

**STUDENT FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (SFTE)
REPORTING
GUIDELINES and PROCEDURES
February 2016**

**COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
FTE REPORTING GUIDELINES**

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I. STATUTORY AUTHORITY, OVERVIEW , AND DEADLINES

Statutory Authority 23-1-105(1). The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE, the Commission) shall prescribe uniform financial reporting policies for counting and classifying Student Full-Time Equivalents (SFTE, FTE) for the institutions and governing boards listed in Section 23-18-102(10)(a), C.R.S., as well as participating private institutions as outlined in Section 23-18-102(9), C.R.S. For the local district colleges organized pursuant to Section 23-81-101, C.R.S., CCHE's FTE policy and subsequent guidelines dated June 2002 remain in effect.

Overview. Established by C.R.S. 23-18-201, the College Opportunity Fund (COF) changed how higher education is funded in Colorado. More change was introduced with the passage of HB-14 1319 (C.R.S. 23-18-301) which introduced a new funding allocation model for the distribution of state funds among state institutions of higher education (IHEs). Based on these two significant shifts in funding allocation, public Colorado institutions of higher education no longer receive direct state funding through General Fund appropriations. Through the funding allocation model and by extension COF, eligible undergraduate students receive a stipend that is submitted on their behalf to the institution of their choice. Since the COF funding method is based entirely on credit hours which must be converted into Student Full-Time Equivalents in order for accurate distribution of funds, the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE, the Department), finds it necessary to establish an accurate and consistent reporting method that complies with CCHE's stated policy goals.

The CCHE policy goals:

1. To achieve equitable utilization of state resources by specifying a uniform way to measure student full-time equivalents.
2. To recognize the needs of individual students and state priorities in the policies for counting and classifying student full-time equivalents (SFTE).
3. To achieve greater simplicity and uniformity in state administrative reporting procedures.
4. To recognize the statutory role and mission of institutions.
5. To meet legislative reporting requirements for appropriation purposes.
6. To provide data for statutorily mandated reporting by the Commission.
7. The Commission and/or the State Auditor's Office will report any eligibility deviations to the governing board of the institution in question.

SFTE reports are due on the following dates:

1. The Fall FTE Census Report is due mid-October (approximately October 15th).
2. The Fall Final / Spring Census FTE Report is due February 15th or the first business day following February 15th.
3. The Final Student FTE Report is due July 15 or the first business day following July 15.
4. COF Billing Reconciliation Reports are due January 31 for the fall semester, May 31 for the spring semester, and September 15 for the summer session.

II. DEFINITIONS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

Student and Course Reporting Definitions

A student full-time equivalent (SFTE) is calculated in 30 student credit hour increments as an undergraduate, at a semester system school and 45 student credit hour increments at a quarter system school. Graduate student full time equivalents are calculated in 24 credit hour increments at a semester system school and 36 credit hour increments at a quarter system school.

Colorado Resident Student. Only resident, undergraduate students are eligible to receive the COF stipend. A student eligible for in-state tuition classification as defined in Sections 23-7-101 through 23-7-109., C.R.S. Section 23-7-103(IV)(k), C.R.S., mandates that, “the establishment of a Colorado domicile shall be the burden of the person seeking to establish domicile. The registering authority of any state institution of higher education shall require the individual seeking to establish domicile to support their claim with clear and convincing evidence of the validity of the claim.” Domicile for tuition purposes is defined by physical presence and intent. Each institution is responsible for having appropriate procedures in place to determine if a student was physically present and intended to claim Colorado as the permanent place of residence at least 12 months prior to the start of the term.

Undergraduate: The COF stipend applies to resident undergraduate students. This is defined as students pursuing certificates, associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees, and post-baccalaureate students, as well as non-degree seeking students enrolled in undergraduate courses. Undergraduate students enrolled at participating private institutions who are classified as a resident student for tuition purposes and who graduated from either a Colorado high school or an approved non-public, home-based education program are eligible to receive the COF stipend, provided they demonstrate financial need through eligibility for the Federal Pell program.

Graduate: State funding for graduate level education is provided through the higher education funding allocation model. Graduate students are defined as students pursuing graduate degrees or students taking graduate-level courses, including:

- Students holding Bachelor’s degrees pursuing a Master’s degrees.
- Students enrolled in the fifth-year of a three plus two Master’s program.
- Students pursuing educational specialist, professional or doctoral degrees.
- Students enrolled in post-doctoral courses.
- Post-baccalaureate students enrolled predominantly in Master’s courses.

Other Tuition Classifications: Because tuition classification is a complex process, subject to policy and statutory revisions, a number of outlier cases exist and should be reported according to the following chart:

Name/Type	Statute	Summary	How to Report
CDHE Approved Reciprocity Agreements	C.R.S. 23 1 112	Allows students participating in this program to be claimed by Colorado institutions for state general fund, up to the maximum number of FTE allocated to the institution by DHE. Colorado has approved reciprocity agreements with New Mexico and Utah in SURDS files.	Report student as in-state
U.S. Armed Forces and Their Dependents	C.R.S. 23 7 103(1)(c)(I) and (II)	Allows U.S. military personnel and dependents to be granted in-state tuition status, prior to having been domiciled in Colorado for twelve continuous months, upon moving to Colorado on a permanent change-of-station basis, for courses that are not taken on military bases. Credits generated in off-base courses may be reported for FTE general fund support, but these credit hours must be separately identified in the End of Year FTE Report.	Report student as in-state
Canadian Military Personnel and Their Dependents	C.R.S. 23-7-106	Provides that any member of the military forces of Canada stationed in Colorado, or the dependent of any such member, shall receive in-state tuition status at any institution of higher education in this state. No member of the Canadian military shall be deemed to be stationed in this state unless he maintains a full-time principal residence in this state. In- state tuition status for Canadian military personnel or their dependents shall terminate at the conclusion of the current quarter or semester upon transfer to any station outside this state.	Report student as out-of-state
Olympic Training Center Athletes	C.R.S. 23-7-105	Allows athletes living in Colorado Springs and training at the Olympic Training Center, or at a facility in Colorado Springs approved by the Olympic governing board to be considered in-state students for the purposes of assessing tuition and generating FTE reimbursable credits at any state-supported institution of higher education.	Report student as in-state
Chinese and Russian students in Graduate Public Policy Programs	C.R.S. 23-7-107	Allows students from The Commonwealth of Independent States (Russia) and the People's Republic of China in graduate public policy programs to be allowed to receive in-state tuition. However, these students may not be counted as resident students for any purpose other than tuition classification.	Report student as out-of-state
WICHE Regional Graduate Program (WRGP)	C.R.S. 23-1-108(10)	Allows postgraduate or professional students participating in this program to be claimed by Colorado institutions as in-state students for the purposes of assessing tuition, enrollment reporting, and budgetary reporting.	Report student as in-state
WICHE Undergraduate Exchange Program (WUE)	C.R.S. 23-1-108(10)	Students participating in the WUE program are assessed 150% of the in-state tuition rate of the Colorado institution. The enrollment in the WICHE undergraduate program is not reportable for state general fund.	Report student as out-of-state

Colorado Educational Exchange Program	C.R.S. 23 3.3-601	Allows students to be reported as in-state students for the purposes of assessing tuition, enrollment reporting, and budgetary reporting. The institution must be approved by DHE to participate in the Colorado Educational Exchange Program. No student may be a recipient or participant for more than one year.	Report student as in-state
Economic Development	C.R.S. 23-7-111	Grants in-state status to employees and employee's children (NOT spouses) if employee moved to Colorado as the result of the employer's moving "all or a portion of its operations to Colorado as a result of receiving an incentive from the Colorado Office of Economic Development or an incentive from a local government economic incentive program. Effective August 8, 2007.	Report student as in-state
Faculty Dependent	C.R.S 23-7-109	Grants in-state tuition to the child of a new faculty member (but NOT to the faculty member or spouse) at "a state-supported institution of higher education." Effective August 8, 2007.	Report student as in-state
Honorably Discharged Veterans	C.R.S. 23-7-103	Beginning with the fall semester of FY 2009-10, this legislation requires that state institutions of higher education charge resident tuition rates to honorably discharged veterans. State institutions of higher education may also extend the resident rate to spouses and dependents of veterans.	Report student as in-state
COF Affidavit (ASSET)	C.R.S. 23-7-110	Beginning in Fall 2013, this code is for identifying students completing a COF Affidavit for the enrollment period. Report student as in-state tuition classification in SURDS files.	Report student as in-state
Veterans Choice Act Benefit Recipient	Veterans Choice Act Section 702	Veterans Choice Act Section 702; beginning in Fall 2015, this federal legislation requires that state institutions of higher education charge resident tuition rates to veterans or their dependents, if applicable, who are receiving benefits under the Post 9/11 GI Bill or Montgomery GI Bill and meet the criteria spelled out in the Veteran's Choice Act.	Report student as in-state

All Other Instruction Not Claimable For State Support

Certain types of instruction are not eligible for state support regardless of an individual student's COF-eligibility. However, certain statutory changes have occurred since Fiscal Year 2006-07, expanding the types of instruction claimable for state support (see numbers 5, 8 and 9). The following types of courses are ineligible:

1. Course enrollments generated by out-of-state (non-resident) students as defined in Section 23-7-101, C.R.S.
2. "Off-campus, extended campus, or continuing education courses not supported by state General Fund" as specified in Section 23-18-102(5)(a)(II)(D)(b), C.R.S., (unless separately approved by the Commission). However, if such courses are part of an eligible private institution's regionally accredited academic program, qualify for Title IV

financial aid support, and are applicable to a degree program, then the courses are eligible for the COF stipend.

3. Non-credit courses.
4. All course sections where enrollment is closed to the general public, the curriculum is customized for an employer or the course is funded by customized job training dollars, which are separately appropriated and outlined in statute, per Sections 23-60-306 and 23-60-307, C.R.S.
5. Basic skills courses as defined in C.R.S. Section 23-1-113 are not claimable for state support unless said courses were administered at Adams State University, Colorado Mesa University, Western Colorado State University (Chaffee and Gunnison counties only) and community colleges governed by the State board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education. Instruction administered at any one of these campuses may receive reimbursement payments from the state for basic skills courses as defined in C.R.S. 23-1-113.
6. All transcribed credits not directly attributed to college instruction (e.g., AP, ACE, IB, and CLEP) at any two-year or four-year institution
7. All enrollments for which students are not charged full tuition (e.g., tuition waivers). This stipulation excludes: children and grandchildren of the displaced Auraria residents who are granted free tuition, in-state Native American students attending Fort Lewis College under statutory role and mission may be counted for SFTE purposes regardless of tuition classification status.
8. Prior to FY 2006-07, courses taken pursuant to the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act (PSEO) (Article 35 of Title 22, C.R.S.) were not eligible. With the passage of SB05-132, PSEO courses are now claimable for state support, however, PSEO Basic Skills classes taken with stipend funding will not count toward the lifetime COF total of 145 credit hours.
9. Prior to FY 2006-07, courses taken pursuant to the High School Fast Track Program (Article 34 of Title 22, C.R.S.) were not claimable. With the passage of SB05-132, Fast Track courses are now claimable for state support, however, Fast Track classes taken with stipend funding will not count toward the lifetime COF total of 145 credit hours.

III. ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATIONS

The FTE Guidelines and Reports are tied to end-of-term reporting. These guidelines follow previously adopted practices developed over several decades between CCHE and IHEs regarding how students who drop, withdraw, or add classes may be reported for SFTE purposes. The following terms detail various reporting procedures:

1. **Census Date:** The census date is the last date of the registration adjustment period. Typically a date within 15 percent of the beginning date of the term, when students have the option to decide whether to drop a class without academic record or add a class without penalty. In most cases, census date refers to a term census date. However, the more precise rule for SFTE reporting is class census date to accommodate courses in which instruction may begin after the term census date. Exceptions to this later rule may be appropriate for classes whose enrollment is not counted until the end of the class term. For the end of year Student FTE Report, census date affects three enrollment scenarios:
2. **Class Drops:** Students formally process out of a class within the first 15 percent of a class term and the student's transcripts do not record enrollment in dropped class. Students who drop classes may not be included in SFTE data. Institutions are not eligible to receive COF stipends for class drops. If an institution has already received stipend payment for a student who has since dropped, the institution must refund the applicable amount to College Assist.
3. **Class Withdrawals:** Students formally process out of a class enrollment after census date and the student receives a "W" or "NC" on the official transcript. Students who withdraw from a class shall be included in SFTE reporting. Institutions can receive COF stipends for students who withdraw from a class.
4. **Class Adds:** Students who add a course before the class census date can be claimed for SFTE enrollment reporting and the COF stipend. A student who adds a class after the class census date is ineligible for SFTE enrollment reporting and the COF stipend.

Records: A record of enrollment transactions occurring after the Census Date must be generated and maintained. This record is the necessary trail showing that the student was enrolled in the course at the time of the Census Date. Class Withdrawal will be recorded on the student permanent record. Open admission institutions—community colleges—may choose to maintain other transaction records of withdrawals in lieu of the student permanent record.

IV. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Relationship between Credit Reported and Academic Activities

To establish a statewide approach for reporting FTE student enrollment, CCHE and IHEs have established criteria for assigning credit hour values to courses, since 1985. Those values are continued as these updated guidelines reflect. This section identifies the typical relationship between base contact hours, credit hours and types of faculty involvement.

Base Contact Hour The faculty Base Contact Hour represents a standard measurement of consumption of faculty resources by students. It consists of the number of scheduled minutes of instructional activity involving direct contact of faculty with students in a given term utilizing a particular method of instruction. The standard measurement for a faculty Base Contact Hour except for the instructional activities listed in Table II is:

Semester System Term: One Base Contact Hour = a minimum of 750 minutes. This translates to a minimum of fifteen 50-minute hours per semester.

Quarter System Term: One Base Contact Hour = a minimum of 500 minutes. This translates to a minimum of ten 50-minute hours per quarter.

TABLE I Contact/Credit Hour Conversion Table		
INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY	DEFINITIONS	MINIMUM BASE CONTACT HRS FOR ONE CREDIT HOUR
Lecture	Formal presentation/communication by faculty.	1.0
Recitation: Discussion/Seminar	Two-way (student and faculty) communication of course materials.	1.0
Laboratory: Academic/Clinical	Instructional activities conducted by faculty requiring student participation, experimentation, observation or practice.	2.0
Laboratory: Vocational/Technical	Instructional activities involving training for employment in a work-like environment with active faculty teaching role.	1.5
Art Studio	Painting, sculpture and other lab-type activities conducted by faculty.	2.0
Field Instruction	Instructional activities conducted by faculty and designed to supplement individual course work.	2.5

Music: Private Instruction	Formal presentation in a one-to-one relationship between student and instructor.	.5
Music: Studio	Band, ensembles, music labs and the like conducted by faculty.	2.5
Physical Education/ Recreation Courses	Physical education and Recreation activities conducted by faculty designed for the development of skill proficiencies.	2.0

**TABLE II
STUDENT OUTCOME BASED TABLE**

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY	DEFINITIONS	CREDIT HOURS
Thesis/Dissertation	<p>A thesis, which may be research or expository, critical or creative work, required for graduation with a masters' degree.</p> <p>A dissertation, an original investigation showing mature scholarship and critical judgment, demonstrating knowledge of research tools and methods, required for graduation at the doctoral degree level.</p> <p>Thesis and dissertation credits should correlate with the scope and level of research or written work.</p>	<p>Institutionally defined but credit hours allowed must be comparable to similar programs at national levels. In no case should credit be assigned that would cause credit of all types to exceed 30 semester (45 quarter) hours per academic year. Institutions must have written institutional policies and must keep records documenting how the number of credit hours awarded was determined.</p>
Study Abroad	<p>Credit for undergraduate experiences in which a Colorado resident student enrolled at a Colorado public college or university takes courses in a foreign country or a semester at sea. To qualify for state SFTE support, the courses must apply to a student's graduation requirements. Study abroad programs include those in which a student is fully integrated in a foreign university system where they take classes from host country faculty and study with host country students or take courses during special terms taught by the home university or college faculty. All participants in study abroad programs remain enrolled at the College institution and all credit earned while abroad is considered earned in residence. Does not include exchange student study.</p>	<p>Institutionally defined but must be comparable with credit hour limits at other institutions nationally. Institutions must have written institutional policies and must keep records documenting programs offering study abroad and how the number of credits hours awarded was determined.</p>

Internships	Credit hours for placement in business and industry environments that offer degree-seeking students professional-level experience and responsibility. To qualify for state support, the internship should be well supervised and carefully structured (i.e., based on learning objectives that are related to the student's academic discipline and established in cooperation with the student, employer, and faculty advisor).	Institutionally defined but shall not exceed the number of hours that may be applied to the degree program. The institution must keep a record documenting how the number of credit hours was determined.
Student Teaching	Student teaching and practica in which college faculty are actively involved and present in the field.	Institutions should determine the relationship between faculty contact hours and credit hours granted for student teaching activities.
Independent Study or Research	Student projects or other required activities with minimal faculty associated direction where a student is formally enrolled during a period of research or independent study instruction in pursuit of a CCHE-approved degree program.	Institutionally defined but shall not exceed the number of hours that may be applied to the degree program. The institution must keep a record documenting how the number of credit hours was determined.
Vestibule Labs	<p>Laboratory instruction in basic skills, which is provided or supervised by faculty, that is designed to improve the academic skills of students with specifically identified deficiencies. The deficiencies may be self-identified or instructor referred.</p> <p>Vestibule lab instruction credit hours are only claimable by community colleges.</p>	Minimum of 1,000 contact minutes in a semester. Vestibule hours require 1.33 (okay per '97 guidelines) contact hours to equal one credit hour.

Appendix B

SFTE Report Review Process

The governing boards and their respective institutions are responsible for the accuracy of the Student FTE enrollments they report for COF stipend support. Therefore, record-keeping and reporting responsibilities must be viewed similarly to financial accounting. Each institution must be prepared to validate reported enrollments with supporting documentation. CCHE recommends that institutions conduct periodic internal reviews of their operations and reporting systems. Compliance with the policy/guidelines is subject to annual audit by the Commission and/or the State Auditor's Office. Eligibility deviations will be reported to the governing board of the institution in question.

The Student FTE policy review objectives are to:

- A. Determine if the institution is in compliance with tuition classification statutes and COF.
- B. Determine if the SFTE data reported by the institution is accurate, reconcilable, and consistent with other enrollment statistics reported by the institution and its governing board including, but not limited to, the COF invoice and reconciliation files submitted to CAN for stipend payments.
- C. Determine validity and reconciliation of fee for service payments made to institutions and/or governing boards by the Commission.
- D. Determine if the institution's SFTE data were computed in accordance with CCHE's "Policy for Reporting Full-time Equivalent Student Enrollment" (i.e., met the criteria for state reporting and are in accordance with the conversion tables -- Table I and Table II in this guidance document).
- E. Determine if credit hours earned by students in courses explicitly restricted from COF or fee for service funding are not reported as eligible for funding.

Institutional Review

During the institutional review, the institution should refer to the following documents for guidance and definition.

- CCHE's Policy for Public Institutional Reporting College Opportunity Fund Student Credit Hour Stipend Enrollment
- Final SFTE Enrollment Report for the specified review period.
- Tuition records related to student refunds and modifications.
- Records, including dates, of all individual class add, drop and withdrawal transactions during the terms being reviewed.
- The institution's COF invoice and reconciliation files submitted to CAN for stipend reimbursement for the review period
- The fee for service contract in place between the institution/governing board and CCHE for the review period and the disbursement requests made under said contract
- Class rosters or equivalents (as of census date with final grade class rosters)
- Student transcripts

- For residency:
 1. original student matriculation records
 2. copies of agreements with other schools for shared enrollments through off-campus state funded and coordinated programs
 3. petitions for resident tuition classification
 4. student files with documentation as required by statute when residency classifications have been made
 5. documentation from other state agencies attesting to student residency classification where appropriate (See guidelines on reviewing residency)
 6. institutional policies related to residency determinations

- List of CCHE approved state-funded off-campus programs and number of Commission approved student FTE by each participating institution (CCHE agenda item).
- List of CCHE approved REAP partnerships and the total dollar amounts for each partnership.
- Any written interpretations to relevant or related policies that CCHE has formally published in the Commission agenda and/or minutes.
- List of exemptions granted by CCHE for the institution (CCHE agenda item).
- CCHE Policy on Service Areas of Colorado Public Institutions of Higher Education (area vocational schools (AVS), community colleges, ASC and MSC).
- List of students and credit hours generated from tuition waivers.
- List of students and credit hours generated from institution- and CCHE-approved lifetime-credit-hour waivers.

Institution Review by the Commission (or Auditor’s Office)

The Commission may at any time choose to conduct a review of compliance with these guidelines at any public or private institution participating in the COF stipend or public institution with a Fee-for-Service contract. The Commission will notify the institution(s) of the timeframe during which it wishes to review compliance in advance of its review.

In conducting its review the Commission may request all or some of the documentation outlined in this Part 4 or Part 5 for the purpose of determining statutory and policy compliance.

Appendix C

SFTE Fact Sheet

What is the FTE report and why is it necessary?

The FTE report is a collection of aggregated data including headcount, credit hours and student full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment for a given fiscal year. This, formalized, standardized data collection process is required by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education's policy section 5, part B (<http://highered.colorado.gov/Publications/Policies/>).

The FTE report provides vital financial information and is used for a variety of budgeting purposes. As a source of fiscal year data, the FTE report is used to:

- Calculate and communicate various statistics including annual State funding per FTE and one-off requests from legislators, legislative staff and the Governor's office;
- Forecast enrollment for budgeting purposes, including students who are potentially eligible for College Opportunity Fund stipends (as required by Legislative Council and Joint Budget Committee); and
- Create the annual November 1st budget request, including the requests for operational funding for public college and universities and tuition spending authority.

What is the difference between the Finance FTE report and the SURDS Enrollment report?

SURDS data is collected by academic term and the Finance FTE data is collected by fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). Due to institutions' varying summer schedules, some institutions' fiscal year data includes a leading summer (e.g. summer 2016, fall 2016, spring 2017) while others' fiscal year data has a trailing summer (e.g. fall 2016, spring 2017, summer 2017). Additionally, some institutions split up their summer data between two fiscal years (e.g. summer 2015, fall 2015, spring 2016, "Maymester" 2016 and summer 2016, fall 2016, spring 2017 and "Maymester" 2017). This variation makes it difficult to use SURDS data to calculate fiscal year FTE, hence the similar reporting to Finance and SURDS.

Additionally, the annual Finance FTE report is due to the Department in late July so the data can be used for the annual Nov. 1 budget requests, which are due to the Governor's Office of State Planning and Budgeting (OSPB) in early August. SURDS summer reporting is not due until early October, which is too late to for the data to be used for the Nov. 1 budget requests.

Finally, since the Finance FTE report is used to forecast student FTE that are potentially eligible for College Opportunity Fund (COF) stipends, the definitions used for the report must align with statute as to who is eligible for COF stipends. Much of the data collected in the report relates to various COF-eligible populations, such a military, concurrent enrollment, and vestibule hours.