



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

Nelson College London Limited

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Silver

Typically, the experience students have at Nelson College London Limited 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:

- teaching, assessment, and feedback practices that support students' learning, progression, and attainment
- a supportive learning environment, where students have access to a range of readily available services
- physical and virtual learning resources that are used effectively to support teaching and learning
- effective student engagement, leading to improvements to experience and outcomes.

Student outcomes: Bronze

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

Very high quality features include:

- significant evidence of support and personal development activities and a concerted endeavour to make a substantial impact on students achieving educational gains
- a variety of methods to evaluate the gains made by students.

There was one outstanding quality feature:

- outstanding rates of continuation and completion for the provider's 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

Nelson College London Limited is based in London and offers full-time courses, mainly at Level 4 and 5, with a small percentage of Level 6 programmes. The main subject area is Business and Management, with programmes that support those with career aims in the hospitality sector. The provider recorded significant growth in its provision over the four-year TEF period.

Programmes are designed and delivered to meet a high proportion of locally resident students, 66 per cent of whom are over 31 years old. The provider showed an understanding of the needs and interests of this particular student cohort.

A high percentage of students are from groups who traditionally have lower rates of participation in higher education and whose educational outcomes can be lower than comparative groups. There are comparable rates of Asian and black students, with 63 per cent of the population self-declaring as white. There is an equal mix of male and female students, with about seven per cent of students declaring a disability. More than 55 per cent begin their higher education studies with no prior entry qualification.

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: 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 all the provider's students.

Across the student experience aspect, the panel found:

- four features are very high quality
- there were three features found to be below the level of very high quality
- the 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 the best fit rating to be 'Silver'. This is because most features are very high quality for all groups of students and courses. A 'Bronze' rating was not considered appropriate for the student experience aspect, as 'most' features are very high quality rather than 'some', and these impact across all groups of students.

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

Teaching, assessment, and feedback

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

The indicators for 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback' provided initial evidence of outstanding quality for full-time students, including students from underrepresented groups.

Further evidence was included in the provider and student submissions, including:

- external examiner comments agreed that feedback is used to help students identify their strengths and how they can improve further
- students say that feedback 'is provided on a timely basis' and that lecturers 'are very well versed in their area of specialisation'
- examples of very high quality assessment and feedback practices, although there was less evidence of how these approaches are tailored for different student groups or subjects to meet the level of academic rigour required for each programme.

The panel found that the provider and student submissions supplemented the indicators by providing further evidence of how teaching, assessment and feedback are embedded to support learning and progression. However there was less evidence of how these are tailored to students or subjects. It therefore concluded that very high quality teaching, assessment, and feedback practices that support students' learning, progression, and attainment are found across the provider, and rated the feature as very high quality rather than outstanding.

Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch

The panel considered there was insufficient evidence of very high quality.

The provider submission describes some processes that seek to achieve this goal, however, at times there was insufficient explanation or detail of the level of engagement or impact of these approaches, to more deeply convey the educational impact these have on students.

The panel was rigorous in seeking compelling evidence that the provider designs and determines course content and delivery to encourage and stretch students to engage in their learning. However, overall the panel concluded that there was insufficient evidence that course content inspires or effectively engages students, while acknowledging the good practice reflective of the sector.

Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement

The panel found that there was insufficient evidence of very high quality.

The provider submission provides some evidence of a pro-active approach to research but is less clear how courses and students directly benefit. The submission only provides brief detail of how these activities act as catalysts for change, or enhance existing learning strategies and techniques. Thus, the panel considered that the contribution this makes to the overall academic experience was limited.

Overall, the panel concluded that the submissions did not provide compelling evidence that the provider uses research systematically across disciplines, although the panel did recognise that the provider has plans in place to strengthen this feature.

Staff professional development and academic practice

The panel considered that there was not enough evidence of very high quality, although there are some approaches where participation in continuing professional development is promoted.

There is evidence of how staff learn new skills on learning technologies and hone their teaching practice through regular staff development opportunities.

However, there was also less compelling evidence of how positive outcomes have increased as a result of targeted activity.

Overall, the panel concluded that the submissions did not provide sufficient evidence of innovative practice designed to promote excellence in academic practice.

Learning environment and academic support

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

The 'academic support' indicator provides initial evidence that this is outstanding for full-time students. This evidence applies to all groups of students, including students from under-represented groups.

The provider submission includes examples that a broad mix of interventions are provided including regular one-to-one tutorials offered by student support staff and lecturers, in elective class sessions and tutorial group sessions. The student submission echoes this and adds further depth and insight into how these services and facilities combine to a positive effect and foster a supportive learning environment.

The student submission commends the level of support offered at student inductions and also highlights the value of adapting terminology and language for the large groups of students who have English as a second language, and those from widening participation backgrounds.

In rating this feature the panel examined the completion rates where evidence suggests not all student groups benefitted from a wide and readily available range of outstanding academic services, tailored to each group, so that all complete equally.

Overall, the panel concluded that the submissions and indicators evidence very high quality practice that fosters a supportive learning environment, where students have access to a range of readily available services.

Learning resources

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

The indicator provides evidence of outstanding 'learning resources' for all full-time students, including those from under-represented groups.

The provider demonstrates evidence of wide-ranging virtual learning resources that are used effectively to support the very high quality teaching and learning. External validation reports in 2018 and 2021 are quoted as evidence of the quality of virtual and physical learning resources.

Termly and annual Virtual Learning Environment audits ensure resources are up to date, relevant and aid access. The provider's internal student feedback survey supports the National Student Survey results that learning facilities are very high quality.

The panel considered there to be less evidence of an outstanding feature, which would require the provider to demonstrate that physical learning resources are used to effectively support outstanding teaching and learning that stretches students to their fullest potential. Instead, the panel concluded that the submissions and indicators show that very high quality physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support teaching and learning.

Student engagement in improvement

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

The indicator provides evidence of outstanding 'student voice' for all full-time students, including those from underrepresented groups.

The provider submission describes how student voice is gathered through multi-faceted and diverse student engagement practices, including an annual Learning and Teaching Conference, coffee mornings and quarterly internal surveys.

While the submission describes the processes and stages, it offers less information on the specific improvements or responses that resulted and could support a judgement that engagement leads to continuous improvement to the experiences and outcomes of students. Therefore, the panel concluded that the submissions and indicators are evidence that the provider engages students in leading improvements to experience and outcomes, and that this is a very high quality feature.

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.

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

The panel found there to be insufficient evidence of typically very high quality student outcomes across the aspect as a whole.

Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- one feature is outstanding
- two features are very high quality
- there were three features with insufficient evidence of very high quality
- the very high quality and outstanding features did not apply to all the provider's groups of students.

The panel applied the criteria and considered the best fit rating to be 'Bronze'. This is because typically some features are very high quality for most groups of students and courses. The panel did not consider 'Silver' to be the best fit because only some features are very high quality and not for all groups of students and courses.

Approaches to supporting student success

The panel found insufficient evidence of very high quality.

The panel assessed the extent to which the provider effectively supports its students to succeed and progress beyond their studies. The panel considered the evidence from the indicators for 'continuation' and 'completion', as set out below, which shows that some groups that do not succeed as well as others.

There is less positive evidence of how the provider effectively supports students to progress, and in particular to graduate level positions. The submissions included some examples of best practice, including:

- regular progress and attendance monitoring and using supportive and motivational measures focused on the individual circumstances of learners, although no detail was

provided to show the extent of this or how many students had improved and returned to study

- positive comments from students about how the Employability and Entrepreneurship Forum ‘connects employers, entrepreneurs and students in a forum which allows students to learn about the different career paths.’

In spite of these examples, the panel considered that, overall, there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate the effective provision of support for all students to both succeed and progress beyond their studies.

Continuation and completion rates

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The indicators provide evidence of outstanding ‘continuation’ and ‘completion’ for most groups of students, including those from underrepresented groups, but not for all groups. The evidence suggests that ‘continuation’ and ‘completion’ is below the level of very high quality for several student groups. However, taking into consideration the small sizes of these groups, the panel interpreted that overall, the indicators gave initial evidence of an outstanding quality feature.

Overall, the panel concluded that the submissions and indicators evidence outstanding rates of continuation and completion for the provider’s students and courses, while noting the lower performance for some students.

Progression rates

The panel considered there was insufficient evidence of very high quality.

The ‘progression’ indicator provided compelling statistical evidence that the provider’s performance is below the level of very high quality for full-time students. There is little improvement over the time period nor variation between the different student groups.

The provider presents a series of counterpoints to the indicator evidence in its submission, as set out below:

- the data relates to a small cohort and the response rate to the Graduate Outcomes Survey is low
- the provider attributes low progression rates to the impact of coronavirus and the closure of hospitality businesses
- they also propose that the pursuit of higher education is not always for career purposes for their larger cohort of mature students.

The panel assessed these counterpoints, concluding that: there was limited alternative evidence of progression within the submission; that rates of progression remained below benchmark beyond Year 3 of the TEF period; and that there was no compelling evidence of how mature students progress towards the initial ambitions they began a higher education programme to achieve.

The panel considered the indicator evidence alongside the submission and found that the provider does not have very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses, and concluded there is insufficient evidence of a very high quality feature.

Intended educational gains

The panel considered there was insufficient evidence of very high quality.

The Nelson College London motto is 'Learning Brought to Life'. In the pursuit of this motto, the provider describes a range of educational gains, under a broad banner of 'vital employability and transferable skills to prepare students for employment or further education and training' it intends its students to develop. The panel found that these are not defined through a clear strategy that articulates the educational gains the provider intends all its students to achieve, but more often determined and described as inherent parts of the course or subject of study.

The panel noted that there are activities embedded through curriculum planning and induction that seek to develop the educational gains and students identify these in surveys and the student submission. However, there was less clarification why these gains are relevant to each set of individual student groups or courses. Therefore, the panel concluded that the submissions did not clearly articulate educational gains, nor the relevance of those to each course, in a compelling manner, and that there was insufficient evidence of very high quality.

Approaches to supporting educational gains

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

The provider submission sets out details of a range of activities and efforts to make a substantial impact on students achieving educational gains for this feature. For example:

- Hospitality students (a large proportion of the provider's students) have opportunity to acquire practical skills and experience through e-resources that are widely used across hotel chains
- students from both the provider's subjects (Hospitality and Business) make use of this online training. The success of this approach led to this being embedded into assessments. All students can complete the training to receive a certificate of recognition
- the provider embeds a work-based learning module into foundation programmes and offers advice on alternative routes for disabled students
- the provider uses links with industry to enhance course design in seeking to aid student progression. Other activities include the Employability and Entrepreneurship Forum, a pro-active careers service and a new entrepreneurship mentor scheme.

Overall, the panel concluded that the provider showed significant evidence of very high quality support and personal development activities.

Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

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

The provider submission describes a variety of methods adopted to evaluate the gains made by students. These include post-graduation surveys to examine how students have improved personal attributes over their course of study. The provider has begun to evaluate the gains made by its students and will continue to develop this approach to demonstrate how its students are succeeding in achieving educational gains in skills like improved communication, teamwork and planning. These include initial evaluations at the start of a programme and then exit interviews that measure skills again at the end. The student submission concludes that these features support “students’ individual needs”.

In one example, the provider demonstrates the impact of building students’ skills on the HND Business through an exit survey report, which resulted in 21 per cent improvement of various skills of students from the start to end of their course. This is not demonstrated across the range of all courses, which is why the panel did not consider this an outstanding quality feature. Overall, the panel concluded that while the provider evaluates the gains made by its students, it does not demonstrate its students are succeeding in achieving the intended gains. Therefore, it is a very high quality feature.

Overall: Silver

The panel considered the overall best fit rating to be ‘Silver’ because, across the available evidence, the student experience and student outcomes are typically of very high quality: the student experience aspect was rated ‘Silver’ and the student outcomes ‘Bronze’.

The panel considered the proportion of students from underrepresented groups relevant to this assessment, noting very high and outstanding quality for a number of underrepresented groups. The panel observed a difference in indicators for some student groups, such as first-degree students, but considered the smaller denominators and statistical variance for the overall rating.

The panel weighted the evidence that demonstrates that the very high quality features apply to most groups of students in student outcomes and all student groups for student experience.

When determining whether the overall rating should be ‘Bronze’ or ‘Silver’, the panel considered all the evidence across all the features and judged the evidence to show, on the whole, there to be typically very high quality provision for most groups of students and courses.