



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

## **Summary TEF 2023 panel statement**

**De Montfort University**

# Summary of outcomes

## Overall: Silver

Typically, the experience students have at De Montfort 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:

- research, innovation, scholarship and professional practice which create a very high quality academic experience for students
- physical and virtual resources are used to effectively support very high quality teaching and learning
- effective engagement with students, leading to improvements to their experience and outcomes.

There is one outstanding feature:

- support for staff professional development and excellent practice, embedded across the provider.

### Student outcomes: Silver

Student outcomes are typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- effective support in place for students to succeed in and progress beyond their students
- very high rates of continuation and completion for all groups of students, and for most courses
- very high rates of progression for the majority of student groups, and for most courses
- a nurturing community providing effective support for students to achieve educational gains
- evaluation of the gains made by students.

There is one outstanding feature:

- clear articulation of the educational gains the university intends students to achieve, and why these are highly relevant to students and their future ambitions.

# 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

De Montfort University (DMU) had around 20,330 full-time and 940 part-time undergraduate students in 2020-21, as well as a small number of undergraduate apprenticeship students. Most students study business and management, or creative arts and design.

The provider's submission sets out its view of 'diversity as its strength', its personalised learning approach and what it says is 'sector leading work' in promoting wellbeing, decolonising the curriculum and universal design for learning, supporting attainment and inclusion.

The provider has a new 'empowering university' strategy, describing its mission to discover gateways of opportunity that empower students, staff, and its community to create a fairer society. It has also created a new programme, Education 2030 looking at what education will look like in the next decade, which focuses on integration of employability, sustainability, and entrepreneurial activity.

There is a high proportion of students at the provider from underrepresented groups.

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

Full details about the provider's student demographics used in the TEF 2023 assessment are available at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-used-in-tef-2023/](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-used-in-tef-2023/).

More information about this provider can be found on the OfS Register at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/).

## Student experience: 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.

The panel found the quality of the student academic experience is typically high quality, with some very high quality features, for DMU's mix of students and courses. Across the student experience aspect, the panel found:

- one feature that is outstanding
- three features that are very high quality
- three features with insufficient evidence of being very high quality
- compelling evidence that the three very high quality and one outstanding feature apply to most of the provider's groups of students. This includes students from underrepresented groups, which comprise a high proportion of the provider's students.

The panel applied the criteria and considered that the rating with the best fit is 'Bronze'. The panel did not think that 'Silver' would be the best fit, because it did not find that all of the features of the aspect were very high quality, nor that most of the features were very high quality for all groups of students.

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

### Teaching, assessment, and feedback

The panel considered there to be not enough evidence of very high quality for this feature.

For full-time students, the indicators provide:

- evidence of performance below the level of very high quality for 'teaching on my course'
- evidence of very high quality for 'assessment and feedback'.

For part-time students, these indicators also provide some initial evidence of very high quality or outstanding quality, but the numbers of students involved are small, and therefore the panel placed less weight on this evidence.

The provider and student submissions give further evidence of its approach to learning, teaching, and assessment including:

- practice-led teaching methods, the impact of which is evidenced across some subjects
- work on decolonisation which focuses on cultural variability and individual student needs, which has been evidenced for some courses
- employability designed into the curriculum and practice-based programmes work with companies.

The panel considered that this evidence did not cover all courses and groups of students across the university.

The panel concluded that the submissions and indicators provide insufficient evidence of very high quality teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are effective in supporting its students' learning, progression, and attainment.

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

The panel considered there to be not enough evidence of very high quality for this feature.

The provider and student submissions give evidence of the university's approach to this feature, including:

- sustainability development goals, although the submissions lack evidence on how this engages student learning and stretch for most students
- embedded employability and placement learning opportunities across some subject areas
- sector-leading work to decolonise the curriculum work, although there is insufficient evidence on how this work engages students on most courses
- a favourable description in the student submission of how support from teaching staff has enabled them to engage in learning
- student and staff co-creation projects on some courses.

The panel considered that while there was evidence of strategic innovation in course content and delivery, the evidence for this feature was not for all courses and groups of students across the provider.

Overall, the panel concluded that the submissions provide insufficient evidence that course content and delivery effectively encourages the provider's students to engage in their learning, and stretches students to develop their knowledge and skills.

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

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

The provider submission sets out its approach to research, innovation, scholarship and professional practice, including detail of advanced research projects in some subject areas; work in decolonisation and sustainability; and a curriculum enhanced by staff who work in practice in some subject areas. The student submission corroborates evidence for employability being designed into the curriculum.

Overall, the panel concludes from the submissions that there is sufficient evidence that the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, 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 to be an outstanding feature.

The provider submission includes evidence of this, such as:

- pathway progression from lecturer to professor in teaching and learning
- the provider's Centre for Academic Innovation and Teaching Excellence draws on a community of Teaching Fellows who devote 10 per cent of time to supporting staff development
- national recognitions for teaching practice
- second year and final year students undertaking work supervised by staff engaged in cutting edge research.

The panel considered that the outstanding provision in this feature is evidenced in sector leading research and innovation which enhances curriculum and the student experience.

The panel's conclusion is that there is outstanding support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is embedded across the provider.

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

The panel considered there to be insufficient evidence of very high quality for this feature.

For full-time students, the overall academic support indicator provides evidence of performance below the level of very high quality for this feature. The panel noted that the indicators gave evidence of at least very high quality for part-time students, but the numbers are small.

The provider and student submission sets out an approach to academic support which includes a range of partnerships and programmes, an initiative for students with learning disabilities and autism, and the recruitment of 12 student personal tutoring advocates. However, the evidence included gave only limited detail of the number of students using these services, and the impact this had.

Overall, the panel concluded that there is not enough evidence that the provider fosters a supportive learning environment, or that its students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support.

### **Learning resources**

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

The 'learning resources' indicator provides:

- initial evidence of very high quality for full-time study, for all student groups including those from underrepresented groups, and for the majority of courses
- not enough certainty in the data to suggest evidence of very high quality for part-time study, though numbers are low so the panel put less weight on this.

In its submission, the university sets out its approach to learning resources as a 'home-from-home' experience, especially in relation to some specialised discipline areas and for underrepresented students. This approach includes:

- investments in innovative teaching and student spaces such as a trading room and mock law courts

- a state of the art diagnostic radiography facility
- a Centre for Learning and Study Support in which students can self-select workshops, or attend drop-ins, tutorials and clubs, with the student submission demonstrating engagement in this facility
- a large Islamic prayer space for 1,000 students
- highly valued library and learning services, as well as investment and innovation in student spaces.

Overall, the panel concluded that the evidence shows that physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning by this provider.

### **Student engagement in improvement**

For this feature, the panel found sufficient evidence of very high quality.

Reviewing the 'student voice' indicator, the panel considered there was:

- compelling initial evidence of very high quality provision for the majority of full-time students, including underrepresented groups, and across the majority of courses
- initial evidence of outstanding quality for part-time students, although the number of students responding to this question is low.

The provider and student submissions set out how students are embedded co-creators and co-leads in the university's approach to improvement, including through:

- monthly meetings with the vice chancellor to ensure student perspectives are considered
- a paid Student Leader to challenge everyday norms of university life and work towards solutions, such as tackling the awarding gap
- involving students fully in the consultation and design of the provider's Education 2030 programme
- embedding student presence and participation in university meetings.

Considering the evidence in the round, the panel found that the provider demonstrated that effective engagement led to improvement to the experience and outcomes of its students, though the panel did not find enough evidence of continuous improvement to consider this an outstanding feature.

On balance, the panel concluded that the university effectively engages with its student body, leading to improvements to the experiences and outcomes of its students.

### **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 for the provider's mix of students and courses, with one outstanding feature.

Applying the guidance, the panel concluded that the student outcomes aspect is 'Silver', because all features are at least very high quality for most 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 to be a very high quality feature.

The provider submission describes its approaches to supporting students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies, with tailored emphasis for underrepresented groups. This includes:

- mentoring and mock interview schemes to provide additional support.
- a careers self-assessment tool, providing students with a personalised suite of employability development tools and e-learning
- opportunities for students to present their work to industry
- a university-wide approach to wellbeing called 'Healthy DMU', with an aim to reduce health related inequalities
- a 'look after your mate' training recognising that BAME students and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to seek peer than professional support
- a co-created 'Women in STEM Society'.

In addition, the student submission includes information on projects designed to embed mental wellbeing into the student experience, as well as student group activities such as volunteering and societies, supporting students to connect and create a sense of belonging.

The panel concluded that the provider effectively supports its students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies, but found limited evidence of tailored approaches and their effectiveness and so did not consider this feature outstanding.

### **Continuation and completion rates**

The panel considered there to be sufficient evidence of very high quality for this feature.

The full-time students' 'continuation' indicator provides compelling initial evidence of very high quality for this feature, for all groups of students and for most courses. The 'completion' indicator for full-time students provides initial evidence of very high quality, and suggests that this applies to all groups of students, with some variations by subject.

For part-time students, the 'continuation' indicator provides initial evidence of either very high quality or outstanding, while for 'completion' there is compelling evidence for outstanding, although in both cases numbers are low, meaning less weight was placed on this.

The provider details its approach to continuation and completion rates, including:

- adjustment of assessment load for courses in School of Midwifery and Nursing

- peer and mentoring schemes which support continuation and belonging
- authentic assessment enabling students to achieve their fullest potential.

Overall, the panel concluded that there are very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's groups of students and courses.

## **Progression rates**

The panel considered there is sufficient evidence of very high quality for this feature.

For full-time students, the 'progression' indicator provided compelling initial evidence of very high quality, for the majority of student groups, including students from underrepresented groups, and most courses.

For part-time students, the 'progression' indicator provided initial evidence of either very high quality or outstanding quality.

The provider details its approach to progression rates, with a specific focus on underrepresented groups, including:

- mentoring and mock interview schemes to provide additional support
- a careers self-assessment tool, providing students with a personalised suite of employability development tools and e-learning
- The Leicester Graduate City project, which aims to keep more graduates in highly skilled graduate jobs in Leicester, driving regional economic prosperity. A key focus has been the roll-out of new internships at the end of the second year, creating earlier connections between students and local employers
- the launch of 140 new businesses by students and graduates in 2020-21, with the provider's Innovation Centre running a business incubator programme

Overall, the panel considered there is sufficient evidence that there are very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses.

## **Intended educational gains**

The panel considered there to be sufficient evidence of outstanding quality for this feature.

The provider's submission describes a university-wide educational gain framework which supports its ambition to empower its students. This includes:

- defining educational gain as the 'distance travelled' for students in relations to their knowledge, skills and personal development
- 'distance travelled' allows the provider to assess the extent that its offer develops the skills, knowledge and confidence to empower students to find and use their voice to create a fairer society.

The student submission corroborates why these knowledge, skills and personal development are relevant to them.

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 to be a very high quality feature.

The provider submission gave evidence that it supports educational gains with a focus on support which evidences the 'distance travelled' by students, including through:

- a supportive and nurturing community of academics, students and expert advisers create an empowering learning environment which is successful in attracting a diverse student body
- programmes to stretch learning beyond the classroom, grounding students in digital literacy and equipping them with employability and entrepreneurial life skills
- commitment to outreach work and maintaining low tariffs that aid access and inclusion
- work to ensure students understand how they can bring about change through the knowledge acquired.

The panel considered that the university's evidence shows that it effectively supports its students to achieve these gains.

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

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

The provider's approach to evaluation and demonstration of educational gains includes:

- engagement meetings with staff and students
- work to identify research, approaches and measures for educational gain that already exist and which could be further developed and shaped into a coherent framework
- a self-assessment evaluation tool at enrolment develops students' reflection in a range of areas which align to educational gain framework
- a career readiness survey which demonstrates 11 per cent self-report learning gain from students engaging with the tool over time
- alumni surveys which evaluate educational offer in relation to career planning.

Overall, the panel concluded that the provider evaluates the gains made by its students, but that there is limited evidence of how it demonstrates students are succeeding in achieving these intended gains and so did not consider this feature to be outstanding

### **Overall: Silver**

The panel rated the student experience aspect 'Bronze' and the student outcomes aspect 'Silver'.

The panel found that some student experience features are of very high quality for most groups of students and courses, and all student outcomes features are of very high quality for most of the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups, and some

courses. The panel also found one outstanding quality student experience feature, and one outstanding feature in the student outcomes aspect.

In reaching its decision, the panel considered there to be evidence that the outstanding and very high quality features apply to most the provider's groups of students, including to students from underrepresented groups which comprise a high proportion of the provider's students, and to most courses. The panel considered this contextual factor throughout its assessment of all of the evidence.

Weighing the two aspects equally and considering all the evidence across all features, it considered the overall 'best fit' rating to be 'Silver'. When determining whether the overall rating should be 'Bronze' or 'Silver', the panel considered all the evidence across all the features and judged that the student experience and student outcomes are typically of very high quality for most groups of students and courses, rather than typically high quality provision with some very high quality features.