



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

University of Portsmouth

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Gold

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

Student experience: Gold

The student academic experience is typically outstanding.

Outstanding quality features include:

- highly effective teaching, assessment and feedback practices, which support students' learning, progression and attainment, are embedded across the provider
- course content and delivery which inspire the provider's students to actively engage in and commit to their learning, and stretch students to develop knowledge and skills to their fullest potential
- the use of research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement to contribute to an outstanding academic experience
- 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
- embedded engagement with students which leads to continuous improvements to students' experiences and outcomes.

There are also some very high quality features including:

- very high quality support for staff professional development, and the promotion of excellent academic practice
- physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning.

Student outcomes: Silver

Student outcomes are typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses
- very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses
- effective approaches to supporting students to achieve the intended educational gains.

There are also some outstanding quality features including:

- the provider deploys and tailors approaches that are highly effective in ensuring its students succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- the provider clearly articulates the range of educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are highly relevant to students 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 Portsmouth states that it 'offers the life-changing benefits of outstanding higher education to all our students'. It says that it aspires to 'deliver outstanding educational gain for our students' and to support the needs of regional, national and global employers.

In 2020-21 the provider had around 20,000 full-time undergraduate students and 1,430 part-time undergraduates. There were also 390 undergraduate apprenticeship students in 2020-21.

The provider offers a range of subjects through 29 schools across five faculties. A large proportion of students (14.1 per cent) study Business and Management.

The provider's students include 17.1 per cent with a reported disability, 16.1 per cent who are mature, and 12.9 per cent who are local prior to entry. The provider reports just under a quarter of students as black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME), and just over a quarter as from disadvantaged backgrounds (based on the index of multiple deprivation measure).

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

Full details about the provider's student demographics used in the TEF 2023 assessment are available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-used-in-tef-2023.

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

- five features that are outstanding quality
- two features that are very high quality
- evidence that the provider embeds effective approaches and tailors its approaches to its students
- compelling evidence that the very high quality and outstanding features apply across all the provider's courses and groups of students. This includes students from underrepresented groups, which comprise a high proportion of the provider's students.

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.

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

Teaching, assessment, and feedback

The panel found this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The 'teaching on my course' indicator for full-time students provided compelling evidence of very high quality. This was the case across all full-time undergraduates, except those studying Material and Technology courses, although the panel placed less weight on this evidence due to the low numbers of students involved. The indicator suggested a similar level of quality for part-time students, although the low number of students meant that the panel placed less weight on this.

'The 'assessment and feedback' indicator for full-time students provided evidence of outstanding quality. This was the case across all the provider's groups of students. The indicator suggested a lower level of quality for part-time students, but the panel placed less weight on this because of the low number of students involved.

The provider and student submissions supplemented the indicators with further evidence of outstanding quality, including:

- a culture which promotes and celebrates innovative learning and teaching
- a tailored, research-informed approach to learning and teaching during the pandemic, which supported students from low income backgrounds and underrepresented groups
- the introduction of the 'Blended & Connected' approach to learning, which the provider says prioritises active student engagement, and promotes the development and application of

subject knowledge, and professional and digital skills. The approach was refined in partnership with students

- the use of a team-based approach to course and module design, including co-creation with students, which helped eliminate plagiarism and missed deadlines, and increased pass rates for relevant modules.

Considering the evidence overall, the panel concluded 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 found this to be an outstanding quality feature.

In addition to the indicator evidence considered in the 'teaching, assessment and feedback' feature, the panel considered information in the provider's submission, which states that students are encouraged to engage in their learning and are stretched to develop knowledge and skills. The panel considered the following evidence from the submission, including case studies, to indicate outstanding quality:

- workplace simulation in courses. This received high praise from students, according to the student submission
- real-life practice incorporated into course content and delivery, including:
 - students treating NHS patients in a dental academy
 - Law and Accounting students run legal and debt clinics for the public
 - the School of Architecture running an architectural practice with students
- all faculties offering relevant co-curricular activities
- student stretch achieved through research-informed learning.

This evidence led the panel to conclude that the provider's course content and delivery inspire the provider's students to actively engage in and commit to their learning, and stretch students to develop knowledge and skills to their fullest potential.

Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement

The panel found this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The provider submission evidenced that courses are embedded with research, innovation and employer engagement through a tailored approach to subject requirements and the career aspirations of their students, including those wanting to progress into postgraduate study. Evidence of this included:

- all undergraduate courses including a research-focused dissertation or professional practice-focused project

- employer networks being involved in course and curriculum development, to ensure graduates have relevant skills and knowledge. A case study for Sport, Health and Exercise Science courses showed how this has improved progression to professional employment
- a team of 30 experienced 'Entrepreneurs in Residence' who use their expertise to help students plan, develop, network and market new businesses. In total, 42 graduates are now running their own businesses in one of the provider's incubation and innovation centres
- five courses in the School of Creative Technologies culminating with real-time interactive group projects, for example developing a training simulator for Royal Navy pilots.

The panel found that the provider's practices benefit all groups of the provider's students. This, and the evidence as a whole, led the panel to conclude that the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement to contribute to an outstanding quality academic experience for its students.

Staff professional development and academic practice

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

The provider submission outlined support for staff professional development and academic practice, including:

- almost half of the provider's 1,360 academic staff having fellowships awarded through an AdvanceHE-accredited scheme, which the provider states is above the sector average. All staff who teach and support students are encouraged to achieve some level of AdvanceHE fellowship
- several examples of excellence in learning and teaching being supported through dissemination channels, working groups and co-creation with students. Outcomes of these are quantified, including through case studies
- details of education-specific pathways for academic promotion.

Considering the evidence from the provider submission, the panel concluded that there is very high quality support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is promoted.

Learning environment and academic support

The panel found this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The 'academic support' indicator for full-time students provided initial evidence of an outstanding quality feature for all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

For part-time students, the indicator suggested quality may be lower, and there was variation for different groups of students, but the panel placed less weight on this evidence because of the low number of students in the data.

Evidence in the provider submission described:

- support for disabled students and their course teams to deliver bespoke adjustments and independent learning plans
- personal tutors helping students to understand assessments, guide decisions about options, and plan for careers, using a variety of resources and coaching
- support from the School of Mathematics for students on all courses, given the importance of mathematics skills to a number of courses
- innovative academic support and extensive resources from the university library, which is validated by positive student feedback
- integration of digital technologies into teaching.

In addition, the student submission highlighted opportunities for students to co-create and embed good practices in the provider; the work of course representatives; a pre-arrival module; strong support from staff; and quick adaptations during the pandemic. It also noted a disparity in the levels of support experienced by part-time and full-time students.

Considering all of the available evidence, the panel concluded overall that the provider ensures a supportive learning environment, and that students have access to a wide and readily available range of outstanding quality academic support tailored to their needs.

Learning resources

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

The 'learning resources' indicator for full-time students suggested some initial evidence of an outstanding quality feature for all of the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

For part-time students, the indicator suggested less strong performance, and there was variation for different groups of students, but the low number of students in the data meant that the panel placed less weight on this evidence.

Evidence from the provider submission included:

- the work of online course developers and specialist learning designers
- the provider has 2,000 open access computers, 3,000 teaching terminals and 800 specialist computers across campus, plus 1,000 loanable laptops
- the use of simulated learning (as described under 'course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch' above)
- an operational police forensic facility on campus, combining police forensic science and digital crime investigators with facilities for students and researchers. Students have internship opportunities, access to professional mentors and are taught by serving officers
- specific support for international and EU students.

Overall, the panel found that the provider understands its students and concluded that physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning by the provider.

Student engagement in improvement

The panel found this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The 'student voice' indicator for full-time students provided initial evidence of a very high quality feature, and this evidence applied to all of the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

For part-time students, the indicator was at a similar level, but the small number of students in the data meant that the panel placed less weight on this evidence.

The provider submission detailed: that there are more than 1,000 course representatives, who ensure that the student voice informs decision making; the implementation of a new student voice policy; and formal representation of students being reinforced by regular informal meetings between students and senior members of staff. It also highlighted that students from the BAME network developed and delivered training for staff.

The student submission agreed that the provider is committed to its engagement with students, and to co-creation in several areas, and that this has been particularly relevant around equity, diversity and inclusion issues, as well as during the coronavirus pandemic. The student submission noted that this commitment has extended to sharing data with student course representatives.

Considering the evidence in the provider submission, which was corroborated by the student submission, along with the indicators, the panel concluded there was sufficient evidence that the provider embeds engagement with its students, leading to continuous 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 student outcomes are typically very high quality for the provider's mix of students and courses. Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- three features that are very high quality
- two features that are outstanding quality
- one feature where there was insufficient evidence of very high quality
- that the very high and outstanding quality features apply broadly to all of 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 'Silver'. This is because most features of the aspect are very high quality for all groups of students.

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

Approaches to supporting student success

The panel found this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The provider submission stated that in an annual survey in March 2022, students gave 'support given to help progress your degree' an average score of 7.5 out of 10, with 74 per cent of responses scoring seven or higher. It also detailed the provider's use of data to improve student engagement and the creation of improvement plans for courses where metrics demonstrate a need for improvement.

The submission also noted that pre-arrival resources were used by 3,000 students in 2020/21, outlined several evidence-based interventions for underrepresented groups, and described an international orientation week that supports 1,300 new undergraduates with tailored information. Students are also provided with careers and employability support for five years after graduation.

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

The 'continuation' and 'completion' indicators for full-time students both provided compelling initial evidence of a very high quality feature across all of the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

For part-time students, both indicators provided initial evidence of outstanding quality.

The provider submission included additional evidence about: the use of learner data analytics on every course; the redevelopment of the provider's student engagement and attendance monitoring policy; and approaches tailored to specific courses, with case studies.

Considering the evidence from the indicators and the provider submission, the panel concluded overall that there are very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses.

Progression rates

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

The 'progression' indicator for full-time students provided compelling initial evidence of a very high quality feature. This applied to almost all of the provider's students, including those from underrepresented groups, aside from some small groups of students and courses. The panel placed less weight on those outliers, given the low numbers of students involved. The provider submission also detailed action to successfully address lower levels of progression in some subject areas.

For part-time students, the indicator provided initial evidence of outstanding quality.

Considering all the evidence, the panel concluded that there are very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses.

Intended educational gains

The panel found this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The provider submission outlined its mission to 'create, share and apply knowledge to make a difference to individuals and society' along with its strategy to 'engage every student in a life-changing experience'. It defined educational gain as 'the distance travelled or the improvement in knowledge, skills, work-readiness and personal development demonstrated by students at two points in time'.

The submission included evidence that effective approaches are tailored throughout the student lifecycle to ensure every student has the opportunity for educational gain by improving subject knowledge, soft skills, personal skills and cultural competencies.

It also detailed tailoring of the provider's approach to meet the needs of each student, including at the transition into higher education, and throughout the course, within and beyond the curriculum.

The panel considered there was sufficient evidence 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 found this to be a very high quality feature.

The provider submission detailed that it embeds support for progression to professional employment or further study across the institution and its courses. It also described a 'seven steps to success' professional development programme, which is tailor-made for each disciplinary area, and includes co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

The panel considered there was sufficient evidence to conclude that the provider effectively supports its students to achieve the intended educational gains.

Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

The panel found there was insufficient evidence that this is an outstanding or very high quality feature.

The panel considered that the provider defines the educational gains it wants for its students, and supports them to attain these gains with personalised approaches, but found insufficient evidence that the provider evaluates the gains made by its students.

Overall: Gold

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

The panel considered the student experience aspect rating to be 'Gold' and the student outcomes aspect rating to be 'Silver'.

The panel weighted these two aspects equally and considered all the evidence across all 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 determining whether the overall rating should be 'Gold' or 'Silver', the panel considered all the evidence across all the features, and noted that:

- while it considered most student outcomes features to be very high quality for all groups of students, there are some outstanding quality student outcomes features
- the provider presented compelling evidence to show that its approaches are embedded across the university
- the provider presented evidence demonstrating that it tailors its approaches to its students, including to the significant proportion of students who have multiple attributes of intersectional disadvantage.