



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

Queen Mary University of London

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Silver

Typically, the experience students have at Queen Mary University of London and the outcomes it leads to are very high quality.

Student experience: Bronze

The student academic experience is typically high quality, with some very high quality features.

Very high quality features include:

- effective teaching, assessment and feedback to students, and strategically applied across the university
- very high quality support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is promoted
- a supportive learning environment, where students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support
- effective student engagement is embedded and there is a collaborative approach with students to make improvements.

Student outcomes: Silver

Student outcomes are typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- effectively supporting students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- very high rates of continuation and completion, supported by peer led team learning and interactive teaching methods
- very high successful rates of progression, supported by including graduate attributes in all programmes
- articulating the educational gains intended for students, why these are relevant to them, and effectively supporting students to achieve these gains.

About the assessment

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is a national scheme run by the Office for Students (OfS) that aims to encourage universities and colleges (providers) to improve and deliver excellent teaching, learning and student outcomes.

The TEF does this by assessing and rating providers for excellence above the high quality baseline that we expect from all providers. It covers undergraduate courses.

Throughout this document, we use the terms 'outstanding' and 'very high quality', which are defined in terms of the TEF 2023 assessment as follows:

- 'outstanding': the quality of the student experience or outcomes are among the very best in the sector, for the mix of students and courses taught by a provider
- 'very high quality': the quality of the student experience or outcomes are materially above the relevant high quality minimum requirements, for the mix of students and courses taught by a provider.

The assessment was carried out in 2022-23 by the TEF Panel, a panel of academics and students who are experts in learning and teaching. This document sets out a summary of the panel's findings and judgements.

The panel reviewed the following evidence:

- numerical indicators produced by the OfS, using national datasets
- a submission made by the provider, setting out its own evidence
- a submission made by the provider's students, setting out students' views.

The panel applied its expert judgement to:

- identify particular features of the student experience and student outcomes that are excellent (above the high quality baseline requirements)
- decide a rating for the 'student experience' and for 'student outcomes'
- decide an overall rating for the provider.

Throughout the assessment the panel took account of the context of the provider and judged how well it delivers teaching, learning and student outcomes for its mix of students and courses.

In making its decisions the panel took account of the OfS general duties and the public sector equalities duty.

Summary of panel assessment

Information about this provider

Queen Mary University of London sets out its ethos as combining research excellence with a strong commitment to social justice, mobility, and inclusion. Located in Tower Hamlets in London, which is one of the most deprived areas in the country, many of its students come from challenging backgrounds. It states that its vision is to open doors of opportunity and its education strategy comprises four strategic pillars of: excellence in education; student engagement; student employability; and the learning environment.

The provider's most popular subject area is law and social sciences which is studied by 18 per cent of students. Humanities and languages, and natural and mathematical sciences are both taken by 17 per cent of students. These are followed by engineering, technology and computing (13 per cent), business and management (12 per cent).

The university has a very high proportion of students who are typically underrepresented in universities, with 92 per cent of its home students from state schools, 75 per cent are ethnic minority students, and 49 per cent who are the first in their families to enter higher education. 35 per cent are from the most disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds.

The assessment considered information about the provider's undergraduate courses and students on those courses.

Full details about the provider's student demographics used in the TEF 2023 assessment are available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-used-in-tef-2023/.

More information about this provider can be found on the OfS Register at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/.

Student experience: Bronze

Throughout this section, we refer to indicators. These indicators are based on students' responses to the National Student Survey. The indicators are 'benchmarked' to show how well the provider performs for its particular mix of students and courses.

The panel judged the student experience is typically high quality, with some very high quality elements. Across the aspect of student experience the panel found:

- most features are very high quality
- there is not enough evidence to judge two features very high quality.

The panel found strong evidence that the very high quality features apply to most of the provider's groups of students. This includes those from underrepresented groups, which make up a high proportion of the provider's students. The panel considered the context of the high numbers of students from underrepresented groups to be relevant throughout its assessment.

The panel applied the criteria and found the 'best fit' rating to be 'Bronze'. This is because most features are very high quality for most groups of students and courses, consistent with a rating of 'Bronze'. The panel did not think that 'Silver' would be the best fit because the evidence shows that most rather than all of the student experience features are very high quality, and these features do not apply to all students.

The panel's assessment of the student outcomes features is set out below.

Teaching, assessment, and feedback, and course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch

The panel considered these features are very high quality for most groups of students.

The indicators showed for full-time students:

- there is compelling evidence that 'teaching on my course' is very high quality, but with notable variation in subject areas including some below very high quality
- there is compelling evidence 'assessment and feedback' is below very high quality.

However, the provider and student submissions showed evidence of very high quality, including:

- teaching, assessment and feedback approaches tailored to its students including introducing the going for gold framework and active curriculum for excellence
- strategically applying these approaches across the university. However, their impact on all student groups and subjects is yet to be seen
- acknowledging the assessment and feedback indicators and the approach being taken to address this
- an increased focus on feedback and assessment for learning, which has led to the creation and implementation of technology enhanced, solution oriented toolkits

- student feedback recognises the work being done to improve teaching quality, but highlights concerns and dissatisfaction with assessment and feedback, and the need for faster resolution of academic misconduct cases.

The panel noted that while the indicators did not provide initial evidence of very high quality, the submissions show effective and tailored teaching practices and the approaches taken to assessment and feedback. It considered the effectiveness of the approach is yet to be seen for all student groups and subjects, as suggested by the indicator evidence.

Considering the evidence in the round, the panel found the provider has embedded very high quality teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are effective in supporting its students' learning, progression, and attainment. Therefore the panel judged this is a very high quality feature for most groups of students.

Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement

The panel found there is not enough evidence to judge this feature as very high quality.

The provider and student submissions show evidence, including:

- the Research Excellence Framework result from 2021 showing that 92 per cent of the provider's research was rated as internationally excellent or world leading
- the provider states research excellence feeds into education and programmes are grounded in a Russell Group research environment. However, evidence is limited to a small number of courses
- the Queen Mary Academy and its fellows embed research on teaching methods and academic practice across the provider.

The panel considered that the provider submission describes some approaches to how research and innovation contribute to the academic experience. However, there is limited evidence of how these approaches are tailored to students, the range of students supported, or their effectiveness. The panel noted limited information on how research feeds into students' education and how widely, or how employer and stakeholder engagement impacts this.

Looking at the evidence in the round, the panel concluded there is insufficient evidence that the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience for its students.

Staff professional development and academic practice

The panel considered this to be a very high quality feature.

Evidence of very high quality in the provider submission includes:

- the Queen Mary Academy and its fellows play a central role in teaching, learning, and assessment
- developing and sharing the Blender staff resource, widely used by staff for blended learning

- a shift towards feedback and assessment for learning, with students involved in co creating toolkits
- customised pathways for staff to gain professional qualifications and recognition for teaching
- a teaching and scholarship pathway within the academic careers framework.

Overall, the panel concluded there is evidence there is very high quality support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is promoted.

Learning environment and academic support

The panel considered this is a very high quality feature.

The indicator showed that for full-time students there is probable evidence that 'academic support' is below very high quality.

In spite of this, the provider and student submissions include evidence of a very high quality feature, including:

- an awareness of diverse student needs, undertaking a review of this area and making improvements in 2018-2020
- high quality academic support through an advisor system and advisor hub website. However, there is some indication that the advisor system management might vary at department level
- improvements in academic support indicators for years 3 and 4 to become very high quality
- implementing learner engagement analytics across the university
- student feedback shows discontentment with academic support and support services.

The panel considered the academic support indicators and the provider and student submissions and found there is enough evidence of a very high quality feature across subjects and students, including those from underrepresented groups.

Looking at all the evidence, the panel concluded that the provider fosters a supportive learning environment, and its students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support.

Learning resources

The panel found there is insufficient evidence to rate this as a very high quality feature.

The indicator shows for full-time students there is compelling evidence that 'learning resources' are below very high quality.

The panel considered further evidence in the provider submission including:

- a large scale project co led with students to improve campus facilities
- offering 24 hour access to libraries
- developing an app to show available study spaces.

The panel noted that the provider submission describes some approaches to how learning resources contribute to the academic experience. However, there is limited evidence of how these are tailored to its students, the range of students supported, or their effectiveness.

Considering the feature in the round, the panel concluded there is not sufficient evidence that physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning.

Student engagement in improvement

The panel considered this to be a very high quality feature.

The indicator shows for full-time students there is initial evidence that 'student voice' is very high quality. However, there is variation among subjects, many of which are below very high quality.

The provider and student submissions include evidence of high quality, including:

- student voice plays a central role in the university's going for gold framework
- student engagement is embedded and there is a collaborative approach with students to make improvements
- students are involved with decision making at all levels across the university
- encouraging student representation and co creation, although it was not clear how widespread this is
- the student submission acknowledges collaborative working with the students' union, along with positive feedback on staff's genuine interest in listening to students
- students also noted some areas where student voice is less embedded or representatives' involvement is felt to be tokenistic, although no examples was given.

The panel considered the student voice indicator suggests very high quality for some students and some subjects. It noted that the provider submission describes some approaches but there is limited evidence of how these approaches are tailored to its students, and how widely they are supported across different groups and subjects.

Considering the evidence in the round, the panel found that the provider effectively engages with its students, leading to improvements to the experiences and outcomes of its students. This is consistent with a very high quality feature.

Student outcomes: Silver

Throughout this section, we refer to indicators. The indicators for continuation, completion and progression rates are based on national data about higher education students. The indicators are 'benchmarked' to show how well the provider performs for its particular mix of students and courses.

The panel found there is evidence of typically very high quality across student outcomes. Across the aspect the panel found:

- nearly all features are very high quality
- there was not enough evidence to judge one feature very high quality.

Considering the evidence holistically, along with the provider context, the panel considered there is evidence of very high quality for all courses and subjects and across all groups of students. This includes those from underrepresented groups, which make up a high proportion of the provider's students.

The panel applied the criteria and considered that the rating with the best fit is 'Silver'. This is because most features are very high quality for all groups of students and courses, consistent with a rating of 'Silver'.

The panel's assessment of the student outcomes features is set out below.

Approaches to supporting student success

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The provider and student submissions showed evidence of very high quality, including:

- partnerships with local schools and the community
- interventions to retain students based on their individual characteristics
- focusing on co creating the curriculum with students
- using learner engagement analytics as to underpin academic support
- using the higher education achievement record to recognise students for their development.

The panel considered a suggestion from the provider that these approaches have led to an improvement in continuation rates, by 5 per cent. It also noted that there is no difference in continuation between students from higher and lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Considering the evidence in the round, the panel concluded the provider effectively supports its students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies. This is consistent with a very high quality feature.

Continuation and completion rates

The panel considered this feature is very high quality.

The indicators showed for full-time students there is initial evidence that 'continuation' and 'completion' are very high quality.

There is further evidence of very high quality in the provider submission, which includes:

- introducing peer led team learning to improve student continuation, engagement, and completion through interactive teaching methods
- the approach involves small group active learning and collaboratively created module content, leading to a nearly 20 per cent improvement in academic performance
- successfully eliminating the gap in continuation rates for ethnic minority students
- the performance gap for BTEC students has decreased by 20 per cent.

The panel noted the very high quality features are seen across much of the student mix and across most subjects. However, there are two subjects below very high quality for continuation.

Considering the evidence in the round, the panel found there are very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses, consistent with a very high quality feature.

Progression rates

The panel considered this is a very high quality feature.

The indicator showed for full-time students there is compelling evidence that 'progression' is very high quality.

There was some additional evidence in the provider submission, including:

- embedding graduate attributes into all undergraduate programmes
- giving students opportunities to build employability skills
- the university's entrepreneurship hub empowers social entrepreneurs and investors from diverse backgrounds
- using three main methods to improve progression: QTaster, QConsult, and QMentoring.

Looking at all the evidence, the panel concluded that there are very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses, consistent with a very high quality feature.

Intended educational gains; approaches to supporting educational gains; and evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

The panel considered that intended educational gains and approaches to supporting educational gains are very high quality features. However, there was insufficient evidence to judge evaluation and demonstration of educational gains is very high quality.

The panel considered that the approach to educational gains is clearly articulated and relevant to students. It is rooted in the belief that students' backgrounds should not limit their success, and considers the diverse student population.

The panel noted evidence in the provider submission including:

- the provider emphasises four pillars of educational gains aligned with its going for gold framework
- there is clear differentiation between educational gains and programme learning outcomes
- co curricular and extra curricular activities are used to enhance personal development and work readiness skills
- the higher education achievement record is used to document and recognise students' educational gains, helping to develop their confidence. There is evidence this approach is having an impact
- the provider's strategic KPIs include relevant goals related to educational gains.

The panel noted that except for its stated aims of widening access, it did not find examples of excellence for the educational gains indicators offered within the submission. Additionally, an independent appraisal of the approach is not yet in place.

Considering the evidence in the round, the panel found that the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, why these are relevant to its students, and effectively supports its students to achieve these gains. These are consistent with very high quality features.

However, the panel found there is insufficient evidence to judge the provider evaluates the gains made by its students.

Overall: Silver

Based on the guidance and the expert judgement of panel members, the panel found the 'best fit' rating to be 'Silver'.

The panel considered student experience features to be 'Bronze'; and student outcomes features to be 'Silver', and gave equal weight to both. It carefully examined the evidence across all features, student groups, subjects, and courses.

In judging 'Silver' rather than 'Bronze' to be the best fit, the panel noted nearly all the student outcomes features to be very high quality for all groups of students. Additionally, across the aspects, the panel found evidence to show approaches are embedded across the provider, and that the provider tailors its approaches to most of its students.

The panel considered all the evidence across all the features and judged it to show there is typically very high quality for all groups of students and courses, consistent with a rating of 'Silver'.