



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

Oxford Brookes University

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Silver

Typically, the experience students have at Oxford Brookes University and the outcomes it leads to are very high quality.

Student experience: Bronze

The student academic experience is typically high quality, and there are some very high quality features.

Very high quality features include:

- the use of research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, and professional practice
- support for staff professional development, and the promotion of excellent academic practice across its staff body
- physical and virtual learning resources are used to support very high quality teaching and learning
- effective engagement with students allowing the provider to make improvements to the student experience and outcomes.

Student outcomes: Silver

Student outcomes are typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- a wide range of approaches to effectively support students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- typically very high rates of continuation and completion for the majority of its students
- for the majority of its students, typically very high rates of progression to positive outcomes after qualifying
- educational gains are articulated that it wants its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students
- effectively supporting 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

Oxford Brookes University says it is ‘founded on the pillars of education and enterprise, research and innovation’ and that it aims to ‘make the world a better and fairer place’.

It is a majority undergraduate led provider with 84.3 per cent undergraduate students in 2020/21 and 15.5 per cent postgraduates. The provider had 14,740 full-time students in 2020/21 and 2,730 part-time. It has seven associate college partners, with 70 Oxford Brookes undergraduate programmes provided for 700 students.

Oxford Brookes has four campuses – three based in Oxford, and one in Swindon. It is a large, teaching-led institution with a focus on ‘employability and high-quality outcomes’. Business and management students make up 22 per cent of undergraduates and 30.6 per cent of postgraduate students. Architecture, building and planning and Allied health are other subject areas of significant size and specialism.

The assessment considered information about the provider’s undergraduate courses and students on those courses. The provider’s small apprenticeship provision has been excluded from its assessment submission.

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: Bronze

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 mix of students and courses.

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

- four features to be very high quality
- three features where there was insufficient evidence of very high quality.

The panel applied the criteria and considered that the rating with the best fit is 'Bronze'. This is because the evidence provided showed that some features are very high quality for most groups of students and courses. The panel did not feel that it was explained why some disciplines were below benchmark in some areas and therefore 'Silver' was not appropriate.

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

Teaching, assessment, and feedback

The panel considered there to be insufficient evidence of very high quality for this feature.

The 'teaching of my course' and 'assessment and feedback' indicators do not provide evidence of a very high quality feature. There is also little evidence presented of tailoring to student groups. However, the provider and student submission give some evidence of very high quality, for example:

- evidence of an inclusive curriculum model to improve the student indicator values. One of these initiatives poses student-focused questions to programme teams to ensure that student voices and experiences lie at the heart of all stages of programme development and review. The student response to these improvements is positive
- the provider engages students with authentic assessment activities (e.g. industry-facing projects, professionally modelled assessment, and live projects) across an increasing number of curriculum areas including physiotherapy. The student submission provides evidence of students valuing these real-life examples and feeling challenged and engaged
- sharing of good practice identified in high performing areas including live project sharing across architecture, building and planning, and a 'coaching model' of academic advising as teaching within sports and exercise science.

Overall, the panel found limited evidence that the provider's teaching, feedback and assessment practices are effective in supporting its students' learning, progression, and attainment. While there are examples of very high quality within this feature, including the embedding of good practice as mentioned above, these are not consistent across the whole feature, and evidence of tailoring to students was also felt to be lacking.

Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch

The panel considered there to be insufficient evidence of very high quality for this feature.

The provider and student submissions give evidence of the provider's approach, including:

- changing its course structure and streamlining of modules which the panel considered to be effective
- engaging students in research within their courses, with conferences providing impressive opportunities for students to publish and present their academic work (where over 500 have done so)
- earlier timetabling and room allocations to allow students to plan caring responsibilities.

The panel considered that the provider's submission focused primarily on the delivery of courses with the redevelopment of modules, but there was not enough evidence on how they encourage students to engage in their learning, and how students are stretched to develop their knowledge and skill.

Overall, the panel concluded that there was insufficient evidence to show how course content and delivery effectively encourage the provider's students to engage in their learning and 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 provider submission describes how it aims to embed 'research-inspired' teaching and connections, and provides evidence including:

- a strong level of formal partnerships, including with Oxford Health NHS Foundation and over 350 placement schools, with positive evaluation in the student submission
- monitoring and working with academics to understand student employability needs and an Entrepreneurs in Residence scheme for business students
- the 'Entrepreneurs in Residence' scheme provides valuable opportunities to learn about growing businesses, partnered with the Royal Society, resulting in 27 new startups in 2020
- the student submission highlights the use of real-life examples in teaching and assessment and that this is highly valued by students, noting that staff emphasise an 'employability-based approach' to learning.

The evidence in both the provider and student submissions demonstrate that relevant research is embedded into teaching practices, alongside valuable opportunities for students to conduct and publish research of their own. The provider also has strong connections and partnerships with various employers which bolster the academic experience of students. Overall, the panel judged that the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, innovation, and professional partnerships to contribute to a very high quality academic experience for its students.

Staff professional development and academic practice

The panel considered there to be insufficient evidence of very high quality for this feature.

The provider submission includes evidence of effective approaches that are in place to ensure that all teaching staff obtain teaching qualifications, including:

- staff were supported during the pandemic to use digital approaches to reflect new methods of teaching
- staff without teaching qualifications undertake 240 hours of professional development in their first three years
- staff with teaching qualifications undertake 40 hours of professional development to understand the provider's approaches to inclusive learning and the student body.

In spite of this, the panel did not feel there was enough evidence of how professional development is embedded across the provider. In addition, the panel felt that the student submission did not add additional relevant evidence.

Overall, the panel concluded that there was not enough evidence of very high quality support for staff professional development and the promotion of excellent academic practice, as the evidence did not demonstrate effective reach or embedding of professional development across the whole institution.

Learning environment and academic support

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

The provider highlights its commitment to inclusivity, with underrepresented or disadvantaged student groups benefiting from targeted support and interventions. The indicator provides initial evidence that 'academic support' is very high quality for full-time students.

Evidence from the provider submission includes that:

- the Centre for Academic Development receives 100 per cent student satisfaction
- each faculty has a team of student support coordinators who provide one-to-one confidential support, advice, guidance and encouragement to help students with academic issues
- two Inclusive Support Service teams receive positive feedback from students, with 78 per cent surveyed stating the service 'had a positive impact on their student experience'
- specific digital services staff support student access to digital learning
- students note the approachability of lecturers and the quality of communication within the student submission.

Overall, the panel considered that the provider fosters a supportive learning environment, and its students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support. There

were some elements of outstanding practice, such as the support the provider gives to disabled people, but there was not enough tailoring of academic support provisions to judge this feature outstanding overall.

Learning resources

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

The indicators provide initial evidence that 'learning resources' are very high quality for full time students.

The provider and student submissions included the following evidence of a very high quality feature:

- major investments into digital infrastructure, with a focus on digital inclusivity and immersive classrooms
- space planning on campus has taken account of student feedback
- the library facility is open 24/7 with plenty of study spaces available and live chats to support students
- lecture streaming has been implemented across campus in response to coronavirus and student concerns, which is also noted in the student submission.

Overall, given the links between student feedback and space planning, and the embedding of resource support within the library, the panel considered this to be a very high-quality feature, and that physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning.

Student engagement in improvement

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

The indicators provide initial evidence that the 'student voice' is very high quality for full time students.

The provider submission describes its commitment to 'work with students to bring about enhancements to curriculum, teaching and learning'. This includes:

- students are partners in projects, including the 'Global Majority Collective' in social work which represents underrepresented groups and their lived experiences
- a scheme, co-designed with the Students' Union, recognises students serving on provider committees
- student partners employed in the technology, design and environment faculty to work with local employers and academic staff on graphic design branding, website development and film and media opportunities.

The student submission highlights that the IDEAS (Inclusive, Digital, Employability, Assessment and Sustainability) framework was developed with student input. Additionally, it identifies effective student representation structures and gives good examples of the provider changing practice in response to student input.

Overall, the panel considered the strong partnerships between the provider and its students, with recognition of student contributions and co-development of schemes with the Students' Union and the feedback within the student submission. As such, the panel concluded 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 mix of students and courses.

The panel found student outcomes are typically very high quality for the provider's mix of students and courses.

Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- the provider effectively supports its students to achieve very high quality student outcomes
- most features are of very high quality, except for the evaluation of student gains
- none of the features are clearly below the level of 'very high quality' or of concern.

The panel found the very high quality features apply to most of the provider's groups of students and most courses and subjects. However, the continuation and completion rates for part-time students for are materially below benchmark, but this was noted in the submission by the provider as a coding error, which the panel considered has now been adequately addressed.

The panel considered that the rating with the best fit is 'Silver' as the aspect is typically very high quality.

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

Approaches to supporting student success

The panel found that this to be a very high quality feature.

The provider submission describes how it sets out a coherent 'life cycle' approach to supporting students' success, with policies and practice implemented to meet each stage of student's life prior to, during and after their studies. Some examples of the evidence from the submission include:

- an initiative to ensure students have a strong induction process

- support from academic advisers and student support co-ordinators is personalised, and learner analytics are monitored
- bespoke and targeted interventions resulted in a 17.5 per cent reduction in academic failure rates in 2021/22
- programmes for employability development tailored to individual students
- certificates and programme awards are granted for engagement with programmes, taken up by a significant number of students given the time commitment (around 200).

The student submission is positive about how the provider makes it easier for students to study abroad by reducing financial barriers. It also notes an encouragement of voluntary or extra-curricular activities alongside the provider to engage with national sports teams in a variety of ways including media coverage, commentary and graphics support.

The panel considered this feature was very high quality with outstanding elements, including the tailoring of support for specific student demographics and the reduction in academic failure rates. Overall, the panel concluded that the provider effectively supports its students using its full 'life cycle' approach to support students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies.

Continuation and completion rates

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

The indicators provided initial evidence of:

- very high quality 'continuation' and 'completion' for full-time students
- not very high quality 'continuation' and 'completion' for part-time students (however these results have been addressed in the submission as a data error which the panel felt was a satisfactory explanation).

The indicators suggest very high quality rates of continuation and completion are consistent across student groups, including underrepresented groups. Additionally, the provider submission supplies persuasive evidence of support for continuation and completion with mentor schemes on offer throughout a student's time at the provider.

Overall, the panel considered that the indicators and the provider submission provide evidence that there are very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses across student groups.

Progression rates

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

The panel noted that the indicators provide evidence of very high quality progression rates for full-time students, but that for part-time students they are at least very high quality.

The provider submission provides evidence of efforts to improve progression, such as:

- a commitment to reducing gaps in progression to underrepresented and ethnic minorities
- championing of employability through the Brookes Careers service which works via both curriculum-based methods and individual support
- initiatives to target specific groups with particular issues. For example, the provider's careers service has created a bespoke six-week coaching course for females who lack confidence in pitching their ideas
- additional credentials that can be obtained through the BrookesEDGE certificate scheme which fosters skills in leadership and management.

Overall, with the progression data being very high-quality, supported by the evidence from the provider's submission, the panel concluded that there are very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses.

Intended educational gains

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

The provider submission clearly explains the process of identifying and refining the educational gains it wants its students to receive, and how the methods used to articulate these have been refreshed following an assessment.

Its Value-Added indicator compares students' degree results with entry qualifications to see how effective their teaching has been across their course. Its Graduate Attributes model provides a qualitative articulation of education gains with their assessment.

Overall, the panel considered that the evidence shows that the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students. The panel felt that it was not outstanding quality as it did not relate the gains to students' future ambitions.

Approaches to supporting educational gains

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

The panel found that the provider clearly articulates intended educational gain and has a clear approach to gathering evidence on students' educational achievements which drives approaches to supporting students.

Evidence from the provider submission includes:

- collaborative learning to bring together different lived experiences of learning and authentic assessments
- investment in employability learning with resources like the Brookes Education and Employability timeline tool, which is implemented by academic advisers who support students with one-to-one conversations about employability and career readiness
- investment in tools for digital confidence to enable the provider's students to act confidently 'in an increasingly digital world'.

The panel considered that while some provisions are yet to be embedded into programmes, it was able to conclude that there is clear evidence of success with established educational gains (such as evidence-based solution finding and collaborative learning) and a strong monitoring system to ensure that approaches are evidenced-based.

Overall, the panel judged that the provider effectively supports its students to achieve these gains.

Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

The panel considered there was not enough evidence of very high quality for this feature.

The panel noted that the provider monitors its students' gains by learner analytics data and scoring that enables academic advisers to tailor approaches and help students who are struggling. However, the panel found that the provider submission does not contain detailed evidence of whether students are successful in these gains. New educational gains being introduced by the provider are also in their early stages and are not yet fully implemented beyond a strategy.

Overall: Silver

The panel judged that the rating for student experience was 'Bronze' and the rating for student outcomes was 'Silver'.

Throughout the student outcomes aspect, and within a considerable number of student experience features, the provider submission presents clear evidence of very high quality in its policies, practices and approaches, which meet the needs of nearly all its student groups and courses.

Considering the evidence, the panel judged that the best fit is 'Silver' because there is sufficient evidence that, overall, student experiences and outcomes are typically very high quality.