

1.3 TRAC activity definitions – Extract from the November 17 v2-2 TRAC Guidance

In TRAC, all costs and income are attributed to three core activities: Teaching, Research and Other. Costs are either attributed directly to the three core activities of T, R, or O, or attributed to a fourth activity, Support (S). All Support costs are then attributed to the three core activities.

Each core activity includes Direct costs that have been directly attributed to that activity, and Support costs (indirect and estates costs).

1.3.1 Teaching

1.3.1.1 Teaching (T) is a core activity.

It includes all costs and activities that provide or support the teaching of undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.

It comprises:

a) The costs of academic staff time directly attributable to teaching. The annual TRAC academic staff time survey includes:

- holding lectures, seminars and tutorials;
- project, workshop and laboratory supervision;
- preparing materials for lectures, tutorials and laboratory classes;
- preparing materials for an agreed new course;
- editing and updating course materials;
- organising and visiting placements, fieldwork;
- supervision / contact time relating to projects and dissertations, and their assessment;
- other student contact time relating to educational matters, including remedial classes;
- preparing and marking examination papers, including resits;
- oral examinations / vivas;
- reading and assessing student dissertations, reading and marking essays and other student work;
- invigilation of examinations including external examining (both at own and other institutions);
- mentee meetings.

b) Outreach where teaching is the underlying activity (i.e. Teaching funded through a Teaching Company Scheme or Knowledge Transfer Partnership). Other directly attributed costs include:

- the full pay costs of staff who work 100% on Teaching;
- pay costs of secretarial and administrative staff who support Teaching;
- non-staff costs directly attributed to Teaching, which includes placements, projects etc.;
- the scholarships and bursaries of taught students.

c) A relevant share of Support costs, incurred both in the academic department and in the institution's central departments are also attributed to Teaching. This includes the costs of the support time of academics (scholarship, administration, and management) and other Support costs.

All teaching costs are further categorised into publicly funded teaching and non-publicly funded teaching.

1.3.1.2 Publicly funded teaching (PFT) activity is generally considered across the sector as a whole to be fundable, at least in part from public funds.

This includes the costs of:

- UK award/credit bearing courses;
- all teaching activities like European Social Fund (ESF), Erasmus and Tempus;
- all levels of teaching – sub-degree, degree, PGT (but not PGR);
- higher education, further education, teacher training, NHS (nursing) etc.;
- all courses fundable by public bodies.

For HEIs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, publicly funded loans and grants administered by the Student Loans Company to meet the cost of tuition fees should be classified as PFT.

1.3.1.3 Non-publicly funded teaching (NPFT) activity is generally considered, across the sector as whole, to be funded wholly from non-public funds.

This includes the costs of:

- short courses;
- non-award or non-credit bearing courses run in the UK for overseas or NPF students;
- non-credit/award-bearing courses run overseas (overseas courses)
- other NPF commercial teaching;
- part of the costs of award-bearing courses in the UK attended by overseas and self-funded students¹ (where the numbers involved are material);
- students studying for equivalent or lower qualifications (ELQs). Note that this is only applicable to institutions in England;
- teaching carried out through trading units / commercial companies.

1.3.2 Research

1.3.2.1 Research (R) is a core activity.

It comprises:

¹Students who are self-funded are those where the institutional costs are not fundable by Funding Council grants, i.e. where the institution is not potentially eligible for grant aid for the students from a public organisation.

- research – refer to the definitions in the Frascati Manual²;
- fieldwork, laboratory, studio, desk/library work;
- management of projects, informal discussions, progress reports etc.;
- recruitment and supervision of research staff;
- attendance at conferences, seminars and society meetings that are directly connected with specific research projects;
- production of research reports, papers, books;
- training and supervision of PGR students including training in research methodology, review of drafts and preparation of thesis, and external examining;
- collaboration with other academic departments or institutions in any of the above;
- outreach where research is the underlying activity (i.e. research carried out through a Teaching Company Scheme or Knowledge Transfer Partnership);

TRAC follows the definition used by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) in the Finance Statistics Return guidance:

- Research is to include research and experimental development. The definition of research, below, is taken from the 2002 Frascati Manual.

‘Research and Experimental Development (R&D) comprise creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications. R&D is a term covering three activities: basic research, applied research and experimental development.’

Research can be a specific project, or blue skies / speculative in nature, but for TRAC, research has an external sponsor or is expected to lead to some research output (or PGR training / supervision). For TRAC, research:

- a) Can include clinical trials. Where clinical trials are considered by the NHS to be research then the time spent on them is allocated to research, otherwise they are Other;
- b) Does not include routine testing (this should be reported as Other);
- c) Includes institutions’ own-funded research. Research work or projects that are solely funded by the institution (including through the Funding Council block grants), and that are not directed by an external sponsor, are still Research activity. They come under the research sponsor category of ‘institution own-funded’ research. However, in the time allocation data, time spent on research (or teaching) that is not considered by the institutions to be necessary for its mission or research strategy should not be recorded;
- d) Does not include scholarship activity; this can form part of the Support activity for Research, but could equally be Support for Teaching.

² Frascati Manual 2002: ISBN 978-92-64-19903-9

1.3.2.2 Research is categorised into eight research sponsor types, summarised below (sub-sections 1.3.2.3 to 1.3.2.6). A research sponsor type is a group of sponsors that are similar in nature. It is not an individual research sponsor organisation.

The word 'sponsor' is used in TRAC to denote the funder – external or internal.

Where a Research project is funded by a consortium of organisations (public and non-public) the costs will need to be attributed proportionally between research sponsor types. Proxies could be used, e.g. attribution pro rata to the direct costs funded by each sponsor.

However, where a research project is only partially funded by a sponsor and the remainder is institution own-funded, all of the academic time is attributed to the research sponsor type represented by the external sponsor through the time allocation process. However, the costs are allocated pro-rata to the external sponsor and institution own-funded categories. Academic time is only attributed to institution own-funded if there is no external sponsor of that project.

1.3.2.3 Institution own-funded – This covers work that is not carried out to the direction of an external sponsor (the work may or may not be on specific research projects).

The work could be funded through Funding Council block grant or other initiatives, or from an institution's general income (e.g. interest, endowments, or surpluses from other activities).

It could include speculative 'blue skies' research undertaken to investigate the potential of ideas before preparing grant or contract bids; or for publication. It must be expected to lead to an external research output (publication, conference presentation, etc.). If this research is done primarily in support of teaching, it is classified as CPD/Scholarship and is allocated to support for teaching.

1.3.2.4 Postgraduate research (PGR) – This covers the training and supervision of PGR students including training in research methodology, review of drafts and preparation of theses, and external examining. The costs include:

- scholarships and bursaries (a direct cost of Research);
- any other direct costs incurred by the institution on behalf of PGR students (e.g. travel and subsistence, consumables, stipends);
- the indirect costs and estates costs associated with the PGRs themselves;
- the time of the supervisor in PGR training and development
- the indirect costs and estates costs associated with this supervision time.

The reallocation of income and costs relating to PGR activity away from the external research sponsor type to the PGR category is not a TRAC requirement, but the current direction of travel for policy development suggests that this could become mandatory, at least for research intensive institutions (defined as being in the top 60 institutions, in terms of volume, funded by the Research Councils).

Noting that this is not a current TRAC requirement, and acknowledging that the burden of undertaking this reallocation needs to be balanced with the utility provided by the data, research intensive institutions are encouraged to report PGR income and costs under the PGR research sponsor type:

a) Where costs can be readily identified and reallocated, all income (except HEFCE, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland (DfE for Northern Ireland) quality-related research funding and SFC's research excellence grants and research postgraduate grant) and costs relating to PGR activity should be recorded under the PGR sponsor type, not the external research grant or contract sponsor type;

b) Where costs can not readily be identified and reallocated (i.e. they are not separately recorded in an institution's statement of comprehensive income and expenditure, or they are an inseparable part of salaries) then the costs of stipends and scholarships / bursaries are reported against the same research sponsor type as the income that is covering them.

If neither of the allocations described above can be done without (in the view of the institution's TRAC Steering Group) significant burden being added to that institution, then, at the least, the institution improves its understanding of the recovery relating to research students.

Institutions should indicate on the Annual TRAC return (see section 4.1) whether this reallocation has been undertaken or not.

1.3.2.5 External research grants and contracts:

- Research Councils, as defined in the HESA Finance Statistics Return guidance.
- OGDs: UK central government bodies / local authorities, health and hospital authorities, as defined in the HESA Finance Statistics Return guidance.
- European Union (EU) government bodies: research grant and contract income from all government bodies operating in the EU, including the European Commission, as defined under Column 8 in Table 5 of the HESA Finance Statistics Return guidance.
- Charities: UK-based charities. (This is irrespective of their classification or recognition in any Research funding method operated by a Funding Council.)
- Industry: all other organisations, including (as defined by the HESA in the Finance Statistics Return guidance):
 - EU-based charities, EU industry and EU other;
 - UK industry, commerce and public corporations;
 - other overseas – non-EU-charities, non-EU-industry and non-EU-other (other than those specifically mentioned above);
 - other sources.

1.3.2.6 Recurrent research income from the Funding Councils – the eighth category. No costs are recorded against this category.

1.3.3 Other

1.3.3.1 Other (income-generating activity) (O) is a core activity. It relates to activities that generate income or could potentially generate income.

It comprises:

- consultancy that is contracted to the institution and carried out during institution time, including advisory work, journal editing and feasibility studies;

- other services rendered, including routine testing and non-research clinical trials (i.e. activities not covered under the definition of Research in the Frascati Manual);
- work carried out through trading/commercial companies that is not teaching or research;
- technology transfer work if remunerated through the institution (e.g. directorships of start-up companies and/or consultancy contracts for the companies) – if it is not remunerated then it should be categorised as Support to Other;
- outreach (where the outreach activity is not teaching or research);

As well as the costs of academic time, costs attributable to Other activities include:

- residences, catering and conferences;
- goods or services sold to students, staff or external customers. These might include printing or reprographics;
- trading activities including non-Teaching and non-Research activities in commercial companies, spin-outs (subsidiaries), retail services such as shops.

Unfunded research activity, which satisfies the definition of Research, as set out in 1.3.2 should not be allocated to Other.

1.3.3.2 Other (Clinical Services) (O(CS)) – a sub-category of Other used by institutions with medical or dental schools.

It includes services provided to the NHS under knock-for-knock arrangements by academic departments of clinical medicine and dentistry (to be reattributed to T, R, O and S).

1.3.3.3 Other (non-commercial activity) – a sub-category of Other used to separate income and associated costs that are allocated to Other, but are not Other income generating activities or other clinical services.

This category should enable the Other (income generating activity) category to be free from items that distort the reporting of that activity. Items that will typically be included in this sub-category include:

- Investment income including gains and losses on investments (that is not allocated to Teaching or Research); and
- New endowments and donations (that are not allocated to Teaching or Research).

1.3.4 Support

1.3.4.1 Support (S) is NOT a core activity. It is carried out in support of the three core activities of T, R and O.

Support time is often categorised into several areas to assist both in the recording of the academic staff time and its subsequent allocation (as part of indirect costs) to T, R and O.

Five areas of Support are described below: Support for Teaching, Support for Research, Support for Other, general management or institutional Support, and scholarship/professional development.

1.3.4.2 Support for Teaching includes:

- timetabling;

- examination boards;
- preparing prospectuses;
- interviewing taught students, admissions and induction;
- committees related to teaching;
- careers advice for taught students;
- schools liaison;
- academic mentoring (outside timetabled tutorials), counselling;
- initial course development (where the future of the course is not certain; preparing materials for an agreed new course is T);
- module reviews (but subsequent updates and editing etc. is T);
- quality assurance (e.g. Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education reviews);
- publicity for teaching facilities and opportunities.

Institutions might also wish to include here scholarship/professional development and other Support (covered below) such as:

- writing books and other publications for teaching purposes;
- advancement of knowledge and skills related to teaching;
- secondment to / academic exchanges with other institutions for teaching activities.

1.3.4.3 Support for Research includes:

- drafting and redrafting proposals for new work and supporting bids to external bodies (where bids involve a significant amount of speculative research, that element can be attributed to institution own-funded Research);
- quality assurance;
- peer review;
- refereeing papers;
- publicity for research facilities and opportunities.

Again this might also include scholarship/professional development and other Support to Research (which are covered below) such as:

- advancement of knowledge and related skills which directly contribute to the academic's research work;
- unpaid work advising government departments or committees;
- unpaid work for professional bodies or agencies in relation to research matters;
- institute and academic department committee work supporting Research;
- blocks of time in other institutions on research exchange schemes.

1.3.4.4 Support for Other includes:

- drafting and re-drafting proposals for new work and supporting bids to external bodies for consultancy and other services rendered (where bids involve a significant amount of speculative research, that element can be attributed to institution own-funded R);
- negotiating contract terms and conditions with external bodies;
- technology transfer work that is not private, nor undertaken commercially by the institution (e.g. supporting patent applications, licence negotiations, formation of start-up companies).

1.3.4.5 General Support includes:

- management and administration not specifically related to Teaching, Research or Other;
- membership of / participation at faculty boards, senate, institution committees etc. (where these relate to Teaching or Research this time could alternatively be recorded as Support for Teaching or Support for Research);
- management duties such as deans, head of admissions, assistant deans;
- staff management; appraisal etc.;
- publicity; representative work on behalf of the institution or academic department;
- careers advice;
- information returns;
- quality assurance contribution to sector e.g. on (unpaid) committees or secondments to panels (where the quality assurance activity relates to teaching or research, then it should be charged to Support for Teaching and Support for Research, respectively);
- secondments, exchanges, all other tasks not attributable to other categories.

1.3.4.6 Professional development (scholarship) covers maintenance and advancement of own personal knowledge and skills (reading literature, attending professional conferences, maintaining professional or clinical skills, acquiring new skills etc.).

Scholarship activity does not relate to supporting 'student scholarships' as defined at 1.3.1.1 (c) above.