



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

## **Summary TEF 2023 panel statement**

**Moorlands College**

# Summary of outcomes

## Overall: Silver

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

### Student experience: Silver

The student academic experience is typically very high quality:

Very high quality features include:

- a holistic and active approach toward teaching, assessment and feedback with the aim of training for professional practice
- integration of research and scholarship into teaching, including professional practice
- support for staff development
- learning resources that are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning.

There are also some outstanding features:

- a strong combination of academic and pastoral support, with a supportive learning environment with access to a range of readily available, tailored support
- a range of student voice measures, such as the internal surveys, and a clear system and range of student representation, including on committees, programme boards and the board of trustees, as well as governance and management committees.

### 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
- a strong sense of learning community, which underpins consistent very high rates of continuation and completion
- effective support for students to achieve intended educational gains.

There are also some outstanding features including:

- well defined educational gains, with a clear link to academic support
- student progression rates, specifically in year 1 and year 3.

# 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. The indicators are 'benchmarked' to show how well the provider performs for its particular mix of students and courses
- a submission made by the provider, setting out its own evidence
- a submission made by the provider's students, setting out students' views (though the panel noted the brevity of the student submission, and that it draws on comments of only five students. The panel was therefore not confident this was fully representative of the views of students across the provider. The panel also noted that remarks in the student submission largely corroborate those in the provider submission.)

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

Moorlands College is a small specialist college with a mission to ‘develop people for or in Christian ministry and other, similar, social-service related roles’.

It had around 170 full-time, mostly undergraduate, students and 110 part-time postgraduate students in 2020-21. It has a high proportion of mature entrants and only five per cent of its undergraduate students have previous degrees.

The provider offers undergraduate programmes in Applied Theology as well as postgraduate programmes in other related subjects. It has a number of regional centres for delivery and has developed a new hybrid mode of delivery.

Around half of students are below 21 years of age on entry. Around a third report a disability, and almost ninety per cent don’t live locally prior to entry.

The assessment considered information about the provider’s undergraduate courses and students on those courses, and has taken account of students’ strong focus on ministry as a graduate destination.

Full details about the provider’s student demographics used in the TEF 2023 assessment are available at <https://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/](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/).

## **Student experience: Silver**

Throughout this section, we refer to indicators. These indicators are based on students' responses to the National Student Survey. The indicators are 'benchmarked' to show how well the provider performs for its particular mix of students and courses.

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

- most features are very high quality
- two outstanding quality features.

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 all groups of students and courses.

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

### **Teaching, assessment, and feedback**

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The indicators showed:

- for full-time students there is compelling evidence of very high quality 'teaching on my course', and for 'assessment and feedback' there is initial evidence of outstanding quality
- no data was available for part-time students
- the panel found overall that the indicators provide initial evidence of outstanding quality.

The provider submission gives evidence of a very high quality feature, for example:

- high levels of student attendance at 97 per cent
- a periodic review report which indicates 'consistently high quality of learning and teaching.'
- high levels of satisfaction with the quality of learning, delivery and high levels of response to internal surveys
- external examiner comments regarding the diverse methods of feedback text, the use of full range of marks and an observation that teaching is well organised.

The student submission is brief and commends content and expert lecturers. It does note some contradictions between lecturers in assessment feedback. While attendance and survey response rates are strong, the panel did not view these as persuasive evidence of outstanding quality in themselves.

Overall whilst the panel found evidence of outstanding quality in the indicators, it did not find persuasive evidence of outstanding quality in the written submissions. The panel found sufficient evidence to demonstrate very high quality teaching, assessment and feedback.

## **Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch**

The panel considered there to be limited evidence of a very high quality feature.

The panel noted from provider and student submissions that the strongly vocational focus of the course effectively encourages students to engage in their learning and stretches them to develop their knowledge and skills.

The student submission describes strong connections between theory and practice that help identify the application of knowledge that equips for ministry and commends the notion that the provider 'invests in the person as an individual as well as a student looking to get high grades'.

However there is limited discussion of course content and methods of delivery, or how these are tailored to the needs of students and therefore the panel concluded there is insufficient evidence to judge that this is a very high quality feature.

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

The panel considered there to be evidence of very high quality in relation to this feature.

The provider submission provides evidence that this is a very high quality feature, including:

- 31 per cent of staff have doctorates and 62 per cent have other higher degrees
- annual review processes require demonstration of the impact of scholarly activity on teaching with 10 per cent of teaching staff time dedicated to scholarly activity
- teaching is often underpinned by professional experience of ministry
- programme periodic review processes ensure vocational perspective is considered in course design.

The student submission expresses positive views of the impact of staff time for scholarly activity on the quality of teaching.

The evidence indicates very high quality integration of research and scholarship into teaching, as well as clear general evidence of the integration of professional practice throughout the curriculum, although the submissions do not provide evidence of the impact.

Overall the panel considered this to be limited evidence 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 considered there to be evidence of very high quality practices in relation to this feature.

Evidence in the provider submission includes the following:

- outstanding indicators for teaching and assessment and feedback, which are claimed to be underpinned by investment in academic support

- an induction process in which annual reports on new academic induction are received by academic quality committees
- a tri-annual scholarly session
- a peer-based system of formalised developmental sharing of good practice
- the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA HER) corroborates the above
- individual staff development needs are addressed in annual reviews for staff
- support for staff to seek Higher Education Academy (HEA) fellowship.

The provider does not indicate whether the 'tri-annual scholarly sessions' for staff have a focus on pedagogy, learning or teaching, and does not give examples of these events or evidence of their impact.

The percentage of staff recognised as fellows or above of the HEA or holding other learning and teaching qualifications was not provided. Discussion of this feature is relatively limited and names common good practice without identifying impact.

Nonetheless, the integration of scholarly practice and the investment of time in such are features of very high quality for the size and type of provider.

## **Learning environment and academic support**

The panel considered there to be evidence of outstanding quality in relation to this feature.

Overall, the 'academic support' indicator provides compelling statistical evidence of outstanding academic support for full-time students, with no data available for part-time students.

The provider submission provides further evidence of an outstanding feature, including:

- a personal tutoring scheme
- a Student Welfare Department offering tailored support, with policies and a committee in place to ensure a consistently high level of engagement in holistic tutorial support
- academic 1:1 sessions for students achieving below 50 marks in assessments
- the QAA HER commented on the 'multi-layered support structures which enable students to develop fully their academic, personal and professional potential.'

The student submission commented positively on the responsiveness of lecturers and notes that students with disabilities feel that 'their disabilities have been effectively accommodated for all assessment types'.

The student submission also details differing areas of support which are available to them, for example, financial, placement support, and assignment support. Students also reference the holistic development which is reflected in their overall experience.

The panel concluded that there is a strong combination of academic support with pastoral and spiritual formation – noted as ‘holistic development’ - typical for the type of specialist provider. The submissions include evidence 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.

Considering all the evidence, the panel considered there is sufficient evidence to suggest an outstanding quality feature.

## **Learning resources**

The panel considered there to be evidence of very high quality in relation to this feature.

The indicators provide initial evidence of at least very high quality ‘learning resources’ with some upwards leaning toward outstanding quality for some groups of students. There is no data available for part-time students.

The panel considered whether this feature could be outstanding, but found that there is insufficient detail or discussion of impact in the submissions to supplement the initial indicators.

The provider submission:

- uses student feedback to explain variations in learning resource, including the enhanced online resources provided temporarily in 2021 during coronavirus
- identifies improvements in the functionality of search facilities on the library catalogue
- quotes external examiner remarks that resources ‘are presented in a systematic and accessible way’
- does not mention IT resources, beyond routine use of VLE – though it notes a commitment to use the VLE a collaborative space, which reflects good practice if actualised.

The student submission comments that students who have registered disabilities welcome the increased accessibility of online resources during the pandemic. The panel noted that this refers to resources the provider submission notes have since been withdrawn and so overall considers this to be a very high quality feature.

## **Student engagement in improvement**

The panel considered there to be evidence of outstanding practices in relation to this feature.

For full-time students, there is compelling statistical evidence of outstanding student voice, with no data available for part-time students.

The provider submission provides evidence including:

- a range of student voice measures, such as the internal surveys
- a clear system of student representation on committees, including the programme boards and the board of trustees as well as governance and management committees



- a claim that the comparatively high participation rate in National Student Survey core and optional questions and in the Graduate Outcomes survey indicates ‘an outstanding sense of [students’] commitment to and engagement with their studies.’

The student submission notes that the provider values student suggestions and comments. It provides an example of the provider’s creating ‘discipleship groups’ in September 2022 alongside tutorial groups, although the activity falls outside of the TEF window under consideration. As such the example could not be accorded great weight, but served to corroborate the quality indicated in the submissions and indicators.

Overall the panel considers this to be sufficient evidence of outstanding quality in the feature. The provider adopts a systematic approach to gathering and responding to student feedback. The student and provider submissions demonstrate a genuine commitment to student voice through well-established and meaningful practice. This leads to continuous improvement to the experience and outcomes of the provider’s 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 the student outcomes are typically very high quality, with some outstanding quality features. Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- three features to be very high quality, with one of these displaying elements of outstanding quality
- two outstanding quality features.

The panel applied the aspect ratings criteria and considered the best fit rating to be ‘Silver’. This is because all features are at least very high quality for all groups of students and courses. Some features are outstanding.

The panel did not think that ‘Gold’ would be the best fit because the evidence demonstrates that ‘some’ rather than ‘most’ of the student outcomes features are of outstanding quality.

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

## **Approaches to supporting student success**

The panel concluded that this was a very high quality feature.

The provider submission provides evidence including:

- a strong sense of learning community is claimed to underpin continuation and completion

- supplementary NSS questions regarding personal development and employability that demonstrate outstanding levels of development.
- the inclusion of practice placements positively commented on by external examiners
- the action taken following a dip in data in 2017-18 to improve progression
- assessments which reflect workplace needs
- QAA review panel comments remarking on the careful integration of ‘theory and practice which enables students and graduates to apply their learning successfully.’

The student submission notes the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on availability of placements. No mitigations are described, but the student submission notes the college’s commitment to its students in this regard. The student submission commends the use of alumni as guest speakers and the availability of field trips to relevant workplaces.

The panel noted a stronger and more extensive description throughout the provider submission of how the college supports student progression and educational gain, rather than continuation or completion.

Considering all the evidence, the panel concluded that there is very high quality in relation to this feature, with an outstanding level of support for progression.

### **Continuation and completion rates**

The panel concluded that this was a very high quality feature with some evidence of outstanding practice.

‘Continuation’ indicators for full-time students are typically very high quality, although the provider’s performance is not as strong for female students, or for students who report a disability.

There is some evidence of outstanding continuation for some but not all of the provider’s students. There is statistical evidence of at least very high quality continuation across the provider’s mix of students and courses.

As above there is some variability among splits for ‘completion’ indicators with female students demonstrating higher completion rates. There is no data available for part-time students.

The provider does not comment specifically on the causes of the dissonance between female and male continuation or completion, or that between students who do or do not report a disability, nor does it describe action to address these. In spite of this, the panel considers that the indicators provide sufficient evidence of at least very high quality continuation and completion for all of the provider’s students, and concludes that this is a very high quality feature.

### **Progression rates**

The panel considered this feature to be of outstanding quality.

The indicators provide strong statistical evidence of outstanding ‘progression’ overall.

The panel considered that the outstanding performance for student progression arises from the vocational nature of courses and strong focus on placement. The entirety of the course and student experience is clearly and deliberately aligned to strong progression outcomes.

These outstanding progression indicators are supported by the provider's ethos and curriculum oriented to the anticipated professional progression of students. The panel concluded that there are outstanding rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses.

### **Intended educational gains.**

The panel considered this feature to be of outstanding quality.

The provider submission articulates a clear link between educational gain and its academic support. Educational gain is understood as 'preparation of students for professional futures'. This demonstrates consistency between ethos, vision and mission and outcomes. Alongside this it articulates the personal growth students experience.

Overall the panel considers there is sufficient evidence of outstanding quality in relation to this feature. The provider clearly articulates the range of educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are highly relevant to its students and their future ambitions.

### **Approaches to supporting educational gains**

The panel considered that this was a very high quality feature.

The provider's evidence includes:

- quotations from programme review reports which recognises 'multi-layered support structures'
- extensive quotations from external examiners, including commending the management of placements during the pandemic.

The student submission does not use the terminology of 'educational gain' and contains only brief and generic affirmations of the gains achieved. There is little evidence from students' perspectives of the impact of the support described.

Overall, the panel concluded that there is sufficient evidence of very high quality in relation to this feature. There is sufficient evidence that the provider supports its students to achieve these gains, though it does not articulate how these are evidence-based, highly effective or tailored to its students and their different starting points.

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

The panel concluded that there is limited evidence of very high quality in this feature.

The provider gives a brief and general description of its focus of learning towards practice. It points to its outstanding progression data as an indicator of its achievement in relation to this feature. It also points to the National Student Survey and its internal survey to demonstrate that it monitors its students' holistic development. However, it does not articulate changes made on the basis of this

feedback or the other examples of continuous improvement explicitly aligned to its vision of educational gain.

While the provider indicates in general the sources of data that may enable it to evaluate the gains made by its students, it does not demonstrate fully that its students are succeeding in achieving the range of gains intended.

The panel noted the brevity of the discussion on this feature in the submission. There is some limited evidence of very high quality.

## **Overall: Silver**

Applying the guidance and the panel members' expert judgement, the panel considered the overall best fit rating to be 'Silver'. The panel weighted the two aspects equally and considered the student experience rating to be 'Silver' and the student outcomes rating to be 'Silver'.

Having considered all the evidence across all features, and across all the provider's student groups, subjects and courses, the panel recommend the 'best fit' for the overall rating is 'Silver'. This is because the student experience and student outcomes are typically very high quality, and there are some outstanding quality features.