

## **Student Submission for TEF 2023**

### **Section 1: Approach to Evidence Gathering**

As preparation for our TEF 2023 student submission, we have gathered wide-ranging evidence from our fellow students using different approaches and involving a representative Team

To begin with, in September 2022, we surveyed our fellow students in our largest School to find out how they felt RCL was performing against the Office for Students (OfS) Conditions of Registration.

We then formed a working group from across the whole taught provision, headed by our Student President, to consider, discuss and better understand the survey findings, as well as our own response to the conditions.

The group collated the views of our fellow students and fed back to class groups the broader debate surrounding the student experience at RCL.

### ***Student Survey January 2023***

We decided to commission a second survey aimed at all our fellow students (the results are discussed in this submission) so that we could draft this document with the broadest and most representative base of evidence possible. For this particular survey, we selected a set of questions that we think best reflects the focus for the TEF exercise, and these were forwarded to the entire student population on Friday 6 January 2023. We chose this period of time as we felt it was imperative to have data that was as up to date as possible.

The survey was sent to all students at RCL. Broadly in line with the relative sizes of our academic

Students responded from all levels of study,

### ***Student Submission Writing Group***

We set up an MS Teams forum for the exchange of ideas and held meetings, to focus upon the themes that we wished to pursue most. These were: Academic Experience, Student Support, Learning Materials, and a more generalised question about how studying at RCL has challenged us to grow and improve in a broader context. This last area is what we refer to as 'value added' or 'educational gains'.

We have also been fortunate enough to have shared with us some of the overall statistical data that the College has been producing through the last year. This has been very useful in positioning what we hear from fellow students, what is reported to us, and what we ourselves experience against the broader trends and context of the institution as a whole. We have also drawn upon data from the last National

Student Survey (NSS) and also the data which has been generated by the OfS with regard to our Continuation, Completion and Progression rates.

The views expressed in this submission are rooted in the evidence we have collected and reviewed, as well as in the views of a broad and representative range of students. Whilst we acknowledge that there will be many individual perspectives, where we make statements, we are confident that they consistently reflect the views of the student body as a whole.

## **Section 2: Student Experience**

In this section we have summarised our views on the student experience at RCL, based on the range of evidence and opinions that we have gathered from fellow students as well as external and internal data.

The student population at RCL is very mixed, so our January 2023 survey questions tried to capture key elements of that mix to better reflect the make-up of our student body. For example, responses to our survey show a wide age range

it is perhaps unsurprising that many of our students have extra responsibilities that need to be taken into account when thinking about their reactions to their experience and outcomes.

### ***Caring Responsibilities, Employment and Flexible Study***

Our survey revealed that a large number of respondents have responsibilities towards dependents, children, and wider family communities as well as work related responsibilities. Of the respondents, (54%) stated that they had one or more dependents, indicating that a majority of students have to juggle caring responsibilities with their studies.

In terms of employment, our fellow students typically face a range of demands on their time. Of the respondents, only a fifth had no paid work commitments. By contrast, two fifths were doing 30+ hours of paid work, 15% were doing 20-30 hours, a fifth were doing 10-20 hours, and 7% were doing 1-10 hours.

Taken together, this is why RCL students appreciate the flexible opportunities and responsive support that they receive from the College and its staff, which allows us to study successfully whilst balancing our caring and employment responsibilities.

### ***Digital Learning and RCL's Response to Covid-19***

Students also appreciate the flexibility provided by RCL's approach to learning that uses both digital in person (on campus) and digital online approaches.

Provider name: RTC Education Ltd, T/A Regent College London  
UKPRN: 10008455

The College was particularly good at digital learning during the pandemic. Over COVID-19, the decision to move all classes to digital methodologies was welcomed by students. This happened seamlessly without missing a single hour of our teaching and was accomplished in week one of the pandemic. To enhance our already strong student experience, the team established a long-term view to deliver a synchronous digital methodology. Within four months, Regent Digital (our student information platform) was revamped. Within nine months, provisions were made for the successful introduction and implementation of a laptop loan scheme for students. We have now returned successfully to a balance of in-person and online teaching.

### **The End Result of Education is Character**

One of the things that attracts many students to RCL is its vision based on 'The End Result of Education is Character' and the way staff at the college work to make sure we develop and succeed on our courses but also grow as individuals and achieve our career goals.

Through its Thinking into Character (TiC) philosophy and the weekly student development sessions (called SCOPE), RCL places equal prominence on academic attainment, character building, employability, and well-being.

### **Learning, teaching and assessment**

From our January 2023 survey, we found that the teacher-student relationship at RCLF is consistently positive, with 82% respondents reporting that they felt tutors knew who they were, and were interacting in a helpful way.

Based on the survey, we also found that 91% of respondents were of the opinion that their assignments were correctly pitched, and more importantly that they had relevance to how they saw their careers developing – that is to say they had 'real-world' applicability.

In addition, students in total noted that teaching materials included sets of up to date and relevant examples, which again bore a strong relation to the world in which they were currently living.

### **Challenge and engagement**

In line with our recent NSS results, our January 2023 survey indicated that high proportions of students typically feel engaged and challenged by their course.

Of the 221 respondents, 94% felt strongly that their writing skills had improved as a result of studying on the course, 90% reported that their critical thinking skills had been positively enhanced, and 87% noted that problem solving skills had improved.

These findings are matched by the experiences of student representatives on the TEF working group. For example, students on the group recognised that for them and many of their peers, they began their courses concerned about *'beginning to study after so many years'* and often *'not in my first language'*. Whilst finding this challenging at the start, teachers helped them semester by semester to *'build confidence'* and learn new ways of studying.

*'In the beginning, I was a bit hesitant to study a method of learning that I discovered was very different from the method of study I was used to. I remember feeling very confused. I did not know where to start. But in all this experience, I am very grateful for the amazing lecturers because they have been so understanding and have built my confidence. I now find myself very engaged with my studies and I find very myself very familiar with a method of study that before was unknown. Also, the extra support of the learning tools given by the lecturers led me to increase my desire to expand my knowledge.'*

### ***Expert teachers and external speakers***

As students, we recognise the importance of having opportunities to learn from teachers who have up to date knowledge and expertise in their subjects, as well as having opportunities to hear from external experts across a range of industry sectors. We also know that our lecturers take part in regular development activities at the college and at conferences to evaluate the effectiveness of different ideas and techniques and help us have an up to date view of our subject. Each term we are sent copies of the research newsletter that shows us what types of development activities they have been involved with. These newsletters also celebrate the dissertation work of some of our fellow students.

We would also like to further note that we have been lucky enough to experience input from a variety of external speakers, (covering different topics, subjects and industries, and often from non-traditional perspectives) as shown here in data provided by the student development (SCOPE) team:

### ***A supportive and responsive learning environment***

In line with our NSS results, students are typically positive about the physical and social learning environment. A key thing is how open and responsive academic and support staff are.

At RCL, we are encouraged to voice any concerns that we have, right from induction, and repeatedly as we study. We can talk directly to tutors within class, and many tutors are supportive and responsive within the classroom setting. It is not uncommon for students to send letters of appreciation to their tutors.

All students at RCL are assigned to a Hub within the Hub X model. The Hub provides direct access to a Customer Services Officer (CSO). The CSO is the person who runs the Hub, and liaises directly with a Senior Lecturer if any of us encounter issues with our academic work. The Hub model also provides support for any pastoral needs we have, such as issues related to finance, course registration, or attendance.

If we feel the need to escalate any class issues, or we are concerned about any level of the teaching that we experience, we can approach the Heads of Schools directly, and also raise notice at the weekly Open Forum with the Director of Students, who will represent our case to the Head of School. This is all on top of the normal processes for evaluation of our teaching experience, such as Module Evaluation Questionnaires, which accompany the delivery of every module or unit that is taught.

Of the respondents, 86% reported that they felt well supported throughout their year of study, which is important in maintaining a healthy environment where students can learn effectively.

When asked about staff responsiveness, 85% reported that tutors were responding to questions appropriately and speedily, Responses in relation to CSOs were even more positive with 89% reporting that responses from CSOs were always very quick

### **Academic support and learning resources**

We also asked students about whether and how often they had attended optional support workshops in the past 12 months. Academic webinars offered in the year 2021-2022 included topics such as: achieving academic success, finding and evaluating sources, academic reading strategies, Harvard referencing, quoting and paraphrasing, academic writing style, giving academic presentations, using RCL's Heritage library, using open access resources, and becoming a critical learner.

Just under half of all respondents said that they had attended at least one optional workshop in the last 12 months, while just under a quarter had sought this support 2-3 times and close to a fifth had attended more than six workshops. Overall, we feel this shows that levels of such support are constant and ongoing, open and receptive, and taken up by a good proportion of the students.

RCL prides itself upon being digitally enabled, and most learning resources are available online, either within our own digital library access system, or enabled by our awarding partners.

Our library management system is called Heritage. Through Heritage all students, no matter what programme, can access our e-library and databases that cover business, health and social care, and engineering and computing. In addition, there are helpful study skills material available on Regent Digital and learning and employability resources on our free online careers platform, Career Connect.

Positively, in line with our NSS results, our January 2023 survey showed that 91% of respondents felt resources were accessible and appropriate, Their comments were typically in relation to occasional difficulties accessing awarding partner resources.

### **Student voice is listened to at all levels**

Student voice is very strong at RCL and improving year on year. Notably, our NSS score for 'Student Voice' improved from (84%) in 2020-21 to 91% in 2021-22.

There is ample opportunity for us to raise issues at RCL. We can use the Student Representation system, its bi-annual Student Council, or its semester based Student Voice Committees. There are weekly 'drop-in' sessions for Representatives, and Representatives are fully trained throughout the year in which they operate, so that they can garner opinion and put forward any views that would warrant the College's attention.

There is also the Open Student Forum held every week, where any concern can be raised and where we can also share good news stories about the student experience (recordings are made available to students who can't attend). We have regular opportunities to meet with senior staff, attending 'Ask the Principal' sessions, and students are also invited to the weekly Principal's digital online 'Townhall' meeting. We know that all staff are directly told that they need to prioritise student concerns, and so at all levels and in all environments our questions are responded to.

The survey we conducted in January 2023 supports this. It found that 88% of respondents felt able to raise issues with College Management either through the students representation system, or via the Open Forum,

The use of surveys in itself allows students also to raise issues in the open comments section, and these are reviewed whenever a survey takes place – not least of course in relation to the NSS Survey, where a poster campaign informing students of what the College has done in response to the most pressing issues is made visible across all College sites – the annual ‘You Said, We Did’ campaign!

### **Section 3. Student Outcomes**

We would like to note right at the outset of this section on outcomes for students that studying at RCL gives us more than a qualification, and that we benefit in all sorts of other ways from our time of study here. We certainly benefit from the courses of study in increasing our knowledge and understanding of specific subject areas, but we also gain critical thinking skills, and analytic reasoning abilities, which translate into day to day experiences.

It is certainly true that our academic abilities are enhanced, even in learning how to formulate an argument within an assignment, and, how to relate this to real world cases that affect our lives. But we have also gone through a process of personal development, confidence building, interpersonal and communication skills, socialisation skills. We are given a variety of assignment types that might test our presentational skills, our spoken word communication levels, and our ability to contribute within class.

### **Continuation, Completion and Progression**

The strong teaching and support that fellow students receive helps them to continue on their programmes, something RCL is good at and this helps students to complete their qualifications. We know that staff take this seriously and are working hard to improve all of our outcomes, making sure that even more students to complete their courses successfully.

We feel RCL encourages all students, particularly mature students, to pursue higher education whenever they are ready, enabling them to reach their career dreams. They often see RCL as a ‘family’ with the relationship beginning long before their first day and continuing beyond graduation.

During their time at the College, students are supported positively to gain the knowledge and skills to progress in their careers or further study. For example, The Student Survey carried out in January 2023 revealed that 83% of respondents felt that careers advice and information had been suitable and helpful,

Furthermore, 88% of respondents reported that they had much more of a career plan by attending RCL, and that they could see the relevance of their studies to their future development. Finally, 83% reported that the careers advice and guidance they had received had been useful,

We have further had the advantage of specific careers support, one to one sessions as we may need them, classroom visits, and specialised events – not least inviting back former students to share with us how they have progressed from their studies. We are very aware that the end of the period of study it

is not all over, that support will continue, that there is an Alumni Association, and that we are made to feel 'work-ready' with all the attributes of successful graduates.

### **Educational Gains.**

Students within our January 2023 survey were asked specific questions to reflect upon what levels of 'value-added' they were experiencing, or had experienced, at RCL. We see this as comparable with the notion of educational gains. Positively, our survey told us that:

- 91% of respondents felt that their confidence levels had increased significantly
- 90% of respondents felt that their communication skills had improved
- 86% reported increased time management skills
- 86% said that their interpersonal skills had improved, and
- 84% of respondents reported that their teamworking skills had improved.

There are also a whole host of extra-curricular activities (263 last year) that are specifically aimed at building personal attributes, delivered via the SCOPE programme, the Wellbeing Team and the Careers Team.

These engaging and helpful workshops – such as 'Networking for Introverts', creating great CVs and LinkedIn profiles, Academic Writing Bootcamps, social media for business, becoming an entrepreneur, public speaking and presentation skills, and Guest Speaker talks – are deliberately aimed at encouraging us to explore our ambitions and aspirations, and developing positive strategies to achieve our goals.

We are also offered free access to the bespoke and accompanying study programme 'Thinking into Character', with a weekly Study Circle in operation.

A full programme of student development events is made available to the entire student population each semester, and informs the environment in which we study as a whole, with a monthly newsletter, weekly email reminders, invitations being posted to our calendars, and recordings available on Regent Digital .



Provider name: RTC Education Ltd, T/A Regent College London  
UKPRN: 10008455

Taken together these show a consistent positive impact on students' holistic development (educational gains) in line with the College's ethos of 'The End Result of Education is Character'.

### ***Concluding remarks***

Our NSS results for last year, which are higher than sector average, show improvements across all areas (see table) and match our view that RCL is a great place to learn. We feel our overall rating of 93% goes some significant way to indicating that we are supported in all sorts of ways to gain qualifications and develop personally and professionally.

Area	% Results in 2022 (+/- 2021)
The teaching on my course	93 (+2)

Provider name: RTC Education Ltd, T/A Regent College London  
UKPRN: 10008455

Learning opportunities	<b>93</b> (+3)
Assessment and feedback	<b>91</b> (+8)
Academic Support	<b>90</b> (+4)
Organisation and management	<b>93</b> (+7)
Learning resources	<b>89</b> (+5)
Learning community	<b>87</b> (+3)
Student voice	<b>91</b> (+7)
Students' academic interests	<b>85</b> (+10)
<b>Overall</b>	<b>93</b> (+3)

We hope that you find this submission helpful in carrying out our TEF 2023 assessment. It represents the views of a wide range of students and is approved as accurate