



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

Leeds Beckett University

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Bronze

Typically, the experience students have at Leeds Beckett University and the outcomes it leads to are high quality, and there are some very high quality features.

Student experience: Silver

The student academic experience is typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- a supportive learning environment, where students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support
- physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning
- effective engagement with students, leading to improvements to their experiences and outcomes.

Student outcomes: Bronze

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

Very high quality features include:

- very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses
- the provider's articulation of the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students.

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

Leeds Beckett University states it is an 'inclusive anchor in the Leeds city region, with outreach, research and the education portfolio all grounded in the needs of local communities and employers'.

The provider is a medium sized university, with 16-17,000 full time undergraduates per year. It offers a range of undergraduate programmes, with the largest numbers of full-time students in Business and Management (22.2 per cent), followed by Sport and Exercise (12.5 per cent), Creative Arts and Design (8.6 per cent), and Sociology, Social Policy and Anthropology (6.9 per cent). For apprenticeships, the largest subject is Engineering, then Architecture, Building and Planning.

Over a third (36.7 per cent) of the provider's students come from the most disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, with just over 15 per cent eligible for free school meals.

Additionally, the provider notes that 55 per cent of its UK undergraduates have a home address in the city or region, meaning there is a large number of commuter students. 67 per cent work part-time alongside their studies.

The assessment considered information about the provider's undergraduate courses and students on those courses. This included degree apprenticeships at undergraduate level.

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 to be typically very high quality. Across the aspect the panel found:

- three features are very high quality
- there was not enough evidence to judge four features as very high quality.

The panel noted that for some features, although they were not judged very high quality overall, there were some very high quality elements.

The panel applied the ratings criteria and considered the 'best fit' rating to be 'Silver'. While the panel did not identify a perfect fit with the rating descriptions, overall the panel judged that most of the student experience features included evidence of very high quality for most groups of students.

When judging whether 'Bronze' or 'Silver' would be the best fit, the panel considered that a rating of 'Silver' would better recognise the evidence of positive practices in the submissions, alongside the very high quality indicator evidence for many student groups. On the basis of a best fit judgement, the panel concluded that 'Silver' was the appropriate rating.

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

Teaching, assessment, and feedback; and Course content and delivery, student engagement in learning and stretch

The panel found there was not enough evidence to judge these two features as very high quality.

The overall indicators provided initial evidence that both 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback' are very high quality for full-time students. There was some variation across subjects and student groups, ranging from outstanding to not very high quality.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions included:

- highlighting the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on courses needing specialist facilities or placements along with interventions to improve engagement and confidence, for example providing access to additional resources
- details of developments in teaching methods during coronavirus to offer greater flexibility and opportunities to engage students, such as large group sessions to bridge between lectures and seminars and pre-recorded lectures
- details on flexibility, inclusivity, and accessibility in teaching, learning, and assessment
- an acknowledgement by the provider of issues in the indicators for specific subject areas, although there was limited evidence of the impact of interventions.

The student submission highlighted issues raised through student feedback and how they were addressed, and noted positive experiences for those with disabilities. There were also student comments that noted concerns about consistency and timeliness of feedback.

The panel considered that while there was evidence of some very high quality teaching, feedback and assessment practices, there was not enough evidence to demonstrate that these are effective in supporting its students' learning, progression, and attainment. Additionally, there was a lack of evidence to show that these practices are embedded for most students and subjects.

Therefore, looking at the evidence overall, the panel concluded that there was insufficient evidence to judge these features as very high quality.

Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement

The panel found there was insufficient evidence to judge this feature as very high quality.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions included:

- leadership in knowledge transfer partnerships, and a Local Government Association review recognising the provider's anchor work in Leeds. However, while important, the panel considered these were more related to employer support and economic contribution rather than being direct benefits for students
- references to embedding research skills in the curriculum, although the connection to staff research activity was not clear
- both the provider and student submissions highlighted the inclusion of practitioners in teaching sessions. While there was limited evidence of impact, the panel noted that this is clearly appreciated by students
- there are 286 accredited courses involving 72 different professional, regulatory and statutory bodies and other organisations, showing strong relationships with local employers. However, there was limited evidence of embedding across the provider or direct relevance to the student experience.

Overall, while the panel considered there were very high quality elements of this feature, there was not enough detailed evidence of how research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice or employer engagement contribute to the student academic experience. Therefore, the panel concluded that there was insufficient evidence of very high quality for the feature as a whole.

Staff professional development and academic practice

The panel found there was not enough evidence to consider this feature very high quality.

The evidence in the provider submission included details of a centre for learning and teaching which delivers events, an annual conference, and an annual, thematic cycle for developing excellent academic practice. Staff can take fixed term secondments as centre associates to focus on specific projects, although there was limited evidence about the number of associate roles, or the impact or effectiveness of projects. There are also opportunities for staff to seek teaching qualifications and engage with centre activities, but the panel noted there was very little data or evaluation of how the centre's activities benefit students.

Overall, the panel concluded that there was limited evidence of very high quality support for staff professional development, and insufficient evidence that excellent academic practice is promoted. Therefore it did not judge this a very high quality feature.

Learning environment and academic support

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The indicator provided compelling initial evidence that 'academic support' is very high quality for full-time students. There was some initial evidence of not very high quality for part-time and apprenticeship students, but the data did not provide certainty.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions included:

- tailored academic support sessions offered through the library, with strong positive feedback from students
- structured and timely academic support through the student support framework
- embedded academic support within programmes to aid student continuation and transition
- elective online academic skills modules with some tailored for international students, although their effectiveness and uptake were not clear
- support provided for digital resources and the cost of living
- student comments highlighting the value they place on academic support. They also noted the development of peer mentoring and the benefits of academic tutors.

Looking at the evidence overall, the panel concluded that the provider fosters a supportive learning environment, and its students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support.

Learning resources

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The indicator for full-time students provided compelling evidence that 'learning resources' are very high quality, and for part-time students there was probable evidence of outstanding quality. For apprenticeship students there was limited certainty in the data.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions included:

- students' comments stating they value access to learning resources, both physical and digital, such as specialist software for arts
- students also made suggestions for improvements in the communication of the available resources and access to appointments, such as for disability and wellbeing services

- accessible, consistent learning resources aligned to subject areas supported by substantial investment, plus a £90 million investment in two new teaching and research spaces for the schools of sport and arts
- targeted IT support for students from low income households, as well as increases in the hardship fund and digital resources such as laptop loans
- moving to a digital first library, and flexible and hybrid resources more generally, to support part-time and apprenticeship students in particular, who are not always based on campus. The student submission acknowledges this, but also raises concerns about its impact on students' sense of belonging and community
- that students engaging with support services viewed them positively, but noted that services could be better advertised.

The panel noted the variation in the indicators for some students was acknowledged by the provider and considered in the submission. The panel considered that, while there was not always detailed evidence of impact, actions have been taken to address these issues.

Considering the evidence overall, the panel concluded that physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning, including for students from underrepresented groups.

Student engagement in improvement

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The indicator for full-time students provided evidence that 'student voice' is very high quality. For part-time and apprenticeship students, there was some evidence of not very high quality but without certainty in the data.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions included:

- support and training for around 1,000 student representatives, along with further part-time paid student roles in the students' union. Student representatives are full members of committees at all levels of governance
- providing structured responses to student feedback
- co-creation between staff and students, including a collaborative response across the students' union and provider that led to decisive action to support students with the cost of living
- the student submission highlighted a range of improvements arising from student voice and engagement.

The panel noted that the student submission highlighted discussions taking place between the provider and the students' union on the best way to represent apprentices in future, providing evidence of a recognition of the variation in the apprenticeships indicator. The panel noted however that there is limited evidence of impact as yet.

Looking at the evidence overall, the panel judged that the provider engages effectively with its students, leading to improvements to the experiences and outcomes of its students. This is consistent with 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 found that student outcomes are typically high quality, and there are some very high quality features. Across the student outcomes aspect the panel found:

- two features are very high quality
- three features where there was not enough evidence of very high quality
- one feature where the panel did not reach a judgement.

The panel noted that for some features, although they were not rated very high quality overall, there were some very high quality elements.

The panel applied the ratings criteria and considered the best fit rating to be 'Bronze'. This is because some features of the aspect are very high quality for most groups of students.

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

Approaches to supporting student success

The panel found there was not enough evidence to judge this feature as very high quality.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions included:

- attempts to support students through the pandemic and now the cost of living crisis, for example by reducing the cost of food on campus and limiting rent increases in residences. While the panel noted that cost of living issues are recent and it is difficult to show impact, the panel considered this an element of very high quality, tailored to the provider's student groups
- initiatives for targeted student support and others based on engagement and the development of a sense of belonging, although the effectiveness of these was not clear
- tailored and impactful approaches to supporting progression, for instance around the employability framework.

The panel noted that the provider submission focused more on the reasons why some students do not complete or continue with their courses, than on providing evidence of effective actions taken to ensure students are supported to continue and complete.

The panel considered there was evidence of very high quality support for students in terms of progression, but not for continuation and completion. Therefore, the panel concluded there was not enough evidence to judge this feature as very high quality overall.

Continuation and completion rates

The panel considered there was insufficient evidence to judge this feature as very high quality.

The indicators showed that:

- for full-time students there was compelling evidence that 'continuation' is very high quality, but with considerable variation across different subject areas and student groups. There was compelling evidence that 'completion' is not very high quality
- for part-time students there was initial evidence that 'continuation' is not very high quality, but with some variation across different subject areas and student groups. There was initial evidence that 'completion' is very high quality
- for apprenticeship students there was initial evidence that 'continuation' is not very high quality. There was no data available for 'completion'.

Looking at the indicators and submissions together, the panel noted a mixed picture across different types of study and between continuation and completion. The panel considered that while the provider has measures in place intended to improve completion, these are described rather than quantified or analysed for impact.

Overall, the panel concluded there was not enough evidence to judge this feature as very high quality because there are not very high rates of continuation and completion across the provider's students and courses.

Progression rates

The panel judged this feature to be very high quality.

The indicators showed that:

- for both full-time and part-time students there was evidence that 'progression' is very high quality. There was some variation across different subjects and student groups, including apprenticeships.

The panel noted evidence in the provider submission, including:

- approaches to career readiness which are embedded in the curriculum, and of working directly with local employers to support graduates into work
- investment in careers and student staff, and a business engagement team
- data is being gathered through a graduate exit survey

- upskilling and internship opportunities are available to graduates in the summer, supported by bursary funding
- there is targeted support to connect underrepresented students with employers, including one which has received an Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services award.

The panel considered the 'progression' indicator along with the wide range of progression related activity. Considering all the evidence, the panel concluded that there are very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses.

Intended educational gains; Approaches to supporting educational gains; and Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

Considering these three features, the panel found that:

- the feature of 'intended educational gains' is very high quality
- there was not enough evidence of very high quality for the 'approaches to supporting educational gains' feature
- the panel did not reach a judgement on the 'evaluation and demonstration of educational gains' feature.

The panel considered how the provider's approach to educational gains involves supporting the development of students as independent, engaged critical thinkers. Personal and professional development and skills are included alongside academic knowledge.

The panel noted that learning pathways are articulated in some detail in the provider submission, and these are flexible in terms of support and starting points. Graduate employability is a clear goal, with an explicit aim for students to be aware of the academic and professional contexts of their subjects. Academic staff are supported to work with students on the development of these skills.

However, the panel found there was limited evidence of impact, and no evidence on how the provider intends to measure or evaluate educational gains.

Overall, the panel considered there was evidence that the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students. It also considered there was evidence of very high quality support for students to achieve these gains in terms of progression, but insufficient evidence that the 'approaches to supporting educational gains' feature is very high quality overall. In terms of evaluating educational gains, the panel did not identify relevant evidence and therefore was not able to reach a judgement on this feature.

Overall: Bronze

Applying the guidance and the expert judgement of panel members, the panel found the overall 'best fit' rating to be 'Bronze'.

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

When determining whether the overall rating should be 'Bronze' or 'Silver', the panel considered there was insufficient evidence that the student experience and student outcomes are typically very high quality. The panel noted that most features within both aspects had insufficient evidence of very high quality overall, although each aspect did contain some very high quality features.

In judging 'Bronze' to be the best fit overall rating, the panel concluded that the student experience and student outcomes are typically high quality, and there are some very high quality features.