

## Quick guide

# Part-time undergraduate courses

## Overview

You can use this document for guidance on entering courses onto the Courses Management Service (CMS) to ensure your courses meet policy and student support regulations.

For more detailed information on how to add and amend courses, and general 'how to' information, please see the CMS User Guide on the HEP Services website.

It is your responsibility to ensure that the details we hold for all your part-time undergraduate courses are correct and meet the relevant student support regulations. This will ensure that students are assessed against the correct course details and that, where applicable, fee payments to students are accurate.

## Eligibility

To qualify for part-time fee and maintenance support the student must undertake a designated part-time course. The student must also be studying at a course intensity of at least 25% to get a Maintenance Loan or a Tuition Fee Loan.

A designated part-time course must be:

- at least the duration of one academic year
- ordinarily possible to complete in no more than four times the period ordinarily required to complete the full-time equivalent where the course begins on or after 1 September 2012

You can find more detailed information on course eligibility in the guidance chapters on the SFE Practitioners website:

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

## Academic years

The academic year is strictly defined in the regulations as a 12-month period beginning on either 1 September, 1 January, 1 April, or 1 July depending on when the course started.

This means that the maximum Tuition Fee Loan, Maintenance Grant and loan for living costs awarded to a student starting their course in September or October, for example, covers the academic year from 1 September until 31 August the following year. Where a course runs

beyond the end of the academic year, students will not be funded for the period after the end academic year to the end of the last term.

The table below shows the academic years depending on the course start dates.

Date course started	Academic year
Between 1 August and 31 December	1 September - 31 August
Between 1 January and 31 March	1 January - 31 December
Between 1 April and 31 June	1 April - 31 March
Between 1 July and 31 July	1 July - 31 June

## Term dates

Term dates are really important to student finance as they allow us to determine:

- when to pay your students
- how much to pay them depending on how long they are studying with you that year

It's vital that the number of teaching weeks, that's the time your students are attending lectures, undertaking course work or taking exams, is accurate.

## Term start dates

Your term dates should be linked to the season when your course begins. There are restrictions to how early a term can begin. This is to make sure students' payments are spread out throughout the academic year. The table below shows the term date borders:

Season (Academic Year Start)	Term 1 No earlier than	Term 2 No earlier than	Term 3 No earlier than
AUT (Aug- Dec)	1 August	1 January	1 April
WIN (Jan - Mar)	1 January	1 April	1 July
SPR (Apr - Jun)	1 April	1 July	1 January
SUM (July)	1 July	1 January	1 April

The only exception to this rule is in the final course year, where term dates can be compressed into the remaining period of attendance.

In the years that a bank holiday falls at the beginning of April, the term 3 start date should be 3 April at the earliest. Our payment system schedules payments before the bank holiday which means even if a term 3 start date falls on 1 or 2 April, the payments would need to be processed in March.

## Freshers weeks

Freshers weeks are not counted as weeks of teaching. Unless your students are attending lectures, undertaking course work or taking exams, these weeks should not be included in your term dates. If you wish this week to be marked as the start of term for your students' funding then it is important to remove a week from your overall term length.

## Holiday periods

Holiday periods should always be accounted for when entering term dates. You should ensure that they are not included in any term (for instance for a student starting their course in October we would expect the term dates not to include the Christmas and Easter holiday periods).

## Midterm holidays

Midterm holidays can be difficult as we only ask for the start and end date of each term. If you have a holiday in the middle of that term, then it is important to remove a week from your overall term length.

## Exam periods

Exam periods can be included in your term dates as they count within your overall teaching weeks. However, periods where students are waiting for their results should not be counted.

## Semesters vs terms

Many HEPs operate on two semesters rather than three separate terms. As we pay your students at three points throughout their academic year we still need to maintain the three terms in our systems. If you are semesterised, then you can create term dates that reflect the study pattern of your students as closely as possible. You could use any holiday periods in the second semester as a natural break for your terms.

## Course duration

The table below shows the most ordinary durations for full-time courses.

Ordinary full-time duration (years)	Course qualification
1	CertHE
	HNC
	Honours degree (1-year top-up)
	Honours degree (1-year intercalation)
	PGCE
2	DipHE
	HND
	Foundation degree
	Honours degree (2-year top-up)
	Honours degree (condensed)
3	Ordinary degree
	Honours degree (full course)
4	Honours degree (with integral foundation year)
	Honours degree (with integral placement year)
	Honours degree (with study abroad year)
	Integrated master's degree
5	Honours degree (with integral foundation year and integral placement year)
	Honours degree (with integral foundation year and study abroad year)

It is vitally important to submit an accurate duration as this affects the student's entitlement. For part-time undergraduate courses you should enter the 'full-time equivalent' (FTE) duration of the part-time course you are submitting. You **should not enter** the duration of the part-time course.

Where you do not have a full-time version of the part-time course, you should choose the duration that the full-time course would be, if there were one. For example, a degree is ordinarily completed within 3 years when studied full-time. Therefore, where you have a part-time degree course but no full-time version your part-time course should be added as 3 years 'full-time equivalent'.

When entering a part-time undergraduate course you can choose a duration of either 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 years full-time equivalent:

- Part-time courses with a duration of 1 year 'full-time equivalent' – can be studied up to 4 years
- Part-time courses with a duration of 2 years 'full-time equivalent' – can be studied up to 8 years
- Part-time courses with a duration of 3 years 'full-time equivalent' – can be studied up to 12 years
- Part-time courses with a duration of 4 years 'full-time equivalent' – can be studied up to 16 years
- Part-time courses with a duration of 5 years 'full-time equivalent' – can be studied up to 16 years
- Part-time courses with a duration of 6 years 'full-time equivalent' – can be studied up to 16 years

It is the university's responsibility to ensure the student is aware of the actual duration of the part-time course they will be attending.

The scenarios below should help guide you on adding your part-time course durations.

### Scenario 1

BA degree studied part-time over 6 years with the full-time version of the course completed in 3 years.

This course would be added to CMS with a duration of 3 years full-time equivalent.

### Scenario 2

Integrated master's studied part-time over 6 years with the full-time version of the course completed in 4 years.

This course would be added to CMS with a duration of 4 years full-time equivalent.

### Scenario 3

HND studied part-time over 4 years with no full-time version.

The normal length that it takes to complete a full-time HND is 2 years. Therefore, this course would be added to CMS with a duration of 2 years full-time equivalent.

#### Scenario 4

BA (hons) degree studied part-time over 7 years with no full-time version.

The normal length that it takes to complete a full-time BA (hons) degree is 3 years. Therefore, this course would be added to CMS with a duration of 3 years full-time equivalent.

### Fixed durations

Where you offer part-time courses with a fixed duration, for example a 15-month or an 18-month course duration, these should be added to CMS with a duration of 1 year FTE. This will ensure your students receive the correct level of funding. You should not split these courses out, for example, one course for year 1 and another course for year 2.

### Course credits

To accurately assess a student's eligibility for Part-time Maintenance Loan (PTML) funding, we need you to enter the number of credits the student will achieve on completion of the entire course. You **should not** enter the number of credits achieved in an individual academic year.

The below table gives examples of the most common credits achieved for an entire course based on the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) which is the credit system that we expect you to enter into CMS.

Under FHEQ a year of full-time study generally equates to 120 credits. This is not always the case and the information you submit **must be** correct for the individual course as it will be used to assess the student's eligibility and entitlement.

Ordinary full-time duration (years)	Course qualification	Expected credits (based on FHEQ)
1	CertHE	120
	HNC	
	Honours degree (1-year top-up)	
	Honours degree (1-year intercalation)	
	PGCE	
2	DipHE	240
	HND	
	Foundation degree	
	Honours degree (2-year top-up)	
	Honours degree (condensed)	
3	Ordinary degree	300-360
	Honours degree (full course)	360
4	Honours degree (with integral foundation year)	480*
	Honours degree (with integral placement year)	
	Honours degree (with abroad year)	
	Integrated master's degree	480
5	Honours degree (with integral foundation year and integral placement year)	600*
	Honours degree (with integral foundation year and study abroad year)	

\*We appreciate that integral foundation, study abroad and work placement years don't traditionally have a credit value attached as is not a requirement to receive the honours degree (under FHEQ). However, we need one to accurately assess the student's entitlement to support.

Whilst a nominal amount of 120 credits has been used in the table above, the non-standard year should reflect the same credits as a standard year of the course. For example:

Where the honours degree is 390 credits over 3 years, we would expect that a 4-year version including a non-standard year (foundation, study abroad or work placement) would be 520 credits (390 + 1 year at 130 credits).

There is validation in CMS that will not allow you to save a course with a credit value of less than 20 or greater than 600.

## Course intensity calculation for a Part-time Maintenance Loan

We will calculate the student's course intensity. The information below shows how we calculate the intensity and how both the course duration and credit affect the end result.

Students must be studying at a course intensity of at least 25% to qualify for a Maintenance Loan. The student will also need to know the number of credits they will gain in the academic year when they apply. This is used to calculate their course intensity which then determines their entitlement.

The student's course intensity is calculated as below:

- FTE course credit figure divided by the number of FTE course years = FT credit (for the year)
- The number of credits the student will gain in this academic year = PT credit (for the year)
- $(PT \text{ credit} / FT \text{ credit}) \times 100 = \text{Intensity of study (\%)}$

### Scenario 1

Ryan is studying a part-time honours degree with an FTE duration of 3 years which achieves 360 credits. In this academic year he will gain 80 credits. Ryan's course intensity is calculated at:

$$360 / 3 = 120$$
$$80 / 120 \times 100 = 67\%$$

### Scenario 2

Beth is studying a part-time HND with an FTE duration of 2 years which achieves 240 credits. In this academic year Beth will gain 60 credits. Beth's course intensity is calculated at:

$$240 / 2 = 120$$
$$60 / 120 \times 100 = 50\%$$



### Scenario 3

Jo is studying a part-time bachelor's degree with an FTE duration of 3 years which achieves 300 credits. In this academic year Jo will gain 40 credits. Jo's course intensity is calculated at:

$$300 / 3 = 100$$

$$40 / 100 \times 100 = 40\%$$

## **Apprenticeship and graduate entry course**

Apprenticeship courses and graduate entry courses are not eligible for funding and should not be added to CMS.

## **HND and HNC courses for Scottish students**

From AY 2020/21 HEPs in England, Northern Ireland and Wales are not able to use the title 'HND' or 'HNC' for courses offered to Scottish students. You can still choose the qualification of Higher National Diploma (HND) or Higher National Certificate (HNC) on CMS, but you cannot include this in your course title.