HESES24, as the final year of engagement becomes countable between the census date and 31 July 2025, the student would be included in Column 2 of Table 1 in HESES24, as they would have been in HESES23 and HESES22. All activity for this final year would be recorded in HESES24.

50. No activity for this student course session would be recorded on HESES25 (for the period from August to the census date), as all the activity would have been returned on HESES24 and there would be no year of engagement / student course session starting in the 2025-26 academic year.

Example 5: Standard year, student starting late

51. A full-time Higher National Diploma (HND) course starts on 10 October 2024 and runs from 10 October to 24 June each year. A student starts the HND programme late, on 10 January 2025, but intends to catch up with the rest of the students on the course and follow the same pattern of activity as them.

52. As the first student course session starts between the census date and 31 July 2025, the student's year of engagement would be recorded in Column 2 in HESES24. It will be necessary to determine if the student course session that defines this year of engagement meets the definition of full-time.

53. As the student intends to catch-up on the work they missed and then continue on a pattern of standard years of study, future student course sessions would start between 1 August and the census date, meaning they will be recorded in Column 1 of Table 1 in future HESES returns.

Example 6: Standard year, student who interrupts their course

54. A full-time student starts in September 2024 intending to study eight modules before June 2025. At the end of the first semester in February 2025, having completed four modules, they interrupt the course and return 12 months later to complete the remaining four modules by June 2026.

55. The first year of engagement is defined by the student course session that starts in September 2024 and is therefore returned in Column 1 of Table 1 of HESES24.

56. The second year of engagement is defined by the student course session that starts in February 2026; the year of engagement will be returned in Column 2 of Table 3 in HESES25 as the second student course session will not meet the definition of full-time study.

Example 7: Students topping up from a foundation degree

57. An OfS-fundable student studies full-time for a foundation degree at a college in the academic years 2022-23 and 2023-24, then tops up to a full-time bachelors' degree at a university in 2024-25:

- a. If the foundation degree was delivered by the college under a subcontractual arrangement from that university, then the student would be considered to be studying at the same provider (the university) and at the same broad level throughout the period 2022-23 to 2024-25. They should not therefore be reported as a new entrant for 2024-25 in Table 5.

- b. If the foundation degree was not delivered under a subcontractual arrangement, but was funded directly at the college, then the student would be considered to be a student of the college for 2022-23 and 2023-24, and of the university in 2024-25. Because the study is not at the same provider, the student should be reported as a new entrant in Table 5 when they top up to the bachelors' degree in 2024-25.

Example 8: Students who switch modes

58. A student started studying towards a Higher National Diploma on a part-time basis in 2022-23. In 2024-25 they switch to full-time study. The student is studying at the same provider and at the same broad level throughout the period 2022-23 to 2024-25. Therefore, they should not be reported as a new entrant for 2024-25 in Table 5.

Example 9: Students who start a new course at the same provider

59. A student completed an undergraduate degree course at a provider in 2022-23. In 2024-25 they start a one-year masters' course at the same provider. The student is generating their first countable student course session for that course and has not been active at the same broad level (postgraduate taught) at the registered provider in either of the two previous academic years. Therefore, they should be reported as a new entrant in Table 5.

Example 10: Students who start more than one engagement in the same academic year

60. A student is starting the first year of an undergraduate degree course at a provider on 1 September 2024. On 1 March 2025 the student begins the first year of a part-time HNC course with the same provider. The student is therefore starting more than one engagement in the same academic year and could be considered a new entrant for each. The student should only be recorded as a new entrant for one course. As the degree course has the earlier start date the student would be recorded as a new entrant for the degree course and not for the HNC course.

Example 11: Within-course periods of study in vacation time

61. A student studies full-time for a degree over three years. Each year contains a single student course session running from October to July. Between the second and third years, a short period of study – running from 25 July to 5 September – is undertaken to bring the student up to the standard of others on the course. This short period of study counts as part of the second year of the degree, and is not a separate engagement.

Example 12: Students who transfer onto a pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession course from one that is not

62. A student studies full-time at a university for a bachelors' degree in biological sciences in 2022-23 and 2023-24, and completes the first two years. However, in September 2024, the student transfers to a pre-registration midwifery course, studying full-time at the same university. The student is reported as a 'starter' for 2024-25 in Table 6a. Such a student transferring within a provider would not be a 'new entrant' for the purposes of Table 5.

Annex D: Mode of study

This annex explains how to determine, for the purposes of HESES, the mode of study for a year of engagement (full-time, sandwich year out or part-time). It includes guidance on how to treat learning in the workplace and work experience when determining mode of study. In general, all students on a given course with a broadly similar pattern of activity, for a given year of engagement, should be recorded as having the same mode.

Annex D contents

- Assessing attendance for mode
- Distance learning courses

Full-time

- Part-time students in receipt of full-time student support
- Accredited prior learning

Sandwich year out

Part-time

Additional guidance on mode of study

- Apprenticeships
- Students only active for part of a year
- Students who change from full-time to part-time within a year of engagement
- Treatment of learning in the workplace and work experience for the purposes of determining mode of study

Examples

Assessing attendance for mode

1. 'Attendance' means that the student is required to be at a provider location, or other specified location (such as a partner provider, or defined workplace) to undertake periods of study, tuition, learning in the workplace, or sandwich work placement. These locations are expected to be collective for all students on the course. Where the normal expectation is that students attend virtually (for example through online or pre-recorded lectures), we would not consider this to meet the definition of attendance. An exception to this would be where alternative arrangements are made because a student is unable to attend for a reason that relates to their disability.

Distance learning courses

2. A 'distance learning course' means a course on which a student undertaking the course is not required to be in attendance by the provider of the course, where 'required to be in attendance' is not satisfied by a requirement imposed by the provider to attend any provider location (or other specified location):
 - for the purposes of registration or enrolment or any examination
 - on a weekend or during any vacation
 - on an occasional basis during the week.

Full-time

3. A year of engagement is counted as full-time if it meets all of the following criteria:
 - a. The student is normally required to attend the provider, or elsewhere, for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks within the year of engagement.
 - b. Within that time they are expected to undertake periods of study, tuition, learning in the workplace, or sandwich work placement that does not meet the criteria to be sandwich year out, which amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week. ('Guided learning hours' should not be used in isolation to determine how many hours each week a student spends studying. All guided learning hours count towards this total, but it is expected that higher education students will spend a significant amount of time each week in self-led individual learning, and an estimate of this time should also be included.) Time spent in study away from the specified locations noted in paragraph 3a can be included when determining if this criterion is met.
 - c. Full-time fees are chargeable for the course for the year. Exceptionally, all or part of the fee may be waived for individual students based on their particular personal – rather than course-related – circumstances. This does not include cases where fees are reduced because students are studying less intensively than is normally expected for a full-time student. It should not be waived for all students on a course, and the criteria that determine if fees may be waived should not be tantamount to waiving them for all students.
4. The full-time category includes full-time, sandwich and year abroad students, other than those falling within the definition of 'sandwich year out' given below. For student finance (including regulated fees) purposes, distance learning courses may be classified as full-time or part-time, but for HESES purposes cannot meet the attendance requirements to be classified as full-time. Students on such courses should therefore be classified as part-time for HESES purposes.

Part-time students in receipt of full-time student support

5. Some students may receive full-time student support, but be on a year of engagement that does not meet the criteria given in paragraphs 3a and 3b of this annex. This includes those on distance learning courses that are studying at a full-time rate. Years of engagement that do not

meet the criteria given in paragraph 3 should be returned as part-time, unless they fall under the definition of 'sandwich year out' given in paragraph 7 below.

Accredited prior learning

6. Years of engagement for students who are on a full-time programme, but who, because of accredited prior learning, do not meet the attendance requirements to be full-time, should be returned as part-time.

Sandwich year out

7. A year of engagement is counted as a 'sandwich year out' if it includes a period of work-based experience and meets the following criteria:
 - a. The course falls within the definition of a 'sandwich course' in Regulation 2(10) of the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 (Statutory Instrument 2011 No. 1986) as amended, or the year of engagement is an Erasmus year abroad spent working.⁴⁰
 - b. It is a year of engagement that fulfils one of the following:
 - i. Any periods of full-time study within the year of engagement are in aggregate less than 10 weeks.
 - ii. In respect of that year of engagement and any previous years of engagement, the aggregate of any one or more periods of attendance which are not periods of full-time study (disregarding intervening vacations) exceeds 30 weeks.
 - c. A reduced fee is chargeable for the course for the year, compared with what would be chargeable if the student were studying full-time in the year.
8. Students spending a full year abroad working, including under the Turing scheme, should be returned as sandwich year out. This includes students under the British Council's Language Assistants scheme.

Part-time

9. A year of engagement is counted as part-time if it does not meet the requirements to be either full-time or a sandwich year out.

Additional guidance on mode of study

10. In some cases, a student's mode of study reported on HESES changes between years. For example, the mode of a student on a full-time 18-month course would be full-time in year one and part-time in year two, if the second year does not have 24 weeks of study. On the student record returned to the designated data body, the student's activity in year two would be

⁴⁰ Regulation 2 of Statutory Instrument 2011 No. 1986 is available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2011/1986/regulation/2>. Providers should note in particular that the definition of an Erasmus year in the regulations includes academic years where the student is participating in 'the scheme established by the Secretary of State for Education known as the Turing scheme'.

recorded as 'other full-time' (SCSMODE = 02). On the Individualised Learner Record (ILR), it would be recorded as part-time (MODESTUD = 3).

Apprenticeships

11. Where students are studying on a recognised higher education course as part of an apprenticeship, they will normally be dividing their time between work and study. Therefore, we would commonly expect years of engagement for these students to be part-time for HESES purposes. For apprenticeships, only activity that directly relates to their recognised higher education course should be counted. We do not expect this to include all the apprentice's time in the workplace, including for the purpose of determining whether the attendance requirements for categorisation as a full-time year of engagement are met.
12. We recognise that the concept of a full-time fee may not be meaningful for recognised higher education undertaken as part of an apprenticeship. Where this is the case, the criterion in paragraph 3c of this annex can be disregarded for the purpose of determining whether a year of engagement for an apprentice should be classified as full-time.⁴¹ However, years of engagement for any recognised higher education studied as part of an apprenticeship should not be categorised as full-time unless, when compared with the equivalent full-time course not taken as part of an apprenticeship, both:
 - the duration of the course is the same
 - the number of credits studied per year is the same.
13. Where no such equivalent course exists, the duration and number of credits studied should be assessed against the typical length of a similar qualification.

Students only active for part of a year

14. 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 recorded as part-time, even though they are 'full-time' for that period of study. The mode of attendance must be established with reference to the intended activity for the whole year of engagement.

Students who change from full-time to part-time within a year of engagement

15. Where full-time students change mode within a year of engagement to become part-time, the year of engagement should be recorded as part-time only. This applies only when the student continues to study actively on their year of engagement, where there is a formal process for agreeing the change in mode, including confirmation by the student, and a recalculation of their course fee to reflect their part-time status. It may also result in the student losing entitlement to full-time student support.

Treatment of learning in the workplace and work experience for the purposes of determining mode of study

16. For the purposes of meeting the attendance definition for a full-time course, full time study can include learning in the workplace, where this is a course requirement. Such learning is frequently a feature of foundation degrees, the placements for courses leading to first

⁴¹ The criteria in paragraphs 3a and 3b must still be met.

registration in various healthcare professions and may also occur in other programmes. Learning in the workplace is a structured academic programme, controlled by the higher education provider and delivered in the workplace by the academic staff of the provider, staff of the employer, or both.

17. Unlike work experience, which is one element of a course such as a sandwich placement (whether for all or part of a year), learning in the workplace is at the heart of a student's learning programme and must be subject to the same level of academic supervision and rigour as any other form of assessed learning. It includes:
- the imparting of relevant knowledge and skills to students
 - opportunities for students to discuss knowledge and skills with their tutors
 - assessment of students' acquisition of knowledge and skills by the provider's academic staff, perhaps jointly with an employer.
18. Learning in the workplace should be substituting for learning that under other circumstances would normally take place within the provider. The inclusion of an element of learning in the workplace should not, therefore, extend the normal duration of a course.

Examples

Example 1: Student intermitting their studies

19. A student intends to study full-time in 2024-25 for the second year of their course. They complete all modules in term one, but then intermit their studies for a year. They return to full-time study in term two of 2025-26 and complete all remaining modules.

- a. For 2024-25, the student would have a full-time mode of study for the year of engagement.
- b. For 2025-26, the student would have a part-time mode of study for the year of engagement, as they would not meet the criteria given in paragraph 3 of this annex.

Example 2: Student on the final year of a full-time course

20. A student is studying on a full-time course, the final year of which is ordinarily completed in less than 24 weeks. The student would have a part-time mode of study for the year.

Example 3: Student repeating part of the year

21. A student was studying full-time in 2023-24 but failed three modules. In 2024-25 the student repeats these modules on a part-time basis, studying for an average of seven hours per week. The student is still eligible to claim full-time student support. As the year of engagement would not meet criteria given in paragraph 3 of this annex, the student would have a part-time mode of study for the year.

Example 4: Year in which total sandwich placement exceeds 30 weeks

22. A student studies for a Higher National Diploma (HND) over three years. This includes two periods of work placement, taken in the first and second years of engagement.

- a. The first year of engagement is full-time, as the period of full-time study is more than 10 weeks, the cumulative period on work placement to date is less than 30 weeks, and the total attendance is greater than 24 weeks.
- b. The second year of engagement is a sandwich year out. Though the pattern of activity is the same as for the first year, the cumulative period on work placement exceeds 30 weeks ($16 + 16 = 32$ weeks total work placement). This meets the definition in paragraph 7b.ii of this annex.

Example 5: Degree apprenticeship

23. A provider is currently offering a pre-registration nursing course, requiring study for 360 credits over three years. Starting in the next academic year, it will also offer the course as a four-year degree apprenticeship. On this course, apprenticeship students will be studying at the university for 30 weeks in the year, at an average of 22 hours of study per week.

24. Students on the four-year degree apprenticeship course would be considered to be part-time as the duration of the course is longer and they will be studying for fewer credits in each year than in the equivalent full-time course (see paragraph 12).

Annex E: Level of study

This annex explains how to determine a student's level of study (undergraduate or postgraduate) for the purposes of HESES. It also explains how to separate postgraduate students into the different categories of postgraduate taught and postgraduate research.

Annex E contents

Undergraduate

- Undergraduate Level 4 and 5 (UG (Level 4 and 5))
- All other undergraduate (UG (Other))

Postgraduate

- Postgraduate research (PGR)
- Postgraduate taught (undergraduate fee)

(PGT (UG fee))

- Postgraduate taught (masters' loan)

(PGT (Masters' loan))

- Postgraduate taught (other)

(PGT (Other))

Examples

Undergraduate

1. Undergraduates are students on higher education courses for which it is not a normal condition of entry that they are already qualified to degree level: that is, not already qualified at Level 6 of the 'Sector-recognised standards' or 'Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ).⁴² They may be studying towards a first degree (including foundation degree), integrated masters' programme (such as a four-year Master of Engineering (MEng)), higher education certificate, higher education diploma or equivalent, or registered for a higher education-level credit that can be counted towards one of these qualifications.
2. For HESES24, there are two groups: Undergraduate (Level 4 and 5) and Undergraduate (Other).

⁴² The sector-recognised standards that apply in England are available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/sector-recognised-standards/. The FHEQ is available at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/qualifications-frameworks>.

Undergraduate Level 4 and 5 ('UG (Level 4 and 5)')

3. This category is for undergraduate students on courses leading to qualifications that are designated at Level 4 or 5 of the 'sector-recognised standards'. These are categorised in HESES as 'UG (Level 4 and 5)' and include:
 - Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) and Certificate in Education (CertEd) courses
 - Higher National Certificate (HNC) courses
 - Higher National Diploma (HND) courses
 - Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) courses
 - foundation degree courses.⁴³
4. Students who are undertaking credits at Level 4 or 5, but without a stated qualification aim, should be classified as UG (Other) (see paragraph 6 below).

All other undergraduate ('UG (Other)')

5. This category is for all undergraduate students who do not fall into the above category. Such students should be recorded on HESES as 'UG (Other)'. This includes students on undergraduate courses that lead to qualifications at Level 6 or above (such as bachelors' degrees (with or without honours) and integrated masters' degrees; and students studying for credit, but without a stated qualification aim). It should be noted that the determining factor for whether a student is recorded as UG (Level 4 and 5) or UG (Other) is the qualification aim for the course as a whole. With the exception of students with multiple qualification aims (see below), we would expect a student to be recorded at the same level throughout their course.

Undergraduate students without a stated qualification aim

6. Where a student registers, without stating a qualification aim, for credits that may count towards a qualification at undergraduate level, they should be counted as UG (Other).

Undergraduate students with multiple stated qualification aims

7. Where students have stated multiple qualification aims as part of the same engagement, they should be recorded against the lower aim. For example, a student registered for a Level 4 or 5 qualification aim and a degree should be recorded as UG (Level 4 and 5).

Postgraduate

8. Postgraduate students are registered for courses or credits where a normal condition of entry is that entrants are already qualified to degree level: that is, already qualified at Level 6 of the sector-recognised standards or FHEQ. There are two groups: postgraduate research (PGR) and postgraduate taught (PGT).

⁴³ This does not include foundation degree bridging courses, which should be returned as UG (Other).

Postgraduate research

9. Postgraduate research students are those whose qualification aim is a research-based higher degree. This is a postgraduate programme comprising a research component (including a requirement to produce original work) which is larger in terms of student effort than any accompanying taught component.

Postgraduate taught

10. Postgraduate taught students are postgraduates who do not meet the requirements to be a research student.
11. Postgraduates include those on graduate conversion courses, graduate-entry courses (including graduate-entry medicine, dentistry and veterinary courses) and all on postgraduate initial teacher training courses such as Postgraduate or Professional Graduate Certificates in Education (PGCEs). We split PGT students between those who are on courses that are eligible under the undergraduate student support regime, those who are on courses that are eligible under the masters' loan arrangements, and all others.
12. All PGT students on apprenticeships should be split between the three categories of PGT (UG fee), PGT (Masters' loan) and PGT (Other) according to the characteristics of their recognised higher education course, rather than their own personal eligibility for any such student support.

Postgraduate taught (undergraduate fee) ('PGT (UG fee)')

13. This category is for PGT students on courses that are designated under the undergraduate student support arrangements. It applies only to:
 - a. Students aiming for a postgraduate initial teacher training qualification.
 - b. Those architecture students studying Part 2 of the qualification leading towards registration with the Architects Registration Board, where it is being treated as a single course with Part 1.⁴⁴
 - c. Students on postgraduate, pre-registration nursing, midwifery and allied health courses, as defined in Annex J, which lead towards first registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council or the Health and Care Professions Council. This does not include postgraduate pre-registration courses in dental therapy.
 - d. Students on graduate-entry, pre-registration courses in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science.

⁴⁴ Further detail regarding when Part 1 and Part 2 can be considered as a single course is set out in section 5.9 of the Student Finance England 'Guidance Chapter: Assessing Eligibility Guidance AY 2024 to 2025' (available at www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/policy/). Providers should note that a student will not be considered to be undertaking Part 1 and Part 2 architecture courses as a single course where:

- the Part 2 course is studied part-time (irrespective of the mode of study of the previous course)
- the student has changed their mode of study (i.e. the student has undertaken Part 1 on a part-time basis and then undertakes Part 2 on a full-time basis)
- the student has withdrawn from their Part 1 course.

Postgraduate taught (masters' loan) ('PGT (Masters' loan)')

14. Subject to the exception stated in paragraph 17, inclusion in this category is dependent on the eligibility of the course, rather than the student's own characteristics. The PGT (Masters' loan) category applies only to postgraduate taught students on courses that are designated under Regulation 4 of the Education (Postgraduate Master's Degree Loans) Regulations 2016 (Statutory Instrument 2016/606), as amended.⁴⁵ This excludes students on postgraduate courses that are designated under the undergraduate student support arrangements, set out in paragraph 13 and who should be recorded in the PGT (UG fee) category.
15. The PGT (Masters' loan) category applies to courses leading to a postgraduate masters' qualification that are one of the following:
 - a. A full-time course of one or two academic years in duration.
 - b. A part-time course which it is ordinarily possible to complete in no more than twice the period ordinarily required to complete its one or two academic year full-time equivalent.
 - c. A part-time course that does not have a full-time equivalent and which it is ordinarily possible to complete in up to three academic years.
16. Masters' loans are available only where the student is undertaking a full standalone masters' course, not a partial masters' course requiring a lesser number of credits, whether as a result of the student's previous study or their experience. Therefore, students who are topping up to a masters' qualification from another postgraduate qualification, such as a diploma or certificate, should not be recorded against this category. Because assignment to this category is not dependent on the characteristics of the student, it includes those who are not personally eligible for a masters' loan because of, for example:
 - their age
 - their nationality or domicile
 - their having started their course prior to 1 August 2016
 - any intention they may have to take longer to complete a part-time course than the definition of designated courses allows as being 'ordinarily possible'.
17. Architecture students who are studying Part 2 of the qualification leading towards registration with the Architects Registration Board where it is not being treated as a single course with Part 1 should be returned as PGT (Masters' loan).
18. Students who are aiming for a masters' degree through a PGR programme may also be eligible for a masters' loan. However, such students should continue to be classified in HESES as PGR. No breakdown of PGR students between those on programmes eligible for a masters' loan and others is required.

⁴⁵ See www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2016/606/regulation/4.

Postgraduate taught (Other)

19. PGT students who do not fall under the previous two categories should be recorded as PGT (Other).

Examples

Example 1: Student topping up to a masters' degree from another postgraduate qualification

20. A student registers for a 60-credit postgraduate certificate (PGCert). Upon successful completion of the PGCert, they then register for a 120-credit postgraduate diploma (PGDip), for which the 60-credit PGCert counts towards the PGDip credit requirement. Upon successful completion of the PGDip, they then register for a 180-credit masters' degree course, for which the 120-credit PGDip already counts towards the masters' credit requirement.

21. In this case the student would be recorded as PGT (Other) throughout their studies. This is because while studying for the PGCert and PGDip, they are not explicitly studying for a masters' degree; and when they do finally register for a masters' degree, they are using PGT credit previously achieved to top up.

Example 2: Student registering for a masters' degree, but instead completing a PGDip

22. A student registers for a 180-credit masters' degree course, with no previously achieved credit being used to count towards it. They do not complete the full course, but complete sufficient to be awarded a 120-credit PGDip.

23. The student would be recorded as PGT (Masters' loan), because they are aiming for a full PGT masters' degree.

Example 3: Student awarded an intermediate qualification

24. A student registers for a 180-credit masters' degree course, with no previously achieved credit being used to count towards it, and while continuing to study towards it they are awarded an intermediate qualification (of a PGCert or PGDip).

25. They will continue to be reported as PGT (Masters' loan), even after being awarded the intermediate qualification, because they are continuing on the same masters' degree course. However, if the intermediate qualification was awarded because the student formally withdrew from the masters' course at that point, and the student then returned (perhaps after a break) to register afresh to top up the intermediate qualification to a masters' degree, they would be reported as PGT (Other) for the top-up study.

Annex F: Residential and fundability status

This annex provides guidance on identifying the residential and fundability status of a student for the purposes of HESES24. It includes guidance on:

- which students should be classified as Home fee, and which are Overseas
- categorising Home fee students as OfS-fundable or non-fundable
- how to determine the fundability status of students aiming for equivalent or lower qualifications (ELQ), and of those supported from other UK or EU public sources.

Annex F contents

Definitions

- Home fee students
- Overseas
- OfS-fundable students
- Non-fundable students

Students aiming for ELQs

- Identifying entry qualifications through other sources
- Students with multiple stated qualification aims
- Students exempt from ELQ policy for OfS funding purposes
- Determining level of qualification
- Reviewing ELQ status
- Relationship to fee regulations

Examples

Good practice

Definitions

Home fee students

1. Students are classified as 'Home fee' if they can be regarded as eligible as defined in Schedule 1 of the Education (Fees and Awards) (England) Regulations 2007 (Statutory Instrument 2007 No. 779), as amended.⁴⁶ Students from specified overseas territories may be classified as eligible for Home fees if they meet the criteria set out in those regulations. Although our definition of Home fee is not changing (in that it is still determined by Schedule 1 of Statutory Instrument 2007 No. 779), providers are reminded that they should review this legislation annually in order to identify any relevant changes to the legislation. Additionally, providers should review how changes to legislation might affect their existing student population.⁴⁷
2. Providers are reminded that significant changes to Home fee status were introduced in August 2021 following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, which continue to affect new entry cohorts. This also included extending Home fee status to new and continuing students living in the Crown Dependencies (the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) who come to England solely for the purposes of higher or further education study, on the basis of three years' residency in the UK or the Islands.⁴⁸ Providers should continue to refer to government guidance and legislation for more detail about these changes to Home fee status.⁴⁹

Obtaining guidance on fee eligibility

3. Student Finance England provides a practitioners' helpline for detailed information about policy, regulations or for help with more complex questions about assessment, eligibility or circumstance. If you are unsure whether an individual student meets the eligibility requirements as set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this annex, call the practitioners' helpline on 0300 100 0618. If Student Finance England states that the student is eligible, this means that the student is also regarded as 'Home fee' for HESES purposes.
4. Further policy information and guidance are also available from the Student Finance England practitioners website.⁵⁰

UK-domiciled in Table 5

5. For the purposes of Table 5 (and the Courses table where applicable), UK-domiciled students are those entitled to pay Home fees and whose DOMICILE/PERMADDCOUNTRY or 'Country

⁴⁶ See <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2007/779/contents>. Amendments to these regulations for 2023-24 have been made by The Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (available at www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2024/85/contents/made). These regulations have also amended various other sets of regulations affecting student entitlements from 2024-25, including The Higher Education (Fee Limit Condition) (England) Regulations 2017 S.I. 2017/1189 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/1189/contents>), which define the population of students to whom regulated course fee limits apply.

⁴⁷ For instance, from 1 August 2024 changes include that students can gain settled status part-way through their course, meaning they may become eligible for student support for the rest of their course and will qualify for home fee status from that point.

⁴⁸ This does not include such students studying at an English provider via distance learning.

⁴⁹ See www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-finance-eligibility-2021-to-2022-academic-year.

⁵⁰ See <https://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/policy/>.

of domicile' field is coded as XF, XG, XH, XI or XK for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales or UK not otherwise specified, respectively, in the appropriate student record.⁵¹

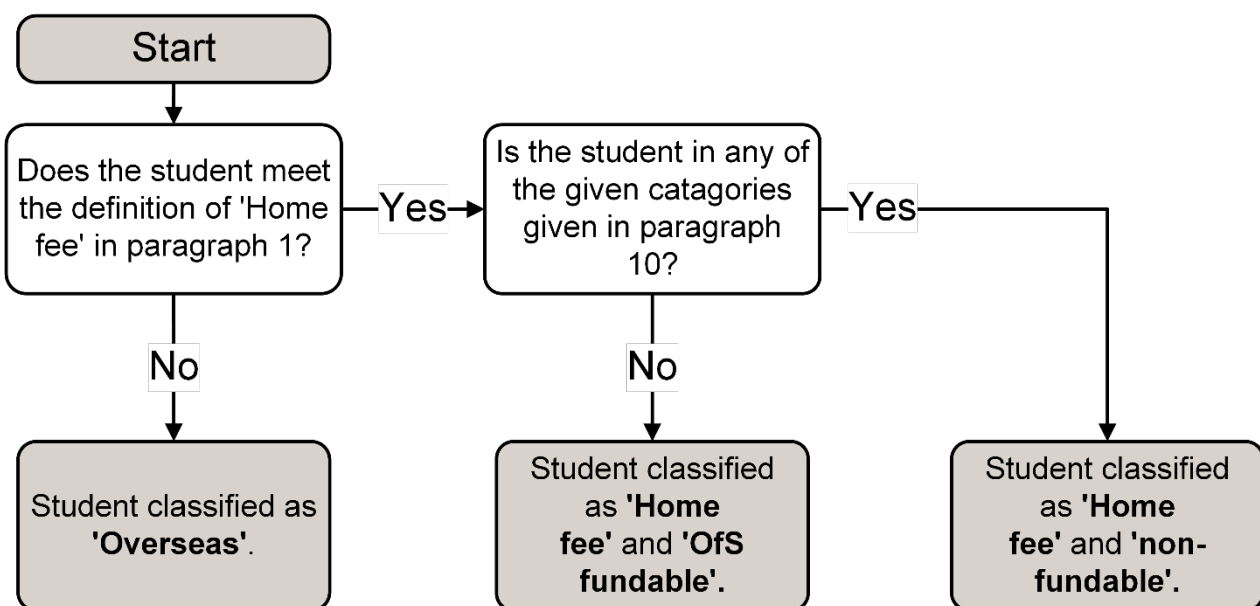
Overseas students

6. All students who fall outside the definition of 'Home fee' in paragraph 1 of this annex should be recorded as 'Overseas'. This will include those EU, EEA and Swiss national students not eligible for home fee status under the Withdrawal Agreements or Common Travel Area with Ireland and those from the Crown Dependencies who are studying outside the UK (for example by distance learning from the Islands).

OfS-fundable students

7. Home fee students are eligible to be counted towards OfS recurrent funds for teaching (OfS fundable) for an eligible higher education provider if they are in the HESES population, as defined in Annex A, and do not meet any of the criteria in paragraph 10 of this annex. Overseas students are not OfS-fundable.
8. Where a source other than a UK or EU public source is paying the fee, the level of the fee paid does not affect the eligibility of the student to count as OfS-fundable.
9. The flowchart in Figure F1 can be used to determine a student's residential and fundability status.

Figure F1: Classifying students in the HESES population



⁵¹ As defined in Annex A, paragraph 2b.

Non-fundable students

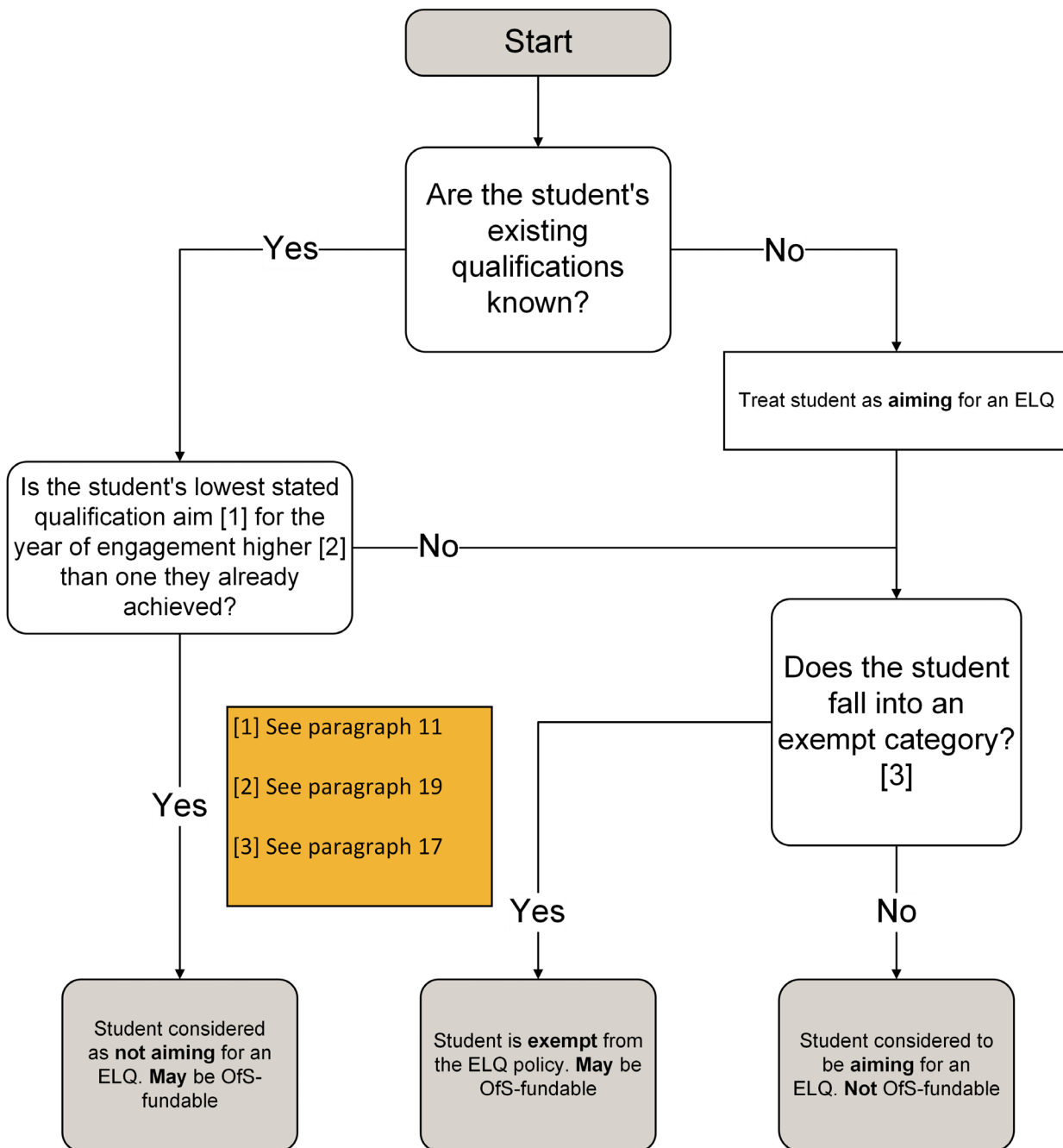
10. Home fee students meeting any of the following criteria should be recorded as non-fundable:
- a. Postgraduate research students (as defined in Annex E, paragraph 9).
 - b. Students on initial teacher training (ITT) courses leading to qualified teacher status (QTS) or to early years teacher status (EYTS), and all students holding QTS who are on an in-service education and training (INSET) course.
 - c. Students on courses commissioned and funded by an NHS organisation, where the course fee charged to the student is zero because an NHS organisation is meeting the full costs of the course. This does not include students on courses studied as part of an apprenticeship, who remain fundable as long as all other fundability criteria are met. A course is commissioned by an NHS organisation if there is a contractual agreement with it that the provider will provide a certain number of places on the course. Other students on the same course who are not funded by an NHS organisation should be returned as fundable, where they meet all other relevant criteria.
 - d. Postgraduate taught students on a course, other than an apprenticeship, funded by another UK or EU public source where the course fee charged to the student is zero because that source is meeting the course costs.
 - e. Students on closed courses. These are courses that are not generally available to any suitably qualified candidate, but only to employees of particular companies or organisations that are meeting the costs of students' studies. This being the case, few students on such courses will be claiming student support. Closed courses will not commonly be marketed or advertised in general prospectuses or in course searches on a provider's main website, because enrolment on them is not open to the general public. The content of such courses will also commonly be tailored towards the needs of the employers concerned. Recognised higher education courses taken as part of an apprenticeship should not be treated as closed courses. Years of engagement taken as part of an apprenticeship may therefore be treated as OfS-fundable subject to meeting all other criteria necessary for that status.
 - f. Students who are aiming for an equivalent or lower qualification (ELQ), unless they are exempt from the ELQ policy, as defined in paragraphs 11 to 27 of this annex.
 - g. Undergraduate and postgraduate taught students at the Open University who are domiciled in Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland.

Students aiming for ELQs

11. An equivalent or lower qualification (ELQ) is a qualification that is no higher than one that a given student has already achieved. The two key considerations in determining whether a student is aiming for an ELQ are the academic levels of the qualifications already awarded to the student and the academic levels of the qualifications that the student has stated they are aiming for. If the qualifications already achieved are not known, the student should be treated as if aiming for an ELQ.

12. The flowchart in Figure F2 can be used to determine the ELQ status of a student.

Figure F2: Establishing ELQ status



Identifying entry qualifications through other sources

13. Providers should take reasonable steps to test the accuracy of the entry qualifications reported by their students, taking into account the availability of other sources of information such as data from UCAS, the Learning Records Service,⁵² the Student Loans Company, application forms and students' certificates. This does not require a provider to test the qualifications achieved by all its students. For many students, the data provided by UCAS through the

⁵² See <https://www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/learning-records-service>.

awarding body linkage (often referred to as ABL) will be sufficient. However, this will not apply in some cases, such as students who achieved their qualifications some time ago or whose qualification types are not included. In these circumstances we expect providers to verify entry qualifications using the Learning Records Service. Otherwise, providers should use a random sample to test the overall accuracy of their entry qualifications data, plus selective samples where doubts exist about the entry qualifications reported by individual students or where there is a higher possibility that the student is aiming for an ELQ.

Students with multiple stated qualification aims

14. Where students currently have multiple recognised higher education qualification aims stated as part of the same engagement, they should be recorded against the lower aim, as explained in Annex E. Where the student's currently stated qualification aim for that engagement is at a higher level than their highest existing qualification, then the year of engagement should not be treated as an ELQ, even where a given year is at the same or lower level than a qualification already achieved.
15. The ELQ policy applies regardless of where a student's previous qualifications were obtained, or how they were financed.
16. In some circumstances, a student may not be formally awarded a qualification which they have stated as their aim and to which they are entitled, having completed all the necessary work for that qualification. This may occur if, for example, the student has been assessed as eligible for the award but has not completed the formal process of receiving it. In such cases, the student should be treated for ELQ purposes as if they had been awarded the qualification. The achievement and award of credit should not be treated as a qualification for these purposes.

Students exempt from the ELQ policy for OfS funding purposes

17. Students falling into one of the following categories are exempt from the ELQ policy for OfS funding purposes, and therefore may be reported as OfS-fundable provided they meet all other relevant criteria:
 - a. They receive Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) for at least some of their year of engagement reported in the HESES return. Providers should make estimates for HESES purposes of the numbers of students whose receipt of the DSA for the year of engagement will be confirmed after the census date.
 - b. They have stated that their qualification aim is a foundation degree.
 - c. They are on a course of initial or in-service teacher training (in any mode or level of study). In-service teacher training courses are defined as courses whose primary (but not necessarily only) purpose is to improve the effectiveness of teachers, lecturers or trainers.
 - d. They are on a year of engagement (in any mode or level of study) for which an NHS bursary is payable.

- e. They are on an undergraduate or postgraduate course (in any mode of study) that on successful completion leads to first registration as a professional with one of the following:
 - i. General Medical Council.
 - ii. General Dental Council for the professions of:
 - 1. Dentist
 - 2. Dental therapist
 - 3. Dental hygienist.
 - iii. Nursing and Midwifery Council.
 - iv. Health and Care Professions Council for the professions of:
 - 1. Podiatrist
 - 2. Dietician
 - 3. Occupational therapist
 - 4. Operating department practitioner
 - 5. Orthoptist
 - 6. Paramedic
 - 7. Physiotherapist
 - 8. Prosthetist or orthotist
 - 9. Radiographer
 - 10. Speech and language therapist.
 - v. Social Work England.
 - vi. Scottish Social Services Council.
 - vii. Social Care Wales.
 - viii. Northern Ireland Social Care Council.
 - ix. Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.
- f. They are on an undergraduate course (in any mode of study) whose primary (but not necessarily only) purpose is to improve the effectiveness of practitioners registered with one of the professional bodies listed in paragraph 17e of this annex. In the case of the Health and Care Professions Council, this must additionally relate to practitioners in the professions listed in paragraph 17e.iv of this annex.

- g. They are on an undergraduate course (in any mode of study) which leads to a professional qualification that has been professionally validated by the National Youth Agency. These are courses leading to qualification to practise as a youth and community worker.
- h. They are on an undergraduate course (in any mode of study) whose primary (but not necessarily only) purpose is to improve the effectiveness of professionally qualified youth and community workers.
- i. They are on a full-time course (for student support purposes) which leads towards registration with the Architects Registration Board.
- j. They are aiming for a postgraduate research qualification.

18. All exemptions listed above, except that for students in receipt of DSA mentioned in paragraph 17a above, are an attribute of the course not of the individual student.

Determining level of qualification

19. It is not possible to provide a full hierarchical list of the qualifications that are awarded in the UK, or indeed elsewhere. In most cases, whether or not a student will be aiming for an ELQ will be clear. However, in a minority of cases, providers will need to make a reasonable academic judgement about whether or not a student's qualification aim is at a higher level than their highest existing qualification achieved. Providers should bear in mind the guidance in paragraphs 20 to 33 of this annex.

Sector-recognised standards in England and the Frameworks for higher education qualification of UK degree awarding bodies

20. In assessing the ELQ status of students, providers should determine a basic hierarchy of qualifications that reflects:

- a. For qualifications awarded in England, the 'sector-recognised standards' that have been adopted in relation to those conditions of OfS registration that relate in whole or part to the standards applied to higher education.⁵³
- b. For qualifications awarded in other parts of the UK, the 'Frameworks for higher education qualifications of UK degree-awarding bodies' (FHEQ).⁵⁴
- c. Any revisions to these documents should be reflected as they are introduced and further guidance on their use is provided below.

21. In general, providers should treat qualifications that fall within the same level in the sector-recognised standards and FHEQ as being equivalent. However, for ELQ purposes, it may be appropriate in certain circumstances to consider a hierarchy of qualifications within a

⁵³ The 'sector-recognised standards' are available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/sector-recognised-standards/.

⁵⁴ The FHEQ is available at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/qualifications-frameworks>.

single level, especially where students are progressing through a succession of qualifications. In particular:

- a. Within Level 7 in the sector-recognised standards and FHEQ, it may be appropriate to consider a masters' qualification to be at a higher level than a postgraduate diploma, which in turn may be at a higher level than a postgraduate certificate. However, this may not apply in all cases and will depend on the naming adopted by different awarding bodies.
- b. Within Level 6 in the sector-recognised standards and FHEQ, it will normally be appropriate to consider a bachelors' degree with honours to be at a higher level than a bachelors' degree without honours.
- c. Within Level 5 in the sector-recognised standards and FHEQ, it will normally be appropriate to consider a foundation degree bridging course (which gives access to the final year of an honours degree) to be at a higher level than a foundation degree.

22. For a student who already holds an honours degree, their classification in HESES as either undergraduate or postgraduate taught should not in itself determine whether or not they are aiming for an ELQ. The ELQ policy is about the academic level of qualifications, so the level of the final qualification for which the student is aiming will determine their ELQ status. By contrast, whether or not a student is recorded as postgraduate taught in HESES is determined by whether or not a degree-level qualification is a normal condition of entry to their course, and does not necessarily indicate the academic level of their study or final qualification aim. In particular, the following considerations will apply to any student whose highest qualification already achieved is an honours degree:

- a. Where they are undertaking a graduate conversion course, they should be recorded as a postgraduate taught student, but also considered as aiming for an ELQ. In this context, a graduate conversion course is one for which a normal condition of entry is an honours degree, but whose academic level is no higher than Level 6 in the sector-recognised standards. Some such courses may be designed to enable access to postgraduate courses for those whose first degree was in a different subject area.
- b. Where they are undertaking an integrated masters' programme (such as a four-year Master of Engineering (MEng), Master of Physics (MPhys) or Master of Chemistry (MChem)), they should be recorded at undergraduate level in HESES, because a degree is not a normal entry requirement for such study. However, with the exception of the Master of Pharmacy (MPharm) (see paragraph 24 of this annex), they should not be treated as aiming for an ELQ, because the academic level of the final qualification of the integrated masters' programme is at Level 7 in the sector-recognised standards. This also means that (again, with the exception of students who hold an MPharm) a student who holds an integrated masters' qualification and who wishes to enrol on a taught postgraduate masters' qualification (such as an MA or MBA) should be treated as aiming for an ELQ.

23. For the purposes of determining ELQ status, MAs granted by the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge should not be treated as academic qualifications.⁵⁵ Students holding such awards should be treated as holding Level 6 qualifications (reflecting whether or not a student's preceding bachelors' degree was with honours for the purpose of the guidance at paragraph 21b of this annex). A number of universities in Scotland also have a tradition of awarding MAs as opposed to BAs at undergraduate degree level. These should also be treated in the same way as bachelors' degrees, reflecting also whether they are with honours.

Exceptions to the sector-recognised standards and FHEQ

24. The MPharm should be treated for ELQ purposes as a Level 6 qualification in the sector-recognised standards and FHEQ. This means that the following hold true:

- a. A student whose highest qualification already achieved is a bachelors' degree with honours and who is studying for an MPharm should be treated as aiming for an ELQ.
- b. A student who holds an MPharm as their highest qualification already achieved and is now studying for a taught postgraduate masters' qualification at Level 7 (such as an MA or MBA) should not be treated as aiming for an ELQ.

25. The sector-recognised standards and FHEQ state that the final outcomes of first degrees in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science typically meet the expectations of the descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 7. However, for ELQ purposes only, these qualifications should continue to be treated as if they were at Level 6. This means that the following hold true:

- a. A student whose highest qualification already achieved is a bachelors' degree with honours and who is studying for a first registrable degree in medicine, dentistry or veterinary science should be considered to be aiming for an ELQ. However, they are exempt from the ELQ policy by virtue of paragraph 17e of this annex and (assuming they meet all other criteria for that status) can be recorded as OfS-fundable.
- b. A student who holds a first registrable degree in medicine, dentistry or veterinary science as their highest qualification already achieved and who is studying on a taught postgraduate masters' qualification (such as an MSc or MBA) should not be treated as aiming for an ELQ.

26. All postgraduate initial teacher training courses, such as PGCEs (whether Postgraduate Certificates in Education or Professional Graduate Certificates in Education) should be treated, for the purpose of the ELQ policy only, as being equivalent to Level 6. This means that a student whose highest qualification already achieved is a PGCE, and who has no other postgraduate qualification, would not be treated as aiming for an ELQ if they enrolled on a postgraduate masters' qualification. Students on a postgraduate initial teacher training course are exempt from the ELQ policy, as explained in paragraph 17c of this annex.

⁵⁵ This refers to Master of Arts (MA) awards granted by the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge, which are normally granted, on application, to graduates of these universities with a bachelor's degree. No further study or assessment is required, but the recipient may be required to pay a fee. At the University of Oxford, the MA may be granted during or after the 21st term from matriculation, and at the University of Cambridge the MA may be granted six years after the end of the first term.

27. Where students do not have a stated qualification aim and study by accumulating credit on a succession of ‘courses’ or modules, they should not be treated as aiming for an ELQ if they do not have a previous higher education qualification. Such accumulation of credit should be treated as progression towards a final undergraduate qualification. However, if the student has a higher education level qualification (as well as having potentially accumulated undergraduate level credit from recent study), then the student would be treated as aiming for an ELQ if that qualification is at a level equivalent to, or higher than, the credit towards which they are now studying. A similar approach should be adopted where students are accumulating credit at postgraduate level: credit previously achieved should not generally be used to determine that a student aiming for further postgraduate credit is aiming for an ELQ, but a previous postgraduate-level qualification generally should.

Professional qualification and qualification awarded abroad

28. Providers may wish to take advice from the UK National Information Centre for the recognition and evaluation of international qualifications and skills (UK ENIC) about the relative level of professional qualifications and those awarded abroad.⁵⁶ UK ENIC is the national agency responsible for providing information, advice and opinion on vocational, academic and professional qualifications and skills from all over the world.

29. There may be cases where UK ENIC advises that, for example, the academic level of a degree awarded in another country is below that of a degree in the UK. In such a case it is acceptable to treat a student whose highest higher education qualification is a degree from that country, and who is studying for a degree in the UK, as not aiming for an ELQ.

Reviewing ELQ status

30. In general, whether or not a student is aiming for an ELQ should be reviewed annually, at the start of each year of engagement. This is necessary to take account of changing student circumstances, such as where a student:

- while following two separate programmes of study, receives a qualification for one before the other is complete
- changes their qualification aim
- begins to receive DSA.

In general, and subject to the guidance in paragraph 17a of this annex, we would not expect providers to change the ELQ status of their students within a year of engagement.

Relationship of OfS policy on ELQs to fee regulations

31. The Higher Education (Fee Limit Condition) (England) Regulations 2017 (Statutory Instrument 2017 No. 1189, as amended⁵⁷ define which categories of students and courses are covered by the regulated undergraduate fee regime – that is, those for whom providers cannot charge a

⁵⁶ Formerly known as UK NARIC. See <https://www.enic.org.uk/>.

⁵⁷ See <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1189/contents>.

fee that exceeds prescribed limits, including the limits stated in their access agreements up to 2019-20.

32. The Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 (Statutory Instrument 2011 No. 1986)⁵⁸, as amended, define entitlements to undergraduate student support. The Education (Postgraduate Master's Degree Loans) Regulations 2016 (Statutory Instrument 2016 No. 606)⁵⁹, as amended, define entitlements to masters' loans. The Education (Postgraduate Doctoral Degree Loans and the Education (Student Loans) (Repayment) (Amendment) (No. 2) etc.) Regulations 2018 (Statutory Instrument 2018 No. 599)⁶⁰, as amended, define entitlements to doctoral loans. Each of these statutory instruments contains an ELQ definition.
33. There are differences in the way that ELQs are treated in HESES and for fee regulation and student support purposes. Providers should not assume that the guidance noted in paragraphs 11 to 30 of this annex will apply when considering ELQ status for the purposes of regulated course fees or of the different elements of student support.

Examples

Example 1: Student aiming for both HND and degree

34. A student with a stated aim of both a Higher National Diploma (HND) and a degree as part of the same engagement should be treated as aiming for an HND for ELQ purposes.

Example 2: Student who acquires undergraduate certificate (not stated aim)

35. A student aiming for a first degree has a Higher National Certificate (HNC) as their highest existing higher education qualification. The student will be awarded an undergraduate certificate if they successfully complete their first year, but this is not a stated aim. The student should not be treated as aiming for an ELQ for any of their years of engagement (including the first), because the undergraduate certificate that they will acquire is not a stated qualification aim.

Example 3: Student aiming for honours degree with foundation degree as highest qualification

36. A student enters with a foundation degree as their highest qualification already achieved, and has a stated qualification aim of an honours degree. The student should not be treated as aiming for an ELQ. This would apply whether the honours degree involves

⁵⁸ See <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1986/contents>.

⁵⁹ See <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/606/contents>.

⁶⁰ See <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/599/contents>.

three years of full-time study or the student is aiming for the honours degree through, for example, a one-year top-up from the foundation degree.

Example 4: Student with honours degree studying for foundation degree and then topping up to a second degree

37. A student enters already holding an honours degree as their highest qualification, and intends to study for a foundation degree over two years then top up to an honours degree in one year. If they have a stated qualification aim of both a foundation degree and an honours degree as part of the same engagement, then the student is exempt from the ELQ policy in the first two years when studying for the foundation degree. However, when topping up to an honours degree in the final year, the student will be treated as aiming for an ELQ.

Example 5: Student studying a succession of continuing education courses

38. A student without any prior higher education qualification is undertaking a succession of 20 credit-point undergraduate continuing education courses, all at the same academic level. After successful completion of such a course, the student is permitted to be awarded a university certificate. If the student completes 120 credit points from such courses, they can be awarded a Certificate of Higher Education. In this example:

- a. A student who has successfully completed a 20 credit-point course, but has not been awarded the university certificate, should not be treated as aiming for an ELQ for any study towards another 20 credit-point course.
- b. Where the student has been awarded a university certificate for successfully completing a 20 credit-point course, then:
 - i. They should be treated as aiming for an ELQ if they are taking another 20 credit-point course, and either have a stated qualification aim of a university certificate or have not stated a qualification aim (that is, they are assumed to be studying towards further credit at the same level as a qualification already awarded).
 - ii. They should not be treated as aiming for an ELQ if they are taking another 20 credit-point course, but have a sole qualification aim of a Certificate of Higher Education. This is because, on the basis of the guidance at paragraph 21, the Certificate of Higher Education would be considered a higher qualification than the university certificate already achieved. If the student has stated qualification aims of both a university certificate and the Certificate of Higher Education, then (following the guidance in paragraph 14) they would be treated as aiming for an ELQ, by virtue of paragraph 38b.i.

Example 6: Student who acquires ELQ status part way through a course

39. A student with no previous higher education qualifications is concurrently aiming for a first degree and a part-time two-year HNC. The student completes the degree midway through the first year of the HNC.

In this example, the student should not be treated as aiming for an ELQ for the first year of the HNC. However, the student should be treated as aiming for an ELQ in their second year of engagement for the HNC, because their ELQ status should be reviewed annually to take account of any newly achieved higher education qualifications.

Example 7: Student already registered with a regulatory body for nursing, midwifery and allied health professions, who enrolls on a pre-registration course for one of the professions

40. A student is already registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council as a nurse but enrolls on a pre-registration midwifery course. As the midwifery course leads to a first registration for the profession 'midwifery', the student is exempt from the ELQ policy regardless of already being registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council as a nurse. The exemption from the ELQ policy is an attribute of the course, not of the individual student.

Good practice

Collecting qualification data from students

41. Providers should ask students to confirm annually that they have not achieved any new qualifications since they last enrolled.
42. Providers should ensure that their data protection notices allow them, the government or their respective agents to check the accuracy of personal information provided by students against external data sources, including the Student Loans Company and Learning Records Service. For example, they should permit the provider to test if the student has been reported on earlier HESA student, HESA student alternative or Individualised Learner Record returns of other institutions, and to contact these other institutions to confirm any qualifications obtained.

Keeping records of how students aiming for ELQs have been identified

43. In all cases, providers should keep records for audit purposes of how they are identifying students as aiming for an ELQ. This should set out the broad approach adopted by the provider. Where there may be uncertainty as to whether an individual student is aiming for an ELQ, the provider should also keep a record of how it has determined their ELQ status.

Recording of non-exempt students aiming for an ELQ

44. Home fee students aiming for an ELQ and not covered by an exemption should be clearly identified on the student record system, and returned in the 'non-fundable' column.

Annex G: Price groups

This annex explains how years of engagement should be mapped to price groups for the purposes of HESES24. Firstly, for the specific cases of sandwich years out, medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, nursing, midwifery and allied health professions, education and social work are addressed; and where those cases do not apply, mapping based on course subject codes is explained. Examples are given for cases where a year of engagement should be split across price groups.

Annex G contents

A note on the structure of this annex

Specific cases

- Sandwich years out
- Medicine and dentistry
- Veterinary science
- Pre-registration courses in nursing, midwifery and allied health professions
- Social work
- ITT, INSET and other education students.

Allocating years of engagement to price groups

- Further guidance on the use of Higher Education Classification of Subjects (HECoS) codes for further education colleges
- Allocating years of engagement to price groups based on HECoS codes
 - Tables relating CAH and HECoS codes to price groups
 - Examples.

A note on the structure of this annex

1. Years of engagement are assigned to price groups based on two criteria:
 - a. First, they may be one of the specific cases noted in paragraphs 4 to 22 of this annex.
 - b. Second, if no specific cases apply, they are assigned to price groups based on the subject codes for courses
2. From 2024-25, all providers should determine the price groups for courses using the HECoS code of the subject(s) of the course. This follows the introduction of HECoS codes to the Learning Aims database from 2024-25 by the ESFA.

3. Further guidance relating to the use of HECoS codes for further education colleges can be found in paragraphs 28 to 30 of this annex.

Specific cases

Sandwich years out

4. All students on a sandwich year out should be recorded in price group C2 regardless of other specific cases listed below or course HECoS code.

Medicine and dentistry

5. Medical and dental years of engagement should only be recorded in price group A when students are in one of the following categories:
 - a. Clinical medical students on the final three years of a course (including a graduate-entry course) leading towards first registration as a doctor with the General Medical Council, taken at one of these points:
 - i. After the pre-clinical part of the course.
 - ii. After a free-standing pre-clinical course.
 - iii. As part of an integrated pre-clinical and clinical course.
 - b. Clinical dental students on the final four years of a course (including a graduate-entry course) leading towards first registration as a dentist with General Dental Council, taken at one of these points:
 - i. After the pre-clinical part of the course
 - ii. After a free-standing pre-clinical course
 - iii. As part of an integrated pre-clinical and clinical course.
 - c. Clinical medical (including clinical psychology) and clinical dental postgraduate taught students (other than those on graduate-entry courses leading towards first registration as a doctor or dentist) whose course meets the following three criteria:
 - i. The course bears very high average annual costs of at least £15,000 per full-time equivalent.
 - ii. A substantial proportion of the staff teaching time contributed to the course is provided by medically or dentally qualified, university funded clinical academic staff who hold honorary contracts with the NHS (this includes general practitioners).
 - iii. Nearly all of the course is taught in a clinical environment. A clinical environment is one where patients are being treated – usually a hospital. This does not include settings designed for simulation, for example using models in a simulated environment, or virtual environments where, for example, patients may be seen in real time on screen but are not physically present.

- d. Research students, the focus of whose research is in a clinical environment (as defined in paragraph 3c.iii above) and whose lead supervisor is a clinical academic.
6. Students who meet the criteria in paragraph 3 above should have all of their activity for the year of engagement attributed to price group A.
7. For postgraduate courses, the HECoS subject of the course aim should only be coded as 100267 (clinical medicine), 100266 (clinical dentistry) or 100494 (clinical psychology) on the appropriate student record, where the course meets one of the following criteria:
 - a. It is a graduate-entry medical course that meets the criteria set out in paragraph 5a above.
 - b. It is a graduate-entry dental course that meets the criteria set out in paragraph 5b above.
 - c. It is a postgraduate taught course that meets the criteria set out in paragraph 5c above.
 - d. It is a postgraduate research course that meets the criteria set out in paragraph 5d above.

Veterinary science

8. Veterinary science students should be included in price group A if they are in the final five years of a course (including a graduate-entry course) which leads towards eligibility to register to practise as a veterinary surgeon, irrespective of their HECoS code. All other years of such veterinary science courses, including foundation years, should be returned in price group B.
9. To be included in price group A, clinical veterinary science postgraduate taught students (other than those on graduate-entry courses leading towards first registration as a veterinary surgeon) must be on courses which meet the following three criteria:
 - a. The course bears very high average annual costs of at least £15,000 per full time equivalent.
 - b. A substantial proportion of the staff teaching time contributed to the course is provided by veterinary-qualified, university funded, clinical academic staff.
 - c. Nearly all of the course is taught in a clinical environment. A clinical environment for veterinary science is one where animals are receiving medical treatment – usually an animal hospital. This does not include settings designed for simulation, for example using models in a simulated environment, or virtual environments where, for example, animals receiving treatment may be seen in real time on screen but are not physically present.
10. For veterinary science research students to be included in price group A, the focus of their research must be in a clinical environment (as defined in paragraph 9c above) and the lead supervisor should be a clinical academic.
11. Students who meet the criteria in paragraphs 9 or 10 above should have all of their activity for the year of engagement attributed to price group A, irrespective of their HECoS code.

12. Where, and only where, a postgraduate course meets the criteria set out in paragraphs 9 or 10 above, the HECoS subject of course aim should be coded as 100531 (veterinary medicine) or 101347 (veterinary dentistry) on the appropriate student record.

Pre-registration courses in nursing, midwifery and allied health professions

13. Students on pre-registration courses that on successful completion lead to first registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) as a professional in nursing (all specialisms), should be entirely attributed to price group C1.1, irrespective of their HECoS code. This does not include courses leading to registration as a Nursing Associate.
14. Students on undergraduate pre-registration courses that on successful completion lead to first registration with the General Dental Council (GDC) as a professional in dental therapy or dental hygiene, should be entirely attributed to price group A, irrespective of their HECoS code.
15. Students on postgraduate pre-registration courses that on successful completion lead to first registration with the General Dental Council (GDC) as a professional in dental therapy, should be entirely attributed to price group B, irrespective of their HECoS code.
16. Students on pre-registration courses that on successful completion lead to first registration with a relevant recognised regulatory body as a professional in midwifery, dietetics, speech and language therapy, podiatry, orthotics and prosthetics, occupational therapy, operating department practice, orthoptics, physiotherapy, and radiography, should be entirely attributed to price group B, irrespective of their HECoS code.
17. For the purposes of paragraph 16, the relevant recognised regulatory bodies are the NMC for midwifery and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) for all other professions listed.

Social work

18. Students should be entirely attributed to price group C2, irrespective of their HECoS code, where they are on courses that:
- lead to registration solely as a social worker with one of the UK regulatory bodies (courses leading to dual-registration as both a nurse and a social worker should be assigned entirely to C1.1 as per the guidance in paragraph 13 above)
 - provide post-registration qualifications for social workers
 - are short, post-registration, credit-bearing courses whose primary (but not necessarily only) purpose is to improve the effectiveness of social workers.
19. For the purposes of paragraph 18 above, the UK regulatory bodies are Social Work England, the Scottish Social Services Council, Social Care Wales and the Northern Ireland Social Care Council.

ITT, INSET and other education students

20. Students on initial teacher training (ITT) courses, whether leading to qualified teacher status (QTS), qualified teacher learning and skills (QTLS) or early years teacher status (EYTS), should be entirely attributed to price group C2, irrespective of their HECoS code. All Home fee students on ITT courses leading to QTS or EYTS should be returned as non-fundable.

21. In-service education and training (INSET) courses are defined as courses whose primary (but not necessarily only) purpose is to improve the effectiveness of teachers, lecturers or trainers. Students on these courses should be recorded as follows:
- a. Students who do not hold QTS, QTLS or EYTS but are studying for an ITT qualification via an INSET course should be recorded in price group C2, irrespective of their HECoS code.
 - b. Other students on INSET courses should be attributed to price groups using their HECoS course codes.
 - c. Home fee students holding or aiming for QTS on INSET courses should be returned as non-fundable.
22. Students studying for a foundation degree to become a teaching assistant should be returned in price group C2.

Allocating years of engagement to price groups

23. Only where none of the specific cases defined in paragraphs 4 to 22 of this annex apply, should providers assign years of engagement to price groups according to the HECoS codes that apply to the course, using the mappings shown respectively in Tables G1 and G2.
24. Use of HECoS codes should reflect the guidance on the HESA website,⁶¹ and in particular providers should ensure that:
- 'The course subject(s) should represent directly, or relate very closely to, the qualification subject(s) associated with specific deliveries of that course.'
 - 'The qualification subject(s) must represent directly, or relate very closely to, the wording on the qualification's official certificate of award. More than three qualification subjects would generally be regarded as exceptional.'
 - 'Percentages should not be derived from a detailed analysis of the contributions of subjects to individual students' programmes of study. They must instead be based on a broad assessment of the relative contributions of each subject, and be consistent with the guidance on economical coding and the relationship between qualification subjects and course subjects.'
25. Determining HECoS codes is a matter for providers, though we recommend the HECoS codes assigned and the rationale for assigning them should be kept for audit purposes. However, if we believe there are errors or inappropriate classifications which would significantly and materially affect our use of the data, we will require providers to amend their data submissions. This may include requiring changes to how providers use subject classifications and hence how students are assigned to price groups.
26. Some qualifications contain study in two or more distinct subject areas, for example a chemistry and business course. Where the qualification has more than one HECoS code, the student's year of engagement should be split between the relevant price groups in proportion to the split between each subject for the course as a whole.
27. Where activity is delivered under a subcontractual arrangement or as part of a study year abroad (partial or whole), it should be returned in the price group(s) allocated to the HECoS code(s) of the course.

Further guidance on the use of HECoS codes for further education colleges

28. Further education and sixth form colleges and academies can utilise the Education and Skills Funding Agency's 'Find a learning aim' service (FaLA),⁶² to access the information which shows the HECoS codes for each course.

⁶¹ See www.hesa.ac.uk/support/documentation/hecos/implementation-guide.

⁶² See submit-learner-data.service.gov.uk/find-a-learning-aim/DownloadData.

29. It is the responsibility of providers to ensure that any information contained in FaLA relating to their courses (including those for which they intend to return engagements in HESES) is correct, including HECoS codes (see Annex B, paragraphs 4 and 5).
30. If there is no HECoS code for a particular course, or a college thinks that the wrong HECoS code has been assigned, the college should follow the guidance in Annex B, paragraphs 4 and 5.

Allocating years of engagement to price groups based on HECoS codes

31. Tables showing the complete list of HECoS codes are available on the HESA website,⁶³ and a detailed mapping of HECoS codes to price groups is available in Annex A of 'Data collection to inform funding for 2022-23: Notification of changes' (OfS2021.32).⁶⁴ Providers may use the Common Aggregation Hierarchy (CAH) standard groupings of HECoS codes to determine price groups in most situations. The assignment of HECoS codes under the CAH is available on the HESA website. Tables G1 and G2 show the mapping of CAH codes to price groups, but where individual HECoS codes are exceptions to the CAH mapping, these HECoS codes are given in italics. For the purposes of HESES24 we are using CAH version 1.3.4.
32. CAH codes contain 'CAH' followed by up to six digits in three pairs. The top level and two subsequent levels of the hierarchy are each represented by a pair of digits. In Tables G1 and G2, the mapping of CAH codes to price groups includes all sub-levels of each code, unless stated otherwise. For example, 'CAH01' includes all CAH codes that begin with CAH01, 'CAH03-02' includes all codes that begin with CAH03-02 and 'CAH03-01-09' includes only that code.

Table G1: Attribution of CAH codes to price groups

CAH codes (including all sub-levels of the hierarchy) or HECoS codes	Price groups
CAH01	B
CAH02-02, CAH02-05, CAH02-06-01, CAH02-06-02, CAH02-06-03, <i>HECoS 100241 and 100243 (within CAH02-06-06)</i>	B
CAH02 (other than above)	C2
CAH03-01-09, CAH03-02	C2
CAH03 (other than above)	B
CAH04	C2
CAH05	B
CAH06-01-06, CAH06-01-08	C2
CAH06-01-04	D
CAH06 (other than above)	B
CAH07	B

⁶³ A full list of HECoS and CAH codes and associated subject descriptions are available at <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/documentation/hecos/cah>.

⁶⁴ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/data-collection-to-inform-funding-for-2022-23-notification-of-changes/.

CAH codes (including all sub-levels of the hierarchy) or HECoS codes	Price groups
CAH09	C2
HECoS 100109 and 100110 (within CAH10-01-03)	C1.2
HECoS 100213 (within CAH10-01-03), HECoS 100219, 100548, 100549 and 101048 (within CAH 10-01-07), HECoS 100093 (within CAH10-03-06)	C2
CAH10 (other than above)	B
CAH11	C1.1
CAH13	C2
HECoS 101218 (within CAH15-01-04)	B
CAH15-04-03	C2
CAH15 (other than above)	D
CAH16	D
CAH17-01-06	C2
CAH17 (other than above)	D
CAH19-04 (except CAH19-04-08)	C2
CAH19 (other than above)	D
CAH20-01-03	C1.1
CAH20 (other than above)	D
CAH22	D
CAH23	D
CAH24-01-02	D
CAH24 (other than above)	C1.2
CAH25	C1.2
HECoS 100369 (within CAH26-01-05)	C1.1
CAH26-01-01, CAH26-01-02, CAH26-01-03, HECoS 101056 (within CAH26-01-05)	C2
CAH26 (other than above)	B

Table G2: CAH codes sorted by price group

Price group	CAH codes (including all sub-levels of the hierarchy) or HECoS codes
B	CAH01, CAH02-02, CAH02-05, CAH02-06-01, CAH02-06-02, CAH02-06-03, HECoS 100241 and 100243 (within CAH02-06-06), CAH03 (except CAH03-01-09, CAH03-02), CAH05, CAH06 (except CAH06-01-04, CAH06-01-06, CAH06-01-08), CAH07, CAH10 (except HECoS 100093, 100109, 100110, 100213, 100219, 100548, 100549 and 101048), HECoS 101218 within CAH15-01-04), CAH26 (except CAH26-01-01, CAH26-01-02, CAH26-01-03, HECoS 100369 and 101056)
C1.1	CAH11, CAH20-01-03, HECoS 100369 (within CAH26-01-05)

Price group	CAH codes (including all sub-levels of the hierarchy) or HECoS codes
C1.2	HECoS 100109 and 100110 (within CAH10-01-03), CAH24 (except CAH24-01-02), CAH25
C2	CAH02 (except CAH02-02, CAH02-05, CAH02-06-01, CAH02-06-02, CAH02-06-03, HECoS 100241 and 100243), CAH03-01-09, CAH03-02, CAH04, CAH06-01-06, CAH06-01-08, CAH09, HECoS 100213 (within CAH10-01-03), HECoS 100219, 100548, 100549 and 101048 (within CAH10-01-07), HECoS 100093 (within CAH10-03-06), CAH13, CAH15-04-03, CAH17-01-06, CAH19-04 (except CAH19-04-08), CAH26-01-01, CAH26-01-02, CAH26-01-03, HECoS 101056 within CAH26-01-05)
D	CAH06-01-04, CAH15 (except CAH15-04-03, HECoS 101218), CAH16, CAH17 (except CAH17-01-06), CAH19-01, CAH19-02, CAH19-04-08, CAH20 (except CAH20-01-03), CAH22, CAH23, CAH24-01-02

Examples

Example 1: Allocation to price group based on HECoS code

33. A student studies on a course with an assigned HECoS code of 100074. This course's corresponding CAH code would be CAH17-01-03. As this is not an exception to CAH17, the student would be allocated to price group D for this course.

Example 2: Allocation to price group based on HECoS code

34. Two students studying for different undergraduate degrees have respective HECoS codes of 100760 (Welsh history) and 100299 (archaeology). These correspond to CAH codes CAH20-01-01 and CAH20-01-03 respectively.

- a. As CAH20-01-01 is not identified as an exception to CAH20 in Table G3, courses with this code will be returned as price group D.
- b. As CAH20-01-03 is identified as an exception to CAH20 in Table G3, courses with this code will be returned as price group C1.1.

Example 3: Split price groups where students study different subjects in different years

35. A provider offers a foundation degree in Climate Science and Climate Change, over two years. The course has been allocated two HECoS codes by the provider which correspond to different price groups:

100379 (climate science) – CAH26-01-06 – price group B

101070 (climate change) – CAH26-01-02 – price group C2.

36. In the first year of the course, students mainly study climate science. In the second year of the course, there is a larger focus on climate change. Over the entire duration of this course, student activity relating to climate science makes up 40 per cent of the course, with climate change making up the remaining 60 per cent. Students in both years of this course would be reported with 40 per cent of their year of engagement in price group B and 60 per cent in price group C2.

Annex H: Long years of engagement

This annex explains how to determine if a full-time or part-time year of engagement should be classed as 'long' for the purposes of HESES. It also contains guidance on how to treat learning in the workplace and work experience when determining the length of a year of engagement, as well as examples of how to treat mixed-length courses.

Annex H contents

Definitions

- Full-time long years of engagement
- Part-time long years of engagement
- Mixed-length courses

Examples

Definitions

Full-time long years of engagement

1. For full-time courses, the year of engagement will be classified as 'long' for our purposes if students are normally required to attend for 45 weeks or more within that year of engagement.⁶⁵
2. Years of engagement that are not long are referred to as 'standard-length'.
3. If the year of engagement is 45 weeks or more in length because of a period of work based study, then the year of engagement is not counted as long. This applies to both learning in the workplace and work experience, including work placements. Sandwich years out cannot therefore be recorded as long, nor would we generally expect foundation degrees, qualifications taken as part of an apprenticeship or years of engagement for pre-registration courses in nursing, midwifery and allied health to be recorded as long.
4. For undergraduate students, long years of engagement typically occur in accelerated programmes where the qualification is achieved in a much shorter time than normal. The following are not criteria in defining a long year of engagement for HESES reporting purposes:
 - a. The number of credit points studied in the year.
 - b. The eligibility of a full-time student under the undergraduate student support arrangements for a 'long courses loan'.

⁶⁵ See Annex D, paragraph 1 for the definition of 'attendance'.

5. For postgraduate students, most long years of engagement will be for higher degrees such as a masters' qualification.

Part-time long years of engagement

6. For part-time courses, the distinction will depend on the length of each year for an equivalent full-time course. If the equivalent full-time course is long then the part-time course will also be recorded as long. The number of weeks attended within the year of engagement for part-time students is irrelevant in determining whether the year of engagement is long.
7. If an equivalent full-time course does not exist, a provider should use a reasonable academic judgement to determine whether the year should be classed as long based on an appropriate comparable full-time course. The rationale for such a judgement should be recorded for verification and audit purposes.
8. If no such comparisons can be made to any full-time courses, the part-time course should be recorded as standard.

Mixed-length courses

9. In some cases, a full-time course may have one or more years of engagement which are long, and one or more standard-length years. When determining which years of engagement to return as long for the equivalent part-time course, the proportion of years of engagement recorded as long should be the same on both the full-time and part-time courses.

Examples

Example 1: Foundation degree with work-based study

10. A full-time student on a foundation degree studies for 47 weeks in the year of engagement, 10 of which are work-based study. The year of engagement is not counted as long because, without the work-based study, the number of weeks studied within the year of engagement is 37.

11. Similarly, a full-time student on a foundation degree studies for 47 weeks in the year of engagement entirely in the workplace. The year of engagement is not counted as long.

Example 2: Calculating the length of year for a part-time course from the full-time equivalent

12. A full-time, one year course has a 30 week year of engagement; the equivalent part-time course lasts for two years, each with a 45 week year of engagement. The part-time course would not be long.

13. Conversely, if each year of the part-time course lasted for 30 weeks, but the year of engagement for the full-time course was 45 weeks, then the part-time course would be classified as long.

Example 3: Taking a foundation degree bridging course after a foundation degree

14. A student completes a two-year, full-time foundation degree, then chooses to undertake a foundation degree bridging course over the summer in order to enrol full-time on the third year of an honours degree. In this case, both years of the foundation degree and the third year of the honours degree should be recorded as standard-length. The foundation degree bridging course should be recorded separately as a standalone, part-time course.

Example 4: Mixed length part-time course – standard-length

15. A four-year part-time course has an equivalent two-year full-time course where year one is long and year two is standard-length. As the proportion of years of engagement recorded as long should be the same on both full and part-time courses, the first two years of the part-time course should be recorded as long, with the remaining two recorded as standard-length.

Example 5: Mixed length part-time course – accelerated

16. A part-time course lasts two and a half years and has an equivalent two-year full time course where year one is long and year two is standard-length.

To ensure the proportion of years of engagement reported as long for the part-time course is equivalent to the full-time course (as per paragraph 9 of this annex), all first years of study can be recorded as long, and all years of engagement for half of the students in the final years of study recorded as long. The years of engagement of the other half of the students in the final year should be recorded as standard-length. The second year would be recorded as standard-length.

Example 6: Nursing course including significant work placement

17. A university has a full-time course in children's nursing lasting three years. During this time, students study at the university on a modular basis for 45 weeks of the year. As part of the requirements for registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council, students are required to spend at least 50 per cent of the course (2,300 hours) learning in a practice setting.

18. Though a student would be engaged in study or work-based learning for 45 weeks of the year, this is due to the presence of the practice placement. The year would therefore not meet the definition of 'long' and would be recorded as standard-length.

Annex I: Year abroad categories in Table 4

This annex provides guidance on how to assign years of engagement to the appropriate category of year abroad in Table 4 of HESES24.

Annex I contents

Year abroad

Turing Scheme

Examples

1. Table 4 collects information about a subset of Home fee undergraduate students included in Columns 1 and 2 of Tables 1 and 2: those undergraduates taking a year abroad in 2024-25 as part of their engagement.
2. We expect to use the information on Table 4 to inform the 2025-26 'Overseas study programmes' funding allocation to support providers' participation in student exchange programmes with overseas providers.

Year abroad

3. A full-time year of engagement is a year abroad if it is provided in conjunction with an overseas educational provider and either:
 - a. During which any periods of full-time study at the provider in the UK are, in aggregate, less than 10 weeks.
 - b. For which, in respect of that academic year and any previous academic years of the course, the aggregate of any one or more periods of attendance which are not periods of full-time study at the provider in the UK (disregarding intervening vacations) exceeds 30 weeks.
4. In exceptional circumstances, providers may offer students an alternative 'year abroad' experience involving, for example, online learning while remaining in the UK. Such exceptional circumstances may arise because of ongoing armed conflicts, or any continuing need to comply with domestic or foreign government guidance and regulations on measures to address the coronavirus pandemic. Under these particular circumstances, students prevented from travelling abroad for their overseas year of study (as part of a degree from a UK higher education provider) due to the exceptional circumstances will still be considered as attending the overseas institution if both of the following criteria are met:
 - a. That overseas higher education provider (rather than the provider in England) is providing the learning online. Sandwich years abroad will therefore not meet this criterion.

- b. The fees charged to the student for the year are no higher than the regulated fee limit that would apply had the student been able to take the year abroad as normal.⁶⁶
5. A 'sandwich year out' year of engagement is a year abroad if one of the following applies:
 - a. All periods of attendance that are not full-time study are spent outside the UK.
 - b. At least one period of attendance in the year of engagement that is not full-time study is taken under the Turing Scheme.
6. Some years abroad may comprise a combination of work experience and full-time study at a provider outside the UK. Where the period of work experience is not sufficient for the year of engagement to meet the definition of sandwich year out, it should be categorised as a full-time year abroad.

Turing

7. Years abroad are split between:
 - a. Those taken under the Turing Scheme.⁶⁷
 - b. Other study years abroad.
8. A Turing Scheme year abroad is an Erasmus year as defined in Regulation 2(1) of the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011, Statutory Instrument 2011/1986, as amended.⁶⁸
9. If a year abroad comprises more than one period of study or work placement abroad, not all of which are taken under the Turing Scheme, the year of engagement should be recorded as follows:
 - a. As a 'Turing year abroad' if at least one study or work placement is taken under the Turing Scheme during the current year of engagement.
 - b. As an 'Other study year abroad' otherwise. This may include cases where a Turing study or work placement, which counts towards categorising the current year of engagement as

⁶⁶ The regulated fee limits for study years abroad are available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-providers/equality-of-opportunity/access-and-participation-plans/fee-limits/.

⁶⁷ Erasmus+ is the European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport. Further information about the programme for 2014-20 can be found at www.erasmusplus.org.uk/ and the Erasmus+ programme guide, available online at <https://erasmusplus.org.uk/project-support.html>. We understand that, because of delays arising from the coronavirus pandemic, some elements of the Erasmus+ programme for 2014 to 2020 may be continuing and running in parallel with the new Turing Scheme. We do not expect there to be any Erasmus+ years abroad to be reported in HESES24, following the completion of the Erasmus+ 2014-2020 programme (despite the extension until the end of 2023 for some UK universities to complete Erasmus+ programmes affected by the coronavirus) and the beginning of the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme (of which the UK is not a participating country). However, any activity that is eligible to be reported in HESES24 should be reported as a Turing Scheme year abroad.

⁶⁸ See <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/1986/regulation/2>.

a year abroad, was taken in a previous year of engagement but not in the current one. (See example 1 below).

Examples

Example 1: Student spending a calendar year abroad

10. A student studies a four-year full-time undergraduate course from September 2023 to June 2027. The student spends a year abroad studying at an overseas provider for the calendar year 2025, which incorporates parts of their second and third years of engagement; all other study is in the UK.

11. The second year of engagement does not meet the definition of a year abroad, because the student has spent at least 10 weeks studying at their UK provider between September and December 2024, and they have not yet spent over 30 weeks studying abroad by the end of the year of engagement.

12. The third year of engagement meets the definition of a year abroad, because (including the time abroad during their second year of engagement) the student will have spent over 30 weeks studying abroad by the end of that year. If the year abroad is taken under the Turing scheme, the year of engagement should be identified as a full-time Turing year abroad.

Example 2: Student spending an academic year abroad

13. A student studies a four-year full-time undergraduate course from September 2022 to June 2026. The student spends a year abroad between September 2024 and June 2025, contained entirely within their third year of engagement; all other study is in the UK. The year abroad comprises one semester which is a 16-week work placement not taken under the Turing Scheme, and another semester which is a 16-week study placement at an overseas university which is taken under the Turing Scheme.

14. The work placement is not in itself sufficient for the year of engagement to count as a sandwich year out. Because at least one study or work placement is taken under the Turing Scheme in the current year of engagement, the year of engagement is categorised as a full-time Turing year abroad.

Example 3: Work then Turing study abroad

15. As in Example 1, but the calendar year abroad comprises one 16-week semester (taken at the end of the second year of engagement) which is a work placement abroad not taken under the Turing Scheme, and another 16-week semester (at the start of the third year of engagement) which is a study period at an overseas provider taken under the Turing Scheme. As with Example 1, the second year of engagement does not meet the definition of a year abroad.

16. The third year of engagement meets the definition of a year abroad, but the work placement is not in itself sufficient for any year of engagement to count as a sandwich year out. Because at least one period of study or work placement in the current year of engagement is taken under the Turing Scheme, that year of engagement counts as a full time Turing year abroad.

Example 4: Turing study then work abroad

17. As in Example 3, but the semesters are reversed: the calendar year abroad comprises one 16-week semester (taken at the end of the second year of engagement) which is a study period at an overseas provider taken under the Turing Scheme, and another 16-week semester (at the start of the third year of engagement) which is a work placement abroad not taken under the Turing Scheme. As in Examples 1 and 3, the second year of engagement would not meet the definition of a year abroad.

18. The third year of engagement still meets the definition of a year abroad. The work placement is not in itself sufficient for the year of engagement to count as a sandwich year out. No study or work placement in the current year of engagement is taken under the Turing Scheme (even though one was in the previous year of engagement). Therefore, the third year of engagement counts as a full-time 'Other study year abroad'.

Annex J: Pre-registration nursing, midwifery and allied health courses including guidance for Tables 6a and 6c

This annex defines the pre-registration healthcare profession courses which must be included in HESES24. It also details definitions specific to Tables 6a and 6c. Only providers delivering these courses in 2024-25 need to complete these tables.

Annex J contents

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Definitions

HESES nursing, midwifery and allied health professions population for 2024-25

1. The HESES24 population for Tables 6a and 6c comprises years of engagement for all Home fee students on pre-registration nursing, midwifery and allied health profession courses (defined below). These years should continue to be included in Tables 1 to 5 as Home fee, either as fundable or non-fundable, as appropriate (see Annex F). The information in Tables 6a and 6c will be used to inform calculation of the provider's nursing midwifery and allied health supplement funding allocation.
2. In Tables 6a and 6c, the definition of 'starters' is not the same as for new entrants in Table 5 (see Annex C). In general, starters on Tables 6a and 6c are students starting study for the first time on a relevant pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession course in a specific year. Please note:
 - a. Students who transfer during an academic year onto a pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession course from one that is not should be treated as a starter in the year in which they transfer onto the pre-registration course.

- b. Students who transfer between different types of pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession course should be recorded against the profession that applies to their current course, but they should be treated as a starter in the year that their previous course started.
 - c. Students repeating a year of a pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession course should be treated as starters in the year they started the course, and not when they repeated the first year.
3. Tables 6a and 6c collect two mutually exclusive categories: OfS-fundable and Non-fundable.
 4. Tables 6a and 6c also separately identify all Home fee years of engagement, both fundable and non-fundable, for students who are starters in 2024-25. This is collected for planning, not funding, purposes. These students will already have been recorded as either OfS-fundable or non-fundable.
 5. Students at the Open University who are studying in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland should be excluded from Tables 6a and 6c, as funding responsibility for them rests with the devolved administrations. They should, however, still be included as appropriate in other HESES tables.

Healthcare professions

6. For the professions listed in Table J1, only years of engagement that are part of pre-registration courses at English providers that are approved by the relevant regulatory body should be included. These are:
 - the Nursing and Midwifery Council for nursing and midwifery
 - the General Dental Council for dental hygiene and dental therapy
 - the Health and Care Professions Council for all other professions listed.
7. Years of engagement that are not part of the specific programmes approved by the relevant regulatory body, or which relate to registration for a profession not listed in Table J1, must not be included in Tables 6a and 6c. This applies to:
 - a. Any additional activity that may be integrated with those courses, such as foundation years ('Year 0') provision. However, such other integrated activity may still be countable on other HESES tables, where it meets all relevant criteria (see Annex B, paragraphs 7 to 8 for guidance regarding foundation years).
 - b. Any other courses that do not lead to registration with a relevant regulatory body in the specified professions (as listed in Table J1 below), such as courses leading towards registration as a nursing associate.
8. 'Pre-registration' is an attribute of the course, not of the individual student. If a pre-registration course leads to a first registration for that specific profession, the student is recorded in Table 6a or 6c, regardless of whether the student is already registered with the regulatory body for another profession. Courses that do not meet the definition of pre-registration (and will therefore not be recorded on Tables 6a and 6c) should still be recorded in Tables 1, 2, 3 and 5.

Table J1: Courses for which activity should be included in Tables 6a and 6c

Pre-registration courses in	Leading to registration with
<p>Nursing – adult Nursing – children Nursing – learning disability Nursing – mental health</p>	<p>Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC).</p> <p>Relevant courses are those at English providers listed at www.nmc.org.uk/education/approved-programmes/ by selecting the relevant course type from the drop-down menu headed ‘Course’. In general these are, respectively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Pre-registration nursing – Adult’ or ‘Pre-registration nursing – Adult (pre-2018)’ • ‘Pre-registration nursing – Child’ or ‘Pre-registration nursing – Child (pre-2018)’ • ‘Pre-registration nursing – Learning Disabilities’ or ‘Pre-registration nursing – Learning Disabilities (pre-2018)’ • ‘Pre-registration nursing – Mental Health’ or ‘Pre-registration nursing – Mental Health (pre-2018)’. <p>In addition, the NMC website identifies six types of ‘Dual award – pre-registration nursing’ courses (for each possible combination of two of the four specialisms) and similarly six types of ‘Dual award – pre-registration nursing (pre-2018)’ courses. Years of engagement for students on such courses should also be included on Tables 6a and 6c, but split equally between the two nursing specialisms concerned. For example, for a course identified on the NMC website as ‘Dual award – pre-registration nursing – mental health/child’, years of engagement should be split equally on Tables 6a and 6c between the categories ‘Nursing – children’ and ‘Nursing – mental health’.</p>
<p>Nursing – unclassified</p>	<p>NMC.</p> <p>In some cases, pre-registration nursing courses may share a common first year, during which students will choose their nursing specialism for later years of the course. Any such years of engagement that cannot yet be assigned to one of the nursing specialisms above should be recorded under ‘Nursing – unclassified’. They must, however, be part of a pre-registration course listed at www.nmc.org.uk/education/approved-programmes/ by selecting the relevant course type from the drop-down menu headed ‘Course’. The category ‘Nursing – unclassified’ must not be used to report years of engagement on courses that do not meet the criteria for inclusion in Tables 6a and 6c, such as pre-registration courses for nursing associates, or post-registration courses.</p>
<p>Midwifery</p>	<p>NMC.</p> <p>Relevant courses are those at English providers listed at www.nmc.org.uk/education/approved-programmes/ by selecting the relevant course type from the drop-down menu headed ‘Course’. In general these are, respectively:</p>

Pre-registration courses in	Leading to registration with
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Pre-registration Midwifery' • 'Pre-registration Midwifery – Short Course' • 'Pre-registration Midwifery – Three-year programme – 18-month programme (pre-2020)'.
Dietetics	<p>Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).</p> <p>Relevant courses are those at English providers listed at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/approved-programmes/ by selecting 'Dietitian' from the drop-down menu under 'Search by profession'.</p>
Occupational therapy	<p>HCPC.</p> <p>Relevant courses are those at English providers listed at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/programmes/register/ by selecting 'Occupational therapist' from the listing under 'Search by profession'.</p>
Operating department practice	<p>HCPC.</p> <p>Relevant courses are those at English providers listed at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/programmes/register/ by selecting 'Operating department practitioner' from the listing under 'Search by profession'.</p>
Orthoptics	<p>HCPC.</p> <p>Relevant courses are those at English providers listed at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/programmes/register/ by selecting 'Orthoptist' from the listing under 'Search by profession'.</p>
Orthotics and prosthetics	<p>HCPC.</p> <p>Relevant courses are those at English providers listed at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/programmes/register/ by selecting 'Prosthetist / orthotist' from the listing under 'Search by profession'.</p>
Physiotherapy	<p>HCPC.</p> <p>Relevant courses are those at English providers listed at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/programmes/register/ by selecting 'Physiotherapist' from the listing under 'Search by profession'.</p>
Podiatry	<p>HCPC.</p> <p>Relevant courses are those at English providers listed at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/programmes/register/ by selecting 'Chiropodist / podiatrist' from the listing under 'Search by profession'.</p>
Radiography (diagnostic)	<p>HCPC.</p>
Radiography (therapeutic)	<p>Relevant courses are those at English providers listed at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/programmes/register/ by selecting 'Radiographer' from the listing under 'Search by profession'. Providers will then need to distinguish between the two types of radiography according to the aim and content of their particular courses: after a search on Radiographer, the HCPC website distinguishes between these two types through a filter on 'Modality'.</p>

Pre-registration courses in	Leading to registration with
Speech and language therapy	<p>HCPC.</p> <p>Relevant courses are those at English providers listed at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/programmes/register/ by selecting 'Speech and language therapist' from the listing under 'Search by profession'.</p>
Dental hygiene Dental therapy	<p>General Dental Council (GDC).</p> <p>Relevant courses are those at English providers listed at www.gdc-uk.org/education-cpd/dental-education/quality-assurance/approved-providers/dental-therapy-and-dental-hygiene.</p> <p>Providers will then need to distinguish between the two types of programme, reflecting the courses they offer and the qualification aim of their students. Where a student has a single aim for a qualification in dental hygiene, they should be recorded under dental hygiene. Otherwise, they should be recorded under dental therapy (including where they are aiming for qualifications in both dental hygiene and therapy).</p>

Guidance

Mode

9. The definitions of mode for Tables 6a (full-time) and 6c (part-time) are in Annex D. The vast majority of students on pre-registration courses will undertake learning in the workplace, which can count towards full-time study and will therefore not meet the definition of a sandwich year out.

Length

10. Years of engagement can either be standard-length or long, as defined in Annex H. We do not generally expect years of engagement for pre-registration courses to meet the definition of 'long', because periods of work-based study, including placements, should not be counted in determining whether such years meet the minimum 45-week attendance requirement in the year (see Annex H).

Level

11. Postgraduate taught students studying a pre-registration course in dental therapy are to be recorded in HESES as postgraduate taught (Masters' loan). All other postgraduate taught students studying a pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession course are to be recorded in HESES as postgraduate taught (undergraduate fee). This applies irrespective of their own personal eligibility for undergraduate student support.

Examples

Example 1: Student who transfers between different types of pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession course

12. A student started a pre-registration course in 'Nursing – children' in September 2023. The student transfers to a pre-registration course in midwifery in September 2024. The student is recorded against the profession 'midwifery' but is not recorded as a starter in 2024-25, as that is not the year that their previous pre-registration course started.

Example 2: Student who transfers onto a pre-registration nursing, midwifery or allied health profession course from one that is not

13. A student studied for a full-time bachelors' degree in biological sciences in 2022-23 and 2023-24, and completed the first two years of the bachelors' degree. However, in September 2024, the student transfers to a full-time pre-registration midwifery course at the same provider. The student is reported as a starter for 2024-25 in Table 6a.

14. However, such a student transferring within a provider would not be reported as a 'new entrant' on Table 5, as they are studying at the same provider and at the same broad level.

Example 3: Student already registered with the NMC, who enrolls on a pre-registration midwifery course in 2024-25

15. A student previously trained as a nurse (Nursing – child) and registered as a nurse with the NMC in 2021. The student starts a full-time pre-registration midwifery course in October 2024. The midwifery course is listed as a pre-registration course by the NMC.

16. As the midwifery course leads to a first registration for the profession 'midwifery', the student is recorded in Table 6a against the profession 'midwifery' as a starter in 2024-25, regardless of already being registered with the NMC as a nurse.

Example 4: Student starting a specialist nursing course in September 2023

17. A student previously trained as a nurse (Nursing – adult) and registered as a nurse with the NMC in 2021. The student starts a full-time undergraduate bachelors' degree in Specialist Nursing – health visiting, at a provider's School of Health in September 2024. This course is listed as an approved course by the NMC with course entry requirements that specify applicants should have active registration on Part one or Part two of the NMC Register.

18. The student is not recorded in Table 6a because the course is post-registration. The Specialist nursing – health visiting course does not lead to a first registration for the profession ‘nursing’. This course leads to registration on Part three of the NMC register for specialist community public health nurses.

Example 5: Nursing course including significant work placement

19. A provider has a full-time bachelors’ degree in Nursing – mental health lasting three years. This includes mandatory learning in the workplace, which comprises approximately 60 per cent of the course being spent on clinical placements each year, with the remainder being student learning hours.

20. Though a student would be engaged in study or work-based learning for 45 weeks of the year, this is due to the presence of the clinical placement. The year would not therefore meet the definition of long and would be recorded as standard-length.

Annex K: List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
CAH	Common Aggregation Hierarchy
CertEd	Certificate in Education
DDB	Designated data body
DipHE	Diploma of Higher Education
DSA	Disabled Students' Allowance
ELQ	Equivalent or lower qualification
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
EU	European Union
EYTS	Early years teacher status
FaLA	The ESFA's 'Find a learning aim' service
FHEQ	Frameworks for higher education qualifications of UK degree-awarding bodies
FTE	Full-time equivalence
GDC	General Dental Council
HCPC	Health and Care Professions Council
HECoS	Higher Education Classification of Subjects
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HERA	Higher Education Research Act 2017
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HESES	Higher Education Students Early Statistics survey
HESF	Higher Education Students Forecast
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
HTQs	Higher technical qualifications
ILR	Individualised Learner Record
INSET	In-service education and training
ITT	Initial teacher training
LDCS	LearnDirect Class System
MPharm	Master of Pharmacy
NMC	Nursing and Midwifery Council
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OfS	Office for Students
PG	Postgraduate
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education or Professional Graduate Certificate in Education
PGR	Postgraduate research

Abbreviation	Definition
PGT	Postgraduate taught
QTS	Qualified teacher status (non-fundable)
QTLS	Qualified teacher learning and skills (OfS-fundable)
UCAS	formerly the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UG	Undergraduate
UK ENIC	UK National Information Centre for the recognition and evaluation of international qualifications and skills



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