



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

The University of West London

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Silver

Typically, the experience students have at The University of West London and the outcomes it leads to are very high quality.

Student experience: Gold

The student academic experience is typically outstanding.

Outstanding quality features include:

- outstanding teaching, feedback and assessment practices, that are highly effective and tailored to support students' learning, progression and attainment
- course content and delivery effectively inspire and encourage students across the range of courses and student groups to engage in their learning, stretching them to develop their knowledge and skills
- research and innovation across disciplines, professional practice and employer engagement delivers educational aims and contributes to an outstanding academic experience for all students
- a supportive learning environment in which students have access to a range of outstanding quality academic support tailored to their needs
- physical and virtual learning resources are tailored and used effectively to support outstanding teaching and learning
- the provider embeds engagement with its students, leading to improvements to the experiences and outcomes of its students.

Student outcomes: Bronze

Student outcomes are typically high quality, and there are some very high quality features.

Very high quality features include:

- effective support for students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- educational gains that are relevant to students' ambitions, and consistent with the institution's goals as an engine for social mobility
- effective support for students to achieve educational gains.

About the assessment

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is a national scheme run by the Office for Students (OfS) that aims to encourage universities and colleges (providers) to improve and deliver excellent teaching, learning and student outcomes.

The TEF does this by assessing and rating providers for excellence above the high quality baseline that we expect from all providers. It covers undergraduate courses.

Throughout this document, we use the terms ‘outstanding’ and ‘very high quality’, which are defined in terms of the TEF 2023 assessment as follows:

- ‘outstanding’: the quality of the student experience or outcomes are among the very best in the sector, for the mix of students and courses taught by a provider
- ‘very high quality’: the quality of the student experience or outcomes are materially above the relevant high quality minimum requirements, for the mix of students and courses taught by a provider.

The assessment was carried out in 2022-23 by the TEF Panel, a panel of academics and students who are experts in learning and teaching. This document sets out a summary of the panel’s findings and judgements.

The panel reviewed the following evidence:

- numerical indicators produced by the OfS, using national datasets
- a submission made by the provider, setting out its own evidence
- a submission made by the provider’s students, setting out students’ views.

The panel applied its expert judgement to:

- identify particular features of the student experience and student outcomes that are excellent (above the high quality baseline requirements)
- decide a rating for the ‘student experience’ and for ‘student outcomes’
- decide an overall rating for the provider.

Throughout the assessment the panel took account of the context of the provider and judged how well it delivers teaching, learning and student outcomes for its mix of students and courses.

In making its decisions the panel took account of the OfS general duties and the public sector equalities duty.

Summary of panel assessment

Information about this provider

The University of West London sets out its vision as ‘a career focussed, professionally engaged, modern university of quality’. Its mission is to enable its students, regardless of social background and ethnicity, to transform their lives and prospects through an inspiring educational experience which enables them to progress to a range of careers and professions.

The provider has a strong commitment to social inclusion and has accessibility, affordability and diversity as three of its core values. Its strategic plan commits to three fundamental rights: enhancement, inclusion and participation.

In 2020-21 the provider had just under 11,000 full time undergraduate students, with 98 per cent studying at first degree level. The student body has grown significantly over the four year TEF period, notably in subject areas such as business and management, and performing arts. In 2020-21 there were 800 part time undergraduate students, the vast majority of whom are studying on Level 5 (‘other undergraduate’) courses.

The largest proportion of students study business and management (full time 30 per cent, part time 16 per cent), performing arts (full time 15 per cent), nursing and midwifery (full time 13 per cent, part time 53 per cent) and computing (full time 7 per cent, part time 5 per cent).

The provider describes the demographics of its students as highly diverse, with high proportions of students from underrepresented groups: mature learners, from minority ethnic backgrounds, and from areas of multiple deprivation. A high proportion of students enter with a qualification other than A-levels. Approximately 14 per cent of full time students have a reported 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.

More information about this provider can be found on the OfS Register at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/.

Student experience: Gold

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.

The panel found the quality of the student academic experience is typically outstanding for the provider's mix of students and courses. Across the student experience aspect, the provider embeds effective approaches and tailors its approaches to its students to provide a consistent and excellent student experience. The panel found:

- six of the seven features are outstanding
- there is insufficient evidence that one feature is of very high quality
- the outstanding features apply to all of the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups
- none of the features are clearly below the level of 'very high quality' or of concern.

The panel judged that the evidence indicates that the aspect is typically outstanding and best fits with the description 'most features of the aspect are outstanding quality for all groups of students'.

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

Teaching, assessment, and feedback

The provider submission outlines its strategic approach to embedding excellent learning and teaching practices to ensure student learning and success. The provider states its commitment to delivering transformative opportunities for students through its teaching and learning environment, with curricula based on 'principles of research-informed, industry led and professional recognition'.

The effectiveness of this approach is supported by evidence in the indicators for 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback', which both provided initial evidence of outstanding quality.

Evidence in the provider and student submissions included:

- a strategic approach to design and delivery of the employer and industry led curricula, tailored to support students' learning and progression
- a strategic approach to developing the portfolio to support the needs of local employers and economy, in particular diversification into STEM-related subjects
- a co-creative approach to the development of courses with students
- continuous improvement of courses through the annual educational review process, which considers performance in relation to student success to drive enhancement
- educational development workshops and guidance to support staff in designing engaging and rigorous assessment, including the use of formative feedback to support students' understanding of the task and purpose.

Considering all the evidence, the panel concluded that the provider has embedded outstanding teaching, feedback and assessment practises that are highly effective and tailored to support its students' learning, progression and attainment, and which apply to the mix of students at the provider. The panel considered the evidence to demonstrate an outstanding quality feature.

Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

As noted above, the 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback' indicators provided initial evidence of outstanding quality.

Evidence in the submissions included:

- embedded external and employer involvement in the courses offered, with input of employer, industry and professional bodies informing the design of curricula, ensuring up-to-date, sector relevant practice
- employer and external engagement is a core aspect of course delivery, exemplified by master classes, webinars, industry visits, and industry/employer engagement panels in several schools and colleges
- teaching in smaller interactive classes, with 80 per cent of teaching taking place in classes of fewer than 28 students.

The student submission includes evidence of the value of a guest speaker from industry bringing current knowledge and experience, and the development of knowledge and skills through practical learning which prepare students for industry.

Overall, the panel concluded that the provider's course content and delivery effectively inspire and encourage students across its range of courses and student groups to engage in their learning, stretching them to develop their knowledge and skills. The panel considered this an outstanding quality feature.

Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

Evidence which the panel noted included:

- the provider's strategic approach to embedding impactful research, scholarship and professional practice within its courses
- strategic development of research and specialist centres to encourage the development of a STEM portfolio
- embedding of employer interactions in the curriculum, with engagement across all schools and colleges, including employer engagement boards and forums involving large multinational companies, guest speakers, and student visits to a range of locations locally, in central London, and further afield

- 65% of staff have a doctorate, and the university submitted to the Research Excellence Framework 2021 across seven units of assessment
- relationships with 193 employers through apprenticeship activity.

Overall, the panel concluded that the provider uses research and innovation across its disciplines, professional practice and employer engagement to deliver its educational aims and contribute to an outstanding academic experience for all students and across its subjects and courses. The panel judged there to be compelling evidence that this is an outstanding feature.

Staff professional development and academic practice

The panel considered there to be insufficient evidence that this is a very high quality feature.

Evidence in the submission included:

- a teaching observation scheme with 100 per cent completion rate required by all staff at least once every two years
- the annual educational review process which helps to inform continuous professional development requirements for staff
- three streams of academic staff positions; research academic, teaching academic, and academic practitioner, enabling promotion from lecturer to professor
- academic staff are encouraged to be actively engaged in research and practice, and to be involved in business activities and events focused on the regional growth agenda
- lead personal tutors participate in a forum to share good practice, although the frequency, uptake and impact of this is not evidenced.

Although there was evidence of a systematic approach to the management of teaching quality, there was limited evidence of how staff are supported in developing their practice. Limited detail was provided about the range of continuous professional development opportunities available, or the uptake and impact of these activities on the student learning experience.

Additionally, limited information was given about the proportions of staff with a recognised teaching qualification, the levels of promotion through the career pathways, or the ways in which approaches to internal reward and recognition work. Therefore, on balance, the panel considered there to be insufficient evidence that this is a very high quality feature.

Learning environment and academic support

The panel considered this feature to be of outstanding quality.

The 'academic support' indicator provided initial evidence of outstanding quality for full time students. For part time students there was less certainty in the data.

The provider submission sets out its approach to the learning environment and academic support, including:

- a range of activities supporting induction and transition into higher education
- an initiative where students have a one-to-one discussion with a student ambassador to identify support needs. Evidence shows that this has reached two thirds of students
- weekly central monitoring of attendance and engagement data, providing institutional oversight of learner data and identification of associated interventions
- a study support team offering a range of tailored support for students, including workshops, one-to-one appointments and drop-in sessions. Reference is made to capital investment in international student support.

The student submission describes high levels of personalised support from academic staff, including their personal tutor and support from student services, including a mental health and disability service.

The panel considered that the provider's policies and practices are informed by data, and are directly relevant to the provider's mix of students, in particular those from underrepresented groups. The panel concluded that academic support was highly effective and tailored to student needs, and that overall this is an outstanding quality feature.

Learning resources

The panel judged this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The 'learning resources' indicator for full time students provided initial evidence of an outstanding quality feature. For part time students there was less certainty in the data.

The provider submission included evidence of the effective use of physical and virtual learning resources to support teaching and learning, including:

- investment in the student learning environment with above sector average spend on facilities
- commitment to capital investment in facilities to support 'real world' learning, including the purchase of two buildings to expand the campus and links with creative enterprises, and in the development of research centres to support the expansion into STEM
- investment in simulation technology, including ambulance and flight simulation, and specialist facilities such as studios, a theatre and a number of specialist laboratories, which provide facilities for industry-related and practice based learning.

The student submission refers to access to equipment and online library resources, and 24/7 access to library facilities supporting flexible study.

Considering all the evidence, the panel concluded that physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support outstanding teaching and learning and these are tailored to the mix of courses. The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

Student engagement in improvement

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The 'student voice' indicator provided initial evidence of an outstanding quality feature for both full time and part time students.

Evidence in the submissions that the provider's approach to embedding engagement with its students leads to continuous improvement included:

- a data-informed approach to monitoring the student experience, which includes a weekly report on academic and student support service issues, presented as a RAG rated dashboard. This is monitored, and allows for identification and resolution of issues
- the student submission notes that 85 per cent of issues raised in student feedback are resolved
- partnership working with the students' union, exemplified by student involvement in curriculum co-development and validation, membership on groups and committees, and participation in mental health and wellbeing strategy training.

Considering all the evidence, the panel concluded that the provider embeds engagement with its students, leading to continuous improvements to the experiences and outcomes of its students. The panel took into consideration the extent to which this applied across its student groups and subject mixes. Overall, the panel considered that this is an outstanding quality feature.

Student outcomes: Bronze

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 student outcomes to be typically high quality, and there are some very high quality features for the provider's mix of students and courses. Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- three features that are very high quality
- not enough evidence that three features are very high quality
- no features of concern.

The panel applied the ratings criteria and considered the best fit rating to be 'Bronze'. This is because the evidence best fits the description: 'some features of the aspect are very high quality for most groups of students'.

The panel did not think that 'Silver' would be the best fit because the evidence demonstrates that 'some' rather than 'most' or 'all' of the student outcomes features are very high quality.

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

Approaches to supporting student success

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

The provider submission included evidence that it supports students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies, such as:

- a strategic approach to continuation and completion through the student retention framework. Central oversight of student engagement and attendance enables appropriate academic and pastoral support interventions to be put in place
- financial, disability and mental health support through student services, and a range of support including access to laptops, library access and bursaries to address digital poverty and financial hardship
- careers opportunities supported by the careers service and practical learning opportunities as preparation for future employment
- access to recruitment support. A 'Future You' email campaign entails regular emails to final year students signposting them to careers support. The provider refers to 'specific support to students entering their final year'.

Overall, the panel concluded there was sufficient evidence that the provider effectively supports its students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies, and that this is a very high quality feature.

Continuation and completion rates

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

The panel considered the balance of performance across the 'continuation' and 'completion' indicators in order to arrive at a judgment on this feature as a whole. While for the majority of students studying full time the continuation indicator suggested very high quality, the completion indicator suggested not very high quality, including across a number of underrepresented student groups.

Having weighed up the evidence across the feature and given consideration to the continuation and completion outcomes of all student groups, the panel concluded that there was not sufficient evidence for this to be a very high quality feature.

Progression rates

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

While the overall 'progression' indicator for full-time students suggested initial evidence of very high quality, the panel noted there was variation in performance across subjects, and some evidence to suggest that progression rates are lower for students in some underrepresented groups, for example Asian students, and students eligible for free school meals.

Overall, the panel concluded that there was insufficient evidence that this is a very high quality feature. In arriving at this judgement, the panel considered the progression outcomes across the mix of students, including those from underrepresented backgrounds, and the range of courses offered.

Intended educational gains

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

The provider submission defines educational gain in terms of its graduate attributes, which are listed as 'professional', 'confident', 'resilient', 'networked', and 'globally aware'. These go beyond what is measured through the student outcomes indicators, and reflect the provider's holistic approach to education and its intention to provide a transformative educational experience.

The provider submission states its strategic focus is on personalising the learning journey, recognising its students 'starting points' and its mission to 'inspire [our] students to become innovative and creative professionals regardless of social background and ethnicity, by connecting them to exciting and rewarding careers'.

The provider also claims that these graduate attributes underpin the provider's approach to curriculum design and authentic assessment. The industry and professionally focussed approach to education provides the context for the development of career relevant knowledge and skills and 'soft skills' to support students' future success. The student submission endorses the relevance of gains in terms of personal development, such as resilience and confidence as well as professional skills, networking and career readiness.

Overall, the panel judged that the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and that these gains are relevant to students' ambitions and consistent with the institution's goals as an engine for social mobility. The panel concluded that this is a very high quality feature.

Approaches to supporting educational gains

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

The provider submission shows that students develop professionally relevant skills and knowledge through their studies. The portfolio of professionally-oriented courses that embed 'real life practice' lead to the development of work-relevant knowledge and skills. This career-focused approach to the curriculum is relevant to the development of educational gains.

Beyond the curriculum, students have access to a range of wider opportunities, including the Leadership Award, volunteering, placements, peer mentorship, student representation activities and the Equality Champion initiative. However, there is limited information about the uptake and reach of these opportunities to be able to judge how impactful these opportunities are.

The student submission provided evidence of individual cases of personal and professional development, including building confidence, preparation for wider options, networking and the development of professional skills.

Overall the panel considered that the provider effectively supports its students to achieve educational gains, and therefore concluded that this is a very high quality feature.

Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

The panel concluded there was insufficient evidence that this is a very high quality feature.

The panel considered evidence in the submissions of the provider's approach to the evaluation and demonstration of educational gains. There was limited information about how it currently evaluates educational gains, both through the level of engagement with opportunities and the impact of these on the wider range of educational gains intended. The student submission provided individual reflections, however the panel did not consider this sufficient evidence that the provider was systematically identifying and measuring the gains of its students, nor did the panel conclude that evaluation was yet embedded in practice.

Taking into consideration all the available evidence, the panel concluded that there was insufficient evidence to judge this to be a very high quality feature.

Overall: Silver

The panel considered the overall 'best fit' rating to be 'Silver'.

The panel judged the student experience aspect to be 'Gold' and the student outcomes aspect to be 'Bronze'. The panel weighted these two aspects equally and considered all the evidence across all features and across all the provider's student groups, subjects and courses. The panel noted:

- the student experience aspect was rated 'Gold', with outstanding features across six of the seven features, reflecting a consistently outstanding experience for all student groups
- the student outcomes aspect, while being rated 'Bronze' overall, included three features which were deemed to be very high quality, which apply to all groups of students.

The panel therefore concluded that the best fit for the overall rating was 'Silver', because across all the available evidence the student experience and student outcomes are typically a combination of very high and outstanding quality.

In making this judgment the panel considered all students, including those from underrepresented groups which comprise a high proportion of the provider's students. The panel considered this contextual factor throughout its assessment of all of the evidence.

Overall, the student experience and student outcomes are typically very high quality.