



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

## **Summary TEF 2023 panel statement**

**Hartpury University**

# Summary of outcomes

## Overall: Gold

Typically, the experience students have at Hartpur University and the outcomes it leads to are outstanding.

### Student experience: Gold

The student academic experience is typically outstanding.

Outstanding quality features include:

- feedback and assessment practices have been embedded that are highly effective and tailored to supporting students' learning, progression, and attainment
- a range of things that support practical, industry-focused and engaging learning experiences and evidence of stretching students to develop knowledge and skills to their fullest potential
- active use of research in relevant disciplines, and professional practice and employer engagement in the delivery of courses
- a supportive learning environment, and access to a wide and readily available range of outstanding quality academic support tailored to the needs of students
- physical and virtual learning resources are tailored and used effectively to support outstanding teaching and learning.

There are also some very high quality features including:

- excellent support for staff professional development and excellent promotion of academic practice
- effective engagement with students, leading to improvements to their experiences and outcomes.

### Student outcomes: Gold

Student outcomes are typically outstanding.

Outstanding quality features include:

- deploys and tailors approaches that are highly effective in ensuring that students succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- outstanding rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses
- clear articulation of the range of educational gains it intends its students to achieve
- approaches to supporting students to achieve educational gains are evidence-based and tailored to different starting points.

There are also some very high quality features including:

- very high continuation and completion rates
- evaluation of the gains made by students and clear plans for the further development.

# 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

Hartpury University describes itself as ‘a specialist niche provider delivering relevant, effective and high-quality education and training for employment in sport, equine, animal and agricultural industries; locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.’

Established as an agricultural college in 1948, it began offering higher education from 1992 and achieved university status in 2018. It shares a campus with further education provision delivered through Hartpury College, a wholly owned subsidiary of the university.

The provider’s approach to teaching, learning and assessment is driven by its academic strategy 2020-25, which includes priorities: ‘teaching practice will provide learning opportunities that will enable students to realise their potential’ and ‘our graduates will be highly employable, recognise the value in what they do, and be able to make positive contributions to society.’

In 2020-21, the provider had around 2,000 higher education undergraduate students, almost all full-time and primarily on first degree programmes. Around seven per cent of the first-degree students enrol on a programme with an integrated foundation year.

Most undergraduates study ‘agriculture, food and related studies’ (45 per cent), sports sciences (23 per cent) and ‘veterinary sciences’ (12 per cent), with the remainder spread across a small number of subject areas.

There is a high percentage of females (67 per cent), and most students are aged under 21 years (85 per cent), and white (86 per cent). Around 20 per cent of students declare a disability, half of which relate to cognitive or learning difficulties.

About 40 per cent of students enter with BTECs or a mix of BTEC and A-levels, and around one third enter with A-levels and a further 15 per cent with access or foundation courses.

The assessment considered information about the provider’s undergraduate courses and students on those courses.

Full details about the provider’s student demographics used in the TEF 2023 assessment are available at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-used-in-tef-2023](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-used-in-tef-2023).

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

## Student experience: 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 weighed up all the evidence in the indicators and the submissions relating to the student experience aspect as a whole and determined its rating to be 'Gold'.

The panel then considered the extent to which there are very high quality and outstanding quality features across the aspect as a whole, and considered how far these features apply across all the provider's student groups and the range of its courses and subjects.

It found:

- five features to be of outstanding quality
- two features to be very high quality
- no features below the level of very high quality or of concern
- the provider embeds effective approaches tailored to its students to provide an outstanding quality academic experience for its students.

The panel judged there to be evidence that typically the very high quality and outstanding features apply to all of the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups. And considering the evidence holistically, the panel considered there to be outstanding quality across most groups of students and for most courses and subjects.

The panel concluded that the best fit rating should be 'Gold', because most features are outstanding quality, and there was sufficient evidence to consider that provision was typically outstanding across the aspect.

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

### Teaching, assessment, and feedback

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The overall indicator for 'teaching on my course' provides compelling evidence that the provider's performance is very high quality or outstanding for full-time students, as this varied for different subject areas.

The overall indicator for 'assessment and feedback' provides compelling evidence of outstanding quality for full-time students, across all the major subjects areas, with a couple of exceptions.

No indicators were available for part-time students due to the small numbers.

The provider and student submissions supplement the indicator evidence by providing further evidence including:

- a provider-wide approach to the design of learning, teaching and assessment activities, focused on the provider's core mission

- use of industry-type facilities to contextualise and apply learning
- embedded assessment approaches recognised by students as preparing them for employment
- embedded assessment feedback practices informed by student input
- examples of external recognition for teaching quality.

In summary, the panel considered that the provider has embedded outstanding feedback and assessment practices that are highly effective and tailored to supporting its students' learning, progression, and attainment.

### **Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

It found evidence including:

- examples of industry-relevant curriculum – endorsed by external examiners, and examples of industry engagement
- wide-ranging examples in the student submission of inspiration and engagement in learning and exposure to industry
- examples of external professional engagement opportunities for students.

Overall, the submissions showed evidence of a range of things that support practical, industry-focused and engaging learning experiences, including those derived from the provider's specialist facilities. There is also evidence of stretching students to develop knowledge and skills to their fullest potential.

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

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

It noted:

- multiple examples of employer engagement in design and delivery of provision demonstrating how these links contribute to students' academic experience
- strategic commitment to, and investment for, industry-relevant research to contribute to students' academic experience, with a case study for sports science provision
- dual role staff to support professional practice integration and career pathways which support professionally active staff
- a strong knowledge exchange framework position for local growth and regeneration.

Weighing up all the evidence, the panel judged that the provider actively uses research in relevant disciplines, professional practice and employer engagement in the delivery of its courses. Although there was less evidence presented as to how the approaches noted above impacted students' academic experience across the provision, the panel considered there was enough evidence overall to demonstrate an outstanding quality feature.

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

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

Evidence noted in the provider submission included:

- a provider-wide approach to set expectations of, and support for, staff
- a professional development approach which has evolved to support institutional growth and developed from staff feedback and student needs
- a career pathway which recognises quality and innovation in teaching and learning and integration of professional practice
- a provider-wide approach to supporting continuous improvement and sharing of excellent academic practice.

The panel found evidence of excellent support for staff professional development and that excellent academic practice is promoted. However, there was less evidence of how embedded approaches are, or how effective they are in impacting positively the student experience, which is why the panel did not consider this feature to be outstanding. Considering the evidence, the TEF panel considered the evidence to demonstrate a very high quality feature.

## **Learning environment and academic support**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The overall indicator for 'academic support' provides very strong initial evidence of outstanding for full-time students. There is some variation across different subjects and student groups, but on the whole it is outstanding across the board.

No indicators were available for part-time students due to the small numbers.

The provider and student submissions supplement the indicator evidence by providing further evidence including:

- a strategic approach to academic support, recognising changing needs as the university grew, and supported by targeted investment. There was also evidence to demonstrate increased student engagement with this support
- external recognition for academic support, including being an early awardee of the mental health charter
- an academic and success centre which has evolved to meet changing student needs and grown significantly its levels of student engagement
- the student submission contains various positive references to the academic support provided indicating coverage across different student needs and disciplines.

In conclusion the panel found that the provider ensures a supportive learning environment, and most of its students have access to a wide and readily available range of outstanding quality academic support tailored to their needs.

## Learning resources

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The indicator for 'learning resources' provides initial evidence of very high quality for full-time students, although there is a decline in quality for year 2 to year 4 and some subjects. The year 4 position is explored further in the provider and student submissions with the latter 'drilling down' into the issue and presenting a more positive profile.

No indicators were available for part-time students due to the small numbers.

The provider and student submissions supplement the indicator evidence by providing further evidence of:

- data-informed development of provision: eg. learning from the coronavirus pandemic experience to further develop virtual learning resources, with evidence of effectiveness
- examples of investment in specialist and industry-level facilities to support learning
- the student submission confirms recognition of the general and specialist course-specific resources available to support their learning.

The panel concluded that physical and virtual learning resources are tailored and used effectively to support outstanding teaching and learning. Although the indicators did not support this for one sub-group (males) and associated subject area (sport and exercise science), noting that the indicators contributed no more than half of the evidence of excellence, the panel considered that the explanation offered by the provider and the additional evidence in the submissions demonstrated that this was an outstanding quality feature overall.

## Student engagement in improvement

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

The overall indicator for 'student voice' provides evidence of very high quality or outstanding quality for full-time students. There is some variation across student groups, but the panel interpreted the indicator to provide initial evidence of at least very high quality.

No indicators were available for part-time students due to the small numbers.

The provider and student submissions supplement the indicator evidence by providing further evidence including:

- examples of student feedback informing enhancement and in the student submission
- examples of a close working relationship between the provider and the student's union – such as during the coronavirus pandemic, working in partnership for the TEF.
- the student submission also presented a sense of community and positive engagement with university staff to enhance provision, with some examples given.

The panel concluded that the provider effectively engages with its students, leading to improvements to the experiences and outcomes of its students. There was less evidence to demonstrate the reach and effectiveness of these engagement mechanisms across the range of provision, so the panel considered the evidence to demonstrate a very high quality feature overall, with some outstanding elements.



## Student outcomes: Gold

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 weighed up all the evidence in the indicators and the submissions relating to the student outcomes aspect as a whole and determined its rating to be 'Gold'.

It then considered the extent to which there are very high quality and outstanding quality features across the aspect as a whole, and how far these features apply across all the provider's student groups and the range of its courses and subjects.

It found:

- four features to be outstanding quality
- two features to be very high quality
- no features of concern or below the level of very high quality.

The panel judged there to be evidence that typically the very high quality and outstanding features apply to all of the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

Due to the relatively small numbers, ascertaining the profile of various sub-groups was limited and the provider submission offered explanations on observed variability where possible.

Considering the evidence holistically and the provider context, the panel considered there to be, typically, evidence of outstanding quality outcomes across all groups of students and for all courses and subjects. It therefore considered the best fit rating to be 'Gold'.

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

### Approaches to supporting student success

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

It found that:

- data-informed support design and delivery is tailored to student needs
- targeted approaches to support successful completion, such as for students returning from study breaks
- support for student well-being and general assistance, noted positively in the student submission
- external recognition for career prospects
- positive recognition in the student submission of the support for employability.

Overall, the panel judged that that the provider deploys and tailors approaches that are highly effective in ensuring its students succeed in and progress beyond their studies.

## **Continuation and completion rates**

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

The indicator for 'continuation' provides compelling evidence of very high quality for full-time students, although there was some variation with students and subjects. For part-time students it provides initial evidence of below very high quality, but the panel did not place considerable weight on this evidence due to the very small numbers of students and the very high levels of statistical uncertainty.

The indicator for 'completion' provides initial evidence of very high quality or below very high quality for full-time students, but this varied for different student groups and subjects.

The provider submission notes an issue with inaccurate data spanning the time period for both continuation and completion indicators. A request to the Office for Students for data amendment was not supported 'due to the complexities and retrospective nature of the request, spanning both further education and higher education data bodies'.

Recently the OfS has agreed to amend data regarding subject splits, although the outcome was not in time to inform the TEF data dashboard. The recalculated continuation rates suggest the overall rate is outstanding. The provider's recalculated completion rates also show a changed picture, suggesting the overall completion rate is outstanding, though this varies with the different year groups.

In summary the panel considered that there was sufficient evidence of very high continuation and completion rates. It noted the provider's explanation regarding data reporting errors and considered that the recalculated rates, alongside the provider's additional evidence for this feature (including evidence of successful outcomes achieved for underrepresented groups), when deciding the final outcome.

## **Progression rates**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The overall indicator for 'progression' provides compelling evidence of outstanding and very high quality, with only one small sub-group below very high quality. The panel interpreted the 'progression' indicator to provide initial evidence of at least a very high quality feature. The 'progression' indicator for part-time students is not available due to small numbers.

The provider submission sets out additional information to inform progression indicators for its specialist provision and presents additional graduate outcomes survey and other data.

The panel concluded that, given the provider's context – in particular its specialist nature – and the additional evidence provided in the submission, there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate that there are outstanding rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses.

## **Intended educational gains**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The provider articulates educational gains as 'creating life-changing educational experiences that empower students to transform their passions into measurable, career focused outcomes, valuing their different starting points and associated educational and personal distances travelled'.

The provider submission extends this articulation to indicate how it considers students' different starting points and why it feels these are relevant to its students and their future ambitions. It then sets out three

specific educational gains which encompass actively engaging students in their academic journey. It states that students:

- connect subject specific theory to practice and industry standards
- develop and demonstrate transferable, employment ready skills
- have the personal awareness to influence their own achievements, as well as wider society.

The panel considered that the evidence noted above indicates that the provider clearly articulates the range of educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are highly relevant to its students and their future ambitions. These also go beyond what is measured by the student outcomes indicators, for example in aiming to develop attributes such as professional self-awareness, and supporting development of professional networks.

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

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The evidence it found to support this includes:

- a new (2021) academic framework, based on sector good practice, against which all curricula were revalidated to embed educational gain principles and to provide a framework for evaluation
- a quality enhancement framework that integrates industry focus into course design and delivery
- campus facilities to support learning through doing
- examples of enriching learning experiences (although the reach of this across student groups is not indicated)
- acknowledgement in the student submission of the provider's support for educational gain and motivating students to achieve.

The panel considered that overall the provider's approaches to supporting its students to achieve educational gains are evidence-based and tailored to its students and their different starting points.

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

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

The provider presents examples of how it currently evaluates the gains made by its students and demonstrates student achievement, including:

- feedback from industry partners, including placement providers, on students'/graduates' skills
- optional national student survey questions on professional skills development – rates above sector average
- internal data showing improvements in some transferable skills
- acknowledgement of further development of evaluation approach.

The provider notes that its approach to evaluation is evolving and how future plans 'will in part centre on measuring the impact of the Hartpury Academic Framework including harvesting student and employer feedback'.

In conclusion, the panel considered that the provider evaluates the gains made by its students and has clear plans for the further development of its approaches.

## **Overall: Gold**

Applying the guidance and the panel members' expert judgment, the panel considered the overall 'best fit' rating to be 'Gold'. The panel noted the guidance that the overall rating should not be higher than the highest aspect rating and should be no more than one rating higher than the lowest aspect rating. The panel considered the student experience aspect rating to be 'Gold' and the student outcomes aspect rating to be 'Gold'. The overall rating is therefore 'Gold' because this is the rating awarded to both the aspects of student experience and student outcomes.