



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

BPP University Limited

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Bronze

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

Student experience: Requires improvement

Improvement is required to be awarded a TEF rating for this aspect.

There are not enough very high quality features to be awarded a TEF rating.

The panel finds that there are no features which are clearly below the level of very high quality or which are of concern.

Very high quality features include:

- excellent academic practice is promoted by the provider.
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Student outcomes: Silver

Student outcomes are typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- effectively supporting students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- very high rates of continuation
- very high rates of progression
- educational gains and their relevance to students are clearly articulated
- effectively supporting students to achieve these 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

The provider is part of the BPP Education Group. Its educational mission is to 'build careers through education' and describes its strategic aim as being to 'become the leading provider in global post-secondary education'. The provider operates from eight undergraduate campuses throughout England.

Students studying at the provider are primarily postgraduates. It admits around 2,000 undergraduates each year. In 2019-20, 950 of these were part-time students, although in prior years the number of part-time students has been smaller.

Across the four-year aggregate, the largest subjects for full-time undergraduates are business and management and law. For part-time students, the largest subjects are law and computing.

The majority of the provider's students are non-UK domiciled. In 2020-21, nearly half of full-time undergraduates were aged over 21 on entry and a small proportion were aged over 31 on entry.

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: Requires improvement

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.

Across the student experience aspect, the panel found:

- one very high quality feature
- that the remaining features are not very high quality.

The panel judged that there were minimal very high quality features for this aspect. The panel applied the criteria, and determined the outcome to be that the provider requires improvement for the award of a TEF rating.

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

Teaching, assessment, and feedback; Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch

The panel considered that these features were below the level of very high quality.

The indicators provide evidence that:

- 'teaching on my course' is not very high quality for full-time students, with the statistical uncertainty distribution spread between not very high quality and very high quality
- 'teaching on my course' is not very high quality for part-time students
- 'assessment and feedback' is not very high quality for full-time students, with the statistical uncertainty distribution spread between not very high quality and very high quality
- 'assessment and feedback' is not very high quality for part-time students.

The provider evidence includes:

- data from module evaluation questionnaires, although as there was limited evidence on the scope and coverage of these surveys, the panel did not place substantial weight on this as it could not determine if it was directly relevant to the provider's mix of students and courses
- provision of feedback on summative assessment and holistic marking rubrics
- the Learning and Teaching team support staff to develop proficiency in marking
- a five-stage model for learning.

The student submission states that internal feedback mechanisms show higher levels of satisfaction than the National Student Survey, and that the NSS results are not representative of the student population. The student submission also refers to action plans for improving assessment and feedback and a digital exams platform. The panel did not place significant weight on the student submission as there was limited evidence about the number of students whose views had contributed to the evidence base.

The panel considered that there was limited compelling evidence for these features and considered that the features were below the level of very high quality.

Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement

The panel considered that this feature was not very high quality.

The provider evidence includes:

- the provider is accredited by a number of professional bodies
- employers and professional bodies are members of the provider's Approval Panel
- an annual census is conducted of staff scholarship activities; the 2021-22 census showed that 63 per cent of teaching staff demonstrated engagement with professional bodies and external providers
- a 'Business Pitch Perfect' simulation activity for business students.

The panel did not identify evidence relating to this feature in the student submission.

The panel considered that there was not compelling evidence of the use of research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience.

Staff professional development and academic practice

The panel considered that this was a very high quality feature.

The provider evidence includes:

- new teaching staff are required to complete an accredited Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching
- funding for courses, qualifications and professional membership fees
- a CPD framework, nominated leads for training and development and a community of practice which has delivered more than 40 CPD sessions since 2021.

The panel did not identify evidence relating to this feature in the student submission.

The panel considered that there was sufficient evidence that excellent academic practice is promoted by the provider.

Learning environment and academic support

The panel considered that this feature was not very high quality.

The indicators provide evidence that:

- 'academic support' is not very high quality for full-time and part-time students.

The provider evidence includes:

- library support services are available face-to-face and online, with satisfaction rates of 80 per cent and above
- a virtual campus space for students, staff and alumni, with 17.5k registered users since spring 2020
- a clinically-moderated platform for mental health support

- dedicated support for international students.

The student submission referred to the provider responding to student feedback about academic support. It also described the in person induction sessions.

The panel considered that there was insufficient evidence of the impact of the provider's approaches to the learning environment and academic support.

Learning resources

The panel considered that this feature was not very high quality.

The indicators provide evidence that 'learning resources' is not very high quality for full-time and part-time students.

The provider evidence includes:

- simulation facilities for nursing students
- an AI adaptive learning platform for law students, with positive feedback from external examiners
- programme evaluation data showing 80 per cent or higher rates of agreement that library and IT resources support learning in 2020-21 and 2021-22, although the scope and coverage of these surveys was not included.

The student submission states that students find the virtual learning environment, which includes lectures, textbooks and past exam papers, to be beneficial for their assessments. The student submission also states that the library collections meet students' needs.

The panel considered that there was insufficient evidence that physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning.

Student engagement in improvement

The panel considered that this feature was not very high quality.

The indicators provide evidence that:

- 'student voice' is not very high quality for full-time students
- there was no robust statistical evidence provided by the part-time 'student voice' indicator.

The provider evidence includes:

- an annual Student Written Submission to the provider's Academic Council, which the student submission describes as sector-leading
- the Student President meets fortnightly with the Vice-Chancellor
- improvements made based on student feedback, including an increased number of activities delivered through the virtual campus.

The student submission states that academic representation is effective, students see 'tangible changes' based on their feedback and describes focus groups run by the Student Association and a 'Students as Partners' approach.

The panel considered that there was insufficient evidence that the provider's approaches are informed by evidence, data or evaluation. The panel also considered that there was limited compelling evidence of impact.

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.

Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- all features are very high quality.

The panel applied the criteria and considered that the rating with the best fit is Silver. This is because all features are very high quality.

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

Approaches to supporting student success

The panel considered that this was a very high quality feature.

The provider evidence includes:

- the employability service supports students up to 18 months post-graduation
- the 'Access to Practice' scheme partners law students with qualified legal professionals for coaching and mentoring
- entrepreneurship masterclasses are run for business students
- 77 per cent of students agreed in the 2022 student experience survey that they have developed career skills and improved their professional career prospects.

The student submission states that the provider has begun to recruit students into part-time roles to help them gain work experience. It also states that the provider seeks to employ non-UK domiciled students after graduation through the graduate visa route. These statements were not quantified and so the panel gave them limited weighting.

The panel considered that there is sufficient evidence that the provider effectively supports its students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies.

Continuation and completion rates

The panel considered that this was a very high quality feature.

The indicators provide evidence that:

- continuation is very high quality for full-time students and outstanding quality for part-time students

- completion is not very high quality for full-time and part-time students.

The provider evidence includes:

- an explanation that its health and social care students are on a level 4 programme prior to re-registering for a degree or apprenticeship. The provider states that the below benchmark completion rates are because of the flexibility this offers. The panel accepted this explanation
- an explanation that its 'no-detriment' policy during the coronavirus pandemic is a reason for high levels of student deferral. The panel did not consider this explanation was compelling.

The student submission refers to the learning support available to students to support them to continue.

The panel considered that there is sufficient evidence of very high quality for continuation and insufficient evidence of very high quality for completion. The panel considered that there is evidence of very high quality for most groups of students.

Progression rates

The panel considered that this was a very high quality feature.

The indicators provide evidence that:

- progression is either very high quality or outstanding for full-time students
- progression data is suppressed for part-time students because the numerator is within two of the denominator.

The provider evidence includes:

- internal data showing that 90.6 per cent of its UK-domiciled graduates were in highly skilled employment in 2018-19 and 2019-20
- 100 per cent of students who took the solicitor apprenticeship examinations in 2022 passed, compared with a national average of 77 per cent
- Graduate Outcomes data indicates that 94.1 per cent of graduates are engaged in work, further study or other recognised activities 15 months after graduation.

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

Intended educational gains; Approaches to supporting educational gains

The panel considered that these were very high quality features.

The provider evidence includes:

- its view that educational gains are 'the additional value learners gain by being students at BPP, measured by their enhancement employability and the range of knowledge, skills, behaviours and attributes they develop'
- programme learning outcomes including professional skills
- outcomes from the careers readiness survey are embedded across programmes

- use of the careers readiness survey from 2022-23.

The panel considered that the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve and why these are relevant to them. The panel also considered that the provider effectively supports its students to achieve these gains through its identification and promotion of professional and key skills.

Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

The provider evidence includes:

- description of the use of datasets, including entry data, careers readiness, outcomes and evaluations alongside alumni feedback to measure educational gain
- a plan to 'identify the characteristics of high performing students and build profiles of activity which demonstrate the successful educational gains students are making'.

The panel considered that the evaluation strategy for educational gain is not yet in place. The panel had regard to the guidance in RA22 that providers should not be prevented from being awarded higher TEF ratings solely on the absence of its own developed measures of educational gains.

Overall: Bronze

The panel judged that the provider requires improvement for the award of a TEF rating for the student experience aspect. The panel judged that the best fit rating for the student outcomes aspect was Silver.

The panel judged that the best fit overall rating is Bronze. It judged that overall there are some very high quality features and that there are no features which are clearly below the level of very high quality or which are of concern which the panel judged to be sufficiently serious or widespread to prevent the award of an overall rating of Bronze.