



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

## **Summary TEF 2023 panel statement**

**Norland College Limited**

# Summary of outcomes

## Overall: Gold

Typically, the experience students have at Norland College Limited and the outcomes it leads to are outstanding.

### Student experience: Gold

The student academic experience is typically outstanding.

Outstanding quality features include:

- outstanding quality teaching, assessment and feedback. The provider's practices are highly effective in supporting students' learning, progression and attainment
- course content and delivery effectively encourage students to actively engage in their learning and stretch them to develop their knowledge and skills to their fullest potential
- outstanding support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is embedded across the provider
- an integrated and personalised approach to ensuring students have access to outstanding academic support tailored to their needs
- the provider has an embedded approach to engagement with its students, leading to improvements to their experiences and outcomes.

There are also some very high quality features including:

- the use of professional practice and employer engagement to contribute to the academic experience
- learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning.

### Student outcomes: Gold

Student outcomes are typically outstanding.

Outstanding quality features include:

- the provider deploys and tailors approaches that are highly effective in ensuring its students succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- taken together, outstanding continuation and completion rates
- outstanding rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses
- a credible articulation of educational gains that is consistent with the provider's goals for its students
- the provider effectively supports its students to achieve these gains, with approaches that are tailored to students' different starting points.

# 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

Norland College Limited is a small specialist college providing a single full-time award: a BA Honours degree in Early Years Development and Learning, delivered from premises in Bath. In addition to the BA, the college offers a non-credit bearing Norland diploma complementary to and taught alongside the degree.

Following the three-year degree, students complete a year of paid and assessed employment as a newly qualified nanny to be awarded the diploma. The college was granted taught degree awarding powers (TDAP) in March 2019.

It sets out its mission to 'provide exceptional, bespoke and research-informed early years higher education, practical training and consultancy, and cultivate outstanding graduates with life-long career opportunities, professional support and continuous learning for all'. It describes itself as primarily a teaching-intensive institution. The college also operates an in-house employment agency to help its graduates and alumni find employment initially and throughout their working lives and to provide professional advice and guidance.

The college states it has a population of 265 undergraduate students, with an annual intake of around 100. Based on data for the four years of the TEF period in total, the demographics of the student body are: predominantly white, young (aged under 21 years) and female. A high proportion of students (32.3 per cent) report a disability, with cognitive or learning difficulties the largest category (23.2 per cent).

There are 26 full-time academic staff, including ten higher education teaching/management staff, four diploma lecturers, five placement staff, one teaching assistant and six academic support staff.

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/](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: 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 weighed up all the evidence as a whole and determined the student experience aspect rating to be 'Gold'.

The panel identified outstanding and very high quality features.

It found:

- five of the features to be outstanding quality
- two of the features to be very high quality
- no features clearly below the level of 'very high quality' or that may be of concern
- evidence of typically outstanding quality across the aspect as a whole.

The panel judged there to be compelling evidence that most of the features are outstanding for all students, although the panel noted that for students in one year the indicators were lower. The panel viewed this one year in the context of the time series as a whole, and in the context of all features. There are relatively few variations (and some gaps due to low numbers) in the indicator data given the single discipline and limited diversity across the student body.

The panel found the indicator evidence to be supplemented by further evidence of excellence in the provider and student submissions and the indicators contributed no more than half of the evidence of excellence for the student experience aspect.

The panel considered the best fit rating to be 'Gold', because most of the features are outstanding for 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 an outstanding quality feature.

The indicators provide evidence of outstanding quality for 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback' overall.

There is some variation in certain split indicators, but with limited certainty in the data. The provider submission addresses the year four performance in relation to the coronavirus pandemic.

Evidence in the provider and student submissions relating to this feature includes:

- a strategic approach to education drawing on professional needs and employer feedback and tailored to the development of relevant knowledge and skills

- robust quality processes that are endorsed by external examiners, supported by a quality innovation team made up of staff across the organisation
- the annual review of modules and assessments draw on feedback from staff, employers, placement providers and the agency team to update and enhance the curriculum
- an assessment and feedback policy, which includes an 'assessment scrutiny panel'
- a variety of teaching methods and activities which make use of a range of resources and learning environments.

The student submission endorses the quality of teaching and assessment, citing responses from the National Student Survey 2022, and in general the response by the college to coronavirus.

Overall, the panel considered that there is evidence of outstanding quality teaching, assessment and feedback. The provider's practices are highly effective in supporting students' learning, progression and attainment.

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

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

As well as the indicators relating to 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback' (as noted above), the panel considered evidence of excellence in the provider and student submissions about course content and delivery and student engagement in learning and stretch.

This evidence includes:

- an established and systematic approach to curriculum design
- the development of understanding and application of knowledge across the years of study, shown through the embedding of research ethics in modules at each level
- the design of the course, which provides a final period of eight weeks ('employment weeks') to prepare students for their first role
- a value-added programme of masterclasses, guest lectures and visits to complement the curriculum – although there is limited evidence on the uptake and impact of these activities
- the student submission includes evidence (from the National Student Survey 2022 responses) in relation to challenging and stimulating teaching and staff being good at explaining content and that learning is supported by personalised feedback
- a high level of support provided by teachers through small group teaching and personalised support inside and outside teaching time.

The evidence led the panel to conclude that course content and delivery effectively encourages students to actively engage in their learning and stretch them to develop their knowledge and skills to their fullest potential.

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

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

The provider submission states that the academic experience is enriched by research, scholarship, and practice. As a teaching intensive institution, the college aims to build a research and evidence-based culture, so that 'research and scholarship can be effectively used to contribute to students' academic experience as well as make a contribution to the field'.

Evidence in the provider submission includes:

- all academic staff have relevant prior experience of working in early years settings and regularly update their competence through shadowing early years practitioners, nannies, or early years teachers
- practical training and experiential learning is integrated throughout the course, and through extra classes, external speakers and masterclasses. However, there is limited evidence of the levels of engagement
- input from employers is used to enhance and influence provision
- the provider's strategy for research includes establishing a Norland Research Centre. The college has also launched its own research journal
- students can take part in a graduate research internship, which 'several' students have participated in
- there are opportunities to take part in an annual research conference for staff and students.

The student submission does not provide any additional evidence for this feature.

Overall, the panel found ample evidence of the use of professional practice and employer engagement to contribute to the academic experience, although less compelling evidence of research and scholarship being used to directly and positively impact the student experience. The panel therefore judged this a very high quality feature, rather than an outstanding feature.

## **Staff professional development and academic practice**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

Evidence for this in the submissions includes:

- staff in a range of full-time roles are employed by the college – these roles include teaching/management, lecturers, placement staff, a teaching assistant, and six academic support staff
- support is given for staff professional development to gain academic qualifications and take continuous professional development (CPD), with a spend of £100,500 over four years
- the provider's strategy to develop an active research environment and culture, which values and encourages staff to develop as researchers

- the overwhelming majority (80 per cent) of lecturers have a teaching qualification or Higher Education Academy (Advance HE) fellowship
- peer and management observations take place every year to support and share effective teaching
- as part of the college's ambition to raise the status of the nanny profession, in 2022 it established the Professional Association of Norlanders (PAN), which as a professional body provides a vehicle for graduates' ongoing CPD.

The panel concluded that the provider took a strategic approach to the professional development of its staff, providing outstanding support, including through the development of practice-led and professionally focused research, and ensuring excellent academic practice is embedded within the provider.

### **Learning environment and academic support**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

The overall indicator for academic support suggests some evidence of outstanding quality, which is consistent across almost all student groups. For year four the split indicator provides evidence of below very high quality, but the provider refers to the negative impact of the coronavirus pandemic, which it responded to through a 'comprehensive support package'. The panel also noted less strong performance for students with a reported disability, although there was limited certainty in the data.

The provider submission outlines its approach to academic support stating its aim to provide holistic support for its students, offering academic and unlimited pastoral support within a supportive community. Evidence relevant to this feature includes:

- a holistic and integrated approach to support involving student services and personal tutors. This is confirmed and endorsed by the student submission
- personalised support for transition for at risk students through a study skills programme
- initiatives such as the 'buddy volunteer' scheme for all new students, and peer support through Here to Hear, although there is no detail on uptake
- a learning environment which is supportive of minority groups, including the 'student jury' which is made up of students who represent minority groups, an anti-discrimination innovation team, and LGBTQUI+ society
- bursary support for certain demographic groups, with 18 per cent of students benefiting every year
- academic advice and guidance through the student services team, study skills masterclasses and drop-in sessions (for writing skills and referencing), and an academic reading group.



As such, the panel concluded that the evidence demonstrates an integrated and personalised approach to support, making sure that students have access to outstanding academic support tailored to their needs.

## **Learning resources**

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

The indicator for learning resources provides evidence of outstanding quality overall, with very high levels of certainty. This varies for some groups of students, though, where the results are less certain.

The provider submission sets out its claim that students on the programme have the resources, physical and digital, appropriate to their needs. Evidence for this includes:

- digital resources, including a virtual learning environment, a student dashboard with curricular and extracurricular information, and equipment such as computerised life size dolls and virtual babies
- specialist learning spaces such as a mock-up nursery to replicate real life situations and access to the surrounding natural environment to maximise learning
- library facilities (endorsed by the student submission) with physical and digital resources, offering support sessions and guidance
- the student submission refers to the live streaming of lectures during the coronavirus pandemic, although there is no reference to teaching modifications during this time in the provider submission.

Overall, the panel considered that there was sufficient evidence that learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning. There is, however, insufficient information to indicate that the provider made effective use of resources over the full TEF period, in particular, how resources were effectively deployed during the extended period of the coronavirus pandemic. This meant that it was rated a very high quality feature, rather than outstanding.

## **Student engagement in improvement**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The indicator for 'student voice' provides compelling evidence of outstanding quality overall. This is consistent across all student groups, except for year four where the indicator performance is less strong, although with limited certainty in the data.

Evidence in the provider and student submissions includes:

- a strategic approach to partnership and engagement set out in a student engagement policy
- an embedded approach to the 'student voice', through a variety of feedback mechanisms

- a scheme providing funding and support for student chosen activities, although specific examples of uptake and impact are not given
- the introduction of the 'student jury' to consider the impact of changes on minority groups
- examples of student feedback being used to inform practice and lead to enhancement, including in relation to timetabling changes and support for assessment. This is endorsed by the student submission.

The panel judged there to be sufficient evidence of the provider having an embedded approach to engagement with its students, leading to improvements to their experiences and outcomes.

## **Student outcomes: Gold**

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 determined the student outcomes aspect rating to be 'Gold'.

As above, in accordance with the guidance, the TEF panel considered all the evidence available in the submissions and the indicators and weighed up this evidence to identify very high quality and outstanding quality features.

The panel found:

- all features to be outstanding quality except one, which the panel found did not provide sufficient evidence of 'very high quality'
- evidence of typically outstanding quality student outcomes across the aspect as a whole
- compelling evidence that the features apply to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

The provider submission presents a clear explanation for its performance in the progression indicator, in that the role of 'nanny' is classified in Standard Occupational Coding as level 6 (not a graduate level job). Alternative evidence is provided of successful progression to employment. As a result, weight has not been placed on the progression indicator.

The panel also noted that a provider will not be prevented from being awarded higher TEF ratings solely on the basis of an absence of developed educational gains measures.

Considering the evidence holistically and the provider mission and purpose, the panel considered the best fit rating to be 'Gold', because most features are typically outstanding 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 considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The provider submission articulates its approach to ensuring students succeed in and progress beyond their students. Evidence includes:

- the in-house employment agency which makes sure that its students are employed once they have left, with 100 per cent of students fulfilling their career intentions
- bespoke advice, support and guidance for graduates and alumni around securing employment and ongoing professional development
- preparation for employment is fully integrated into the degree, for example through placement, curricular, and co-curricular opportunities
- the integration of a diploma to make sure additional skills for employment are developed through paid employment as a nanny
- the personalised approach to tracking and supporting completion, attendance, and engagement
- the provider submission notes the need to support continuation, particularly for those with BTECs and other vocational qualifications, and that this is provided through transition support.

Overall, the panel found evidence 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 indicator for continuation provides evidence overall of very high or outstanding quality. There is some variation across student groups.

The indicator for completion provides evidence overall of outstanding quality. This is consistent across all groups of students, albeit with varying levels of certainty in the data.

The panel concluded that the continuation and completion rates taken together were sufficient evidence of an outstanding quality feature.

## **Progression rates**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

The indicator overall for progression provides initial evidence of below very high quality for all students, with 100 per cent certainty. However, the provider submission states that this is wholly explained by the categorisation of jobs, because the role of 'nanny' is classified in Standard Occupational Coding as 'not a graduate level job'.

The provider recognises that the role of nanny often does not require degree-level qualifications, and no necessary qualification in some cases, but that it is providing degree level education and training according to its taught degree-awarding powers.

The provider submission states that every graduate who chooses to be, is employed and that currently the ratio of graduates to available jobs on the in-house employment agency is 1:8. The provider shows that graduates on average command high salaries.

The provider's approach to helping students to progress to employment and continue in employment through career-long engagement with the in-house agency has already been outlined above in 'approaches to supporting student success'. On balance, the panel considered there was sufficient evidence to judge this an outstanding feature.

### **Intended educational gains**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

The provider submission defines educational gains as the advantages gained by their students in terms of skills, knowledge and career prospects through studying for the degree, but also through the non-credit bearing diploma that prepares the graduates directly for employment and beyond.

Through this provision, students increase their skills and competencies relevant to the nanny profession, supporting their career prospects. The provider is clear about the gains students will make, and these gains are integrated and embedded within the students' experience.

While there are no external set standard skillsets for nannies, the provider recognises the key skills it expects graduates to have through its 'code of professional responsibilities'.

The panel considered that the provider presents a credible articulation of educational gains and that these gains are consistent with the institution's goals for its students. These intended gains are highly relevant to the provider's students and their future ambitions and reflect the provider's understanding of its students' needs. The panel considers that this is an outstanding feature.

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

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

Through their degree studies and diploma, students are supported to develop and enhance their knowledge and skills that are relevant for their future profession. The career prospects of graduates are exceptional, and because of the quality of their training, graduates leave as highly skilled and sought after nannies.

The provider understands the starting points of its students and puts in place mechanisms to support and track students who may be more at risk. For example, those with lower entry qualifications, mature and care experienced students are supported through a package of measures at transition.

Evidence of support for work-readiness is provided throughout the submission, including through the practical and experiential aspects of their course, placement activity, additional master classes and learning opportunities.

Overall, the panel considered there to be sufficient evidence to judge that the provider effectively supports its students to achieve these gains, and that the provider's approaches are highly effective and tailored to its student and their different starting points. As such, the panel considers this to be an outstanding feature.

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

The panel found insufficient evidence that this is a very high quality feature.

The provider submission gives evidence of its approach to a continuous review of its provision against employer expectations and feedback on graduate performance. This is achieved through gathering data from clients and monitoring any concerns.

The in-house employment agency conducts end user analyses based on placed jobs and in-house reports considered by the Quality Innovation Team. These are used to identify what qualities and skills employers are looking for, which then influence admissions processes and curriculum development.

The panel considered there to be emergent practice in evaluating and demonstrating the gains students from all starting points make, for example, in relation to those with lower tariff entry qualifications or from underrepresented backgrounds.

## **Overall: Gold**

Applying the guidance and the panel members' expert judgement, the panel considered both the student experience aspect and the student outcomes aspect to be 'Gold', and that the overall provider rating should therefore be 'Gold'. The panel weighted the two aspects equally and considered all the evidence across all features and across all the provider's student groups.

In reaching this decision, the panel considered there to be compelling evidence that the student experience and student outcomes are typically of outstanding quality. In both aspects the outstanding features apply to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

The panel concluded that when taken together the overall rating was 'Gold', as the student experience and student outcomes are typically of outstanding quality.