



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

## **Summary TEF 2023 panel statement**

**The University of Law Limited**

# Summary of outcomes

## Overall: Silver

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

### Student experience: Gold

The student academic experience is typically outstanding.

Outstanding quality features include:

- outstanding teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are highly effective and tailored to supporting students' learning, progression, and attainment
- course content and delivery that engages students in their learning and stretches students to develop knowledge and skills to their fullest potential
- outstanding support for staff professional development, and excellent academic practice is embedded across the provider
- a supportive learning environment in which students have access to a wide range of outstanding quality academic support tailored to their needs.

There are also some very high quality features including:

- physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning
- effective engagement with students, leading to improvements to the experiences and outcomes of students.

### Student outcomes: Silver

Student outcomes are typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- effective support for students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses
- the provider's articulation of the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students
- effective support for students to achieve the intended educational gains
- the provider evaluates the educational gains made by its students.

# 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 Law Limited is a specialist provider focused on legal education and training. Its mission is to serve students and their future employers through 'pioneering professional education and world leading teaching.'

The provider is a relatively small university that delivers its programmes in a range of centres across England and Wales, with their degrees and programmes available both full-time and part-time, face-to-face, and online. Additionally, the provider offers a small number of apprenticeships.

There has been an increase in its undergraduate student population during the four year TEF period. In 2020-21 the provider had around 2,600 full-time and 140 part time undergraduate students and 160 apprenticeship students.

The majority of students study law, with a small number studying business and management.

The provider has a diverse population of students, and a small population of international students. Many students are from low socio-economic backgrounds.

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

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](http://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/](http://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 that the student experience is typically outstanding for the provider's mix of students and courses.

Across the student experience aspect, the panel found:

- four features are of outstanding quality
- two features are very high quality
- one feature where there was not enough evidence to reach a view on its quality
- that the very high and outstanding quality features apply to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

The panel applied the ratings criteria and considered the best fit rating to be 'Gold'. This is because most features of the aspect are outstanding quality for all groups of students and courses.

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 two features to be of outstanding quality.

The 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback' indicators provided compelling evidence of outstanding quality for full-time students.

The indicators provided evidence of either very high or outstanding quality for part-time students, with limited certainty in the data.

Evidence in the provider submission included:

- students receive individualised feedback on formative assessments
- vocational scenarios are used on all undergraduate courses such as commercial case studies, virtual reality criminal investigations and role play interactions
- tailored assessment support for students from ethnic minorities aimed at improving the experience and outcomes of students
- group academic coach meetings, assessment technique sessions, inclusive assessment and a more flexible deferral, extension, and mitigating circumstances policy.

Overall, the panel found the submissions and indicators to show that the provider has embedded outstanding teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are highly effective and tailored to supporting its students' learning, progression, and attainment. The panel also considered that course content and delivery engages students in their learning, and that the use of vocational learning and teaching activities stretches students to develop knowledge and skills to their fullest potential. The panel therefore concluded that these were outstanding quality features.

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

The panel considered the evidence in the provider submission which included:

- Engagement with law firms to develop new programmes, and the linking of students with practitioners and academics through an advisory board.

Overall, the panel considered there was not enough evidence in the provider submission to reach a view on the quality of this feature.

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

The panel found this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The evidence in the provider submission included:

- staff are 'regularly released into legal practice to maintain their subject knowledge and vocational expertise'
- a large number of events and initiatives, supporting AdvanceHE fellowship applications
- institutional membership of the Staff and Educational Development Association, and the Association for Learning Development in Higher Education
- a distinctive approach to peer-led observation including peer review and manager observation
- a staff development committee meets monthly to facilitate staff support
- an annual learning and teaching conference.

Overall, the panel found there is outstanding support for staff professional development and that excellent academic practice is embedded across the provider. The panel concluded that this is an outstanding quality feature.

## **Learning environment and academic support**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The 'academic support' indicator provided compelling initial evidence of outstanding quality for full-time students.

Evidence in the provider submission included:

- a doubling of resources in Student Support Services, including regular check-ins for vulnerable students and apps to support students
- a learning analytics tool used by students and academic coaches, with lower levels of engagement alerted to the Student Journey Advisor.

Overall, the panel considered the submission and indicator evidence to demonstrate that there is a supportive learning environment in which students have access to a wide and readily available range of outstanding quality academic support tailored to their needs. The panel judged this to be an outstanding quality feature.

## **Learning resources**

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

The 'learning resources' indicator provided initial evidence of an outstanding quality feature for full-time students.

Evidence in the provider submission included:

- the adoption of Universal Design for Inclusive Learning principles
- the involvement of students from ethnic minorities in reviewing the impact of the provider's approaches.

The student submission highlighted positive feedback from students about learning resources and study space. Additionally, the students' union offers a skills development programme enabling students to access a wide range of courses and develop transferable skills.

Overall, the panel considered there was compelling evidence that very high quality physical and virtual learning resources are used to support teaching and learning. The panel considered there was not enough evidence of an outstanding quality feature because while the provider submission detailed its approach to supporting students' virtual learning there was limited information provided in reference to physical learning resources. Additionally, in the student submission it was noted that students would like greater access to past papers and recorded workshops.

Considering the evidence in the round, the panel considered the evidence to demonstrate a very high quality feature.

## **Student engagement in improvement**

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

The 'student voice' indicator provided compelling initial evidence of an outstanding quality feature for full-time students.

The provider submission included evidence of:

- initiatives through which students can influence policy, practice, and share professional knowledge

- an employability service and students' union partnership through which students are trained to take on roles within the provider's governance.

The student submission demonstrated that the provider sufficiently engages with students through the students' union, working together on projects and ensuring there is student representation on committees. It suggested that there is involvement of student representatives in all layers of governance and the students' union engages with its student parliament.

The provider described its engagement with students through various methods which the panel considered very high quality. However, the panel did not find enough evidence of outstanding quality as the submission does not provide evidence that numerous initiatives were adopted because of student feedback or the impact on the student experience. Additionally, the student submission suggested there is scope to improve how the provider communicates improvements and changes to students to close the feedback loop.

In summary, the indicator provided initial evidence of outstanding quality and whilst the panel found clear evidence that the provider does engage with its students, the extent to which this engagement leads to improvements to the experiences and outcomes of students was not fully evidenced. Overall, the panel considered the feature to be of very high quality.

## **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 student outcomes are typically very high quality for the provider's mix of students and courses.

Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- five features are very high quality
- one feature had elements of both very high quality and not very high quality
- that the very high quality features apply to all of the provider's groups of students.

The panel applied the ratings criteria and found the best fit rating to be 'Silver'. This is because most features of the aspect are very high quality 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 considered this to be a very high-quality feature.

Evidence in the provider submission included:

- targeted programmes and approaches for students from ethnic minorities, mature students and other small groups of students with less positive outcomes
- one-to-one careers advice, employer talks and careers events, with a high student take up
- student access to academic and digital skills in courses, and the library trains students using a prepare, engage, and consolidate approach.

While the panel did not consider there was enough evidence of tailored approaches or the impact of approaches to judge this feature as outstanding quality, overall the panel considered there was enough evidence to show that the provider effectively supports its students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies and that this is a very high quality feature.

### **Continuation and completion rates**

The panel considered this feature to have elements of very high quality and not very high quality.

The 'continuation' indicator provided evidence of either very high quality or outstanding quality for full-time students.

The 'completion' indicator provided evidence of not very high quality for full-time students.

The panel noted concerns about below benchmark 'completion' indicators for some underrepresented groups, which were also referenced in the provider submission. However, the panel noted that there was an upward trajectory and that the submission details the actions the provider is taking to support the completion rates of these groups, including:

- participation in the Culturally Sensitive Curriculum Scales research project
- coronavirus related adjustments that were of particular benefit to students from underrepresented groups
- training for the Student Journey Advisor role including racial literacy and cultural awareness.

Overall, the panel considered this feature to have elements of both very high quality and not very high quality due to the variation in performance across the 'continuation' and 'completion' indicators. The panel noted however that the provider showed an awareness of where it has lower indicators and discussed its strategies to address them in its submission.

### **Progression rates**

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

The 'progression' indicator provided evidence of either very high quality or not very high quality for full-time students.

The provider submission states that the Graduate Outcomes survey does not capture the high proportion of students who progress to the Legal Practice Course due to a timing issue and the student submission supports this. The provider presented alternative data and cited an upwards trend over the TEF period.

Other evidence included:

- a volunteer bursary programme to enable underrepresented students to take opportunities for internships
- student peers associated with each undergraduate cohort from year two onwards.

The panel noted that there was insufficient evidence of very high rates of successful progression in the indicators, but the provider explained the rationale for this which the panel considered to be compelling evidence.

The panel concluded that there was enough evidence of very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses as evidenced in the provider submission and graduate outcomes data, and therefore that this is a very high quality feature.

### **Intended educational gains; and Approaches to supporting educational gains**

The panel considered these two features to be very high quality.

The provider presented a framework for the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, defined through 3 areas: cognitive, learning, and social gains.

Evidence included:

- students have access to pre-entry study skills materials and workshops to help them prepare to succeed in their university studies
- embedded learning from practice through qualified professionals
- authentic assessment through vocational scenarios
- the 'Work Ready Award' – a professional employability programme
- a graduate club providing 'employability for life' support.

The student submission mentioned that through engagement with clubs and societies students achieve their social gains.

Overall, the panel considered that the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students.

Additionally, the panel concluded that the provider effectively supports its students to achieve these gains. The panel considered this was a very high quality rather than an outstanding quality feature because there was insufficient evidence to suggest that this support is tailored to students.

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

The panel considered this feature to be very high quality.

Evidence in the provider submission included:

- the evaluation of educational gains is through student feedback and conversations with Student Journey Advisors and academic coaches
- most feedback on the impact of activities is gathered informally but the provider intends to use formal ways in the future.

The panel noted that the provider is in the early stages of its evaluation and therefore was unable to fully show the impact of the educational gains it intends its student to achieve. Nonetheless, the evidence presented was considered to be very high quality as the provider explained the means through which it would evaluate the gains made by its students through a strategic approach.

## **Overall: Silver**

Applying the guidance and the panel's expert judgment, the panel considered the overall 'best fit' rating to be 'Silver'.

The panel considered the student experience rating to be 'Gold' and the student outcomes rating to be 'Silver'. The panel weighted these two aspects equally and considered all the evidence across all the features and across all the provider's student groups, subjects and courses to come to a 'best fit' decision regarding the overall rating for the provider.

When deciding whether the overall rating should be 'Gold' or 'Silver', the panel judged the evidence to show, on the whole, there to be typically very high quality provision rather than typically outstanding provision, and therefore the best fit rating was 'Silver.'