



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

Luminate Education Group

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Silver

Typically, the experience students have at Luminate Education Group and the outcomes it leads to are very high quality.

Student experience: Silver

The student academic experience is typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- very high quality teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are effective in supporting students' learning, progression and attainment
- course content and delivery that effectively encourages the provider's students to engage in their learning and stretches them to develop their knowledge and skills
- the use of research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, 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
- physical and virtual learning resources that are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning.

There are also some outstanding quality features including:

- a supportive learning environment in which students have access to a wide and readily available range of outstanding quality academic support tailored to their needs
- embedded engagement with students, leading to continuous improvements to the experiences and outcomes of students.

Student outcomes: Bronze

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

Very high quality features include:

- effective support for students to succeed in and beyond their studies
- the provider's articulation of the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students
- the provider effectively supports its students to achieve the intended educational gains.

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

Luminate Education Group comprises of Leeds City College, Leeds 6th Form College, Harrogate College, Keighley College, University Centre Leeds, and Leeds Conservatoire. It states its purpose is to 'collectively transform lives through inspirational education, training, and support' and that it is aligned with the mission of University Centre Leeds, aiming to:

- 'be the leading choice for students and staff
- make a positive, life changing impact on our students with clear progression routes into further study and work
- help to make our communities more prosperous and cohesive
- fully connect to businesses with constantly emerging opportunities'.

In 2020-21 the provider had around 1,900 higher education students: 1,250 full-time students, 410 part-time students, and 250 apprenticeship students.

University Centre Leeds was awarded Foundation Degree Awarding Powers in 2018 and currently offers 37 foundation degrees, 22 BA top-ups, and one 3 year degree.

The largest proportion of full-time students study Business and Management and the largest proportion of part-time students study Allied Health.

Most students are female and there are many mature students. A high proportion of students are from low socio-economic backgrounds and most students enter with qualifications alternative to A Levels. 64 per cent of students are local to the provider on entry.

The assessment has taken account of the context of the provider and the characteristics of its students and courses. For example, the panel has considered the evidence in the submissions as relevant to the characteristics of students noted above, and to the mix of courses including their focus on employment.

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: Silver

Throughout this section, we refer to indicators. These indicators are based on students' responses to the National Student Survey. The indicators are 'benchmarked' to show how well the provider performs for its particular mix of students and courses.

The panel found that the student experience is typically very high quality for the provider's mix of students and courses. Across the student experience aspect, the panel found:

- five features are very high quality
- two features are of outstanding quality

The panel applied the ratings criteria and found the best fit rating to be 'Silver'. This is because the evidence 'best fits' the description: 'all features of the aspect are very high quality for most groups of students'.

The panel recognised that some of the features were of outstanding quality but did not think that 'Gold' would be the best fit for the aspect overall because the evidence demonstrates that 'some' rather than 'most' or 'all' of the student experience features are of outstanding quality.

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

Teaching, assessment, and feedback

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

The indicators provided initial evidence of:

- very high quality 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback' for full-time students
- outstanding quality 'teaching on my course' for part-time students.

The provider submission states that it 'delivers a relevant curriculum that puts student needs first'. The submission describes its approaches to delivery models in accommodating study, work, and family commitments with a concentrated timetable that is designed to meet students' and employer's needs. The submission also includes reference to improvements in assessment and feedback processes due to interventions taken by the provider as part of their peer review process.

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

- small class sizes, facilitating more one-to-one time between students and tutors
- examples of improvements such as skills audits and online tutorial resources made for teaching and learning in some subject areas, resulting in improved student outcomes
- examples of changes to assessment feedback, resulting in improved grades, increased student satisfaction, and an increase in positive external examiner comments

- evidence from a survey which indicates that students find their course engaging and that staff provide good levels of support
- comments from students that 'curriculum teams provide close support within assessment timeframes by responding in a timely manner to student queries, staff are friendly and approachable, and that teaching is high quality'.

The provider describes the actions it took in response to a reduction in student satisfaction with assessment and feedback in 2019/20 which included staff training to 'facilitate consistency and improve feedforward skills' resulting in an increase in positive external examiner comments and improved NSS results.

Considering the indicator and submission evidence overall, the panel concluded that the provider has embedded very high quality teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are effective in supporting its students' learning, progression and attainment, and that this is a very high quality feature.

Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The provider submission states that employer's needs, and subject benchmarks are taken into consideration when structuring programmes and that employers are involved in the design and validation process of higher education courses. The submission includes examples of how the provider has embedded their feedback in the curriculum, such as:

- a range of business programmes
- examples of new modules being developed in Business, Computer Games and Media Make-up courses to ensure content is contemporary and aligns with employer needs
- opportunities for students to engage with employers through employer-led projects, 'live' briefs and guest speakers
- additional opportunities to develop employability skills such as team working, leadership and influencing are provided through Student Ambassador, Student Representative, and peer-to peer support schemes.

The student submission reports the outcomes of a survey which indicates that 86 per cent of respondents confirmed they found their course content to be 'very engaging and enjoyable'.

Considering the evidence overall, the panel concluded that course content and delivery effectively encourage the provider's students to engage in their learning and stretch students to develop their knowledge and skills. The panel therefore judged this to be a very high quality feature.

Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement

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

The provider submission states that 'employers are at the heart of its curriculum development process and that employers are consulted in the design, approval, and review of programmes' as

well as providing feedback on the skills developed by students. The submission includes examples of the direct impact employers have had on curriculum development in some subject areas and provides details of extra curricula activities which students have been involved in with external organisations to enhance their employability skills, which include:

- collaborations with the National Film and Television School, British Film Institute, ScreenSkills, Prime Studios, ITV, Screen Yorkshire, and various freelancers from the film and television industry
- the Film and Screen Media department being part of Screen Yorkshire's Connected Campus initiative which works to forge closer links between TV and Film professionals, production companies, broadcasters, and students
- a Women in Leadership programme held during the first half of semester two in 2022.

The provider submission also includes evidence of staff being encouraged to develop their scholarship and that it is applying this to its courses in innovative ways as noted above.

The panel considered the submission showed 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. Considering the evidence in the round, the panel judged this to be a very high quality feature.

Staff professional development and academic practice

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

The provider submission states that a range of staff development opportunities are provided, including support to undertake further qualifications, opportunities for shadowing, sharing of good practice events, and the opportunity to gain Advanced Higher Education recognition. The provider also facilitates the promotion of excellent academic practice through an annual review process including observations of teaching, review of student module results and student surveys.

Additional evidence in the provider submission included:

- that all teaching staff are required to hold a recognised teaching qualification, typically a PGCE or equivalent
- 50 per cent of staff have, or are working towards, a postgraduate, and a further 20 per cent have, or are working towards a PhD.

The panel considered that the submissions show that there is very high quality support for staff professional development and that excellent academic practice is promoted. Considering the evidence overall, the panel concluded that this is a very high quality feature.

Learning environment and academic support

The panel found this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The indicators provided compelling initial evidence of at least very high quality 'academic support' for full-time students.

The provider submission details the support services it provides for students and attributes the high levels of satisfaction and positive continuation rates with the support provided to students, which includes:

- an online academic support hub
- an increase in the learning support team
- the inclusion of counselling and mental health support
- the introduction of a Student Support Manager, and Welfare and Progression Officer for Higher Education in response to an increase in students reporting financial difficulties.

The submission also provides details of the responses taken by the provider to support an increase in student mental health concerns, which included mental health talks and webinars to support the return to campus.

The student submission provides a positive account of the support provided and references student comments from a survey and committee meeting which include 'having consistent support alongside their learning from the Additional Learning Support officer'.

Overall, the panel examined the evidence in the provider and student submissions and the indicators and concluded that 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. The panel therefore considered this an outstanding quality feature.

Learning resources

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

The indicator provided strong initial evidence that 'learning resources' are very high quality for full-time students, but not very high quality for part-time students.

The provider submission details the investments the provider has made in physical, digital, and human resources to support students including investment in a new virtual learning environment designed to meet the needs of higher education students (due to be operational in September 2023) and a new campus which is due to open in 2024. The provider acknowledges students' low satisfaction with learning resources in 2021, stating 'this is a concern and focus' for the provider, and attributes the low student satisfaction to students, particularly those studying practical subjects, not being able to access on-campus resources during the coronavirus pandemic.

Additional evidence in the provider submission includes:

- the provision of a sensory room, sports performance lab, chemistry equipment, robotics equipment, and computing hardware
- new teaching spaces/studios for Acting and Art students
- online tutorial resources

- higher education roles related to learning support, counselling, mental health, welfare, and progression.

Weighing up the indicator and submission evidence, the panel considered that physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning, and therefore concluded that this is a very high quality feature.

Student engagement in improvement

The panel considered this an outstanding quality feature.

The indicators provided strong initial evidence that ‘student voice’ is outstanding for full-time students, although for Education and Teaching ‘student voice’ is not very high quality.

The provider submission states there is an ‘open door’ culture and that student voice mechanisms across the provider are strong with students able to provide feedback informally and formally. This is supported by the appointment of a student engagement officer which has helped to expand communication channels and implement timely interventions, resulting in very few student complaints.

The student submission also provides examples of how the provider has resolved issues raised by students and provides specific examples of where student feedback has been acted upon, including:

- resolving a heating issue and access problem for students with mobility difficulties
- providing more healthy eating options
- changes to delivery patterns and alterations to timetables
- development of student societies (Parent, Law, Business, Science)
- an increase in trips/visits and guest speakers
- new facilities and study spaces.

The student submission states that students feel their opinions and voices are recognised, and that students ‘feel like active members of the University Centre’. Student representatives are in place for each course which has allowed students to voice their opinions through course committee meetings.

The panel examined the evidence in the provider and student submissions and the indicators and considered that the provider embeds engagement with its students, leading to continuous improvements to the experiences and outcomes of its students. Considering the evidence overall, the panel concluded that this is an outstanding quality feature.

Student outcomes: Bronze

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

The panel found that student outcomes are typically high quality with some very high quality features for the provider's mix of students and courses. Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- three features that are of very high quality
- one feature that did not reach the level of very high quality overall but contained some very high quality outcomes
- two features where there was not enough evidence of very high quality.

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

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

Approaches to supporting student success

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The provider submission describes the approach it takes to identify and support students with additional support needs prior to entry, backed up by data which shows an increase in the number of applicants receiving support. Students declaring additional support needs at the point of application are referred to the higher education learning support officers by admissions and specific transition programmes provide tailored support to students who, for example are carers, mature students returning to study, or students estranged from their family.

The submission also outlines the range of activities it provides to support students' transition into higher education such as an online summer school, higher education study skills programme, subject taster days, induction talks, workshops, and a pilot mentor scheme. In addition, the submission describes outreach opportunities which help to build students' transferable skills which staff have praised for increasing student confidence. Students' tutorials also include wellbeing topics such as mindfulness and healthy eating.

Additional evidence in the provider submission includes:

- examples in Creative Arts and Engineering of sessions to support the development of critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving, academic writing, research and referencing skills
- outreach activities providing opportunities for students to lead practical activities in the community that are linked to their subject specialism.

The panel considered that the submissions provide sufficient evidence that the provider effectively supports its students to succeed in and beyond their studies. Considering the evidence overall, the panel concluded that this is a very high quality feature.

Continuation and completion rates

The panel considered there was not enough evidence to show that this is a very high quality feature overall, but considered there to be some very high quality outcomes within the feature.

The indicators provided initial evidence of:

- very high quality 'continuation' for full-time students with outstanding rates for some groups of students such as young students, and students studying Business and Creative and Performing Arts
- not very high quality 'completion' for full-time students
- outstanding 'continuation' and 'completion' for part-time students
- not very high quality 'completion' for apprenticeship students. For 'continuation' there was some evidence of performance below the level of very high quality but the data did not provide certainty.

The provider states in its submission that there is a difference between the TEF published data and its internal data. The panel considered the internal completion data reported by the provider but placed limited weight on the evidence as there was no indication of the sample size, response rates, or representativeness of the sample and it was unclear what definition of 'completion' the provider had used in its assessment of the internal data.

The provider submission also reports that the introduction of a higher education student support manager and a higher education welfare and progression officer have provided students with timely access to appropriate support which has had a positive impact on continuation, particularly for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Evidence in the continuation indicators confirms that continuation rates for students who declare a disability are consistent with students with no disability declared.

The panel recognised that there are significant variances between continuation and completion rates at the provider and between the different modes of study. Considering the evidence overall, the panel judged there to be a mixture of 'very high quality' and 'insufficient evidence for very high quality' for this feature.

Progression rates

The panel considered there was not enough evidence to demonstrate that this is a very high quality feature.

The indicators provided initial evidence of performance below the level of very high quality 'progression' for full-time students.

The provider acknowledges the low progression indicators and offers the following explanations in mitigation: 'response rates for the Graduate Outcomes survey have been low across all modes of

study for the last three years. Due to the nature of our provision, mainly [foundation degree] of two years followed by one year top-up, the timing of the Graduation Outcomes survey poses us with challenges, in that our students are surveyed twice, once following completion of their [foundation degree] programme and then again following completion to their top-up programme. The results are significantly negatively impacted, with [foundation degree] graduates being surveyed a full 12 months earlier than comparable full 3-year undergraduate programmes, when it is less likely that they will have gained professional and managerial roles as might be reasonably expected 15 months after graduation’.

The submission includes reference to an internal destinations data collection activity undertaken in 2021 which received approximately 50 responses and reported that ‘72 per cent of respondents were working (either paid or voluntary and in-line with their future plans) and a further 12 per cent engaged in further study’.

The submission does provide various case studies of graduates who have successfully progressed to employment or further study; however, the panel noted that it was unclear what period these cover or how representative the examples are of the provider’s mix of students and courses.

In considering all of the evidence for this feature, the panel placed limited weight on the results of the data collection activity provided in the submission. It was also unclear what proportion of respondents were in managerial or professional employment. Therefore, considering the evidence overall, the panel concluded there was not enough evidence that this is a very high quality feature.

Intended educational gains

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

The panel noted that the provider submission demonstrates very high quality in relation to the focus the provider has on supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds and underrepresented groups into employment and refers to curriculum content that supports the development of resilience, motivation, confidence, communication, presentation, time management, networking, and interpersonal skills and provides examples of how students are able to gain these additional skills, which include:

- internal and external networking events where students can meet with peers from other cohorts/specialisms
- a higher education study skills module targeted towards level three learners from underrepresented groups
- induction days covering mental health and resilience, and management of expectations.

The panel considered the evidence from the submissions and found that the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve and why these are relevant to its students. Considering the evidence in the round, the panel concluded that this is a very high quality feature.

Approaches to supporting educational gains

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The provider submission states that a range of opportunities are provided for students in relation to the development of graduate skills and to promote entry into graduate employment, which include graduate schemes, master lectures/practical's, guest speaker programmes, Women in Leadership programme, wider graduate skills development sessions, and a range of employer engagement activities.

The student submission reports that students value the extra skills taught in classes and that they have a positive impact on their chosen career.

Further evidence includes:

- the provision of one-to-one support from application to enrolment
- positive student feedback to the higher education study skills programme
- support services provided by the study support team, student support manager and welfare and progression officer
- digital resources designed to meet the needs of higher education students.

The panel considered that the submissions demonstrate that the provider effectively supports its students to achieve the intended educational gains, with references to the provider's approach to continued and tailored support across the student lifecycle as an important part of their approach to educational gains. The panel therefore concluded that this is a very high quality feature.

Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

The panel considered there was not enough evidence that this is a very high quality feature.

Whilst the provider does not specifically reference how it evaluates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, or demonstrate its students are succeeding in achieving the intended gains, the panel noted some evidence in the submission that student progress is monitored and evaluated, for example:

- in Business and Law and Creative Arts, a grade calculator has been introduced to help monitor progress and calculate grades needed for different outcomes which has resulted in improved grades
- the incorporation of a range of formative and summative assessment methods which contribute towards students achieving educational gains
- end of year reviews and employment progress reviews have been introduced in the Business and Law department
- external examiner feedback notes that Film and Screen Media students demonstrate growing levels of research skills, creativity, and understanding of professional practice
- external examiner feedback for Law noted strength with critical analysis, particularly at level six.

Despite this, overall the panel concluded there was not enough evidence to determine the quality of this feature, but recognised that in line with the guidance the absence of a provider's own developed measures of educational gains will not prevent it from being awarded higher TEF ratings.

Overall: Silver

Applying the guidance and the panel members' expert judgment, the panel considered the overall 'best fit' rating to be 'Silver'.

The panel considered the student experience aspect rating to be 'Silver' and the student outcomes aspect rating to be 'Bronze'. The panel weighted these two aspects equally and considered all the evidence across all features and across all the provider's student groups, subjects and courses to come to a 'best fit' decision regarding the overall rating for the provider.

In reaching this decision, the panel considered that the student experience and student outcomes are typically very high quality. It also noted that there are some outstanding features for some groups of students and courses.