

## The University of Chichester Student Submission for TEF 2023

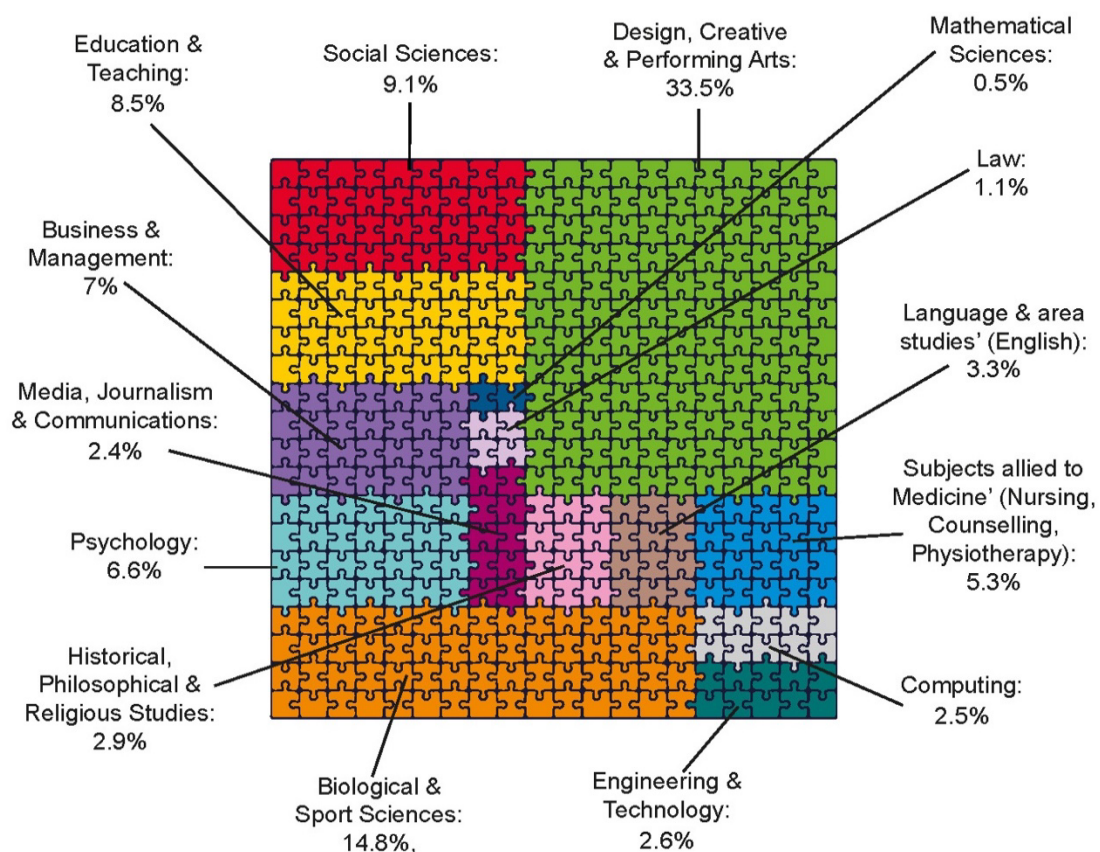
This Student Submission for the University of Chichester has been co-ordinated

with

primary responsibility for Academic Representation across the student body. The SU is a small and specialist union

The SU does not employ external consultants or use external surveys, rather it relies on its own internal communications including surveys and polls and has access to data collected by the University. The SU believes both its relationship, and that of our students, with the University is unparalleled; all students and University staff are part of our joint community, where there is a sense of pride and belonging. The experience and outcomes of every student matter, and students are known as individuals not just a number or name on a spreadsheet.

Figure 1.1 shows the range of courses delivered across the University campuses covered in this submission. The courses are markedly different in their nature and style of learning (classroom vs practical) and many have non-typical outcomes and/or employment opportunities.



**Figure 1.1:** 2021/22 Undergraduate Subject Split, including distribution of students (at common Aggregation Hierarchy level 1 (CAH01))

The demographics of the student body is a key consideration in the context of experience and outcomes. From the University's HESA 21/22 submission, there were 4082 undergraduate students. 64% of students identify as female and 36% as male

. 47.5% (undergraduates, who answered

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the question) of our students are the first in their family to attend University and 25% (full time UK domiciled undergraduates) of students have a family income less than £25K.

Students are attending or have attended University at a time either during or as we continue to emerge from the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, there is a cost-of-living crisis, the war continues in the Ukraine, and against a backdrop of significant events such as the murders of George Floyd and Sarah Everard which caused national concern/distress and impacted lives and education of the student body. A significant proportion of the students (84% of the 1503 that engaged with our social media post) are actively looking for or are in part-time employment, or seeking hardship support to ensure they can afford to live and continue their studies.

The SUP and SUVP as the elected full-time officers are the primary student representatives between the student body and the University at a senior level.

The SUP and SUVP are members of key senior university committees and meetings, including the University Board of Governors (SUP).

The SU and all members of the University VCG have an 'open-door' approach to each other, allowing for a quick and effective escalation route for any urgent/significant matters. The SU is assigned a 'Link Governor' from the University Board of Governors with whom meet a few times a year (outside of formal meetings). The SUP also has regular 1-2-1 meetings in an informal setting to listen to feedback.

The SU and University relationship is formally set out in a Relationship Agreement (RA). This not only sets out the relationship between the SU and the University to ensure compliance with the Education Act and both the SU and University memorandum and articles, but is also realistic and reflects the working relationship, thus ensuring students continue to be fully represented. Section 1.2.2 of the RA acknowledges the SU as the 'recognised representative channel between students and the University of Chichester and any other external bodies'. The SU and University believe firmly in open and honest dialogue and genuine working relationships, recognising that collaborative working is by far the best way to ensure outstanding experiences and outcomes for our students. The University welcomes and responds positively to the SU as a 'critical friend' and is always willing to listen, discuss, consider and by mutual agreement make changes or compromise.

All students sign up to the Commitment Charter which is reviewed annually

. The Commitment Charter reflects the sense of belonging to the University of Chichester community which is a 'close knit, strong and moral community that is constantly striving for excellence in all that we do'. There are six core themes which each set out a clear statement of expectations on both the University and the students. The Commitment Charter is intrinsic to the way the University operates and the student experience.

Responses to the NSS question (Table 1.1) '*The student's union (association or guild) represents students' academic interests*' demonstrate student support for the SU as their representative body. For all years covered by this TEF Student Submission, the SU have exceeded both the sector average and OfS benchmarks for positive response to this question.

**Table 1.1** - NSS Results from 2017 to 2022 for the question '*the student's union (association or guild) represents students' academic interests*'.

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
<b>University of Chichester</b>	60.97	60.37	59.37	59	60.39	65.63
<b>Sector</b>	52.55	53.28	46.67	55.66	56.47	56.79
<b>OfS Benchmark</b>	51.56	53.16	56.5	55.87	57.49	57.55

To support this submission, in addition to all the regular meetings that take place between the SU and the University, multiple evidence sources have been used:

**Academic Board (and sub-committee) discussion and minutes** – Academic Board

ensuring the student voice is heard at this level.

**Programme Board feedback and minutes** – Programme Boards are responsible for the overall control and management of Programmes. The terms of reference for Programme Boards were reviewed in 2021/22, ensuring standardisation and importantly, the ability for enhanced monitoring and measuring of student feedback. Programme Board meetings take place twice a year.

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Feedback is shared and discussed at Programme Board meetings, and actions/outcomes are subsequently fed back to the students.

Minutes of all

Programme Boards are reviewed

**Student Forum discussion and minutes** – The Student Forum meets three times a year,

The Student Forum exists to further the aims of the University's strategic plan and facilitate discussion on any matters impacting the student experience. Items for discussion can be raised by any student.

**Surveys and polls conducted by the SU** – To supplement existing data, the SU undertook a specific TEF student feedback survey.

Responses to surveys conducted help direct conversations and determine areas for focus; they are often targeted at specific student groups or have a specific theme (for example welcome week and careers fair feedback). Surveys are typically conducted through our website, Microsoft forms and social media platforms with a clear statement of how responses will be used where the responses are more than a simple Yes/No style.

**Face to face meetings** – The SU values face to face conversations. For some students this is their preferred communication and can influence meeting agendas and best practice.

In a typical year, the SU engages with student volunteers and staff,

of whom are keen to share their friends' and their own experiences. This is in addition to the regular footfall through our venues and those participating in SU sports clubs and societies,

In addition to data shared routinely shared with the SU under the Data Sharing Agreement, the University openly shares other data, either as part of meetings where the SU are representing students or where a specific data request has been made.

The SU have actively participated in the TEF submission including the joint University/SU TEF working group. The group has focused on understanding the requirements of the TEF and contextualising this to the University of Chichester. Throughout, the University shared all its data including the TEF indicators, subsequent analysis and relevant meeting minutes, case studies, and survey results. Throughout the process,

the University has shared regular drafts of its submission with the SU and invited feedback.

The SU consciously decided to prepare and submit the Student Submission on behalf of the student body of the University of Chichester. This decision was made with the knowledge of limitations the SU would face in undertaking the work required to prepare the submission but felt it was important that the student voice should be heard. The SU has maintained its independence in preparing this written submission and can confirm that there has been no pressure or influence from the University at any time. So as not to introduce any questions around independence, the SU did not share its submission with the University until a final draft was prepared.

The COVID-19 pandemic had significant impact upon teaching and the student experience. Irrespective of year of study, the lives of students were disrupted and resulted in a different university experience to that expected/hoped for. Students starting University during or post the height of the pandemic had their formative years impacted, increasing levels of support and wider life skills education needed. This was illustrated in our TEF survey - students identified making friends and developing social skills as significant benefits of attending university. At all times, the University focus was on wellbeing within the immediate and local community, whilst achieving the best outcomes for students, through adaptation of approach to academic delivery and student/university life, enabling continuation of study and further enhancing the supportive environment.

Positive feedback referenced delivery and support from staff in person and online; smaller class sizes, moving theory sessions on-line to free up space for practical sessions; technology improvements (including remote access to specialist networks/servers for courses within Creative Industries, such as e-sports) and enhanced learning including the further development of Moodle Minimum Standards and increased range of e-books/journals. The personal service from the librarians where books were posted to individuals, and the support provided by the wellbeing and campus services/accommodation teams all contributed to the continuation of study and student experience during this time. Teething issues with on-line delivery were addressed promptly with up-skilling, hardware, and software support. **Together**, the student body, University and SU successfully navigated this uncharted territory, culminating in an outstanding student experience,

Students can, and do provide feedback on teaching, assessment and the learning environment in many ways, including directly to academic staff/department/Academic Advisor, through module feedback forms, external examiners, Programme Boards, the NSS or directly to the SU. As expected, there is always a wide range of feedback across all years and courses. Where areas for improvement are identified, these are worked through and acted upon, improving the student experience, with or without the influence of the SU. Even the small changes can make a huge

*“Scripts were sometimes sent out the night before lessons; this was addressed by discussion with the lecturer and resulted in scripts being issued with a week’s notice”.* NSS feedback throughout the timeframe of the TEF clearly indicates that students believe that staff make their subject areas interesting (higher than the OfS benchmark/sector average every year) and that courses have challenged students to achieve their best work (higher than the OfS benchmark/sector average every year).

Feedback informed that not all lecturers have the same teaching style, and it is acknowledged that not all students learn in the same way – what works for one student, may not always work for another. When asked to describe teaching in 'one word' students said: *"Fast paced, Brilliant, Very clear, Sporadic, Helpful, Constructive, Interactive, Variety"*. 74% of students went on to say that course content and delivery is highly or extremely engaging and 68% indicated that they always felt supported in their studies, additionally 22% do most of the time. Academics understand the importance of varied learning styles, taking feedback onboard and have an innovative approach to learning outside the classroom which benefits the student experience and leads into longer-term student outcomes. In the Outdoor & Adventure Education Course teaching is often taken outside of the classroom, allowing for theory to be put into practice and technical/practical skills developed. The Alpine Residential, is the perfect example of this, students visit the French Alps to learn first-hand about avalanche risks, survival and performance in extreme environments while developing advanced pedagogical skills in a unique setting. This is similar to that seen within the Conservatoire which provides multiple performance opportunities for students, including the Sleepy Lagoon Orchestra helping to refine performance skills and develop classroom-based learning. The Orchestra performs across the country including Goodwood Festival of Speed and at the Duchess of Richmond's Birthday dinner. These are just two examples where students' employment prospects are strengthened.

*'We're using industry standard software and have access to resources some universities could only dream of. These are all embedded into our curriculum, so very innovative'.*

*'I believe this course is incredibly innovative. Not only teaching acting students how to act but giving us an insight into all of the aspects of filming including crew work. The film combat module (not to be confused with street fighting) is what makes the course stand out. No other university or drama course gets this kind of hands-on training. That also goes for the voice over module'.*

Innovation, professional practice and/or employer experience make a significant contribution to the student experience. There are students studying on one of the 30 programmes with PSRB (Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body) accreditation/endorsement, on a QTS (Qualified Teacher Status) course and a significant number have practical or other industry-based placement opportunities.

Students predominantly feel that the feedback received for assessments and in lessons is constructive and of value. This has been reflected in the NSS since 2018, where assessment and feedback exceeds the OfS benchmark in three out of four years, only slightly under in 2022 (71.43 vs 71.51), higher than the sector average (bar 2020 and 2018). Within our TEF Survey it is noted that staff deliver feedback in a variety of ways, including video feedback within the Conservatoire and Business School. As with teaching, not all methods suit everyone, and it is recognised that on occasions feedback is not received in line with expectations (predominantly linked to Associate Lecturers). That said, most students believe that feedback is *"informative and helpful"*. Following

Programme Board meetings and NSS feedback, the Institute of Sport introduced a standardised marking matrix where staff aim to deliver seven points of feedback under key headings, this is under continual development. The Law department produce a 'You said, we did' document following feedback given from Students Reps at Programme Board meetings (in 23/24 this will be requested from all departments), highlighting the continuous improvements made to the student experience (including feedback and assessment), and ensuring accountability. The SU were already aware and proactively working with the University on most of the negative feedback raised through Programme Boards, NSS, and TEF Survey. There continue to be challenges on the relatively new Engineering course; the course has low student numbers and therefore the views of every student significantly impact the overall perception of the course, as highlighted in NSS 2022 feedback. Where, on other courses, adverse feedback has been received, there is a lack of clear theme either local to the course/department or wider University, and the feedback often relates to individuals and personal circumstance.

The University has always maintained a rolling plan for changes to the physical and learning environment; COVID expedited some of these and added new requirements and priorities. Examples include the increase in technology enhanced learning, improvements to Moodle, move to paperless module handbooks, introduction of the use of pronouns and preferred name on the student record system (ChiView), extended use of Single Sign On across systems, new IT skills centre and creative suites, relocation of the Careers centre, extended library services including e-books, Student Support pop up centres and digital presence, redevelopment of the Conservatoire, upgrading of the Sports Dome and Astro, refurbishment of spaces and redesigning room layouts to name but a few. In 2019 the University introduced the SAM (Student Attendance and Monitoring) system, supported by the SU, with a view to allowing early interventions to support students effectively. The SAM system was initially monitored by Academic Advisors and is now extended to include academic department support teams and the Student Support and Wellbeing's Student Engagement and Retention Advisor therefore offering an earlier cohesive intervention approach where necessary, helping to achieve the best outcomes for students.

The University has an extensive Staff Development Programme, ensuring that staff have the appropriate skills to undertake their roles and contribute effectively to both learning and supporting students effectively. Unconscious Bias training was made compulsory for all staff and White Privilege training was introduced into the Staff Development Programme. other training sessions such as the Academic Advisor Briefing, Sexual Assault and Transgender Awareness .

The University and the SU are committed to ensuring that students succeed in and progress beyond their undergraduate studies, leaving Chichester ready for future endeavours be that work or further study. This learning process begins during induction week and continues past graduation, through support offered by the Careers and Employability Service in the form of mock interviews, vacancies and opportunities, events, advice and guidance and employer profiles. When asked, 49% (of the 167 who completed our survey), indicated that they felt '*prepared*' or '*extremely prepared*' for a career after graduation with an additional 34% indicating that they are '*somewhat prepared*'. Students went on to say that this was due to either support they had received from careers (17%), the course delivery and expertise of the academic staff (34%), the importance of placements (17%), and 21%

suggested their university experience has helped them develop real world life skills, which is reinforced by the NSS 2022 feedback. Throughout the feedback there was a clear theme between a blended approach to learning and the importance of career focused learning,

*“The modules focusing on core skills for the profession and placements”* have best prepared them for life after Chichester. 11% of students responded ‘negatively’, the majority of whom answered “N/A” or that they were unable to answer the question due to where they were in their studies, for example first year students accounted for 15% and 21% acknowledged they are a mature student who came to university further their education.

Changes to the academic year structure were approved by Academic Board in 2018 and took effect from 19/20. Due to the pandemic, it was not possible to effectively measure the success of the changes during the first year of implementation and therefore a broadly similar timetable was rolled forward for 20/21. Following feedback, the academic year structure was revised, reducing the number of exam weeks, and following detailed work with the SUVP (21/22) embedded two institution-wide employability weeks (to include wellbeing and skills development, and wider themes to break down barriers to student employability) into the academic year structure for 22/23. As with any change, particularly of this nature, it does not suit all students. The SU and University intend to re-evaluate at the end of 22/23 (noting that the 23/24 structure is, necessarily, already published) once feedback on the new structure, including the employability weeks, can be measured and evaluated.

Events such as ‘Speed Networking’, Part-Time and Full Time Job Fairs that have jointly been run by the University and the SU will continue to run, following on from their success in previous years.

The SU work closely with several University departments to offer voluntary/extra-curricular opportunities for individuals/groups to enhance their skill sets with course specific opportunities.

The vast majority do,

students gain events management skills and help deliver a visual experience for those in attendance by live streaming the annual SU Sports and Societies Awards.

Without the positive involvement of departments (such as Creative Industries, the Conservatoire, Institute of Sport, Nursing and Allied Health), opportunities such as these would not be possible, The SU believe that these experiences and opportunities are of paramount importance to the student and fundamentally are a key driving factor to delivering successes.

*“The course is incredible but the societies take it for me. Being able to go to so many societies last year, was so rewarding and I was able to make so many lifelong friends. This year I can't go to as many as the work load has increased but I am still able to go to my favourite society*



*This helps me focus on my work better and I keep fit.*

The help that the University offers through access to facilities, technicians and specialist equipment helps students annually who participate in extracurricular activities, the added value gained through understanding teamwork and social engagements, and in addition committee members,

learn leadership, financial, communication and organisational skills that they can relate to their studies and future employment.

The progression rate for students not in receipt of a bursary was 66.4% relative to 68.1% of students in receipt of a bursary (i.e. from a household income of less than £25k).

Of those whose Parents/Guardians did not have HE Qualifications (thus assumed First in Family to attend university) 66.1% progressed, which is slightly lower than those whose Parents/Guardians did have an HE Qualification where progression was 68.7%.

The TEF Survey indicated that (49%) students (that completed the survey) had considered dropping out of university (primarily due to the financial pressures or the impact of COVID-19); however, all have continued their studies. These students stayed for several reasons; the University's commitments in the Commitment Charter has ensured many continued.

*"I find it very difficult to write academically, , and I lost all confidence in myself to be able to teach.*

*"Yes many times (due to mental health), and because I realised this is what is keeping me going and this is what I love. And my friends and course leader helped me through".*

Chichester students show resilience, are determined to complete their degree programmes, and take the appropriate steps to move forward in their chosen professions. 70% of students that responded to our TEF Survey indicated they had an expectation for where they wanted to be within six months of graduating: 51% wish to be in their chosen career, 16% wish to continue their studies and 3% are keen to travel before going into work/further studies. Of the remaining 30%

18% of them expected that they would be working whilst deciding on their future direction, "I'll move back in with my parents and go back to working my part-time job (but now full-time) and just chill out and enjoy life for a while (BA History Students), or would be looking to take short-term employment to supplement their interest or long-term desired direction.

The University believes that students should be challenged rather than limited by what is possible - both the University and SU have the 'advancement of education' in their objects and embedded in their respective organisations and processes. Educational Gain is not new but is something the TEF working group have actively discussed. Discussions have focused on clarity around understanding of educational gain for students and development and improvement on the measurement thereof, with a view to enhancing improvement across the institution.

Feedback below is a perfect example of how the University support to students facilitates outstanding educational gains: ‘

*I felt like the University gave me another chance to prove my worth. I felt the grades I got did not come close to what I was capable of and being chosen to do the course, even as I had much lower grades than all my peers I felt valued as a person rather than a statistic.”*

As outlined above, one size will not fit all, this is acknowledged and acted upon at Chichester, through adaptive teaching styles and learning opportunities,

. Teaching is enhanced through the added value the Professional Services teams offer: Careers and Employability, Student Support, the Academic and IT Skills teams’ sessions on the Adobe Creative Cloud and Office 365, and the support given by the Royal Literary Fellows – all of which helps students grow as individuals. When asked in our TEF Survey "What do you believe the most important thing you've gained from university?", the five most common words were: **confidence** (x28), **knowledge** (x19), **skills** (x19), **friends** (x17), **independence** (x16).

The SU has learnt from preparing this TEF Student Submission; already identifying areas where collection of feedback and training can be enhanced to ensure consistency University-wide, therefore helping to maintain the journey of continuous improvement and advance the education of the student body. The SU is not saying every bit of feedback is positive; however, the SU know and continues to see the University listen and value student feedback and is genuinely ‘Open for Change’.

The elected officers fully support the University's statement that it is deserving of an overall Gold Award due to the combination of Very High Quality and Outstanding characteristics. Not every student will agree with this statement, and some will believe that more should be done, but this is the same at any educational institution. The University actively encourage open conversation and through constructive dialogue changes are and will continue to be made, and decisions influenced. The strength of the relationship in place and the active engagement of the SU within the University community will ensure consistency for years to come. The University of Chichester cares about its students and provides an outstanding education, advances knowledge and develops individuals that will benefit the world.