



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

## **Summary TEF 2023 panel statement**

**Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance**

# Summary of outcomes

## Overall: Silver

Typically, the experience students have at Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance 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:

- teaching, feedback and assessment practices
- course content and delivery to engage learning, and stretch students to develop their knowledge and skills
- promotion of high quality support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice.

There are also some outstanding quality features including:

- the use of research in relevant disciplines, innovation, professional practice and extensive employer engagement to contribute to an outstanding student experience
- a supportive learning environment, where students have access to a wide and readily available range of outstanding quality academic support tailored to their needs
- learning resources that are tailored and used effectively to support outstanding teaching and learning.

### Student outcomes: Silver

Student outcomes are typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- supporting students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- very high rates of successful progression for students and courses
- effective support for students to achieve educational gains
- evaluation of educational gains made by its students.

There are also some outstanding quality features including:

- rates of continuation and completion
- educational gains that are highly relevant to its students' 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

Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance is a small specialist performing arts institution based in Sidcup, Kent. The provider's vision is 'to create the change-makers', building on the founding belief that teaching, learning, creative practice, arts and industries all speak one to another.

The provider offers a focused range of subjects for full-time and part-time students, with the majority of students studying Performing Arts courses that include performing, design, applied and technical arts.

Most students are 21 years or under and not from the local area prior to entry.

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: Silver**

The panel found the quality of the student experience is typically very high quality for the provider's mix of students and courses. Across the student experience aspect, the provider embeds effective approaches and tailors its approaches to its students to provide a consistent and excellent student experience.

The panel found:

- three of the features to be very high quality, three to be outstanding and one to be below the level of very high quality
- the very high quality and outstanding features apply to most of the provider's courses and groups of students
- one feature was below the level of very high quality, but the panel found some evidence of excellence in the provider and student submission for this feature.

The panel judged that the evidence indicates that the aspect is typically very high quality. The panel did not think that 'Bronze' would be the best fit rating because most, rather than some, of the student experience features are of very high quality. In addition, 'Gold' would not be the best fit because the evidence demonstrates that only some of the student experience features are of outstanding quality.

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

### **Teaching, assessment, and feedback**

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The indicators provide evidence of very high quality 'teaching on my course' for most students, but not evidence of very high quality for 'assessment and feedback'.

The provider and student submissions give further evidence of a very high quality feature, for example:

- teaching, feedback and assessment that supports students' learning and progression
- learning tailored to individual students
- transparent assessment and feedback processes that 'measure performance against grading descriptors'
- live verbal feedback during practice-led teaching and a 'Student Guide to Feedback'
- professional industry-standard teaching and learning spaces.

There is some evidence in the student submission regarding teaching and assessment, with positive comments about practical assignments and the ability to work with and learn from professionals. There were also a number of external examiner report comments on the high level of teaching and employability offered by courses and on the marking and feedback process.

The panel considered that the indicators provide initial evidence of very high quality teaching and the submissions include evidence of a learning, teaching and support strategy to support effective teaching, assessment and feedback practices. Overall, the panel found highly effective teaching, assessment and feedback practices that support students' learning, progression, and attainment are embedded across the provider.

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

The panel considered this a very high quality feature. The indicators provide initial evidence of at least very high quality 'teaching on my course'.

The provider submission offers compelling evidence of very high quality course content, delivered through a 'Learning, Teaching and Student Support Strategy'. The provider also offers evidence of effectively encouraging students' engagement in their learning, with small group learning, opportunities to study abroad and different assessment methods to ensure success for students with additional needs.

The student submission noted that small group learning was very beneficial in terms of attention and understanding.

Overall, the panel considered that the provider submission offers evidence of effectively encouraging students' engagement in their learning, with elements of inspirational activity. The provider data shows that most, but not all, students are achieving their full potential. The panel therefore concluded 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 an outstanding feature.

There is strong evidence of academic research and scholarship at the provider and some evidence of how this contributes to the student experience.

Some of the specific evidence includes:

- research-informed changes to the curriculum
- recruitment of staff holding doctorates and research-active staff
- industry links offering undergraduates students opportunities to engage with national and international organisations.

Overall, the panel considered that the evidence shows that the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, innovation, professional practice and extensive employer engagement to engage its students and contribute to an outstanding academic experience.

## **Staff professional development and academic practice**

The panel found that this is a very high quality feature and that there is evidence of initiatives that support staff development and enhance academic practice.

Examples in the provider submission include:

- evidence that staff are qualified and accredited
- details of support provided to teachers for research projects
- facilitation of sharing of practice among staff, including working with an external facilitator to develop institutional inclusive best practices regarding supporting students with disabilities
- staff training workshops around supporting students with mental health conditions, neurodiversity and learners with dyslexia.

The panel found that while the provider does not provide evidence for professional development beyond its teaching staff, it concluded that there is very high quality support for staff professional development and that excellent academic practice is promoted.

## **Learning environment and academic support**

The panel found that this is to be an outstanding quality feature.

The indicators provide evidence of very high quality 'academic support', albeit with some evidence of not very high quality for certain student groups. However, the provider submission shows evidence of outstanding quality student support, including:

- out-of-hours student support services
- a focus on increasing the number of mental health first aiders
- mandatory staff training in areas including mental health, neurodiversity, equality and diversity
- dedicated support staff to ensure all students are supported in all aspects of their experience
- a Student Experience Committee to discuss non-academic student issues and support requirements.

The provider has also recognised that there is an increase in students reporting a disability and has introduced specific support for these students. The student submission commented on helpful support which led to a dyslexia/ADHD diagnosis, library staff offering support and deadlines being adjusted to take account of additional needs.

Overall, the panel judged that the provider offers enough evidence to demonstrate that it ensures a supportive learning environment, and its students have access to a wide and readily available range of outstanding quality academic support with support being targeted both at specific underrepresented or marginalised groups and the wider student population.

## **Learning resources**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The panel found that the indicators provided evidence of very high quality 'learning resources'. The provider submission offered compelling evidence of outstanding learning resources. This included:

- blended learning delivery to address challenges of coronavirus
- industrial sponsorship to create the Centre for Digital Production
- resources that prepare students to work in high demand, technical skills shortage subject areas
- a significant range of high-specification specialist facilities such as theatres, studios, mixing suites, computer-aided design facilities and scenic workshops
- a library with over 50,000 items, including special collections, an IT suite and a music store.

Overall, the panel considered there to be sufficient evidence that physical and virtual learning resources are tailored and used effectively to support outstanding teaching and learning for a provider of this nature.

## **Student engagement in improvement**

The panel did not find sufficient evidence to conclude that this feature is very high quality.

The indicators provide evidence that 'student voice' is below the level of very high quality. However, the provider submission does provide some evidence of engaging with the student voice. This includes:

- the appointment of a student engagement officer
- programme student representative system, with induction training
- student rep-led module evaluation surveys
- student representation on committees
- students participating as full members of periodic reviews.

While these mechanisms demonstrate strategic and embedded processes for supporting the student voice, the panel found that the impact is not evidenced in the provider submission. Overall, the panel concluded that the disparity between the activities and their impact suggest that, for this feature, there is insufficient evidence of very high quality.



## **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 student outcomes are typically very high quality for the provider's mix of students and courses.

Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- the provider effectively supports its students to achieve very high quality student outcomes and educational gains
- most features are of very high quality, and two are outstanding
- none of the features are clearly below the level of 'very high quality' or of concern.

The panel found the very high quality and outstanding features apply to all the provider's groups of students, including students with disabilities (which comprise approximately 34 per cent of the provider's students).

The panel considered that the rating with the best fit is 'Silver' as the aspect is typically very high quality. It judged that the available evidence best fits the 'Silver' rating description that 'all features are very high quality for most groups of students and courses'. It did not think that 'Gold' would be the best fit because only 'some' rather than 'most' of the student outcomes features are of outstanding quality.

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 how many of the approaches it employs to ensure students succeed and progress are embedded into the curriculum. The panel found the indicators provide initial evidence of:

- typically outstanding quality for 'completion', but Creative Arts and Design courses to be not very high quality
- typically very high quality for 'progression', but with variances between different student groups

The provider submission offers compelling evidence of a very high quality feature, which supports this positive data, including:

- engagement with professional bodies and organisations, including with industry on course validation panels

- embedding of simulated professional practice in all full-time programmes ensuring key industry skills have been engaged with prior to graduation
- alumni returning to assist students with careers advice, mentoring, placements and work experience
- undergraduate programmes having entrepreneurship and employability embedded within them.

Overall, the panel judged this feature to be of very high quality and concluded that the provider effectively supports its students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies.

### **Continuation and completion rates**

The panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

The 'continuation' indicator provided initial evidence of outstanding continuation rates for the provider's mix of students and courses. The provider submission notes that for subjects with continuation rates below the benchmark, this was often a consequence of skilled labour shortages in the sector, with students choosing to leave their studies to take professional posts in industry. The provider describes mitigating action that they are taking to address this, which has been positively noted by the external examiner.

The provider submission also provides evidence of high quality support in place for continuation. Other evidence includes external examiner comments relating to the support leading to continuation rates remaining high during coronavirus.

The panel was satisfied that where there have been low completion and continuation rates for some groups, the provider is taking action to address this. Overall, the panel considered that there is sufficient evidence to conclude that there are outstanding rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses.

### **Progression rates**

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

The overall full-time indicator for 'progression' provides evidence of very high quality, although there is mixed post-study employment experience for students from different demographics. The provider submission attributes some low indicators to the impact of coronavirus on employment in the drama sector.

The provider submission includes evidence of support for progression, such as:

- many of the college's 2021-22 graduating cohort (96.1 per cent) have been signed by agents
- the formation of an interdisciplinary Industry Advisory Board in 2021 to advise on specific topics such as increasing graduate employability
- the appointment of an industry relationship manager to lead industry engagement and employability.

The provider appears to recognise the reasons behind low indicator data and offers evidence as to why the coronavirus pandemic impacted upon the indicators. Therefore, considering the evidence in the round, the panel concluded that there are very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses.

### **Intended educational gains**

The panel considered this an outstanding feature, and that the provider articulates evidence of the educational gains it intends for its mix of students through its strategic plan.

The provider submission acknowledges students from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds face challenges in this sector and has put in place actions and interventions to support them, including holding an event, utilising external experts, designed to inform their understanding of contemporary British black theatre. The provider also recognises that some of its students have disabilities relating to mental health and has worked to offer support specifically for that group of students.

The student submission notes that modules are designed to represent industry expectations and to teach time management. It also notes that assessments are 'designed to reflect industry and consider others' needs and understanding positionality'.

Overall, the panel considered that the provider clearly articulates the range of educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and students recognise the skills they are being encouraged to develop and why they are highly relevant to careers in their sector.

### **Approaches to supporting educational gains**

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

The panel found compelling evidence within the provider submission of very high quality strategic support for students to achieve intended educational gains. For example, the development of key skills through pre-higher educational induction, learned professional behaviours, a coaching-led learning culture, gaining of collaborative skills acquired through project-led and production-led processes, and the use of mentorship, work experience and networking opportunities.

However the panel noted that the provider submission offers limited evidence of how these skills are embedded or enabled through the curriculum. On balance, given the small and specialist nature of the provider, the panel concluded that the provider effectively supports its students to achieve these educational gains.

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

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

The provider submission articulates compelling evidence of very high quality evaluation of educational gains. Examples include:

- ensuring that many of these gains are built into programme and module learning outcomes
- requesting that external examiner reports explicitly address employability opportunities and attributes of students

- dialogue with industry professionals and employers to validate the success of intended educational gain.

Overall, the panel judged that there was sufficient evidence that the provider evaluates the gains made by its students.

## **Overall: Silver**

The panel judged that the rating for student experience was 'Silver' and the rating for student outcomes was 'Silver'.

Throughout the student outcomes aspect, and within a considerable number of student experience features, the provider submission presents clear evidence of very high quality in its policies, practices, and approaches, which apply to most of its student groups, subjects and courses. The panel found that the provider presented compelling evidence to show that its approaches are embedded and effective.

Considering the overall evidence, the panel judged that the best fit is 'Silver' because overall student experiences are typically very high quality for all the provider's groups of students, and student outcomes are also typically very high quality for all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.