FTES Calculation Primer

Overview
California Community Colleges are funded, in part, based on student attendance. Student attendance is measured using a unit called Full-Time Equivalent Students, or FTES. This primer is designed to give an overview of how FTES is calculated. For more details, consult the State Chancellor’s Office Student Attendance Accounting Manual, especially Chapter 3.

Terms and Constants
- **Resident FTES** is the amount of FTES generated by students who are California residents. Credit classes in California Community Colleges are funded based on resident FTES. Students that are not California residents pay an additional out-of-state fee designed to offset the money that is not funded by the state for their attendance.

- **Total FTES** is the amount of FTES generated by all students, regardless of their California residency status.

- **525** is a number that appears in many of the calculations. It converts student-hours of attendance to FTES, and is based on a full-time student attending 15 hours of classes per week for 35 weeks a year:

  \[
  15 \text{ hours a week} \times 35 \text{ weeks} = 525 \text{ student-hours} = 1 \text{ FTES}
  \]

- **17.5** is a number that appears in some calculations. It is City College’s **Term Length Multiplier**, and is based on the length of our two primary terms (fall and spring). 17.5 is the largest Term Length Multiplier that’s allowed by the state.

- **Census enrollment** is the enrollment in a class on census day. For full-term credit class in the Fall and Spring terms, census day is a specific calendar day. Short-term credit classes have a census day that is defined based on the actual schedule of the class.
Weekly Census

In order for a class to be eligible for the weekly census accounting method, it must:

- Be a credit class
- Be scheduled in the fall or spring term
- Have start and end dates that coincide with the beginning and end of the term
- Meet for the same number of hours every week

Examples include:

- A full-term HIST 1 class that meets MWF from 8:10-9:00AM
- A full-term ANAT 25 class that meets for lecture MWF from 9:10-10:00AM and also has lab on Mondays from 11:10-2:00PM. While this class meets for more hours on Mondays than it does on Wednesdays or Fridays, it meets six hours a week for the whole semester, and so it’s still eligible for weekly census.

Example classes that are ineligible for weekly census include:

- A noncredit ESLN 3100 class that meets M-F 1:10-3:00PM. Weekly census is only for credit classes.
- A full-term EMT 101A class that meets T 12:30-3:20, but also has several TBA meetings on Saturdays during the semester. This class does not meet for the same number of hours per week, and so is ineligible.

FTES for Weekly Census classes is calculated as follows:

\[
FTES = \frac{\text{Census Enrollment} \times \text{Hours per Week} \times 17.5 \text{ weeks}}{525}
\]

If that HIST 1 class above had 35 students at census, the total FTES would be:

\[
FTES = \frac{35 \text{ students} \times 3 \text{ Hours per Week} \times 17.5 \text{ weeks}}{525} = 3.5 \text{ FTES}
\]

If that ANAT 25 class had 30 students at census, the total FTES would be

\[
FTES = \frac{30 \text{ students} \times 6 \text{ Hours per Week} \times 17.5 \text{ weeks}}{525} = 6.0 \text{ FTES}
\]
Daily Census

In order for a class to be eligible for the daily census accounting method, it must:
- Be a credit class
- Have five or more meetings
- Meet for the same number of hours every meeting

Examples include:
- A short-term BTEC 24 class that runs from 8/31-10/5 and meets Thursdays from 9:10-1PM
- A summer session PSYC 1 class that meets M-F from 9:40-11:10AM

Example classes that are ineligible for daily census include:
- An IDST 80C class that meets on two consecutive Saturdays from 1:10-5:25PM. Daily census classes need to have 5 or more meetings.
- A short-term CS 110A class that runs from 2/1-4/15 and meets Mondays from 10:10-2:00PM and Wednesdays from 10:10-3:00PM. It’s ineligible because the Monday and Wednesday meetings are for different amounts of time.

FTES for Daily Census classes is calculated as follows:

\[
FTES = \frac{\text{Census Enrollment} \times \text{Hours per Meeting} \times \text{Number of Meetings}}{525}
\]

If the BTEC 24 class above had six meetings and 25 students at census, the total FTES would be:

\[
FTES = \frac{25 \text{ students} \times 4 \text{ Hours per Meeting} \times 6 \text{ Meetings}}{525} = 1.14 \text{ FTES}
\]

Alternative Accounting Method

Online classes, hybrid face-to-face/online, work experience, and independent study classes do not necessarily have meeting times, and so need an alternative mechanism by which FTES is calculated.

Generally, FTES for these classes is calculated using a formula similar to the Weekly Census method, but substituting the course units for the weekly hours:

\[
FTES = \frac{\text{Census Enrollment} \times \text{Course Units} \times 17.5 \text{ weeks}}{525}
\]
For example, BCST 100 is a 3-unit course. If an online section of BCST 100 had 26 students at census, total FTES would be calculated as follows:

\[ FTES = \frac{26 \text{ students} \times 3 \text{ units} \times 17.5 \text{ weeks}}{525} = 2.6 \text{ FTES} \]

An adjustment is made when a class that uses the alternative accounting method has lab hours (or a combination of lecture and lab hours). This is done because of the ratio of lab hours to student units, so that colleges do not have a disincentive to bring these kinds of courses online. In this situation, FTES is calculated using the hours that the class would normally be scheduled as a full-term class.

\[ FTES = \frac{\text{Census Enrollment} \times \text{Nominal Weekly Hours} \times 17.5 \text{ weeks}}{525} \]

For example, BIO 9 is a 4-unit credit class, with 52.5 total hours of lecture and 52.5 total hours of lab. As a full-term face-to-face class, it would be scheduled 6 hours a week. An online section of this class with 35 students at census would have total FTES calculated as follows:

\[ FTES = \frac{35 \text{ students} \times 6 \text{ hours per week} \times 17.5 \text{ weeks}}{525} = 7 \text{ FTES} \]

**Positive Attendance**

The Positive Attendance accounting method is used for credit courses when the class is scheduled in such a way that it’s ineligible for any of the other accounting methods. Positive Attendance is also used for all noncredit classes.

Faculty teaching positive attendance classes must keep records on student attendance for each student and each class meeting. For credit classes, faculty report the total hours of student attendance to A&R at the conclusion of the class. For noncredit classes, student attendance is reported biweekly using the Positive Attendance (PARS) forms.

FTES for positive attendance classes is calculated using the total actual attendance hours of students:

\[ FTES = \frac{\text{Total Actual Student Attendance Hours Reported}}{525} \]
For example, consider a section of IDST 80C which was scheduled for two consecutive Saturdays for 4.5 hours each. If there were 25 students in attendance for the first Saturday, and 22 students in attendance for the second Saturday, then the faculty member would report a total of 211.5 student-hours of attendance. Total FTES would be:

\[
FTES = \frac{211.5 \text{ Actual Student Attendance Hours}}{525} = 0.40 \text{ FTES}
\]

**Further Reading**

As noted above, the [State Chancellor’s Office Student Attendance Accounting Manual](#), especially Chapter 3, goes into great detail about these calculations and additional definitions, such as how to define the census day for a short-term class. It is the source for the formulas used in this document.

Converting class meeting times (like 1:10-2:00PM or 9:40-10:55) into contact hours is also defined by the Student Attendance Accounting Manual. For additional details, review [How to Determine Class Meeting Times](#) and the [Attendance Hour Calculation Chart](#).