

2022 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Student Submission

1.0 Approach to Evidence Gathering

1.1 Context Statement

Hartpury University (Hartpury) is a small institution which specialises in animal, agriculture, equine, veterinary nursing and sport degrees, and gained its independent university status in 2018. The small and specialist nature of the university is a strength to the student experience, whereby Hartpury University feels like a family rather than an institution, with our community eagerly identifying themselves under the name 'Pury Family'.

Hartpury established the Hartpury Students' Union (HSU) in 2014 but it should be noted that HSU is not an independent organisation, and the SU staff members are employed by the university. The structure of the HSU executive board evolved, and at the time of writing the HSU comprises one full-time staff member, 3 part-time paid student presidents (which is the equivalent of one traditional SU sabbatical president role), and 3 voluntary student liberation officers with one position vacant. The evolution of HSU, not only as a union but as part of a developing university, has allowed its members to take part in extraordinarily important opportunities, such as making addresses at the 2022 graduation ceremonies, founding forums, attending consultations, amongst others. This evolution highlights how even though HSU is small, it is evolving at an impressive speed, and there has been a shift in the university's approach to HSU, with partnership working becoming common practice.

The student submission TEF team was made up of the three elected part-time student presidents. The structure of the executive committee means that the elected officers are also full-time students, and as such this submission has been created alongside study, assessments and for two of the three officers, dissertation completion. The fact that our officers are current students offers contemporaneous experience and insight but studies and additional roles such as one officer being a student governor have meant that we have balanced this submission against other competing priorities.

We have benefited from the support of the university in terms of training on the TEF indicators, facilitation of our own data collection, access to pre-existing data relevant to the submission and sight of the university's draft submissions. We have worked with the TEF contact and working group throughout the process. Students have been consulted directly through surveys and focus groups, and representative information has been gathered from our student representatives as part of this exercise and from recorded forum feedback. Forums are part of the student representation system at Hartpury which is organised by the SU and overseen by President:

The rural location and practical nature of Hartpury's curriculum offer can present challenges in reaching fully representative input as students are widely distributed across our campus and frequently engaged in practical commitments which come as a part of their programme.

Additionally, many Hartpury students, including current officers, can take advantage of the numerous internal, extra-curricular activities which our applied degree programme setting offers us.

Given these challenges we have endeavoured to ensure that what follows is representative of Hartpury students and is an authentic account of their experience.

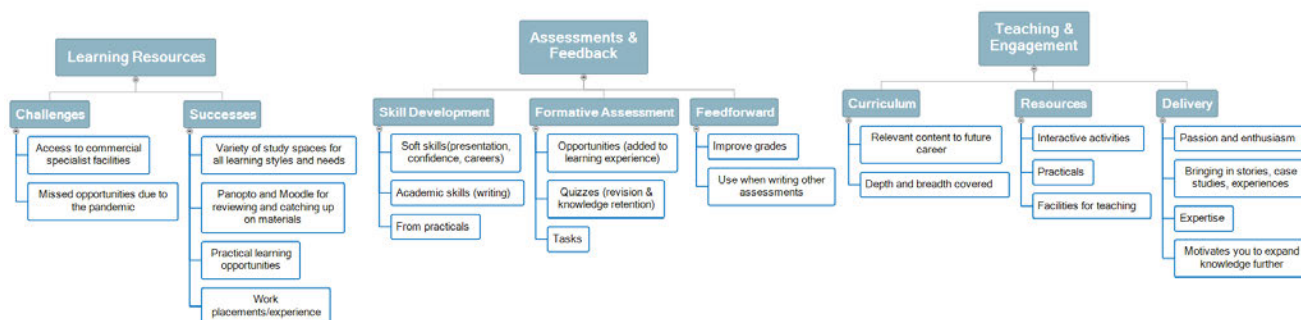
1.2 Data Collection

In order to gain further insight into some of the TEF dashboard data indicators we created a 14-question questionnaire using a mixture of Likert scale, nominal and open questions, which was then disseminated using student representatives, flyers with QR codes in key locations across campus and large, core module sessions over a three-week period (November 2022). The sample size reached 176 undergraduate students, representing approximately 15% of the student body across

all departments. The survey was also sent to the 10 students studying a Hartpury programme at the British Racing School, which is not based on Hartpury campus. We analysed the survey for descriptive and frequency data using SPSS (version 26, IBM) and a word cloud generator for open questions.

Within the timescale and resourcing available we were able to hold focus group interviews (FGIs) within the equine and animal departments. In total, five 30-minute FGIs were held with 23 students. For all FGIs, Braun & Clarke's 6 step thematic analysis was used to generate key-themes, sub-themes and quotes to identify common ideas surrounding each major set of questions, which are integrated into Section 2.0.

The thematic tree below shows the overarching themes produced from the focus group interviews along with the Sub-themes and Codes.



We also used public data such as comments from What Uni reviews and the NSS alongside internal feedback mechanisms (such as staff-student committees and course representatives) and surveys (such as mid- and end of module evaluation) to increase our data set.

2.0 Student Experience

Although Hartpury is specialised, our departments can be so diverse, and due to this diversity, perceptions on what students want and need can differ greatly. The student experience at Hartpury can be tied into the notion of 'Pury Family'. Students, and staff, work closely with each other in our community and this connectedness enhances our academic journey through the sharing of ideas and experiences with each other.

The following section explores the authentic Hartpury experience using the pre-existing data, TEF dashboard and our own collected data.

2.1 Academic Experience and Assessment

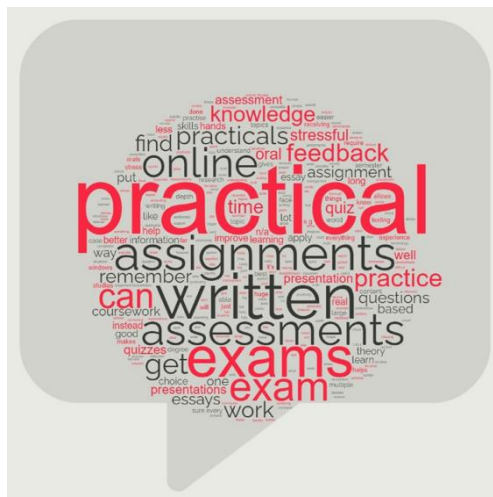
SE1

Hartpury's overall TEF student experience indicator for 'Teaching on my course' shows 61.5% in-line with the benchmark, and 38.5% materially above the benchmark, which we feel is slightly unrepresentative of the current academic experience. The results of the 2022 NSS led to Hartpury University being ranked the number 1 university in England for teaching, and this is echoed through the student voice, where our internal survey indicated that 86.4% of students would rate the quality of teaching they receive on their programme as very good or excellent.

This is supported by the findings of our FGIs where students discussed the depth and breadth of their curriculum. They told us the topics they study give them a deep understanding of a wide variety

of specialist subject areas as well as understanding how to apply the knowledge. For example, one participant said “I think [the topics covered] have given a more in-depth idea for me personally about the way horses work and you do get a very good in-depth explanation as to what they're doing and why they're doing it, which is quite good”. In conjunction with this, through our FGIs, students stated they felt that the topics covered, although specialist, were of a wide variety that gave them the opportunity to deepen their knowledge into specialist areas and look at prospective career options. One participant stated “I feel like I am actually getting something out of it for my future career” whilst another said “The topics we cover help us explore more subject areas and what we will actually be interested in, in the future, future careers”. The encouragement and enthusiasm from lecturers within the classes appear to set the students up to apply the knowledge gained in class to use independently within their own interests and research.

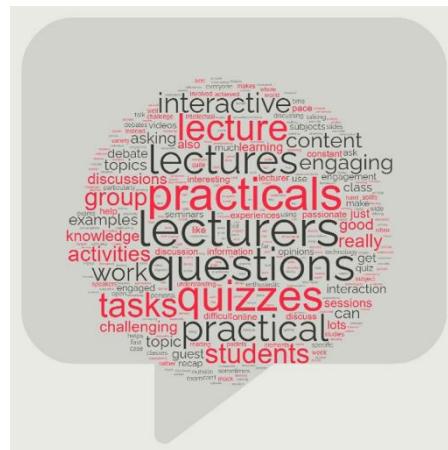
Hartpury provides a variety of assessment types for each department dependent on the relevant skillsets required for success post-graduation, with a large focus on practical assessments which take advantage of the Hartpury campus and facilities. For example, in the animal department, there are animal handling assessments, analyses in laboratories and assignments based upon surveying techniques across the campus's woodland, lake and grassland. Via the student rep system, sports students highlighted that most assessments are practical (such as joint mobilisation and massage practicals). Similarly in the equine department, students told us they have horse-handling assessments. Examples from other departments included the agricultural students being assessed in body condition scoring, grass analysis and mobility scoring. The prevalence of practical teaching and assessment is significant as when we asked what students thought was most supportive towards their learning experience this was the top result as shown in the word cloud. We believe that practical assessments are still challenging and creditable as putting theory into practise shows a degree of adaptability and critical thinking to display a deep understanding of a topic rather than a recital.



The survey we conducted highlighted high levels of content engagement (71.6% very good or excellent), and mid-range levels of push and challenge received from lecturers (58.5% very good or excellent) which we feel indicates teaching excellence. We believe this mid-range level of push and challenge may be due to students not wanting to admit, or perhaps do not realise, that they are feeling challenged. This may be because lecturers challenge students using indirect, supportive methods rather than putting students under direct pressure, which we interpret as a positive.

The word cloud below shows the most reported elements when we asked what lecturers use to make their content engaging, with practicals featuring heavily again.

The responses show quizzes, interactive tasks, and the lecturers themselves to be large factors which inspire engagement. Lecturers at Hartpury often implement Kahoot quizzes to test students on their knowledge through the session, which not only encourages students to engage with the content, but also throws a friendly bit of competition into the mix. Students are often incentivised over beating their friends in the quiz, winning a small prize, or proving to their lecturer that they are competent in a way that is more relaxed than a formal examination.



Supportively, our FGIs saw students quote “(interactive activities) help with a more visual and more interactive way of learning”, “(Interactive activities) keep everyone’s attention... I love the quizzes”. Interactive Padlets are also frequently used whereby students can collaborate and share ideas, which will indirectly boost engagement as they are often anonymous and remove any worries about sounding ‘silly’ or ‘wrong’. In addition to interactive activity boosting engagement, the lecturers themselves use their motivation to encourage further autonomous research into a wide variety of topics and their passion to inspire the students to strive for excellence whilst providing a supportive environment. They will use life-experience and anecdotes to relate the work to the industry and from our students it appears that this fortifies their engagement and desire to be present. One student in the FGIs stated “I’d say that when the lectures are delivering the information to you, you can see how driven and motivated they are to share their passion with you” whilst another said that “They really make sure to go into detail and any questions you have, they’re really keen to answer. “Being in a fairly small class size makes it really easy to actually speak to the lecturer so they get to know you”. Having such motivated lecturers encourages an environment where independent learning and knowledge application is actively developed by students.

Finally, many of the lecturers have a wealth of industry and life experience, which not only provides real-world examples for the students, but also increases the frequency of guest lecturers, internship opportunities and trips due to their numerous connections. Examples that students have experienced include overseas opportunities for wildlife rehabilitation in Brazil, zoo visits, trips to real-life working farms and sport business study trips to Barcelona. An inspiring quote from the internal 2022 StAR Awards (Student Allocated Recognition Awards – the HSU student led staff awards) brilliantly represents many of the students’ feelings towards Hartpury’s lecturers and their level of professionalism: “(Lecturers name) is absolutely one of the most knowledgeable lecturers at Hartpury. They are always enthusiastic about equine anatomy & physiology; they know the answer to almost anything related... They have such an in-depth knowledge surrounding everything in their field and (this) really shows their dedication and enthusiasm to impart that knowledge to all their students. They have given talks on their PhD ...and they are absolutely one of the leading experts in anatomy and physiology”. This type of comment is typical in the nominations HSU receive from students.

2.2 Resources, Support and Student Engagement

SE4

HSU holds the StAR awards annually to recognize the dedication and support that staff have provided over the academic year. Students are solely involved in the nomination and awarding process and the delivery of the ceremony where HSU officers present the awards. Students provide rich, qualitative reasons as to why they are voting for their most inspiring lecturer, the staff member they believe to be an expert in their field, and their most supportive tutor. The officers sitting on the student TEF team presented the awards at the 2021-22 ceremony, and we all received verbal, anecdotal feedback from staff highlighting that these awards help them feel really supported by the students. The following quotes from the 2022 StAR awards shine a light on the high admiration students have for Hartpury staff: “Amazing support both academically and mentally with my final year

dissertation and general tutoring for other modules. Throughout my time at Hartpury, (Lecturers name) has always gone above and beyond for their students and really got to know each of us personally.”, “(Lecturers name) really knows how to challenge people's ideas and get them to think about points of view. They're incredibly supportive, can have a laugh with you, and is amazing at helping you understand what you need to do to improve yourself and your work”. Hartpury facilitates the running of programme and departmental staff-student forums, whereby student representatives provide feedback relating to their academic experience three times a year. Feedback from these is used to help inform and improve the academic practices at Hartpury. In this way staff and students work together to make enhancements to the delivery and structure of learning from a student-centred approach.

SE5

Hartpury provides varying forms of academic support through a variety of services. Hartpury's OfS overall TEF student experience indicator for 'Academic support' is 97.9% materially above the benchmark, which we believe to be representative. Our own survey asked students to rate the different support services Hartpury provide where the following results show the satisfaction of current students with each service; personal tutor, 98.1%; lecturers, 100%; student advisors, 94.9%; disability support, 98.3%; IT support, 92.6%; wellbeing team/safeguarding, 90.6%; Moodle support, 93.7%; academic support (ASC), 99%. Resources are constantly evolving and being developed, adapting to the changing student and industry needs.

SE6

We were surprised that Hartpury's OfS overall TEF student experience indicator for 'Learning Resources' was lower than we anticipated based on our experience and feedback from students via the students' union forums over the last few years, which often praises our facilities. Our own data collection has highlighted a potential reason as to why our indicator is overall 11.9% below the benchmark, 88.1% in-line with the benchmark and 0% above the benchmark. The wording of the NSS questions regarding learning resources may have been misinterpreted by students who didn't recognise the wider range of facilities available to them as learning resources. The wording does not allow students to make their own interpretations of what a learning resource is, they are instead offered somewhat leading statements, for example, we believe NSS questions 18, 19 and 20 to be leading. Question 20 of the NSS also does not directly address how the learning resources support the student's teaching and learning, whereas the TEF SE6 is asking 'how well physical and virtual learning resources support teaching and learning'. NSS Q20 addresses accessibility to resources, which will have been poor over the last 3 years due to the Covid-19 pandemic and having to undertake degrees online, while our specialist practical learning resources on campus will not have been open for use.

Due to this potential miscommunication, the student TEF team dedicated a large proportion of the survey and FGIs towards learning resources. Our survey asked students to rate learning resources in regard to how well they believe that resource complements their learning (resource, percentage of students who have utilised the resource that rated it as very good or excellent): Library, 72%; academic resources (ASC), 79%, Innovations and Career Enterprise, 66%; the farm, 78%; the sports academy and associated facilities, 84%; the animal collection, 69%; online resources, 67%; the equine yard, 77%; the equine therapy centre, 83%; canine hydrotherapy centre, 85%; canine agility/therapy centre, 68%; study areas, 75%; laboratories, 80%. We believe that students rate these resources so highly due them being fully integrated into the curriculum as well as being available for extra-curricular opportunities, such as using the sport and equine facilities for practical assessments within their course but also to help train and prepare for competitions; the animal collection for data collection towards assignments but also as a volunteering opportunity in their free-time; the farm for thermal diagnostics within cattle for a practical session,



but also milk parlour volunteering to develop their CV. We believe that these high ratings, specifically for the sports academy and associated facilities, the equine therapy centre, the canine hydrotherapy centre and the laboratories, emphasise how students do believe that Hartpury provides excellent learning resources that complement their learning extremely well, and that the resources which students rate highly were not represented on the NSS. Students recognise our facilities as world class and tell us through our forums that they are one of the reasons many students chose Hartpury over other institutions.

SE7

Due to HSU not being independent from Hartpury, HSU's engagement with students and change facilitated by HSU could be considered as institutional-student engagement in this context. Some examples of change due to student communications with Hartpury include the implementation of a safe space room and multi faith room, introduction of the study lounge and continuation of lecture capture. Of the students who responded 'yes' to ever engaging with HSU in our internal survey, 63% reported that their engagement often or always led to improvements to their Hartpury experience. It is important to consider that engagement with HSU can be academic (programme representatives, programme and departmental committees, curriculum development and non-academic (student representative forums, clubs and societies, StAR awards and officer roles), and therefore this result may not be entirely representative of perceptions on HSU engagement with academic improvements.

3.0 Student Outcomes

As current students, we think that Hartpury has equipped us well for life post-graduation so far, and this is supported by previous graduates. Results from the graduate outcomes survey conducted by Hartpury for 2019-2020 graduates showed that 97% of graduates were in employment, further study, or purposeful activity. This included 100% of agricultural study, 100% of veterinary nursing students, 97% of animal graduates, 97% of sport graduates, 92% of equine graduates and 100% of postgraduate students progressing into further study, employment or other purposeful study. This is supported by the OfS overall TEF student outcomes indicator for 'progression' which is 46.6% above the benchmark and 53.3% in line. The jobs our students often enter after graduating are not categorised as graduate level employment, however, they are valued by our students, for example managing an equine yard or farm, becoming a vet nurse or working within a family company.

Hartpury University knows how important it is to equip students for their future and encourages our students to develop relevant skills. To support students, Hartpury has the Innovation, Careers and Enterprise (ICE) centre which offers CV and interview support, as well as advice about presentation skills. They can also assist students in finding placements to increase their employability. The ICE department helps students start their own enterprises and runs an annual enterprise award where students can win money to help start or further develop their business venture. Our survey supports this, as when asked which skills students think they have developed during their degree, it was seen that confidence, writing and management were among the most frequently reported. A survey conducted by Hartpury in the academic year 2019-2020 showed that business start-up and enterprise received the highest mean rating across all three years. We also feel that the high scores for presentation skills, personal branding and interview skills are all representative of how students feel they are supported outside of lectures to achieve their goals.

Hartpury University ranked 4th in 2020 and 2022 for student support at the What Uni awards and data such as this matches the student examples provided in Section 2.2. Hartpury encourages students to find placements or undertake work experience to get the opportunity to enhance their CV and give the student the chance to try the sector they may want to work in after graduating, before applying for jobs. For example, Hartpury has set up a student therapy clinic where students on the sports therapy course can volunteer and gain placement hours. In addition, the sports therapy students can work pitch side at the Hartpury sports matches, for example as a medical support, which contributes to their placement hours. Furthermore, Hartpury athletes or sports students are given the opportunity to enhance their CV and develop their soft skills, such as time management, commitment and presentation skills, by coaching the college or university sports teams. Students are also encouraged to continue studying at Hartpury through Scholarship programmes where

students coach the sports teams in addition to studying for their postgraduate qualification. Hartpury gives the opportunity to students to further progress their CV by providing jobs on site, such as in the student bar, canteen, as student ambassadors and presidents within HSU. This provides students with skills such as budgeting, time management and resilience.

Students can find the details for a wide range of volunteering and job opportunities on the HSU website. Hartpury also encourages students who build their own businesses which are not directly related to their programme of study. An example of this is photography which is a popular interest for students who share a passion for sports and horses. To date there are two photography businesses that students have established while studying at Hartpury and carried on beyond graduation.

By providing the HSU with necessary resources such as meeting places, start-up finances, vehicles for travel and professional connections, Hartpury facilitates the clubs and societies which students can create, run, or join. Involvement in such roles helps students to be better engaged with the university increasing their likelihood of completing their course. Roles in committees develops skills such as budget and time management which are transferable and the societies provide additional learning opportunities to sit alongside those provided by their courses via guest speakers and external visits.

Lecturers share their passion for their fields by sharing relevant job vacancies with students and providing encouragement and support in applying for them. For students who have specific educational needs, Hartpury offers support in several ways. Lecture capture post-Covid has been heavily praised by students via the SU forums, particularly by those students with learning support needs. Students can access notes, schemes of work and slides prior to lecture sessions and can also benefit from specific disability support via our Learning Support Assistants (LSA). The LSAs are part of the Achievement and Success Centre who also offer one to one and workshop-based support to students. Staff from these teams are warmly praised by students in SU feedback and attract nominations in our StAR awards demonstrating the support students feel.

The well-being team provides students with mental health support and advice, as well as our therapy dog Ralph who can be taken on walks or be seen on general wellbeing sessions such as 'Dogs and Doughnuts'. We also have multiple quiet rooms with comfortable furniture for students who need time away from louder study spaces and lecture rooms and frequent seminars allow for students to add additional notes or ask any questions they may have.

In relation to educational gains, Hartpury encourages students from application through to completion to stay passionate about what we are studying. The passion that students see from staff (as reflected in many of the nominations students submit for the StAR awards) helps keep students motivated through their studies and in this way, we can see what the university wants us to achieve is very relevant to students. This is seen by 70% of students achieving a 1:1 or 2:1, which allows them to progress into a career or further study which transforms their passion into something employers recognise and value, not only in the subject area but also the wider picture. As many lecturers have been active in the professions that many of our students wish to enter, students are well supported both academically, in terms of real-world experience, and in relation to the network of contacts that we have access to. It can also be seen that a passion for your subject is one of the requirements for being offered a place at Hartpury.

The FGI discussions covered the fact lecturers use lots of different strategies to ensure that curriculum is covered in the most engaging way whilst encouraging further autonomous research into the topics; they are passionate and clearly motivated to ensure that students get the best education and do the best they can with as much support that is available. Students in the groups also highlighted the fact that the staff's own real-life experience means they can give examples of how what they are teaching translates into the workplace.

4.0 Summary

The strong presence of practical learning and assessment using on-campus facilities such as the working farm, the equine stables and the sport labs enables students to gain real life experience and become work ready before entering the workplace and is something our FGIs discussed. The close

community feel between students and staff, including non-academic staff, results in personal development for students in areas such as communication skills and time management as previously mentioned. Students also told us in the FGIs that they can see how their learning will support future careers, and that the wide variety of subjects covered can help them identify future career paths.

We hope this submission clearly demonstrates what it is like to be a student at Hartpury, and the outstanding level of teaching and support that we believe we receive. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Hartpury staff for their support with this submission.