Provider name: Teesside University
UKPRN: 10007161

Teesside University – TEF Submission January 2023

1. Provider context: Education 4.0: Delivering Student and Regional Ambitions Today

Delivering opportunities through providing a high-quality learning environment, offering excellent courses taught by passionate staff, is intrinsic to the ethos of Teesside University. Teesside excels at widening access, innovative learning and teaching, applied research, and working with industry and the professions, demonstrated by the outcomes for our students.

Building on the first TEF exercise in 2016/17 (based on Bronze rated metrics) which resulted in a Silver rating, Teesside has demonstrated **significant and sustained improvements in the identified key metrics**. These improvements demonstrate the maturity of the institutional approach to enhancing learning, teaching and the student experience. In the previous TEF submission, we detailed intended work around our bold strategic approach to Future Facing Learning, underpinned by a data-driven and digital approach to enabling student success. Over the last few years, we have further embedded this approach, as outlined in this submission and the supporting metrics.

Our student experience measures are outstanding for all modes of study during the period covered by this exercise, with all measures being either substantially above or broadly in line with our TEF benchmarks. These excellent outcomes place us in a coveted position within the HE sector and corroborate that our strategic approaches are highly successful and are having a significant positive impact at scale on our students' learning experiences. We are particularly proud of the impact that the implementation of our Future Facing Learning framework has had on our assessment and feedback outcomes, and the NSS and International Student Barometer data included in this submission signpost our success. We celebrate the significant educational gains that we deliver, which effectively support our students to succeed in and to progress beyond their studies. This success is demonstrated by our strong performance in the student outcomes measures, the majority of which are either significantly above or broadly in line with our benchmarks.

Our student body is made up of 14,381 undergraduate students
Our taught postgraduate student body is made up of 8,025 students

Our institution is comprised of five academic Schools offering a diverse portfolio of courses designed to meet the needs of our current and future student populations and our regional partners and stakeholders.

A significant proportion of our students commute daily from across the Tees Valley region. We recruit 73% of students from the North East, and the top ten feeder schools and colleges remain within a 15-mile radius of Middlesbrough, accounting for 46% of full-time undergraduate students. Notably 86% of our full-time undergraduate students are considered to be Access and Participation Plan (APP) countable.

We are proud to serve our region and our local communities. The Tees Valley[1] is ranked as the second most deprived out of 38 English LEP areas, with a high proportion of localities identified as among the most 10% deprived nationally. A recent Public First report[2] noted '…*Teesside plays an enormous role in the local skills landscape, and has developed strong partnerships in order to provide the education and training needed for the growing high skill economy in the area'*. We work intensively with local colleges through the Teesside University College Partnership to widen access to higher education and support the regional skills agenda**.** We sit above the national benchmark for attracting young full-time undergraduate UK domiciled students from low participation neighbourhoods (31.4% compared to a benchmark of 16.1%), and mature full-time students with no

previous HE experience from low participation neighbourhoods (23.3% compared to a benchmark of 13.4%) (HESA 2020/21).

Strong partnership working with students and the Students' Union sits at the heart of our work and enables our effective engagement with each cohort of students. Consecutive drafts of this submission have been shared with our Students' Union colleagues. Our Student Charter[3], co-created with the Students' Union defines a shared ambition to deliver a high-quality academic experience for our students to ensure that they can succeed in and beyond higher education. This is underpinned by our clearly communicated and understood values and behaviours.

'We want to note the active partnership between SU and University means that we have been involved in many of the initiatives the University notes in its TEF submission. We would endorse the University's comments and achievements whilst disclosing our partnership means the draft submission was shared with us, and we were encouraged to give feedback on it.'

The student experience is core to our vision and mission[4], set out below:

Vision: 'Teesside will be a leading University with an international reputation for academic excellence that provides an outstanding student and learning experience underpinned by research, enterprise and the professions.'

Mission: 'Teesside University generates and applies knowledge that contributes to the economic, social and cultural success of students, partners and the communities we serve. Through education enriched by research, innovation, and engagement with business and the professions, we transform lives and economies.'

This period has been transformative for Teesside, as this submission and the associated TEF metrics demonstrate. The distinctive nature of Teesside's student body directs and frames our work to create an academic student experience that we are proud of: namely, our up-to-date, coherent and effectively delivered courses and effectively designed assessments, all supported by high quality targeted resources. To enable this, we have consolidated and embedded our Student Futures Strategy, Student Life offer and Future Facing Learning (FFL) model, and invested in our campus footprint and digital infrastructure to meet the evolving needs of particular cohorts of Teesside students.

FFL is central to every aspect of our high-quality course design, delivery and the effectiveness of our learning, teaching and assessment practices. This is enabled by our uncompromising

commitment to staff development, our investment in outstanding teaching and learning resources including our digital teaching infrastructure and our integrated and targeted approach to student academic support.

FFL provides all Teesside students with the skills, knowledge and tools to thrive in a complex and uncertain world. FFL is underpinned by three enabling factors: Teaching Excellence, Inspiring and Enabling Spaces, and 21st Century Curriculum Design and Delivery, which build on our historical strengths and remain a focus for continued investment. These elements form the focus of Section 2 of this submission. Pedagogic practice is shaped by five core themes which prepare students for sustainable

success: future readiness; social and ethical engagement; research activeness; global connectivity and digital empowerment. These themes shape the educational gains we support and work with our students to develop, as described in Section 3.

The design of FFL was explicitly shaped by the distinctive characteristics of our student body, particularly in enabling equality of opportunity. For example, core themes of digital empowerment and global connectivity specifically reflect potential challenges for commuter students in accessing reliable technology and undertaking internationally oriented experiences respectively. FFL therefore provides a strong, strategically driven and purposeful foundation from which Teesside's outstanding student experience and student outcomes will continue to grow and flourish.

2. Student Experience

SE1: Education 4.0: Effective and Tailored Teaching, Assessment and Feedback

Teesside has adopted an ambitious institutional commitment to delivering high-impact learning through the following strategic aim outlined within the Teesside 2027 Corporate Strategy[5]:

> *'To be the University of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, delivering innovative and impactful provision through Education 4.0'*

This aim is operationalised through an unswerving focus on nurturing, recognising and scaling teaching excellence, deeply grounded within institutional quality assurance processes and underpinned by a purposeful transformation programme of physical and digital infrastructure and capabilities. Our distinctive pedagogic approaches ensure effective delivery for our diverse student body, with an overarching emphasis on authentic learning and engagement with real world challenges, aligned with the FFL core themes.

Student engagement and feedback clearly demonstrates the success of our investments and developments in people, resources, courses, and delivery. We are immensely proud that in 2022, the NSS[6] registered population response rate for all modes of study and all levels of study resulted in Teesside being ranked **29th of 130 participating institutions for '*The teaching on my course*'** in addition 87% of respondents confirmed that 'Staff are good at explaining things', compared to an England average of 84.2%. This is further confirmed by Teesside's ranking of **1st of 96 global universities for overall satisfaction with learning** in the International Student Barometer Survey 2021

Scaffolded by our institutional Assessment & Feedback Policy[8], our use of innovative and effective assessment and feedback methods has been a particular area of focus for development and innovation. We ensure that assessments are designed to be authentic and inclusive. We also ensure that assessments are progressively designed to facilitate and support student success in higher education and prepare students effectively for the workplace or other future destinations. In the International Student Barometer 2021,   students were satisfied with assessment Teesside ranked **1st of 96 global universities for performance feedback and marking criteria** in the same survey. Feedback from External Examiners has also recognised the success of assessment practices across Teesside:

> *'I continue to be impressed by the diversity of assessment across the course, which provides students with chances to demonstrate the skills and abilities that they have developed in a range of different capacities. One element that stood out for me was the commitment to quality assurance that is evidence across the course. Marking is something that is taken very seriously, and with evidence of positive and constructive*

> *discussion between and among the academic team to ensure marks are appropriate and fair. Related to this, the feedback that students receive is very detailed, reflecting what I believe to be a strong commitment of the staff to student experience and outcomes, and is delivered in a very structured and constructive way.'*
> *(External Examiner, 2021/22)*

We are keen to build on our good practice and formally ask for student feedback three times each year at module level, using our Module Evaluation Survey[9]. Responses for '*Feedback has helped me develop and improve my learning*' demonstrate a continuous improvement from 69.8% in Semester 1 2019/20   to 77.2% in Semester 1 2021/22   reflecting the work we have done in this area. This is further reflected over the TEF period National Student Survey (NSS) data which has consistently exceeded the average for England since 2017: Teesside was ranked 28th out of 123 participating institutions in the 2017 NSS for 'Assessment and Feedback'   rising to 11th out of 130 participating institutions in NSS 2022

We are delighted that due to our recognised expertise in the area of assessment and feedback, Adobe provided a Faculty Development Grant in 2021 for academics in each School to devise and evaluate innovative digital approaches to assessment and feedback. This is further reflected in our School of Health & Life Sciences' assessment project winning '*Most Innovative Approach to Engaging Students Using Educational Technology*' at the **Pearson HE Innovate Awards 2022**.

In October 2020, we were proud to become **the first recognised Adobe Creative Campus in Europe**, demonstrating our institutional commitment to and success in promoting digital literacy across all academic areas, aligned with our core FFL theme of digital empowerment. This further catalysed innovative approaches to teaching and assessment utilising the affordances of the Adobe Creative Cloud suite, enabled by a comprehensive staff development offer co-delivered by Adobe experts. For our students, all of whom have access to the Adobe Creative Cloud suite, this includes a clear focus on improving employability through the effective use of digital tools,

Our NSS results are testament to our hard work in creating outstanding teaching and learning opportunities and experiences. In NSS 2022, we were ranked **in the top 25% (27th out of 130) of participating institutions for '*Learning opportunities*'**
        81.8% of respondents confirmed that '*My course has provided me with opportunities to apply what I have learnt*', compared to an England average of 77.1%.

SE4: Empowering Staff through Values-driven Staff Development

Our staff are actively encouraged to find creative and innovative ways to draw on our institutional values in their working practice. Our extensive pedigree in the development of teaching excellence is evidenced through our unrelenting commitment to staff professional development and the development of excellent academic practice (reinforced by the prominent placing of SE4 within this submission). Our work in this area has received wide external recognition, particularly in our work to upskill staff at scale.

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We have held Investors in People (IiP) accreditation since 1999. The most recent reaccreditation report, resulting in a prestigious **IiP Gold award**, explicitly referenced the professional development and support for staff identified and implemented in support of the adoption of Future Facing Learning:

> *'A key developmental intervention relates to the development of the knowledge and skills which were initially identified to support the Future Facing Learning strategy.'*

Reflecting this work and the growing digital capabilities of our staff, we received global recognition for institution-wide high impact staff professional development through winning the **Catalyst Award 2022 from Anthology** for the CPD associated with the rollout of the Blackboard Ultra VLE.

We are proud of the **high proportion of our teaching staff (73%) that possess a recognised teaching qualification**, ranking Teesside joint 36th of 189 HE providers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland on this measure (HESA 2020/21). Our ambition remains to increase this proportion further, with structured mechanisms in place to achieve this, aligned with HR processes. Our bespoke PgCert in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education is one of the longest established in the UK and has been externally accredited since 1996. It remains a contractual requirement for all new staff who do not have a recognised HE teaching qualification or significant experience of teaching at HE level and sits alongside our wider bespoke framework, '*Recognising Excellence in Learning and Teachin*g' designed to support ongoing staff professional development. Both are aligned to the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) and are accredited by Advance HE, with successful completion leading to the award of Fellowships of the Higher Education Academy (HEA).

In 2021 Advance HE's Accreditation Panel[10] commended Teesside on our longstanding institutional commitment to the professional development of staff who teach and support learning, including clear processes to monitor and manage the quality of judgements; institutional engagement with the UKPSF across a number of integrated processes, e.g. Academic Induction for new staff, promotions pathways and annual professional development reviews; and the range of professional learning opportunities and initiatives aligned to the UKPSF that are inclusive and supported by comprehensive workshops and guidance.

Through these schemes and activities, all staff who teach and support learning, including our valued technicians and graduate tutors, are encouraged and supported to seek appropriate levels of Fellowship of the HEA. The success of this integrated approach is demonstrated by the increase in the proportion of staff with HEA Fellowship (Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow and Principal Fellow) which has risen from 50.5% in 2015/16 to 63.6% in 2021/22. This success places Teesside 2% ahead of the University Alliance average and approximately 17% ahead of both Universities UK (UUK) and sector averages[11]. The number of Principal Fellows increased from 7 in 2015/16 to 11 in 2020/21. In recent years, Teesside has continued to have staff recognised as National Teaching Fellows, demonstrating external validation of innovative teaching practices by individuals across the institution, with four new National Teaching Fellows recognised during the period in question.

To support our core FFL theme of digitally empowerment, we launched a mandatory Digital Development Programme in 2018 for all student-facing staff. This was purposefully designed to increase digital capabilities across the institution to ensure that we harness technologies to have meaningful impact within the classroom. The programme was shaped to develop the confidence of individuals to engage with a Future Facing Learning Digitally Empowered toolkit of apps within their teaching practice. Through this mechanism, Teesside was the **first HE institution in the UK to embed Microsoft Teams for learning and teaching at scale**. Digital development for staff has

subsequently continued at pace, and evolved to embrace emerging approaches to learning, teaching and academic support, such as effective use of learner analytics by Personal Tutors (see SE5 below).

staff completed the programme,   additionally recognised as Microsoft Innovative Educators. We are also proud to have staff who have taken the next step and become Microsoft Innovative Educator Experts (MIEE). Our analysis demonstrated that Teesside employed the highest number of MIEEs in UK HE sector between 2018/19 and 2020/21. Microsoft promoted our approach to professional development through a global case study[12]. **Participant satisfaction with the development programme was outstanding at 96%,**   confirming that the programme fully met their learning and development needs

We frequently host senior delegations from other institutions to explore how we have implemented FFL. For example, Teesside hosted the UCISA Future Facing Learning Study Tour 2020 for senior managers from   UK HEIs to showcase our innovative digital learning practices, with a particular emphasis on the digital transformation of learning and teaching at scale. Feedback highlighted the influence of Teesside practice on other institutions:

> *'It was very relevant to us, prompted some excellent discussions with my Learning & Teaching colleague on the way back and provided many ideas to bring back into our University.'*

A world-leading digital learning toolkit developed by Teesside to aid teaching staff in designing impactful online learning experiences, with support from Jisc, was published by EDUCAUSE[13] in 2021 for the US Education sector. This has now already been adopted by around 83 learning organisations across the globe to inform and shape their institutional approaches to staff development within the context of Education 4.0.

We are proud that we demonstrate parity of esteem between a variety of promotional pathways for academic staff. Those who choose the learning and teaching route can secure advancement to Associate Professor and Professor (Learning & Teaching) based on appropriate expertise and sector recognition for the design, delivery and impact of innovative learning and teaching. Individuals progressing through this promotional pathway contribute to key institutional initiatives to enhance pedagogic practice, demonstrating an embedded institutional approach to talent management. We awarded our first two Professorships in Learning and Teaching in 2022. Once appointed, Associate Professors and Professors undertake enhancement projects across the institution to deliver pedagogic enhancement at scale. In 2021/22, the eight Associate Professors conducted a review and revision of the Academic Enhancement Framework (see SE2), ensuring current best practice is infused into all courses undergoing approval and review via a coherent structure.

We additionally promote the sharing and embedding excellent academic practice through our institutional learning and teaching conferences. Now in their 16th year, these conferences provide an opportunity for staff and students to disseminate good practice, both within and beyond the University.

Our innovative educators are frequently invited to deliver keynote speeches and facilitate workshops externally on a global scale. Such activities are enabled by institutional investment in the external development and dissemination of practice by teaching staff.

SE2: 'Course First': how we inspire student engagement and develop potential

FFL takes a 'course first' approach to designing a coherent portfolio, focussing on equality of opportunity and creating a consistent student experience. To achieve this, Course Design Events emphasise the overall coherence and connectedness of learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment practices to meet FFL requirements and enable and support our students – whatever their starting point – to develop their knowledge and skills to their fullest potential and become future-ready graduates. This is driven through embedding the five FFL core themes within the curriculum design and course approval process.

The Academic Enhancement Framework (AEF)[14], established in 2019 and reviewed in 2022 by our expert learning and teaching staff, is one of the key tools that operationalises our strategic priorities including FFL, across the institution. The AEF consists of nine core themes, namely: Future Ready, Research Active, Digitally Empowered, Globally Connected, Socially & Ethically Engaged, Transitions, Student Success, Student Voice, and Wellbeing (the latter recognises the importance of wellbeing on academic success). A matrix for each theme, designed by key stakeholders across the University and partner institutions, defines characteristic practice for course teams: from very high quality to outstanding. The AEF ensures that all elements of the student experience – from resources and the professional development of teaching staff to course design and content (via course approval and periodic review) and broader enhancement work remains strategically aligned and coherent through the overarching structure provided by FFL. It acts as a consistent enabling mechanism to inject institutional priorities into the student experience.

The rigorous course approval and review process is verified and informed by the externality on Approval Panels, stemming from independent external academic input, employer and practitioner contributions and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation (as appropriate). We currently work with 42 PSRBs, with active engagement across all academic Schools. Where relevant, service user/carer representatives are also invited to contribute to approval or review events to ensure appropriate consideration of professional practice. Staff further bring their own research practice to inform curriculum design and the student experience. Since 2018, **a total of 489 courses have been challenged to situate FFL within curriculum design** and delivery as part of our approval or periodic review processes.

We have adopted a University wide embedded approach to Universal Design for Learning (UDL) interrogating reasonable adjustment data and looking for commonality for broader curriculum interventions to ensure that all students are supported to meet their potential.

Our AEF further enables the close synergy between classroom teaching and industry practice (addressed further in SE3 below), which is evidenced in student feedback from the 2022 NSS:

> *'The organisation of the modules over time and the quality of the content taken is excellent and very applicable in the workplace. This course prepares you well to enter the workforce with confidence and start making important contributions since day one.'*

This is augmented by our bespoke Module Design Toolkit[15] (comprising good practice suggestions, examples and recommendations) which has been developed in conjunction with a student intern to support all Teesside Course Teams to create high-quality experiences that meet student expectations, provide intellectual challenge and promote engagement in learning.

Our Module Evaluation Survey helps us to understand where this is working and where we need to focus attention. Utilisation of module-level student feedback enabled a local focus on improvement and enhancement, drawing upon targeted staff development (both internal and external) and the

publication of specific resources and guidance for course teams. The responses for '*Staff have made the subject interesting*' evidenced a sustained improved performance from 78.4% in Semester 1 2019/20   to 84.1% in Semester 1 2021/22

SE3: Embedding future readiness

Our outstanding academic experience is augmented by and infused with employer partner contributions and wider professional practice opportunities. The close integration of academic and professional practice is demonstrated by the recent award of the title of Queen's Nurse from the Queen's Nursing Institute to a Lecturer in Community Nursing. This prestigious award was given in recognition of a high level of commitment to patient care and improving nursing practice as a leader and role model.

From the first stages of course development and validation, as part of our quality standards, we require all academic teams to engage with industry, employers and/or practitioners. Recent examples include Primary Care Training Centre, Cleveland Police, Circle Health Group, Bond Solon, Mitie, the Northeast Ambulance Service and TÜV SÜD Ltd. This ensures that the design of our courses not only meet the current and emerging needs of industry but also reflect current industry practice and standards.

As a result of such partnerships, Teesside has been able to offer an extensive range of experiential learning opportunities including live projects, conferences, year-long placements, undergraduate and graduate internships, international exchanges, work experience and clinics. These opportunities provide external validation of the future readiness of our students. For example, in 2022, Teesside students won 'The Greggs Marketing Challenge', an annual competition where North East universities (Teesside, Sunderland, Northumbria, and Newcastle) come together to tackle a real-world marketing challenge. Working to an industry brief focussed on business growth, student teams deliver projects as part of an assessment for core modules.

Our unswerving commitment to nurturing future ready graduates, in alignment with our University mission, is also evident in the growth of apprenticeship provision in partnership with employers. We currently support a community of over 1500 higher and degree apprentices across 32 programmes, working with over 200 employers. While these programmes are built on employer-led occupational standards, continuing partnership with employers is fundamental to ensuring the contextual relevance of the knowledge, skills and behaviours we work together to develop in our apprentices. As a result of this partnership approach, our long-standing and growing collaborations with our local NHS trusts was recognised as critical in Teesside receiving the **Nursing Associate Training Programme Provider of the Year prize at the Student Nursing Times Awards 2020.**

We are proud that following an Ofsted inspection of all higher and degree apprenticeship provision in January 2019[16], we were judged to be **outstanding in all areas** incorporating: effectiveness of leadership and management; quality of teaching, learning and assessment; personal development, behaviour and welfare opportunities; outcomes for learners and overall effectiveness. Inspectors noted the following: '*Staff have very high expectations of apprentices, and the support that they provide is excellent. As a result, apprentices gain significantly in confidence; they are able to participate in learning at a higher level than previously and respond successfully to the rigour and academic challenge of their apprenticeships*'. We are also proud that they noted the quality and ease of navigation of academic support as building relationships and support for apprentices (whose primary status may be that of employee) has been noted as a key challenge in other providers[17]: '*Because of the excellent and extensive guidance that staff provide, apprentices have a detailed understanding of the wide range of learning and personal support that they can access at the*

university. Apprentices are able to access help and support related to a wide range of personal development, health and welfare issues.'

SE5: Tailored and seamless academic support

Student support is a key strength of our tailored provision, created through an integrated and holistic offer which embraces a range of academic needs. Our approach is based on evidence gathered through a comprehensive end-to-end review of our student experience, working with an independent consultancy team, in 2018[18]. The review found a number of areas where our students encountered inconsistency in their experiences of support and struggled to navigate the internal architecture of the institution. We were conscious that because of the nature of our student population this has the potential to contribute to continuation, completion and progression. The independent findings, alongside intelligence gathered through our own wide-ranging experiences of working with students, catalysed a bold evidence-based student academic support service redesign which seamlessly integrated the support received within and beyond classroom settings. At the heart of this work is our data-led approach to academic support, which allows Personal Tutors to connect with targeted Student Success interventions and our central Student Life offer.

Key to our data-led approach (from 2019) has been our learner analytics platform (StREAM) which provides personalised dashboards for staff and students to monitor engagement with learning and associated interventions, including records of tutorials, library resources engagement, attendance records and online interactions. StREAM encourages student engagement by comparing individual engagement measures with those of their peers, and increases the visibility of students who need additional support with key staff members. Most significantly, StREAM facilitates seamless referrals and monitoring of individual student cases between Personal Tutors and other support functions, providing a single source of truth for data and subsequent actions. Through meshing together academic and pastoral functions into a single unified approach, we draw upon multiple points of intelligence gathering to inform enhancements to ensure academic success. Our journey towards this is detailed below as we outline the critical cogs in our integrated and holistic support offer.

Our Personal Tutors provide critical front-line, high quality academic support, informed by robust data on student engagement and attainment. To scaffold this, in 2018/19 we introduced a new Personal Tutoring Code of Practice with the expectation that each student is known, valued and their respective needs recognised and supported. During 2021/22 an Academic Professional Standards evaluation[19] verified the consistent operation of the Code of Practice and provided recommendations for future enhancement based on best practice examples identified across the institution.

We ensure the high quality of our academic support through a consistent workload allocation to ensure tutors have the time to address the needs of their tutees and a package of professional development and guidance for new and existing Personal Tutors. This has been informed (since 2020) by our partnership with the UK Advising and Tutoring (UKAT) association, an expert community of practice engaged in advancing the scholarship and practice of student advising and tutoring. We are one of only 11 institutions to have worked with UKAT to pilot their professional standards and recognition scheme. Since 2020, 16 Teesside staff have received UKAT recognition, including three **nationally Recognised Leaders in Advising**. In both 2021 and 2022 Teesside staff were recognised in the national award 'Outstanding Contribution to UKAT' which recognises individuals who have shown outstanding dedication and commitment to supporting sectoral advising practice through the work of UKAT.

Our initial work using learner analytics data highlighted our need to strengthen the provision of specialist staffing resource to deliver swift, data-led interventions. This resulted in significant

investment in a team of dedicated specialist Student Success Tutors in 2021, who provide support in numeracy, academic writing, study skills and engagement. Driving a Student Success Programme[20] (SSP), they act to support students at risk of disengagement who would benefit from tailored one-to-one academic support interventions to help them succeed in their studies. The primary aim of the SSP is to empower students to take control of their learning – goals are set individually for each student to promote autonomous learning, confidence in academic skills and engagement with their studies. Students are identified through learner analytics engagement data and academic or support service team referrals. This includes referrals aligned to our Student Attendance & Engagement Policy. In 2021/22,   students were onboarded to the inaugural iteration of the SSP, spanning all curriculum areas and with representation from levels 3 through to 7. Close monitoring of outcomes data at institutional level will inform further embedding and honing of the SSP over coming years.

Student feedback[21] from those who have engaged with our SSP to date is overwhelming positive, with   respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that Student Success Tutors have created a safe and encouraging space to facilitate their development, and that they have made personal progress from being on the programme.   respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more engaged with their studies after completing the programme

'Student success has helped me massively.

after the first 20 minutes of my first session, I felt like a whole weight was lifted.'

'Before starting my tutoring lessons, I felt nervous as I've always felt embarrassed because of how hard I found   to be… [the tutor] made me feel at ease throughout the tutoring lessons and …[worked] at a pace which suited me and which I understood. Now I feel really confident with my mathematics skills and this will help me in the long run with my future career.'

The early success of this integrated data-led approach to academic support is emerging in our metrics. In NSS 2022 the questions linked to Academic Support resulted in Teesside being ranked 53rd out of 130 participating institutions in the NSS
which evidenced an enhanced performance from the previous survey outcome.

Success is   evidenced by our 2021/22 student outcomes data with   participants that were identified as 'at-risk' through our data analytics approach subsequently supported to continue and complete their course of study in 2021/22. Importantly, withdrawal rates for this group were in line with the remainder of our student population, despite the identified factors placing them at increased risk of withdrawal.

Complementing the targeted programme of support, our Succeed@Tees offer provides a series of open workshops and a wealth of resources designed and created to help all Teesside students become more effective learners, able to succeed in higher education. An average academic year now sees   students attending workshops. Recently celebrating 10 years in operation, Succeed@Tees has continued to grow and develop provision to ensure continued relevance to our unique student population. In addition, the pandemic provided a requirement to revisit and review delivery models and ensure that academic support is readily available at a time and in a format that best suits our current student population. As such, 2020 saw a notable increase in delivery through online collaborative tools, more evening workshops and increased flipped learning content. As well as this more blended approach, we have introduced bitesize and Q&A sessions for students who

want quick tips or refresher information, and longer bootcamp sessions linked to key touchpoints in the student journey. Feedback from students is overwhelmingly positive:

'This will help me to be precise in my academic writing and to make timely decisions in my career.'

'I haven't written academically for a long time, so it was a great refresher to help my confidence.'

Our overarching strategic concept of 'Student Life' - designed and driven by students themselves - has been critical to creating our integrated (targeted and whole-population) and seamless academic and pastoral support function. With this lens at the forefront of our thinking we have been able to situate critical holistic student support physically and symbolically at the heart of our university (and campus) in our Student Life building, a brand-new central support facility. This central space draws together all student-facing touchpoints from counselling to careers, in both physical and virtual ways, to drive pro-active interventions that have direct impact on academic success. As the building progressed towards opening, students were part of all key decision-making groups. Student personas were developed which allowed us to consider services from a diverse range of student perspectives and to clearly focus our outstanding academic support service and offer. Students tell us that the rehoming of our work in this tangible 'space' has further enabled them to know where (physically and digitally) to ask for support and to feel comfortable in doing so. This provides the rationale for situating the Student Success and Student Futures Teams prominently within the Student Life Building.

The success of Student Life has been evident from its launch, with over **32,000 student visits to the building in the first month of opening**. We continue to monitor data concerning student queries and timely resolution to drive continuous improvement. For example, a notable recent trend in queries relating to post-pandemic anxiety around exams on campus resulted in the redesign and relaunch of a customised support package throughout the assessment period. The Student Life Building has also achieved external recognition winning the Education Category Award at the 2020 RICS Social Impact Awards and the Pupil/Student Experience Prize at the Education Estates Awards.

We understand that some of the best academic support can come from those who have had recent personal learning experiences. Purposeful peer support supplements the Student Life offer, provided by our Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) with   individual students supported since 2018/19 and participation growing year on year. In 2019/20, in response to the pandemic, a buddying scheme was also launched. This scheme was intended for new students at Teesside to help them settle into university, referring them to support services when needed
Feedback shows it has had significant impact:

'For me, the PASS programme was great when I first started this course and helped with my own nervousness and created a great environment for me'

'From being involved in PASS lectures   it helped me develop and improve my anatomy and physiology knowledge. Being able to talk to the PASS team about ideas and their experience really helped in getting the grades I have… achieved.'

In response to the particular needs of our student population, in 2022 we invested in our first student leadership programme through GRIT training[22], focussed on identifying what it takes for an

individual student to achieve and thrive in their studies. GRIT was chosen as they were able to demonstrate their significant positive impact on widening participation students, evidenced by previous training in other providers which had demonstrated that progression rates for students from widening backgrounds were higher where GRIT sessions had been attended.

After the training[23],   students indicated they agreed or strongly agreed that they were now more comfortable engaging with other students and feedback demonstrated the positive impact the session had:

> *'I found the training an amazing space that felt comfortable to be honest with and about yourself and connecting with people I never met or that I did not know that well.'*

> *'The training was really insightful and I'm glad I went through it actually having action points on things I could implement in my life right now.'*

The deep integration of student support functions across Teesside, reflecting the distinctive needs of the student body, directly contributed to the award of **University of the Year for Social Inclusion in The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2022**.

> *'The award of University of the Year for Social Inclusion recognises that Teesside University is a force for change, that supports its student community to realise their ambitions, today, and to become the leaders of tomorrow.'*

SE6: A step change to our physical and virtual learning environments and resources

The value to the student experience provided by effective and impactful support mechanisms is further increased by inspiring and enabling spaces, which serve as an underpinning factor for FFL. In addition to our Student Life Building (discussed in SE5). Significant investment has been made in physical and digital learning resources, with £275 million invested in delivery of the campus masterplan to transform the estate and provide vibrant and innovative facilities for students and staff. Decision-making and planning around new and refurbished campus facilities is a result of meaningful collaboration between Campus Services and learning and teaching specialists. Every general purpose teaching room has been refurbished in recent years, ensuring alignment with our innovative FFL pedagogic practices focussed on collaborative active learning, and enabling our institutional approach to digital learning. Hardware across the estate is refreshed on a regular cycle, and this has been supplemented more recently by growth in remote access capability. Spend per student has increased from £2,152 in the 2018 Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide using 2014/15 and 2015/16 finance data to £2,781 in 2022 in the same league tables using 2018/19 and 2019/20 finance data.

With the exception of the 2021 pandemic year, the NSS registered population response rates for all modes of study and all levels of study for Learning Resources have consistently exceeded the average for England between 2019 and 2022. In 2022, Teesside ranked 42nd out of 130 participating institutions with a score of 82.6%

resulting in an average positive score between 2019 and 2022 of 82.9%. The responses from our Module Evaluation Survey for '*I have been able to access module-specific resources when I needed to*' evidenced a sustained performance throughout 2021/22 from 86.4% in Semester 1

to 85.3% in Semester 2
and 85.9% in Semester

3

We are proud to have been named as the **EduFuturist University of the Year 2022** for digital innovation in learning and teaching. The evolution of the digital transformation programme for learning and teaching since 2018 has been driven by a commitment to harnessing the affordances of technology to empower our students' learning, enable equality of opportunity and strengthen their digital skills for future career success. This includes substantial investment in establishing a 'best in class' digital infrastructure. Since 2018, we have implemented a new VLE, learner analytics platform, student app and attendance recording solution. As demonstrated above, the digital transformation programme has sought to surface accurate and timely data to drive interventions and decision-making across all levels of the organisation linked to the student experience.

Our digital transformation has received widespread recognition on a global scale and was described by Microsoft as **'one of the biggest shake-ups the higher education sector has ever seen to help students prepare for future jobs'**.

Teesside continues to invest in library resources comparing well in the sector for resource budget, FTE spend and ensuring 24/7 opening can be maintained all year round. In addition, during 2021/22 £100,000 was invested in Patron Drive Acquisition triggering 860 additional titles and ensuring the library collection continues to be tailored to student need. Since 2018/19 library e-resource use has significantly grown, including a 289% increase in ebook usage resulting in 3,643,416 accessed in 2021/22. In the same time period, 30% more information literacy sessions were delivered with 2021/22 seeing 1,140 sessions delivered to students. As well as delivering direct training, librarians have produced 236 subject-specific LibGuides allowing students to access refresher and additional information to ensure they get the most out of library resources.

Working with our commuter students we have become fully cognisant of the particular challenges they face in accessing learning alongside caring and work commitments, and wider societal challenges around digital poverty and inclusion. With this in mind, we purposefully designed and launched the Advance Scheme in 2018[24], equipping all full-time undergraduate students with an iPad, toolkit of apps and £100 credit per annum for the purchase of resources to support learning with a particular focus on academic texts. By the 2022/23 academic year, investment in the Advance Scheme will have exceeded £11 million. A student pulse survey in 2021 found that **92% of respondents used their iPads at least several times a week**, and 15% of respondents had used the device to aid in home schooling of children during the pandemic

The Advance Scheme, and associated student training and support, provide a level playing field for students to access high quality digital learning materials both on campus and at home, as the following student feedback attests:

> it has massively supported me in my studies and it is so much easier in regards to placement and being able to research and work whilst at placement without having to take a big laptop or trying to use one of the computers   whilst people are busy.'

> 'I completed my whole degree using my free Advance iPad and the learning apps! There was nothing I couldn't do on it. Even when learning moved online.'

Between 2018 and 2022, **83% of students eligible for the scheme have utilised at least some of their funds** to purchase learning equipment or resources. This includes specific book bundles designed to reflect the needs of each individual course. Average spend has increased by 9% since the launch of the scheme. 79% of purchases to date have

consisted of books, with stationery and art materials and computing equipment making up 13% and 7% of all purchases respectively. During the pandemic, students were able to use some of their funds to purchase mobile data to overcome unreliable or non-existent home broadband connectivity.

Whilst it may be noted that apprentice satisfaction with learning resources, evidenced through the NSS, is lower on average than their PT/FT UG counterparts, we believe this outcome can be traced directly to the impact of the pandemic. Apprentice satisfaction with learning resources rose from 85.4% in 2019   to 90.2% in 2020
                                                         However, satisfaction fell to 73.6% in
2021   and 73.0% in 2022
                                        The decrease in satisfaction with learning resources during periods impacted by the pandemic may be linked to the pressures under which apprentices operated whilst both learning and working remotely, including the challenge of navigating both University and workplace systems. Prior to the pandemic, apprentice satisfaction with learning resources remained high, and this was validated by the 2019 Ofsted inspection report[25] in the context of institutional resource management:

> *'They take very effective steps to ensure that apprenticeship programmes are well resourced. Consequently, apprentices benefit significantly from their access and exposure to excellent resources and learning environments.'*

As noted above, Teesside has placed students at the heart of all decision making and learning, teaching and student experience strategies are shaped by the context of our student body. The importance of in-person personalised support within this context has been discussed above, and the restriction of this during the pandemic was felt deeply by our students. Teesside attempted to mitigate this by guaranteeing all students a minimum of 4 hours in-person weekly teaching (the maximum possible due to social distancing restrictions on campus) outwith national or regional 'lockdowns'. The limited contact on campus was felt deeply by our students and was reflected in our NSS performance during this period. The value of in-person learning and integrated support, reflecting the distinctive characteristics of our student body and articulated by the student voice, was therefore fully recognised and a full return to planned on-campus teaching was achieved from September 2021. The success of this response to student feedback is evident in the substantial improvements made in NSS 2022. This validates the strategic approach taken during this TEF period and demonstrates the premium that our students place on the added value and associated gains offered by the University.

SE7: Energising the Student Voice

We are proud of our mature and well-established culture of partnership working with students, underpinned by systems that empower meaningful opportunities for students to engage in feedback and discussion with us during their time at Teesside. Mechanisms including Pulse Surveys, Module Evaluation Surveys, NSS, the International Student Barometer and student representation on School and University Committees including the Student Experience Sub-Committee which is co-chaired by a student and a senior academic, ensure that actionable insights into the student experience form the basis for strategic enhancements. Our institutional approach to course design (see SE2) empowers students to shape their education through their active involvement in the design and delivery of their learning.

These mechanisms complement and augment the significant number of opportunities for feedback organised and/or initiated by the Students' Union including co-ordinating meetings at a School level between Course Representatives and the Associate Dean (Learning & Teaching), and School Representative Forums. A variety of informal feedback opportunities are also available both within

and outside formal teaching including the Personal Tutoring system and feedback mechanisms offered by key University Departments. A dedicated mechanism has been established for students to email queries relating to the expectations of their experience outlined in the Student Charter, supplemented by weekly 'check in' telephone calls to provide insight into the experiences of a sample of individual students from across the University.

Teesside has invested in funded opportunities for students to explore the experiences of their peers, and co-design solutions and enhancements. This includes the creation of dedicated Student Engagement Assistant (SEA) posts from 2020 onward. A pool of   SEAs are recruited throughout the year from our student body to work alongside library staff providing service delivery support across both the Library and the Student Life Building. In addition, the SEAs are offered the opportunity to identify, create and participate in projects intended to improve the student experience. SEAs are also given full Teesside staff status and are held to the same high standards as all staff, thus providing them with the opportunity to develop valuable employability skills within a supportive environment.

To ensure that the student voice could be heard at scale, in 2017 Teesside implemented a new module evaluation system, EvaSys, to drive a consistent approach to sourcing and acting upon student feedback across all modules. This forms a critical component in our approach to continuous monitoring and enhancement, enabling timely interventions and building staff capacity for evidence-based enhancement through a data-led approach. Using a standard question set, all taught students receive an online survey for every module during each semester. Through operating the survey in Weeks 8 and 9 of each semester, immediate changes to module delivery can be made, where appropriate to do so. The utilisation of EvaSys has provided a consistent source of student feedback data each semester across the University for analysis at module level, and subsequent aggregation at course, School and institutional levels. In addition, EvaSys has been supplemented with 'closing the loop' functionality, ensuring that all students receive the results of the survey for their modules along with an action plan from their Module Leader each semester. This equates to circa 291,374 reflections sent out to students between September 2018 and August 2022. This feedback mechanism has significantly strengthened the student voice in continuous enhancement of teaching delivery and improvements at module and course level, as this student comment makes clear:

> *'The amount of response from each lecturer was surprising to many, as people didn't completely realise it was being dealt with, so seeing these added to the realisation that the University is taking everything on board and the evaluations work.'*

We are proud of our success in energising the student voice through meaningful partnership, and recognise that supporting students to feel confident in providing critical and constructive feedback contributes to the building of cultural capital and social efficacy for our students. During 2022, the NSS registered population response rate for all modes of study and all levels of study resulted in Teesside being ranked **15th out of 130 participating institutions for 'Student Voice'**   The value of the 'closing the loop' function of Module Evaluation Surveys is reflected in 60.7% of NSS 2022 registered responses confirming that they were clear how student's feedback was acted upon, compared to an England average of 51.9%.

We are keen to showcase to our students that their partnership, participation and feedback is vitally important to us and our continuing success. With this in mind, we purposefully designed a new approach to formal dialogue focused on the importance of the Student Voice as the fundamental feature of the student learning experience through a change of approach from 'Course Boards' to 'Student Voice Fora' (SVFs), reinforced through collaborative working and support with our

Students' Union. The format of SVFs evolves over the academic year, reflecting the relevant stage in the student journey, ensuring that course related matters can be addressed through Spotlight meetings. Students influence both School and institutional matters through direct engagement with School Senior Management Teams and the University Executive Team as part of Town Hall meetings. We are proud of our work in this area and believe this is reflected in our positive 2022 NSS results where Teesside was ranked **19th out of 130 participating institutions**) **for 'Learning community'** 67.1% of respondents confirmed that '*I feel part of a community of staff and students*', compared to an England average of 61.1%.

Partnership working with students remains intrinsic to our approach to enhancement. The Students' Union President for Education and Deputy Student Support Manager for the Students' Union meet with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) and Director of Student and Library Services on a six-weekly basis. The agenda for these meetings is set by the SU providing opportunity for a proactive and responsive approach to feedback and insight from the student body.

The Students' Union established a student-led awards scheme recognising staff excellence[26] in 2013/14, which subsequently became a collaborative initiative with Teesside. All awards relating to learning and teaching are based upon student nominations, and student representatives play an active role on the judging panel. The Students' Union Officers hold regular 'SU on Tour' campaigns to engage with the student body and between 2018/19 and 2021/22, 5,071 recorded interactions with students took place.

3. Student Outcomes

SO1 – Tailored approaches supporting student progression and success

Drawing upon FFL, we utilise a strategic approach that is highly effective in ensuring students succeed and progress beyond their studies as demonstrated by our student outcomes metrics (see SO2-3 below). Our most recent Graduate Outcomes data
highlights that 78.1% of our graduates are in professional / managerial roles or further study 15 months post-graduation. Given our reputation for social inclusion, our outcomes have significant impact on social mobility and opportunities for under-represented groups. Teesside was ranked joint 41st out of 131 institutions for 'Graduate Prospects' in The Times & Sunday Times Good University Guide 2023.

Our approach is driven by a deep understanding of the needs of our student body. Place is of significant importance to our students. The Tees Valley Higher Education Report 2021[27] highlights that 41% of Tees Valley graduates found employment within the Tees Valley, with 49% finding employment within the North East. Graduate Outcomes benchmark progression data by location of graduate (county or unitary authority) highlights that 41% of all respondents employed in the Tees Valley graduated from Teesside University. The Graduate Outcomes data and our Teesside Future Ready Survey for 2018/19[28] evidenced that 79% of final year students are unlikely to move away from their home area to find a job.

We have taken a multi-faceted approach to delivering this ambition, including engagement with local employers, opportunities for employers to network with our students and creation of experiential learning opportunities with placements and live projects.

As with our other work, our approach to driving student success and progression is data-informed, personalised in nature and delivered in partnership with employers. In 2018, we introduced a Future Ready Survey[29] to capture and tailor the transformative effect of a Teesside education on a student's outcomes and transition post-graduation. With an annual average response rate of 92% over the last four years, it ensures that we deliver in line

with the needs of our students. Survey data further provides a longitudinal perspective of student growth over time and a real-time snapshot (at the beginning of each level of study) of each student's sense of progress in their 'recruit-ability' and employability journey. This data is analysed to determine insights relative to others or over time at a cohort, subject, School, and institutional level. The survey supplies us with a rich picture of individual students that enables the creation of personalised journeys, the tailoring of communication and the 'packaging' of opportunities relevant to individuals to increase their distance travelled over the student lifecycle, alongside informing the continuous improvement in course design and delivery. This data allows our central Student Futures team to provide actionable insights for course teams to inform the nature and shape of the curriculum and offer tailored local interventions. Student Futures staff directly inform curriculum design through the course approval and review process.

During the period in scope, to prepare students for graduate employment, Student Futures delivered 2,384 individual coaching sessions, and our 'Online Employability Essentials' resources were utilised by   students. To strengthen the promotion of vacancies to students and graduates we invested in a dedicated online platform, with 14,797 vacancies advertised since 2018/19[30].

Teesside has a long history of highly successful employer engagement activities, in alignment with our University mission. Aligned with the curriculum, students collaborate on live employer projects, engage in work experience and undertake internships (see also SE2 and SE3 above). Since 2017/18, we have created   student and graduate internships in conjunction with SMEs, 92% of which have been within the Tees Valley. 29% of employers return each year to source new talent for their business.[31]

Since 2018/19,   students have participated in employer workshops, including online events. Animex, our international festival of games and animation, has served as a showcase event for our students with creative industry employers for over 20 years.
                                                                                    Our commitment to showcasing student work to employers was sustained during the pandemic, with   online attendees from 55 countries in 2021 and 1,473 registrations for the free online festival in 2020.

We recognise, support and celebrate the range of destinations achieved by our students. Teesside has supported   new graduate start-ups in total over the 3-year period 2018/19 to 2020/21, placing us =7th in the KEF Cluster J group and 6th in the University Alliance. During the same period, Teesside is ranked 2nd in the KEF Cluster J group (and 3rd in the University Alliance) for the average number of active start-ups that have survived for three years. Average cumulative turnover of graduate start-ups (2018/19 to 2020/21) is £49m per year – the highest in both KEF Cluster J and University Alliance groups. These successes are enabled by a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem across the campus, with a particular focus on social enterprise. Established in 2015, Launchpad[33] is our support hub for student and graduate enterprise, with a particular emphasis on social enterprises. Fledgling social enterprise companies being supported through Launchpad were recognised in the Tees Best New Business Awards 2022.

Our personalised approach to support progression into graduate level employment embraces a range of exit trajectories post-graduation, including the provision of tailored support where required. Through the ERDF funded project Graduates for Growth (GforG), we have worked with SMEs in the Tees Valley to recruit talented graduates as either fully funded interns or part-funded employees. The £1.7 million project, initially over three years but extended to five as a result of the pandemic, provided new graduates with hands on experience in their first graduate role. It also allowed companies to access part-financed graduate talent for short term projects, trial prospective

employees and recruit a recent graduate whilst enabling organisations to access graduate knowledge, skills, and technological know-how to help increase their performance, productivity, and competitiveness. The programme also allowed companies to develop new-to-company products, processes, or services to contribute to their growth. Interns are appointed for fully-funded 12-week graduate internships and employed by Teesside. Alternatively, the project offers part-funding towards the employment of a graduate with a contribution of up to £5000 per company over a longer 26-week period. A recent testimonial from an employer articulates:

> *'We have been really impressed with the high calibre of graduates at Teesside University, and it has been a terrific experience being involved in helping get young graduates into work. Giving a graduate a live project to work on has given them the chance to show us what they are capable of achieving - enabling us to create longer term roles based around their personal strengths and passions, and of course what they have learned in their studies!'*

In addition to the Graduates for Growth programme, we have invested significantly in the regional economy by creating an extensive programme of graduate internships, placing 607 graduates with SMEs for up to 12 weeks. These opportunities were welcomed by employers and interns:

> *'(the intern) provided significant support to a time-bound project which has led to further opportunities for extended project work with the project sponsor.' (Employer feedback)*

> *'Completing a graduate internship gives you the opportunity to put everything you have learned into practice by collaborating as part of a professional team with a common goal.' (Intern feedback)*

Our Access and Participation Plan 2020-2024 evidences our commitment to improving the equality of opportunity for students through embracing tailored approaches that meet the needs of specific student groups. For example, we developed specific guidance and support relating to attainment, progression and achievement for those with mental health issues, including a new Mental Health, Wellbeing and Resilience (MHWR) strategy and secured OfS challenge competition funding that will be used to improve the rates of progression of students from under-represented groups, by providing targeted support to develop skills, attributes and meaningful graduate-level opportunities in the Tees Valley (see also SE1 and SE5 above).

SO2-3: Outstanding Continuation, Completion and Progression Rates

Teesside is broadly in line with our continuation benchmarks for full and part-time study (full-time 88.9% compared with a benchmark of 87.9%, part-time 69.8% compared with a benchmark of 69.1%) as reflected in the TEF dashboard. For apprentices, we are materially above our benchmark (91.5% compared to a benchmark of 88.1%). For all modes of study, Teesside is materially above the completion rate benchmarks (full-time 88.0% compared to a benchmark of 84.0%, part-time 74.9% compared with a benchmark of 67.8% and apprenticeships 87.0% compared to a benchmark of 75.2%). The full-time progression rate stands at 72.3% which is above the benchmark on the TEF dashboard of 72.2%, for part-time the indicator stands at 68.3% compared with a benchmark of 74.9% and for apprenticeships it stands at 89.2% compared to 86.2%.

The student numbers associated with the part-time indicator are relatively small, Further analysis of the remaining data reveals that although students did not progress to graduate level roles initially, they did progress to jobs and industries that were relevant to the academic award from which they had graduated.

SO4-6: Educational Gains

Beyond the student outcome metrics, we conceptualise educational gains through the core themes of FFL, namely: Digitally Empowered, Research Active, Socially and Ethically Engaged, Globally Connected and Future Ready. These themes were co-developed with a range of internal and external stakeholders to ensure their relevance for our distinctive student body and are threaded through curriculum design and delivery by the Academic Enhancement Framework matrices[34] which provide mandatory baselines for approval and review of all courses, as well as shaping the professional development of teaching staff. Whilst the totality of the core FFL themes contributes to the attributes and future success of our graduates, course teams are encouraged to translate these as appropriate for the specific demands of their discipline, using the AEF matrices to structure their implementation at module and course level. Centrally facilitated Course Design Events for course teams navigating approval or periodic review events provide time and space for the distinctive course level approach to FFL adoption to be honed in conjunction with specialist expertise from central departments.

. Since 2021, our Associate Professors (Learning & Teaching) have worked across the University to identify, evaluate and share emerging good practice related to these educational gains. Whilst work remains to be done in crafting measurement mechanisms for all the FFL core themes, our approach to recognising gains through their lens provides an appropriate balance between a consistent institutional approach and local translation to meet the needs of specific sectors. We are developing a combination of institutional and subject-relevant measures of success aligned to the core FFL themes, which will become a focus for continuous improvement moving forward.

Educational Gain 1: Digitally Empowered

Digital inclusion remains a key societal challenge and may have a significant impact on commuter students in accessing reliable technology to support their learning when off campus. The Advance Scheme, outlined in SE6 above, was introduced specifically to provide equity and parity of access for all eligible students, thereby ensuring that staff are confident in introducing new digital learning initiatives. We remain alert to the need to ensure students and staff are empowered and energised by the affordances of technology (see SE6 above). As an example of this commitment, we undertook a comprehensive mapping of the recommendations of the OfS Gravity Assist report[35], with actions subsequently monitored through the institutional committee governance structure.

Monitoring the impact of digital learning initiatives is achieved through a specific question with the Module Evaluation Survey, providing feedback each semester across every module. This modular level focus allows good practice and areas for development to be identified. Intellectual stimulation catalysed by innovative curriculum design is evidenced in student feedback. The responses for '*I have had the opportunity to use digital tools or technologies to enhance my learning on this module*' evidenced a sustained improved performance from 77.5% in Semester 1 2020/21 to 83.5% in Semester 1 2021/22 We are proud that Teesside was awarded **second place in the '*Excellence in Digital Innovation*' category of the national Whatuni Student Choice Awards in 2021**.

We have invested to offer all students the opportunity to undertake professional certifications from Adobe and Microsoft at no additional cost to the individual, providing a clear line of sight between academic study and professional expertise. During the period in question, 1,005 Adobe and Microsoft professional certifications have been awarded to our students. In 2022, Teesside was officially recognised as a **Prodigy Learning Outstanding Centre of Excellence 2020-21**, as one of

only 20 centres in the UK and Ireland that deliver '***a continuous high volume of digital skills certifications at a high standard to students and staff***'. One of our students recently won third place in the Adobe Certified Professional World Championship in California USA, as **the highest ever ranked British finalist**. Student feedback reinforces the value of providing free certifications to aid in employability:

> *'Having this certification allows my job application to stand out more than others as the Adobe software is widely used in the designing industry. The certification has definitely allowed me to produce work of high quality as I apply the new skills I've learnt and I believe in the future it will allow me to produce creative and innovative work.'*

As well as providing educational gains for our teacher trainees, our work with schools and colleges across the North East is further evidence of our regional commitment and impact. Recognising the value of digital learning and teaching within the professional education curriculum, Teesside has worked to provide graduates with digital skills that can be easily translated into classroom settings across the education sector. Between 2018 and 2022,   trainee teachers studying at Teesside were certified as Apple Teachers providing future support for the educational experiences of students across the Tees Valley and beyond. Following a global review process, we are proud to be recognised as **an Apple Distinguished School for 2021-24, the only University in the UK to receive this designation**.

Educational Gain 2: Research Active

Through FFL, Teesside defines the concept of 'Research Active' to reflect the ability of students to synthesise theory and practice in ways that allow them to successfully navigate the challenges of contemporary society and make a meaningful contribution to the communities that they serve, whether through research, scholarship or professional practice (see also SE3 above). During this period, we have invested significantly in research as evidenced in the recent REF outcome. Between 2018/19 and 2021/22, the proportion of our staff possessing a doctorate increased from 40.4% to 43.1%. Through the AEF, research expertise and activities directly infuse course design and delivery. Research partnerships are actively harnessed to inform the student academic experience.

In 2021, the Sports Injury Management Clinic (SIMC) was **awarded a prestigious national Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence**, based on a sector-leading approach to bridging the student knowledge gap between theory and clinical experience. Driven by a multi-stakeholder collaborative model, the SIMC unites clinical and academic staff with external partners to provide an authentic environment in which students can develop skills and confidence in the clinical management of musculoskeletal conditions. Since 2018/19,   students have participated in the SIMC, treating   patients. Evolution of the SIMC model has been driven by the research interests of a National Teaching Fellow. A student-led research group initially identified sector-wide best practice and the necessity to bridge the gap between theory and clinical practice through such a pedological initiative. From evidenced-based teaching strategies to the utilisation of clinic data for student-led dissertation and research projects, a meaningful research community continues to be the driving factor behind evolution of the model. SIMC strives for extensive reach beyond the institution through sharing best practice, impacting student experiences at partner institutions and raising the status of learning and teaching through our research centred approach. The clinic model has been adopted by higher education institutions nationally and internationally, with sharing research the vehicle for collaboration, including the establishment of a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with two Chinese universities in 2018.

The Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (MIMA) provides a platform for students to harness their creative practice and scholarship for the benefit of local communities, as part of the Plus Tate dynamic network of visual arts organisations stretching across the UK that exchange ideas, knowledge, skills and resources and collaborate on joint programmes. The School of Arts and Creative Industries has developed a suite of modules that allow students to engage directly with the MIMA collection of over 2,500 art works and craft pieces that are of significant value and cultural significance both internationally and historically. Students work directly with the programme team to present, propose and pitch the exhibition or event in response to the collection. This event or exhibition is a public event held at MIMA, giving real world experiences into the development of an exhibition or curatorial display from origin to presentation.

Teesside has a long-established 'Students as Researchers' scheme[36] to provide meaningful opportunities for students to participate in collaborative research projects with academic staff.

Educational Gain 3: Socially and Ethically Engaged

We are committed to creating opportunities for our students to deliver value through collaborative working with the local community, in direct response to the localised nature of much of our student recruitment and a significant proportion of graduate employment locations. Through the mapping of FFL within course design processes, these opportunities may be facilitated for all students, as well as contextualised according to the needs of specific disciplines/employment sectors, as outlined below.

students have enrolled on the Teesside volunteering programme[37] undertaking over 67,000 volunteering hours. Recognition is given to students annually with internal Volun-cheers Awards having been achieved since 2017/18,
Students volunteer for a range of projects to tackle local issues, including mental health, education, social deprivation and loneliness. In 2021, student volunteers who offered vital support to vulnerable people in police custody helped the Volun-tees team earn a special recognition award from Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind which recognises their support in promoting opportunities during the pandemic for the Appropriate Adult role with the local mental health charity.

As an example of purposeful course design to facilitate social and ethical engagement, the Teesside University International Business School (TUIBS) has worked to embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across all courses and all levels of study within the School, which has been a signatory member of the UN Principles for Responsible Management Education since 2018. All first-year undergraduate students   participate in a Business Enterprise module which involves working in teams to develop a sustainable business model drawing on the SDGs, with their findings showcased to a panel of academics and practitioners. At level 6, the 'Sustainability, Strategy and Society' module exposes students to leading business practitioners through a two-day conference where students engage with major societal challenges and associated business solutions. This is followed by the presentation of a live brief.
Most recently, this brief was provided by Middlesbrough Council and required students to propose how the local business community could innovate in partnership with the council to address societal challenges. The impact of this approach has been recognised by students:

> *'The Sustainability, Strategy and Society module I completed in the final year of my undergraduate [studies] enabled a better decision process that I could apply to real*

*environmental issues in the Teesside area. This improved my research capabilities, and
to make important decisions that positively impacted a charity.'*

A new University role, sponsored by our partner Thirteen Housing Group (a social purpose business providing housing solutions and support for vulnerable people) supports the growth of social enterprise activity in the community and secures the active engagement of our students.

In 2021, Teesside hosted the inaugural, now annual, Youth Climate Summit[38], aligning with the COP26 Global Conference held in Glasgow in the same year. The organisation of the event was led by Environmental Science academics who were supported by both undergraduate and postgraduate students.   FE students attended the conference from six colleges and sixth forms across the Tees Valley region. Our students delivered oral and poster presentations on climate change communication and renewable energy, with international students presenting on climate change from their own country's perspective. This initiative allows our students to network and engage with both industry professionals and the local next generation of environmental scientists.

Our Teesside Law Clinic[39] provides invaluable *pro bono* legal advice to our University community and wider Tees Valley area, working in partnership with lawyers, charities and voluntary organisations to provide students with real-world opportunities and practical skills in law. The Law Clinic is embedded within the curriculum and provides experiential learning experiences, development of personal networks and professional skills that have enabled students to achieve success in training contract positions ranging from a prestigious commercial law firm in the Tees Valley to local high street law firms, securing paralegal positions in Cleveland Police, advisor roles at Citizens Advice, Legal Secretary positions and entry to Amazon's Graduate Training Scheme.

Moreover, the Law Clinic provides a vital legal service which has helped hundreds of people gain free access to justice and has been recently **celebrated at the Northern Law Awards 2022 through securing the Pro Bono / Community Initiative Award**. In the academic year 2021/22 25 students participated in the Law Clinic and contributed a total of 8,496 practice hours to the Tees Valley Community. Student feedback evidences the value of involvement in the Law Clinic:

*'This module is beneficial to our degree as it is totally unique and gives us essential
skills and experiences similar to a practicing solicitor'*

Educational Gain 4: Globally Connected

We recognise the positive impact that knowledge and experience of operating in diverse global contexts has on learning and employability, particularly given the socio-economic profile of our home student body, with potentially limited prior experiences of international travel. This aligns closely with a strategic aim in our Teesside 2027 Corporate Strategy '*to encourage our students to become global citizens by creating international opportunities throughout their University experience.*'

We support our students to achieve their potential in becoming global citizens through new initiatives to help increase confidence, share experiences and develop personal skills and attributes, including the School of Art & Creative Industries World Storytelling Day – a special international celebration of creative storytelling with participation from alumni, partners, staff and students; and the International Business School's 'Know My Country' series[40] showcasing and celebrating the many nationalities and cultures within our University community. This latter initiative proved so popular that it is being scaled across the whole institution.

We have established a dedicated mobility team in our Department for International Development and facilitated a range of physical and virtual mobility opportunities[41]. Teesside was awarded

£30,000 from the first iteration of The Turing Scheme, which successfully supported 25 students to engage in global mobility experiences in India, China, Malaysia, the US and Czech Republic. We also sent 37 students to a range of destinations including India, France, Tanzania, The Philippines, Finland and Italy. Students participated in international health placements, online summer schools and business bootcamps. Overall, 62 students participated in international mobility opportunities across the last academic year. It is well evidenced that global mobility experiences enhance the student and learning experience, as well as their employability prospects; the direct personal impact can also be demonstrated through participant's feedback:

> '*Why did I decide to go abroad? To push myself out of my comfort zone and experience life from a different perspective.*'

Creative approaches to facilitating global connectivity during the pandemic period saw the development of the International Business Challenge[42] in collaboration with students and staff from partner institutions in the Czech Republic and India, where students worked in international, multidisciplinary teams to create entrepreneurial business plans in a video pitch format, with a focus on addressing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The pitches were presented to a panel of judges who gave feedback and advice and chose a winner. This concept was scaled up following its success, with the next iteration involving   students from the International Business School and plans to develop this across the institution are in development.

Recognising that entrepreneurship in the global economy transcends national borders and demands global connectivity, Launchpad has established a start-up space dedicated to supporting Chinese graduates to launch innovative businesses which build links between the North East and China. Since 2018, the School of Arts & Creative Industries has collaborated with Marmara University in Turkey to bring together our Fashion students with Marmara Textile students to design and make contemporary garments from innovative textiles. The project aims to develop student skills, knowledge and networks in the context of a global industry through stimulating participants to find solutions to international challenges. Through online learning communities, students at both institutions shared insights on their creative practices and social contexts. Garments crafted from innovative knitted textiles featured in fashion photoshoots and a Fashion Show. Alongside physical garments, students also produced 3D fashion imagery using avatars and animated digital catwalks. This enabled students to visualise their work in new ways using emerging technology which is reshaping the fashion industry.

Demonstrating our effectiveness in enabling students to forge connections within an international context, we ranked **2nd of 93 global universities for '*making good contacts for the future*'** in the International Student Barometer Survey 2021. 96.3% of students were satisfied with 'studying with people from other cultures'

Educational Gain 5: Future Ready

Future readiness provides students with the confidence, skills and opportunities to deliver impact across their professional lives, whether in the workplace or their community. This is fostered within the curriculum through close and effective working partnerships between the central Student Futures team and academic course teams (see also SE3 and SO1 above).

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Module design is intrinsically linked to preparing students to develop professional skills for graduate level employment, and measured through a specific question within the Module Evaluation Survey. The responses for '*This module has provided me with experiences that could be applicable to the workplace*' evidenced an improved performance from 76.4% in Semester 1 2019/20 to 82.4% in Semester 1 2021/22 As an example, the '*Employability and Work-Related Learning'* module, delivered to students across nine courses in 2021/22, enables our students to develop their graduate skills in preparation for employment in a professional context aligned to the Social Sciences. Feedback from an employer demonstrates the impact our students had in the workplace:

> *Any tasks agreed to complete outside of our meetings were completed to a very high standard and showed innovation and curiosity. The student was reflective, authentic, professional, motivated and achieved all tasks that were set asked some excellent questions and challenged one of my ideas with appropriate levels of respect and effectiveness. I was highly impressed and if I had been in a position to offer a job, I would have done.'*

Preparing students for the professional world is at the heart of our partnership working with employers, increasing the social capital and networks of our students by embedding employers into the curriculum. Through delivering 'employer on campus' events and developing impactful mentoring opportunities, we proactively activate Teesside's collective professional networks and unlock associated opportunities for the benefit of our students. The sustained emphasis on this approach has resulted in a University-wide increase of 7.1% in students identifying as having networks that might help them to source a job between levels 4 and 6 in the period from 2019/20 to 2021/22. This data is sourced from the internally collected Future Ready Survey[43] with an average response rate of 90.6% to this question Of particular note is the significant uplift of 13% for students from the School of Computing Engineering and Digital Technologies. In part, this demonstrates the impact of long-established structured opportunities for students to interface directly with industry practitioners such as Animex (see SO1 above).

Conclusion

Teesside continues to excel in delivering significant enhancements to learning, teaching and the student experience as evidenced by the substantial distance travelled in positive improvements to key metrics since the inception of TEF. The evidence provided within this submission demonstrates the strategic implementation of enhancement initiatives at scale across Teesside. Future Facing Learning is the primary vehicle for delivering this transformation, being interwoven in every aspect of course design, delivery and assessment and underpins the development and evolution of our teaching staff. The core FFL themes shape key education gains for our students, enabled by the introduction of an integrated and holistic student support offer and the maturity of an established programme of digital transformation of learning and teaching.

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