



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

Teesside University

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Gold

Typically, the experience students have at Teesside University and the outcomes it leads to are outstanding.

Student experience: Gold

The student academic experience is typically outstanding.

Outstanding quality features include:

- course content and delivery that inspire and stretch students to their fullest potential
- research, innovation, scholarship and employer engagement activities that contribute to an outstanding student experience
- outstanding support for staff, professional development and excellent embedded academic practice
- a supportive learning environment, and a range of outstanding quality academic support tailored to student needs
- learning resources that are tailored and used effectively to support outstanding teaching and learning
- embedded engagement with students, leading to continuous improvement to their experiences and outcomes.

There is one very high quality feature:

- very high quality teaching, assessment and feedback practices that are effective in supporting students learning, progression and attainment.

Student outcomes: Gold

Student outcomes are typically outstanding.

Outstanding quality features include:

- strategic and tailored approaches that are highly effective in supporting students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- clear explanation of the educational gains the provider intends its students to achieve, including why these are highly relevant to its students and their future ambitions
- highly effective and tailored approaches to supporting students to achieve educational gains, particularly in relation to employability.

There are some very high quality features, including:

- very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses
- very high rates of successful progression 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

Teesside University ('the provider') aims to be a leading university with 'an international reputation for academic excellence, providing a learning experience underpinned by research, enterprise and the professions'. It sets out its goals of being 'socially and ethically engaged, future ready, research active, globally connected and digitally empowered'.

It is a medium-sized university with around 10,000 full-time undergraduate students in 2020-21. It has a single campus in Teesside and 73 per cent of its students are from the local area and surrounding locations. Many are commuters who travel across the Tees Valley region, which the provider notes is the second most deprived region in the 38 English Local Enterprise Partnership areas. Most students study at first degree level with the remainder at postgraduate level.

The largest subject areas are Nursing and Midwifery and Computing and Engineering. In 2020-21 the provider had 1,080 apprenticeship students and 2,320 part-time students.

More students enter with BTECs or Access courses than A-levels.

The assessment considered information about the provider's undergraduate courses and students on those courses. This includes 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: 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.

Looking at all the evidence available, the panel found the student experience is typically outstanding, with the provider incorporating highly effective approaches that are tailored to its students.

Across the student experience aspect, the panel found:

- most features are outstanding
- one feature is very high quality.

The outstanding and very high quality features apply to all the provider's groups of students. This includes underrepresented groups which the panel considered relevant to the assessment due to the high proportion of these students at the provider.

The panel applied the criteria and considered that the rating with the best fit is 'Gold'. This is because all features, with the exception of one, are outstanding for all groups of students and courses.

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 with some outstanding quality practices.

The indicators provide initial evidence of very high to outstanding quality 'teaching on my course' and outstanding 'assessment and feedback'. The provider and student submissions show evidence of very high to outstanding quality practices, for example:

- a commitment to improving the student experience through institution-wide approaches
- the provider received global recognition for high impact professional development of its staff
- external examiners praise the provider's diversity of assessment and the commitment to quality improvement.

The provider and student submissions show evidence of effectively tailoring teaching, assessment and feedback practices across the provider's mix of courses and students. This includes students from underrepresented groups, which the panel considered to be relevant.

Overall, the panel found at least very high quality teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are effective in supporting the provider's students' learning, progression, and attainment.

Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch

The panel found this feature to be outstanding quality.

The provider and student submissions show evidence of outstanding quality practices, for example:

- strategically using a framework to enhance the academic experience, which is designed by stakeholders across the provider and its partner institutions (this includes guidelines for very high quality to outstanding practice)
- using external input from regulatory bodies to inform academic engagement and curriculum design
- redesigning a total of 489 courses into the Future Facing Learning strategy, with rigorous approval processes and use of research to inform curriculum design
- using bespoke module design toolkits and universal design for learning to give students a tailored experience
- a recent student survey shows 84.1 percent of students think 'staff have made the subject interesting'
- student feedback also supports the effectiveness of course content and delivery, highlighting opportunities for engagement and stretch for all students on all courses.

Overall the panel found course content and delivery inspire the provider's students to actively engage in and commit to their learning, and stretch students to develop knowledge and skills to their fullest potential.

Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement

The panel found this feature to be outstanding quality.

The panel considered that the provider and student submissions set out clear evidence of the provider's extensive range of experiential learning opportunities that are informed by research, scholarship and professional practice, including:

- effectively engaging with students, staff, industry, employers and practitioners when designing the curriculum
- developing apprenticeships, with the provider being recognised for this externally
- offering a large range of experiential learning opportunities including live projects, conferences, internships, international exchanges, and work experience among others
- taking part in real-world marketing challenges e.g. 'The Greggs Marketing Challenge' which is an annual competition between universities in the North East of England.

The panel noted that the provider has received external recognition for the development of apprenticeships, its employer partnerships, and its high level of commitment to patient care.

Overall the panel found the evidence demonstrates that the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement to contribute to an outstanding academic experience for its students.

Staff professional development and academic practice

The panel found this feature to be outstanding.

The provider submission outlines evidence of outstanding support for staff, professional development and excellent academic practice promoted through several initiatives. Evidence of this includes:

- encouraging staff to undertake recognised teaching qualifications and receiving commendations from external bodies for its commitment to staff professional development
- taking a strategic approach to digital development for staff and introducing a digital learning toolkit which has been adopted by learning organisations globally
- adopting a provider-wide approach to developing the curriculum alongside partners internally and externally
- continuation of staff development by appointing Associate Professors and Professors who lead enhancement projects across the provider.

The panel considered the provider's narrative for staff professional development and academic practice to provide compelling evidence that this feature is of outstanding quality and is embedded across the provider.

Learning environment and academic support

The panel found this feature to be outstanding.

The indicator provides initial evidence of outstanding quality 'academic support'.

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

- using research to improve its services, evaluating and implementing changes based on the findings
- adopting an integrated approach to academic support. This includes an academic advisory approach which has received external recognition
- using a learner analytics system to make informed improvements
- the Student Success Programme shows early evidence of being well embedded, with positive impacts on student satisfaction and outcomes
- holding weekly 'check-in' telephone calls with a sample of individual students from across the provider to understand their experiences.

The panel considered the academic support indicators to provide initial evidence of outstanding quality for most students. It considered the provider and student submissions to show evidence of effective support for students across the provider's mix of courses and students. This includes students from underrepresented groups, which the panel considered to be relevant.

Overall, the panel found the provider ensures a supportive learning environment, and its students have access to a wide and readily available range of outstanding quality academic support tailored to their needs.

Learning resources

The panel found this feature to be outstanding quality.

The indicator provides initial evidence that 'learning resources' are at least very high quality.

The provider and student submissions added evidence of outstanding quality, for example:

- tailored learning resources to meet the needs of students
- investing £275 million in upgrading the campus, including innovative facilities such as its Student Life building, and completing the refurbishment of all teaching rooms
- winning the EduFuturist University of the Year 2022 award
- a recent student survey showed 98.4 per cent of students were satisfied with learning technology.

Considering the evidence in the round, the panel found that physical and virtual learning resources are tailored and used effectively to support outstanding teaching and learning.

Student engagement in improvement

The panel found this feature to be outstanding.

The indicator provides initial evidence that this feature is outstanding quality.

The provider and student submissions add evidence of an outstanding quality feature including:

- gathering the student voice through a number of credible surveys, along with student representation on committees
- using a module evaluation system which has been effective in improving student satisfaction
- co-creating the Student Charter with the Students' Union which outlines a shared goal of achieving positive student outcomes
- students actively participate in committees and are involved in course design, allowing them to shape their education.

The provider and student submissions show evidence of effective student voice activities across the provider's mix of courses and students. This includes students from underrepresented groups, which the panel considered to be relevant.

Overall the panel found that the provider embeds engagement with its students, leading to continuous improvement to the experiences and outcomes of its students.

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 found that student outcomes are typically outstanding quality for the provider's mix of students and courses, including those from underrepresented groups which form a high proportion of the provider's students.

Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- three features are outstanding
- two features are very high quality
- one feature is considered neutral.

The panel applied the criteria and considered that the rating with the best fit is 'Gold'. This is because most features are outstanding for all groups of students and courses.

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

Approaches to supporting student success

The panel considered this an outstanding quality feature.

The provider submission describes its approaches to supporting students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies. This includes:

- effective strategies to support student success and progression beyond studies. Graduate outcomes data shows 78.1 per cent of graduates are in professional/managerial roles or in further study 15 months after graduating
- actively engaging with employers to provide valuable learning opportunities for students, and collaborating with local industry to enhance graduate opportunities
- being externally recognised for supporting enterprise and start-up ventures
- providing coaching sessions and resources to enhance students' employability skills which are used by thousands of students

- overcoming challenges posed by coronavirus by showcasing student work to employers through online events, with global participation.

The provider and student submissions show evidence of tailored support for student success across the provider's mix of courses and students. This includes students from underrepresented groups, which the panel considered to be relevant.

Overall the panel concluded that the submissions evidence how 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 panel considered this feature very high quality, with outstanding quality in some areas.

The panel looked at the 'continuation' and 'completion' indicators and found that they broadly provide evidence of a very high quality feature, though noting outstanding performance for some groups of students and courses (and some weaker performance for others).

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

Progression rates

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The indicator provides evidence that 'progression' is very high quality for most students, although there is some variation for part-time students.

In considering the evidence, the panel took the characteristics of the student body, the socio-economic make up of the region, and the high numbers of students from underrepresented groups into account. Overall, the panel concluded there are very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses.

Intended educational gains

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

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

- focusing on core themes for educational gains i.e. digitally empowered, research active, socially and ethically engaged, globally connected, and future ready
- integrating these themes into the curriculum design and delivery through an Academic Enhancement Framework
- identifying, evaluating and sharing good practices in educational gains through associate professors and others.

Considering the evidence, the panel found that the provider's articulation of educational gains is embedded into its current provision for all students, in all subject areas. Therefore the panel concluded that the provider clearly articulates the range of 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 an outstanding quality feature.

The provider demonstrates its commitment to supporting students' educational gains by effectively embedding employability throughout the learning experience. Examples include:

- activities such as the Globally Connected initiative contribute to students becoming global citizens, with the provider holding events such as 'World Storytelling Day'
- having a significant number of graduates in professional/managerial job roles and receiving awards are evidence of outstanding practice
- employing digital tools to enhance student learning.

Overall the panel found that the provider's approaches to supporting its students to achieve these gains are evidence-based, highly effective and tailored to its students and their different starting points, and concluded that this is an outstanding feature.

Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

The panel considered this a neutral feature.

The panel examined the evidence in the provider and student submissions and noted that the provider's evaluation of educational gains is a developing picture, using learning analytics and student surveys.

The panel considered that the provider cannot yet demonstrate that its students are universally succeeding in achieving the intended gains. Therefore, this feature has been treated as neutral according to assessment guidance that providers will not be prevented from being awarded higher ratings solely based on the absence of developed educational gain measures.

Overall: Gold

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

The panel considered the student experience aspect to be 'Gold' and the student outcomes aspect to be 'Gold', and gave equal weight to both. It carefully examined the evidence across all features, student groups, subjects, and courses, considering the context of the provider throughout its assessment.

Overall the panel found there is typically outstanding quality provision for all groups of students and courses.