



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

## **Summary TEF 2023 panel statement**

**Blackpool and the Fylde College**

# Summary of outcomes

## Overall: Gold

Typically, the experience students have at Blackpool and the Fylde College and the outcomes it leads to are outstanding.

### Student experience: Gold

The student academic experience is typically of outstanding quality.

Outstanding quality features include:

- teaching, assessment and feedback practices, tailored to support students' learning, progression, and attainment
- course content and delivery, inspiring students to engage with their learning and develop knowledge and skills to their fullest potential
- professional practices and employer engagement that contribute to an outstanding academic experience
- support for staff professional development, with excellent academic practice embedded across the provider
- a supportive learning environment, with access to a wide range of outstanding academic support tailored to their needs
- student engagement embedded across the provider, leading to continuous improvement to student experiences and outcomes.

There is also one very high quality feature:

- effective use of physical and virtual learning resources to support very high quality teaching and learning.

### Student outcomes: Gold

Student outcomes are typically outstanding.

Outstanding quality features include:

- tailored approaches that are highly effective in ensuring students succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- clearly explained educational gains that the provider intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to students and their future ambitions
- highly effective, tailored approaches to supporting students to achieve their intended educational gains
- how the provider evaluates students' gains and demonstrates they are succeeding.

There are also some very high quality features, including:

- very high rates of continuation and completion for students and courses
- very high rates of successful progression for 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

Blackpool and the Fylde College is a large further education institution, with its mission stated as being 'Inspirational learning creating outstanding futures'. The provider's vision for higher education is to: 'Secure outstanding outcomes for students and apprentices regardless of age or demographic, in which learning and teaching excellence are absolutely central'.

The provider has approximately 3,000 undergraduate students each year, including full-time, part-time and apprenticeship students. It operates from five campuses and four specialist centres and is a lead partner in Lancashire and Cumbria's Institute of Technology.

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/](http://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/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/).

## **Student experience: Gold**

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:

- most features are outstanding
- one feature that is very high quality.

The panel applied the criteria and considered that 'Gold' is the best fit rating. This is because most features are outstanding for all groups of students and courses.

The panel did not think that 'Silver' would be the best fit because the evidence demonstrates that 'most' rather than 'some' of the student experience features are of outstanding quality. Also, the outstanding quality features apply to 'all' rather than 'most' students.

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

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

The panel found this to be an outstanding feature.

For full-time students, the indicators provide initial evidence of very high quality 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback', with some variation between subjects.

The panel noted that almost all indicators for part-time students are unavailable due to low response rates and student numbers.

For apprenticeships, the indicators provide strong initial evidence of outstanding 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback'.

The provider and student submissions give further evidence of an outstanding feature:

- evidence of the impact of the Senior Tutor role, which has been effective in supporting student progress on learning, teaching, and assessment, and on scholarship and research
- external examiner reports, which confirm that assessment and feedback practices are effective in supporting students' learning and development
- the provider routinely reviews the quality of teaching and learning through observations aligned to the UK Professional Standards Framework
- student survey results show that teaching and assessment are effective in helping students to progress, include the provider's use of 'flipped' learning to familiarise students with basic concepts before attending classes.

The panel considered the characteristics of the student body and the high proportion of students from underrepresented groups to be relevant when considering this evidence.

Overall, the panel concluded the indicators and submissions suggest that outstanding teaching, assessment, and feedback practices are embedded across the provider, effectively supporting students' learning, progression, and attainment.

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

The panel found this to be an outstanding feature.

The students submission provided evidence that the standard of education is of 'extremely high quality'. Attendance at all timetabled sessions over the last four years is 90 per cent or above each year.

The provider and student submissions provide further evidence of an outstanding feature:

- Degree Plus Employability Awards, which provide the opportunity to formally recognise the skills and achievements students gain through extra-curricular activities
- co-creation of curricula with employers e.g. BAE Systems Ltd, Merchant Navy Training Board, and Lancashire County Council
- a work-based learning module included with all foundation degrees
- evidence in the student submission that students appreciate the additional learning support offered by the Higher Education Learning.

Overall, the panel concluded that course content and delivery inspire the provider's students to actively engage in and commit to their learning, and stretch students to develop knowledge and skills to their fullest potential.

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

The panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

The provider submission includes evidence of:

- business and management programmes that were co-created with local and regional employers, including Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Transport, Wigan Council, regional NHS Foundation Trust Teaching Hospitals, and a range of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
- the provider actively developing its capacity for scholarship
- numerous activities aimed at employer engagement and the engagement of partners, designed to effectively embed employability skills throughout the college's provision.

For example, the Project Management programmes were developed in partnership with BAE Systems Ltd, which led to the delivery of the Project Manager (integrated degree) apprenticeship.

An increasing number of employers are providing work-based learning opportunities, and the student submissions provide evidence of how students benefit from this, with positive comments from students.

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

The panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

Evidence in the provider submission includes:

- the requirement for all staff to have a recognised teaching qualification or be working towards one. Currently 91 per cent of staff hold a recognised teaching qualification
- the alignment of teaching and learning observations to the UK Professional Standards Framework, with 42 per cent of staff receiving a grade 1 outstanding
- 'New to HE' induction for new staff, funding for staff to undertake postgraduate qualifications, and opportunities for staff to maintain their professional practice with up to five days a year in industry
- three professional development events a year, including an annual Learning and Teaching conference
- funding for small scale research projects, showcased in the college's Scholarship and Review Journal.

Across the provider, 97 of 152 higher education practitioners are members of a learned society or professional body and 23 are members of a subject association. 25 are fellows of the Higher Education Academy and 41 are studying additional qualifications, with up to 50 per cent of the funding provided by the college.

Overall, the panel concluded there is outstanding support for staff professional development, and excellent academic practice is embedded across the provider.

## **Learning environment and academic support**

The panel found this to be an outstanding feature.

The indicator for full-time students provides initial evidence of outstanding quality 'academic support' with support for first-degree, performing arts, biosciences, politics and computing students exceeding the benchmark.

The indicator for apprenticeships also provides evidence of outstanding quality.

The indicators and submissions include evidence that the provider fosters a highly supportive learning environment by adopting a proactive and preventative approach to student support and wellbeing. Students have ready access to a wide range of outstanding quality academic support tailored to their needs, including:

- Higher Education Learning Mentors providing all students and apprentices with academic development support, as well as supporting students who are 'at risk' of not continuing and those experiencing barriers to progress
- Senior Tutors in each curriculum area, focused on student progress

- one-to one Progress Tutorials, plus workshops and coaching
- ‘Student Life’ portal, offering 24/7 access to online resources, advice, and guidance to support each student’s learning journey.

As part of its student wellbeing strategy, the provider has developed bespoke training for teaching and student support staff on trauma, attachment and emotional coaching and has invested in a dedicated higher education student support, wellbeing and inclusion team who provide tailored support for students.

Overall, the panel found 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.

## **Learning resources**

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

For full-time students and apprentices, the overall indicator provides initial evidence of very high quality ‘learning resources’. However, there is inconsistency across students and courses.

Evidence of the provider’s investment in learning resources includes:

- Learning Resource Centres at each main campus, providing access to multiple resources such as print material, eBooks, and e-Journals
- a clear digital strategy, the provider having recently upgrading its virtual learning environment
- ‘Power to Progress’, a package of interactive resources designed to equip students with the skills to engage, succeed, and foster independence
- immersive scenario-based learning e.g. full bridge and engine room simulators, and one of the sector’s largest renewable and nuclear simulators.

The student submission gives a positive account of the available learning resources and confirms the accessibility of online resources.

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

## **Student engagement in improvement**

The panel found this to be an outstanding feature.

The indicator provides initial evidence of very high quality ‘student voice’ for all full-time students, including those from underrepresented groups. For apprenticeships, the indicator provides evidence of outstanding ‘student voice’. The part-time overall indicator for ‘student voice’ was excluded from the panel’s assessment due to the low response rate.

Evidence in the provider submission includes:



- higher education students are represented at all levels from programme-level to the Higher Education Academic Board and Board of Governors, and given training to support their participation
- Student Engagement Strategy 2020-2023, which includes a 'Framework for Student Engagement through partnership' developed by AdvancedHE
- Post Induction Survey, enabling the provider to benchmark results with over 100 other colleges
- module evaluation questionnaires, which are also compared to an external benchmark
- nominations of teaching staff by students in the annual Awards for Teaching and Learning; in the last three years, eight out of ten awards were won by higher education teaching staff.

The student submission provides evidence that the Student Union plays an important role in supporting and representing students.

Overall, the panel concluded that the provider embeds engagement with its students, leading to continuous improvement to the experiences and outcomes of its students.

## **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 found student outcomes are typically outstanding for the provider's mix of students and courses.

Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- most features are outstanding quality
- two very high quality features
- no features below the level of 'very high quality' or of concern
- the outstanding and very high quality features apply to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups, which comprise a high proportion of the provider's students.

After applying the criteria, the panel considered that the rating with the best fit is 'Gold'. This is because most features 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 to be an outstanding feature.

The provider submission details the suite of appropriate policies and interventions it uses to support its student body, many of whom are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Evidence in the provider submissions includes:

- 'Flying Start' programme, targeted at non-traditional entrants (e.g. care leavers and mature students), offering practical and financial support
- careers centre offering an online employability platform, designed to boost graduate employability and future prospects
- a responsive approach to supporting student wellbeing and mental health, including a mental health fitness application
- a Higher Education Academic Achievement Manager, focused on driving positive progress and outcomes
- one-to-one study skills and wellbeing sessions
- hardship funding and the provision of a free breakfast.

Overall, the panel concluded that the tailored support given by the provider is highly effective in ensuring its students succeed in and progress beyond their studies.

## **Continuation and completion rates**

The panel considered this to be a very high quality feature. However, the panel also recognises that continuation rates for some students, such as part-time students under 21 years old and apprentices, are outstanding.

The overall indicator for 'continuation' for full-time and part-time students, and for apprenticeships, is outstanding. This is consistent across almost all groups of students and subjects.

The overall indicator for 'completion' for full-time students provides evidence of very high quality and, for apprenticeships, outstanding quality. For part time students, 'completion' is not very high quality, although there is some variations according to subjects and the age of students.

Overall, evidence in the submissions and indicators confirm there are very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's mix of students and courses.

## **Progression rates**

The panel considered this to be a very high quality feature. However, the panel also recognised there were some outstanding practices for some groups of students, including certain part-time students and apprentices.

Evidence in the submissions and indicators confirm there are very high rates of successful progression for the provider's mix of students and courses.

The overall indicator for 'progression' provides evidence of very high quality for full-time students and outstanding quality for part-time students .

While the overall indicator for 'progression' is suppressed for apprenticeships due to the very low number of apprentices (30), the provider has replicated the benchmark internally and reports that 96.4 per cent of apprentices progressed to highly skilled employment or further study.

Further evidence of high quality in the provider and student submissions includes:

- 'Degree Plus', which encourages students to participate in an award scheme for additional recognition beyond their qualification
- Careers Centre online employability platform to support graduate employability
- a Student Union student survey reported that 92 per cent of respondents stated they 'felt the provider had prepared them for careers, employment and/or promotion'
- an annual Jobs Fair
- guaranteed offer of a one-to-one interview with a qualified student advisor for students with a declared disability and/or learning difference
- Higher Education Achievement Report hosting service which supports students in the transition to work or further study.

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 to be an outstanding feature.

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.

The provider submission includes evidence of outstanding quality, such as:

- a model that has been developed over several years which presents the incremental achievement of educational gains
- One-to-one Progress Tutorials to discuss students' academic development, personal development, and work readiness with defined instructions across each stage, which are recorded and accessible by students and tutors to enable ongoing engagement and development over time.

Overall, the panel judged the provider clearly explains the range of educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are highly relevant to its students and their future ambitions.

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

The panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

The provider submission describes a well-designed suite of supportive activities tailored to student groups, designed to help them achieve the intended gains. There are multiple support mechanisms, such as a tailored careers advice service to ensure that students are maximising their opportunities.

The provider draws upon individual student data to track their progress through various KPIs. This also enables the identification of students who may be at risk, who are then referred to additional support services. The data is also used to identify needs of whole groups of students which can be used to plan workshops to support their needs.

The student submission provides the following supportive evidence:

- smaller class sizes help students feel better supported
- students feel taught as opposed to lectured
- students feel their voice is heard
- 85 per cent of students who responded to a survey agreed they 'felt a sense of belonging' at the college.

Overall, the panel concluded the provider's approaches to supporting its students to achieve educational gains are evidence-based, highly effective and tailored to its students and their different starting points.

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

The panel found this to be an outstanding feature.

The provider's submission describes how it uses a range of data analytics to evaluate student progress and gains through various KPIs and to identify students who may benefit from support services. The data is also used to analyse and understand the needs of whole groups and can be used to plan workshops to support academic development, personal development, and work-readiness.

In addition, the provider is investing resources in learning analytics related to student service usage, such as learning resource borrowing, attendance, and assessment results.

The provider plans to measure gains in educational outputs including average assignment scores, assignments submitted on time, and assignment feedback activities as well as evidencing students' perception of their development through Skills Reviews.

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.

## Overall: Gold

The panel rated both the student experience and student outcomes aspects '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' overall rating for the provider.

In reaching this decision, the panel found compelling evidence that the outstanding and very high quality features apply to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups (which comprise a high proportion of the provider's students).

The panel found most student experience features to be of outstanding quality for all groups of students and courses, and most student outcomes features to be of outstanding quality for almost all the provider's groups of students and courses.

The panel considered all the evidence across all the features and judged, on the whole, there to be typically outstanding quality provision for all groups of students and courses rather than typically very high quality provision. For this reason, the provider has an overall rating of 'Gold'.