



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

ACM Guildford Ltd

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Bronze

Typically, the experience students have at ACM Guildford Ltd and the outcomes it leads to are high quality, and there are some very high quality features.

Student experience: Requires improvement

Requires improvement to be awarded a TEF rating for this aspect.

There are no very high quality features.

The panel did not find any features of concern.

Student outcomes: Bronze

Student outcomes are typically high quality, and there are some very high quality features.

Very high quality features include:

- effective support for students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- very high rates of progression
- intended educational gains are clearly articulated and that the provider articulates why these gains are relevant to its 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 provider is a specialist music provider. The provider operates from locations in Guildford, London and Birmingham.

The provider has around 1,000 students, all of whom study full-time. The provider submission additionally refers to postgraduate courses and franchised provision.

The subject mix shows that the majority of students study performing arts, with a smaller provision in computing.

The student mix shows that the majority of students are UK domiciled. It also shows that the majority of students are male, under 21 years of age on entry and white. A relatively small proportion are from the most deprived areas.

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: Requires improvement

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.

Across the student experience aspect, the panel found no very high quality features.

The panel judged that there were no very high quality features for this aspect. Although the panel found some elements of practice that were positive and may lead to a very high quality assessment, there was generally not sufficient evidence about the effectiveness or impact of these practices to demonstrate very high quality features. The panel applied the criteria, and determined the outcome to be that the provider requires improvement for the award of a TEF rating.

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

Teaching, assessment, and feedback

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

The indicators provide evidence that:

- 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback' are not very high quality for full-time students
- the indicators are clearly below the level of very high quality and potentially of concern.

The provider evidence includes:

- class and group sizes are capped because of the intense, personalised support which is relevant to the industrial needs of the discipline
- all large group sessions at all three campuses are archived online
- the introduction of marking rubrics has been praised by an external examiner.

The student submission refers positively to a new course and to the interdisciplinary course structure, although the panel noted that this course started in 2022-23 so is outside the TEF assessment period.

The panel considered that there is limited evidence that the provider's approach is embedded or effective in supporting its students' learning, progression and attainment. The panel considered that the potential concerns arising from the indicators were alleviated by the evidence in the provider and student submissions.

Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch

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

The provider evidence includes:

- mid-module reviews, academic wellbeing temperature checks and reassessment bootcamps
- internal survey data which shows that course organisation has improved following actions including a governance review, a new educational leadership team and a digital learning team
- a broad curriculum is offered on the new interdisciplinary course and students can choose different pathways, although the panel noted that this course started in 2022-23 so is outside the TEF assessment period
- interdisciplinary termly projects, where students work collaboratively in a group
- all large group sessions/lectures delivered as online 'community sessions' across all three campuses.

However, the panel found there to be limited evidence of the impact of the practices listed.

The panel considered that there is limited evidence that the provider's course content and delivery effectively encourages its students to engage in learning and stretches students to develop knowledge and skills.

Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement

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

The provider evidence includes:

- industry professionals are engaged as tutors
- the provider is involved in a project to find creative uses for 5G networks
- the use of Metropolis Studios as an example of a professional environment which boosts student networking and work experience
- there is specialised delivery across the creative industries. This approach is also referred to in the student submission
- work previously associated with 'industry link' has been integrated across all programmes.

However, the panel found there to be limited evidence of the impact of the practices listed.

The panel considered that there was limited strong evidence of research, professional practice and/or employer engagement contributing to a very high quality academic experience for students and of professional practice being embedded in the provider's courses.

Staff professional development and academic practice

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

The provider evidence includes:

- most academic staff have been contracted rather than seasonal lecturers to improve the student experience and the quality of teaching.

The panel considered that there was minimal evidence of very high quality support for staff professional development and that excellent academic practice is promoted.

Learning environment and academic support

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

The indicators provide evidence that:

- ‘academic support’ is not very high quality for full-time students
- the indicators are clearly below the level of very high quality and potentially of concern.

The provider evidence includes:

- new support initiatives have been introduced as a result of the academic wellness temperature check. This includes short courses, personal tutors and mentors
- community sessions are used to build connections across campuses
- there is a campus manager, student support team, and facilities team on each campus as well as a team of programme administrators and a disability support assistant
- module evaluation data shows improvement in student satisfaction in 2021-22.

The provider submission also includes evidence of a tutor system introduced in 2022-23, which the panel considered to be outside the timeframe for this TEF assessment.

The student submission provides endorsement of student satisfaction with academic support.

The panel considered that there is insufficient evidence that the provider fosters a supportive learning environment and its students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support. The panel considered that the potential concerns arising from the indicators were alleviated by the evidence in the provider and student submissions.

Learning resources

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

The indicators provide evidence that:

- ‘learning resources’ is not very high quality for full-time students
- the indicators are clearly below the level of very high quality and potentially of concern.

The provider evidence includes:

- virtual library resources have been introduced to address disparities in access across campuses

- library functions have been brought in-house and new library spaces are being acquired or built on campuses where there is not sufficient space
- the 'campus in a box' initiative was introduced during the coronavirus pandemic and is now becoming standard practice
- OfS capital grant funding is being used to acquire more campus space, including an assisted learning technology library.

The panel considered that there was not strong evidence that physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning. The panel considered that the potential concerns arising from the indicators were alleviated by the evidence in the provider and student submissions.

Student engagement in improvement

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

The indicators provide evidence that:

- 'student voice' is not very high quality for full-time students
- the indicators are clearly below the level of very high quality and potentially of concern.

The provider evidence includes:

- student council and student representatives meetings
- module evaluation questionnaires
- mid module reviews
- opportunities for students to contribute to their academic experience through membership of the provider's committees and participation in activities to develop courses and their delivery.

The student submission endorses improvements made by the provider, including purchase of equipment requested by students, and also gives an example of how students' feedback impacted on availability of practice and studio spaces and the booking system.

The panel considered that there is insufficient evidence of very high quality. The panel considered that the potential concerns arising from the indicators were alleviated by the evidence in the provider and student submissions.

Student outcomes: Bronze

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.

Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- three very high quality features
- two features which did not reach the level of very high quality
- one feature where there is insufficient evidence to reach a view on its quality.

The panel applied the criteria and considered that the rating with the best fit is Bronze. This is because some features are very high quality for most groups of students, and the panel considered that there is evidence of typically high quality student outcomes with some very high quality features.

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

Approaches to supporting student success

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

The provider evidence includes:

- an approach to supporting students to progress beyond their studies, including embedding of 'industry link', diversification of the curriculum, access to networks in an enhanced studio culture and targeted short courses which support progression into industry
- collaborative projects which give external exposure and professional experience and work experience in the provider's two commercial creative industry entities
- a boot camp for reassessments, which is endorsed by the validating partner
- monitoring of attendance and students' activities on the VLE to identify students at risk of disengaging.

The panel considered that there is effective support for students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies.

Continuation and completion rates

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

The indicators provide evidence that:

- continuation is not very high quality for full-time students

- completion is very high quality for full-time students. There is evidence of outstanding quality for some groups of students, and also of provision below the level of very high quality for some groups of students.

The provider evidence includes:

- the introduction of equality impact assessments for all proposals made to the provider's academic board
- introduction of enhanced disability support provision.

The panel considered that this feature did not reach the level of very high quality, but there are some very high quality outcomes in relation to completion.

Progression rates

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

The indicators provide evidence that:

- progression is very high quality for full-time students
- there is evidence of outstanding quality progression for some groups of students.

The panel considered that there is sufficient evidence of very high quality for this feature.

Intended educational gains

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

The provider evidence includes:

- educational gain is defined as having exemplary creative skills and outstanding interpersonal skills
- the narrative around educational gain is at the core of the new interdisciplinary programme framework
- educational gain is embedded in a clearly scaffolded curriculum.

The panel considered that intended educational gains are clearly articulated and that the provider articulates why these gains are relevant to its students and their future ambitions. The panel considered that there are elements of outstanding in this very high quality feature.

Approaches to supporting educational gains

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

The provider evidence includes:

- creating 'industry link' as part of the core programme

- acquisition of a theatre and a recording studio
- description of the collaborative, specialist and professional work students undertake, which follow the articulation of educational gains the provider has articulated.

The panel considered that there is insufficient evidence of the effectiveness of supporting students to achieve the educational gains articulated by the provider, but did note some very high quality practices.

Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

The panel considered that there is insufficient evidence to reach a view on the quality of this feature. The panel noted the guidance states that a provider will not be prevented from being awarded higher TEF ratings solely based on an absence of developed educational gain measures. The panel treated this feature neutrally when weighing up the evidence across the aspect as a whole.

Overall: Bronze

The panel did not award a rating to the student experience aspect as there are no very high or outstanding quality features. The panel awarded a rating of 'Bronze' for the student outcomes aspect as there is evidence of typically high quality with some very high quality features.

The panel judged that the best fit overall rating is 'Bronze'. It judged that overall there are some features which are very high quality and that there are no features which are clearly below the level of very high quality or which are of concern.