

## Optional student submission template for TEF 2023

### 1. Approach to evidence-gathering

I

I am a part of

the Student Representative structure and attend

I interact with other students,

listen to their issues, relay them to senior staff or SSTs to find a solution, get the answers the students' need or find out whereabouts they can get help and give feedback to students.

students took part in the student panel for this submission and were happy to give their input and feedback. I oversaw the project; leading meetings with the panel, reviewing existing evidence, formulating the submission template and the student panel contribution to writing the final submission. The students on the panel chose different ways to get involved and were regularly updated on the progress of the submission and consulted on its content. Some students took part in interviews, some contributed to the writing, some reviewed the submission, and some took part in the recording.

In gathering evidence, I was involved in the running of focus groups, attended all the group meetings, ran my own focus groups, took part in surveys past and current, gathered information from case studies, results from surveys, post survey summaries, data collection, SRC minutes, roadshow, Teams meetings for students, the annual student engagement review and the enhancement survey.

While reviewing the existing evidence, we gathered information about previous student voice activities, the engagement resources shared with us on the VLE and used the student rep Teams channel where we were given evidence on survey results which helped to formulate the submission template. The focus group responses contributed to the contents and structure of the final submission.

We used different approaches to gather new evidence for the student submission, which the student panel decided would ensure we sought the opinion of the representative sample formed from students around GBS on topics which relate directly to student outcomes and experience. Staff supported us to gather this evidence due to a large number of students across GBS.

We have spoken to current students on all courses at GBS, from all the campuses, to find out the opinions of all the students who study here. The focus groups were held with students from the Leeds Trinity University Health and Social Care degree and the University of Suffolk Global Business Management degree. The students were from Level 3, 4, 5, and 6. We have only spoken to current students at GBS but we have looked at information about our past students as well.

We reviewed the student representative committee and programme committee meeting minutes, along with the student engagement review as a summary of these; the survey data analysis from Induction, National Student Survey and module evaluations were reviewed also. Access was provided for the internal analysis of the student NSS data and the associated action plan. Access was provided to policies and strategies and also to the student consultations which took place for these. We decided this would ensure we sought the opinion of the student sample of all the students across GBS. We were supported to gather this evidence as there are many students on campuses across the country. We identified themes to explore specific questions as part of the evidence gathering. We also gathered feedback from the student engagement roadshow across all the campuses where we asked questions and got feedback on student experience at GBS.

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We ran one-to-one Teams meetings with a small number of students, to create case studies, providing context for the experience of the wider student population; larger groups of students took part in the focus groups which were planned by me and facilitated by the Student Engagement Manager. Six questions were asked to build up a picture of learning, teaching, assessment and the support we get from GBS. The transcripts from these meetings were then used to plan the content for our video submission.

As part of the Teaching Excellence Framework Submission the student panel supported the GBS staff to undertake a survey of all GBS students, we contributed to the questions and made suggestions on the format of the survey. We also promoted the survey to our peers and have used the results to inform the student submission.

This submission is an independent submission written by the students and GBS did not influence any of this content.

## **2. Student experience**

Students enjoy the teaching style at GBS and are fully engaged throughout the learning process. It makes them more curious and encourages them to explore more, making the topics easier to remember. Students said that different lecturers teach in different ways and told us that this was good because all students need to try learning in different ways.

Weekly slides are extremely helpful, it gives a better understanding of what you need to do. The lecturer makes sure that we are learning at the right level and pace which helps our individual progress, improves our academic relationships and achievements, gaining confidence and self-esteem to believe more in ourselves

Students do formative and summative assessments, including essays and presentations. Taking part in presentations helps students to engage with each other and learn how to work as a team. It builds their confidence in public speaking and also in their work. Doing presentations as part of the formative assessment helps students to improve their work before submitting their summative assessments.

The feedback from the lecturers is very important and has had a huge impact in a positive way. It helps students in their writing and to make necessary changes to improve their work and achieve excellent marks, to get better grades and to progress further in their studies.

Overall students have found feedback to be constructive. Across the GBS programmes, supportive feedback is given to individuals to help identify areas of improvement, solutions to areas of weakness they may have and also to identify areas of good practice. Feedback has also been useful tool for students especially in early stages of study as it has set the standards for the quality of work expected to be submitted.

One consistent feedback has been the level of support from the lecturers and Skills Support Team in providing meaningful learning experiences and individualised support sessions for students. They provide students with tips on how to improve writing skills and how to do correct referencing of learning materials in the assignments and projects.

The student feedback strongly suggests that positive practices from the GBS staff has resulted in more confident and knowledgeable students. Students strongly feel that the support given is helping them achieve their short-term targets towards successful completion of their programme.

GBS students have benefited from a blend of face to face and virtual learning. The flexibility of accessing the materials and resources online and virtual learning during Covid helped the students

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to stay engaged and on target with their studies. Currently students benefit from the online educational resources that are easy to access at a convenient time. This has supported students who are working parents and finding a balance with personal life and studies, as it empowers them to complete assignments and continue to make progressions.

Face to face learning has been good, and continues to be, a good experience at GBS. There are many benefits from classroom learning and interactions with other students due to good practice of lecturers. Lectures are carefully planned to cover the content for each module and through class teaching and group work this information has been clearly conveyed. When needed, lecturers are always at hand for additional support session or to point the students in the right direction for support from the Support Team at GBS.

Face to face learning has given us the chance to get to know new people, many from different backgrounds and cultures. Many students talked about the friendships they have made and how they have become more tolerant and understanding since studying here. It's not only the students, but the GBS staff as well that are part of the great and diverse environment. Through this social interaction students have been able to make new relationships and build support systems around them.

noticed that as students feel more part of the community, they were more likely to raise their concerns and share their positive experiences.

Classroom learning has given the student more opportunity to raise questions about the modules and the work being thought in class and lecturers have been able to provide additional information and clarifications to ensure effective learning in class. Lecturers are good at checking learner knowledge through questioning in class to ensure learning is taking place and all students are given the right tools to complete their assignments. Students have enjoyed the level of support, routine and structure at GBS. It has given the students opportunity to learn without distractions and develop new learning skills.

For students studying with GBS, we have seen the growth in support system and wider range of resources being made available to students. GBS has set up libraries and computer rooms on campuses in order to provide their students with all necessary equipment and resources needed to study. There has been very positive feedback on the new facilities and positive learning environment to better support students.

Staff have been excellent in providing the right level of support for the students and assisting them with any personal struggles that is preventing them with continuing with their studies. Staff working directly with the students have set behaviour boundaries to promote inclusive and respectful environment.

Currently the students from each Cohort are benefiting from the support of Student Success Tutor (SST) that has been allocated to them as an advisor. Student Success Tutors are students first port of call for queries and because they are always on campus, they have always been able to provide good and quick service. Student Success Tutors have helped students to access a wide range of services including academic support and career guidance. In all our discussions with students, SSTs were mentioned as being one of the best types of support for students, no matter what problem they were facing.

Students made comments including "SSTs are just amazing!", "SSTs are very understanding and are always on hand when needed." and "I think I speak on behalf of all students in saying SSTs are such a blessing to us and they make studying at GBS such an amazing, rewarding place to learn."

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Student Success Tutors are quick to recognise struggling students and discuss with them referral process to the support services and how they can support them. Student Success Tutors have worked successfully with the students with personal learning plans and the Student Welfare team in ensuring effective communication is established and maintained about the students' needs.

Student Success Tutors are very knowledgeable on mitigating circumstances, deferral procedures and academic regulations. Student feedback is that they are always able to advise with the correct processes and information for their query, that they listen to students and push them to achieve their best.

Speaking to students on campus, they have found having a library on campus very helpful as they can go there and use the computers, find useful information and have face to face interaction with staff. We also have an online library which is very convenient as we can access it 24-7. We have access to a lot of books, journals, e-books, audiobooks and videos. It helps students to have access to reading materials, in a digital format, at any location and we are able to store books and pages that are of interest to us.

Student Representatives find the experience rewarding. The enhanced reps are starting to organise student activities and interacting with the students who are studying on different programmes. This has given them an insight on the teaching in other classrooms and they now have wider knowledge of running of the programmes across the GBS campus. Reps say that they have developed leadership skills and have a better understanding of advising students on their individual circumstances. Representatives attend Board meetings and represent the students which gives them an insight into how much work GBS staff go through to ensure student voices are heard and how quick they are to action them.

Student voice activities have made us engage more with what is happening at GBS. We know we are being listened to and can give our feedback. It has helped us to engage with senior staff, in the classroom, in meetings and by attending the weekly forum called Meet the Exec where you get answers to questions you may have.

Through running of the Focus groups and meeting with other students we have seen the positive feedback on the role of Representative. Students have found it reassuring that their messages and feedback are passed on in the meetings and are happy with the actions that have followed as a result. Reps are able to share messages with the students from staff and help students to access support and advice if they have any problems. Representatives feel pride in their work and feel that they are supported by GBS to be able to effectively and confidently implement their role.

Students told us how proud they are to be part of a great institution like GBS. It has grown so much and still puts their students and staff needs first. They are always there to give support when needed and they treat everyone the same with respect regardless of any issues you may have. We feel safe and secure when we are there and can express ourselves freely. We as students had the opportunity to study at GBS and we chose it because it was highly recommended. As many of us are mature students, by providing the chance to achieve our life goals, to improve English skills, and to give flexibility in studying options, GBS is changing our lives.

GBS is a great environment, the campuses are in good locations and very accessible even with students with disabilities. Speaking to students with disabilities, they have said GBS has been very supportive to their needs, and they were surprised at how helpful they are. The welfare team is always on hand, checking in, and putting a plan in place for them. One student told us that GBS have contributed to their improved mental health by helping them to be more open minded and by teaching them skills to develop their resilience.

We asked students what excellence meant to them. Here are some of their responses:

“Excellence means to me always thriving to be the best in life, in any situation. It means I can continue to excel in whatever I do trying my best to push myself to achieve greatness. Being the best in everything I do. Staying focused, passionate and have a get go energy. Developing habits to thrive and reach for the best. For me having an excellent student environment helps me to be more curious about the environment and wanting to explore more excellence means inspiration.”

“Excellence means the quality and effectiveness of teaching, understanding the student's needs and catering for the individual student requirements.”

Same as the rest of the country we had to deal with Covid outbreak. GBS has handled the situation well by contacting students and putting new measures in place to help them continue with their studies. Students have experienced the transition from face-to-face learning to online lectures. At the time this has proven difficult for some students, however with the help of Student Support Tutors they have been able to access the sessions and gain confidence in using modern technology.

Some of the students had difficulties in using Big Blue Button at first and so everyone was given instructions and training on how to use the platform. A lot of us had never used that type of software before but support was always on hand, so we didn't miss submission deadlines and we got updated daily by email. Staff at GBS were always asking if we needed help in those difficult times, it was mentally draining sometimes but having the big blue button made us feel that we were not online as we were interacting with staff and our peers throughout lockdown.

GBS has communicated all information with the students on current government guidelines. During this time students have received regular updates on changes. There was increase of online support for the students from academic staff and Welfare team.

At the end of the lockdown GBS has communicated the new safety measures in place that are on campuses, with the students, prior to our return to the class. This has ensured we are minimising the spread of Covid. GBS facilities were equipped with hand sanitizers, masks and testing kits for the students and staff. Students and staff have worked in bubbles during the restrictions. GBS has ensured that staff and student health is paramount during this time. On arrival temperatures were checked and the campuses were sign posted with information on how to protect ourselves. Additionally, to masks and hand sanitizers, gloves were made available. There were changes to the class timetables to ensure campus is not overcrowded and social distancing is easier to implement.

Talking to a student who contracted Covid four times, they said it was the most difficult time of their life. Although she was ill, GBS gave her so much support and guidance that she still got to hand in her assignments on time and achieve her goals. The support she got from the lecturer was excellent and she said that she would be forever grateful for their support at a difficult time.

GBS staff provided excellent amounts of support to the students to help them through new challenges brought by Covid. Students who were on a verge of giving up were motivated, supported and enabled to continue. Much of the support made available to the students was in relation to their welfare and wellbeing and students felt very grateful for GBS role in supporting them through such a difficult time.

### **3. Student Outcomes**

Studying at GBS, students tell us that they have experienced great growth personally and professionally over the years. They have gained confidence and new skills along the way that have

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been transferable to other areas of their lives. They are more focused on achieving their goals and developing their management skills and knowledge. Many report that they are now more motivated and determined to complete their degree.

Excellent teaching has given us an opportunity and experience to build up on our existing skills and set new specific goals and focus for the future.

GBS provides work-integrated learning opportunities for students to gain business and industry insight and to enhance their work skills such as positive leadership and professional communication. These opportunities give us the chance to get out of the classroom and gain genuine business and industry insight as well as learning about work culture.

GBS lecturers have been mentors in discussing this with students and letting them know about opportunities for different paths they may take in the future. One student had an excellent and rewarding opportunity to attend UK black business entrepreneurs conference and meet business owners. She learned about possible paths she could take in her own career as a result.

Studying with GBS means being proactive in learning and engaging with learning activities in the classroom. Weekly activities such as group research and presentations have contributed to good self-esteem and confidence building of the students.

The study skills team has worked with the students to support them in improving writing skills with their step-by-step training plan. Learning about research and conducting it has helped the students learn how to select relevant data, finding and recognising valid sources of information and accurate ways of storing records.

Active note taking is always promoted during the lectures as this is part of the learning process, whether this is done on the campus or online. Students have shared the feedback on these new skills and how this has contributed to their process of completing the assignments and formative assessments. Effective note taking has also resulted in key points being recorded of each subject to better enable the students with preparation for summative assessments.

Lectures at GBS are carefully planned to challenge the students and exercise their critical thinking skills. Embedded activities get the students to problem solve by the process of evaluation to identify solutions, think and propose the alternatives and review and consider manageable ways in increasing the productivity in the workplace. Students can respectfully challenge themselves and their peers, they engage in tasks requiring scrutinising and justifying of ideas to find logical reasons to the problem solving. Students can analyse the information and data; they are skilled in differentiating and categorising ideas to effectively use the data.

Receiving constructive feedback on the submissions, projects and presentations in the class has given the students clear indication of the areas for improvement that include specific skills they will need to attain. Equally as important feedback has been encouraging and focused on the areas of good practice.

Students have seen growth in their skills and abilities. There has been holistic strengthening of their knowledge, skills and behaviours, such as better communication and development and maintenance of professional relationships. They feel fulfilled and have better future career prospects. A student rep explained that they have gained knowledge and skills at GBS both through their study and as a student representative, giving them excellent traits that are transferable which they will use in the future. The skills they felt they had gained are communication, problem resolution, speaking in committee meetings, giving advice and feedback and always working to high standards.

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Students feel confident in their ability to work as a part of a team and some, even to effectively coordinate and manage a team. They have increased their understanding of different cultures and how this may impact individuals in education.

Due to variety of teaching methods, resources, support, activities, evaluations, research, presentations, and mainly group works students have found that they have improved their leadership skills. Students have been able to participate in activities where they had to establish their roles, dedicate the tasks and combine the information and research completed prior to presenting it to the rest of the class. Working in a team with different students has certainly given the students opportunity to deal with different personalities, articulate language to get better responses and deal with challenges brought by different ideas and ways of working. Studying with GBS has not only improved students' knowledge about theory, but it has also helped them gain practical skills needed to work in their chosen industry.

A student, interviewed for a case study, told us that studying at GBS helped her to set up her own business and talked about how the content of the modules, the teaching styles and the opportunities for work placement helped her to develop her confidence, knowledge and skills.

Many students studying with GBS are working alongside their studies, with some business owners or managers. Studying has helped them with customer service, professionalism, industry and product knowledge, thinking strategically, adapting to colleagues and the working environment more quickly, giving them a growth mindset and being more adaptable to changes in the professional life. Overall students have become more resilient.

Speaking to another student, who has run his own business for over 22 years, he now questions business practices more and uses research to understand why things are done a certain way. He has been able to improve his IT skills, presentation skills, listening skills, critical thinking, academic writing, referencing and resilience and said that all these things will help him to develop his business even more.

Students have shared their learning experience during focus group sessions. Students wishing to, have been offered opportunities to do in-house internships, external placement or work experience in their chosen industry for better experience. Students are invited to regular career workshops such as the Dragons Den event last term. These are planned through the academic year with plenty of opportunities for the students to join and learn something new.

GBS has excellent systems in place to support and assist students with readiness to work. Students are able to access the Careers Hub and book appointments with careers service. Services available to students include e-learning content, CV development, interview preparation; job board to look for opportunities and IT programmes and resources. This support is available for students studying on different programmes and attending different campuses. Students said that this is helping them to think about their options for the future and gives them confidence that they will succeed.

Final note from our lead student,

It has been a great pleasure to be a part of GBS journey and see them navigate through changes with positivity and continuous high standards of education. GBS staff support students from the first meeting at the inductions all the way through to their graduation. We will continue to be impressed with the positivity, support, friendliness and welcoming environment.



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On behalf of all students at GBS, I want to add that we are immensely proud and thankful for all the work GBS has done to support individuals studying in their institution and going over and beyond to ensure wellbeing of their students.

It has been important for me to add that this was not just about gaining a certificate. This has been an adventure where along the way I have develop new unexpected skills and found myself with new ambitions I want to accomplish.

We cannot wait to see what the future holds for GBS.

#### **4. Video Transcript**

I'm very proud to be a part of the student voice as it gets me to express myself, speak on behalf of other students, like getting feedback for them. It's been very rewarding to me, as stuff that I've never known before I've been able to learn from being a part of all of this. So, I would say my biggest achievement at GBS would be being a part of the student rep structure.

It's made me to develop more as a person, like I'm more confident in speaking to a lot of people when I was a bit shy coming here, so I find that they give you the opportunity to grow. The support at GBS has been amazing for the past few years. It's made me proud that other people believe in what you believe, and they push you to get to your goals and limits that you have in life.

I'm proud to be a part of GBS because it's a brilliant, it's a brilliant college for starters. It's got such a diverse culture. All the teachers, all the students, you know, we all get on very well. As a student, all the services that's offered to us, all the support, you know, GBS always go the extra mile. All of the staff that are there are very, very supportive so although it's adult independent learning, you don't really feel that because the support is there and GBS with all their resources, all their teachers, all the lecturers, all the staff at the campus, everyone is lovely from A to Z, you know, very, very supportive in every aspect, whether it's learning, whether it's problems that you might be having as an individual. I mean, we're all adults. We all have respective jobs, families, you know, they're very understanding and very lenient, you know, towards being supportive with however they can. So, I feel proud to be a part of this institution.

Having feedback from the teachers has been helpful because when, especially when you're doing your assignments, if there's something that you're lacking in, it gives you an opportunity to up your work. So, I find the feedback part of the learning outcome is very helpful to students because it pushes us further to achieve what we are capable of achieving.

You get to work within a group, you get to stand up in front of a classroom and you get to present your work, which you will be very proud of, like presenting in front of your peers and lecturer and people appreciating what you do. It's, it's a very good outcome.

All of the modules, the way it's broken down, the support that is offered, any further questions that we have is all on point. Any extra questions, anything that we don't understand. The teachers are accessible, the books, library, everything that is there at hand. I find it supportive because anything that I don't understand, you know, we can quickly go to the library, ask our colleagues or the teachers. They're open to us emailing them outside of hours, you know, during midweek. Anything that we don't understand, they're happy to go over it with us, suggest extra books that we can read, or any topics that we we're not covering properly, or go back and redo something. So as a student, that does make a big difference. Having that support from your tutors.

Largely, I think if we talk about support services in education, I've had a great deal in GBS.



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The staff, they're very friendly, they're very nice, they're very welcoming. And if you've got any problems, anything, you know, you always can go to them. I do appreciate them, and I hope they know that we do appreciate them very much and they are always there to help us with things like that. But she's always there for us, it doesn't matter what time of day or night, she's always there calling, messaging, anything. She's one of the greatest. And that's how I feel, I'm just telling this from the bottom of my heart and my mind. So, she's really, really great.

Some additional skills I've gained whilst in GBS have been resilience, giving the timelines and deadlines to submit assignments and manage that with my work. Academic writing skills has improved, analytical skills, presentation, speaking to audience. Sometimes not things that I agree with, but I have to respect opinions and that has built my personality.

Before I came to GBS, I never thought like I would be able to do something like this for my future or for anything. But since I'm with GBS, it's like I gained so much confidence for myself. I can speak, like with so much confidence with myself and with other people and I can say I'm studying something really good. It has put me in a place that I would never feel like I would be, so for that I'm grateful.

We were right in the heart of the pandemic. So, we started the course as COVID students, as we call ourselves. So, it was very difficult for us because we didn't have face to face interaction like you would usually do. But GBS, their SSTs, were amazing. They always kept us inform, show us the right places that we need to send emails or to get feedback or even giving online support, having the lecturers on hand to give feedback or have 1 to 1 session when we are struggling.

It was amazing because we weren't in the class having lecturers teaching us, but the Big Blue Button, we had access to everyone. So as much as we are in lockdown, that helped because we had interaction with other people outside of our household. So, we will see our cohorts and the lecturers and other important people that we needed to guide us through our course giving us directions at all times and just there helping us. They guided us in a way that, you know, we were scared at the time but the emails, keeping us up to date, giving us instructions on how to be safe, having our temperatures taken as we entered the building, like doing social distancing, making sure the classes wasn't overcrowded. Like if anyone got ill, they were on hand to say, do this, do that. So, I think as much as a lot of us were scared to come back onto campus, because of the guidance that GBS has given to us, we felt more secure and safe coming back into campus.

Students that wasn't coping well with their mental health or anxiety, Welfare was there to support them at all times. They always had contact information about who to contact, when to contact them, and they were always happy to give one to one sessions online when needed.

GBS is supporting me into employment after my studies by offering me a placement opportunity. I am taking an internal placement at GBS. The support of my teachers and that is really helping me to get the skills I need so that I'll be able to become a professional teacher after my training. Some of the examples is that my teachers are very, very supportive. They give me guidelines, they give me quick feedback with my coursework, with my assignments. They provide me with the techniques I need to become an expert teacher. They give me all the professional qualities I need. They give me references to the professional bodies I need, that will help me in my teacher training.

Studying here has been revealing to me. At the latter part of the year, last year, we had this teaching enhancement programme and after I was introduced to this Teaching Enhancement Thursdays, a seminar for teachers. I'm not actually a teacher, but I was invited to engage in that forum and since I've been part of, I've had opportunity to have a listen in to the various experiences

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and practises of the teachers on board. And everybody seemed to be very, very supportive. They come through with every question after and so they've been very supportive in diverse ways.

Excellence means always been able to achieve the best outcomes in life, whether it's learning new things, growing, listening, caring, just everyday stuff that you take in life. And especially going into the workforce, excellence means becoming managers, great doctors, great teachers, etc.

At GBS, I can say working with staff and meeting my cohorts, like, we meet people from all phases of life, and I found it to be friendly, very respectful, they are engaging. At GBS we are a family and we look after each other, and I think that's one of the biggest things about GBS. Like they treat everyone with the same respect and it's a great institution.