



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

Solent University

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Gold

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

Student experience: Gold

The student academic experience is typically outstanding.

Outstanding quality features include:

- the provider has embedded outstanding teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are tailored to the needs of its students
- course content and delivery inspire and actively engage students to develop to their fullest potential
- support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is scaffolded, supported and embedded across the institution
- a supportive learning environment, including for underrepresented groups, with outstanding quality academic support
- physical and learning resources are tailored and used effectively to support outstanding quality learning and teaching
- an embedded and tailored approach to student engagement and student voice, leading to continuous improvement to student experience.

There is also one high quality feature:

- the provider uses research and employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality experience for its students.

Student outcomes: Gold

Student outcomes are typically outstanding.

Outstanding quality features include:

- highly effective and tailored approaches to support students to succeed and progress
- a clear articulation of the educational gains the provider intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students
- evidence-based, highly effective and tailored approaches to supporting its students to achieve intended educational gains
- effective evaluation of the gains made by students.

There are also some very high quality features including:

- high rates of continuation and completion for most of the provider's students and courses
- high rates of progression across most student groups, including underrepresented groups.

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

Solent University is a 'practice orientated, industry and employment focused, open, lively and an inclusive academic learning community'. It sets out a commitment to 'inclusive, real world learning, teaching and student success, and to ensuring that all students benefit from excellent teaching, whatever their starting points'.

The provider describes a strong skills focus, with regional further education, employer and industry partnerships. In 2020-21, it had around 10,000 undergraduate students, most of whom are full-time. There were just over 500 apprenticeships.

In 2020-21, Business and management made up almost 25 per cent of taught provision, followed by Creative arts and design at 18 per cent, and Sport and exercise at 10 per cent.

The provider describes its undergraduate student population as diverse; with around 20 per cent black and minority ethnic students. Around a quarter are from deprived areas. 17 per cent report a disability or learning difficulty.

Significant numbers of students enter via BTEC, Access and foundational programmes.

The assessment considered information about the provider's undergraduate courses and students on those courses. This includes apprenticeships.

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 student experience is typically outstanding for the provider's mix of students and courses. Across the student experience aspect, the panel found:

- most features are outstanding
- one feature is very high quality
- the outstanding and very high quality features apply to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

The panel judged that the 'best fit' rating for the student experience aspect is 'Gold'. This is because most features of this 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; and Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch

The panel found these features to be outstanding.

The indicators provide initial evidence that 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback' are very high quality or outstanding for full-time students.

The panel noted that the provider submission provides evidence of strong and embedded teaching, learning and assessment practices delivered through a 'Real World Curriculum Framework' that was subject to a transformative review that engaged over 300 academics, 30 staff and 900 students in designing the new framework.

Further evidence of outstanding quality includes:

- a commitment to assessment as learning, through work integrated assessments, team and problem based approaches
- an assessment dashboards for students
- a strong focus on professionally aligned programmes
- a Chartered Management Institute award 2022 – outstanding partner of the year
- the apprenticeship provision is currently aligned to 21 standards.

The student submission mentions some dissatisfaction with assessment scheduling and the timeliness of feedback but is very positive about the high quality of feedback, course content and employer engagement.

The panel considered the mix of students, including from underrepresented groups, in considering the evidence, and determined that the features of excellence applied across all groups. It found compelling evidence that the provider has embedded outstanding teaching, feedback and

assessment practices that are highly effective and tailored in supporting student learning, progression and attainment. The panel also concluded that the course content and delivery inspire students to actively engage in and commit to their learning, stretching and challenging them to reach their full potential.

Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement

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

Evidence in the provider submission includes:

- employment-focused, inclusive, real-world learning and assessment to prepare students for success in their chosen profession, vocation or enterprise
- industry standard additional qualifications embedded within programmes
- extensive employer engagement and in house employer engagement approaches
- a university research internship scheme, where students have the opportunity to work in a research active community
- research embedded into the real world curriculum framework.

The student submission provided positive evidence of available opportunities to engage with guest speakers from the industry to support learning outcomes.

Considering all the evidence, the panel found that this is a very high quality feature, with some outstanding practice. The panel therefore concluded that the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience for its students.

Staff professional development and academic practice

The panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

Evidence in the provider submission includes:

- an established Learning and Teaching Institute, including a learning and design team, and learning technology advisers
- that 74 per cent of academic staff have access to fellowships
- that mentorship is available to staff members, including through the course leadership development programme, the Solent exchange network, and other cross disciplinary networks and a self-service good practice course
- a 'teaching tool-shed' provides resources to support academic practice and teaching excellence.

Overall, the panel considered the evidence and concluded that the provider has embedded outstanding support for staff professional development and that excellent academic practice is supported and embedded across the institution.

Learning environment and academic support

The panel found this feature to be outstanding.

The 'academic support' indicator for full-time and part-time students, including those from underrepresented groups, showed initial evidence of being outstanding.

Evidence in the provider submission includes:

- a 'student first' approach by combining all student support services in the Student Hub, for ease of access to students
- early identification of groups of students at risk, so that tailored support can be put in place
- academic referral programme, with evidence of impact following student engagement
- specialist support for students with disabilities
- presence of mental health and therapy team on campus.

Considering the indicator and submission evidence, the panel concluded that there is compelling evidence that the provider ensures a supportive learning environment for its mix of students and courses - including for underrepresented groups - with access to a wide and readily available range of outstanding quality academic supported that is tailored and impactful.

Learning resources

The panel found this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The 'learning resources' indicator provides initial evidence of very high quality for full-time students, and outstanding quality for part-time students. This also applies to students in underrepresented groups. There is some variation across courses, and while indicator evidence suggests that 'learning resources' is below the level of very high quality for apprentices, the panel noted that the number of students is low.

Evidence of outstanding quality in the provider submission includes:

- significant investment in both digital and on campus facilities, to support teaching and learning across the mix of courses and subjects
- the delivery of digital learning as standard, with blended and online delivery that enables learning to be personalised and tailored
- a range of specialist facilities, including accredited sports labs, studio spaces, a multimedia newsroom and a ship handling facility unique in the UK
- a range of tools and resources to support personalised student learning, for example ePortfolios, lecture capture, digital assessment services, e-portfolio, reading lists, library resources, online seminar tools.

The student submission recognises and appreciates the presence of these learning resources.

Taking the provider and student submissions, as well as the indicator evidence, into account, the panel concluded that the evidence demonstrates that physical and learning resources are tailored and used effectively to support outstanding quality learning and teaching.

Student engagement in improvement

The panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

The 'student voice' indicator provides initial evidence of outstanding quality for both full-time and part-time students, across all student groups.

The panel considered there to be compelling evidence in the provider and student submissions of impactful partnership working and student engagement to support improvements.

Evidence of this includes:

- an established student board and an embedded structure for student reps
- sabbatical officers as frontline representatives of the student voice, with regular direct contact with the chief student officer and head of student success, as well as the vice-chancellor
- regular internal surveys, with evidence of feedback and impact
- established annual teaching awards, led by the students' union
- the estates team engages with students, employers and industry partners as stakeholders in all building and equipment purchases, to ensure their fit with teaching and learning requirements.

Overall, the panel found evidence that the provider has an embedded approach to student engagement and student voice, and concluded that this leads to continuous improvements in academic experiences and outcomes.

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 found that student outcomes are typically of outstanding quality for the provider's mix of courses, and for all of its groups of students.

Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- four outstanding quality features
- two very high quality features.

The panel considered the 'best fit' rating to be 'Gold', because most features are outstanding for all groups of students and courses.

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

Approaches to supporting student success

The panel concluded this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The panel considered the evidence in the provider submission to demonstrate the ways in which the provider supports students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies, and that the support is targeted and tailored, including a focus on students from low participation neighbourhood students and black and minority ethnic students. Evidence of this includes:

- matching industry professionals to students, and role models from alumni and businesses
- an embedded focus on students' confidence building
- embedded mentoring and networking schemes, and the 'steps to success' programme.
- micro internships for students from lower income backgrounds to focus on professional experience opportunities
- high levels of student engagement with a mock online interview tool and a tool used to score CVs against 50 checks, providing immediate feedback to improve results
- support for graduate business start-ups and broader regional business connectivity.

Taking this evidence into consideration, the panel concluded 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 judged this to be a very high quality feature.

For full-time students, the indicators provide initial evidence that 'continuation' and 'completion' are very high quality.

The panel noted that the 'continuation' and 'completion' indicators provide initial evidence of performance that is below the level of very high quality for part-time students; and outstanding for apprentices. In spite of these variances, the panel carefully considered the indicator evidence, and judged that this is a very high quality feature, with very high rates of continuation and completion for most of the provider's students and courses.

Progression rates

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

The overall 'progression' indicator for full-time students provided initial evidence of very high quality. While the panel noted the 'progression' indicator for Asian students gave evidence that the provider's performance is not very high quality, it acknowledged that the provider is taking necessary steps to address this. There is also some variation across subjects.

The indicator for part-time students provides evidence of outstanding progression rates.

Overall, the panel considered that there is evidence to show that this is a very high quality feature, with very high rates of progression across most student groups, including underrepresented groups.

Intended educational gains

The panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

The panel felt that throughout its submission the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant.

The provider's approach to educational gains is built around work readiness and commitment to social mobility, social justice and inclusivity; recognising that its students 'do not necessarily come ready for the journey', based on their starting positions. The educational gains are focused across confidence and personal insight; global and ethical awareness; and work readiness and commercial grounding.

The panel considers that there is evidence that the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve and why these are relevant to its students, and that the provider supports its students effectively to achieve the intended gains.

Approaches to supporting educational gains and Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

The panel considered these to be outstanding features.

The provider submission included evidence of the approaches taken to support students to achieve educational gains and how these are tailored and evidence-based. The panel noted that the provider has a suite of activities and measurements in place to assess progress and demonstrate success. The evidence includes:

- embedded inclusive teaching, learning and assessment
- library support in the skills of independent learning, information literacy and academic integrity
- a careers service to support students to become more self-aware, helping them make informed decisions and seek out real world opportunities as part of their individual learner journeys
- a survey designed to build understandings of each student's career readiness
- an evaluation checklist, linked to four stages of impact evaluation, with clear approach to evidence of impact, and that students are achieving educational gains.

The panel concluded that the evidence shows that the provider clearly understands and articulates the educational gains that it intends for its students, why these are highly relevant to its mix of students and their futures. It found that the evidence shows that the approach is evidence-based, highly effective and tailored to the different starting points of students.

Overall: Gold

The panel considered the overall 'best fit' rating for this provider to be 'Gold'.

The panel weighted the student experience and student outcome aspect ratings equally, and considered the evidence across all features, and across all student groups, subjects and courses.

The panel found most features, across both aspects, to be outstanding, and the remaining features to be of very high quality. The indicators and the provider and student submissions, provide compelling evidence that approaches are embedded and tailored.