



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

## **Summary TEF 2023 panel statement**

**Sheffield Hallam University**

# Summary of outcomes

## Overall: Gold

Typically, the experience students have at Sheffield Hallam University and the outcomes it leads to are outstanding.

### Student experience: Silver

The student academic experience is typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- effective teaching, assessment, and feedback practices which support students' learning, progression, and attainment
- excellent provision, which effectively encourages the provider's students to engage in and commit to their learning
- a supportive learning environment in which students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support
- the use of research and innovation in relevant disciplines, professional practice and employer engagement which contribute to a very high quality academic experience.

There are also some outstanding quality features including:

- excellent support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice
- tailored physical and virtual learning resources
- embedded engagement with its students, leading to continuous improvements.

### Student outcomes: Gold

Student outcomes are typically outstanding.

Outstanding quality features include:

- approaches that are highly effective in ensuring its students succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- very high continuation and completion rates for all groups of students
- very high progression rates for all groups of students
- the range of educational gains the provider intends its students to achieve, and why these are highly relevant to its students and their future ambitions
- tailored and effective approaches to supporting students to achieve educational gains.

There is also one very high quality feature including:

- a well-developed framework for evaluating student gains.

# About the assessment

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is a national scheme run by the Office for Students (OfS) 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 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

Sheffield Hallam University sets out to transform lives and be a world-leading applied university. It describes itself as one of the UK's largest and most socially diverse universities, with a global community of students, staff and alumni. It has been recognised with several national awards.

The provider developed the Hallam Model, used in course design, validation, and evaluation, to ensure that all courses engage with the world beyond the university.

It had more than 35,000 students in 2020-21, including around 22,000 full-time and just over 500 part-time undergraduate students. Undergraduate-level apprenticeship provision grew from 350 in 2017-18 to 1,410 in 2020-21.

The largest subject areas for full-time students are Business and Management, Creative Arts and Design, Nursing and Midwifery, and Computing. For part-time students it is Architecture and Engineering. For apprenticeships it is Business and Management, Engineering, Architecture, and Computing.

The undergraduate student body is predominantly white. The percentage of female students is 54 per cent for full-time, 23 per cent for part-time and 33 per cent for apprenticeships; while the proportions for students reporting a disability are 22 per cent, nine per cent and 12 per cent respectively.

The assessment considered information about the provider's undergraduate courses and students on those courses, including apprenticeships.

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: Silver**

Throughout this section we refer to indicators, which 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 TEF panel weighed up all the evidence in the indicators and the submissions relating to the student experience and determined the aspect rating to be 'Silver', because all features are at least very high quality for most groups of students and courses.

Throughout its assessment, the panel took into consideration that:

- the provider submission set out its strategy and framework for offering students a relevant and excellent educational experience. It acknowledged and indicated action to address areas of challenge
- evidence from the student submission is based on surveys (very low response rates) and focus groups
- the overall indicators were robust for full-time and for many sub-groups, less so for part-time and apprenticeship students due to small numbers.

The panel considered three of the features to be outstanding and four to be very high quality.

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

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

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

The panel considered both the 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback' indicators to give the following evidence:

- very high quality provision for full-time students
- performance below the level of very high quality for part-time and apprenticeship students

The provider and student submissions provide further evidence of a very high quality feature, including:

- a provider-wide approach to the design of learning and teaching activities based on the Hallam Model, articulated through the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework
- external recognition examples, including University of the Year for Teaching Quality (2020)
- effective implementation of assessment measures to mitigate the coronavirus impact
- the Assessment Journey Programme initiative, which provides students with early formative feedback on their work.

Overall, the panel concluded that effective teaching, assessment, and feedback practices that support students' learning, progression and attainment are embedded across most provision.

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

The panel considered this to be a very high quality feature, noting evidence from the provider and student submissions, including:

- an applied learning approach that combines teaching and learning on campus with digital learning and support, recognised externally
- examples of contextualised and cross-disciplinary learning opportunities in some subject areas/courses
- collaborative teaching with industry, recognised externally
- example case studies of stretch and engaged learning
- every undergraduate student undertakes a mandatory Highly Skilled Employment module in each level of study, including work experience or a placement
- the student submission also notes positively the contextualised and cross-disciplinary learning opportunities and the embedding of the Hallam Model across some subject areas.

Overall, the panel judged that the submissions provided excellent examples of provision which effectively encourage students to engage in and commit to their learning. However, the extent to which this applied to all groups of students, including underrepresented groups, or courses/subject areas was less evident, and therefore the panel concluded this to be a very high quality feature, rather than outstanding.

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

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

Examples to support this were provided in the submissions, such as:

- recognition for research-informed teaching to enhance student learning and outcomes, on which the panel placed more weight because the impact on the student experience was demonstrated
- a research-informed teaching toolkit for staff 'informed by examining student and staff perceptions of research-informed teaching and embedding it in the curriculum'
- industry and employer engagement examples across all subject areas
- examples of students being involved in research-related enrichment activities such as public engagement with research in Biosciences and Chemistry, with external funding
- a large apprenticeships programme recognised as Ofsted 'good' and noted as addressing regional skills needs.

Overall the panel concluded that the provider uses research and innovation in relevant disciplines, professional practice and employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience for its students, although the extent of reach across student groups and subject areas was less evident.

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

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The student and provider submissions included evidence to this effect, including:

- an academic careers framework aligned to university strategy recognised by an external award (from Universities Human Resources)
- a provider-wide approach to supporting staff professional development
- a case study of investment in pedagogic development and effect on student satisfaction
- a provider-wide approach to sharing of excellent academic practice aligned to institutional priorities (e.g. retention)
- examples of centrally coordinated support for staff with practice based on institutional learning.

The panel considered that the provider submission showed evidence of excellent support for staff professional development and that excellent academic practice is embedded across the provider.

## **Learning environment and academic support**

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

The overall full-time 'academic support' indicator provides evidence of very high quality provision. Evidence from the split indicators showed outstanding quality provision for two large subject areas (Business and Management; Creative Arts and Design), and performance below the level of very high quality for two subject areas (Nursing and Midwifery; Psychology).

The 'academic support' indicators provided initial evidence of a not very high quality feature for part-time students.

The provider and student submissions provide further evidence of a very high quality feature, including:

- embedding of student wellbeing in transition and induction, positively received by students
- case study of research-informed support for foundation year students
- embedded support via the Student Support Triangle, although the provider acknowledges that there is more work to do to reach all student groups or subject areas/courses
- some evidence of improvement from the position affected by the coronavirus
- evidence of effective support for disabled students.

The panel concluded that the provider offers a supportive learning environment and students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support. Taken together with the information in the indicators, however, the panel did not find strong evidence that the provider's approach is sufficiently consistent to conclude this applies to all student groups or courses/subject areas. Considering the evidence in the round, the panel considered the evidence to demonstrate a very high quality feature.

## **Learning resources**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

Overall, the full-time 'learning resources' indicator provides evidence of very high quality. However, some subject areas are outstanding (Psychology; Allied Health) and some are not very high quality.

There was insufficient evidence of very high quality regarding 'learning resources' for part-time students, but overall the panel interpreted the indicator as providing initial evidence of very high quality.

For apprenticeships, the 'learning resources' indicator provides evidence of very high quality.

The provider and student submissions offer further evidence, including:

- increased investment in Library texts (and mode of availability) and other resources leading to increased use
- increased use of the Hallam Skills Centre – with high student satisfaction
- implementation and impact of self-help resources available to all students
- numerous examples of tailored facilities across subject areas and appropriate to the student demographic
- data-informed targeting for improvement of services and provision
- examples of innovation in extending facilities to create an 'Extended Campus' integrating digital and physical environments.

The panel concluded that the evidence was sufficient to consider 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 an outstanding quality feature.

The overall full-time 'student voice' indicator provides evidence of very high quality, for most students, with some variation across courses.

The panel interpreted the part-time and apprenticeships 'student voice' indicators as providing initial evidence of very high quality.

The submissions from the provider and students provided further evidence, including:

- student voice principles and structures, co-designed by students and staff, that embed the student voice across the institution
- examples of effective approaches, for example Listening Rooms, and their impact and external recognition

- examples of research-informed practice and impact on underrepresented groups.

The panel concluded that the evidence presented was sufficient to show that the provider embeds engagement with its students, leading to continuous improvements in the experiences and outcomes of most of its students.

## **Student outcomes: Gold**

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 TEF panel weighed up all the evidence in the indicators and the submissions and determined the student outcomes aspect rating to be 'Gold', because most features are outstanding quality for all or most groups of students.

Throughout its assessment, the panel took into consideration that:

- the provider submission set out its strategy and framework for supporting students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies.
- the student submission mainly corroborated the very high to outstanding support for student success and progression.
- the overall indicators were robust for full-time and for many sub-groups, less so for part-time and apprenticeship students due to small numbers.

The panel weighed up the evidence to identify outstanding and very high quality features. It considered five features to be outstanding and the sixth to be of very high quality.

The panel's assessment of these features is below.

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

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature, noting evidence in the provider and student submissions of:

- a provider-wide approach to a focus on student outcomes using the Hallam Model and institutional strategies and plans, with a purposeful focus on applied practice-based learning and tailored student support
- national awards representing external recognition for student support to successful outcomes – for example enterprise and entrepreneurship support; embedded employability within courses developed with employers and students
- evidence of targeted interventions resulting in good outcomes for underrepresented groups
- multiple examples of employability support with high student satisfaction.

Overall, the panel found that the provider presented wide-ranging evidence of its approaches to supporting student success and progression and demonstrated the positive impact of these approaches on student outcomes. The panel therefore concluded that the provider uses 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 an outstanding quality feature.

The indicator for 'continuation' provides evidence of very high quality for full-time students. There was evidence of outstanding quality for several underrepresented groups; and several subject areas. There was evidence of one subject area, Geography, being not very high quality.

The 'completion' indicator provides initial evidence of at least a very high quality feature for full-time students, with outstanding rates for some groups.

The part-time 'continuation' and 'completion' indicators provides evidence of at least a very high quality feature.

The 'continuation' and 'completion' indicators provides initial evidence of at least a very high quality feature for apprenticeship students.

The panel considered the provider's context, including large numbers of students from underrepresented groups and the regional environment. It noted the outstanding continuation and completion rates for many of these underrepresented groups, and also for large areas of its provision. The panel therefore concluded that there are outstanding rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses.

### **Progression rates**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The full-time 'progression' indicator provides initial evidence that the provider's performance is at least very high quality for full-time students, with evidence of outstanding rates for some groups of students.

The panel interpreted the 'progression' indicator as providing evidence of at least very high quality for part-time students.

For apprenticeships, the 'progression' indicator provided initial evidence of at least very high quality.

The provider and student submissions set out how the provider uses educational outcomes data and social mobility recognition to demonstrate positive student progression outcomes.

Considering the evidence in the round and the provider's context, the panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature. The panel concluded that there was evidence of very high progression rates for all groups of students with outstanding rates for some groups of students, including for several underrepresented groups and large subject areas.

## **Intended educational gains**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

It noted evidence in the provider and student submissions that the provider describes educational gains as ‘the change in knowledge, skills, work-readiness, and personal development achieved by the individual in their subject discipline context’. This is intended to recognise students’ different starting points and their journey to achieve positive outcomes. The provider sees engagement with the Hallam Model as key to their success and to the achievement of very strong outcomes by diverse student groups.

The panel found that articulation of educational gains is threaded throughout the provider submission with examples of how it is manifested, including the approach to authentic assessment, strong and relevant industry engagement, and the tailored and holistic support for students’ success in their studies. Considering the evidence, the panel concluded that the provider clearly articulates the range of educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students and their future ambitions.

## **Approaches to supporting educational gains**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

It noted evidence in the provider and student submissions of outstanding quality, such as:

- the use of student analytics to track engagement with learning and development opportunities and target action to ‘at risk’ students
- examples of research with specific groups with lower outcomes to inform development of provision
- examples noted under other features above which support students in achieving the intended educational gains.

The student submission also noted ‘most SHU students move through the university and into jobs which have a significant impact of [sic] their social mobility and capital’.

Overall the panel considered 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. Considering the evidence in the round, the panel concluded that the evidence demonstrates an outstanding quality feature.

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

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

The panel took into consideration how the provider uses intermediate measures and outcomes for monitoring and evaluating educational gain, drawing additional data from National Student Survey optional questions and module evaluation questionnaires. It also uses an impact dashboard to track demographics and outcomes for student groups in support of its access and participation plan evaluation, which shows more positive outcomes associated with greater engagement with learning and development opportunities.

The panel found that the provider has a well-developed framework for evaluation of the gains made by its students and can demonstrate that students are already succeeding in achieving some of the intended gains. For this reason, the panel concluded this was very high quality.

## **Overall: Gold**

The panel considered the overall 'best fit' rating to be 'Gold'.

The panel considered the student experience aspect rating to be 'Silver' and the student outcomes aspect rating to be 'Gold'. The panel weighted these two aspects equally and considered all the evidence across all features and across all the provider's student groups, subjects and courses.

In reaching this decision, the panel considered there to be compelling evidence that the outstanding and very high quality features apply to all groups of students, including those from underrepresented groups.

When determining whether the overall rating should be 'Gold' or 'Silver', the panel considered all the evidence across all the features and judged the evidence to show there to be typically outstanding quality provision for all groups of students and courses rather than typically very high quality provision. In judging 'Gold' to be a better fit than 'Silver' the panel noted:

- the very high to outstanding outcomes across all stages of the student lifecycle (continuation, completion and progression), indicating the success of the provider's holistic approach grounded in the Hallam Model
- across the aspects, the provider has presented compelling evidence to show that many of its approaches are embedded and tailored to its students, including the significant number of students from underrepresented groups.

The panel considered that the student experience aspect included outstanding features and that taken together with the 'Gold' rating for student outcomes, the best fit for the overall rating was 'Gold'.