



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

## **Summary TEF 2023 panel statement**

**Hugh Baird College**

# Summary of outcomes

## Overall: Bronze

Typically, the experience students have at Hugh Baird College 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:

- use of research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience for students
- a supportive learning environment, where students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support.

### Student outcomes: Silver

Student outcomes are typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- effective supports for students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- very high rates of successful progression for students and courses
- articulation of the educational gains intended for students to achieve, and why these are relevant to them.

There is one feature with both very high quality and outstanding elements:

- very high rates of continuation and outstanding rates of completion for 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.

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

Hugh Baird College sets out its mission to 'inspire, challenge and transform lives'. The provider has five strategic priorities which include 'being driven by its people, for its people'; 'providing the highest quality experience for students'; 'delivering an employer driven curriculum'; 'serving as a beacon for the community'; and 'seizing opportunities that benefit its people and place'.

It is a further education provider delivering higher education courses in Bootle, North Liverpool, which it describes as a very deprived area of the country. This influences employment opportunities in the surrounding area. The provider's focus is higher technical qualifications, foundation degrees, one year honours top ups and initial teacher training.

There are around 500 full-time and 50 part-time undergraduates each year, and 40 apprentices. Most courses are studied for two years, with Health and Social Care, and Creative Art and Design being the most popular with students. Most students (around 80 per cent) are mature and the vast majority (over 80 per cent) are from the most disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. Around a third of students have a disability.

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: 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 aspect of student experience the panel found:

- two features are very high quality
- there is not enough evidence to judge five features as very high quality.

The panel noted that there were elements of very high quality within each of the features, however not all features were very high quality overall.

Throughout the assessment, the panel took the provider's context into careful consideration, noting that it offers an essential service to the people in the local area which experiences high levels of deprivation.

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, consistent with a rating of 'Bronze'.

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 there is insufficient evidence to judge these features as very high quality.

The indicators showed that for full-time students there is initial evidence that 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback' are very high quality, but with low certainty. There is no indicator data for part-time students.

The panel considered evidence in the provider submission, including:

- mature, parent students have good experiences with supportive tutors and engaging lessons; while students are also positive about the opportunity to meet industry experts
- class sizes are small, typically with fewer than 12 students per class
- questionnaire feedback during coronavirus challenges related to teaching, equipment and learning, with action was taken to address arising issues
- cross discipline collaboration, including students studying creative make-up design and practice students working with digital imaging and photography students on photoshoots, among others
- external examiner comments note the dynamic nature of work-based learning projects and assignment briefs relevant to industry practice

- supporting the development of industry relevant skills and confidence, such as adopting a 'studio culture' on the Merchandising and Design course
- industry partnerships give students opportunities to develop presentation skills by pitching ideas directly to industry professionals, who also assess their work.

Considering the evidence holistically, the panel found there is not enough 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. Therefore it could not judge this feature as very high quality.

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

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The provider submission shows evidence of very high quality, including:

- strong partnerships with local industry which contribute to the development of courses, assessments, and placement opportunities
- students have the opportunity to undertake a four-week placement, with some students going on to employment with the placement provider after completing their course
- staff members are encouraged to maintain ties with industry, including freelancing and entrepreneurship, which informs the curriculum design
- a working relationship with the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, and an external examiner commenting on strong employability links with industry and local businesses.

The panel considered this evidence carefully in light of the provider's context in a deprived area, and concluded significant effort is being made to maintain links with industry to inform teaching and learning, and to support students to progress.

Looking at the evidence in the round, the panel judged 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.

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

The panel considered there is not enough evidence to rate this feature as very high quality.

The panel considered evidence from the provider submission, including:

- ungraded, personal development observations for new staff, enabling supportive feedback on higher education delivery
- coaching and peer reviews allow further enhancement and sharing of best practice
- staff are financially supported to gain higher level qualifications and engage in continuing professional development, leading to more staff progressing to PhD level

- encouraging staff to participate in professional practice in terms of freelance and owning companies. This was endorsed by an external examiner as successful and important in translating learning to the classroom
- holding annual college staff excellence awards.

The panel considered that, while there is detail on support for staff development, there is not enough evidence of how the provider promotes excellent academic practice, such as the numbers of staff engaging in continuing professional development or progressing to higher level study.

Therefore, the panel concluded that there is insufficient evidence of very high quality support for staff professional development and that excellent academic practice is promoted.

## **Learning environment and academic support**

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The indicator for full-time students showed there is possible evidence that 'academic support' is very high quality, but certainty in the data is low. There is also some variation between different subjects and student groups.

The panel also considered evidence in the provider submission, including:

- implementing hardship initiatives during coronavirus to help students with rent, laptop loans, home internet access, food vouchers, and equipment. An external examiner commented positively on teaching and support during this period
- establishing a partnership with Merseycare Life Rooms, enhancing students' access to tailored mental health support
- in 2021-2022, there was a notable increase in students claiming mitigating circumstances
- four facilitators offer additional support to creative students in and out of class contact time
- timetabling is designed to accommodate student parents and others facing additional barriers to learning
- students who have a disability receive support from a coordinator, with additional assistance from student services
- the quality of the learning environment and academic support is endorsed by students.

Looking at all the evidence available, the panel concluded that the provider fosters a supportive learning environment, and its students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support.

## **Learning resources**

The panel found there is insufficient evidence to consider this a very high quality feature.

The indicator shows for full-time students there is possible evidence that 'learning resources' are very high quality, but certainty in the data is low. There is also some variation in performance for different subjects and student groups.

The panel also considered evidence in the provider submission, including:

- funding to support the college's digital offer and £549,000 to support the curriculum
- a dedicated £8 million invested in a higher education university centre, which has supported a studio culture on courses such as merchandising and design.

Considering the evidence in the round, the panel concluded there is not enough evidence 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 is insufficient evidence to judge this as a very high quality feature.

The indicator for full-time students shows there is initial evidence that 'student voice' is below the level of very high quality, although with low certainty in the data.

The panel also considered evidence in the provider submission, including:

- development of a student voice plan is underway, although this is not yet in place
- staff student liaison committees, one of which led to engineering workshops being available out of timetabled hours
- the provider's 'you said, we did' campaign resulted in an additional student representative who meets with the personal development coaches.

Examining all the evidence, the panel concluded there is insufficient evidence that the provider effectively engages with its students, leading to improvements to the experiences and outcomes of its students. Therefore it was unable to judge this as a very high quality feature.

### **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 there is typically very high quality across student outcomes. Across the aspect the panel found:

- three features are very high quality
- one feature has a mixture of very high and outstanding quality



- there is not enough evidence to judge one feature to be very high quality
- there is not enough evidence to give a rating for one feature.

The panel took the provider's location in an area of high deprivation into particular consideration when looking at its students' progression.

The panel applied the criteria using its expert judgement and considered that the best fit rating is 'Silver'. This is because most features are very high quality for all groups of students, consistent with a rating of 'Silver'.

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

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

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The provider submission showed evidence of very high quality, including:

- a commitment to widen access for those without traditional qualifications, including through the integrated foundation entry which provides a route to higher level study
- a higher education knowledge hub identifies skills needs and conducts workshops to address them, although there are no figures on workshop uptake
- monitoring of attendance and attainment, with personal development coaches offering targeted interventions to students identified as at risk of leaving or not achieving. Detail on the specific interventions are not provided
- course teams are given attendance and achievement targets as part of a higher skills quality improvement plan
- employer led enrichment opportunities and events are held during annual progression week, receiving support from the National Careers Service and Sefton Education and Business Partnership
- offering opportunities for students such as compulsory work placements, employment talks, and guest speakers.

The panel noted that the evidence did not show the uptake or success of these initiatives to demonstrate how students have benefitted. In spite of this, considering all the evidence along with the provider's context, the panel judged the provider effectively supports its students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies. This is consistent with a very high quality feature.

### **Continuation and completion rates**

The panel considered this feature has both very high quality and outstanding elements.

The indicators showed that:

- for full-time students there is probable evidence 'continuation' is very high quality, and strong evidence that 'completion' is outstanding
- for part-time students there is initial evidence 'continuation' is very high quality and that 'completion' is outstanding. However, for both part-time indicators there is low certainty in the data.

The panel judged that this feature has a mixture of very high and outstanding quality, due to very high rates of continuation and outstanding rates of completion for the provider's students and courses.

## **Progression rates**

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The indicators showed that for full-time students there is initial evidence that 'progression' is not very high quality, but with less than probable certainty in the data. There is some variation in quality for different student groups and courses, with many not very high quality, but two outstanding. For part-time students, there is no indicator data available.

The panel noted additional 'progression' data in the provider submission showing, among other things, that 100 per cent of students on the Engineering foundation degree who completed a placement with 'Company 57' were offered employment with them after completing their course.

The panel considered comments from the provider addressing the not very high quality indicators, stating that its context makes it challenging for the graduate outcomes survey to collect accurate data. While the panel did consider this, it also noted that most college-based providers will be subject to similar challenges.

The panel considered all the evidence carefully. It concluded that the uncertainty around the indicator data and additional data from the provider, coupled with the challenging local employment market which is among the most deprived in England, means there is sufficient evidence of very high quality for this feature. The panel judged there are very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses.

## **Intended educational gains**

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The panel noted the provider submission describes how they are working towards five strategic priorities. It considered how these strategic priorities support students' growth through industry based courses, and how the student groups the provider recruits are mapped to the Government's advice on skills for jobs.

The panel found that, while the provider does not explicitly outline its educational gains, there is evidence of a commitment to career readiness which is achieved through an employer led curriculum.

Overall the panel concluded that the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students. This is consistent with a very high quality feature.

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

The panel found there is not enough evidence to rate this feature as very high quality.

The panel considered evidence of a value-added system, which supports staff to identify target grades for each student, which are then monitored throughout the student journey. This informs skills needs for each student, and staff work with the library to support students through skills workshops.

However, the panel noted there is no evidence on the success of these measures, or how many students the system supports. It also considered there is no clear articulation of how the support is strategic in helping students achieve the educational gain of career readiness.

Looking at the evidence in the round, the panel concluded there is insufficient evidence the provider effectively supports its students to achieve the educational gains. Therefore it could not rate this feature as very high quality.

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

The panel found there is insufficient evidence to rate this feature.

The panel considered the provider submission did not offer any information about how it seeks to measure the educational gains made by students.

The panel noted the guidance which states that the panel should not prevent a provider from being awarded higher TEF ratings solely because of a lack of developed measures for educational gains.

## **Overall: Bronze**

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

The panel considered the student experience aspect to be 'Bronze'; and 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.

In judging 'Bronze' to be the best fit overall, the panel considered there is evidence that the provider understands its student groups and helps them to successfully progress to further study or professional employment. However, it found the student experience aspect did not show consistent excellence above the minimum level the panel would expect of a higher education provider in a further education college. Considering the evidence in the round, the panel judged the best fit overall was 'Bronze', as there is evidence that student experience and student outcomes are typically high quality, and there are some very high quality features.