



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

The University of Leicester

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Gold

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

Student experience: Silver

The student academic experience is typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- the use of research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience for students
- a supportive learning environment in which students have access to a range of very high quality academic support
- physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning.

Some features are a combination of very high quality and outstanding quality:

- a mixture of very high and outstanding quality teaching, feedback and assessment practices, some of which are tailored, that support students' learning, progression and attainment
- course content and delivery effectively encourage, and in some cases, inspire the provider's mix of students to develop their knowledge and skills.

There are also some outstanding quality features:

- outstanding support for staff professional development, with excellent academic practice embedded across the provider
- embedded engagement with students, leading to continuous improvements to the experiences and outcomes of students.

Student outcomes: Gold

Student outcomes are typically outstanding quality.

Outstanding quality features include:

- outstanding rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses
- a clear articulation of the range of educational gains the provider intends its students to achieve, and why these are highly relevant to its students and their future ambitions
- approaches to supporting students to achieve the intended educational gains are evidence based, highly effective and tailored to students and their different starting points
- the provider evaluates the gains made by its students, and demonstrates its students are succeeding in achieving the intended gains.

There are also some very high quality features:

- effective support for students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses.

About the assessment

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is a national scheme run by the Office for Students (OfS) that aims to encourage universities and colleges (providers) to improve and deliver excellent teaching, learning and student outcomes.

The TEF does this by assessing and rating providers for excellence above the high quality baseline that we expect from all providers. It covers undergraduate courses.

Throughout this document, we use the terms 'outstanding' and 'very high quality', which are defined in terms of the TEF 2023 assessment as follows:

- 'outstanding': the quality of the student experience or outcomes are among the very best in the sector, for the mix of students and courses taught by a provider
- 'very high quality': the quality of the student experience or outcomes are materially above the relevant high quality minimum requirements, for the mix of students and courses taught by a provider.

The assessment was carried out in 2022-23 by the TEF Panel, a panel of academics and students who are experts in learning and teaching. This document sets out a summary of the panel's findings and judgements.

The panel reviewed the following evidence:

- numerical indicators produced by the OfS, using national datasets
- a submission made by the provider, setting out its own evidence
- a submission made by the provider's students, setting out students' views.

The panel applied its expert judgement to:

- identify particular features of the student experience and student outcomes that are excellent (above the high quality baseline requirements)
- decide a rating for the 'student experience' and for 'student outcomes'
- decide an overall rating for the provider.

Throughout the assessment the panel took account of the context of the provider and judged how well it delivers teaching, learning and student outcomes for its mix of students and courses.

In making its decisions the panel took account of the OfS general duties and the public sector equalities duty.

Summary of panel assessment

Information about this provider

The University of Leicester outlines its social mission to widen the horizons of students, to empower them with the highest quality education, and to nurture in them a social conscience which positively impacts upon society. It articulates a vision for its graduates as 'citizens of change' uniquely equipped with the attributes of kindness and inclusion, social conscience and critical thinking, as well as an exceptional education, ready to make a positive impact on the world.

The provider notes significant changes in its student population over the four years of the TEF assessment period. In 2020-21 it had 11,080 full-time and 200 part-time undergraduate students. It offers a broad spread of subjects, with the largest being Business and Management at 11.8 per cent, followed by Medicine and Dentistry at 10.7 per cent, and Law at 10.9 per cent.

The number of full-time undergraduate students from the most disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds has recently increased to 30.3 per cent, while 16 per cent of students over the last four years were eligible for free school meals. The number of full-time UK Asian students has grown to 24.5 per cent. 88.2 per cent of students were not local prior to studying at the university.

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/.

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 evidence of typically very high quality across the student experience as a whole. Across the aspect it found:

- three features are very high quality
- two features are a combination of very high and outstanding quality
- two features are outstanding.

The panel judged that the very high and outstanding quality features apply to most of the provider's groups of students. This often includes students from underrepresented groups, which make up a high proportion of the provider's students.

The panel applied the ratings criteria and considered 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 did not think that 'Gold' would be the best fit because the evidence overall does not show that most features of the aspect are outstanding for all groups of students nor that all features of the aspect are outstanding.

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

Teaching, assessment, and feedback

The panel considered this feature to have a combination of very high and outstanding quality elements.

The indicators showed:

- for full-time students there was initial evidence that 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback' are very high quality. However, there was some variation between subjects.
- for part-time students there was initial evidence that 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback' are not very high quality.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions included:

- a long term continuous improvement process that the provider says has contributed to outstanding outcomes for students
- integrating technology to enhance student learning in subjects such as Psychology and Medicine

- embedding education for sustainable development through systematic processes like curriculum mapping
- introducing an assessment strategy resulting in high numbers of new students consistently saying they are clear on how they are assessed
- targeted interventions tailored for students who are the first in their family to go to university
- a strategic dedication to inclusion in teaching, through events and initiatives like the inclusive curriculum project
- the 'Black Excellence Programme' runs focus groups and collaborative action to develop evidence based interventions around satisfaction, awarding and progression gaps
- student feedback shows 92 per cent of students find teaching inspiring. Students also highlight positive developments in formative assessment, feedback, and dissertation support.

The panel considered there were strong examples of very high quality teaching and assessment, with an effective, evidence based, and well evaluated approach to continuous improvement. It noted some sector-leading innovation in relevant areas. The panel also recognised concerns raised in the student submission related to timely feedback, in-person teaching and timetabling, although noted many of these issues are being addressed. Additionally the panel considered the variation in the indicators for some students.

Overall, considering all of the evidence and the provider's context, the panel concluded that the feature contained both very high quality and outstanding elements, and that the provider has embedded a mixture of very high and outstanding quality teaching, feedback and assessment practices, some of which are tailored, that support its students' learning, progression and attainment.

Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch

The panel considered this feature to have a combination of very high and outstanding quality elements.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions included:

- undertaking a three phase continuous improvement project that has involved:
 - curriculum transformation resulting in changes like increased contact hours, reduced reliance on exams and sector leading embedding of UN sustainable Development goals
 - an education excellence initiative emphasising inclusive education and career development across undergraduate programmes
 - a current focus on research inspired education, aiming to deliver challenging programs driven by cutting edge research

a commitment to real life experience and technology enabled teaching

- sector leading efforts in developing impactful interventions to embed equality diversity and inclusion best practices in curriculum and teaching methods. Positive impacts include reducing the ethnicity awarding gap by 4.8 percentage points.
- experiential learning opportunities such as laboratory learning, field courses, study abroad, and industry placements
- receiving a National Teaching Fellowship award for developing racial inclusion toolkit
- an 'accelerated enhancement' program targeting below benchmark performance indicators
- extensive comments from a wide range of students about the engaged and supportive teaching staff.

The panel noted a range of developments and innovation in curriculum and teaching methods, with some rightly described as sector leading. However the panel also considered the extent to which the provider delivers excellence for all its groups of students.

Looking at the evidence overall, the panel concluded that this feature contained a combination of very high quality and outstanding elements, in which the provider's course content and delivery effectively encourage, and in some cases, inspire the provider's mix of students to develop their knowledge and skills.

Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The evidence in the provider submission included:

- adopting a strategic approach to delivering research inspired, employer informed education
- examples of initiatives and activity include a research-teaching nexus, active student engagement with research and employer informed teaching across a wide array of subjects
- work experience opportunities for students across all courses, although the proportion of students taking these up are not detailed
- advisory boards contribute employer input to specific subjects
- an innovation lab offers employment experience for students lacking work experience, and has succeeded in engaging underrepresented student groups.

The panel noted that a range of good practice is highlighted with examples across a range of subjects. However it did not see evidence of the proportion of students undertaking some of these activities or evaluation of their impact.

Considering all of the evidence and the provider's context, the panel concluded on balance that the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or

employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience for its students, and that overall this is a very high quality feature. In reaching this judgement the panel recognised the research-teaching nexus as an outstanding element within the feature.

Staff professional development and academic practice

The panel found this feature to be of outstanding quality.

The evidence in the provider submission included:

- an academic teaching qualification rate of 81.7 per cent is among the sector's highest, due to it being a requirement for staff promotion
- tailored programmes for staff in subjects like Life Sciences
- teaching recognition and reward initiatives, such as an academic promotion route linked to teaching and the distinguished teaching fellowship award
- an educational leadership group enables educational leaders to develop institutional strategy
- a university distinguished teaching fellowship scheme, judged by a staff-student panel
- projects related to national teaching fellowships and collaborative awards for teaching excellence help drive innovation
- teaching and research are equally weighted in promotion criteria, with added emphasis on personal tutoring and academic support.

The panel noted a commitment to impactful continuous professional development embedded throughout the academic life cycle. Looking at all the evidence, the panel concluded that there is outstanding support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is embedded across the provider. This is consistent with an outstanding quality feature.

Learning environment and academic support

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The indicator showed:

- for full-time students there was initial evidence that 'academic support' is very high quality
- for part-time students there was initial evidence that 'academic support' is below the level of very high quality.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions included:

- the education excellence project which included enhanced academic induction, extensive student support workshops, personal tutoring reviews, and bringing in a new dean of academic tutoring

- the headstart program engaged 5,700 students in 2022, receiving recognition with a Heist Award
- a personal tutoring scheme is supported by a dedicated personal tutor dashboard
- a peer mentoring system is stated to be sector leading due to a 'liberation mentoring' element
- pursuing mental health charter status, with ongoing improvement in student support services
- student feedback is positive about support from proactive personal tutors, though in a survey only a 53 per cent of students knew where to find this support and said their tutor was supportive and helpful.

The panel noted an approach of using evidence to inform policies and strategic leadership of personal tutoring. However, students noted an inconsistent availability and uptake of personal tutoring support. The panel considered there was a wide range of academic support, including support for mental health, along with other activities.

Considering the evidence overall, the panel concluded that the provider fosters a supportive learning environment, and 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 indicator showed:

- for full-time students there was initial evidence that 'learning resources' are very high quality
- for part-time students there was initial evidence that 'learning resources' are not very high quality.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions included:

- developing teaching facilities, including a new space for the medical school to facilitate soft skills and small group working
- the centre for academic achievement, the accessibility centre, and library facilities
- the provider using its expertise in distance learning to enable smooth transitions to online learning during the coronavirus pandemic
- ensuring inclusivity in online learning through monitoring of accessibility scores, which are high and have improved

- all students are enrolled in an essential skills for digital learning course, with a significant number engaging with it
- student feedback highlights that learning resources were the highest scoring area in the national student survey 2022. They also note their appreciation for investment in learning resources and responsiveness to feedback, such as creating private study rooms.

The panel noted evidence of the range of learning resources, with some examples of reach and impact. It noted for example the essential skills for digital learning course as an outstanding element within the feature. However on balance, when looking at all the evidence, the panel concluded that physical and virtual learning resources overall are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning. This is consistent with a very high quality feature.

Student engagement in improvement

The panel found this to be an outstanding feature.

The indicator showed:

- for full-time students there was initial evidence that 'student voice' is outstanding
- for part-time students there was initial evidence that 'student voice' is not very high quality.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions included:

- introducing a new student voice model through the education excellence project
- a robust framework for embedding student voice into everything the provider does, guided by principles of inclusion, challenge, and partnership
- buddying students' union executive officers with senior leadership team members
- improvements co-created with students include teaching quality guidance, library hour extensions, personal tutor guidelines, and revised mitigating circumstances processes
- a student academic experience survey includes students who do not take part in the national student survey
- module surveys are discussed in student staff committee meetings and annual programme reviews
- a comprehensive academic representative system includes 371 student representatives at various levels, with remuneration to encourage engagement
- collaboration with the students' union and using survey data fed into improved academic support for international students
- positive quotes and comments in the student submission comments on responsiveness to student feedback during coronavirus.

The panel noted evidence of a range of well embedded good practice and some innovation, along with how this impacts approaches across a wide range of student experience. The panel considered this confirms the outstanding quality demonstrated in the full-time indicator.

Overall, the panel concluded that the provider embeds engagement with its students, leading to continuous improvements to the experiences and outcomes of its students. This is consistent with an outstanding quality feature.

Student outcomes: Gold

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

The panel considered that student outcomes are typically of outstanding quality. Across the aspect the panel found:

- four features are outstanding quality
- two features are very high quality.

The panel found that the very high quality and outstanding features apply to all the provider's groups of students. This includes students from underrepresented groups, which make up a high proportion of the provider's students.

The panel applied the ratings criteria and considered the best fit rating to be 'Gold'. This is because most features of the aspect are outstanding quality for all groups of students.

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

Approaches to supporting student success

The panel found this feature to be very high quality.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions included:

- an evidence led approach to curriculum transformation has contributed to year on year improvement in students continuing their studies
- annual program reviews scrutinise continuation, completion, and degree awarding data. Along with examining assessment outcomes, the provider says this has led to lower withdrawal rates
- curriculum transformation in mathematical sciences and engineering has increased continuation by over 8 per cent
- giving students the chance to take part in the Leicester Award as part of the curriculum has increased rates of significant work experience

- proactive employer engagement includes a citizens of change internship scheme and student first employment opportunities initiative
- a career development service, used by over 4500 students annually including by 60 per cent of those in their final year
- the student submission shows evidence that students feel supported in developing transferable skills.

The panel noted that the provider works to identify areas of underperformance through their monitoring and review systems, and takes action to enhance student outcomes. The panel considered the provider adopts an evidence led and strategic approach to enhancing outcomes for the whole range of its students.

Looking at the evidence overall, the panel concluded that the provider effectively supports its students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies, consistent with a very high quality feature.

Continuation and completion rates

The panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

The indicators showed:

- for full-time students there was initial evidence that 'continuation' and 'completion' are very high quality
- for part-time students there was some initial evidence that 'continuation' is very high quality; while 'completion' is outstanding.

The panel noted that the provider provides evidence that its strategic 'evidence led and targeted approach has successfully driven a year on year improvement' of continuation and completion. Where subject splits still demonstrate lower continuation or completion, the panel recognised that curriculum transformation has led to an increase in performance in recent years. The panel also considered positive feedback in the student submission.

Looking at all the evidence together, the panel concluded there are outstanding rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses.

Progression rates

The panel found this feature is very high quality.

The indicator showed that:

- for full-time students there was initial evidence that 'progression' is very high quality
- for part-time students there was some initial evidence that 'progression' is very high quality.

The panel noted evidence from the student submission survey shows a large majority of students feel the provider supports them in developing transferrable skills, providing a series of quotations from former students recognising the benefit of their education for employability.

Considering the evidence overall, the panel concluded that there are very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses.

Intended educational gains

The panel found this feature to be outstanding.

The evidence in the provider and student submissions included:

- the provider's vision of students as citizens of change is emphasised in both submissions, demonstrating that its values are reflected in everyday practice
- articulating various aspects of educational gain, including confidence, criticality, social responsibility, and career readiness including a description of each
- a quote from the current students' union president highlights personal growth in confidence due to the provider's approach
- carefully designing and regularly reviewing programmes to meet the demands of real world challenges
- the commitment to social responsibility and career readiness are embedded throughout the curriculum.

The panel noted the prominence of these themes across both submissions, considering this a nuanced and authentic articulation of a range of educational gains the provider intends its students to achieve. These are in line with its values and mission, and students' aspirations.

Considering the evidence overall, the panel concluded 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. This is consistent with an outstanding quality feature.

Approaches to supporting educational gains

The panel found this was an outstanding quality feature.

The evidence in the provider submission included:

- integrating UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Leicester Award into courses
- a transferable skills framework is well established
- promoting volunteering opportunities for students
- offering a careers registration system

- taking part in the Higher Education Funding Council for England's national mixed methodology learning gain project enabled evidence driven curriculum transformation, embedding sustainability and current issues within courses
- student support workshops allow for regular reflection on skills development along with offering tools for resilience and self management.

The panel considered how these activities will lead to the intended educational gains, noting evidence demonstrates many activities are already well embedded in practice which shows credible and tangible support.

Overall, the panel judged that the provider's approaches to supporting its students to achieve the intended educational gains are evidence based, highly effective and tailored to its students and their different starting points. This is consistent with an outstanding feature.

Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

The panel judged this feature as outstanding quality.

Evidence from the provider submission showed:

- an approach to curriculum enrichment and support using insights from a range of data to create an 'educational gains evaluation framework
- a clear and robust way to ensure consistency in evaluation and continuous improvement, by mapping core measures to each element of its definition of educational gain.

The panel considered that this approach provides systems that track educational gain, and noted that this data will be available at both individual and cohort level.

Overall, the panel concluded that the provider evaluates the gains made by its students, and demonstrates its students are succeeding in achieving the intended gains. This is consistent with an outstanding quality feature.

Overall: Gold

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

The panel considered the student experience aspect rating to be 'Silver' and the student outcomes aspect rating to be 'Gold'. 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.

When determining whether the overall rating should be 'Gold' or 'Silver', the panel judged the evidence to show, on the whole, there to be typically outstanding provision, rather than typically very high quality provision. This is consistent with an overall rating of 'Gold'.