



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

Ravensbourne University London

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Silver

Typically, the experience students have at Ravensbourne University London and the outcomes it leads to are very high quality.

Student experience: Bronze

The student academic experience is typically high quality, and there are some very high quality features.

Very high quality features include:

- teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are effective in supporting students' learning, progression, and attainment
- course content and delivery that effectively encourages the provider's students to engage in their learning
- the use of research in relevant disciplines, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience for students
- a supportive learning environment in which students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support
- physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning.

Student outcomes: Silver

Student outcomes are typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- effective support for students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses
- the provider's articulation of the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students
- effective support for students to achieve the intended educational gains
- evaluation of the educational gains made by students.

There is also one outstanding quality feature:

- outstanding rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses.

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

Ravensbourne University London is a specialist higher education institution focused on the creative industries and creative economy.

The provider has a population of around 2,500 students per year, 98 per cent of which are undergraduates and there are small numbers of part-time students. Its course portfolio includes Fashion, Photography, Broadcasting, Advertising, Architecture, Graphic Design, Music Production, Animation and Games.

It has an education delivery model built around close relationships with industry. The provider's mission is to 'develop people, ideas and innovation, in collaboration with industry'. Its core strategic aims are: to provide a transformative student experience that enables success in students' lives and careers; to be built around access, inclusion and diversity; to be an integral contributor to communities and society; and to be an essential partner to industry.

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.

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/.

Student experience: Bronze

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 found that the student academic experience is typically high quality and there are some very high quality features for most groups of students.

Across the aspect the panel found:

- five features are very high quality
- two features where there was insufficient evidence of very high quality.

The panel considered the contextual information regarding the proportion of students from underrepresented groups to be relevant to this assessment, considering the provider's stated focus on enabling a diverse group of students to succeed in the creative industries.

The panel applied the ratings criteria and considered the best fit rating to be 'Bronze'. This is because the evidence best fits the description 'some features of the aspect are very high quality for most groups of students'. The panel did not consider 'Silver' to be the best fit because it did not find enough evidence that 'most features of the aspect are very high quality for all groups of students' as would be required to meet the 'Silver' aspect rating criteria.

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

Teaching, assessment, and feedback; and course content and delivery, student engagement in learning and stretch

The panel considered these two features together and judged them to be very high quality.

The overall indicators for 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback' did not provide initial evidence of very high quality. However, the panel noted that there was initial evidence of outstanding quality for Computing and Performing Arts courses.

The provider submission addressed its indicator performance and described how it is working in partnership with students and using continuous review processes to 'support the co-generation of solutions as concerns arise'.

The panel used the full range of evidence from the indicators and the submissions in making its assessment. The evidence in the provider submission included:

- opportunities for interdisciplinary working to support creative outputs
- integration of professional practice into teaching with industry-commissioned briefs
- studio and enquiry-based learning
- placements within creative industries
- opportunities for study abroad, fieldwork and external visits

- negotiated topics for final year dissertations and major projects
- use of personal portfolios, e-portfolios, critique, personal progress reviews, and industry-derived assessment tools
- adjustments to assessment load and a focus on ongoing formative assessment
- positive feedback from external examiners, including on processes, staff professionalism, and student outcomes.

The student submission also provided evidence of positive changes to course content as a result of student feedback. The submission also highlighted the subjects' practical nature and industry relationships and suggested areas for improvement including communication and collaboration, and aspects of academic staff engagement.

The panel accepted that the provider's account of the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on its student population in the context of its area of London, was a credible explanation for the below benchmark National Student Survey results during some of the assessment years.

Overall, the panel found that there was enough evidence of very high quality teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are effective in supporting the learning, progression and attainment of most of the provider's groups of students.

The panel also judged that course content and delivery effectively encourage students to engage in their learning, although the panel found less clear evidence that students are stretched to develop their learning and skills.

Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The provider submission discussed its mission 'to educate not for industry as it is, but for industry as it will be'. Throughout the submission, there was reference to a curriculum that is built around engagement with industry, with direct industry input into the student experience.

The provider described an academic experience that is strongly supported by 'scholarship, innovation, professional practice, employer engagement, and research'.

It also noted thematic priorities for research and knowledge exchange which align with industry practice, with a focus upon immersive film and narrative, virtual and augmented reality, wearables and digital teaching methods.

The embedding of professional practice into the curriculum, including through employer engagement, was also highlighted in the student submission.

Overall, the panel considered there was evidence to suggest that this feature is typically of very high quality. The panel concluded that the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience for its students.

Staff professional development and academic practice

The panel found insufficient evidence that this is a very high quality feature.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions included:

- support for staff professional development is in place through the Advance HE accredited postgraduate certificate in teaching and learning
- peer observation of teaching takes place
- there is a monthly staff development forum and a focus upon inclusive teaching to meet the needs of the provider's diverse student body.

The student submission described very positive student reflections on working with lecturers with industry experience, and the wealth of knowledge that is brought into the teaching.

Overall, the panel considered there was not enough evidence to judge this a very high quality feature.

Learning environment and academic support

The panel considered there was enough evidence of very high quality for this feature.

The 'academic support' indicator provided initial evidence of not very high quality for full-time students.

The provider submission described taking active steps to develop and ensure a supportive learning environment, with particular acknowledgement of the challenges that starting at university can present to traditionally underrepresented groups. The evidence in the provider submission included:

- a personal progress review with all students each semester
- the use of blended resources and activities, developed during the coronavirus pandemic, to support neurodiverse students studying games design
- transition to higher education support including an interactive project and introduction to skills such as working collaboratively
- specialist study skills support which reaches students not eligible for the Disabled Students' Allowance
- monitoring processes to re-engage students who fall below an 80 per cent attendance requirement, linked to research evidence relating attendance to achievement
- invitations to disclose additional or hidden learning needs to access additional tailored support and access to wellbeing support via a team of qualified counsellors
- access and participation plan funding for students to support final year projects and showcase events.

The student submission described the provider as offering 'a small close-knit community', 'dedicated support from tutors', and the ability to 'create close connections with students from a range of creative courses to support their future careers'.

While the panel found there to be a lack of evidence of impact as yet for many of the initiatives described by the provider, the panel judged overall that there was sufficient, if limited, evidence of very high quality elements within this feature for some groups of students.

Learning resources

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

The 'learning resources' indicator did not provide initial evidence of very high quality.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions included:

- the Kit Store with 4000 technical resources that students can borrow. This was praised in the student submission
- the Institute for Creativity and Technology (opened 2021) as a site for experimentation
- bursaries provided to enable students to purchase laptops prior to arrival, and a laptop loan service and free online software store
- the introduction of an improved virtual learning environment in 2019 with enhanced features for dialogue and collaboration
- specialist library collections including an on-demand streaming service, materials and technology collections.

The provider described how these specialist resources aid students 'to become the future innovators of the design and manufacturing world by enabling them to make informed decisions relating to the sustainability of materials and to better understand the use of materials in the design and manufacturing process'.

Overall, the panel concluded there was enough evidence of a very high quality feature for most groups of students, and that physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning.

Student engagement in improvement

The panel considered there was insufficient evidence of very high quality for this feature.

The 'student voice' indicator provided initial evidence of not very high quality for full-time students.

The provider submission described a range of approaches to embedding engagement with its students. The evidence included:

- course level student voice meetings each semester which lead to change
- student representative involvement in annual monitoring, course review, approval and validation

- the ability to undertake paid work as student ambassadors, learning buddies and mentors
- students' union-led clubs and societies with volunteering opportunities that develop employability skills.

The student submission described the use of 'specific TEF-focus group feedback, 18 student voice meetings, 600+ responses to a 2022 survey, and meetings with course representatives and other students' in preparing the TEF submission. It says that there is a 'direct line' between the students' union and the senior leadership team and that a new senior role holder invites student feedback through regular meetings with groups of students from each course.

Considering the evidence in both the indicators and the submissions, the panel judged that the provider had not offered enough evidence to explain the indicator performance and to demonstrate that it effectively engages with its students, leading to improvements to their experiences and outcomes. The panel concluded there was insufficient evidence that this feature is typically of very high quality for most groups of 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 that student outcomes are typically very high quality for the provider's mix of students, including students from underrepresented groups, and courses.

Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- five features that are very high quality
- one feature that is outstanding quality.

The panel applied the ratings criteria and considered the best fit rating to be 'Silver.' This is because 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 to be a very high quality feature.

The provider submission described its approach as an: 'inspiring learning landscape that reflects the specialist focus of its creative industries provision, with a collegiate culture and community of practice, to enable students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies'.

Evidence in the provider submission included:

- high profile partnerships with global brands in relevant industries, which result in student placements and enhance student progression to employment
- student projects and briefs which are informed by industry, and commissioned to provide industry-standard experience and professional practice
- a careers service which supports students to find 'relevant employment to support their experiential learning and build professional networks'
- the use of the CreativeLab to drive diversification across creative industries
- support for graduates with significant learning needs to become entrepreneurs or self-employed.

The student submission commends the careers service and states that the provider prepares students well for the world of work. It described students being supported by staff to achieve learning gain and to continue, progress and complete with excellent educational outcomes.

Overall, the panel concluded that the provider effectively supports its students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies and judged this to be a very high quality feature.

Continuation and completion rates

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

The 'continuation' indicator for full-time students provided evidence of very high rates of continuation for most student groups and courses.

The 'completion' indicator for full-time students provided evidence of either very high quality or outstanding quality.

Overall, the panel concluded that there are very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses and that this is a very high quality feature.

Progression rates

The panel found this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The 'progression' indicator provided initial evidence of very high quality for most student groups and courses, and outstanding quality for some underrepresented groups.

Additional evidence in the provider submission included:

- data shows sustained levels of employment one, three, five and ten years post-graduation
- the Incubation+ centre has provided commercial support to over 150 graduates and businesses through accelerator programmes, business mentoring, investment and branding expertise
- the 'Kick-start' programmes across all subjects: 8-month programmes supporting ten students to kick-start freelance careers

- details of industry award wins for students and graduates
- a support scheme for graduates with significant learning needs to become entrepreneurs or self-employed.

Taking all of the evidence into account, the panel considered there was strong evidence to suggest that this feature is typically of outstanding quality, and that there are outstanding progression outcomes for most of the provider's students and courses.

Intended educational gains

The panel found this to be a very high quality feature with some outstanding elements.

The provider submission described how its students have benefitted from the outcomes of the HEFCE learning gain project and refers to its strategic focus on collaboration with industry to provide a range of clearly articulated intended educational gains.

The provider describes itself as enabling:

- highly employable and entrepreneurial graduates
- work within the industry before or soon after graduating
- networks and contacts to establish and build their career
- recognition within a profession and winning industry-leading awards
- influencing their professional practice, including addressing underrepresentation within the creative economies.

The panel found that the provider understands its students, what it intends them to achieve and explains why its educational gains are highly relevant to its mix of students and their future ambitions. The panel therefore judged this to be a very high quality feature overall with some outstanding elements.

Approaches to supporting educational gains

The panel judged this to be a very high quality feature with some outstanding elements.

The provider submission described its approach to supporting students to achieve educational gains as being 'driven by industry standards embedded in our innovative curriculum and learning environment', with access to technology, and its project-based approach to student learning, alongside opportunities to develop as entrepreneurs and to gain employability experience.

The evidence in the provider submission included:

- a project-based approach to student learning
- the demonstration of achievements at end of degree public events such as London Fashion Week

- the embedding of professional networks and industry experts, alongside work-based learning
- business creation and commercial support through the provider's incubator, generating income and jobs.

The student submission described: how academic freedom in student projects reinforces learning gain; support from staff to enable students to achieve learning gain; and student societies and clubs that enhance the student experience and contribute to learning gain.

Overall, considering the evidence from both submissions, the panel concluded that the provider effectively supports most of its groups of students to achieve educational gains, and judged this to be a very high quality feature with some outstanding elements.

Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

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

The provider submission stated that the provider's evaluation of educational gain is at an early stage and that it includes learning from the HEFCE-funded projects. The current approach focuses on the relationship between tariff points on entry and graduate outcomes data.

The provider submission described a range of mechanisms to evaluate the gains made by its students. These include:

- admitting students with lower tariff points, recognising alternative modes of demonstrating aptitude to benefit from study and to achieve educational gain
- multiple instances of students and graduates being shortlisted for or winning awards and prizes
- evidence of the influence of students and graduates on their chosen profession, including working in high-level positions in global organisations.

Overall, the panel considered there was enough evidence to judge this a very high quality feature.

Overall: Silver

Applying the guidance and the panel members' expert judgment, the panel considered the overall 'best fit' rating to be 'Silver'.

The panel rated the student experience aspect 'Bronze', and the student outcomes aspect 'Silver'. It weighted these two aspects equally and considered all the evidence across all features and across all the provider's student groups, subjects and courses to come to a 'best fit' decision regarding the overall rating for the provider.

When determining whether the overall rating should be 'Silver' or 'Bronze', the panel noted that it found all of the student outcomes features to be very high quality, along with one feature, and elements of other features, that it judged to be outstanding. The panel also found some of the student experience features to be very high quality.

In reaching its overall rating decision, the panel considered that the student experience and student outcomes at the provider are typically of very high quality for most groups of students, and there is some outstanding quality for all students with regards to student outcomes.