



**Higher Education Strategic Planners Association  
(HESPA) consultation on Student : Staff Ratio (SSR)  
methodology**

**Response from the Chartered Association of  
Business Schools**

2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022

1. Please respond below to indicate your view on a reduction of the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) of **staff** with responsibilities for **research**. Due to variations in workload models across the sector, we are interested to receive views on whether this reduction should be 20%, 30% or 40%.

**Chartered ABS proposed response:** No reduction.

**Comments/explanation:**

Our stance on the matter is largely motivated by the fact that no change to the current methodology would be fair to all institutions, and that blanket reductions cannot and will not cover the diversity of practices in the sector.

A further important consideration is the affect that any such reduction might have on the UK research environment at large. Reducing the FTE of staff by any of the amounts proposed will likely have adverse effects on research environments, cultures, and outputs UK-wide as it incentivises institutions to move academic staff away from research-related contracts, compromising the competitiveness of the UK research sector. Our members also expressed that it is important for teaching staff to have the capacity to conduct their own research alongside teaching duties, so that their students may benefit from being at the forefront of research in their chosen field. Any reductions as proposed would harm this important link between research and teaching, to the detriment of the students.

Finally, any change will complicate a system that everyone currently understands, even if it isn't perfect.

2. Please respond below to indicate your view on a reduction of the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) of **students** on professional courses involving substantial time in **workplace** settings. Variations in course lengths and time spent in such settings mean that we are interested in hearing views on whether such a reduction should be 20%, 30% or 40%.

**Chartered ABS proposed response:** No reduction.

**Comments/explanation:**

Similar to the above, no blanket reduction could possibly account for the diversity of practices in the sector. Many of our members also expressed that while students are away, there is a great (and, importantly, varied) burden imposed by workplace learning not only in the form of administration but also academic support and end-point assessments.

As with the calculation of staff, there is no perfect answer and any change to the current interpretation should only be considered if it would be a better and fairer reflection of reality. If this cannot be proven to be the case there is no argument for change.

**3. Other pertinent comments:**

It is important to bear in mind the impact on UK institutions of any changes to UK sector-wide SSR calculation in international league tables. Our members have raised the concern that it is not clear whether the Review Group has given this issue due consideration. Such league tables are extremely competitive and hugely important to the reputation of institutions; it is crucial that the Review

Group keep this in mind as any change has the potential to harm the reputation of institutions and weaken the competitiveness of the UK higher education sector as a whole.