

Brief introduction to TRAC and the Time Allocation Survey (TAS)

TRAC, or the Transparent Approach to Costing, is a government-initiated costing exercise which all universities are required to undertake every year, and which plays a large part in determining the amount of income the University receives for Research Council funded projects. It requires all institutional costs to be allocated into Teaching, Research and Other categories based on the activity driving that cost.

The largest single element of cost for the University is academic staff cost, which must be allocated between the activities of Teaching, Research and Other, and between sub-categories (11 in total) within these activities. This is done by means of Time Allocation Survey, or TAS return.

TAS returns

All College staff are required to complete three Time Allocation Survey (TAS) every year. The data collection periods are as follows:

- September – December
- January – April
- May – August

On the return, all staff are required to give a split of their time for that TAS period, on a percentage basis, between various categories of Teaching, Research and Other Activities.

TAS returns are completed via a University portal. You will receive a notification from the TRAC team indicating when the new collection period is open and the deadline for completion.

There are strict definitions for what should go into each activity category. Guidance on completion is available on the TAS forms, via the TAS administrator in each College, or by contacting the TRAC team tracteam@exeter.ac.uk

The TAS return data is a key component in the TRAC process, and as such has a significant impact on the outturn data of the TRAC exercise which have practical implications within the university, and externally, regarding decision making.

If you have any queries, or would like additional information, please contact the TRAC team who will be happy to explain TRAC processes further. The email is tracteam@exeter.ac.uk