

Royal
Agricultural
University



Teaching
Excellence
Framework

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1. Provider Context

The very first agricultural college in the English-speaking world, we have been developing leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators at the Royal Agricultural University (RAU) ever since 1845. Conceived at a time of burgeoning industrialisation and great famine in Ireland, our founders recognised that the transformation of agriculture in the United Kingdom (UK) – needed to increase food production – could only be achieved through education and the application of science and innovation.

Our mission today bears testament to the foresight of our founders, as we aim to equip a new generation of graduates to meet the most pressing challenges that face us in the world now, such as climate change, food security, sustainable land use, biodiversity loss, and heritage management. The Covid pandemic lockdown, the withdrawal from the European Union (Brexit), growing public unease about climate change, and the weaponisation of food supplies as an instrument of war against Ukraine, have all highlighted, in their own way, the importance of what we do at the RAU to prepare the leaders of the future to find innovative and entrepreneurial solutions to the global challenges we all face.

Taking our cue from the Agriculture Act (2020), which presages the biggest single shift in UK Government policy for half a century, we are passionate in our commitment to our vision to be the UK's global university for sustainable farming and land management, enabling communities across

Agriculture Act 2020

From 2021, there is a seven-year transition period to adapt to the new system, which will reward farmers and land managers for mitigating the effects of climate change by contributing to better air and water quality, thriving wildlife, soil health, and measures to reduce flooding.

the world to thrive in harmony with nature. Our Professoriate are contributory authors to key policy, such as the *Government Food Strategy* (2022), as well as leading collaborators in unlocking innovation in agriculture through the UK Agriculture Partnership, launched at the RAU in January 2022 by the Secretary of State for the

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Agricultural Universities Council UK, Centre for Effective Innovation in Agriculture, the Farmer-Led Innovation Network (embracing 4,500 farmers UK-wide), and the National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise.

Through our role in franchising and validating degrees from our network of partner further education (FE) colleges, and our leadership within Landex (a subscription organisation with 36-member colleges and three other universities in the land-based sector), we also support land-based colleges in improving learning, teaching, and assessment at FHEQ (Frameworks of Higher Education Qualifications) Levels 4 and 5 and have a major role in shaping and influencing the wider agricultural landscape. We contributed to the Local Skills Plan at various levels through the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) network and the Federation of Gloucestershire Colleges and Universities.

We are also the preferred provider to deliver flagship leadership courses for the agricultural sector, through the Worshipful Company of Farmers and the Institute of Agricultural Management and *one of only five 'highly trusted' UK universities operating in China* (as determined by the Chinese Ministry of Education). We are also the only UK small specialist institution to have been chosen to establish a Joint Institute (of Advanced Agri-Technology with Qingdao Agricultural University in 2019) in China. In 2020-21 we were selected by the Uzbekistan.



Ministry of Agriculture to co-found the new International Agriculture University in Tashkent (launched in September 2022) and establish a centre of excellence for sustainability in central Asia. These accomplishments could not have been achieved without the confidence of these sponsors in the student experience and learning resources (including online) that we provide.

Significant changes were made to the RAU Executive Team and wider Senior Leadership Team at the end of Year 3 of the TEF period under consideration, bringing new leadership and change management experience and renewing our commitment to all key aspects relating to the student experience and student outcomes. *We offer a community experience where the student is everyone's priority* and is treated as an individual. Teaching-led, research-informed, and enterprise-inclined, we are a University of Advanced Scholarship that celebrates scholarship in all its forms of teaching, discovery, application, and integration

(Boyer, 1990) and we are recognised as a solution-provider for Government, commercial, and voluntary bodies for sustainable agriculture, food security, land management, and rural living. As a science-based and practice-centred 'university without walls', more than half of our research was adjudged 'world-leading and international in quality' in the Research Excellence Framework 2021 and, as such, we are the leading specialist agricultural university for research in England.

Likewise, the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) highlighted our strengths in enterprise and we were ranked 2nd out of the nine small specialist institutions in the STEM subject cluster. Indeed, our Farm491 – a featured case study of high impact in the Guild HE Report 'Building the Jigsaw' (2022) – is the UK's leading agri-tech business incubator. Launched in 2018, it has directly supported more than 200 start-ups (including those of our students and graduates) in agri-tech and agri-food, helping them to create 120 new jobs within its member companies, and raised £33m in funding to support their shift from innovation to commercialisation.

Last year, working with – and supported by (£100k+) – Gloucestershire County Council, Cotswold District Council, GFirst Local Economic Partnership, and the Department for International Trade, we developed a new and exciting £100m project – the Innovation Village @ RAU – which will benefit all our students. Aimed at supporting industry, food producers, farmers, and landowners in developing new innovative practices while protecting land health and building resilience in rural communities, our Innovation Village (launched in January 2023) will comprise a research and innovation centre, live/work residential units, business start-up and support spaces, as well as student, business, and conference hospitality facilities. A rural *Innovation Village* of this nature - centred on agriculture, food and land management will be a first for the UK.

Our *Innovation Village @ RAU* will be developed alongside a new Land Laboratory Teaching Centre – an integrated state-of-the-art facility that will support student training in climate-smart resilient agriculture and land management – which we will building over the next two years following our successful bid for £5.8m in last year's Office for Students (OfS) capital funding competition.



We would like to confirm that all academics, key professional services' colleagues, and the RAU Students' Union (RAUSU) were fully consulted from the outset regarding this TEF provider submission, with many staff contributing via email, or through one of the internal staff consultation workshops, and the RAUSU holding student consultations to produce the TEF student submission.

1.1 Student Profile

The RAU is the smallest public university in the UK, with a diverse community of approximately 1,200 students, comprising an average number of 732 undergraduate students for the four-year period under consideration. As might be expected, most students come from rural areas across the UK but our student body is also geographically diverse with students from more than 40 countries around the world.

Since 2016-17, the proportion of mature students has risen from 16% to 31%. During the four years under review, 54.9% were female, 45% were male, were other. The proportion of students with a disclosed disability was an average of 26.6%, and 70.2% of these students disclosed a learning difficulty, such as dyslexia, which is significantly above the higher education (HE) sector average of 17.9%. Integrated foundation years were included in our BSc programmes from 2019, with a high proportion of students in the POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2.

In 2019 and 2020, 29% of home undergraduates, across Quintiles, 1-5 took a Foundation Degree or Foundation Year, increasing to 40% for Quintiles 1 and 2, and 50% for Quintile 1, highlighting their importance for our target group. *Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data below shows typically that undergraduates reside in rented or RAU accommodation; others live with parents.*

	Provider maintained property ↓	Private- sector halls ↓	Parental/guardian home ↓	Own residence ↓	Other rented accommodation ↓	Other ↓	Not in attendance at the provider ↓	Not known ↓	Total ↓
Royal Agricultural University	360	0	170	70	470	15	0	0	1,085

1.2 Course Portfolio

We offer undergraduate courses in the disciplines of agriculture, business, environment, equine, real estate, and rural land management. BSc (Hons) degrees are three years full-time, or four years full-time with a placement year, and comprise around 78% of our intake for the period in consideration. All offer the opportunity to complete an extra year of study at the start of the course, known as an Integrated Foundation Year, aimed at those who have not recently been in education or who are changing career.

In addition, Foundation Degrees are two years full-time and blend academic learning with a vocational approach. Students may enter the workplace after achieving this qualification or may progress to a one year full-time BSc (Hons) Top-up course. Many courses may also be studied part-time. Students may, therefore, choose from a number of *flexible pathways to achieve their award*. During the period of this review, around 56% of our undergraduates studied on honours degrees, while nearly 16% undertook foundation degrees, and just over 6% did top-up courses.

2. Student Experience

Impressively, the RAU achieved outstanding NSS results for the period during Covid-19 restrictions and into 2022. We ranked higher than any university within the Russell Group, placing us *4th in the rankings of Overall Satisfaction* among all English universities, really reflecting a truly tremendous effort from all staff and students alike, against a challenging financial backdrop. Other NSS scores for 2022 highlighted that the RAU



student experience is now even better than the pre-pandemic values. For example, the RAU is 1st for Learning Community (UK), in the Top Ten for Organisation and Management (England), and in the Top Ten for Academic Support (England). Our NSS 2022 scores increased in all nine categories - five of the scales scored above or significantly above values for the sector - and we exceeded our sector benchmark in six categories. We are very proud of our NSS 2022 scores and, in particular, being placed 1st for Learning Community (UK) shows the high value that our students place on their experience at the RAU. We were also ranked 8th in the UK for the best Student Experience (Sunday Times Good University Guide, 2022) and in the *Top 10 of the WhatUni Student Choice University of the Year Awards* in 2019 and 2020.



2.1 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Institutional Context

The received wisdom tells us that effective initiation into higher education is contingent on three aspects:

- 1) a high-quality student induction experience,
- 2) an authentic academic introductory academic programme, and
- 3) *regular access to and RAU academic adviser.*

With our specialist academic portfolio, most students will generally have had no Level 3 experience in the degree subject they have chosen and are, therefore, typically studying ab initio. As such, academic support is intensive during Induction Week and at the start of Semester 1 to support students, often with no previous formal experience of learning in the discipline, to gain the required level of knowledge and understanding, as well as to bridge the gap from FHEQ Level 3 to Level 4.

For those who do not come from agricultural backgrounds, we provide a wealth of professional work-based learning opportunities to complement students' growing academic knowledge. The design and (re)validation of courses (commencing in TEF period Year 3) are intended to ensure that all students can gain the knowledge, skills, and graduate attributes to work and live in a world where balancing economic, social, and environmental factors is vital.

The National Farmers' Union of England and Wales (NFU) has set the ambitious goal of reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions across the whole of agriculture in England and Wales by 2040, as their contribution to the UK's ambition of net zero by 2050 (NFU, 2019). At the RAU we are committed to supporting these sustainability goals and, for the TEF period under consideration, we have been embedding the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals across our curriculum.

RAU Response to Covid-19

Impact

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in record low levels of student satisfaction nationally across the Higher Education sector for two consecutive years. Lockdowns and social distancing disrupted traditional academic teaching, having a disproportionate adverse impact on practical disciplines such as agriculture, land management, and degree courses focused on outdoor occupations. Students who choose to study at the RAU come to gain academic and practical skills outdoors in a “university without walls” with the practical, face-to-face and personal touch of a small rural university and learning community. All of this was significantly disrupted during Covid-19 with enforced indoor study and a temporary move away from hands-on practical study to online learning, which was not able to replicate all the empirical experience students had originally anticipated.

Covid-19 also significantly disrupted our campus learning community, with many students vacating student accommodation options and returning to their home locations. Whilst financially challenging as the smallest public university, student accommodation fees were partially refunded as students vacated RAU accommodation during the pandemic. This decision was taken to ensure the already adversely impacted student experience was not further impaired by paying for university accommodation fees whilst students were no longer on campus. As a result of reduced student presence on campus, the RAU agreed with Gloucestershire County Council and the NHS to open the county's first rapid testing facility using lateral flow devices, helping prevent the local community unknowingly spreading the virus.



Mitigation

Using the lessons learned from our HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England)/OfS (£2.1m) Catalyst project (2018-22), we extended the new sector-leading active blended approach we had developed for postgraduate land-based education (with 40 employers and an institutional peer – UCEM (University College of Estate Management) to include all our undergraduate programmes from 2020/21, in response to the pandemic. In essence, during Covid-19 we moved from a weekly three-hour face-to-face engagement to a 1+2 model of learning and teaching in which a typical module would feature one hour asynchronous online, guided independent study. This was followed by two hours of synchronous, scheduled, online learning activity with lecturers.

At various points during the pandemic, our hybrid classroom technology allowed academics to run a session both in class and online at the same time so that students who were unable to attend in person were able to join the classroom via a video call. Our Learning Technology team ran face-to-face training and produced resources to support hybrid classroom teaching.

During Semester 1 of 2021-22, we operated at a reduced capacity across teaching rooms to reduce the risk of infection transmission. Mask wearing was recommended in teaching spaces and ventilation was increased. A small number of large modules were scheduled wholly online due to capacity restrictions. During Semester 2 last year, we returned to standard capacity across all teaching rooms. Informed by Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) and Office for Students (OfS) guidance, we established a joint working group of academic and professional service colleagues to evaluate our Covid-19 response and provide guidance on enhancing future practice.

Post Covid-19 Lockdowns

Now we are through the pandemic, our students can once again enjoy seamless access to the natural environment (through our unique education access agreement (in the UK land-based sector) to 15,000 acres of the adjoining Bathurst Estate), the commercial entrepreneur (through their student membership of Farm491), the laboratory, the classroom, and a resource-rich online learning environment – our ‘university without walls’ as characterised by Landex.

All undergraduate modules follow a flipped curriculum structure whereby pre-reading is undertaken by students before attending the class. Then, during timetabled sessions, students explore meaning and application of the relevant knowledge, testing their understanding with both peers and the class lecturer. The RAU’s annual staff skills workshops help to further enhance our teaching practices and allow us to discuss ways in which new innovations in learning technology can be integrated into our practices. The ‘Catalyst’ pedagogic model has facilitated enhancements in RAU teaching practices such as improvements in assessment that emphasise work-ready skills, decision making, leadership skills, and stimulating an enterprising market, to inspire rural entrepreneurship.

Students also experience a variety of assessments and there is an emphasis on authentic assessment, such as reports addressing a particular real-world issue. Academics are provided with



a module design template which, from the module specification, develops a full weekly teaching plan. As an example of authentic assessment from the British Bloodstock Production module, students work with a fictitious mare owner to arrange breeding with a suitable stallion, to meet personal and market demands, under the guidance of a globally-renowned bloodstock agent. Students meet the mare and the ‘client’ to increase authenticity. Pass rates on this assignment are typically high. A further example on a module on *the BSc (Hons) Real Estate* is “Your client, Hortons’ Estate, requires a Development and

Investment Appraisal of two properties that have been introduced to them in order to help them make a decision as to which one to pursue.” This coursework makes use of a real-life client and two properties on the market through commercial agents.

Students were given more choice regarding the content of their course and its assessment. We recognised that this change might be challenging, so we ensured that the new arrangements were clearly set out and provided support which included CPD sessions led by our Learning Technologists which emphasised best practice in learning. This pedagogic model – like the 1+2 model above – are subject to periodic review through the (LTAC) Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee, a formal sub-committee of Academic Board, to ensure student needs are fully met.

The RAU Academic

Cognisant of Newman’s (1853) maxim that ‘to discover and to teach are distinct functions; they are also distinct gifts and are not commonly found united in the same person’, *we expect all our academic staff to be competent in all of Boyer’s (1990) four scholarships* (teaching, discovery, application and integration) *and to excel in at least one of them.*

This expectation is mirrored in our criteria for progression from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer and promotion to Associate Professor and Professor. All new academics undertake a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice and Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (Advance HE). CPD opportunities that will enhance the student learning experience are offered internally: e.g., through our annual Learning; Teaching and Assessment Conference (2022's theme was *'Enhancing EDI for an Inclusive Curriculum'*); Programme Leaders' Forum; monthly seminar series, and externally through Advance HE, QAA, Landex, etc.

As of March 2022:

- our academic staff have either a teaching qualification (or are in the process of completing one) or a professional/chartered qualification aligned to their subject expertise.
- 52% of our academic staff have an earned doctorate (74% as of January 2023).
- academic staff belong to 15 professional bodies, principally the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers (CAAV).
- academic staff hold full or visiting professorships at other universities.
- academic staff are editors/associate editors of learned journals or hold senior positions in learned societies.
- academic staff have served on UK and international Government committees, agencies, or task forces.
- our academics (Rural Land Management) were recognised in Stanford University's list of the top 2% of influential scientists in the world in 2022.
- The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) and the former Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) are members of the Landex Higher Education Committee, with the former DVC, in post throughout the TEF period, also the Chair and a Director of Landex during the first three years of the TEF period.



Research-Led and Informed Teaching and Problem-Based Learning



Our pedagogic framework (2019) supports both research-led (where the academic is a published authority on the topic) and research-informed teaching throughout our curriculum, and problem-based learning in which *the 17 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals are embedded into the curriculum.*

Our academics are prolific authors of scholarly articles (more than 54 in 2020-21), monographs and standard textbooks. Practical examples of our research-informed teaching include:

- Creating a 'Living Land Laboratory' (possibly the first in the UK), which is available for students, staff, and innovators. Situated between the main campus and our Alliston Centre (itself a £4.2M state-of-the-art location built in 2018 to house the Cirencester (LEP) Growth Hub business support facility and our Farm491), the 'Living Land Laboratory' is an open collaborative space used to conduct research-led teaching and problem-based learning.
- Working with the National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB), our academics and students are undertaking trials on the non-chemical control of cabbage stem beetles, a major threat to oil seed rape production. On another plot, we are trialling the remote detection of blackgrass, a significant pest for wheat production. Elsewhere, we are observing by-cropping of wheat and legumes. All these projects involve remote sensing techniques that the students learn such as drone-based multi-spectral imaging.
- At Harnhill Farm, we have been undertaking a long-term experiment (now over 12 years) in tillage methods. Up to 18 plots have been subject to three types of cultivation with measurement of long-term yields as well as weed density and soil health. For example, soil health has been measured in part through comprehensive earth worm densities. These field experiments feed directly into our teaching about crop production and soil health and have provided numerous ongoing dissertation projects for our students over the years.
- Our Wild Campus project (in partnership with Cirencester College), which won the 2022 Environmental Project of the Year at the Cirencester Business and Community Awards, directly involves students and academics in the rewilding of our campus and the town's Educational Quarter. Funded through the European Development Research Fund, this project involves hands-on conservation such as lawn diversification and 'no-mow' areas, pond restoration, woodland and hedge-row management, and wildlife habitat restoration. Students are also directly involved in a voluntary conservation club to gain direct experience in conservation practice.
- Students from our British Wildlife Conservation course also won an award for their work to improve an area of grassland at Cirencester Golf Club which is a habitat for caterpillars of the nationally rare Duke of Burgundy fritillary butterfly. This project was named as Outstanding Environmental Project of the Year at the 2022 Golf Environment Awards.
- *Coates Manor Farm is our principal location for teaching crop production. It is a working farm* and we collect data (e.g. drone data, soil health, inputs, crop yield maps, weather, carbon stocks measurement) which is kept up to date on the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) and is then used by students, as real time data sets to understand how crops perform over the year, as part of their modules. Longer term, we plan to transform the farm into a space for fully regenerative farming using mid-level Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS).
- *All our undergraduate students complete a capstone dissertation, providing an opportunity to put their learning into research practice.*



quality of life in calves
flora and crop yield

many projects have a positive impact on industry even if they are not formally reported or in the form of a research paper.

dissertations have led to peer
reviewed academic articles. These include a genetic study of Mongolian racehorses
crib-biting studies
a study of the
and arable

We would also note that

Field Trips and Student Exchanges:

Although we are the smallest UK public university, *the RAU is highly regarded around the world and our international partnerships provide unique opportunities for our undergraduate students to be truly global in their education and future outlook.* For example, BSc (Hons) Real Estate has facilitated graduate destinations in Singapore, Dubai, Hong Kong, and Brussels, as well as the UK. Our increasingly expanding global operations enable a valuable and distinctive international experience and student exchange for the niche subjects we offer. Our UK home students are able to experience educational and sector specialist opportunities both overseas and at our UK campuses in Swindon and Cirencester (main campus) with international students studying with the RAU in the UK. International students also receive an optional international orientation, a short residential programme running for four nights before the start of term, which is available at a subsidised price.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, and in Year 1 of the period under review, students had the opportunity to undertake a wide range of field trips and student exchanges, many of which resumed in Semester 2 of the last academic year. We fully recognise the benefits of field trips and student exchanges to consolidate and extend students' learning to *inspire students by bringing subject areas to life and to facilitate students in gaining a wealth of personal and professional skills, including gaining greater self-confidence and motivation. They have been particularly popular in agriculture where experience of different climate, soil and water conditions is important.* As such, we subsidise some costs and study bursaries are available, subject to availability and eligibility criteria. There is also a specific Equine Travel Bursary of £3,500 available to cover the cost of two study trips. Student exchange programmes currently exist with the University of Guelph (Canada), the University of Arkansas (United States of America), Lincoln University (New Zealand), Catholic University of Uruguay (Uruguay), and Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania).

Students on the BSc (Hons) Countryside Management (Top-up) course had the opportunity to undertake a research field trip with destinations including Costa Rica and Orkney. Those on BSc (Hons) Wildlife and Countryside Management (Top-up) courses had the option of an Ecology field trip to locations such as Costa Rica and Namibia. Students on the BSc (Hons) Applied Equine Science and Business had the option to undertake a six-day study trip to Ireland, while those on the BSc (Hons) Bloodstock and Performance Horse Management undertake study tours to leading racing businesses in Lambourn, Newmarket, and Ireland. BSc (Hons) International Equine and Agricultural Business Management students are required to undertake study tours with previous destinations having included Northwest Europe and the USA. The BSc (Hons) International Business Management also includes an international study tour, and students on BSc (Hons) Equine Health and Welfare (Top-up) take part in field visits to equine organisations such as Cheltenham Racecourse and the Blue Cross Rescue Centre.

2.2 Academic Support

Regular access to an academic adviser is a critical factor of fostering student progression. The RAU is continuously exploring ways to further improve academic support in order for students to access assistance during their studies at the RAU. For the first three years of this TEF consideration period, students were provided with a personal tutor in order to provide them with a dedicated contact throughout their studies and provide academic support for assessment as well as addressing module and course enquires. Following feedback from students and colleagues, we further enhanced our academic support package, implementing the improvements at the start of the 2021-22 academic year.

These changes provided additional clarification for both students and staff about the role and responsibilities of academic support and, importantly, provided more explicit signposting to other specialist sources of support, such as health and wellbeing. In order to provide students with more dedicated support, *personal tutoring is augmented with additional academic support tutors* who meet with small groups of students at various points during the academic year e.g., at the start of each semester and by arrangement thereafter.

Academics are issued with a comprehensive Academic Support Tutoring handbook which is updated annually and reminders are given throughout the year. This handbook sets out the schedule for the meetings between students and tutors which take place during the year. *Typically, each student is allocated a member of academic staff as their Academic Support Tutor for the entirety of their course. Academic Support Tutors know the students by name, due to the small size of the institution, and take an active interest in their development.* In the 2022 NSS, we were ranked in the Top Ten for Academic Support (English universities), evidencing the improvements made to academic support.

Following a curriculum review, we also introduced a core Level 4 'Developing Academic Skills' module for all undergraduate degree programmes in September 2019. The module was designed to develop students' understanding of the variety of academic resources available, how to find them, critically evaluate them, and present referenced summaries of their content. Students also develop their communication and academic writing skills and apply a variety of techniques for producing academic arguments, including presenting data.

2.3 Learning Resources

Estate

The RAU has a beautiful rural main campus in Cirencester, 'the capital of the Cotswolds', and several other specialist rural sites for students' use nearby. Our teaching and research make extensive use of our farms and associated property as well as our laboratories. We lease Coates Manor Farm (194 hectares) and the RAU Equestrian



Centre, while at Harnhill Farm we have the John Oldacre Rural Innovation Centre (a Lantra-approved training centre) with wet laboratory facilities and workshops for primary fieldwork.

We continue to invest in cutting-edge equipment, with a full suite of analytical facilities for soil and field science, which both staff and students use for their teaching and research. Our 650m² laboratory space has facilities for chemistry, microbiology, dissection, and a clean room. Fully equipped for agricultural science, they include furnaces, freezers, fume cupboards, particle grinders, and homogenizers, with analytical equipment that includes HPLC (High Performance Liquid Chromatography), PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction), total carbon and nitrogen analyser, atomic adsorption analyser, Tullgren funnel, and invertebrate extractors.

The genetics facilities in the clean room include end-point and real-time (PCR) machines along with standard gel electrophoresis equipment. There is also an Agilent 2100 Bioanalyzer for rapid lab-on-a-chip analysis of DNA, RNA, or proteins. We have recently invested £100k in state-of-the-art field equipment, which includes UAV/drones, differential global positioning systems for accurate survey, gradiometers for shallow geophysics, portable X-ray diffraction for elemental analysis (e.g. soils), and two laser scanners, one using SLAM technology. All this equipment is regularly used in practical classes and is available for students for their final year honours project and dissertations.

Through a successful application to the OfS, the RAU is refurbishing a 1950s teaching block into an integrated facility to teach land science to all our undergraduates. The land-laboratories will provide state-of-the-art equipment and facilities to train students in climate-smart, resilient agriculture and land management. This will include wet and dry soil and agronomy laboratories, genomics, and geomantics. This new facility will complement our projected £100m Innovation Village @ RAU which is an international centre for research and innovation in land and food.



The RAU vineyard is a unique part of our estate which is home to an award-winning social enterprise. Cotswold Hills wine, stocked in more than 125 outlets and supports RAU students to start their own businesses that are further incubated at the RAU Growth Hub, based at the Alliston Centre in Cirencester.

At the RAU Equestrian Centre (30 hectares), we have dedicated stabling for up to 80 horses, a 30m x 60m enclosed floodlit outdoor arena, a 1,000m all-weather gallop track, a horse walker, and a 'stick and ball' outdoor exercise area. We use dedicated stalls for the research ponies which are part of a collaborative agreement with Glasgow University and are used for a variety of student and commercial in vivo digestive physiology and behaviour trials. We involve students and their livery ponies (approximately 30) for observational behaviour and exercise physiology monitoring.

In 2020, through a partnership with Swindon Borough Council, the University is leasing a £1.8m campus in Swindon's railway village, for teaching and research in real estate, business and cultural heritage. RAU Swindon is located adjacent to national heritage bodies Historic England, English Heritage, and the National Trust. The facility is fully equipped for heritage and field science, and is itself a case study in sustainable, heritage-led regeneration in a town that is a national 'cold spot' in terms of participation of HE. *We also use RAU Swindon as base for our students to undertake case studies in urban regeneration and levelling up – located in an area of deprivation and industrial dereliction.*

Learning Technology

During the Covid-19 period, when students had to be taught at a distance, we benefited from having strong learning technology in place. In particular, we have an excellent team of five Learning Technologists who are all graduates with a very good understanding of pedagogy and some have teaching qualifications and/or prior teaching experience in other phases of the education sector too. As such, their expertise and experience mean that they are very well-placed to provide high-quality support to students and academics.

The Library collections reflect the nature of the RAU as a small specialist institution with a long history. The Library holds a collection of print books, maps, and pamphlets relating to land and agriculture, with electronic access to 150,000 e-books, 25,000 journals, and subscriptions to e-resources such as digi-map. The online catalogue¹ Heritage is freely available. The Library Gateway page has videos and guides alongside paper copies to help students make the best use of the resources, while individual module pages make direct links to these resources. In common with other HEIs, we have embraced the transition to electronic learning resources for our students.

During 2021-22, and following the creation of a new and well received International VLE, Gateway was re-designed and developed to provide an improved experience for both students and academics. All lecture presentations and other teaching resources are available on Gateway (Moodle), with integrated software including Mahara, Panopto, Turnitin, and Vevox. The Learning Technology team provides a comprehensive training programme on the pedagogical and technical skills required to place materials on Gateway as well as on the submission of assessment, enhancing digital literacy, and the use of assistive technologies to support students with special learning needs.

As many of our programmes have a strong practical element, we are able to train our students in land science. Our facilities include two laser scanners (Trimble X7 and Geoslam), GNSS/DGPS and laser survey equipment, Bartington magnetometer, portable X-ray fluorescence (for measuring elements in the field), and 360-degree cameras. These are used for practical class learning as well as being available to book by students during the dissertation period. Our labs are well equipped for student practical work, with measuring facilities such as HPLC, atomic absorption, and CNS.

For fieldwork, we make use of 360-degree cameras, drones, and iPhones, so that remote students are able to benefit as much as possible from the field experience. We also used this approach successfully for fieldwork delivery during the pandemic. Academics find using iPhones particularly helpful for recording pre-learning content prior to off-site visits to accelerate the learning process.

2.4 Student Voice

The student voice is loud and clear as you might expect in a small, rural, single campus operation where all students and staff are known by name. Even so, we take a structured approach to ensure we capture both formal and informal student feedback in an effective manner. RAU senior leaders meet with RAUSU Officers on a regular basis to provide frequent opportunities for the student voice to be heard at the most senior level and to further enhance quality assurance and enhancement. The RAUSU President is also a member of the University's Academic Board and Governing Council.

The student voice is a crucial aspect of our quality assurance and enhancement. It is used to inform and improve planning and practices, for example our 'Enhancing Education and the Student Learning Experience: Strategy and National Student Survey Improvement Plan' which was developed at the start of 2021-22 and was approved by Academic Board following an institution-wide consultation which included the RAUSU. Informed by student voice data, the strategy was designed to enhance the curriculum, the student learning experience, putting students at the heart of everything we do. Effective implementation is monitored through a comprehensive improvement plan which seeks to celebrate and maintain areas of success and to improve areas for development in order to achieve continual improvement.

The improvement plan focuses on the students' academic education relating to the NSS categories, as well as broad key aspects that shape the overall student learning experience, including culture; people; the effective use, presentation, and analysis of NSS student voice data to inform and improve planning and practices; strategically-aligned induction and continuing professional development (CPD) for academics to enhance research-informed teaching quality, facilitation of high-quality learning, and to establish communities of practice to share best practice; Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QA&E); and Communications. The strategy and improvement plans are monitored by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee (LTAC), a formal sub-committee of Academic Board.

Feedback from the student voice is also used to inform the Annual Programme Manager's Report, which is submitted to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC). AQSC is a formal sub-committee of Academic Board, chaired by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education and Students), and reports are produced for each Academic Board meeting. In addition to externally published metrics, such as the NSS, we operate internal student voice opportunities, mid-module evaluations, and an Internal Student Satisfaction Survey (ISSS) to gather feedback from students regarding their academic experience. This feedback informs enhancements to the delivery of resources, support and engagement, distributed via Gateway (VLE) at the individual module level. Results are also physically disseminated via digital screens and on hard-copy posters around campus.

During 2021-22 we conducted regular student voice opportunities at the end of sessions and undertook mid-module evaluations. Outcomes from this exercise informed a range of enhancements to module delivery and students were informed of improvements made via Module Leaders posting the feedback on module Gateway pages and discussing them with students in the last week of the semester. In 2021-22, the ISSS was improved to mirror the NSS questions and for consistency in the reporting of the student voice. The ISSS is an opportunity for undergraduate students who are not yet eligible to complete the NSS to comment on their programmes / other aspects relating to the student experience.

Furthermore, in the first three years of the 2023 TEF period, the Student Experience Committee (a formal sub-committee of Academic Board) had overall strategic responsibility for all student experience matters. In 2021-22, following a review of the academic committee structure and approval by Academic Board, the Student Experience Committee was disbanded in order to establish two committees, a Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee (LTAC) and a Student Wellbeing and Community Committee (SWCC), to provide greater opportunities for the student voice to give greater focus to the very different and specialist aspects of the student experience, and spend to more strategic time on discussing and decision-making regarding student experience matters.

2.5 Student Experience Data Review

The TEF four-year period depicts *RAU Student Experience is largely in line with benchmark, with the latest year trending higher than benchmark in Academic Support & Student Voice*, showing early signs of the improvements taken by the new RAU Executive. Section 2.1 above, outlined a series of actions designed to radically enhance the assessment and feedback provision across the RAU. International experience, integration of the sustainable development goals, and continual innovation in our academic teams is all designed to enrich our assessment operations whilst ensuring a strong empirical grounding and strong links to future employability skills.

For all five measures, Student Experience is broadly in line with benchmark for students taught at the RAU, whilst Student Voice is 7.6%, marginally above benchmark.

Students registered with the RAU, but taught at our franchise or validated network of partners, have struggled during the four-year period up to August 2022 with learning and resources, and assessment and feedback, adversely reducing our overall score. The new University leadership has made significant progress in addressing these shortfalls, with many subcontracted arrangements being overhauled or ended.

The Royal Agricultural University (Full-time)

Time series (Full-time)

Split indicator type	Split indicator	Measure	Denominator	Indicator value (%)	Indicator (%)		Difference from benchmark (ppt)			Benchmark value (%)	Proportion of statistical uncertainty distribution			
					60	80	-10	0	10		Materially below benchmark	Broadly in line with benchmark	Materially above benchmark	
Time series	Year 1 (earliest)	The teaching on my course	270	85.8							84.4	2.8%	67.3%	29.9%
		Assessment and feedback	270	72.9							73.4	21.4%	66.7%	12.0%
		Academic support	270	83.7							82.0	2.7%	61.5%	35.7%
		Learning resources	270	82.7							85.0	46.6%	52.4%	1.0%
		Student voice	270	80.9							75.9	0.1%	14.9%	85.0%
	Year 2	The teaching on my course	270	81.1							84.8	71.4%	28.4%	0.2%
		Assessment and feedback	270	71.7							74.6	56.0%	42.5%	1.5%
		Academic support	270	81.8							82.6	22.9%	70.8%	6.3%
		Learning resources	270	79.6							83.3	71.3%	28.5%	0.1%
		Student voice	270	76.0							76.6	21.0%	69.1%	9.9%
	Year 3	The teaching on my course	220	78.2							78.7	22.1%	65.6%	12.2%
		Assessment and feedback	220	62.3							68.6	89.6%	10.2%	0.2%
		Academic support	220	71.1							74.0	55.6%	41.5%	2.9%
		Learning resources	220	66.6							69.5	55.7%	41.2%	3.1%
		Student voice	220	64.6							67.8	58.8%	38.2%	3.0%
	Year 4 (most recent)	The teaching on my course	220	77.7							79.6	41.0%	54.4%	4.6%
		Assessment and feedback	220	65.7							68.7	57.0%	39.8%	3.2%
		Academic support	220	77.4							75.9	7.3%	57.2%	35.5%
		Learning resources	220	78.3							78.2	14.8%	67.6%	17.7%
		Student voice	220	70.3							68.3	6.2%	50.4%	43.4%
					60	80		-10	0	10				
					Indicator (%)		Difference from benchmark (ppt)							

The Royal Agricultural University (Full-time)																	
Type of partnership (Full-time)																	
Split indicator type	Split indicator	Measure	Denominator	Indicator value (%)	Indicator (%)	Difference from benchmark (ppt)					Benchmark value (%)	Proportion of statistical uncertainty distribution			Contribution to own benchmark (%)	Survey response rate (%)	
					50	-20	-10	0	10	20		Materially below benchmark	Broadly in line with benchmark	Materially above benchmark			
Type of partnership	Taught by this provider	The teaching on my course	910	80.8								82.4	23.0%	76.9%	0.0%	9.8	79.5
		Assessment and feedback	910	70.0								71.8	30.5%	69.4%	0.1%	9.8	79.5
		Academic support	910	79.2								79.4	3.4%	94.6%	2.0%	9.8	79.5
		Learning resources	910	78.6								80.5	31.3%	68.7%	0.0%	9.8	79.5
		Student voice	910	73.3								72.7	1.5%	90.9%	7.8%	9.8	79.5
	Only registered by this provider (subcontracted out)	The teaching on my course	70	84.1								80.2	1.2%	29.9%	68.9%	52.3	79.3
		Assessment and feedback	70	50.4								58.5	93.3%	6.5%	0.2%	52.3	79.3
		Academic support	70	74.6								72.8	8.7%	49.7%	41.5%	52.3	79.3
		Learning resources	70	59.9								62.8	54.2%	38.9%	7.0%	52.3	79.3
		Student voice	70	77.3								70.1	0.2%	7.6%	92.3%	52.3	79.3
					50	-20	-10	0	10	20							
					Indicator (%)	Difference from benchmark (ppt)											

3. Student Outcomes

3.1 Continuation and Completion

A range of continuation and completion initiatives have been applied to support our students at the RAU. More recently our approach has centred upon 'The Team around the RAU Student', which is a model that conceptualises the student journey and life-cycle in a holistic 'joined-up' way from the perspective of our students.

Following consultation with students and colleagues, 'The Team around the RAU Student' was launched at the start of this academic year with the aim of providing streamlined signposting to specialist areas of student support. This approach is continually socialised to all our students through various communication platforms – digitally, physically, and in person – to ensure all our students feel able to access the support they need. Some examples of the type of initiatives we offer to support our students are summarised below:

- An online summer school is held for students taking resits, providing access to a range of different types of specialist support as needed by individual students, including academic support and specialist personal support from the Enable Team and Learning Technology team.
- During 2021-22 we held 22 social and learning community events for students and staff in celebration of, for example, International Women's Day and Women's History Month.
- In 2019 the university invested in a major refurbishment of the Sir Emrys Jones Building to create an integrated Student Support Hub. This is positioned visibly at the heart of the campus and enables students to access a range of tailored services in a one-stop-shop.
- We work closely with external agencies too. Last year we worked in partnership with Gloucestershire Police to launch the 'Flare' app. This was created for women and girls to anonymously share their experiences of how and where they have felt unsafe.

- In 2021 the employability team and enterprise team were integrated in to a single function within Academic Services to help enhance the 'joined-up' service provision to our students.
- We offer scholarships, awards, and bursaries to assist those students in need of support to enable them to reach their full potential. Last year we launched two Ethnic Minority Excellence scholarships of £9,250 each per year and the total annual budget for scholarships is around £240,000. A goal is to support more students from minority ethnic backgrounds into graduate employment or further study with a total annual University investment of £54,000.

3.2 Progression

Student progression is a very important aspect of the extra-curricular, co-curricular, and curricular elements of the student experience. It is driven through our curriculum offer and co-ordinated by the Careers and Enterprise Team to help students transition successfully to life after graduation. We were ranked 3rd for full-time employment and 4th for all employment among all UK universities in the Graduate Outcomes survey 2018-19. Commensurate with the OfS positive progression outcomes, we encourage and support our students to gain managerial or professional employment (SOC1-3) which includes self-employment and further study.

As such, several bespoke progression strategies, initiatives, and interventions have been implemented and these are outlined below. In addition, the Pedagogic Framework includes additional programme design principles: encouraging progression; engagement with stakeholder views (students, employers, professional bodies), locally, nationally and globally; and furthering enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Employability

Bespoke strategies have also been implemented to facilitate graduate employment in the land-based sector and beyond. Agriculture and the equine industry are the largest rural employers in the UK and our programmes and curriculum are designed to respond to the demand for a blend of business and science identified by industry.

Work placements are an integral part of our undergraduate programmes and they make a significant contribution to the employability of graduates. Placements enable our students to translate theory into practice; develop their personal and social skills; enhance their communication, problem solving, creativity and organisational skills; and gain relevant, practical experience.

As noted in the TEF 2017 provider submission, feedback from our students, alumni, subject advisory groups, and employer groups provided overwhelming support for extended placements and

support. As part of this curriculum review, we enhanced and extended the placement system by ensuring that all students undertook a placement, with the common model being a 15-week placement (typically Semester 2 in Year 2) from September 2019. Simultaneously, we also introduced a core level 5 Industry Placement module for all honours degree programmes in order to place greater emphasis on employability and enhanced continuous student support and ongoing formative assessment while students are on placement. We also introduced a Placement Year from September 2020.

Students are encouraged to undertake a placement beyond their family farm to gain a breadth of different experiences. Students are proactive in finding their own placements under the guidance of a Placement Co-ordinator and make use of the career's portal and our bespoke careers fairs which regularly attract an average of 50 employers on average throughout the year along with 200 of our students. In 2021-22, our Enterprise and Employability teams were merged and are now located in the Academic Services structure, allowing us to better support student outcomes.

Employer engagement occurs on an almost daily basis and includes employer-sponsored projects, visits to employers as part of the curriculum, employer engagement in teaching, participation in conservation projects, and placements. Guest speaker sessions are delivered by leading professionals who are active in their industries, including panel members of DEFRA, entrepreneurs, world-leading equine specialists, veterinary surgeons, and chartered surveyors. We actively engage with employers to understand, and respond to, their needs and have industry advisory boards with senior members of the sector keeping us fully up-to-date with industry.

We maintain a large and loyal global alumni network of 17,000 alumni, many of whom work in senior positions in the land-based sector. We make effective use of our alumni with an overwhelming proportion of land in the UK either owned or managed by RAU alumnus, further helping to enhance the student experience and graduate outcomes. For example, our alumni offer our students work placements, networking opportunities, and mentoring to help them to understand industry priorities.

Alumni also give guest lectures and offer us field trips to take students out to those who run farms and other workplaces.

Current students are able to contact alumni directly using the RAU Connect system and are thus able to directly network with senior leaders in relevant fields.

RAU Connect is our platform for alumni to engage with us and our current students. There are currently 1,329 registered users, 52% of whom are willing

to offer events to support us. We are the leading supplier in the country of rural chartered surveyors with 165 alumni holding Director level posts at the major national and international firms.

We also embedded lessons learned from our HEFCE/OfS Catalyst (2018-22) project in our undergraduate curriculum. Experts from the food supply chain, farming, land management, banking, and non-governmental organisations supported the project to create an 'innovation bridge' between the University and industry, ensuring a sustained and meaningful engagement with students to support us in preparing them for leadership roles. The final OfS report concluded that:

"RAU appears to be entirely consistent with the Government's aspirations for both education and the development of the agri-food sector, especially post-Brexit."

The Student Hub is also the home of Registry and Enterprise and Employability.

Our Student Support Services team operates a triage system via a Student Helpdesk Advisor, Student Advisor (Wellbeing and Funding), Mental Health Coordinator, Disability and Inclusive Learning Advisor, Disability and Inclusive Learning Officer, and Head of Student Services who offer a comprehensive range of year-round services including daily drop-ins, confidential safe spaces, awareness raising, and well-being along with additional investment in disability support, given our disproportionate number of students with special learning needs. Our Pedagogic Framework also includes an additional programme design principle to support students with disabilities.



Finally, courses are accredited by the relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), where appropriate. The BSc (Hons) Real Estate and BSc (Hons) Rural Land Management courses are accredited by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), with a minimum of 70 hours of work experience being an assessed part of each course, leading to first-stage RICS membership for students. Graduates of the BSc (Hons) Business courses are also eligible to receive the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) Level 6 Diploma in Management and Leadership and the Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs (IOEE) Professional Diploma in Enterprise and Entrepreneurship.



Royal Agricultural University -
John Oldacre Rural Innovation
Centre

Further Study

Graduate Outcomes Survey data indicate that an average of 10% of alumni (who responded to the survey) progress to further study. We note the need to improve progression in this area and have put in place strategies and support to encourage students to progress to further study. As such, all undergraduate students have the opportunity to progress to master's degrees in specialist subject areas or to undertake the Master's by Research (MRes) or a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). In 2019, *the Royal Agricultural University received, from the late John Oldacre who was a philanthropist, businessman and agriculturalist, a £2.5m donation to secure PhD and MSc students in perpetuity.*

We offer a wide range of funding opportunities to help students to finance their postgraduate studies each year. For example, Sir Emrys Jones Memorial Trust award (2022/23 £18,000 – shared amongst 11 students), Clyde Higgs Postgraduate Scholarship (£5,000), Geoffrey Cragghill Memorial Scholarship (£2,000), RAU Sports Scholarship (up to £3,000), and RAU MacRobert Forces Scholarship (£1,000 for one year). Additionally, alumni may also be eligible for other funding in the form of scholarships, bursaries, and awards.

From January 2021, all our alumni who are accepted for postgraduate research degrees at the RAU are eligible for a 20% reduction in tuition fees. The 20% reduction in fees is available to visiting students who have completed a minimum of one semester study at the RAU campus and also to RAU students studying at our UK partner colleges. Seven MRes students, who previously completed undergraduate Equine degrees, were funded by individual small amounts of money from industry in the period under review.

Award-Winning Enterprise and Entrepreneurship:

We started our student Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Programme (EEP) 15 years ago – when we launched our first student-led social enterprise project 'Muddy Wellies' as a draught ale in the University bar – and it has evolved into a highly regarded flagship programme and a unique aspect of our provision that has had a significant impact on enhancing our student outcomes, employability prospects, and transferable skills. We have been recognised as a Centre of Excellence by the Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs since 2019, with re-accreditation for a further three years being awarded in 2022. We were the first small, specialist Higher Education Institution (HEI) to achieve such recognition and the sixth university in total. Graduates of the BSc (Hons) Business courses are eligible to receive the Institute's Professional Diploma in Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, as well as the Chartered Management Institute Level 6 Diploma in Management and Leadership.

Our award-winning EEP provides an inspiring and supportive environment in which our students can share, develop, and launch their ideas. It has attracted the support of business leaders across the UK, enabling us to organise networking events, enterprise workshops to provide students with the practical information to start their own business, mentoring services, inspirational talks, competitions, and a chance to meet with one of our Entrepreneurs in Residence (EiR) or industry experts.

The EEP is delivered via our 'Think, Try, Launch, Grow' framework, with targeted events and activities taking place at each stage which allows students from all courses and years to get involved in running a business on an extra-curricular basis where they can access support – via their membership of Farm491 and access to the (LEP-funded) Cirencester Growth Hub (both co-located in the Alliston Centre on campus) – on new product development, and website and marketing design and branding. This opportunity allows them to develop their enterprise and employability skills, as well as gaining real life experience. In addition, all proceeds from the sale of the products go into the RAU's 'First Step Fund' which supports students starting their own businesses with a £250 grant and an external mentor.

Of the 71 proof of concept applications since 2018-2022, our programme has funded 44 applicants to develop their concept further and 179 graduates started a business, reported in the Graduate Outcomes Survey (with an approximate 50% completion rate for the three years in the review). Our Grand Idea (Dragons Den style) business planning competition has crowned 15 winners and runners-up who between them have received more than £30,000 in prize money. Ten prize winners are still running businesses, with several having a turnover in excess of £1.0m, stocking high-end retailers such as Harrods, and featured in leading magazines such as *Vogue* and *Country Living*.

Our six-acre vineyard, acquired in 2016 at Down Ampney (our latest student social enterprise project), is a pioneer in championing sustainability without compromising quality, achieved through the development of a smaller, lighter, and recyclable, flat wine bottle (*led by a Level 6 student graduating from RAU's BSc (Hons) Applied Farm Management²*) and a recyclable can for sparkling wine, both 'firsts' for a vineyard in the UK. Our Cotswold Hills Wine (still Ortega) and our recyclable can for sparkling wine both won Bronze Awards at the Wines of Great Britain Awards during English Wine Week (June, 2022).



"As students of food and agriculture, we are conscious of the carbon footprint associated with the industry. For the wine sector, glass bottles account for a high percentage of these emissions. Eco-flat wine bottles offer Cotswold Hills a product that aligns with our sustainability objectives. Reducing the weight and changing the material of our bottles is a step in the right direction to solve an existing problem."



Our Cotswold Hills wine and social enterprise were recognised in 2020-21 by *The Hairy Bikers Go Local* BBC2 television series to bring together the best local restaurants with the most innovative local suppliers. The episode, shown on 5th January 2023 with viewing figures of 1.5m, bears testimony to our innovative enterprise, impact, and high-quality and award-winning wine and featured our Head of

Enterprise and Employability, our Head of Catering and Retail, and students engaged in the enterprise. We sell our wine in Mid-Counties Co-Op and independent retailers, as well as in our own shop and online. In 2022, our wine was listed in 288 outlets across the South of England.

Our Farm491³ is itself the UK's leading agri-tech business incubator – having directly supported, since its inception in 2018, more than 200 start-ups in agri- tech and agri-food, helping them to create 120 new jobs within its member companies, and raise £33m in funding to support their shift from innovation to commercialisation. Its co-location, alongside the Growth Hub provides a unique link between our teaching and research activities, the industrial strategy ('Build Back Better Plan'), and food, farming and environmental strategies locally, nationally and internationally. These easily accessible links bring our academics and students into collaboration with industrial innovators and

entrepreneurs, including some of the leading pioneers in resilient agriculture, developing and patenting agri-tech solutions. Our students have gone on to work with these SMEs (Small Medium Enterprises) while others have used their own knowledge gained from their degree to set up their own start-ups at Farm491.



Indeed, Farm491 was selected by Guild HE (a subscription organisation with 58 institutional members) as a showcase example of the local, national, and international impact exercised by small, specialist universities in their report 'Building the Jigsaw⁴' (2022). STET and our social enterprises also support the integration of enterprise as a core element of our undergraduate curriculum – for example, as live case studies in a number of modules across all levels, including a first-year marketing and second-year intrapreneurship module, through the provision of guest speakers, support for the Business Residential Programmes, and as a source for judges for our student outreach enterprise work with schools.

An annual survey of students registered for the EEP⁵ is undertaken which shows that, between 2018-19 and 2021-22, 13% of them planned to launch their business while they were still a student, with a further 48% planning to launch after graduation. With support from the programme, new businesses set up by our students have an 82% success rate compared with 44% nationally (2018). The programme supports a wide range of ideas of various magnitude. We were one of only six finalists in the 'Outstanding Entrepreneurial University' category of the Times Higher Education Awards in 2020 and we won the Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurship 'Enterprise Learning Provider of the year' in 2019.

As the IOEE Centre of Excellence Feedback report⁶ following the Approval Visit in 2019 noted:

"A true entrepreneurial "spirit" could be felt within the university – staff and leaders all sharing the same desire to actively encourage students to grasp the enterprise opportunities on offer. ... Entrepreneurship and employability are so often seen as a bolt on to subject specific studies however here we witnessed how the softer enterprising skills were truly embedded into the mainstream curriculum ensuring students leave the university with the broader skill set that employers currently look for."

Not surprisingly then, EE (Enterprise and Entrepreneurs) has become a key unique selling point for the RAU with more than one-fifth of our students seeing this innovative EE as a reason to study at RAU – for example, 63% reported that the EE programme was a factor in selecting the RAU in the 2021-22 registration survey.



3.3 Educational Gain

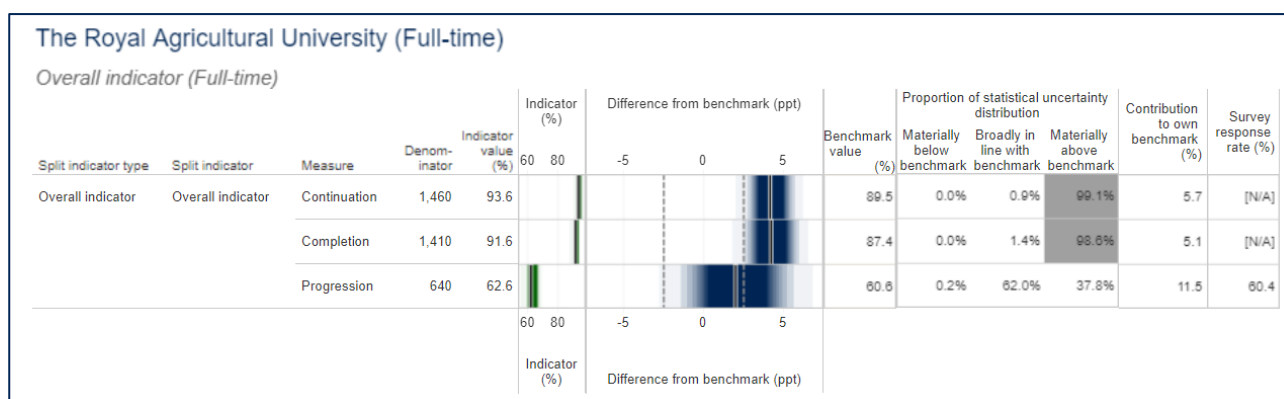
We are preparing the leaders of the future to find innovative and entrepreneurial solutions to the global challenges we all face in relation to the climate crisis, food security, and sustainability. We consider a key RAU educational gain to be the extent to which our graduates have developed an enterprising mindset in order to be able to contribute to the solution of the national priorities outlined in the introduction.

Graduate-ness at the RAU – in common with other universities – is about advanced subject knowledge, higher-order skills and capabilities, employability, the unlocking of meta-cognition (in becoming confident and independent learners), and a curriculum that embodies both education and training.

We believe that the distinctiveness we offer – and the educational gain attained by our graduates – is in the particular skills they acquire that differentiate them in the workplace as new professionals. We are passionate in our commitment – indeed it is a 178-year-old one – to our students and to employers, that the RAU Graduate not only has the highest professional standards in their field but is also savvy and astute environmentally, culturally, politically, socially and commercially.

3.4 Student Outcomes Data Review

The TEF four-year period depicts the three *RAU student outcomes broadly in line with benchmark and marginally above benchmark, with two criteria greater than 98% above benchmark*, confirming the true value of a RAU undergraduate degree. As an award-winning centre for entrepreneurship, a top 10 WhatUni Choice Award winning institution, a leading agri-tech incubator, a leading supplier of chartered surveyors, and a truly global employment offer, the RAU continues to be proud of its achievements as the smallest public university in England.



Continuing improvements in our educational offer, and significant improvements in our student experience and assessment and feedback, will continue to see the undergraduate student experience and graduate outcomes as a truly sought-after higher-education destination. Our founding purpose – to care for the land – is more relevant and vital than ever. *Our mission as educators is to equip a new generation to address global challenges and to thrive through change.*

***Our strategic vision is to be
the UK's global university for sustainable farming and land management.***

We deliver this commitment by ensuring that sustainability, diversity, and enterprise are integrated as core curriculum themes throughout all our programmes of study. It is no accident that we have been developing leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators ever since 1845 – it is our raison d'être. "Practice with Science" was the mantra of our founders in 1845, according to Roger Sayce in 'The History of the Royal Agricultural College', and a curriculum that engaged "the hand, heart and the mind" while nurturing "a fierce independence" – "the famous College spirit".

These founding traits are all flourishing in today's RAU.

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