



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

London South Bank University

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Silver

Typically, the experience students have at London Southbank University and the outcomes it leads to are very high quality.

Student experience: Bronze

The student academic experience is typically high quality and there are some very high quality features.

Very high quality features include:

- an effective provider-wide approach to designing learning and teaching activities
- effective research, knowledge exchange, and enterprise activities with tangible benefits for students
- very high quality support for staff professional development promoting excellent academic practice
- a supportive learning environment, giving students access to a range of very high quality academic support
- effectively engaging with students, leading to improvements to their experiences and outcomes.

Student outcomes: Silver

Student outcomes are typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- effectively supporting students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- very high continuation and completion rates, with outstanding outcomes for some student groups and subject areas
- effectively supporting its students to achieve educational gains
- a well developed framework for evaluating student gains.

There is one outstanding quality feature including:

- educational gains are clear, intended to help students develop skills that meet societal needs, and are relevant to 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

London South Bank University has the mission to transform lives, communities, businesses and society through applied education and insight. It states a commitment to removing barriers to the success of its diverse student body.

Its organisational strategy follows three strategic pillars: Access to Opportunity, Student Success, and Real World Impact. A fourth pillar, Fit for the Future, has been added to the 2020-25 strategy to recognise the challenges associated with a rapidly changing external environment.

The provider is a medium-sized university and in 2020-21, had almost 11,000 full-time and 900 part-time undergraduate students. Over the four year period of this assessment, the number of full-time undergraduates grew from 8,580 while the number of part-time students decreased.

Features of the student body include:

- full-time students study a broad range of subjects with the largest subject areas being Business and Management, Nursing and Midwifery, and Engineering. For part-time students the most popular subjects are Architecture and Engineering
- around 17 per cent of full-time and 13 per cent of part-time students report a disability
- 53 per cent of full-time and 35 per cent of part-time students are from deprived socioeconomic backgrounds
- over half of full-time students enter with BTECs, access or foundation courses, or 'None, unknown or other entry qualifications' rather than with A-levels. Half of part-time students enter with higher education qualifications and 25 per cent with BTECs, access or foundation courses.

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: Bronze

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:

- most features are very high quality for some students
- there was not enough evidence to rate two features very high quality.

The panel found the very high quality features applied across some groups of students, including some underrepresented groups, and for some courses and subjects.

The panel looked at the evidence in the round, including the provider's context, its recognition of issues that need to be addressed and the actions being taken. The panel applied the criteria and considered that the rating with the best fit is 'Bronze'. This is because most features are very high quality, or have elements of very high quality, for some groups of students.

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

Teaching, assessment, and feedback

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The indicators showed:

- for full-time students there was very strong to compelling evidence of very high quality 'teaching on my course', and 'assessment and feedback' for some student groups
- for part-time students there was very strong evidence that both 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback' are below the level of high quality.

The provider and student submissions show evidence of a very high quality feature including:

- a provider-wide approach to designing learning and teaching activities based on an Integrated Student Development Framework, with a Curriculum Framework outlining how courses should be designed, delivered and structured
- an approach to assessment which incorporates technical and professional skills, including competence based assessments
- adapting teaching and assessment practices to suit the diverse student body such as Universal Design for Learning. This results in similar student outcomes regardless of whether students have reported disabilities
- positive feedback from students on the quality of teaching, with specific mention of tailored approaches and learning support. However the variability between subject areas is noted.

The panel noted that the provider acknowledged the need for improvement in the part-time student experience beyond this assessment period and is taking actions to address it from 2022-23.

Overall the panel found the provider has embedded very high quality teaching, assessment, and feedback practices which support students' learning, progression, and attainment reach across the provision. However practices are not yet embedded for all groups or courses.

Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch

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

The panel looked at the provider and student submissions and found:

- a comprehensive approach to curriculum design and delivery since 2020, supported by a Curriculum Framework that includes a skills framework and teaching principles
- there was not enough clear evidence of the impact of this approach on student engagement and the development of knowledge and skills
- the student submission outlined that the teaching experience is highly supportive and personalised, aiding their success and knowledge growth even when the content is challenging. But it didn't provide specific evidence to support this.

The panel also considered evidence found for the 'teaching on my course' indicator described under 'Teaching, assessment and feedback', as well as the provider's approach to competence-based assessment, though it considered that there was limited evidence on its effectiveness in engaging students in their learning.

The panel found there was limited evidence in the submissions to demonstrate a very high quality feature. Overall the panel found there was not enough evidence of how course content and delivery effectively encourages students to engage in their learning, and stretches them to develop their knowledge and skills.

Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The provider and student submissions provide evidence of a very high quality feature including:

- demonstrating a high level of accreditation from professional bodies, and actively engaging with these organisations
- employer advisory boards are used by the provider to obtain industry input and guidance
- both the provider and student submissions show examples of how research, knowledge exchange, and enterprise activities have tangible benefits for students
- innovations in the curriculum, such as the Legal Advice Clinic, provide students with experience of valuable professional practice.

The panel noted some evidence was lacking in the submissions e.g. impact on the student experience, and reach across student groups and subject areas.

However, overall the panel found that the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience for its students.

Staff professional development and academic practice

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The provider submission outlines evidence of a very high quality feature, including:

- a career pathway that recognises quality and innovation in teaching and learning
- supporting the development of excellent teaching, including mentorship, a staff conference, and support for gaining fellowships
- investing in research on teaching methods, including a teaching fellow sabbatical scheme which informs staff teaching practices and resources
- a provider-wide approach to supporting staff professional development and sharing excellent academic practices. This includes collaboration across the university and its partners, including wider perspectives from colleges and schools
- investing in the implementation and evaluation of initiatives to address inequalities
- senior academic staff are actively involved as members of accreditation and review panels for professional bodies.

The panel noted there is evidence in the provider submission that it offers very high quality support for staff professional development which promote excellent academic practice. However, there was less evidence of the extent of reach across the provider, how embedded approaches are, or how effective they are in positively impacting students.

Overall the panel found there is very high quality support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is promoted.

Learning environment and academic support

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The indicator shows:

- compelling evidence of very high quality 'academic support' for some groups of full-time students
- there is limited certainty in the data for part-time students. The panel found evidence of both very high quality, and performance below the level of very high quality.

The provider and student submissions show further evidence of very high quality, including:

- the demonstration of innovation by investing in initiatives aimed at addressing inequalities
- starting the roll out of a Personal Development Plan system which leads to tailored support for individual students and groups. This is also highlighted positively in student feedback
- developing an institutional model for personal tutoring that incorporates best practices within the organisation and the wider sector. This was done in collaboration with students to ensure it meets their needs
- implementing a customer relationship management platform to provide a holistic view of key student information. This enables personalised support, as well as signposting to relevant programmes and peer support networks
- receiving an above sector average response to the National Student Survey question on wellbeing support during coronavirus.

The panel considered that the submissions include evidence of a very high quality feature. However, taken together with the indicators, the panel did not find strong evidence to conclude this applies to all student groups or courses/subject areas.

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

The indicator shows:

- compelling initial evidence that 'learning resources' are below the level of very high quality for full-time and part-time students.

The panel accepted the provider's explanation that its yearly split indicators were negatively impacted by a serious cyber attack, and placed less weight on these indicators in its assessment.

The provider and student submissions added some further evidence, for example:

- significant investments in specialist industry standard facilities, with evidence of its positive impact on student experience in various subject areas
- introducing a Hub to support students' studies, especially for commuting students. But there was limited evidence to demonstrate its impact on students
- the student submission echoed the value of the hub and other learning resources in supporting studies.

The panel did not judge this as a feature of concern but there was not enough evidence to demonstrate it as a very high quality feature. Overall the panel found there was not enough

evidence that physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning.

Student engagement in improvement

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The indicator shows:

- compelling initial evidence that 'student voice' is very high quality for full-time students
- initial evidence that 'student voice' is very high quality for part-time students.

The provider and student submissions add evidence of a very high quality feature including:

- implementing a new approach to collecting student feedback on modules with evidence of its positive impact on student experience
- using the 'Student Union Issue Tracker' system which has been effective in driving actions to improve the student experience, and led to positive student feedback
- the Students' Union led a new approach to increase students' engagement with extracurricular opportunities, which was recognised in a survey rating of the union's effectiveness.

Overall the panel found that for some groups of students and courses the provider effectively engages with its students, leading to improvements to their experiences and outcomes.

Student outcomes: Silver

Throughout this section, we refer to indicators. The indicators for continuation, completion and progression rates are based on national data about higher education students. The indicators are 'benchmarked' to show how well the provider performs for its particular mix of students and courses.

The panel found that student outcomes are typically very high quality across most groups of students and for most courses and subjects.

Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- most features are very high quality
- one feature is very high quality with some outstanding elements
- one feature is outstanding quality
- one feature is not very high quality for many groups of students, but very high or outstanding for some groups of students.

The panel applied the criteria and considered that the rating with the best fit is 'Silver'. This is because all features are either very high or outstanding 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 considered this a very high quality feature.

The provider and student submissions describe approaches to supporting students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies. This includes:

- offering targeted support for assessment methods in certain subjects to help reduce gaps in the numbers of students continuing onto the next year of study
- supporting student groups disproportionately impacted by coronavirus, which is a significant portion of their student body
- the 'Ready for Resits' programme provides targeted support to help students successfully continue and complete their studies
- supporting student mental health, wellbeing, and offering general assistance using student data which shows potential barriers such as financial challenges or lack of a suitable home environment for studying
- supporting student entrepreneurship and enterprise through a high engagement score in the Knowledge Exchange Framework
- positive feedback in the student submission about the value of support services and assistance for their future careers.

The panel noted that some of the examples in the submissions appear to reach intended target groups, there was less evidence to demonstrate that others yet apply across the provision.

Overall the panel found that the provider effectively supports its students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies.

Continuation and completion rates

The panel considered this a very high quality feature, with outstanding outcomes for some student groups and subject areas.

The indicators show:

- initial evidence that 'continuation' is at least very high quality for most full-time students, with evidence of outstanding rates for some subject areas. It also showed initial evidence that 'completion' is very high quality for most groups of full-time students
- initial evidence that 'continuation' and 'completion' are at least a very high quality feature for part-time students, with outstanding outcomes for some student groups and subject areas.

The panel considered that there was evidence of very high continuation and completion rates for most groups of students and most subject areas. This includes the large proportion of students from underrepresented groups, such as those reporting a disability or those from minority ethnic groups. The panel noted there was evidence of outstanding rates for some students e.g. part-time students and some courses/subject areas, but also the varied outcomes across student groups.

Overall the panel found there are very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses.

Progression rates

The panel judged there are not very high progression rates for many groups of students and courses, but very high or outstanding rates for some groups of students.

The indicator shows:

- initial evidence that 'progression' for full-time students is below the level of very high quality
- initial evidence that 'progression' for part-time students is outstanding.

The provider's submission presents:

- data and social mobility rankings to further demonstrate positive student progression outcomes
- an argument that one of the indicator metrics is less relevant for its student demographic compared with the broader higher education sector, and does not accurately reflect the progress of its students.

The panel took this into account when making an overall assessment of this feature and the aspect of student outcomes. The panel concluded that there was evidence of not very high progression

rates for many groups of students and courses/subject areas. But it also noted there are very high or outstanding rates for some groups of students, including some underrepresented groups.

Intended educational gains

The panel considered this an outstanding quality feature.

The provider submission describes its approach to articulating the educational gains it wants students to achieve. This includes:

- defining educational gains as the improvement in students' abilities and capabilities in emotional, behavioural, and cognitive areas, leading to long term wellbeing and career success
- recognising the diverse needs and starting points of students, acknowledging that areas for development may change during their studies due to changing circumstances
- support in the student submission of the provider's intentions. It notes their appropriateness to the diverse student body along with their varied starting points and ambitions when entering higher education.

The panel considered the provider's educational gains model is clear, intended to help students to develop skills that meet societal needs, and shows its relevance to students.

Overall the panel found that the provider clearly articulates the range educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are highly relevant to its students and their future ambitions.

Approaches to supporting educational gains

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The provider demonstrates its commitment to supporting students' educational gains which includes:

- increasing uptake and embedding of the Personal Development Plan (PDP) tool which enables students and staff to track progress and access tailored support
- using data from the PDP to inform service provision and enhance student support
- evidence throughout the provider submission shows the role of the PDP in aiding students' educational gains, holistic development, and career readiness
- student feedback acknowledges the value of the PDP in supporting students.

The panel noted some examples of evidence are yet to reach all of the provider's provision. Overall the panel found that the provider effectively supports its students to achieve these gains.

Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The provider submission demonstrates how it evaluates educational gains, which include:

- a framework for monitoring and evaluating educational gain, primarily using the PDP data
- while the framework is under development, there is some evidence of its impact, such as:
 - using PDP data to inform support for specific groups
 - outcome metrics showing the effectiveness of that support.

The panel noted the provider's well developed framework for evaluating student gains with students succeeding in achieving some of the intended gains. It recognises that the framework will continue to evolve, and some intended gains are not yet demonstrated.

Overall the panel found that the provider evaluates the gains made by its students.

Overall: Silver

Based on the guidance and the expert judgement of panel members, the panel found the 'best fit' rating to be 'Silver'.

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

The panel noted the high proportions of students from underrepresented groups, such as disabled students or those from minority ethnic groups, and the experience and outcomes achieved in these student groups.

In judging 'Silver' rather than 'Bronze' to be the best fit, the panel noted that while most student experience features are very high quality for some rather than all student groups, it would take into account the provider's substantial numbers of underrepresented student groups. The panel also noted that the provider recognised issues that need to be addressed and the actions being taken.

Overall the panel found that, taken together, student experience and student outcomes are typically very high quality, consistent with a rating of 'Silver'.