

Guidance Notes for Academic Time Allocation Schedule (TAS)

1. Background

1.1 TRAC is the methodology used by higher education institutions (HEIs) in the UK for costing their activities. HEFCE has supported the development and implementation of TRAC in HEIs since its inception and seeks to ensure that TRAC is fit for purpose in meeting institutional and stakeholder needs.

1.2 In June 2010, a joint task group of Universities UK (UUK) and the Research Councils UK (RCUK), which was chaired by Sir William Wakeham, produced a report on full economic costing for research in higher education.

1.3 The report made a series of recommendations to funding bodies, as well as HEIs. In particular, these recommendations looked at the financial sustainability and efficiency and effectiveness of the sector. A copy of the Wakeham review can be found on the RCUK website:

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/reviews/fec/fECReviewReport.pdf>

2. Time Allocation

2.1 Time allocation is a key driver of costs across Teaching, Research and Other activity.

2.2 The University of Exeter collects time allocation survey (TAS) data three times a year for the following periods;

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

2.3 Each member of College staff is required to complete their TAS. The purpose of which is to gain robust estimates of the percent of time spent on Teaching, Research and Other.

2.4 The time that is to be allocated is the proportion of your time that you spend on University activities, as defined below, irrespective of the number of hours that you work. It covers work at weekends and off campus – the relevant measure is that you are on University business.

2.5 Please read the following TAS definitions to assist with the completion of TAS forms. Each College has a TAS administrator who can provide advice and support with the completion of forms. Do not hesitate to contact us on tracteam@exeter.ac.uk if you need further information or support.

2.6 The TAS portal also provides guidance as to how to complete the forms once you are logged in. You will receive a notification from the TRAC team indicating when the new collection period is open and the deadline for completion.

2.7 Data entered by an individual will not be available to the others. In order to undertake data validation, College Deans/Managers, via TAS Administrators and the TRAC team, will have access to the data to indicate the reasonableness. All Institutional and external use of the data will be aggregated and individuals will not be separately identifiable.

2.8 The University of Exeter is in the process of setting up a TRAC compliant Workload Planning Model (WLM). This will in time replace the need to collect TAS data as outputs from the model provide details across Teaching, Research and Other headings.

3. Definitions of TAS Headings

These notes provide broad definitions of the activities shown on the Time Allocation Schedule and should enable you to determine in which areas your time should be recorded.

3.1 Teaching – Publicly Funded

All award and credit bearing courses and taught postgraduate courses. Included are European Commission educational programmes such as Erasmus, Tempus and European Social Fund.

3.2 Teaching – Non-Publicly Funded

Non-credit bearing courses; short courses/CPD activity for which fees are charged, including teaching services delivered externally; courses held overseas; any other “commercial teaching” for external organisations.

3.3 Research – Internally Funded

Includes research where there is no external sponsorship, whether identified as a project or not. This category includes speculative work to investigate potential projects.

3.4 Research – Externally Funded

Includes Research Councils, UK Government, commercial and industrial sponsors, overseas sponsors and funding bodies, charities and endowment funds.

3.5 Research – PGR Supervision

Time spent supervising post graduate research students (supervision of post graduate taught students is classified as publicly funded teaching).

3.6 Other – Clinical Services to NHS

Covers services provided to the NHS.

3.7 Other – Consultancy & Other Services

Covers income-generating activities which are neither teaching nor research but which are carried out in the University's time and which have an identifiable income stream. Examples include consultancy (including work in a private capacity if during University time), technology transfer work, advisory work for Government (if funded), commissioned professional work (such as paid editing).

3.8 Support for Teaching Activities

Activities including administrative work relating to teaching (such as timetabling, exam boards, School and Departmental committee work relating to teaching, school liaison, interviewing prospective students), academic exchanges, scholarly work in keeping up to date in your field or exploring new teaching areas, advancement of personal knowledge and skills relating to teaching through training courses or professional development.

3.9 Support for Research Activities

Activities including drafting applications and negotiating contracts, scholarly work in keeping up to date in your field, advancement of personal knowledge and skills in relation to research, including attendance at conferences and time spent at other institutions, unpaid advisory work on research matters, School and Departmental committee work relating to research administration.

3.10 Support for Other Activities

Activities including the drafting of consultancy contracts, unpaid technology transfer work, patent applications, licence negotiations.

3.11 Central University Management

Time spent supporting central management or developing central services where there is no attributable teaching or research element, such as residences and catering, serving on general University committees, time spent promoting the University.

4. TRAC / fEC

4.1 The outputs of TRAC have practical implications within the university, and externally, regarding decision making.

4.2 TRAC seeks to apportion all the costs of the institution into Teaching, Research and Other headings. TAS is a major driver, though a number of drivers are used to best reflect the reality of how cost is incurred across Colleges and Services.

4.3 Costs allocated to the support of Research activity, at College and Central levels, are used to inform the full economic cost (fEC) that the institution is able to claim from Research Councils on awarded projects.

4.4 fEC provides a rate for estates and indirect costs related to Research. Where appropriate, additional fEC charges may be eligible for pool technicians or Major Research Facilities (MRF's).

4.5 The fEC costs do not require an audit trail at project level, once TRAC data is approved these funds can be reclaimed as awarded.

4.6 TRAC data can also be used as an indicator for costing and pricing. The TRAC T return allocates teaching related cost against student numbers to provide a cost per student measure.

4.7 The TRAC returns made to HEFCE are consolidated and provided back to institutions in the form of benchmark data for performance comparison purposes.

5. Frequently Asked Questions

5.1 TAS related FAQ's are available at; <http://admin.exeter.ac.uk/fec/tasdata/tastools-faq.shtml>

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