



FAQ: Full-Time Equivalent Student (FTES)

WHAT'S A FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STUDENT (FTES)?

Full-Time Equivalent Students, or FTES, is the main source of funding for the California Community Colleges. It is based on a formula that measures full-time students and part-time students converted to full-time students for funding purposes as illustrated below.

- An FTES represents 525 Total Student Contact Hours (TSCH)
- 1 student taking five traditional three unit classes, or 15 units per semester for 2 semesters of 17.5 weeks each ($15 \times 2 \times 17.5 = 525$)
- FTES are counted at Census date which is about 20% after the start of the semester, except for positive attendance courses which count actual hours attended

WHAT IS THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS EACH CLASS SECTION SHOULD HAVE?

The best practice is, on average, 35 students per every average 3-unit class section. For example,

$$\frac{35 \text{ students} \times 3 \text{ units} \times 17.50 \text{ weeks per semester}}{1 \text{ FTES (or 525 Student Contact Hours)}} = \frac{35 \times 3 \times 17.50}{525} = 3.50 \text{ FTES per class section}$$

This is what is referred to as 100 percent productivity or workload efficiency and it means that a college is maximizing the state revenue for each average section offered.

DO ALL OUR CLASS SECTIONS HAVE 35 STUDENTS?

No. Many factors go into determining the number of students in each class section, including classroom size, the CTA agreement, special circumstances (e.g. courses required for graduation, courses required in a major, courses required in career subject area, frequency of course offering, maximum enrollments permitted by professional accreditation body), etc. The best practice of 100% efficiency is an average of ALL course sections.