



# **Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023**

## **Summary TEF 2023 panel statement**

**The University of Westminster**

# Summary of outcomes

## Overall: Silver

Typically, the experience students have at The University of Westminster and the outcomes it leads to are very high quality.

### Student experience: Silver

The student academic experience is typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- use of research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience for its students
- high quality support for staff professional development and promotion of excellent academic practice
- a supportive learning environment, where students have access to a wide range of high quality academic support
- physical and virtual learning resources which are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning.

### Student outcomes: Silver

The student academic experience is typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- effective support for students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses
- very high rates of successful progression for students and courses
- articulation of educational gains it intends students to achieve
- effective approaches to, and support for, its students' intended educational gains
- evaluation of the gains made by its students.

# 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 Westminster is ‘a place where discoveries are made, barriers are broken, diversity is celebrated, and everyone is welcome.’

Its strategy is designed to ensure continued growth in performance on four key objectives: education, research and knowledge exchange, employability and global engagement.

In the academic year 2020-21, the provider had 14,830 full-time undergraduate students, 350 part-time undergraduate students and 150 undergraduate apprenticeship students.

Over the four year TEF assessment period, nearly 28 per cent of full-time students study Business and Management, which is the most popular subject among full-time students. For part-time students, the most popular subject is Building and Planning (nearly 75 per cent).

Almost 18 per cent of full-time students are mature students (over 21 at entry) and almost half of the students are from a minority ethnic background, with over 25 per cent Asian.

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 <https://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/](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/).

## **Student experience: Silver**

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 found the student experience is typically high quality for the provider's mix of students and courses. Across the student experience aspect, the panel found:

- four very high quality features
- three features where there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate very high quality

The panel weighed up evidence in the provider and student submissions and the indicators, and found that the four very high quality features apply to all of the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

The panel considered the best fit rating to be 'Silver'. This is because most features are very high quality 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 there to be insufficient evidence of a very high quality feature.

For full-time students, the indicators provided evidence of not very high quality 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback, although the data did not provide certainty.

For part-time students, the indicators provided evidence of not very high quality 'teaching on my course', with less certainty in the data, and not very high quality 'assessment and feedback' with more certainty.

The provider submission includes evidence of teaching and learning strategies which are in place, such as:

- a strategy to develop an authentic learning and teaching experience, using module evaluation surveys with a high level of student participation
- interventions led by staff and paid students to ensure the curriculum is inclusive and relevant
- data on external examiner reports relating to the standard of marking, assessment design and alignment with learning outcomes.

Although the panel recognised some evidence of high quality teaching, feedback, and assessment practices, considering the evidence in the round it concluded that there was limited and insufficient evidence of highly effective and tailored support for its students' learning, progression, and attainment.

## **Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch**

The panel considered there to be insufficient evidence of a very high quality feature.

The provider and student submissions include evidence of content and delivery and student engagement, such as:

- a student survey reporting that 'the course has provided me with opportunities to apply what I have learnt'
- a termly check-in survey, showing that 85 per cent of students feel confident in engaging with their learning and teaching
- students praising their teaching staff for being helpful and going 'above and beyond' to support students
- courses described by students as intellectually and creatively engaging. Students have positive views about additional learning opportunities
- details of how students who have not completed their A-levels are given support to adapt to an academic style of writing
- students finding feedback from teachers valuable.

While the provider notes positive student engagement, with details of the various learning opportunities available to students, when considering the available evidence holistically, the panel judged that there was limited evidence of how course content and delivery effectively encourage the provider's students to engage in their learning, and stretch students to develop their knowledge and skills. Therefore, the panel judged there to be insufficient evidence to demonstrate a very high quality feature.

## **Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement**

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

The provider submission includes evidence of:

- 78 per cent of courses having work based and placement learning
- partnerships with employers to offer employability throughout its curriculum with specific examples given of how working with employers challenges students and how this increases the likelihood of attaining highly skilled employment or further study
- a high number of examiner reports with positives views on the assessment processes
- employer engagement, including virtual internships that were used during the pandemic, live employer briefs and the positive impact on student employability
- partnerships that students can engage in, including the Imperial War Museum and TATE Britain

- facilitated learning with industry experts and employers which positively impacts students. Module evaluation results show that high numbers of students find their modules intellectually stimulating and challenged them to do their best work
- the development of the Westminster Enterprise Network providing compelling evidence of rapid growth of this employability initiative in the four reporting years (2017 – 2020)
- the provider's recently approved Framework for Research and Education, and long running Students as Co-Creator Projects, which directly impact the quality of teaching.

Considering all the evidence in the round, the panel concluded this to be a very high quality feature, and 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.

The provider submission includes evidence of:

- highly qualified staff, who have been awarded a number of national and international awards
- advanced workshops being embedded into the staff programme
- a staff secondment scheme which facilitates the sharing of good practice and innovations
- staff being given one-to-one workshops and training to improve their digital skills and investment in the team that delivers these workshops
- data to show the increase in staff uptake and the impact of one-to-ones on student assessment feedback.

Weighing up the evidence in the round, the panel concluded that support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is promoted across the provider. The panel considered this to be compelling evidence of very high quality for this feature.

### **Learning environment and academic support**

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

The panel considered the 'academic support' indicator for full-time students to provide strong evidence of not very high quality. For part-time students, the panel considered the 'academic support' indicator to provide evidence of not very high quality, with less certainty in the data. .

The provider submission includes evidence of:

- academic support and wellbeing being delivered together with a team specifically supporting disengaged students

- a strong understanding of student demographic, who come disproportionately from disadvantaged backgrounds, with compelling evidence of the needs of these groups and a commitment to meet these needs
- a number of initiatives to foster very high quality academic support, including student projects to work in collaboration with its student body to enhance the curriculum.

The student submission provided evidence from a termly check in survey, in which 70 per cent of students said that personal tutors are the most important support to students. A high number of students use the personal tutors as a first point of contact for support. The survey results also suggest that the most important support was academic, employability and financial support.

The panel considered the academic support indicators for both full-time and part-time students to provide insufficient initial evidence of very high quality. However, the submissions provided evidence of tailored support given to the provider's mix of students, including those from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Overall, the panel placed less weight on the indicators and concluded that the evidence in the submissions demonstrated a very high quality feature. The panel therefore considered that the provider fosters a supportive learning environment, and its students have access to readily available range of very high quality academic support.

## **Learning resources**

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

The panel found the 'learning resources' indicator for full-time students to provide compelling evidence of very high quality. For part-time students, the panel found the 'learning resources' indicator to provide evidence of very high quality, although with less certainty in the data.

The provider submission includes evidence of:

- on-campus technology, used by a high number of students
- survey data showing that students rate the online learning environments and online support positively
- data to show many examples of resources available to students and their impact, including data from external surveys and the investment that has gone into these resources
- very high quality investment in digital learning resources
- a well-embedded use of technology-enhanced learning, for example, 41 per cent of students use Adobe Creative Cloud software application in their studies, which is significantly more than the number enrolled on 'creative' programmes
- growing eBook investment, increasing by 45 per cent from 2019 to 2023, as well as investment in physical resources.

The student submission provides additional data on students' positive views about the library facilities and study spaces, workshop studios and the amount of resources available to them.



The panel examined the evidence in the provider and student submissions, alongside the indicator evidence, and concluded overall that the provider uses physical and virtual learning resources to support very high quality teaching and learning.

## **Student engagement in improvement**

The panel considered there to be limited and insufficient evidence of a very high quality feature.

The 'student voice' indicator for full-time students provides evidence of not very high quality with low statistical certainty. For part-time students, the 'student voice' indicator provides evidence of very high quality but with low statistical certainty.

The provider submission provides evidence of capturing and responding to the student voice including:

- a strong partnership with the students' union and elected officers
- student module evaluation showing that 75 per cent of students agreed that they contributed and engaged with the module. Examples are given of the work that it has done with the students' union to improve services for students.

The student submission also provides evidence, such as:

- how the students' union is funded to target engagement and trains more than 700 course representatives which meet with staff 4-5 times a year
- how elected student union officers sit in on key meetings to escalate any issues raised, and how paid school representatives gather feedback across the provider.

The panel considered that the indicators for 'student voice' did not provide sufficient evidence to suggest that this is a very high quality feature due to the uncertainty in the data.

Considering the evidence in the submission, the panel noted and commended the work that the provider has done with the students' union. However, looking at the feature holistically, the panel considered there to be limited and insufficient evidence of very high quality relating to effective engagement with students leading to an improvement of the experiences and outcomes of its students.

## **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 considered all of features relating to student outcomes to be very high quality, with some outstanding features. The panel judged that there was evidence of typically very high quality student outcomes across the whole aspect.

There was compelling evidence in the provider and student submissions, and the indicators, that the very high quality and outstanding features apply to most the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- six features are very high quality
- none of the features are clearly below the level of 'very high quality' or of concern.

The panel considered that the rating with the best fit is 'Silver', because most features are very high quality for most 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 found this to be a very high quality feature.

The provider submission includes evidence of:

- peer mentors to induct students to the online learning portal and a webpage for students to navigate everything they need – 85 per cent of students agreed that peer mentors fully answered questions and concerns
- a shared foundation programme to support students in developing the skills needed in higher education and to enable them to continue and complete their courses. There is data to support the effectiveness of this programme compared with students who did not do the programme
- financial support packages for students, which research suggests has contributed to a significant likelihood of continuation compared to students who are from low-income homes.

The student submission includes data from the students' union survey showing that 32 per cent of the participants used the employability support, 42 per cent rated it as 'important' and 34 per cent wanting to see more support. The submission acknowledges how valuable this support is at getting students to achieve post study and identifies that students' knowledge of the services increase as they progress through their studies.

The panel considered all of the evidence and concluded the provider effectively supports its students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies.

### **Continuation and Completion rates**

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

The 'continuation' and 'completion' indicators for full-time students provide compelling evidence of very high quality.

For part-time students, the 'continuation' and 'completion' indicators provide compelling evidence of not very high quality.

The panel noted that the indicators provide evidence of very high quality, especially for underrepresented groups of which the provider has a high proportion.

The provider submission notes that 'continuation' and 'completion' remained strong during lockdown, which is attributed to certain interventions that were put in place to support students.

The submission also notes that the awarding gap between minority ethnic groups and white students has narrowed, and that strategies have been put in place to maintain completion and continuation data levels following on from an internal audit in 2020.

Considering the evidence, the panel concluded that the provider has very high rates of continuation and completion for its students and courses.

## **Progression rates**

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

The 'progression' indicator for full-time students provides evidence of not very high quality, with low statistical certainty. There is no data available for part-time students.

The panel considered the following evidence from the provider and student submissions, including details of:

- a mentor programme to match students to a large network of industry professionals in order to enhance their employability. High numbers of students that responded said they felt more confident in their skills
- how enterprise and employability activities are embedded into its courses, and that this has increased self-employment amongst graduates. Provider data shows that the proportion of their graduates who are self-employed, developing a portfolio or running a business is higher than the sector average
- how, in a focus group, students rated the employability awards, networks and CV workshops very highly (although the number of participants is unknown)
- how all students can pick up work-based placements and study timetables allow for part time work. Students are supported to translate these experiences into a CV.

Despite the low indicator score for full-time students, the panel placed more weight on the evidence in the submissions and therefore found that this feature is of very high quality.

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

## **Intended educational gains**

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

The provider articulates the educational gains most relevant to its students, explaining that their strategy is to 'provide grounded, holistic education so that people from every background can realise their true potential.'

The provider recognises the resources, strengths and capabilities that their student body brings, articulating disciplinary expertise, employability and social responsibility as graduate attributes.

The panel considered this summary, together with references to wider educational gains made by students throughout the provider submission and concluded that the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students.

### **Approaches to supporting educational gains; Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains**

The panel found these two features to be a very high quality.

The provider submission includes evidence of:

- the creation of a Business Engagement Directorate with responsibility for enhancing graduate employability outcomes
- research which highlights the need for students to develop confidence to achieve their study goals
- teaching initiatives which support educational gains, including the introduction of foundation provision, embedding employability and entrepreneurship and the use of authentic and transformational learning
- evaluation methods used for educational gains, such as student surveys, the use of dashboards, focus groups and interviews.

The student submission makes reference to learning to think critically and being equipped with transferable skills, although the panel notes that this statement is by the author of the submission only. There were a number of positive comments relating to educational gain in the student submission, including reference to guest speakers, specialist lecturers, interdisciplinary collaboration, and work-based learning and placements.

The panel concluded there to be sufficient evidence that the provider effectively supports its students to achieve educational gains and evaluates the gains made by its students. The panel therefore considered both these features to be very high quality.

### **Overall: Silver**

Applying the guidance and the panel members' expert judgement, the panel considered the overall 'best fit' rating to be 'Silver'. The panel considered the student experience aspect rating to be 'Silver' and the student outcomes aspect rating to be 'Silver'.

The panel considered all the evidence across all features and across all the provider's student groups, subjects and courses to come to a 'best fit' decision regarding the overall rating for the provider.

In reaching this decision, the panel considered that there was compelling evidence of very high quality features, that apply to most of the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups. The panel noted that the rating is based on very high quality for most students, noting that the indicators suggest that part-time students may not be getting a very high quality experience.

The panel awarded a 'Silver' rating for both aspects, signifying typically very high quality student experience and student outcomes, and therefore the panel have awarded an overall rating of 'Silver'.