



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

The University of Bath

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Gold

Typically, the experience students have at the University of Bath and the outcomes it leads to are outstanding.

Student experience: Gold

The student academic experience is typically outstanding.

Outstanding quality features include:

- course content and delivery inspire the provider's students to actively engage in and commit to their learning, and it stretches students to develop knowledge and skills to their fullest potential
- the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice, and employer engagement to contribute to an outstanding academic experience
- there is outstanding support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is embedded across the provider
- a supportive learning environment, and access to a wide range of outstanding quality academic support
- physical and virtual learning resources are tailored and used effectively to support outstanding teaching and learning
- the provider embeds engagement with its students, leading to continuous improvement to their experiences and outcomes.

There is also one very high quality feature:

- very high quality teaching, feedback, and assessment practices that are effective in supporting students' learning, progression and attainment.

Student outcomes: Gold

Student outcomes are typically outstanding.

Outstanding quality features include:

- approaches that are highly effective in ensuring its students succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- outstanding rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses
- outstanding rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses
- the provider clearly articulates the range of educational gains it intends its students to achieve
- the provider's approaches to supporting its students to achieve these gains are evidence-based, highly effective and tailored to its students
- the provider evaluates the gains made by its students, and demonstrates its students are succeeding in achieving the intended 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

The University of Bath ('the provider') sets out its mission for 'driving excellence in education' including how it develops internationally leading courses. It aims to 'develop exceptional students holistically, so they leave with the knowledge, skillset, and experience to think, work and contribute as outstanding global citizens and future leaders'.

The provider also aims to 'foster an outstanding and inclusive community' and give wider opportunities surrounding the student experience. It values working in partnership with business, public and voluntary sectors and the professions.

The provider has around 13,560 full-time undergraduate students (based on student numbers in 2020-21), with relatively small growth in full-time numbers since 2017-18. The majority of undergraduates study at first degree level (68 per cent) with the rest mainly studying at an undergraduate level with postgraduate components.

A third of students study engineering or business and management with the remaining students spread broadly across a number of other subject areas. A significant number of students are under 21 years at age of entry, most are white and 56 per cent are male.

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: Gold

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 considered all the evidence relating to the student experience aspect as a whole and determined the rating to be 'Gold'.

The panel weighed up this evidence to identify very high quality and outstanding quality features, noting that the indicators contributed no more than half of the evidence of excellence.

It found evidence that:

- the majority of features were outstanding, and one of the features was very high quality
- no features were 'of concern'
- the provider embeds effective approaches and tailors its approaches to its students
- there is typically outstanding quality across all groups of students and for all courses and subjects.

The panel judged there to be compelling evidence that the very high quality and outstanding features apply to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

The panel considered the best fit rating overall to be 'Gold', because most features are outstanding for all groups of students and courses.

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

Teaching, assessment, and feedback

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

The 'teaching on my course' indicator provides evidence of outstanding quality for full-time students, and this applies to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups. The panel interpreted this to be compelling initial evidence of an outstanding quality feature.

The 'assessment and feedback' indicator shows strong evidence of performance below very high quality for full-time students, and that this applies to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

The provider submission supplemented the indicator evidence including:

- a project ('curriculum transformation') which sets out to review and redesign the curriculum
- nearly two-thirds of students are undertaking a placement (56 per cent) or other study abroad experience (six per cent)
- the education experience includes research-led teaching, a focus on experiential learning, problem-solving and projects that address real-world issues, as well as placement or study opportunities giving hands-on experience

- half of the provider's degree programmes are accredited by a professional, statutory or regulatory body
- the provider acknowledges that the overall indicator for assessment and feedback suggests performance that is below very high quality, but indicates that it has sought to reduce over-assessment, removing barriers to engagement with assessment as a learning process.

The student submission notes the below very high quality indicator performance and explains that students are working with the provider to address this. While the panel noted the interventions, it did not consider there is sufficient evidence of an outstanding quality feature.

Considering all the evidence, the panel concluded that the provider has embedded very high quality teaching, feedback, and assessment practices that are effective in supporting its students' learning, progression and attainment.

Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

As discussed above, the indicator for 'teaching on my course' provides initial evidence of outstanding quality.

The submissions include evidence that led the panel to conclude that course content and delivery inspire the provider's students to actively engage in and commit to their learning, and that it stretches students to develop knowledge and skills to their fullest potential.

Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

Evidence in the provider submission includes:

- 92 per cent of research was classified as being 'world leading' or 'internationally excellent'. The provider states this provides context to a quality research environment and culture
- students are exposed to the boundaries of knowledge as part of their education
- there is considerable employer engagement, and course content and design are aligned to the needs of employers
- students take part in ambitious projects to identify real-world solutions
- students are encouraged to take part in national and international competitions and award schemes in collaboration with industry
- working in partnership with business, public and voluntary sectors and the professions is core to the educational provision.

Overall the panel concluded that the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice, and employer engagement to contribute to an outstanding academic experience for its students.

Staff professional development and academic practice

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

Evidence in the provider submission includes:

- all teaching-only academic staff are recognised as lecturers, senior lecturers, or professors, and 47.8 per cent have an Advance Higher Education Fellowship
- a focus on development for postgraduate students who teach
- development of technical staff and female technical leaders through involvement in different programmes
- all staff have access to an online tool with over 2,000 resources including top tips, key guides and self-assessments, and an education guide designed to demonstrate the range and distinctiveness of educational practice at Bath
- running an annual learning and teaching day event, allowing staff to share best practice – student involvement is a core part of the event
- embedding electronic data interchange across all levels of the institution.

The evidence from the provider submission indicates that there is outstanding support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is embedded across the provider.

Learning environment and academic support

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The indicator for 'academic support' shows strong evidence of outstanding quality for full-time students. There are a few variations for different students and courses, but the panel judged that, overall, there is initial evidence of outstanding academic support.

The evidence includes:

- personalised support for international students, providing pre-arrival and regular post-arrival events, as well as a specialised student immigration service providing free specialist advice and guidance
- a skills centre and virtual digital hub offering embedded, flexible, and personalised skills development and enrichment for all students
- creation of a new student living department
- 'living in a new culture' online events offered pre-arrival and in person during welcome week
- personalised skills support for students with learning differences, disabilities, and other underrepresented groups.

The student submission describes how students generally give positive feedback about academic support, particularly the personal tutoring system, which is noted as an area of excellence. The submission raises some issues with mitigating circumstances but welcomes the provider's commitment to making all progression-related processes equitable and accessible.

Overall, the panel consider that there is evidence that the provider ensures a supportive learning environment, and its students have access to a wide and readily available range of outstanding quality academic support tailored to their needs.

Learning resources

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The indicator for 'learning resources' shows evidence of outstanding quality for full-time students, though there is also evidence of very high quality. The data did not provide certainty and the panel therefore concluded that it provides initial evidence of either very high or outstanding quality.

The provider submission sets out its approach to learning resources including:

- specialised facilities which give all students a state-of-the-art practical, laboratory and workshop experience
- off-campus learning and social spaces for students adjacent to a significant private housing area in Bath
- significant investment in IT and audio-visual provision, including the creation of additional virtual PC facilities so that students can access course-specific software remotely
- new build for the School of Management with a student entrepreneurship lab and an employability hub for industry partners to help prepare students for the workplace.

The student submission outlines that, following the coronavirus pandemic and cost of living pressures, student behaviour has changed about where they study and they are increasingly likely to use university spaces to stay warm. This has created some challenges but the submission notes that the provider has responded by creating additional study spaces during exam periods as well as more study space across city facilities and in accommodation blocks, with a long-term strategy underway.

In conclusion, the panel considered that physical and virtual learning resources are tailored and used effectively to support outstanding teaching and learning.

Student engagement in improvement

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The indicator for 'student voice' provides evidence of outstanding quality, but there is also evidence of very high quality. The data did not provide certainty and the panel therefore concluded that it provides initial evidence of either very high or outstanding quality.

The provider submission sets out its approach to student voice including:

- creation of assessment and feedback champions to address any indicators that show evidence of below very high quality
- student digital skills co-creators who work in partnership to develop resources to support student study
- student involvement is a requirement in the annual Teaching Development Fund bids.

The student submission outlines several areas of 'student voice' – for example, the Students' Union creates an annual 'Top Ten' issues which are addressed in partnership with the university, supported by the executive. The student submission outlines some issues with inconsistency between approaches across subject areas, as well as the effectiveness of responses to feedback. The provider submission addresses this in several ways, including investment in new senior leadership dedicated to student voice.

Overall, the panel judged that the provider embeds engagement with its students, leading to continuous improvement to the experiences and outcomes of its students.

Student outcomes: Gold

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 considered all the evidence relating to the student outcomes aspect as a whole and determined the student outcomes aspect rating to be 'Gold'.

The panel found:

- all of the features to be outstanding quality
- no areas of concern
- evidence across the aspect that the provider embeds effective approaches and tailors its approaches to its students
- evidence of typically outstanding quality across the aspect as a whole.

The panel judged there to be compelling evidence that the outstanding quality features apply to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

The panel considered the best fit rating to be 'Gold' because all features are outstanding for all groups of students and courses.

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

Approaches to supporting student success

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The provider submission describes university-wide interventions it has put in place which support students from retention and completion through to progression. The provider highlights strong indicators across all three student outcomes measures.

The provider submission describes an established and effective approach to supporting the success of its students, including:

- a career service that promotes many work-based internships to all students and the student union provides several volunteer opportunities alongside student leadership, representation, and trainer roles

- most students take a placement or year abroad opportunity, and there is significant support to achieve this – including financial support for those from underrepresented groups
- support of student entrepreneurship
- half of the provider's programmes are accredited by a professional, statutory and regulatory body.
- there is significant support available in relation to academic skills.

Overall, the panel considered that there is sufficient evidence that the provider deploys and tailors approaches that are highly effective in making sure its students succeed in and progress beyond their studies.

Continuation and completion rates

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

Both the indicators for 'continuation' and 'completion' show initial evidence of outstanding quality for full-time students.

The provider submission describes systematic interventions put in place to support continuation and completion. The panel considered that the TEF data for completion, alongside the provider's in-depth analysis of degree outcomes, shows that its targets for closing degree outcome gaps for black, Asian and minority ethnic students and disabled students have been met. This, alongside the evidence to show that students are inspired to engage in their studies, indicates that there are outstanding rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses.

Progression rates

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The indicator for 'progression' provides initial evidence of outstanding quality for full-time students.

The provider submission outlines its approach to progression including:

- graduates developing cutting-edge knowledge, skills, and experience to think, work, and contribute as global citizens
- students engaging in a mandatory final year project, that helps them to develop a critical perspective, a problem-solving mindset and transferable skills, which all support their employability
- all subjects offering a placement (sometimes called an internship) or study year abroad option with nearly two-thirds of students accessing these opportunities and with support given to underrepresented groups.

The student submission highlights that students work hard for their degrees, and when they leave university, most will enter high quality jobs or graduate schemes or continue into further studies.

Overall, the panel concluded that there is sufficient evidence that there are outstanding rates of successful progression for the provider's students and the provider goes above and beyond to support students to achieve success after graduation.

Intended educational gains

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The provider clearly articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve. Its courses are designed to be intellectually bold and academically stimulating with a strong emphasis on preparing students for leadership career opportunities.

There is a strong emphasis on students gaining the high-level skills needed to be able to apply advanced knowledge, leading to prestigious employment opportunities. The agenda addresses key challenges faced by people, organisations, and societies around the world.

This definition is framed in the context of the high quality and high levels of ambitions of the provider's students, and it has been co-created with them. The student submission highlights the relevance of this framing of educational gains to their future ambitions to 'make a difference'.

Overall, the panel concluded that the provider clearly articulates the range of educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are highly relevant to its students and their future ambitions.

Approaches to supporting educational gains

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The provider submission outlines several areas of support for students to achieve intended educational gains, including:

- course design and structure are focused on a real-world context to the subject and its practice, with elements of problem-solving. Key skills that employers value are embedded in the provider's courses and are accessible to all students
- the placement or study year abroad activities have been well documented to support subject practice, skills development, and future employability

Taking the evidence into consideration, the panel concluded that the provider's approaches to supporting its students to achieve educational gains are evidence-based, highly effective and tailored to its students and their different starting points.

Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The provider submission outlines how it evaluates educational gains through analysis of key performance indicators, National Student Survey scores, entry tariffs, graduate outcomes, and non-continuation to form a holistic monitoring of educational gains. They are evaluated through formal governance structures and, where interventions need to be made, they are actioned quickly and effectively.

Overall, the panel concluded that there is sufficient evidence that the provider evaluates the gains made by its students, and demonstrates its students are succeeding in achieving the intended gains.

Overall: Gold

Applying the guidance and the panel members' expert judgement, the panel considered the overall 'best fit' rating to be 'Gold'. The panel noted that when the two aspect ratings are the same, the same rating should be given to the overall rating. The panel considered the student experience aspect rating to be 'Gold' and the student outcomes aspect to be 'Gold'.

In reaching this decision, the panel considered there to be compelling evidence that the outstanding and very high quality features apply to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.