



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

Loughborough College

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Silver

Typically, the experience students have at Loughborough College and the outcomes it leads to are very high quality.

Student experience: Gold

The student academic experience is typically outstanding.

Outstanding quality features include:

- a holistic approach to supporting and engaging students, actively tailoring teaching and assessments to students' needs
- course content and delivery that inspires students to actively engage in and commit to their learning
- outstanding support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice
- a supportive learning environment, and outstanding quality academic support tailored to student needs.

There are also some very high quality features including:

- using research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement to successfully inform curriculum delivery and support a very high quality academic experience
- learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning
- engaging with students, leading to continuous improvement to their experiences and outcomes.

Student outcomes: Silver

Student outcomes are typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- effectively supporting students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- a clear statement of educational objectives that is embedded in all activities
- effectively supporting students to achieve educational gains
- evaluation of educational gains that is evidence based and tailored to students.

There is also an outstanding quality feature:

- outstanding rates of successful progression for students and courses.

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

Loughborough College's mission is to be recognised as the region's higher education college of choice for 'flexible, career enhancing education and training; providing a first class, supportive undergraduate learning community, which effectively meets the needs of students and employers, while producing employable graduates'. It also aims to 'widen participation and support students to realise their full potential, enhancing social mobility and making degree level study available to all'.

The provider is co-located with Loughborough University and its students benefit from being members of a joint university-college student union and having access to a wider range of facilities than is typical in the sector.

Loughborough College is a large further education college with around 10,000 students overall. Within this it has substantial higher education provision of 1,200 students (in 2020-21) studying a diverse range of subjects. Around 800 are campus-based students taught on a full or part-time basis.

Most of the provider's full-time students study sports and exercise science. The majority are under 21 years, were not local before entering the college, and report no disability. By contrast, most part-time students are aged 21 years and over and were local prior to studying there.

The assessment considered information about the provider's undergraduate courses and students on those courses. Although apprenticeships were discussed in parts of the provider submission, it did not give sufficient detail for the panel to make judgements and so these were deemed to be beyond the scope of 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: 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.

Looking at all the evidence available the panel found the student experience is typically outstanding quality, with the provider incorporating highly effective approaches tailored to its students.

Across the student experience aspect, the panel found:

- four outstanding features
- three very high quality features
- the outstanding and very high quality features apply to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

The panel applied the criteria and considered that the rating with the best fit is 'Gold'. This is because most features are typically 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 features to be outstanding.

The indicators showed:

- for full-time students there was initial evidence of very high quality 'teaching on my course'; and 'assessment and feedback'
- for part-time students there was evidence of outstanding quality 'teaching on my course'; and 'assessment and feedback', but only the earliest year has enough data to be reported
- there is a notable gender split, with male students' indicators less favourable than female students'.

The provider and student submissions show evidence of outstanding quality features, for example:

- a holistic and institution-wide approach to supporting and engaging students, actively tailoring teaching and assessments to students' needs
- survey results in both submissions showing high student satisfaction in teaching, feedback, and assessment practices, which exceed national averages. Positive results from interval surveys were cited, although the panel noted that the response rates were not made clear
- staff who are experienced in relevant industries enrich student learning, while digital learning specialists support digital literacy

- students appreciate the positive relationship with lecturers, small class sizes, and varied teaching methods which utilise technology
- varied assessment methods, academic tutors, and one-to-one support contribute to a positive learning experience.

Notwithstanding slightly reduced levels of confidence in the internal survey data provided, the panel considered 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. It also concluded that 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 feature to be very high quality.

The provider and student submissions outline evidence of:

- highly qualified staff who actively engage in research and scholarship
- staff are encouraged to focus on research activity related to teaching and learning through the Loughborough College Research Network
- students are funded to attend academic conferences and present their own research
- the provider organises an annual research conference for staff and students to engage with and present research
- staff use various methods to engage with employers and the wider academic community

While there is less strong evidence of the extent to which these practices are fully evidence-based and their impacts assessed, the panel considered the provider's practices successfully inform the curriculum. Overall the panel concluded that the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience for its students.

Staff professional development and academic practice

The panel found this feature to be outstanding.

The provider submission outlines evidence of:

- all of the provider's higher education teaching staff hold a teaching qualification or are being supported towards achieving one
- a teaching excellence programme facilitates sharing of best practices and engagement in external events for staff

- new staff receive a reduced teaching load to allow them to develop teaching strategies, along with a personal induction plan and regular reviews, and are encouraged to complete an academic practice apprenticeship
- staff are funded for postgraduate qualifications, with some involving research and publishing academic journals through the Loughborough College Research Network
- staff are required to hold qualifications one level above the programmes they teach, and are supported with funding and time to achieve academic and professional qualifications.

The student submission supports the provider's submission, praising the knowledgeable and engaging teaching staff who can translate theory into practice and demonstrate in depth industry knowledge. Taking this into consideration, the panel concluded that there is outstanding support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is embedded across the provider.

Learning environment and academic support

The panel found this feature to be outstanding quality.

The indicator shows:

- strong initial evidence that 'academic support' is either very high quality or outstanding for full-time students, although the data could not provide certainty
- compelling initial evidence that 'academic support' is outstanding for part-time students.

The provider and student submissions show evidence of:

- regular positive engagement with students, such as being welcomed by the principal at every induction session, and by senior staff each morning
- a free food provision for breakfast and lunch for all staff and students
- therapy dogs available for students and staff
- a personalised induction programme including staff introductions, facility tours, library information and meetings with existing students.

The student submission reports positive experiences with academic support, including good communication, responsiveness, and approachability of lecturers. 89 per cent of students say they know about the support available at the provider.

Considering the indicator data and the evidence in the submissions, the panel concluded that the provider ensures a supportive learning environment, and its 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 feature to be very high quality.

The 'learning and resources' indicator shows initial evidence of:

- either very high quality or below very high quality for full-time students, although the data could not provide certainty and there is variation across some student groups
- either very high quality or outstanding quality for part-time students. The data could not provide certainty but offers very strong initial evidence of at least a very high quality feature.

The provider and student submissions added evidence of very high quality, for example:

- committing to a major investment in the provider's estate, with 40 per cent of this investment being used to improve its higher education services
- focusing on electronic resources following student feedback resulting in resources such as self-service laptops, computer suites, and access to e-books and learning journals
- fitting classroom technology during coronavirus which allowed isolating students to participate in lectures
- investing in specialist industry facilities, such as golf simulator, sports therapy laboratories, with further investment due for engineering and digital subjects
- positive feedback from students on the quality of learning resources.

While the panel did not find sufficient evidence to judge this feature to be outstanding, it did conclude that physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning for almost all groups of students.

Student engagement in improvement

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The 'student voice' indicator shows initial evidence of:

- either very high quality or below very high quality for full-time students, although the data could not provide certainty
- outstanding quality for part-time students.

The provider and student submissions add evidence of a very high quality feature including:

- student feedback that shows they feel actively engaged at all levels in the provider's processes, describing frequent opportunities to feedback and approachable lecturers and course leaders
- each curriculum area holding student representative meetings and college wide forums, feeding back to students through a regular newsletter
- offering students the chance to give feedback at the highest levels. This includes at regular meetings with the vice principal for learner experience, and on governance with two students sitting on the academic board

- involving students in course design discussions with staff and employers
- each curriculum team having a social media presence to engage with students
- course leaders sending weekly emails informing students of opportunities and assessments and there are monthly department wide newsletters updating students and staff
- informal meetings and drop in sessions with lecturers as well as academic tutor support, in group and one-to-one sessions for support with welfare and study skills.

The submissions detail how student views have resulted in significant changes including additional electronic resources, more computers for temporary loan, and introducing additional optional modules in the second and third years of study.

Taking all the evidence into account, the panel considered that the provider embeds engagement with its students, leading to continuous improvement 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, including those from underrepresented groups which form a majority of the provider's students.

Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- most features are very high quality
- one outstanding feature
- one feature with insufficient evidence of very high quality.

The panel applied the criteria and considered that the rating with the best fit is 'Silver'. This is because most features are very high quality for almost all groups of students.

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

Approaches to supporting student success

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The provider submission describes its wide range of highly effective approaches to supporting students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies. This includes:

- an approach to academic support that is designed to stretch students, including dedicated academic tutors to assist with study and academic skills
- monitoring student attendance and engagement to offer early assistance when needed
- future goals are considered, with support provided for students who are seeking employment and placements
- a software package that helps students with CVs, covering letters, interviews and placements
- students in need of additional support receive personalised communication, while academic tutors provide additional study skills and monitor their progress
- 60 per cent of students who are identified for early intervention reengage with their studies.

The student submission praises the provider's activities and commends the level of support it offers. Students feel the skills they are developing are relevant for employment. It also highlights support for mental health, wellbeing and welfare, mental health first aiders, a college counsellor, therapy dogs, and online support.

While the panel noted it is not entirely clear to what extent it can be proven that these activities ensure its students succeed in and progress beyond their studies, the panel considered that the available statistical data suggests that it is largely successful. Therefore, overall the panel found that the provider effectively supports its students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies.

Continuation and completion rates

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

The indicators show:

- a declining trend in continuation and completion rates over the last three years for full-time students, with the last year falling below very high quality
- very high quality continuation rates for part-time students, but for a much smaller student body.

After looking at further evidence from the provider submission, the panel considered the evidence in the round and judged that:

- the indicators show overall continuation rates are below very high quality
- there is not enough further evidence in the submissions to demonstrate that continuation is very high quality
- while there is evidence of completion being very high quality for the first three years covered by this assessment, there was a sharp fall in the final year

- there are several significantly sized student groups whose completion is below very high quality
- despite the provider taking some credible steps to address completion issues, there is not enough evidence to demonstrate that completion is currently very high quality.

Taking all the evidence into account, the panel concluded that there was not enough evidence of continuation and completion to rate this feature very high quality and therefore no rating is awarded.

Progression rates

The panel considered this an outstanding quality feature.

The indicator shows compelling initial evidence that 'progression' is very high quality for both full-time students and part-time students.

The provider submission gives evidence of ensuring outstanding rates of progression, including:

- strong performance in multiple initiatives supporting vocational skills and employability
- establishing collaborative partnerships to address regional and national skills priorities
- a dedicated student development week focuses on vocational skills and academic achievement
- guest speakers and employer engagement opportunities inspire and inform students about work and postgraduate study
- local employers assist in assessing candidates, leading to placement and internship offers for students
- running an employer forum and regular meetings with businesses for networking and placement opportunities.

The student submission positively describes a curriculum that embeds enterprise and employability modules preparing students for successful career applications and recruitment.

On considering the balance of evidence, the panel assessed the provider's performance positively and placed weight on the provider's clear and pro-active approach to dealing with its recognised issues. Overall the panel found that there are outstanding rates of successful progression for almost all the provider's students.

Intended educational gains

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The panel noted the provider has a clear statement of its educational objectives, principally being to improve its students' employment prospects, and that this is clearly embedded in all activities.

The provider submission describes its approach to supporting the educational gains it wants students to achieve. This includes:

- presenting intended educational gains to students in each assessment brief, along with the key employability skills being developed
- the design of modules shows how knowledge and skills are developed through varied assessments
- gains are articulated in promotional activity and guidance for prospective students.

Taken as a whole, the panel found that the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students.

Approaches to supporting educational gains

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The provider demonstrates its commitment to supporting students' educational gains which include:

- business, enterprise, employability and placements that feed into the mission for educational gains
- mid-year examinations boards and skills audits which evaluate progression against the intended gains
- student awards which recognise students for high achievement, raising their aspirations and promoting positive career development choices
- success stories are publicised directly to students through a role model campaign.

Overall the panel found the evidence made it clear that the provider effectively supports its students to achieve these gains.

Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The panel noted that the provider submission highlights how it measures and evaluates educational gains. This includes:

- offering tiered qualifications with flexible entry and exit points, giving employers the ability to tailor education for specific career progression paths
- analysing graduate outcomes data and reflecting on the findings
- monitoring the uptake and achievement of students in vocational qualifications
- recording the intended destinations of students when they graduate.

The panel considered that the provider's approaches are evidence based, highly effective and tailored to its students and their different starting points. Overall the panel found it clear that the provider evaluates the gains made by its students.

Overall: Silver

Based on the guidance and the expert judgement of panel members, the panel found the 'best fit' rating to be 'Silver'.

The panel considered student experience features to be 'Gold'; and student outcomes features to be 'Silver', and gave equal weight to both. It carefully examined the evidence across all features, student groups, subjects, and courses.

The panel found the evidence showed typically very high quality provision for all groups of students and courses. In judging 'Silver' to be a better fit than 'Gold' the panel noted:

- while most student experience features were outstanding quality for all groups of students, three features were rated very high quality
- only one feature of student outcomes was outstanding quality, while one did not have enough evidence of very high quality.

Overall the panel found there is typically very high quality rather than outstanding provision for most groups of students and courses.