



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

University Centre Quayside Limited

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Bronze

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

Student experience: Bronze

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

Very high quality features include:

- using professional practice and employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience for students
- very high quality support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is promoted
- effectively engaging 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.

There is one very high quality feature:

- how the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve and why these are relevant to its students

The panel also found elements of very high quality practice across other student outcomes features.

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 – though there was very limited indicator evidence available for this provider
- 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

University Centre Quayside Limited states its mission as to enable all students, staff and partner organisations to achieve their potential. It aims to achieve this through five strategic pillars which include excellence in teaching learning and assessment; excellence in partnership and community engagement; sustainable financial independence; to be regarded as a leading provider of work based higher education; and recognised as an excellent place to work.

The provider is a small, privately owned provider solely focusing on undergraduate apprenticeships. It had 130 students in 2020-21, growing from only 30 students in 2017-18. All students study business and management.

All the provider's students are mature. 5.5 per cent of students have a disability, with 2.2 per cent reporting sensory, medical, or physical impairments. A relatively high proportion (36 per cent) are from the most disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, and most students are not local when they enter their studies. Over half (56.0 per cent) of students have a higher education qualification on entry.

The assessment considered information about the provider's undergraduate courses and students on those courses. This includes apprenticeship 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. For this provider, there was no indicator evidence available.

The panel found student experience to be typically high quality, with some very high quality features. Across the aspect the panel found:

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

The panel applied the criteria and found the 'best fit' rating to be 'Bronze'. This is because some features are very high quality for most groups of students, consistent with a rating of 'Bronze'.

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

Teaching, assessment, and feedback

The panel considered there is insufficient evidence to rate this feature as very high quality.

There is no indicator data available for this feature. The panel considered evidence in the provider and student submissions, including:

- a hybrid approach to delivery which allows the provider to be responsive to both employers and learners, with flexibility in scheduling, location, and course start dates
- using an e-portfolio system to support learning resources and facilitate work based learning
- assessment practices involve work based learning in all modules. There is limited information on the range of assessments, though comments are made on the opportunity to diversify assessments to be more inclusive and creative
- positive student feedback showing satisfaction with assessment and feedback, programme design, content, and organisation
- teaching and learning practices receive positive comments from external bodies such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) review report, Ofsted, and employer statements, among others.

The panel found there is some evidence of teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are very high quality. However, the panel considered there is limited information of how these are embedded and aligned to the vocational nature of the courses, and how they effectively support students, and so could not find the feature to be outstanding.

Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch

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

The panel considered evidence in the provider and student submissions, including:

- using various teaching methods to support student learning, including experiential, cooperative, and peer assisted learning, along with group activities, among others
- student led activities enhance student engagement, interest, and motivation. There is also focus on targeted questioning. However, there is limited information on how students are engaged and stretched, and how this aligned to the learning environment
- Ofsted highlights how staff expertise and enthusiasm motivate students, while QAA comment that they are engaged
- student survey results show that 98 per cent found the course intellectually stimulating and challenge them to achieve their best work.

The panel considered the context that all students study Business and Management, and found limited evidence of how course content effectively encourages students to engage in learning. The panel also considered there is limited information on the approaches used to stretch students other than effective targeted questioning.

Looking at the feature as a whole, the panel concluded there is insufficient evidence of course content and delivery that effectively encourages students to engage in their learning, and stretches students to develop their knowledge and skills. Therefore it did not consider this a very high quality feature.

Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

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

- maintaining working relationships with CMI and Trailblazer
- offering opportunities for employers to provide feedback on students, including personalised opportunities during reviews with employer mentors
- comments from the Open University on the open and collaborative culture between staff, students, and employers, leading to a quick and supportive response to individual needs
- employers and wider stakeholders contribute to academic practice through the academic governance committee
- comments from Ofsted that learners and apprentices benefit from the provider's strong relationships with regional and national employers
- positive responses from the employer mentor survey on training and the development of apprenticeship students, while the QAA report highlights employers say the programme is high quality and relevant to their businesses.

The panel noted a lack of discussion on how research on teaching methods and innovation inform the provider's hybrid teaching model.

The panel considered the context of the provider, its vocational focus, and how the apprenticeship provision informs the curriculum. Overall, the panel concluded the provider uses professional practice and employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience for its students.

Staff professional development and academic practice

The panel considered this feature to be very high quality.

The provider submission shows evidence, including:

- supporting academic staff to apply for professional accreditation with the Higher Education Academy and 53 per cent have achieved this. Additionally, 26 per cent have attained fellow, 16 per cent senior fellow, and 11 per cent principal fellow
- supporting staff to engage with professional communities and undertake research, although there is limited discussion on research support
- activities to support staff development, including content and teaching methods, along with annual development days
- using teaching observations to identify areas of improvement and good practice in learning reviews. These inform their improvement plans
- comments from Ofsted that staff have ample time and resources to develop their knowledge and are committed to their work and professional development due to the supportive culture.

The panel noted that it did not consider this feature as outstanding due to a lack of evidence of how excellent academic practice is embedded across the academic community.

The panel considered the context of the provider's size and mission, and concluded that there is very high quality support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is promoted.

Learning environment and academic support

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

There is no indicator data available for this feature. However, the panel considered evidence in the provider and student submissions, including:

- a mandatory credit bearing module on academic writing and study skills
- academic support tutors and professional development assessors support students during regular progress reviews

- regular opportunities for personal development planning, along with individualised training and curriculum plans. However, there is limited information on their effectiveness
- learning resources to support academic skills, including workshops, although there is little information on how many students take these up
- endorsement of academic support by external examiners, along with positive student survey scores for 'learning community'
- positive comments in the student submission around tools that track and support student progress and facilitate communication.

The panel considered the range of academic support available, but found limited discussion in how it is implemented and evaluated to ensure a supportive learning environment.

The panel concluded that there is insufficient evidence of how the provider fosters a supportive learning environment, and how its students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support. Therefore it could not judge this feature to be very high quality.

Learning resources

The panel considered there is not enough evidence to judge this feature as very high quality.

There is no indicator data available for this feature. However, the panel considered evidence in the provider and student submissions, including:

- offering an e-book library, though there is limited discussion about available databases
- an e-portfolio system supports programme learning resources and work based learning
- Ofsted acknowledges the ready availability of high quality resources, and the QAA review team found generally positive views about facilities
- student surveys show positive responses to learning resources, including 100 per cent of students in one survey. However, there is limited information about physical resources and their alignment with courses.

The panel noted there is evidence of very high quality platforms and databases aligned to the courses. However, the panel found limited information on the provider's physical and virtual learning resources and how they are used.

Considering the evidence in the round, the panel concluded there is insufficient evidence of how 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.

There is no indicator data available for this feature but panel considered evidence of very high quality in the provider and student submissions, including:

- an academic governance structure that engages student representation, with effective methods of promoting student feedback
- positive comments on how the provider manages feedback from employers and students in an Open University report
- the employer mentor survey shows 100 per cent satisfaction with how the provider responds to concerns, although there is no evidence of the specific changes made
- the student submission comments that students have the right opportunities to provide feedback. This is also highlighted in a student survey
- changes made in response to student feedback include introducing face to face inductions, changing the virtual learning environment platform, and altering the sequence of modules.

Considering all the evidence, the panel concluded that the provider effectively engages with its students leading to improvements to their experiences and outcomes. 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 there is typically high quality, with some very high quality provision, across student outcomes. Across the aspect the panel found:

- one feature is very high quality
- there is not enough evidence to judge the other features to be very high quality.

The panel noted there are elements of very high quality evidenced in some of the features, but it did not consider these features to be very high quality overall.

The panel applied the criteria using its expert judgement and considered that the rating with the best fit is 'Bronze'. This is because its assessment best fits the description: 'some features of the aspect are very high quality for most groups of students', consistent with a rating of 'Bronze'.

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

Approaches to supporting student success

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

The provider and student submissions showed evidence, including:

- embedding personal development plans throughout the programme, including modules supporting professional practice
- comments from Ofsted that students benefit from a high standard of careers advice. However, there is limited description of career support, resources, and accountability
- an application process that identifies potential barriers to learning and a competence diagnostic assessment to identify students' starting points on admission
- using data and key performance indicators to monitor the effectiveness of learning opportunities, although there is limited description of the approach
- a knowledge, skills, and behaviours skill scan, allowing students to conduct self assessments on their progress
- an apprenticeship retention strategy, but with no information on impact and effectiveness due to recent implementation.

The panel considered there are some elements of very high quality in the provider's approaches to supporting students to succeed, but found limited evidence of how these approaches are effective.

Overall, the panel found insufficient evidence of how the provider effectively supports its students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies. Therefore this feature could not be judged as very high quality.

Continuation and completion rates

The panel considered there is insufficient evidence that this feature is very high quality.

The indicators showed for apprenticeships there is compelling evidence 'continuation' and 'completion' are not very high quality.

The panel considered analysis from the provider that shows impacts on 'continuation', including employment, work commitments and changing job roles as reasons for students not continuing on the work based programme. The panel noted similar reasons are given to explain the results for 'completion', and included a forecast for 2024 showing more positive results.

The panel considered comments that some students work for public sector organisations such as the NHS, with increased work pressures impacting on continuation and completion. However, there is limited information on the number of the students to assess the impact on indicators.

The panel found the provider adequately explained the rates and set out an effective approach to support students to succeed in their studies. Therefore it did not consider the feature to be below the level of very high quality or of concern.

Overall, the panel concluded that within the scope of the assessment period, there is insufficient evidence of very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses. Therefore, it could not judge this as a very high quality feature.

Progression rates

The panel judged there is not enough evidence to judge this feature as very high quality.

There is no indicator data available for this feature. The panel considered evidence in the provider submission, including:

- the provider states 100 per cent of achieving students have sustained employment in managerial positions. 86 per cent have taken on additional duties, and 64 per cent have progressed to a higher role. However, there is insufficient information on the sample size
- strong results for chartered manager degree apprenticeships completing end point assessments, although there is no information on the proportion of the student cohorts progressing.

Looking at all the evidence, the panel concluded there is insufficient evidence of very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses. Therefore, it did not consider this to be a very high quality feature.

Intended educational gains

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The panel considered a section in the provider submission entitled 'educational gains', which outlines in detail the knowledge, skills and behaviours to be gained within chartered manager degree apprenticeships.

Considering the courses within scope of this assessment, the panel found the provider articulates the educational gains it intended its students to achieve and why these are relevant to its students. This is consistent with a very high quality feature.

Approaches to supporting educational gains

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

The panel considered evidence in the provider submission, which includes:

- embedding the portfolio of evidence within module assessments
- the knowledge, skills and behaviours skill scan embedded within the programme which allows students to conduct self assessments on progress in meeting the programme outcomes
- support provided at the progress meetings between professional development assessors, students and employers.

The panel considered embedding the portfolio within the module assessments as an element of very high quality. However there was limited discussion of how students are supported in the development of the knowledge, skills and behaviours articulated as educational gains.

Considering the evidence in the round, the panel found there is insufficient evidence of how the provider effectively supports its students to achieve these gains. Therefore it did not judge this as a very high quality feature.

Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

The panel considered there is not enough evidence to find this feature very high quality.

The panel noted the strong results for chartered manager degree apprenticeships completing end point assessments, considered under the 'progression rates' feature above.

It also considered the provider's statement that statistical data including achievement, retention, progression, destination, equality and diversity, student appeals and complaints, is used to monitor the effectiveness and enhancement of learning opportunities and educational gains. However, there is no further information provided.

Overall, the panel concluded there is insufficient evidence the provider evaluates the gains made by its students. Therefore it could not consider this to be a very high quality feature.

Overall: Bronze

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

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

The panel noted the guidance that where each aspect is awarded the same rating, the overall, rating should also be the same.

Therefore, as the panel gave the rating of 'Bronze' to both the student experience and student outcomes aspect ratings, it judged the best fit rating overall to be 'Bronze'.