

Queen's University
Senate Committee on Academic Procedures
November 2010

POLICY ON THE DEFINITION OF A FULL-TIME STUDENT

Background

Currently, Queen's University considers students in programs in which registration status is based on course registrations rather than term registrations to be "full-time" when they are registered in at least an 80% course load. Students in programs with term registrations are registered full-time unless permission is received to register part-time (e.g., graduate studies, Medicine).

The Canadian government defines a full-time student as one enrolled in a 60% course load for the purposes of reporting T2202A forms and the Ontario government considers 60% for determining eligibility for financial aid. The University also uses the 60% definition for assessing student activity fees for student societies and for eligibility to participate in varsity athletics. The University uses registration in an 80% course load as the definition of a full-time student when reporting headcount enrolment internally, although this does not impact external headcount reporting for funding, as that reporting is based on fiscal full-time equivalents.

Analysis and Discussion

It has been recognized that these multiple definitions of a full-time student add unnecessary complexity to administration and can be confusing for students. Further, the 80% definition of full-time status disadvantages many Queen's students when it comes to eligibility for financial aid.

There are several circumstances in which criteria for eligibility or inclusion coincidentally use the descriptor of "full-time" status, but might otherwise describe eligibility criterion on the basis of percentage of a full-time normal load without reference to full-time or part-time status, eliminating any need to change terms of reference because of a change in the definition of full-time. For example, renewable awards will require a student to be registered in a minimum of 80% of a full normal course load. There is no need to reference registration status as full-time or part-time. Similarly, reference to milestones or performance indicators, such as Dean's Honour List and/or admission categories, may remain unchanged in substance by referring to the percentage or actual course load a student may or must register in with no reference to the registration status as full-time or part-time.

All Faculties and Schools, the Director of the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, the Chief Financial Officer, and the Alma Mater Society were consulted and were unanimous in support of changing the definition of full-time to 60%.

Recommendations

It is proposed that Queen's adopts the definition of full-time status as registration in 60% of a full normal course load in programs in which registration status is derived from course registrations. Registration status is assessed per term.

Summary

The Senate Committee on Academic Procedures considered and approved the following motion at its October 20, 2010 meeting and asks that Senate consider the motion at its November 25, 2010 meeting:

Be it resolved that the definition of a full-time student at Queen's University based on course registration be registration in 60% of a full normal course load, effective May 1, 2011.