Teaching Load: FAQs

This page attempts to provide answers to some of the questions that are most often asked about the Teaching Load system and cycle. If you have any questions that are not answered here, or if you find that any of the material here does not answer your questions, please contact Governance and Strategic Planning.

What is Teaching Load?

Teaching Load is an internal reporting aid with some external applications, the basic aim of which is to gain as accurate a picture as possible of the teaching effort - proportion of the overall teaching of students - undertaken by individual Schools/subject units. Teaching Load is expressed in student FTEs (Full-Time equivalents).

Each student will enrol on a programme of study which, for undergraduate (UG) and taught postgraduate (PGT) students, comprises a number of courses. These courses may be taught by different Subject Units within a School, or by a School other than that offering the programme of study (e.g., a student enrolled in the School of Physics on a degree programme in Physics with Music may take courses actually taught by the School of Physics, the School of Mathematics and the School of Arts, Culture and Environment. Teaching Load would allow for the calculation of the relative split of the student's FTE (1 Full-time student = 1FTE) between each of these three Schools.

What are Teaching Load output figures used for?

Teaching load forms a key element of the resource allocation process which is used to calculate the distribution of funding across the University's academic units.

Teaching load is also used as a key cost driver in the annual TRAC return, a compulsory HEFCE return. This is used by government to assess the financial sustainability of the HE sector and to calculate the full economic costs of teaching and research.

How are Teaching Load output figures calculated?

Two types of information held on the student records system are automatically matched together to produce the Teaching Load figures for each session. Data from student registration records regarding an individual's programme of study and course options are matched with details of the teaching effort for each programme/course, supplied by School staff, to produce a Teaching Load FTE figure for each student.

A student's Teaching Load FTE is calculated at the level of greatest detail held on each individual's registration record. This information should be

available at course level for UG and taught PG students. Teaching Load for PGT students is calculated using supervisor data (plus any courses). If there is no supervisor information then programme details are used.

Some courses/programmes listed are no longer offered. Who do I notify of this?

It should be the case that programmes or courses which are no longer offered to students (rather than simply not being offered in this session) are routinely notified by Schools to the relevant Senatus Undergraduate or Postgraduate Studies Committee. These programmes/course are then given a closure date on the student records system by Registry, and hence are removed from Teaching Load reports. Should you find, whilst checking reports TL10-18, any courses or programmes which you believe should have been closed, you should confirm this with your Schools' relevant Board of Studies and then formally notify Registry. The information provided to Registry should tie in directly with Calendar entries/deletions.

What are JACS codes? How do I choose them?

In the Teaching Load updating screens within CCAM, in addition to inputting each weighting and the Subject Unit it refers to, you will be prompted to input a JACS (Joint Academic Coding System) code before a record can be saved. JACS codes were developed by HESA in consultation with UCAS, and are the main identifier of subject areas for external statistical purposes - both for funding returns to SFC, which use JACS codes at programme level, and information returns to HESA, which use JACS coding at course level.

It is therefore extremely important that care is taken to identify appropriate JACS codes for both courses and programmes.

A complete listing of the JACS codes, with brief notes on what subjects are covered by each, is available at http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_studrec&task=show_file&Itemid=233&mnl=07051&href=jacs2.html. Note that in most cases it will be sufficient to use the main JACS code for a section (e.g., G700 Artificial Intelligence rather than G730 Neural Computing, which falls under the banner of G700).

Consider both the name of the programme of study/course and the Subject Unit(s) providing the teaching when allocating JACS codes. Generally speaking Subject Units will tend to have specific JACS codes closely associated with them - for example, teaching undertaken by the subject unit of Philosophy within PPLS will almost certainly merit the JACS code V500, Philosophy. However, care should be taken to choose the right JACS code - for example, Geography can be either L700 (when taught as a Social Science) or F800 (when taught as a Physical Science).

If the JACS code is not obvious, advice should be sought from academic colleagues. The inclusion of the correct JACS code is important given the

effects on funding returns and, ultimately, the University's main Teaching Grant.

My School has a PGT Teaching Load FTE much lower than we would expect from the headcount. Why?

There are a number of possible reasons for this. Take the following example: your School has 9 Full-time PGT students on a specific Masters programme, where students undertake 6 courses (of 20 credits each) plus a dissertation (of 60 Credits) - a total of 180 SCQF credits (and Teaching Load points) for each student. The dissertation is wholly supervised by your School, and three of the courses are also wholly taught by your School. The other three courses are wholly taught by a different School.

- Programmes part-taught by other Schools: Teaching Load FTE will not necessarily directly match a student headcount, given the potential teaching input of other Schools. In the example above, the Teaching Load accruing to your School would correctly = 6 FTE, with the other 3 FTE being allocated to the School teaching the other three courses.

- Lack of relevant data: were each student to have the course information correctly included in their record, but no record of the dissertation, then the Teaching Load calculation would split the FTE 50:50 between the two Schools, in line with the information on courses provided in the record.
  Similarly, if all courses and the dissertation were correctly entered on the students' records, but weightings were not provided for any of the courses taught by your School, then the calculation would again split the each student's FTE 50:50 between the Schools, in accordance with the information provided. See the General Principles document for a more detailed explanation of such calculations.
  This situation can only be rectified by ensuring that full details are included in student records, and that appropriate weightings are added to courses and programmes.

- Collaborative programmes: some programmes are taught jointly with other institutions, and so a reduced overall FTE is initially applied to each student taking these before the standard Teaching Load calculation is made. Again, looking at the example above, if the 3 courses were actually provided by another institution, then the overall FTE for each student would be 0.67 (as only two-thirds of the teaching would be undertaken by UoE).

- Excluded Courses:
  It is possible to exclude live courses from Teaching Load calculations - for instance, course codes relating to exam papers are correctly excluded, as the teaching load will be allocated to another course code. Other examples are when courses are not credit-bearing (e.g. CPD generally (unless it's available to be taken by non-CPD students), and courses normally taken outside the normal diet).

Occasionally courses can become incorrectly flagged for exclusion. If, for example, the course and dissertation information were correctly entered onto each student's record, but all 6 courses and the dissertation had erroneously been flagged for exclusion from Teaching Load, then the students would not be returned in the Teaching Load calculation, as they would have zero FTE.