

Quick guide

Determining mode of study

Overview

With more and more providers choosing to deliver courses with different methods of study, some providers are having difficulty determining the mode of study for these courses.

There are four modes of study that a course can take:

- full-time in attendance
- full-time distance learning
- part-time in attendance
- part-time distance learning

The following information should help you determine the study mode of your courses.

Definitions

The definition of a distance learning course according to the Student Support Regulations is

‘a course on which a student undertaking the course is not required to be in attendance by the institution providing the course, where required to be in attendance is not satisfied by a requirement imposed by the institution to attend any institution

(a) for the purposes of registration or enrolment or any examination;

(b) on a weekend or during any vacation; or

(c) on an occasional basis during the week’

You should use a process of elimination to determine if the course is distance learning. Does your course meet this definition?

Yes: Distance learning course

No: In attendance course

Neither a full-time nor part-time course is defined in the Student Support Regulations. However, the following guidelines are used to decide whether a course is full-time. Full-time courses normally require students to attend the university or college, or elsewhere, for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks within the year. During that time, they are normally expected to undertake periods of study, tuition, learning in the workplace, or sandwich work

placement that does not meet the criteria to be a sandwich year out. These activities must amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week.

You should use a process of elimination to determine if the course is full-time or part-time. Does your course meet this definition?

Yes: Full-time

No: Part-time

Scenario

Thomas is a student who is studying a BA Hons in sports coaching. His course hours are as follows:

- 30 weeks online study including lectures and tutorials
- 2 days per week physical attendance required at sports academy
- 6 days per year attendance required at college or university

Step 1 – determine if the course is distance learning or in attendance

Thomas needs to attend the sports academy on a regular basis, rather than an occasional basis, therefore this is an in-attendance course.

Step 2 – determine whether the course is full-time or part-time

The next step is to look at the study hours and determine if they are full-time or part-time. You can use the guidance below:

Full-time courses normally require students to attend the university or college, or elsewhere, for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks within the year. During that time, they are normally expected to undertake periods of study, tuition, learning in the workplace, or sandwich work placement that does not meet the criteria to be a sandwich year out. These activities must amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week.

Because Tommy needs to attend the sports academy 2 days per week over the course and of the structured nature of his course, the course would be considered a full-time in-attendance course.

By using step 1 and step 2 we can determine this. Points to consider that led to this conclusion are

- the requirement to attend a location or sports club for study purposes
- the requirement to meet a minimum number of hours of attendance per week

- the structured nature of the course and the days of attendance required at the university or college

When determining the mode of study, you should consider the format of study. Is it all online based or is there an expectation that the student would attend seminars, workshops, or lectures? Also look at the frequency of the study. For example, is there a structured timetable that requires regular online attendance at scheduled lectures, seminars, tutorials and discussion forums? If the student is expected to frequently, rather than occasionally, attend any of the above, then the course is not distance learning. If regular attendance is required, meaning the student must be at a specific place to study, the course is not distance learning.