



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

The University of East Anglia

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Silver

Typically, the experience students have at the University of East Anglia and the outcomes it leads to are very high quality.

Student experience: Silver

The student academic experience is typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- highly effective teaching, assessment, and feedback practices, which support students' learning, progression, and attainment, embedded across the provider
- use of research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience
- very high quality support for staff professional development, with the provider promoting excellent academic practice
- a supportive learning environment, in which students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support
- effective engagement with students, leading to improvements to experiences and outcomes.

There is also one outstanding quality feature:

- physical and virtual learning resources which are tailored and used effectively to support outstanding teaching and learning.

Student outcomes: Silver

Student outcomes are typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- very high continuation and completion rates, with outstanding rates for some students
- very high rates of progression, with outstanding rates for some students.
- effective support for students to achieve educational gains
- evaluation of educational gains.

There are also some outstanding quality features including:

- tailored approaches which are highly effective in ensuring students succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- clear articulation of the range of educational gains the provider intends its students to achieve, and why these are highly relevant to them and their future ambitions.

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 East Anglia (UEA) describes its goal of being a higher education institution that widens access, serving both local communities, and welcoming students from further afield.

The provider sets out four strategic educational aims in its strategy: working in partnership to understand and meet changing expectations; providing innovative, high-quality, inclusive education; keeping pace with technological change; and inspiring and enabling students to achieve brilliant things within and beyond graduation.

In 2020-21, the provider had 13,370 full-time undergraduate students, 370 part-time undergraduate students, and 100 studying apprenticeships.

Courses are provided across most subject areas. For full-time students, the largest subjects are Business & Management; Nursing & Midwifery; and Medicine & Dentistry. For part-time students, they are Nursing & Midwifery; Health & Social Care; and Pharmacology, Toxicology & Pharmacy.

Female students are in the majority (56.7 per cent of full-time students and 83.9 per cent of part-time students). Most full-time students (87.3 per cent) are under 21 years, while most part-time students (83.2 per cent) are over 21. Across both modes of study, around a fifth of students report a disability, most commonly cognitive and learning disabilities, and mental health conditions.

Most full-time students (66.4 per cent of full-time students, 87.7 per cent of part-time students) are white. For both populations, the next largest groups are Asian (7.5 per cent and 3.6 per cent respectively), black (5 per cent and 1.4 per cent), and mixed ethnic background (4.1 per cent and 1.2 per cent), with the rest being 'other' or unknown.

A fifth of full-time students (21 per cent) are from the Indices of Multiple Deprivation quintiles 1 or 2, indicating the most deprived backgrounds. For part-time students, the proportion is 30.5 per cent.

The assessment considered information about the provider's undergraduate courses and students on those courses. Although data was available for apprenticeships, the provider submission confirmed they were not included in its evidence, so they were not considered in scope of the assessment.

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: Silver

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 experience to be typically very high quality for UEA's mix of students and courses. Across the student experience aspect, the panel found:

- one feature that is outstanding
- five features that are very high quality, with one of these also containing some outstanding elements
- one feature for which the panel found insufficient evidence of very high or outstanding quality
- compelling evidence that the very high quality and outstanding features apply to most of the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups, which comprise a high proportion of the provider's students. It found that variations in quality were typically at subject level.

The panel applied the guidance and considered the best fit rating to be 'Silver', because the best fit descriptor was that 'most features of the aspect are very high quality for all groups of students' (although the panel noted some variations at subject level).

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

The panel also thought that the presence of some outstanding elements within this aspect supported a 'Silver' rating, although not enough to warrant a 'Gold' rating.

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

Teaching, assessment, and feedback

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

The overall 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback' indicators for full-time students both provide strong initial evidence of a very high quality feature.

For 'teaching on my course', indicators suggest that very high quality applies across all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups. The potential exception to this is students on 'other undergraduate' courses, although the panel noted the low number of students in the denominator, and therefore placed less weight on this evidence.

There are variations at subject level, with Economics showing notably higher quality, while lower quality was seen for Agriculture, Food and Related Studies, and General, Applied and Forensic Sciences, although the panel recognised that there were small student numbers in these two areas.

For 'assessment and feedback', indicators suggest that very high quality applies across most of the provider's groups of students, with the exceptions being students with a disability, and those on 'other undergraduate courses'.

For part-time students, the 'teaching on my course' indicator suggests higher quality than is the case for full-time students, while for the 'assessment and feedback' indicator, it suggests the opposite. The panel noted the low numbers of part time students, and therefore placed less weight on this evidence.

The provider and student submissions provide further evidence of a very high quality feature, including:

- curriculum design that reflects a standard working week with modular academic learning hours to allow for accessible co-curricular activities
- academic writing, studying and learning support from the learning enhancement team
- cross-campus application of Blackboard Ally technology, to make learning more accessible
- a robust new set of principles that inform learning and assessment practices which protected student performance during and after the coronavirus pandemic
- effective blended learning practices, which are tailored to maximise student engagement and understanding of their subject.

The student submission is generally positive towards this feature but notes some inconsistencies across the student body. The panel considered that this highlighted that the provider does not have a tailored approach to supporting its students.

Overall, the panel concluded that the submissions and indicators show that highly effective teaching, assessment, and feedback practices, which support students' learning, progression, and attainment, are embedded across the provider.

Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch

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

In its submission, the provider states that it focuses on creating inspirational course content to encourage active engagement from students, citing an example of designing courses to attract and support students from non-traditional backgrounds.

However, the student submission highlights inconsistencies in the delivery of content and quality of experience, which has had a higher impact on students from certain demographic groups, particularly disabled students. The student submission also notes inconsistencies in the use of lecture recordings, and the impact this has on the student experience.

The panel considered that the provider submission provides limited evidence of how course content and delivery effectively encourage its students to engage in learning, and stretch students to develop their knowledge and skills.

Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement

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

The submissions included evidence of the provider's membership of the Norwich Research Park, which gives students the opportunity to undertake projects with experiential learning, linked to the research of academics and the wider Norwich area.

It also contains details of a newly-formed Centre for Higher Education Research Practice, Policy, and Scholarship. One example of its work is recent research around students affected by specific learning difficulties, which evidences the provider's commitment to research-informed practice.

The provider described involvement in several teaching and academic networks. There was also evidence of engagement with various professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, as well as a range of employers, to inform the design and review of courses, although the submission did not provide evidence of the impact of these activities.

The panel considered that the evidence presented above indicates 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 of its students.

Staff professional development and academic practice

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

Continuous professional development at the provider is delivered through the Centre for Higher Education Research Practice, Policy, and Scholarship. The centre has implemented a system to recognise staff contributions to innovation and evaluation of practice, as well as to educational policy research. However, as it is a newly-formed entity, the provider submission does not provide narrative on its impact.

The panel also noted other development opportunities for staff through internal networks and external schemes. The provider submission mentions preliminary work on rewarding teaching excellence in promotion processes, a bespoke training programme for graduate teaching assistants, and outlines future plans around this feature.

However, the panel noted that there was no evidence of peer observation or mentoring, and the panel considered that there was limited evidence of how staff development linked back to supporting teaching practice.

Nonetheless, the panel considered that the evidence presented above indicates that there is very high quality support for staff professional development, and that excellent academic practice is promoted.

Learning environment and academic support

The panel considered this to be a very high quality feature, with some outstanding elements.

The overall 'academic support' indicator for full-time students provides initial evidence of a very high quality feature. The indicator for part-time students is at a similar level.

For full-time students there is some variation across subject areas, with notably higher quality for Economics, Medicine & Dentistry, and Sport & Exercise Science, but lower quality for English Studies; Media; Health & Social Care; Geography; General, Applied & Forensic sciences; Physics; and Allied Health.

Additional evidence submitted which indicated very high quality with some outstanding elements included:

- an external consultancy conducting research into students' experience and why some felt a stronger sense of belonging than others. This led to a set of principles which are now embedded in student support work
- welcome events and activities for new students, delivered jointly by the provider and the students' union, were evaluated positively by students
- year in industry and work placement modules are embedded across all faculties, showing the provider's commitment to experiential learning
- investment in several mental health and wellbeing measures which the panel considered were of outstanding quality
- monitoring of student engagement with the learning environment via QR codes and other measures such as library use, with this data analysed to identify students who are struggling, and provider support.

The panel found that the student submission provided a different perspective in places. It notes a survey showing that 46 per cent of all students felt that the provider 'cares' about them, with that figure dropping to 34 per cent for those with a disability. The student submission notes concern at this and highlights other inconsistencies in student experiences.

The panel did not find enough evidence that the provider's approach to this feature applies consistently to all student groups or subject areas. Nonetheless, in the round the panel considered that the provider fosters a supportive learning environment, and that its students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support.

Learning resources

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The 'learning resources' indicators for full-time students provide initial evidence of very high quality (and outstanding in some areas). . For part-time students, the indicators show a broadly similar picture.

The provider and student submissions supplement the indicator evidence with evidence of:

- a campus development programme which has focused on modernising teaching, learning, social and recreational spaces
- a digital transformation programme which has introduced blended learning environments and innovative assessment methods, allowing for more experiential learning opportunities

- library services being developed to meet the needs of a diverse cohort of students, with increasing online support. This is demonstrated by student survey data showing the supportive, welcoming nature of the library, calling it an area of excellence at the institution and noting a working relationship between library and students
- investment in Blackboard Ally technology, allowing download of alternative formats, and the implementation of lecture capture with both live transcriptions and closed caption content.

The panel considered that the use of data in this section strongly supported the work that the provider stated it is doing, and demonstrates that the work is embedded in the student experience.

While the indicators provide initial evidence of very high to outstanding quality, the support provided to students through the library supported the panel's conclusion that physical and virtual learning resources are tailored and used effectively to support outstanding teaching and learning.

Student engagement in improvement

Overall, the panel consider that there is sufficient evidence to suggest a very high quality feature.

The overall 'student voice' indicators for full-time and part-time students provide initial evidence of very high quality, although the panel noted weaker performance in some full-time subject areas: English; History; Media; Philosophy & Religious Studies; Health & Social care; Biosciences; General, Applied & Forensic Sciences; Physics; and Allied Health..

The provider submission included the following evidence:

- the co-creation of the student partnership agreement, emphasising open communication and consultation with students, covering various issues including inclusion, support for students, and sustainability.
- regular communication between senior staff and sabbatical officers
- student involvement in quality assurance and decision-making committees, and working groups across all aspects of provision
- continuation of weekly student voice surveys after the pandemic, to capture students' experiences and wellbeing
- improvements to the process for recruiting student representatives, resulting in a record high number of recruits on this scheme. However, this was not replicated across university faculties, resulting in gaps in the student voice.

The student submission highlights inconsistent experience across the student body, with some measures designed to tackle issues in the student experience not carried forward at school and subject level.

The panel noted these inconsistencies and a lack of evidence of whether engagement was leading to improvements in the student experience but overall considered that the evidence indicates that the provider effectively engages with its students, leading to improvements to the experiences and outcomes of its students.

Student outcomes: Silver

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 the quality of the student outcomes are typically very high quality for UEA's mix of students and courses. Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- two features that are outstanding
- four features that are very high quality
- compelling evidence that the very high quality features apply to most of the provider's groups of students, and that the outstanding features apply to some of the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups, which comprise a high proportion of the provider's students.

The panel applied the guidance and considered the best fit rating to be 'Silver', because the panel considered that the best fit description was that 'most features are very high quality for all groups of students' (although the panel noted some variation for different groups of students and subjects).

The panel did not think that 'Gold' would be the best fit because some rather than most of the student outcomes features are of outstanding quality. Nor did it think that 'Bronze' would be the best fit, as most rather than only some of the features were at least 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 an outstanding quality feature.

The provider's submission details a strategic approach to ensuring student success and progression, by offering tailored approaches including:

- clearly presenting graduate attributes to students
- working closely with employers to inform students about opportunities
- promoting innovative approaches to learning such as a 'peer enhanced e-placement'.

The submission also notes strategic investment in this area, with new staff hired into senior roles.

The provider's careers service has a staff member with a remit to develop tailored approaches and guidance for students from underrepresented groups. The provider runs a programme of events which aims to address potential employment barriers for these students and graduates.

The provider has a Development and Opportunities fund to provide financial support to students from underrepresented groups, and these students are also supported through the students' union's peer support networks.

The student submission notes that 73 per cent of students agree or strongly agree that the provider is preparing them for their future careers.

The panel considered that the careers service team was an area of particular quality, and 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 overall 'continuation' indicator for full-time students provides initial evidence of very high to outstanding quality though the panel noted weaker performance for some groups of students (Asian and non-UK students) and courses (Business; Economics; Law; Sociology; Medicine; Geography; Physics; and Medical Sciences).

For part-time students, the indicator suggests performance which is below the level of very high quality across all groups of students and subjects where there is data available (though noting the very small number of part-time students at the provider compared to full-time).

The overall 'completion' indicator provides initial evidence of very high quality, for the majority of students. Rates of continuation are lower for groups those aged over 31, and those studying Computing or Nursing, but higher for groups such as non-UK students and those studying Business; English Studies; and Geography.

For part-time students, the completion indicator is closer to that for full-time students, albeit with some variation for different groups of students and courses.

The panel concluded that, in the round, there was evidence of typically very high continuation and completion rates, with outstanding rates for some groups of students.

Progression rates

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

The overall 'progression' indicator for full-time students provides initial evidence of very high quality though with some variation across subject areas and student groups.

For part-time students, progression rates are similar, although the panel noted that with small numbers of students, there is little data available for this feature on the dashboard.

The panel concluded that the evidence demonstrated very high rates of progression (with outstanding rates in some subject areas and for some student groups).

Intended educational gains

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The provider submission sets out a vision for enabling students to:

- succeed in their studies through gaining knowledge and skills

- gain skills for a wide range of potential career outcomes
- develop and maintain good mental wellbeing
- have time and opportunities to engage in a wide range of learning inside and outside classrooms.

The provider notes that it is developing a method to measure these outcomes, and that it is part of an international project examining the application of student competence frameworks. The provider is already using an educational gain measurement aligned with cognitive gain, career readiness and soft skills.

The panel considered that the provider demonstrates a committed approach and ambition for the future.

Overall, the panel considered 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.

Approaches to supporting educational gains

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

The provider submission states that its educational approach includes providing support for all students to make educational gains, and outlines both its areas of educational gain and the support provided for students to achieve in these areas.

The student submission highlights differences in educational gain between student groups, and says there is a need for further work to explore and mitigate against this.

Overall, the panel considered that the provider effectively supports its students to achieve educational gains but did not consider that there was enough evidence of a tailored approach to consider this feature outstanding.

Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

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

There was limited evidence for this feature as the provider's approach to evaluating student gains is under review, however the panel noted the provider's plans to create a more consistent approach to evaluating gains, incorporating annual plans for employability and teaching excellence, and the use of quality assurance and regulatory data.

The panel considered that the provider's leadership and involvement in international and national projects, such as a collaboration to develop a competence framework which measures student skills, was evidence of very high quality.

Overall, the panel considered that the provider's work in this area demonstrates that it evaluates the gains made by its students.

Overall: Silver

The panel found most student experience and most student outcomes features to be of very high quality for typically all groups of students and courses. This includes students from underrepresented groups, which comprise a high proportion of the provider's students. The panel considered this contextual factor throughout its assessment of all the evidence.

The panel considered the student experience aspect rating to be 'Silver' and the student outcomes aspect rating to be 'Silver'. The panel noted the guidance set out in Regulatory advice 22 (RA22, paragraph 277) that, where each aspect is awarded the same rating, the overall rating should also be the same. Therefore, the panel considered the overall best fit rating to be 'Silver'.