



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

University of the Arts, London

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Bronze

Typically, the experience students have at University of the Arts, London and the outcomes it leads to are high quality, and there are some very high quality features.

Student experience: Bronze

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

Very high quality features include:

- research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement that contributes to a very high quality academic experience for students
- support for staff development and excellent academic practice is promoted.

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
- very high rates of progression for the provider's students and courses
- intended educational gains and their relevance to students are articulated.

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 is a large, specialist art and design provider, formed of six art and design colleges across London. The provider outlines an educational ethos based on global reach and widening access, and principles of preparing students to impact on the world around them through positive cultural, economic and societal change.

The provider had 20,490 full-time students in 2020-21, the majority of whom are first degree undergraduates. There are small numbers of part-time undergraduates, with no reportable data for this group in 2020-21. There are 1,520 students who are on validated-only provision in 2020-21.

The largest full-time subject area is creative arts and design. The subject mix also includes media, journalism and communications, business and management and performing arts.

Three-quarters of students are female. Around one-quarter of full-time undergraduates enter the provider with higher education qualifications. Almost half of students are from the EU or are international.

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.

Across the student experience aspect, the panel found:

- two very high quality features
- five features where there is insufficient evidence of very high quality, although there are elements of very high quality practice in two of these features.

The panel applied the criteria and found the best fit rating to be 'Bronze'. This is because some features of the aspect are very high quality for most groups of students. The panel did not think that 'Requires Improvement' would be the best fit because there were no features clearly below the level of high quality, or that may be of concern.

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

Teaching, assessment, and feedback

The panel considered that there is insufficient evidence of a very high quality feature.

The indicators provide evidence that:

- 'teaching on my course' is not very high quality for full-time students. The panel considered that this evidence applies broadly to the provider's student groups and for some groups of students there may be evidence of provision clearly below the level of very high quality
- 'assessment and feedback' is very high quality for full-time students. For some groups of students there is some evidence of provision below the level of very high quality.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions includes:

- acknowledgement of the 'spiky course profile' of National Student Survey results across the provider's courses
- information regarding the introduction of a resource allocation model, although there was limited evidence of impact
- descriptions of 'practice based enquiry' and the 'Creative Attributes Framework' which includes the integration of assessment

The student submission describes a generally positive experience of teaching, including an embedded approach to inclusive assessment.

The panel considered there to be some elements of very high quality practice in relation to assessment and feedback. However, the panel considered overall that there is insufficient evidence that the provider has embedded very high quality teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are effective in supporting its students' learning, progression, and attainment.

Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch

The panel considered that there is insufficient evidence of a very high quality feature.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions includes:

- the provider's approach of practice-based enquiry which draws on disciplinary knowledge and on technical, theoretical and contextual learning, although there was limited detail of the impact on the provider's students
- experiences of alumni, although with limited evidence of the mix of students and courses to which these applied
- details of projects and staff and student collaborations, such as fashion shows, although with limited evidence of impact.

The panel considered that there is insufficient evidence that the provider's course content and delivery effectively encourages the provider's students to engage in their learning, and stretch students to develop their knowledge and skills.

Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement

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

The evidence in the provider and student submissions includes:

- research and knowledge exchange activities, with statements that research, knowledge exchange and taught programmes are connected
- a credible track record in research, and a commitment to making strong links between research and teaching
- inclusion of a core criteria in promotion to Reader and Chair concerning the impact of research on teaching
- the prominent level of involvement of students in knowledge exchange activities, creating social innovation capacity globally.

The panel considered that across its mix of students and courses, the provider uses research or knowledge exchange or industry engagement in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience for all or most of its students.

Staff professional development and academic practice

The panel considered that this is a very high quality feature.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions includes:

- staff professional development activities and a high level of teaching qualification and fellowship

- mandatory peer observation of teaching, with some evidence of impact
- staff development activities are tailored to the provider's students and courses
- evidence of the impact of approaches on learning and teaching, including through conferences and journals.

The panel considered that there is very high quality support for staff development and excellent academic practice is promoted.

Learning environment and academic support

The panel considered that there is insufficient evidence of a very high quality feature.

The indicators provide evidence that:

- 'academic support' is not very high quality for full-time students.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions includes:

- new policies and procedures for student support, although there is limited evidence of impact or of the mix of students and courses to which these apply
- an individualised approach to academic support, including intercultural awareness workshops
- an embedded approach to inclusive assessment, which is corroborated in the student submission.

The student submission is generally positive regarding academic support, but notes inconsistency of the implementation of disability support at course level.

The panel considered that there is insufficient evidence that the provider fosters a supportive learning environment, and that its students have access to a range of very high quality academic support.

Learning resources

The panel considered that there is insufficient evidence of a very high quality feature.

The indicators provide evidence that:

- 'learning resources' is not very high quality for full-time students, with compelling statistical certainty.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions includes:

- significant investment in physical learning resources
- very high quality library provision, including awards for the provider's extensive online special collections

- how library resources are used to support learning and teaching
- recent investment in digital facilities, although there is limited evidence of the specific impact of this investment on the student experience.

The student submission corroborated the provider's evidence on how the coronavirus pandemic impacted students' satisfaction with learning resources.

The panel considered there to be some elements of at least very high quality learning resources. However, the panel considered overall that there is insufficient evidence that the provider's physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning.

Student engagement in improvement

The panel considered that there is insufficient evidence of a very high quality feature.

The indicators provide evidence that:

- 'student voice' is not very high quality for full-time students, with compelling statistical certainty. The indicators may be below the level of very high quality or of concern.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions includes:

- the involvement of students in routine quality assurance processes, and regular student access to senior leadership through termly 'Deans Forums'
- details of projects and practices relating to the student voice, although there was no evidence of impact or of how this leads to improvements to the experiences or outcomes of students.

The student submission comments positively on the collaborative working relationship with the provider, the pro-active approach to student feedback, and the representation of students on committees at different levels.

The panel considered that while the indicators may provide initial evidence of a potential concern, the evidence in the submissions means that no concerns were found. However, the panel concluded that there is insufficient evidence to find 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.

Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- four very high quality features
- one feature where there is insufficient evidence of very high quality
- one feature where there is insufficient evidence to reach a judgement on quality.

The panel applied the criteria and considered that the rating with the best fit is Silver. This is because most features 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 that this is a very high quality feature.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions includes:

- tailoring of approaches to meet the needs of the mix of students and courses, such as opportunities to engage with industry professionals
- use of specialist studios
- access to academic staff with relevant experience.

The panel considered that there is limited evidence of the effectiveness of these approaches on different student groups.

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 that this is a very high quality feature.

The indicators provide evidence that:

- continuation and completion are very high quality for full-time students.

There was limited further evidence in the provider submission.

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

Progression rates

The panel considered that this is a very high quality feature.

The indicators provide evidence that:

- progression could be very high quality, though there is limited certainty in the data.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions includes:

- information regarding portfolio careers and business founders in the creative industries
- information relating to issues with the Graduate Outcomes Survey as regards creative careers.

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

Intended educational gains

The panel considered that this is a very high quality feature.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions includes:

- an articulation of the educational gains the provider intends its students to achieve and how these are related to the provider's ethos and mission.

The panel considered that there is some evidence that 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 that there is insufficient evidence of a very high quality feature.

The panel considered that there is insufficient evidence of how the provider effectively supports its students to achieve the identified educational gains.

Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

The panel considered that there is insufficient evidence to reach a judgement on the quality of this feature.

Overall: Bronze

The panel judged that the best fit rating for the student experience aspect was 'Bronze'. The panel judged that the best fit rating for the student outcomes aspect was 'Silver'.

The panel judged that the best fit overall rating is 'Bronze'.

It judged that there are some very high quality features in both the student experience and student outcomes aspects. However, the majority of student experience features were not judged to be very high quality. Therefore, the panel judged the evidence to show there to be typically high quality provision for the provider's groups of students and courses, rather than typically very high quality provision.