



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

## **Summary TEF 2023 panel statement**

**Nottingham Trent University**

# Summary of outcomes

## Overall: Gold

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

### Student experience: Gold

The student academic experience is typically outstanding.

Outstanding quality features include:

- teaching, feedback and assessment practices to support student learning, progression and attainment
- support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice
- a supportive learning environment and readily available academic support tailored to needs
- physical and virtual learning resources to support outstanding teaching and learning.

There are also some very high quality features, including:

- course content and delivery that inspires students
- the use of research in relevant disciplines, innovation, professional practice and extensive employer engagement
- engagement with students leading to continuous improvements and outcomes.

### Student outcomes: Silver

Student outcomes are typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- very high rates of continuation and completion
- very high rates of successful progression
- the provider evaluates the gains made by its students.

There are also some outstanding quality features, including:

- approaches that are highly effective in making sure that students succeed and progress beyond their studies
- the provider clearly articulates the educational gains for its students to achieve, including why these are highly relevant to them
- approaches to supporting students to achieve are evidence-based, highly effective and tailored to the different starting points of students.

# About the assessment

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is a national scheme run by the Office for Students (OfS) that aims to encourage universities and colleges (providers) to improve and deliver excellent teaching, learning and student outcomes.

The TEF does this by assessing and rating providers for excellence above the high quality baseline that we expect from all providers. It covers undergraduate courses.

Throughout this document, we use the terms 'outstanding' and 'very high quality', which are defined in terms of the TEF 2023 assessment as follows:

- 'outstanding': the quality of the student experience or outcomes are among the very best in the sector, for the mix of students and courses taught by a provider
- 'very high quality': the quality of the student experience or outcomes are materially above the relevant high quality minimum requirements, for the mix of students and courses taught by a provider.

The assessment was carried out in 2022-23 by the TEF Panel, a panel of academics and students who are experts in learning and teaching. This document sets out a summary of the panel's findings and judgements.

The panel reviewed the following evidence:

- numerical indicators produced by the OfS, using national datasets
- a submission made by the provider, setting out its own evidence
- a submission made by the provider's students, setting out students' views.

The panel applied its expert judgement to:

- identify particular features of the student experience and student outcomes that are excellent (above the high quality baseline requirements)
- decide a rating for the 'student experience' and for 'student outcomes'
- decide an overall rating for the provider.

Throughout the assessment the panel took account of the context of the provider and judged how well it delivers teaching, learning and student outcomes for its mix of students and courses.

In making its decisions the panel took account of the OfS general duties and the public sector equalities duty.

# Summary of panel assessment

## Information about this provider

The provider sets out that its educational mission is ‘underpinned by commitment to social mobility and industry focus’.

The university is the fifth largest in the UK. There were almost 30,000 full-time undergraduate students in 2020-21.

Its courses are delivered at five campuses: three in Nottingham, a land-based education college north of the city, and a hub in Mansfield.

Undergraduate students are mainly enrolled on first degree courses, and they are taught across a wide range of subjects:

- the largest is Business (18 per cent), followed by Creative Arts (15.7 per cent) – over the past four years
- undergraduate part-time, apprenticeship, and sub-contracted student numbers have been less than 1,000 each year.

A high proportion of students are from underrepresented groups. The interaction of characteristics of underrepresentation, including that black students are more likely than white students to be eligible for free school meals and hold BTEC qualifications, is identified by the provider as relevant to the interpretation of its data and indicators.

The assessment considered information about the provider’s undergraduate courses and students on those courses.

Full details about the provider’s student demographics used in the TEF 2023 assessment are available at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-used-in-tef-2023/](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-used-in-tef-2023/).

More information about this provider can be found on the OfS Register at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/).

## Student experience: Gold

Throughout this section, we refer to indicators. These indicators are based on students' responses to the National Student Survey. The indicators are 'benchmarked' to show how well the provider performs for its particular mix of students and courses.

The panel judged that the quality of the student academic experience is typically outstanding for the provider's mix of students and courses. The panel considered all the evidence relating to each feature of excellence and how this applied to all of the provider's students, including students from underrepresented groups.

The panel found:

- four features are outstanding quality
- three are very high quality.

The student submission highlights the different experiences that students report at different campuses. The panel considered and accounted for the extent of how much these experiences might vary, and the size and context of provision at each campus.

The panel judged that the best overall fit for the aspect rating, based on this consideration of the available evidence, was 'Gold'. This was because most features of this aspect are outstanding for almost all groups of students.

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

### Teaching, assessment, and feedback

The panel considered this is an outstanding quality feature.

The indicators provide evidence that:

- 'teaching on my course' for full-time students is very high quality overall. For part-time students it is either very high quality or outstanding. For apprentices, it is outstanding.
- 'assessment and feedback' was outstanding for full-time students, and the data did not provide certainty for part-time students and apprentices.

The provider evidence also includes:

- the SCALE-UP initiative, a collaborative studio-based teaching approach, that is fully embedded as an 'NTU signature pedagogy'.
- an assessment scale aimed at reducing structural disadvantage
- learning, tailored to the needs of different student groups and disciplines, including specific programmes and support
- its response to the coronavirus pandemic, with adjustments such as 'bioscience at home' kits.

The student submission reports that a high proportion of students were satisfied with teaching and assessment and the balance of online and face-to-face teaching. There is, though, significant

differences between the satisfaction of students on different campuses. The panel considered how the academic experiences of different student groups vary.

The panel considered the teaching on my course and the assessment and feedback indicators to provide initial evidence of both very high quality and outstanding teaching, assessment and feedback. The provider and student submissions include evidence regarding the effectiveness and tailoring of teaching, assessment and feedback practices, which apply to the mix of students (including students from underrepresented groups) and courses at the provider.

Overall, the panel concluded that the provider has embedded outstanding teaching, assessment and feedback practices that are highly effective and tailored to supporting its students', learning progression and attainment. Considering the evidence in the round the panel considered the evidence demonstrated an outstanding quality feature.

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

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The provider evidence includes:

- a strong vocational ethos aligned to career opportunities is a key factor in its approach
- examples of how course content is designed to meet the needs of professions and industries
- the CoLab project (in Art and Design), which engages the provider's students with students from other countries and subject specialisms to work on projects set by industry partners – though the panel considered that evidence about the reach and impact of this project is limited.

Overall the panel concluded that course content and delivery effectively encourage the provider's students to engage in their learning, and stretch students to develop their knowledge and skills, although there is insufficient evidence that the provider stretches students to their fullest potential.

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

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The evidence in the provider submission includes:

- the number of apprenticeships offered that have grown in response to employer demand and is successful in widening participation
- industry inputs into the curriculum through CoLab, which encourages teams of students to develop high level skills
- arrangements with 70 Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, for over 200 courses, including work on authentic assessment methods
- examples of ways in which scholarship contributes to students' academic experience, including research into future workforce needs and career readiness surveys to inform curriculum
- the provider's contribution to the establishment of TASO (the 'What works' centre for social mobility) and the use it makes of its research outputs.

The provider submission sets out how its research strengths are important in shaping the course portfolio, and how educational provision is key to how knowledge is exchanged. The panel noted, however, that there is insufficient evidence of how either is embedded in policies and practices and the impact that this has on students' academic experience, which is why the panel did not rate this feature to be outstanding.

In conclusion, the panel found that the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience for its students; which is consistent with a very high quality feature.

### **Staff professional development and academic practice**

The panel considered this an outstanding quality feature.

The evidence in the provider submission includes:

- professional standards for teaching and support of learning are articulated and supported by professional development, and underpin vice-chancellor awards
- support for those new to academic roles and for all teaching staff to gain Advance HE Fellowships, with the proportion of accredited staff being above the Advance HE benchmark
- coaching support for personal tutor schemes
- support for sabbaticals, staff/student research collaborations and co-creation projects through the Trent Institution of Learning and Teaching
- support infrastructure, which includes an Institute for Teaching and Learning and annual Teaching and Learning conferences and event
- continuing staff development is supported by diverse mechanisms (mentoring, short courses, collaborative scholarships, funding, awards) enabling staff to build their own pathway
- PGCert in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education offered as an apprenticeship.

There is outstanding support for staff professional development embedded across the provider.

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

The panel considered this an outstanding feature.

There is statistical evidence that the indicator for 'academic support' is very high quality for full-time students, and strong statistical evidence that for part-time students it is very high quality with some outstanding elements. For apprentices, there is very strong evidence that 'academic support' is outstanding.

The provider set out the evidence, including:

- how surveys were conducted with students to understand their coronavirus experiences so that they could be supported when they returned to in-person learning
- support for students in their transition into higher education with tailored provision for underrepresented groups of students, including a Black Leadership programme and participant-led study of the LGBT+ experience

- a partnership with Grit Breakthrough (a charity that supports personal development) to deliver coaching, which was positively received
- support services for students that led to a significant increase in disability disclosure
- the use of learner analytics (analysis of learning process data) to give targeted support, and how resulting interventions have reduced student withdrawals.

The student submission reports that, in a student survey, 91 per cent of students felt that the provider values their health and well-being, and 83 per cent were satisfied with access to support services. It also found that levels of satisfaction relating to health and well-being varied for students at different campuses, as did the experience of students in accessing student support services.

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

## **Learning resources**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

The indicator provides compelling evidence that for full-time students 'learning resources' is very high quality, with some outstanding features. There is also probable evidence that 'learning resources' for part-time students and apprentices are outstanding.

The provider submission sets out evidence of an outstanding feature, including:

- investments in the estate and learning spaces
- a strategic focus in library provision, excellent study spaces, and an e-first collection
- a personalised approach to supporting student engagement with learning resources, including library skills support, and the reach and impact of continuation of NTU pass workshops and one to one appointments.

The student submission reports that in a student survey 93 per cent of students were satisfied with the provider's technology and facilities.

The panel identified strong evidence that physical and virtual learning resources are tailored and used effectively to support outstanding teaching and learning.

## **Student engagement in improvement**

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

The indicators for 'student voice' provide evidence of:

- very high quality for full-time students
- either very high quality or outstanding for part-time students
- either very high quality or outstanding for apprentices.



The provider submission includes evidence of very high quality, with some examples of how this leads to improvements in experiences and outcomes, including:

- the use of National Student Survey comments and data to inform developments of policies and actions
- research to capture the student voice relating to induction and welcome, the first-year experience, and second- and third-year experiences
- Advance HE evidence that student voice was valued by the provider in reviews of Board effectiveness
- Students are members of the design team for new course development, recruited from diverse backgrounds and supported to engage via training
- The efforts made to address student feedback both during and after the coronavirus pandemic, including pulse surveys, returners surveys, focus groups, and a £1.5 million investment (after lockdown) to address student feedback related to confidence and community.

The student submission noted that, across all campuses the provider sought students' opinion by a variety of methods, which students valued. However, they voiced concern around the intention and suggested that sometimes these exercises felt like 'box-ticking'.

The panel identified evidence that the provider effectively engages with its students, leading to improvements to the experiences and outcomes of its students.

## **Student outcomes: Silver**

Throughout this section, we refer to indicators. The indicators for continuation, completion and progression rates are based on national data about higher education students. The indicators are 'benchmarked' to show how well the provider performs for its particular mix of students and courses.

The panel found student outcomes are typically very high quality for all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

Across the student outcomes aspect the panel found that:

- three features are outstanding quality
- three features are very high quality.

The panel considered whether the best fit was 'Gold', with three features considered to be outstanding quality and three to be very high quality. The panel noted that up to half of the judgement for the student outcomes aspect was in relation to indicator evidence for continuation, completion and progression, which were judged to be very high quality rather than outstanding quality. Therefore, overall the panel concluded that the overall best fit rating for student outcomes was 'Silver'.

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

## **Approaches to supporting student success**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

The provider submission recognises that indicators show that not all provision is very high quality. It sets out the work it has done to address some of the groups who experience outcomes that are below very high quality.

The provider submission includes evidence of:

- sourcing and funding a paid internship for every graduate who needs one to become more employable
- pre-arrival questionnaires and focus groups to understand student experiences
- a 'Success for All' approach and close alignment of strategies with the access and participation plans
- the development and use of research to understand how to enhance student experience.

The student submission reports that 72 per cent of students were satisfied with provider support for their Continuing Professional Development throughout their studies, and that 89 per cent of students could access the support they needed from the provider's employability service.

The panel found that the provider deploys and tailors approaches that are highly effective in ensuring its students succeed in and progress beyond their studies.

## **Continuation and completion rates**

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

The indicators provide evidence that, for full-time students, continuation and completion rates are very high quality, and for part-time students completion rates are very high quality, and continuation rates are below the level of very high quality.

For apprentices, there is evidence that continuation rates are very high quality, and there are no completion rates reports – because of the low number of students.

The panel concluded that there are very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses.

## **Progression rates**

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

The indicator provides compelling evidence of very high quality 'progression' for full-time students, and probable evidence that this is the same for part-time students.

The panel noted that there are no reports on progression available for apprentices because of the low number of students.

The panel concluded that there are very high rates of progression for the provider's students and courses.

## **Intended educational gains**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The panel found that the provider clearly articulates the intended educational gains as 'rounded whole person development' and includes a conception of educational gains related to social mobility and career development. It considered that these are embedded and highly relevant to the provider's students and their ambitions, for example there is a goal to 'to create opportunities for students, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds, to develop the skills employers require and forge meaningful and rewarding careers'. Evidence from a longitudinal study illustrates the embedded approach within the curriculum to employability is developing students' understanding of educational gains expressed as transferable skills.

The panel found sufficient evidence of outstanding provision.

## **Approaches to supporting educational gains.**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

Evidence from the provider submission includes:

- research which shows that engagement in extra-curricular learning can have positive outcomes
- policies and actions to nurture educational gains including experiential learning in courses, developing student employment skills, placement learning and employability services, including one-to-one support, enterprise clubs and an employability award
- measures to support whole-person development are outlined by the provider, which aim to deliver educational gains that are tailored to the mix of courses and students. These include: personal and academic development modules, a law clinic, undergraduate research projects, and volunteering opportunities aligned to subjects
- the provider recognises the distinctive needs of apprentices
- all students do at least 240 hours of assessed work experience within their course.

Overall, the panel concluded that the provider's approaches to supporting its students to achieve educational gains are evidence-based, highly effective and tailored to its students and their different starting points; which is consistent with an outstanding feature.

## **Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains**

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

Evidence from the provider submission includes:

- measurement of the positive impact of engagement with the careers service on progression and academic attainment
- measurement of the reach and impact of services including careers support and Nottingham Trent University Enterprise support.

The provider notes that it is developing its measures for educational gains.

The student submission reported feedback from a student survey that 76 per cent of students were satisfied that the provider successfully developed a culture of life-long learning.

The panel concluded that the provider evaluates the educational gains made by its students and therefore it is a very high quality feature. However, there is insufficient evidence that all aspects of educational gains were achieved during the TEF assessment period and therefore insufficient evidence of outstanding provision.

## **Overall: Gold**

The panel considered the student experience aspect rating to be 'Gold' and the student outcomes aspect to be 'Silver'. The panel weighted these two aspects equally and considered the evidence across all features and across the provider's student groups, subjects, courses to reach a best fit decision for the overall rating of 'Gold'. The panel considered there was compelling evidence that the outstanding and very high quality features apply to all the provider's groups of students, including those from underrepresented groups.

For student experience it found most features to be of outstanding quality for almost all groups of students and courses and student outcomes to be very high quality for all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups and courses. For student outcomes it found some outstanding quality features.

The panel considered there to be typically outstanding quality provision for students and courses rather than typically very high quality provision. In judging 'Gold' to be a better fit than 'Silver' the panel noted:

- whilst it considered student outcomes to be very high quality for all groups of students, there are some outstanding quality features
- across the two aspects the provider presented compelling evidence showing that its approaches are embedded and tailored to its students.