



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

## **Summary TEF 2023 panel statement**

**TEC Partnership**

## Summary of outcomes

### Overall: Silver

Typically, the experience students have at TEC Partnership and the outcomes it leads to are very high quality.

#### Student experience: Gold

The student academic experience is typically outstanding.

Outstanding quality features include:

- high impact teaching, assessment and feedback designed to produce personalised learning
- highly effective course content and delivery designed to meet student needs and increase their confidence and achievement
- highly effective employer engagement with employability and work readiness embedded in the curriculum
- a supportive learning environment, with access to a wide and readily available range of outstanding quality academic support
- physical and virtual learning resources tailored and used effectively to support outstanding teaching and learning
- embedding engagement with students, leading to continuous improvement to their experiences and outcomes.

There is also one very high quality feature:

- an effective systematic approach to staff development and academic practice, tailored to the needs of the provider and its students.

#### Student outcomes: Silver

Student outcomes are typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- an effective strategic approach to student success, focused on keeping students on programmes, preparing them for work, and addressing local workforce needs
- very high rates of successful progression for students and courses
- articulating educational gains it intends students to achieve and why these are relevant
- effective support for students to achieve educational gains
- evaluating the gains made by its students.

## About the assessment

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

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

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

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

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

The panel reviewed the following evidence:

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

The panel applied its expert judgement to:

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

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

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

## Summary of panel assessment

### Information about this provider

The mission of the TEC Partnership is to offer education and training solutions to local communities, supporting a wide range of age groups across tertiary education.

It is one of the largest providers of further and higher education, encompassing the Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education, East Riding College, Scarborough College, MODAL Training Ltd, and Skegness College. TEC Partnership has various campuses located in Northern Lincolnshire, East Yorkshire, and North Yorkshire. The vast majority of higher education courses, around 70 per cent, are delivered at the Grimsby Institute.

Features of the student body in 2021-22 include:

- 66 per cent of students are classified as mature, with 35 per cent over the age of 30
- 55 per cent of students are from deprived socioeconomic backgrounds, with 35 per cent within the most deprived group
- the vast majority of students live within 20 miles of their place of study, with a significant number living within five miles.

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.

Looking at all the evidence available the panel found the student experience is typically outstanding quality, with the provider incorporating highly effective approaches tailored to its students.

Across the student experience aspect, the panel found:

- most features are outstanding
- one very high quality feature.

The outstanding and very high quality features apply to most of the provider's groups of students. This includes underrepresented groups which the panel considered relevant to the assessment due to the high numbers of these students studying at the provider.

The panel applied the criteria and considered that the rating with the best fit is 'Gold'. This is because the panel's judgement best fits the description: 'most features of the aspect are outstanding quality for all groups of students'.

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

### **Teaching, assessment, and feedback**

The panel found this feature to be outstanding.

The indicators showed:

- there was initial evidence of very high to outstanding quality 'teaching on my course' for full-time students, although the data did not provide certainty
- there was strong evidence of outstanding quality for 'assessment and feedback' for full-time students.

The provider and student submissions show further evidence, including:

- a strategic framework for education and experience is at the heart of decision making across the provider
- teaching methods that are tailored to meet the specific needs of students
- small group sizes that offer a personalised approach to learning
- effective tools to gain insight into student needs. The provider uses this information to improve teaching, assessment, and feedback
- graduate attributes are used to develop teaching and enhance student experience.

The panel considered the indicators and the provider submission showed evidence of an outstanding feature demonstrating high impact teaching, assessment and feedback designed to produce personalised learning across student groups and courses.

Overall the panel concluded that the provider has embedded outstanding teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are highly effective and tailored to supporting its students' learning, progression, and attainment.

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

The panel found this feature to be outstanding quality.

The provider submission shows evidence of an outstanding quality feature, for example:

- course content and delivery designed to inspire students by encouraging an active commitment to learning, and developing knowledge and skills to their full potential
- evaluating the delivery model through biannual student engagement and course enhancement meetings to discuss and monitor actions. Student requests for different delivery approaches are fed back into planning and timetabling
- 80 per cent of students who responded to the National Student Survey were satisfied with the timetable, while 87.9 per cent felt they had adequate opportunities to provide feedback on their course
- a project to transition all degree courses to a trimester delivery model, meaning students study fewer modules at once and have a reduced assessment workload. This leads to improved wellbeing, and a greater sense of achievement
- the trimester model enables staff to develop courses focusing on the specific knowledge, skills, and behaviours relevant to each subject, and tutors to concentrate more on formative assessments and support student progress due to the reduced delivery workload.

The panel considered the provider submission shows evidence that course content and delivery is designed to meet the needs of students, including those from underrepresented groups, and increase their confidence and achievement.

Considering all the evidence, the panel concluded that course content and delivery inspire the provider's students to actively engage in and commit to their learning, and stretch students to develop knowledge and skills to their fullest potential.

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

The panel found this feature to be outstanding quality.

The provider and student submissions provide evidence of an outstanding quality feature including:

- designing courses with a focus on graduate employment, using labour market intelligence and employer engagement to develop graduates' skills and behaviours

- employer feedback is part of every programme validation process to ensure they align with employment expectations and develop the graduate attributes needed
- a dedicated department at the Grimsby campus to enhance employability, offering employer engagement, placement opportunities, events and student training
- providing support teams at East Riding College and Scarborough to offer similar employability opportunities.

The panel considered that the provider submission showed evidence that employability and work readiness is embedded in the curriculum, with many opportunities for direct engagement with employment.

Overall the panel found the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement to contribute to an outstanding academic experience for its students.

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

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The provider submission outlines evidence of a very high quality feature, including:

- a systematic approach to staff training and development
- subsidising fees for some teaching qualifications, with many staff members holding fellowships
- holding weekly staff development sessions to foster a community of academic practice
- a 'learning through co-creation' project between teaching staff and students to enhance students' knowledge through learned experiences.

The panel noted the provider has a systematic approach to staff development and academic practice, tailored to the needs of the provider and its students. Therefore, it concluded there is very high quality support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is promoted.

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

The panel found this feature to be outstanding.

The indicator shows:

- there is initial evidence of outstanding 'academic support' for full-time students
- there is initial evidence of part-time 'academic support' below the level of very high quality, but this data applied to a small number of students.

The provider and student submissions show further evidence of outstanding quality, including:

- tutor-led small groups of 10-15 students, with at least one hour of personal academic support each week
- a well-designed transition/induction program with a focus on study skills support, which students rate highly
- giving students the option to choose 'wraparound' support during their courses via success coaches, and offering regular personalised coaching and support that accommodates students' study timetables
- coaches who collaborate with departments across the college including disability advisers, academic support, and tutors. This results in a fast and effective referral processes to address student issues.

The panel considered there was enough evidence of outstanding quality, taking into account the systematic support for students, particularly those from deprived socioeconomic backgrounds which make up a high proportion of the provider's students.

This led the panel to conclude 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 found this feature to be outstanding quality.

The indicator shows:

- initial evidence that 'learning resources' are either very high quality or outstanding for full-time students, although the data could not provide certainty.
- initial evidence that that part-time 'learning resources' are outstanding, but this data only applied to a low number of students.

The panel considered the provider and student submissions to add further evidence of outstanding quality, for example:

- using a strategic approach to invest in resources, including a dedicated higher education centre and detailed processes for resourcing new programmes
- offering students access to well developed online learning, with each course and module having an online page on the virtual learning environment
- survey feedback showing high student satisfaction with the information on modules, learning outcomes, and assessments
- combining both online and in-person teaching methods to create a more enriched learning experience.



Considering the evidence together, the panel concluded that physical and virtual learning resources are tailored and used effectively to support outstanding teaching and learning, and that this is an outstanding feature.

## **Student engagement in improvement**

The panel found this feature to be outstanding quality.

The indicator shows strong evidence that 'student voice' is outstanding quality for full-time students, but that there is not enough certainty to accurately interpret the evidence for part-time students.

The provider and student submissions add evidence of an outstanding quality feature including:

- an extensive framework for student engagement, from interacting with senior management to being given a voice at a module level
- giving students the opportunity to meet with the senior management team regularly to raise concerns and issues beyond their courses
- a Student Senate that serves as a forum for representation across the campus, and has a representative on the provider's corporation and higher education oversight committee
- engaging students in curriculum design through feeding into programme development and sitting as full members of the provider's validation panels.

Overall the panel found that the provider embeds engagement with its students, leading to continuous improvement to the experiences and outcomes of its students, making this an outstanding feature of the student experience.

## **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 that student outcomes are typically very high quality for the provider's mix of students and courses, including those from underrepresented groups which form a high proportion of the provider's students.

Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- most features are very high quality
- there is not enough evidence to rate one feature as very high quality.

The panel applied the criteria and considered that the rating with the best fit is 'Silver'. This is because the panel's judgement best fits the description: 'most features of the aspect are very high quality for all groups of students'.

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

### **Approaches to supporting student success**

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The provider submission describes its approaches supporting students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies. This includes:

- adopting a strategic approach focused on keeping students on their programmes, preparing them for work, and addressing the needs of the local workforce in an economically disadvantaged area
- introducing an employability strategy, explicitly incorporating employability in programme learning outcomes and regularly reviewing it with academic teams
- having a higher education skills and employability team that is responsible for connecting students with graduate level job opportunities and establishing relationships with employers.

The panel noted that despite the severe impact of coronavirus, the submissions show evidence of a very high quality feature. Therefore the panel considered that the provider effectively supports its students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies.

### **Continuation and completion rates**

The panel considered there to be insufficient evidence to judge this feature to be very high quality.

The indicators showed:

- strong initial evidence that 'continuation' for full-time students is very high quality, with some courses below the level of very high quality
- strong initial evidence 'completion' for full-time students is very high quality, although with a varying performance across years
- initial evidence that 'continuation' and 'completion' for part-time students are below the level of very high quality.

The panel looked at the indicators and provider submission in the round and considered the evidence that continuation and completion was below the level of very high quality for part-time students, and for some full-time and part-time courses. Therefore, the panel concluded that there was not enough evidence that this is a very high quality feature.

### **Progression rates**

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The indicator shows:

- compelling initial evidence that 'progression' for full-time students is very high quality
- initial evidence that 'progression' for part-time students is below the level of very high quality, although this data only applied to a low number of students.

The provider submission provided further evidence of a very high quality feature including:

- staff and students created graduate attributes together, to demonstrate the key skills, competencies, knowledge, and personal development expected of graduates in all subjects
- there are 15 attributes that focus on qualities like resilience and critical thinking, teamwork, presentation skills, and personal values.

The panel looked at the indicators and provider submission in the round and considered there was evidence of a very high quality feature. On this basis, the panel concluded that there are very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses.

### **Intended educational gains**

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The provider submission describes its approach to articulating the educational gains it wants students to achieve. This includes:

- Many students at the provider have different characteristics compared to most 18-21 year olds in higher education. They have less cultural capital making them less likely to access traditional higher education.
- Success is measured by the educational progress, development, and graduate progression of students, and its impact on local and national labour markets.
- Various metrics, such as TEF outcome indicators, defined graduate attributes, work-based skills, and the Graduate Award, demonstrate the educational gains achieved by the provider's students in the communities they serve.

Overall the panel found the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students.

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

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The panel found that the provider demonstrates its commitment to supporting students' educational gains, for example by:

- focusing educational gains on employability and work readiness skills, which are integrated into the programme structure

- ensuring programmes demonstrate employer engagement and endorsement at different stages of development
- including employer involvement and student participation in validation panels.

The panel noted that the provider's aim to produce institutional capability had not yet been developed into a coherent approach, but considered there was evidence to show this is a very high quality feature. This led the panel to conclude that the provider effectively supports its students to achieve educational gains.

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

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The provider and student submissions show evidence of evaluating students' educational gains which include:

- an effective approach to evaluating educational gains including whole student support
- recognising graduate attributes through a Graduate Award which develops cultural capital, graduate skills, as well as completion and progression
- students demonstrating evidence related to the four main themes of graduate attributes as part of the Graduate Award
- detailing an intention to develop strategies and measures to evaluate educational gains in student cohorts, considering skills, competencies, knowledge, and personal development
- developing criteria for evaluating gains including benchmarking against other providers.

Considering all of the evidence, the panel found the provider evaluates the gains made by its students, and that this is a very high quality feature.

### **Overall: Silver**

Based on the guidance and the expert judgement of panel members, the panel found the 'best fit' rating to be 'Silver'.

The panel considered the student experience aspect to be 'Gold'; and the student outcomes aspect to be 'Silver', and gave equal weight to both. It carefully examined the evidence across all features, student groups, subjects, and courses.

The panel found compelling evidence that very high quality features apply to all courses and students. This includes those from underrepresented groups who form a high proportion of the provider's students.

In judging 'Silver' to be the best fit the panel noted that it did not find outstanding features when assessing student outcomes. Overall the panel found that student experience and student outcomes are typically very high quality, consistent with a rating of 'Silver'.